

Bob's Date

A One-Act Play
(excerpt)

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Characters

Nerves..... Thin, wiry, and anxious. Prone to shrieking and falling down.

Logic..... Calm and fatherly to a fault. Useless without his PDA.

Libido..... Loud, brash, and sweaty, and always in a hurry.

Bull..... A swaggering loudmouth who thinks he's everyone's friend.

Confidence.... A grown man in an 11-year-old body.

Emotion Fair-skinned and mischievous. She stirs up the men, and loves it.

Memory Darker than Emotion, and malicious. She's out to ruin the date.

The stage is bare, with a dark backdrop.

Nerves RUNS on from R. (All entrances come from R) He's a mess—wiry, disheveled, wearing a torn t-shirt and ripped jeans that he pulls at and twists constantly. He's barefoot. He paces the stage fast.

NERVES I can't do this, I can't—no, I can. I can, I...can't. I have to! I can't—yes, yes, I cannnnnn...not do this. I can't....oh, God... okay, okay, breathe breathe breathe have to remember to breathe.

He starts doing "whoosh whoosh" breathing at the side of the stage toward DLC. Unseen, LOGIC enters. He's an older man, very important-looking. He wears good clothes—a jacket, tie, and neatly polished shoes. He carries a PDA which he is constantly checking and diddling with. His tone of voice is constantly level and fatherly—not a monotone, but steady and smooth. When he speaks now, Nerves shrieks and collapses to the floor.

LOGIC You've heard about the big night?

NERVES Don't *do* that to me!

LOGIC I apologize. *(He helps Nerves up.)* I certainly didn't mean to startle you. I assume you already know about tonight's plans?

NERVES Of course I do! Who doesn't? It's going to be a disaster. How can he *do* this?

LOGIC It's going to be quite all right.

NERVES But it's been two years!

LOGIC *(checking his PDA)* Yes it has.

NERVES We can't do this. *(He grabs Logic by the lapels and gets right up in his face)* We cannot do this!

Logic gently extricates himself from Nerves' grasp. He brushes down his suit and checks his PDA.

LOGIC You're going to have to settle down, Nerves. You're no use to us like this.

NERVES When am I ever of use to anyone?

LOGIC We shall all manage quite nicely this evening if we simply work together and maintain our collective composure.

LIBIDO *(off)* Wheeeee-aaahhh-hooo!

LIBIDO *rushes on. He's shirtless and covered in sweat. He wears a helmet of some sort—motorcycle or military. He bounces around with wild energy. He is loud.*

LIBIDO We got a date! We're going on a date! I'm ready! I am SO ready! Let's go! I'm ready! Where is she? Is she here? I'm ready! Whooo yeah!

LOGIC It's not time.

LIBIDO It's not time? It's been two years—it's time! There's never been a better damn time! It's time. I'm gonna die if it's not time! *(He notices Nerves)* What—what is he doing here? I can't work with him around!

NERVES Do you think I want to be here?

LOGIC We need everyone here in order for this to work.

LIBIDO He's going to ruin everything!

NERVES I am. I am. Oh God I just know I am.

LOGIC Gentlemen? Please. Let's just stop and take a deep breath. Ready?

They inhale deeply. Logic and Libido exhale; Nerves doesn't. He stands at the side, holding his breath rigidly. He looks ready to explode.

LOGIC Nerves? *(Nerves looks at him with pleading eyes)* Breathe.

Nerves collapses to the floor with a rush of breath.

LIBIDO Oh yeah. He's gonna be great.

NERVES *(from his place on the floor)* I can't do this, I can't, I'm going to blow it, I can't— *(He stops and looks up, utterly panicked)* What if I make him spit food again? What if I do that?

LOGIC That only happened once.

LIBIDO It got her in the eye.

NERVES Oh, like you haven't.

LOGIC Gentlemen.

Silence. Logic checks his PDA.

LOGIC Have either of you seen Confidence?

LIBIDO Not for a long time. We used to hang out together back in the day, but lately...nothing.

NERVES He never liked me.

LIBIDO No one does, you palsied pissant.

Logic takes out a cell phone, which he just flips open and begins speaking into.

LOGIC Hello, this is Logic. Could you please page Confidence for me? And send him up. Thank you. *(He hangs up and looks at his watch.)* He should be here soon. *(He walks to the front of the stage L—the “viewing area”— and looks out.)* There’s plenty of time. We’re still en route. *(Turning to them)* Before this date even starts, everyone will know what their role is and what is expected of them. Following that line of thought, we are prepared and we will succeed. Do you understand?

Nerves and Libido nod and mutter assent.

BULL *enters. He has an immediate air of cockiness, to the point of swaggering. He wears a big phony grin and is dressed in a sweatshirt bearing the name of a high-class local college (Harvard, Yale, etc.). Walking on, he steps between Nerves and Libido, an arm around each of their shoulders. From the moment Bull enters, Logic looks very disapproving.*

BULL Hey now! Gentlemen! What’s going on, hmm? I understand we’re going on a big date. Good thing I stopped by, huh?

LOGIC You can go. You won’t be needed.

BULL Won’t be needed? *I won’t be needed...on a date? (He busts out laughing.)* Oh, Jesus, Logic, that’s a good one. That was beautiful! I almost bought it. You should do comedy. You’re a funny guy. I should know. I did comedy for a couple of years.

LOGIC No you didn’t.

BULL No, I didn’t, but I sure know funny when I see it. And it’s you, my friend. Okay, so—enough with the jokes for now. When’s the date?

LOGIC I will say this again, Bull, and I want you to pay attention. You are not needed.

BULL Listen...L. I’m not going to pull rank on you, and I don’t want to argue the point, but it’s on the books that I am necessary personnel for all job interviews, traffic violation hearings, and dates. And *you* don’t have the authority to say otherwise.

LOGIC You’re lying.

BULL Okay, but only in that last part. The necessary personnel thing—that’s true and you know it.

LIBIDO I’d like him to come along, Logic. I owe a lot of who I am today to this guy.

LOGIC I would prefer, given the unusual circumstances, that you...voluntarily decline to get involved in this outing. I just think it would go better for Bob.

BULL Better....without me? Are you serious? Okay, just a little test here. *(To Nerves and Libido)* And you boys can play along. What do you think is going to be more effective in reaching the

(quote fingers) “goal” of the date tonight? Ready? *(In a deep, steady voice)* If everything goes right and the market stays up for the rest of the year, I’m seriously thinking of buying out the other people in my timeshare in Aruba. Or just buy a little place of my own in Turks and Caicos. *(His regular voice)* Or this? *(A “wimpy” kind of voice)* It’s not that I *mind* being junior vice associate assistant of marketing, but I hope this year they might get me up to that 1 percent raise I was thinking about asking for. But I don’t want to be, you know, pushy. *(Regular voice)* Okay! Votes?

NERVES I don’t feel well.

BULL That’s a yes.

LOGIC That is not a yes.

LIBIDO I say he stays.

LOGIC You just want to....

LIBIDO You’re damn right I do! It’s been two years!

BULL You need me, Logic. He’s not going to get through this if you depend on honesty.

LOGIC *(tapping at his PDA)* We will wait until Confidence arrives and then we can all discuss it.

BULL Fine by me. I’ve worked with the guy a long time now.

NERVES I shouldn’t be here. I shouldn’t. He doesn’t need me. Doesn’t he know that? It’s a nice thing he’s doing. Isn’t it a nice thing he’s doing, buying dinner?

LIBIDO It’s a tool.

BULL So are you!

Libido and Bull laugh, high-five. Logic looks disgusted.

LOGIC If this goes badly, I’m holding you two responsible.

NERVES I’m responsible. It’s my fault, I know it is.

CONFIDENCE *enters. He is a young boy, 10 or 11 years old. He is dressed and groomed impeccably.*

CONFIDENCE Gentlemen. Thank you for calling me here. Very good to see you all.

The others turn and stare.

LOGIC You’ll pardon me for asking, but you are.....?

CONFIDENCE Confidence.

NERVES *shrieks again and hits the floor.*

CONFIDENCE (*looking himself over one time.*) I understand why you might not recognize me.

LIBIDO Confidence? But Confidence is like....this tall.

CONFIDENCE Yes, well I've been out of practice for a while, now haven't I?

BULL Well, that settles it. Looks like I'm lead dog.

LOGIC Excuse me?

BULL Oh come on! You're not actually thinking of letting junior drive the bus, are ya?

CONFIDENCE What are you saying?

BULL Well it's just that Logic doesn't think I'm going to be needed on Bob's first date in two years and he was all gung-ho about waiting until you got here to decide, and now you're here and...well, it's just that...I don't think you're old enough to vote. Know what I'm saying?

CONFIDENCE No, Bull, I don't. I admit I'm a bit...out of shape, but aren't we all after two years off? Look at Libido. He's looking rather...soft.

LIBIDO Hey, that's hitting below the belt!

BULL Ha! Good one!

LIBIDO I'm not joking!

BULL Oh.

CONFIDENCE And what about you, Bull? What have been working on the past two years? Certainly not encounters with women. What has it been, Bull? Sick days at work when Bob wasn't really sick? Reasons why Bob hasn't called his mom? Those will keep you sharp when it comes down to smooth-talking the ladies.

Confidence pulls Bull aside and downward by a handful of sweatshirt—his strength belies his size

CONFIDENCE One other thing, Bull. If you don't lay off the "little guy" stuff, I'll be forced to tear out your throat and beat you senseless with your own esophagus. Are we clear?

BULL Yes. Yes, sir. Wouldn't have it any other way, sir. Welcome back.

CONFIDENCE Thank you.

NERVES (*from the floor*) We're going to die...

LOGIC *lifts Nerves to his feet.*

LOGIC Nonsense. Everything will be fine. Confidence's unusual deportment is a minor setback at best. I feel certain that he can perform his duties as required.