

BOB'S DATE

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

By John Shanahan

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SYNOPSIS: Bob is going on his first date in two years. All of his manly inner attributes—Logic, Confidence, Nerves, Libido, and Bull—are gearing up for the event. Then, a love-at-first-sight moment wakes long-sleeping Emotion and she threatens to throw the night into chaos. But if the men weren't ready to handle Emotion, then they're certainly not prepared to take on the Memory of the woman who broke Bob's heart.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 MEN, 2 WOMEN.)

NERVES.....Thin, wiry, and anxious; prone to shrieking and falling down. *(50 lines)*

LOGIC.....Calm and fatherly to a fault; useless without his PDA or smartphone. *(107 lines)*

LIBIDO.....Loud, brash, and sweaty; always in a hurry. *(42 lines)*

BULL.....A swaggering loud-mouth who thinks he's everyone's friend. *(58 lines)*

CONFIDENCE.....A grown man in an 11-year-old body. *(44 lines)*

EMOTION.....Fair-skinned and mischievous; she stirs up the men and loves it. *(51 lines)*

MEMORY.....Darker than Emotion and malicious; she's out to ruin the date. *(27 lines)*

Running time: 40 minutes

Production History:

Bob's Date was originally performed March 15, 2004 by the Attleboro Community Theater, with the following actors:

Nerves: Charles Lafond

Logic: Steven Paulovich

Libido: Ed Benjamin, III

Bull: Arthur Osbourne

Confidence: James Keane

Emotion: Erica Feick

Memory: Demetra Orfanos

Other performances:

Attleboro Community Theater, Attleboro MA

Curtain Call Theater, Braintree MA

Henderson County Performing Arts Center, Athens TX

Geneva Theater Guild, Geneva NY

Hovey Players, Waltham MA

Barnstable Comedy Club, Barnstable MA

Peabody Veteran's Memorial High School, Peabody MA

Holderness School, Plymouth NH

Mansfield Music & Arts Society, Mansfield MA

The stage is bare with a dark backdrop.

NERVES runs on stage. 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 toward the front of the stage. Unseen, LOGIC enters. [All male entrances come from the same area.] He's an older man, very important-looking. He wears good clothes: a jacket, a 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 necessarily 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 lapel 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.

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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: (*From offstage.*) Wheeeee-aaahhh-hooo!

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

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 go well.

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.

LOGIC: 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 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 very front of the stage to one side - this is 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, and puts an arm around each of their shoulders. From the moment BULL enters, LOGIC displays a very disapproving look.

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 (*Uses 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 one 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 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, then 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, ten or eleven-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: 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 you 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 his 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 department is a minor setback at best. I feel certain that he can perform his duties as required.

CONFIDENCE: Thank you, Logic.

LOGIC: (*Ticking something off on his PDA.*) Now that we're all here, we can discuss the matter at hand and develop our approach.

NERVES: I think our approach should start with my departure.

BULL: I second the motion.

LIBIDO: Hear, hear. All in favor?

BULL and LIBIDO raise their hands and look around hopefully. NERVES looks at them and then raises his hand with a pathetic, pleading smile toward LOGIC.

LOGIC: Stop it. No one's going anywhere

BULL: Not even me?

LOGIC: I think you know --

BULL: You said no one.

LOGIC: I'm quite aware of what I said, thank you.

BULL: And since no one going anywhere includes me not going anywhere, I guess I'm staying, isn't that what you said?

LOGIC: No, not exac --

BULL: Works for me! Great! Thanks for the invite.

LOGIC: I'm not falling for this, Bull.

BULL: For what? I'm just doing what you said. You're the boss! I think it's a pretty good idea you've got.

LIBIDO: Oh let him stay, Logic.

LOGIC: Confidence?

NERVES: Somebody decide something before I throw up.

CONFIDENCE: It can't hurt, Logic. You may not need him, but you never know.

BULL: I'm a clutch player!

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LOGIC looks slightly defeated. He takes a moment to click off several things on his PDA. At last, he sighs.

LOGIC: Very well. He stays.

BULL: All right!

LOGIC: But he keeps his mouth shut and does not act until directed to do so.

BULL: By whom?

LOGIC: By me.

BULL: I say we put it to a vote.

NERVES: *(Shaky, holding his stomach.)* I need a bucket.

BULL: That's a yes.

LOGIC: That is not a yes. And there will be no vote. You stay, you listen, you remain silent until your input is directly requested by me. This is how it is, and it is no longer open to discussion. You are wasting my time and you are wasting Bob's time. Do you understand?

BULL grumbles and moves away.

LOGIC: Very well. *(He notes a few more things on his PDA.)*
Gentlemen, we are facing a delicate situation. Bob has not had a date in two years.

NERVES: What about that nurse? Remember her? What about the nurse?

LOGIC: That was not a date. Bob was set up by well-intentioned friends who thought that the two of them would get along.

BULL: He was ambushed.

LOGIC shoots him a look. BULL shrugs.

LOGIC: Unfortunately, Bull is right. We were not prepared for the situation, and it progressed accordingly.

NERVES: She hated men! What if this one hates men too?

LIBIDO: She wouldn't have hated men if I'd gotten my hands on her.

LOGIC: She did not hate men. Unfortunately, Bob's friends didn't realize they'd selected a woman who was *(He taps at the PDA.)* on the rebound, as they say. Still in the throes of a bad breakup.

BULL: Ambushed.

LOGIC: Be that as it may, Bull, it was not a full-fledged date and we had no advance warning.

CONFIDENCE: I don't think Bob was entirely up to the evening, either. I didn't even get called out.

LOGIC: We all know, of course, that at that time Bob was still trying - - *(For the first time, he seems at a loss. He sighs and ticks something off on the PDA. Clears his throat.)* Well, his friends believed they were acting in his best interest. But that is not an issue this evening. This is a fresh start. We've had ample time to assess the situation, we've gathered ourselves here, and we can progress with the evening according to the plan we'll now develop. *(Turning to BULL.)* Without your assistance, thank you.

BULL: You're making a mistake.

LOGIC: That remains to be seen. Pay attention, gentlemen. Confidence, you and I will need to take the forefront.

CONFIDENCE: I agree.

LOGIC: I'd like you directly in front. It will be important for Bob to make a good first impression. There can be no uncertainty.

CONFIDENCE: Understood.

LOGIC: I'll stay just to the side for conversation purposes and general monitoring. Nerves?

NERVES shrieks.

NERVES: It wasn't me!

LOGIC: Nerves, I need you just slightly behind Confidence, but I need you to tone yourself down a great deal.

LIBIDO: Why him?

LOGIC: *(With a tick of the PDA.)* He lends an air of vulnerability. It can be very becoming. If Confidence is the only aspect the date sees, Bob may come off as too cocky.

LIBIDO: I thought that'd be me! *(He laughs, but no one else does.)* Oh come on! Cocky? Me? Get it?

CONFIDENCE: Not the time.

LIBIDO mutters and sulks over toward BULL.

LOGIC: If the evening goes well, Libido, I'll let you take the slot behind Confidence.

LIBIDO: Yessah!

LOGIC: *But* - and I mean this - you must start off at your lowest level of intensity. Do not tip your hand.

BULL: Or Bob will have to use his!

LIBIDO: All right, Logic, I'll come in low and slow.

LOGIC: Confidence, it will be up to you to maintain your presence and regulate Nerves and Libido. You must remain the front man at all times, and only let them come forth as you and I deem necessary. Do you understand?

CONFIDENCE: I do. No worries. I've handled these two before.

BULL: I hope you washed your hands.

LOGIC moves toward the viewing area as he speaks, ticking off on his PDA as he goes.

LOGIC: I feel good about this, gentlemen. Bob has had ample time to step back and assess his situation, and that has allowed us some time to forget the - - roadblocks that we've faced in the past. We come into this date as if it were the first. I, for one, feel something not entirely unlike excitement. The prospect of a good evening awaits, and a new chapter in Bob's life.

The OTHERS drift over toward him over their next few lines.

NERVES: I feel - I feel sort of - excited too. Or maybe it's nausea.
Or diarrhea - -

LIBIDO: Oh great.

CONFIDENCE: Take it easy, Nerves. We'll do fine.

NERVES: Yeah, fine. We'll do fine. We're fine. I'm fine. Fine.

BULL: I think we're gonna give this chick a night she'll never forget.

LIBIDO: And one she'll beg us for later.

CONFIDENCE: Boys.

LIBIDO: What? Oh come on, Confidence. Tell me that there's not part of you that would like to -

CONFIDENCE: - well of course there is. Of course. I might have the body of a ten-year-old but parts of me are still -

NERVES: (*Pointing out.*) - we're there!

LIBIDO/BULL/CONFIDENCE: What?

EVERYONE looks out.

LOGIC: (*Quickly but pointedly tapping on the PDA.*) We're there. We're at the house. The date is beginning. Let's get ready.

NERVES starts making a sort of rising, whining sound and his teeth start chattering. The OTHERS turn and stare. It goes on for a few beats, then NERVES suddenly stops, self-conscious.

NERVES: What? This is what I *do!*

LOGIC: Places, gentlemen, please.

They fall into place according to the plan. CONFIDENCE stays where he is; LOGIC steps aside slightly. NERVES gets behind CONFIDENCE, peeking out over his shoulder and pulling back on him somewhat. LIBIDO and BULL hang back slightly. There's a pause. CONFIDENCE has a strained look on his face.

BULL: He ain't getting out of the car, Logic.

LOGIC: Confidence?

CONFIDENCE: (*With difficulty.*) Hang on. Hold on. I'm just - - (*NERVES is trying to ease past him. CONFIDENCE elbows him back.*) This is harder than I thought.

LOGIC: Concentrate. Nerves, please!

NERVES: I can't help it!

LOGIC: It's just a date, gentlemen. She expects nothing more than our company. We've done this before. It's simply a lovely evening out. That's all.

NERVES: (*Backing off from CONFIDENCE.*) Are you sure?

LOGIC: Realistically, one can never be completely sure of anything.

NERVES: Oh, that helps.

BULL: Throw him a bone, Logic!

LOGIC: Very well. (*Flatly.*) I'm sure, Nerves.

BULL: Ooh yeah - that was convincing.

NERVES: But what if we - -

CONFIDENCE turns and puts his hand on NERVES' shoulder; NERVES twitches.

CONFIDENCE: We'll do great. (*He looks back out, takes a deep breath, and concentrates for a moment.*) Let's move.

LIBIDO: Gentlemen, we're out of the car!

NERVES: Oh dear God, oh no, we're headed for the door. (*Starts with his whoosh-whoosh breathing again.*)

CONFIDENCE: That's really distracting, Nerves.

BULL: And your breath stinks.

NERVES: Sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry - (*Stops the breathing.*)

CONFIDENCE: All right, let's -

NERVES begins chanting "Om," and his eyes roll up in his head. The OTHERS watch him for a moment.

LIBIDO: I'm gonna slap him.

LOGIC: Nerves, please. Control yourself!

NERVES covers behind CONFIDENCE again.

LOGIC: And - let's ring the doorbell.

BULL: (*Pushing forward.*) Yeah, I'll get that.

CONFIDENCE whirls on him, straight-arming him.

CONFIDENCE: (*Hard.*) Back off, little man!

BULL: (*Backing up.*) Ooookay - - you the boss. All yours. Go for it.

CONFIDENCE: (*Under his breath.*) Here we go, Bob. We're good.

NERVES: Oh Lord, he rang it! He really rang it! I'm going to puke.

LIBIDO: I hate the part where you have to wait.

BULL: Gee, really? You?

LOGIC: She's coming. Stand ready! Confidence, prepare an opening remark. On my signal - -

Everything stops. They are all shocked by what they see. NERVES slowly stands up straight. LOGIC'S PDA-hand falls to his side.

LOGIC: (*Whispering.*) My God. She's beautiful.

From the side of the stage opposite where the men entered, EMOTION enters. She is a beautiful woman dressed in light colored, flowing clothes. She is yawning, stretching, rubbing her eyes. She's just waking from a two-year sleep.

EMOTION: (*Sleepily.*) Who called me?

All the MEN jump. NERVES shrieks and hits the floor. They turn to see her, and it throws everyone into a panic. The next group of lines goes out all at once.

LIBIDO: Oh no!

CONFIDENCE: Emotion? Emotion?

LOGIC: (*Fumbling with the PDA.*) This is *not* happening!

BULL: Jesus! What's she doing here?

LOGIC: This is all wrong!

CONFIDENCE: Where did you come from?

BULL: Get her out of here!

LIBIDO: No one said anything about this!

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