



Forrest Musselman

Big Dog Publishing

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to do what I wanted.*

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Missy, Jackson and little Sophie.*

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The BLIND Date was first performed by the students of Studio Academy Charter Arts High School at the Sub-Section One-Act Play Contest in Stewartville, MN, on January 20, 2007.

Cast:

BERNARD: Kaitlyn King

JANET: Mercedes Madline

MARY: Sarah Mayer

MUSICIAN: Shane Fisher

CHEF GROADY: Tasha Harwood

SY: Matt Chase

WATER GIRL: Heather Clark

BARNEY: Michael Baker

SOPHIE: Morgan Converse

FOO FOO MAN: Colin Foster

FOO FOO WOMAN: Desirae Fox

LADY 1: Sara Lutz

LADY 2: Jing He

Crew:

Dan Brandt

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FARCE. This fast-paced show has a host of off-the-wall characters and endless opportunities to showcase physical humor. Barney Bumblestoop, a shy and awkward copyeditor, nervously arrives at a fancy restaurant eager to impress his blind date, who happens to be his boss's daughter. The restaurant's owner assures Barney that his staff will pull out all the stops to ensure that the couple enjoys a first-class dining experience. To create a romantic ambiance, the restaurant's musician serenades the couple by playing a toy piano in the background while a creepy water girl with a bad cold loudly snuffles and coughs as she refills their water glasses. The couple also encounters a flirtatious wine steward, an overzealous new waitress, and the restaurant's egotistical, ill-tempered chef. To top off the evening, one of the customers accidentally chokes on some bread and dies. In a fit of panic and not wanting to ruin Barney's date, the restaurant owner rushes over and strangles the customer's wife and the wait staff quickly drag both bodies into the kitchen!

Performance Time: Approximately 30 minutes.

CHARACTERS

(2 M, 6 F, 5 flexible)

BERNARD: Owner and manager of The Golden Shoe, an upscale restaurant; flexible.

JANET: Veteran head waitress at The Golden Shoe.

MARY: Overzealous new waitress at The Golden Shoe.

MUSICIAN: Piano player at The Golden Shoe; wears a cheesy, blousy shirt; flexible.

CHEF GROADY: The Golden Shoe's talented, egotistical chef who has a bad temper and a lack of social skills; generally unkept, disgusting appearance; flexible.

SY: Flirtatious wine steward at The Golden Shoe; male.

WATER GIRL/BOY: Refills customers' water glasses and speaks in a creepy way; plods about the restaurant, sniffing and hacking often, as if she has a bad cold; disgusting appearance with greasy hair pasted to her forehead; flexible.

BARNEY: Shy, awkward advertising copy editor who is cute in a nerdy kind of way; male.

SOPHIE: Barney's blind date and his boss's daughter; confident and cute in a nerdy way; wears an evening gown.

FOO FOO MAN: Rich, arrogant, snobby customer; speaks with an exaggerated snobbish tone to the extent that no one can understand him; wears an expensive suit.

FOO FOO WOMAN: Foo Foo Man's rich and snobbish wife; speaks with an exaggerated snobbish tone to the extent that no one can understand her; wears an evening gown.

LADY 1, 2: Uppity restaurant customers; two friends who are out on the town; well-dressed; female.

NOTE: For flexible roles, change nouns and pronouns in the script accordingly. If Bernard is by a female, change the name to "Ms. Bernard" in the script. Restaurant staff should act as pretentiously as possible as they try to create an upscale dining experience.

Setting

The Golden Shoe, an upscale restaurant.

Set

Small dining room of an upscale restaurant. There are three tables onstage. Table 1 is directly DSC. The entrance from the outside is located SL. Near the entrance is a podium with a small lamp, phone, and reservation book. Located directly USC are kitchen doors that swing back and forth—one being the “in” door and the other being the “out” door. SR leads offstage to the main dining room and restrooms.

PROPS

Plates	Serving tray
Silverware	Menus
Cloth napkins	Microphone
Water glasses	2 Water carafes
Wineglasses	Wine menus
Restaurant reservation book	2 Bottles of wine
Phone	2 Baskets of bread
Children's keyboard/piano	Large plastic knife
Copies of the specials menu	Cash for tip

SOUND EFFECTS

Phone ringing

Musician should play music appropriate to the pacing and mood of each scene (or pre-recorded music can be used)

NOTE: Feel free to experiment and add sound effects to enhance comedic moments.

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"I AM HERE FOR YOU..."

—Water Girl

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(AT RISE: *Small dining room of The Golden Shoe, an upscale restaurant. Janet, the head waitress, is putting down silverware, glasses, etc. Mr. Bernard, the owner and manager, is standing behind the podium, studying the reservation book. They are relaxed and seem in no particular hurry. They work in silence for a few moments. Phone rings. Bernard answers the phone.*)

BERNARD: (*Into phone.*) Thank you for calling The Golden Shoe. This is Bernard. How may I help you?...No, I'm sorry. We are full tonight. We do have one opening for tomorrow night, if you are interested...Yes, ma'am, we are very busy. It is the weekend, after all. Shall I put you down for tomorrow?...No, the small dining room is full for the next two weeks...Excellent. Your last name, please? (*Writes it down.*) Thank you, Ms. Winfrey. We'll see you tomorrow at 8:30. Yes, of course. Thank you. (*Hangs up.*)

JANET: You know, one of these times you're going to get caught.

BERNARD: Don't worry. We'll be full by tomorrow night.

JANET: But we're not full for tonight.

BERNARD: It doesn't matter. By denying people what they want, you make them desire it more. When they finally get it, they think it's greater than what it was.

JANET: Sounds like the new [Play Station 3]. [*Or insert the name of another recent fad.*]

(*Bernard stares at her for a moment.*)

BERNARD: I don't understand anything you say. As I was saying, the more I deny the customer, the more they want to eat here. Then everyone wants to eat here, and then we're a hit.

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JANET: (*Unimpressed.*) I'm familiar with your philosophy, Bernard.

(*Bernard starts to re-set the silverware, glasses, etc. that Janet had just placed.*)

BERNARD: And it's working, isn't it?

JANET: I guess.

BERNARD: Of course, it's working. This little dining room has been booked solid from day one.

JANET: But it's only three tables. The large dining room hasn't even been close to full.

BERNARD: Darn it, Janet! I've been in this business far longer than you have. I know what I'm doing. Oh, yes, I know!

JANET: Okay, okay. You don't have to snap at me.

BERNARD: I'm sorry. That was uncalled for. I apologize. Things have just been a little tense lately.

JANET: Whatever. (*Begins to re-set the silverware, glasses, etc. that Bernard had just re-set.*)

BERNARD: It is absolutely critical that we do the very best that we can. Once word spreads of our wonderful dining experience, the larger dining room will fill and we will be a success.

JANET: If you want the very best, then maybe you should take a harder look at some of the staff.

BERNARD: What are you suggesting? (*Phone rings. Into phone.*) Good evening, and thank you for calling the The Golden Shoe. This is Bernard. How may I help you?...For this evening? Let me check. (*Doesn't check.*) No, I'm sorry, but our small room is full this evening. I do have an opening in the other section for nine.

(*Janet shakes her head at Bernard's tactics. Bernard's voice trails off as he continues to take the reservation. Mary, another waitress,*

enters SR in a hurry. She stops at the podium and waves timidly to Bernard, but he ignores her.)

JANET: *(To Mary.)* Hi. *(Short pause.)* Who are you?

MARY: I'm Mary. Mary Twitchy?

JANET: Why are you saying it like a question? Don't you know your own name?

MARY: Of course I know. I was hoping you'd know my name.

JANET: Why would I know you? I've never seen you before in my life.

(Bernard hangs up the phone.)

BERNARD: *(To Mary.)* You're late.

MARY: I know, and I'm very sorry, but I was running late and then I had to stop for a train and—

BERNARD: How can I properly train you if you're going to be late?

JANET: Wait a second. *(To Mary.)* You're going to be working here?

BERNARD: I'm sorry, Janet. I'm afraid I forgot to mention it to you, but we're hiring a new service person... *(Indicating Mary.)* ...and here she is.

JANET: Hold on a second. No offense, but as head waitress of this restaurant, I should be involved in any hiring decisions.

BERNARD: And as manager and owner of this restaurant, I can do whatever I want.

JANET: But we don't need more wait staff.

BERNARD: Yes, we do.

JANET: We're perfectly under control with what we have, especially with our assistants. If we keep this up, we're going to have more people working than there are customers. What is this...[Long John Silvers]? *[Or insert the name of another restaurant.]*

BERNARD: It's all part of the illusion. Besides, we're going to get busier within the next few weeks, and we need to be

prepared. Therefore, I've taken the liberty to hire Mary before the rush so that she can be properly trained, and, of course, the most perfect person to do the training would be you.

JANET: How do you know we're going to get busier?

MARY: Look, if it's going to be a problem, I can come back tomorrow night or something.

BERNARD: There is no problem. You can shadow Janet tonight and do as she says.

JANET: *(To Mary.)* Don't expect to be getting any of my tips.

MARY: Fine.

BERNARD: Despite Janet's apparent rudeness, she is one of the best that we have. *(Musician enters SR, wearing a cheesy, blousy shirt. To Musician.)* You're late!

MUSICIAN: Dude, I'm not scheduled to play for another ten minutes.

BERNARD: Don't you have to prepare?

MUSICIAN: Relax, dude, everything's already set up.

(Musician meanders over to the keyboard. Chef Groady sticks her head out of the kitchen's swinging "out" door. She is unkept and disgusting.)

CHEF: Staff meeting in one minute at table one. Be there!
(Pops her head back in.)

BERNARD: Right away, Chef. *(To Mary and Janet.)* Do as she says. I'll get the others. *(Quickly exits SL.)*

MARY: Oh my, was that Chef Groady?!

JANET: Oh, I get it. You're a food groupie.

MARY: Excuse me?

JANET: Yeah, we get one or two in every week. I'm not stupid.

MARY: I don't know what you're talking about. Chef Groady is a legend.

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JANET: Yeah, we'll see. And just because she was on ["Iron Chef"] and won doesn't make her a legend. [*Or insert the name of another suitable TV food show.*]

MARY: What about that famous [Julia Childs's] episode where she called Julia a "talent-less Muppet face"? [*Or insert the name of another TV chef.*]

JANET: What?

MARY: You haven't heard that story?

JANET: No, I've only known her for a month, and she doesn't like it when people make chitchat. It's shoptalk only.

MARY: Got it. Thanks for the tip. And, look, I understand your position here, and I'll stay out of your way.

(Chef Groady enters, carrying several copies of the specials menu. She stumbles to the center table and sets down a tray. She crudely itches herself.)

CHEF: Are we all here?

(Bernard, Sy, and the Water Girl quickly enter. Water Girl plods about and sniffs often like she has a cold.)

BERNARD: Yes, Chef, we're here.

(Chef looks over at Mary.)

CHEF: *(Indicating Mary.)* Who the heck is this?

MARY: I'm Mary Twitchy, Chef Groady. It is truly an honor to be working for such an esteemed and revered master of the culinary arts.

CHEF: *(To Bernard.)* What's her job? Is she the official brown-noser?

BERNARD: She'll be joining the wait staff, Chef. Tonight is her training run.

CHEF: *(To Mary.)* What's your name? Moses?

MARY: Mary.

CHEF: Yeah, look. Here's the rules. The only thing I want to hear you say in the kitchen are the words "order in" when you're putting in an order. Got it?

MARY: Of course.

(Water Girl sniffs.)

CHEF: When I call your name, you'll be in this kitchen within ten seconds. I don't care if you're in the middle of pouring a 200-dollar bottle of Chateau LeSnotty Phew to Mr. and Mrs. Lotta Cash. When I call your name, you come and get the food and you serve the food. Got it?

MARY: Certainly.

(Water Girl sniffs.)

CHEF: If you want to pass on a compliment from the table, that's fine, but do it quickly. I do *not* want to hear about a customer complaint, and I certainly will not do special orders. What is on the menu is what they get. I do not devote my life—my passion—in creating the perfect meal so that Mr. and Mrs. Open Wallet can decide they can throw some capers into my duck stock reduction. You got that?

MARY: Every word.

(Water Girl snorts.)

CHEF: And if you find out you're waiting on a food critic, let me know immediately so I can put broken glass in their food.

BERNARD: *(To Mary, indicating Chef.)* She's joking...somewhat.

CHEF: Critics are worthless hacks who use their own subjective views to feel important.

MARY: I agree.

(Water Girl hacks.)

CHEF: *(To Water Girl.)* Would you stop that incessant noise?!

WATER GIRL: *(Creepily.)* I am sorry. I am afraid a cold has gathered in my nose.

CHEF: Well, make sure your snot stays away from the plates, huh?

WATER GIRL: *(Creepily.)* I am here for you...

CHEF: *(To Staff.)* Here are the specials tonight. *(Staff gathers in closely.)* The appetizer is a simple salad consisting of Rock Spring Farms' organic micro-greens tossed with stone-pressed German extra-virgin olive grape seed oil and ice-wine vinegar. The salad is topped with a fresh thyme-seared lobe of heritage duck liver foie gras; thinly shaved, chestnut-fed, 2-year-aged Black Iberian hog; natural rind, hand-milked, spring-cooled Amish blue cheese; and fire-toasted, fair-trade, Chippewa hand-harvested Wisconsin wild hickory nuts. The customer can have this for a mere 27 dollars.

BERNARD: Most reasonable.

CHEF: The first course is a warm, layered seafood terrine of thinly sliced sashimi-grade Bigeye otoro tuna belly. The fish is slow poached in Italian extra-virgin white truffle oil. The other layer is a hand-dived live Maine sea scallop mousse flavored with number one Indian Kashmir, virgin-plucked, red-saffron stamens, and whole medallions of Dom Perignon champagne-steamed Brittany homard blue lobster tail. The terrine is served in a sauce of 1953 vintage Dom Perignon champagne reduction blended with hand-churned, artisanal, small batch, unsalted Hope Creamery Jersey cow butter and sprinkled with Point Reyes Bay California with sturgeon caviar, which, as we all know, is humanly removed by surgical cesarean section so as to not cause the fish any unnecessary trauma before it is returned to the ocean. This is 69 dollars.

MARY: Ohhhhhh. Absolute genius.

(Water Girl hacks loudly. Musician has wandered over to table.)

MUSICIAN: *(To Chef.)* Yeah, hey, excuse me?

CHEF: Please do not interrupt my dissertation.

MUSICIAN: Dude, I said, excuse me.

CHEF: I don't care what you are saying because you are saying it. I must have silence!

(Bernard pulls the Musician aside.)

BERNARD: *(To Musician.)* What is it?

MUSICIAN: Yeah, my keyboard isn't working.

BERNARD: What? Are you sure?

MUSICIAN: Dude, I double-checked everything.

BERNARD: This is unacceptable. My customers will be arriving any minute now, and they expect live music in the small room, and that is what they shall receive.

MUSICIAN: Well, I got another keyboard in the car, but it's—

BERNARD: Then what's the problem? Go get it.

MUSICIAN: Dude, I'm not sure you want me to—

BERNARD: I want you to do your job. Now, get your other keyboard and start playing!

MUSICIAN: Fine, dude, fine.

(Musician exits. Bernard rejoins the Chef's meeting.)

CHEF: *(To Staff.)* The Kobe beef was shiatsu massaged three times a day and fed Kirin Ichiban reserve beer. It is perched atop gently crushed, Sea of Japan-harvested, kombu seaweed and dashi stock-poached heirloom Oregon state new-crop Russian-yellow fingerling potatoes, and is accompanied by lapsang souchong team-smoked Kyoto Prefecture-grown white asparagus spears, all finished with a sprinkling of course-ground, hand-mined Montana pink Jurassic salt. This is a steal at 135 dollars. There is no special

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dessert at this time, but who knows, the muse may hit me later on tonight. Are there any questions? *(Does not wait for an answer.)* Good. I am finished.

(Chef exits.)

BERNARD: *(To Staff.)* Remember, as always, wait staff, it's all about the show. *(Barney enters. He is nerdy-looking, nervous, and appears to be looking for someone.)* All right then. The house is open. Places, please.

(Staff scatters either SL or into the kitchen. Bernard walks slowly to the podium. Sy quickly grabs Janet and pulls her aside.)

JANET: *(To Sy.)* What?

SY: Please, I need to talk to you about last night.

JANET: Not now.

SY: But I love you.

JANET: Stop it. You're going to get us both fired.

(Janet quickly exits. Sy follows her off.)

BERNARD: *(To Barney.)* Good evening.

BARNEY: Hi.

BERNARD: And did you have a reservation this evening?

BARNEY: Yeah. Barney. Barney Bumblestoop.

BERNARD: Yes, of course. I have you down for two.

BARNEY: Right. I guess she isn't here yet.

BERNARD: You are the first to arrive, sir. Would you like to wait for her at your table?

BARNEY: I guess. Sure.

BERNARD: Right this way, sir.

(Bernard grabs two menus and seats Barney at table one. Bernard pulls out the chair for Barney, unfolds a napkin, and places it in Barney's lap.)

BARNEY: (*Startled.*) Whoa!

BERNARD: I beg your pardon?

BARNEY: Uh, nothing. I just didn't expect the napkin thing.

BERNARD: We're just saving you the trouble, sir. Would you care to hear about our featured wines this evening? Perhaps we could have a bottle opened for you by the time your...date arrives.

BARNEY: Yeah, that's sounds fine. Listen, can I be honest with you for a second?

BERNARD: Certainly, sir.

BARNEY: I've never been in such a fancy place before, and I really don't know how all of it works, you know. I mean, you just put a napkin in my lap.

(Musician enters, carrying a child's keyboard with over-sized keys. Bernard notices but cannot say anything. Musician places the keyboard on top of his real one and positions a microphone over the speaker for added volume.)

[END OF FREEVIEW]