

KNOWN FOR MY SINGING

By. Topher Cusumano

CHARACTERS

BO: A man in a dress.

THE LADY: A singer.

ABOUT THE PLAY

The Lady & Bo don't get along. The Lady never stops singing, and Bo hasn't taken off that dress in years, however today all of that is going to change. Bo's leaving, for the first time in god knows how long. He has a date with the man of his dreams, and nothing The Lady can say or do is going to stop him.

CASTING NOTE

Characters can be cast with actors of any race, gender identity, physical appearance, age, nation of origin, weight, height, etc., They should be the actors who never get cast for one reason or an other, and the director is free to make changes to accommodate any actors who have special needs.

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LIGHTS UP on a small cluttered room. Two dusty chairs face away from each other diagonally across the stage. THE LADY sits with her back to the audience. She starts to sing, beautiful, upbeat, jazz--- like back in the day.

BO sits in the chair facing the audience in silence. He wears a ball gown that doesn't fit correctly, leaving him forced to constantly adjust it as he moves. BO wears no make-up, wig, or fake breasts. He's a man in a dress.

BO

Shut up.

THE LADY

Make me.

She continues to sing.

BO

You're not worth the energy.

She continues to sing.

BO

I know what you're doing. You're trying to upset me on purpose. God, you're a selfish cow.

She continues to sing.

BO

Go ahead, keep it up, you can't get me down. Not today. I'm leaving soon, and than you can sing all you'd like. Sing yourself to death for all I care.

She continues to sing.

BO

You were singing when we met for the first time, you remember, Lady?

She stops singing. A beat. In unison
THE LADY and BO turn their chairs
to face each other.

BO

You were up there singing, and you looked so beautiful. Then somehow we got together---and you haven't shut up since, have you? Not a moment of peace.

THE LADY starts to sing.

BO

I could kill you. You know that? I could kill you with my bare hands. I've done it before---killed someone---when I was young.

THE LADY

Oh Yeah?

BO

Yeah. I strangled him with my bare hands. I choked all of the air out of him, until his body went limp and his face turned blue.

THE LADY

You don't say?

BO

If I wanted to I could kill you. I've done it before.

THE LADY

You never killed anyone.

BO

No. But I've thought about it---almost everyday.

They smile.

THE LADY

You look very pretty.

BO

Don't try to make me feel better. He's already late.

THE LADY

I wasn't trying to make you feel better.

BO

Yes you were. I know what you were trying to do.

BO stands and begins to move around the room gracefully, clearly attempting to show off the brilliance of his gown.

BO

Do you really think I look beautiful?

THE LADY

I said you looked *pretty*.

BO

Not beautiful?

THE LADY

No. Not beautiful. *Pretty*.

BO

PRETTY? What kind of a thing is that to say?

THE LADY

The truth.

BO

Oh—well—I think you look awful. Really—just terrible. That color makes you look like a pumpkin. And pumpkins are the most ugly fruits.

THE LADY

Pumpkins aren't a fruit.

BO

Yes they are.

THE LADY

Liar.

BO

Pumpkin head.

THE LADY

You're so angry.

BO

I'm not angry.

THE LADY

Yes you are.

BO

I just can't hear myself think with you going on all the time.

THE LADY

It's too quiet otherwise.

BO

If we have to talk, let's talk about something else.

THE LADY

We don't have to talk.

BO

It's better than your singing.

THE LADY

I don't have to sing either. We can just sit here and wait.

BO

Good.

A long moment passes in silence.

BO

Now it's too quiet.

THE LADY

Make up your mind.

BO

I've made up my mind, Lady. I know exactly what I want.

Another few moments pass in
silence.

BO

How long has it been?

THE LADY

Let's play a game.

BO

I'm not in the mood for a game today. Answer my question.

THE LADY

I stopped keeping track. Play with me. We can play *tragic romance*.

THE LADY begins to rearrange the
room.

BO

Not today. He may be here soon. I want to be ready.

I'll let you be Vivian.

THE LADY

Bo thinks for a moment.

Will you say I'm beautiful?

BO

No, I'll play the game. Don't be greedy.

THE LADY

Alright, fine. I'll make a grand entrance.

BO

I'll get the jacket.

THE LADY

THE LADY changes into a male's dinner jacket and "fancy" hat.

Are you ready?

BO (O.S)

Yes.

THE LADY

BO re-enters, wearing a fabulous woman's hat that matches his gown. He carries a suitcase in one hand, and a small umbrella in the other. THE LADY & BO start to speak like classic movie stars of the 1930s-40s. The game begins.

BO

I'm leaving John. And I'll never come back again!

THE LADY

No, Vivian, please don't. I can explain, please, my love, let me explain.

BO

I've had enough of your explanations John.

THE LADY

Is it another man?

BO

Yes. Yes, another man. A better man, John. A man who knows how to love me---who knows how I need to be loved.

THE LADY

I won't believe it! There is no other man in this world who could possibly love you as deeply as I do.

BO

I wish things had ended up differently, John.

THE LADY

What do I have to do? Name it! Anything for you my sweet. Anything to keep you as my own.

BO

Tell me you love me, John.

THE LADY

I love you.

BO

Tell me you need me.

THE LADY

I need you.

BO

Tell me you can't live without me.

THE LADY

I can't live without you.

BO

Tell me I'm beautiful.

THE LADY
(BREAKING CHARACTERING)

That's not how it goes!

BO

Why won't you just say it?

THE LADY

Because that's not how the game goes.

BO

I was just trying to have fun. I told you I wasn't in the mood today. Didn't I tell you that I wasn't in the mood?

THE LADY

You told me.

BO

Well, you should have listened. I don't want to play that stupid game anymore. What if he came to the door while we were playing? That would be a fine thing for him to walk in on.

THE LADY

If he ever shows up at all...

Everything gets terribly serious.

BO

What was that?

THE LADY

What?

BO

What you just said--- about him not coming.

THE LADY

I was only talking.

BO

Well, stop it. Stop your talking. He's coming. He's probably on his way. I know it.

THE LADY

I know you do.

BO

He's just a little late. He's just running a little behind.

THE LADY begins to sing.

BO

There you go, again. I'll never understand why you have to constantly sing. Is it to drive me

crazy? Is that it? Like a Hitchcock movie...you're trying to sing me to death.

THE LADY

Because I'm the singer.

BO

I could sing.

THE LADY

More lies.

BO

No, really. I could. You know I've always been known for my singing. I just don't sing around you because I don't want to make you feel bad. What else do you have besides your music? You would only be jealous of me if I sang all of the time. I *let you* be the singer.

THE LADY

You couldn't carry a tune even if it had a handle!

BO

I could kill you, Lady. Remember how I said before that I could kill you? I mean that. I meant every word.

THE LADY

You're too busy waiting. Sitting and waiting.

BO

I could sing. I could sing a damned sight better than you!

THE LADY

That a fact?

BO

You'll see---I'll show you. He's going to take me to a jazz club tonight. And I'm going to get up

on stage and I'm going to sing him a love song like you've never hear before. I'm going to make him so---proud. Because he knows he gets to leave with me on his arm, even though all the men in the joint are making eyes at me while I'm up there. Everyone is going to be there, making eyes at me and wishing I was going home with them. But he'll be there too---in the front row, and he'll listen to me sing my great love song, and he'll just smile. You hear me, Lady? He's going to smile at me, because he knows I'm his. All his.

A spotlight comes up on BO. He notices the crowd. He begins to sing his great love song. After a verse or two, THE LADY begins to sing. The two have a fierce singing battle until BO is forced to give up from exhaustion. A moment of silence.

BO

Why are you such a bitch to me?

THE LADY

That's what lovers do, lover.

BO

I don't love you anymore, Lady. You know that. I'm leaving. Him and I are going to have an amazing evening, without you. Without you hogging all of the attention. You never even tell me I'm beautiful anymore.

THE LADY

We've been through that. Enough.

Silence. THE LADY hums.

BO

How long has it been now?

THE LADY

I don't know. I could check. Would you like that?

BO

Yes please.

THE LADY walks down stage, and looks out the window toward the audience.

THE LADY

It stopped snowing. It looks warm out. Like spring. It must be spring again.

BO

Spring already?

THE LADY

Spring already.

BO

Good. Good, I won't have to wear a shawl when he comes to pick me up. We'll leave just as the sun is setting, and the evening will be warm. It's going to smell like jasmine and drying rain.

THE LADY, still looking out the window, "notices something". She gasps over-dramatically.

THE LADY

What's that?

BO

What's what? What is it?

THE LADY

It looks like there's someone coming. A man in a suit. He's holding a bunch of flowers. They look like lilies, Bo, aren't they are you're favorite?

BO

No---but they could be. That is they will be when he gives them to me. Is it him, Lady? Is it him?

THE LADY

He turned down the block. It wasn't him.

BO

Maybe he's forgotten where I live? Maybe it's just a wrong turn.

THE LADY

Maybe.

BO

That must be it. That was him, he just took a wrong turn. I hope he doesn't take too long finding the place---we don't want to be late.

THE LADY

No, you don't want to be late.

THE LADY & BO turn their chairs
in unison.

BO

He'll be here any minute now---Now that it's spring again. He always loved the nice weather. I should sit here, by the window, so he can see me when he comes around the corner.

Silence.

BO

It's too quiet in here, Lady. Why don't you sing a song while we wait? I should save my voice if I'm going to sing tonight.

THE LADY begins to sing.

BLACKOUT.