

TODD AND BECKY

TEN-MINUTE PLAY

By Phil Olson

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SYNOPSIS: Two homeless people find empty bottles and love in an alley.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 MAN, 1 WOMAN)

TODD (M)

BECKY (F)

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AT RISE:

A homeless guy, TODD, with a Hefty bag half full of cans enters an alley, The Promised Land. On his head, TODD wears a tinfoil hat with two tinfoil antennae sticking out of the top a la My Favorite Martian. There are pieces of newspaper and general garbage scattered on the ground. TODD walks around, looking under newspapers for empty cans and bottles.

From across the alley, a homeless woman appears, BECKY, pushing a shopping cart. They don't see each other. BECKY is wearing scuba goggles with a snorkel hanging from it. She has the same goals in mind as TODD, to find cans and bottles.

Suddenly, they both hear a noise in the distance. They both look up and see someone putting out a full garbage can to be picked up by the trash collectors. The person walks away leaving an overflowing garbage can of riches. We hear the Alleluia Choir. Someone has their speakers blasting in a nearby apartment. There's nothing better than the sight of an overflowing garbage can.

Suddenly, TODD and BECKY's eyes meet, unsettled by the fact that they are walking toward the same gold mine. They stand motionless, assessing the situation. Suddenly, the apartment dweller puts on Clint Eastwood's favorite "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly" music. It's a showdown. You could cut the tension with a knife. TODD and BECKY's eyes move from the overflowing garbage can to each other to the shopping cart, the Hefty bag, then back to the garbage can. Who's going to make the first move?

Suddenly, BECKY starts pushing her cart toward the garbage can. TODD hustles to the garbage can himself. Their pace quickens as they get closer and closer to their destiny. Just as they get to the garbage can, they both suddenly stop, realizing that they recognize each other.

TODD: Becky?

BECKY: Todd?

TODD: Been a long time.

BECKY: Too long.

TODD: You're lookin' good.

BECKY: Yeah, you too.

TODD: I like your jacket.

BECKY: Which one?

TODD: The one under your sweater vest.

BECKY: The green one?

TODD: No, the red one.

BECKY: *(She looks down at it.)* That's blood.

TODD: Yours?

BECKY: It's hard to say.

TODD: Where'd ya get it?

BECKY: The Salvation Army.

TODD: Really, how much?

BECKY: It was free.

TODD: Get outta here.

BECKY: I'm serious.

TODD: There's no free lunch . . . Except at the soup kitchen. But then ya pay later, if ya know what I'm sayin'.

BECKY: You're preachin' to the choir.

TODD: So, it was free, huh?

BECKY: *(Nods "yes.")* I know the guy at the loading dock.

TODD: It's all about who ya know in this town, isn't it?

BECKY: Ya got that right . . . So, what have ya been up to?

TODD: I've been busy. You know how it goes.

BECKY: Yeah, me too. Where does the day go, huh?

TODD: Tell me about it. Excuse me, I gotta take this.

BECKY: Go ahead.

TODD puts his hand up to his forehead like he's receiving a telepathic phone call. BECKY doesn't think anything of it.

TODD: This is Todd . . . Yeah, Jerry, I'm gonna have to call you back. I'm in a meeting right now . . . Okay, talk to ya later. *(He takes his hand down and shakes his head.)* Agents.

BECKY: You gettin' out much?

TODD: *(Shakes head, "no.")* I think I need a new head shot.

TODD pulls out a piece of white paper from his back pocket (folded three ways like a letter.). He hands the paper to BECKY who opens it up. It's a really bad child-like stick drawing of TODD's head. The drawing even has the goofy hat with the antennae on it. BECKY holds it up to TODD's face, comparing the drawing to his face.

BECKY: What's wrong with it?

TODD: The lighting was bad.

BECKY: As long as it looks like you.

TODD: I guess.

BECKY hands the drawing back to TODD, who puts it back in his pocket.

BECKY: Where are ya livin' now?

TODD: Third Street alley. Just across from Parking Ramp Two. It has a bathroom.

BECKY: Really?

TODD: Yeah. They close it at midnight. That's okay. I usually go before that. *(Looks down at his pants.)* Usually . . . Where are you now?

BECKY: The Pier. I like the seagulls. Especially the brown ones. They taste like chocolate.

TODD: How's your screenplay comin'?

BECKY: Pretty good. I finished the title.

TODD: That's always the hardest part.

BECKY: It took me three years . . . I'm happy with it, though.

TODD: What's it called?

BECKY: Vishy Swah Fromage Due Twah.

TODD: *(Thinks.)* French film?

BECKY: Yeah.

TODD: So, what brings ya up here?

BECKY: This is my route.

TODD: Your "route?"

BECKY: Yeah, my route. Everyone knows this is my route.

TODD: There's no "route." You don't get a "route." You know that. It's the code of the street.

BECKY: Yeah, well, things are changing. We're organizing. It's in the newsletter. *(She pulls out an old crumpled napkin from her pocket with some writing scratched on it. She hands it to him. TODD looks at it.)*

TODD: Whoa. Where have I been?

BECKY: Hey, it's a big garbage can. Should be enough for both of us. Why don't we share, huh?

TODD: Yeah, okay. We'll share. *(They start digging through the dumpster.)*

BECKY: So, what are ya huntin' for these days?

TODD: Cans. They're 5 dollars a ton now.

BECKY: They've gone up.

TODD: Yeah, well, you know. The cost of living . . . How about you?

BECKY: I'm still swinging for the fences. You know me.

TODD: Still looking for the diamond in the rough. Same old Becky.

BECKY: I guess I'm just a romantic.

TODD: I knew a guy that found an old picture, once. When he got it home, he discovered it had a Picasso under it.

BECKY: No!

TODD: Yeah! He got 50 billion dollars for it.

BECKY: No way. You knew this guy?

TODD: I heard about it from Skeeter.

BECKY: Skeeter? Is he still playin' the spoon on Colorado?

TODD: He has two now. It's a much richer sound.

BECKY: You played with him, didn't ya?

TODD: *(Nods "yes.")* I played the stick. Not anymore, though. He had to downsize. I don't blame him.

BECKY: It's the times.

TODD: Yeah. You should stop by sometime. Tuesday is open mic night. Only we don't have a mic, so we yell real loud.

BECKY: Do you perform?

TODD: This week, I'm doing a scene from *Curious Savage*.

BECKY: Yeah, I should come over. Jeez, life is just passing me by at a hundred miles an hour.

TODD pulls out a few cans from the trash and puts them in his Hefty bag. One is half-full of soda. He pours the soda out before putting it in his bag.

TODD: Can you believe people? They can't even take the time to empty the cans. How hard is that?

BECKY: Sometimes ya just need to sit back and smell the roses.
(*TODD and BECKY look at each other lovingly.*)

BECKY: (*Continuing.*) What ever happened to us?

TODD: I don't know. Different interests I guess. You wanted to form an all-girl band and I wanted a urinal . . . What ever happened to your band?

BECKY: I didn't like touring . . . We both like music.

TODD: Yeah.

BECKY: Ya know, deep down inside I just never felt I was good enough for you.

TODD: Oh, no. And I always thought you wanted someone who owned a bicycle.

BECKY: Material things aren't important to me.

TODD: Why didn't I see that? (*Suddenly BECKY finds an empty quart bottle worth a 15 cent deposit. Jackpot. Everything stops. TODD and BECKY look at each other. Holy Grail music or equivalent plays.*) That's worth 15 cents, ya know.

BECKY: I know.

TODD: Yeah, well, you always had the golden touch.

BECKY: (*Handing the bottle to TODD.*) Here, you take it.

TODD: (*Pushing it back.*) No, no, I couldn't do that. You found it. It's yours.

BECKY: (*Handing it to TODD.*) No, I insist. You should have it.

TODD: (*Pushing it back.*) No, you found it. You keep it . . .
(*Suddenly the bottle slips and falls back into the trash can, shattering. BECKY and TODD look at each other in shock.*) That was two bananas at Ralph's . . . I am so sorry.

BECKY: Easy come, easy go.

TODD: (*Hands her his bag of cans.*) Here, take this. This should cover it.

BECKY: Don't be ridiculous. It wasn't your fault.

TODD: Are ya sure?

BECKY: Yeah, of course.

TODD: I don't know what to say.

BECKY: Hey. Ya gotta take the good with the bad. Those are the risks we take in this line of work.

TODD: Yeah . . . It was good seeing ya again, Becky.

BECKY: Yeah, you too, Todd . . . *(Looks at her broken watch.)* Well, look at the time. Pick up is tomorrow. I guess I better get goin' before the good stuff gets hauled away.

TODD: Yeah, me too. *(They start to go their separate ways. Suddenly, TODD turns around toward BECKY.)* Hey, Becky?!

BECKY: *(Turns in anticipation.)* Yeah?

TODD: Would ya like to go out sometime?

BECKY: *(Looks around.)* We are out.

TODD: *(Looks around.)* Yeah, I guess we are . . . You doin' anything this Wednesday?

BECKY: Wednesday? I'll check my calendar. *(She looks at the calendar in her cart. Nothing at all is written in it.)* Wednesday looks good.

TODD: Seven o'clock?

BECKY: *(She nods "yes.")* Call me.

TODD: Okay.

TODD and BECKY turn away as the sun sets in Santa Monica. Love Boat theme or equivalent plays. FADE OUT.

THE END