

FOR WHOM THE BEALS TOILS

A Play in One Act

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Cast of Characters

Pete: Late middle years;
sophisticated, kind.

Cecily: Ageless sophisticated
woman of the world;
enjoys a good party.

Ava: Very early twenties;
sweet.

Jerry: Late forties; everyman.

Beals: Late twenties, early
thirties; movie star
handsome.

Setting

The Penthouse in a Las Vegas, Nevada, Hotel

Time

Almost midnight, December 31, 1999

SETTING: The living room of a penthouse suite in a Las Vegas hotel.

AT RISE: There is a knock at the door. PETE enters from the bedroom carrying a tall drink. More knocking.

PETE

Hang on. I'm coming.

(He opens the door to admit CECILY; statuesque, elegant, wearing a gorgeous beaded evening gown in fashion circa 1925.)

CECILY

Petey, dahling. So good to see you.

(They kiss air in the general direction of each others' cheeks.)

PETE

And you, Cecily.

CECILY

It's been ages.

PETE

Only a year.

CECILY

A year of ages.

(SHE checks the mirror behind the bar.)

And I don't look a day older. But, then, of course, I'm not.

PETE

New dress?

CECILY

It was when I bought it.

(A knock at the door. PETE goes to answer it as CECILY slinks her way behind the bar to mix a drink.)

PETE

Fix yourself a drink.

(HE opens the door to AVA, a young woman dressed for a formal party.)

AVA

I'm sorry to bother you, but I've knocked on every door on this floor and nobody's in. The elevator's stuck. I'd like to call the concierge.

CECILY

Housekeeping, dear. The concierge is undoubtedly up to his tie-tack ordering limousines and such. It's such a huge night for him. He was as busy as a one-armed paper-hanger, when I floated by. Come on in. Have a drink while you're waiting.

AVA

Oh, I don't want to trouble you, madam. But if I could use the phone --

PETE

Please. Feel free. It's over there.

AVA

Thank you.

(SHE goes to the telephone. There is a knock at the door. PETE answers, admitting JERRY, a perfectly groomed middle-age man in mechanic's coveralls. CECILY pours a straight scotch.)

JERRY

Oh, geeze, not again!

PETE

Have a drink.

(HE closes the door.)

JERRY

(Crossing to the bar, HE snaps up the scotch from CECILY and swigs it down. To PETE:)

What's the matter with you people? This time I knew I had it right. I said to myself, "Me, I am going to get on that elevator and when I get off, it's going to be different. This time, it's going to be different!" Ha! Story of my life. I plan, God laughs.

PETE

Believe me, you are the last person God would laugh at. He doesn't have time.

CECILY

State of the world, and all that.

(Salutes and drinks.)

Cheers!

JERRY

(Slams his drink down on the bar.)

I need another.

(CECILY pours him another scotch, then freshens her own drink. JERRY downs the scotch, turns and sees AVA hanging up the phone.)

JERRY (Continued)

Who are you?

(To no one.)

Who the hell is she?

PETE

Her name is Ava.

AVA

(To PETE:)

I didn't tell you my name.

JERRY

(To AVA:)

How did you get here?

AVA

I was going up to the penthouse to meet Sergio, and the elevator stopped at this floor. The doors just kept opening and closing, so I got out. And I knocked on every door but nobody else answered. And that gentleman said I could use the phone to call for help. For the elevator.

JERRY

His name is Pete.

(To PETE:)

You said she could use the phone? You never let me use the phone!

CECILY
You never asked.

JERRY
Who asked you?

CECILY
Why would anybody ask me? It's his phone.

JERRY
(To AVA:)
So you used the phone.

AVA
It isn't working.

JERRY
Why am I not surprised?
(Rounding on PETE:)
You think this is funny, don't you?

PETE
On a scale of one to ten? No.

JERRY
You haven't told her.

AVA
Told me what?

PETE
(To JERRY:)
Of course not. You should have a better idea of how it works, by now.

AVA
Told me what?

JERRY
Oh, yeah. Watch the butterfly beat its wings against the glass until it gives up.

PETE
It's about self-awareness, Jerry.

CECILY
A hint?

(To JERRY:)
That's a dead-on sign post.

PETE
Cecily -

AVA
What's going on?

JERRY
(Shrugging in disgust.)
We get to figure it out.

AVA
Figure what out? I don't want to figure anything out. I want to get upstairs, to Sergio's. We have a big party he's taking me to. It's a real party. Not costumes. A real party with real people that Sergio knows. Sergio's waiting for me.

CECILY
Poor Sergio.

AVA
What!

PETE
Cecily.

JERRY
(To PETE:)
This sucks. You know that.
(A short knock at the door. It opens and BEALS, young, movie star handsome, walks in.)

BEALS
Everybody ready?

AVA
Oh-my-gosh, you're - you - you're what's-his name - that American actor - Mike - Mark- Matt - those "I forgot who I am" movies with the guns and cars -

BEALS
No, I'm not. I'm Beals.
(Appraising her.)
Very nice.
(To PETE:)
She mine?

AVA

What?!

PETE

You're a little early.

BEALS

(Checking his watch.)

Damn. Sorry. Says right here, five minutes.

PETE

Early.

(AVA bolts for the door and struggles to open it, realizes it will not open, and turns her back to it, a deer in headlights.)

AVA

Why won't it open?

BEALS

Not for —

(Checks watch.)

— four minutes and fifteen seconds. And not for you. That's my job.

CECILY

Hey, come on, you're scaring her.

BEALS

That's my job, too

END SAMPLE

FOR A PERUSAL SCRIPT, PLEASE CONTACT THE AUTHOR