

A QUICK REVIEW

Ten-Minute Comedy Duet

by
Carl L. Williams



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SETTING: An upscale bar, nearing midnight.

AT RISE: *RODNEY WINSTON, 30's, sits at a small table, amid several empty glasses and writing on a playbill. ABBY HUNT, 30's, enters with a drink in her hand, casually looks around, sees RODNEY and recoils, then approaches.*

ABBY: *(reeking with distaste)* Look who I have to run across in one of the classiest establishments in town. Rodney Winston.

(RODNEY looks up with half-interest, then looks away.)

RODNEY: Hello, Abby.

ABBY: The sewer must've backed up, and here you are.

RODNEY: I take it you read the review.

ABBY: Oh, yes! All my friends were quick to show it to me.

RODNEY: None of your enemies?

ABBY: You're the only enemy I have, you back-stabbing, bile-spewing bag of maggots.

RODNEY: An interesting line. If you had put that one in your play, you would've had. . . let's see. . . one interesting line.

ABBY: Do you know how long I worked on that play?

RODNEY: Too long. . . you finished it.

ABBY: Always quick with an acid remark. Never mind that everyone at the opening told me how much they enjoyed the play.

RODNEY: Of course they did. What else would they say?. . . to your face. It wasn't their job to write the review.

ABBY: But did you have to write it so. . . so. . .

RODNEY: Truthfully?

ABBY: Maliciously!

(ABBY jerks out a chair and sits down.)

RODNEY: I am never malicious. I merely phrase my comments in a vivid manner. . . something more playwrights should aspire to do.

ABBY: Rodney, it was a completely unfair review.

RODNEY: Unfavorable doesn't mean unfair.

ABBY: It wasn't just me you hurt. The actors were crushed.

RODNEY: A deserving fate. If only they had been crushed in rehearsal, the rest of us would have been spared.

ABBY: That's exactly the kind of gratuitous, supercilious, self-inflated swill I'm talking about. Here. . . listen to part of what you wrote.

(ABBY pulls out the review, unfolds it.)

RODNEY: You carry it with you?

ABBY: Like a dagger in my flesh.

RODNEY: Please. . . I'm drinking.

ABBY: I was going to show this to somebody tonight for a little commiseration, but that didn't. . . anyway, take this for example--*(reads)* "Miss Hunt has once again demonstrated her mastery of the mundane. Her slice-of-life drama is meager fare for even the most anorexic of theater-goers. The only tension arises from guessing which character will end up whining the most. Opening night's performance proved too close to call, though by the final self-conscious whimper, surely no one in the audience cared."

RODNEY: *(tone of concern)* Did I write that? *(takes it from her, looks it over)*

ABBY: Yes, you wrote that!

RODNEY: Boy, that's good.

ABBY: *(snatches it back, reads)* "Miss Hunt apparently believes a character needs no other motivation than her hormonal fluctuations. . . the character's, that is, not Miss Hunt's." Rodney, that is inexcusable.

RODNEY: I'm glad you agree.

ABBY: I'd like to know who reviews your reviews? Who tells you if you're any good or not?

RODNEY: Some things are intuitively discerned.

ABBY: It so happens I wrote a review of my own. **(pulls it out)**

RODNEY: Of your own play? Rather like having your cake and barfing it, too.

ABBY: No, I reviewed you. **(reads)** "In his review of 'The Rainbow Finder,' by Abby Hunt, Rodney Winston displayed his usual caustic technique of deriding material he doesn't understand and therefore cannot appreciate. Devoid of either intellect or sensitivity, Mr. Winston resorted to insult in an effort to be clever, but achieved only the offensive excess for which he has become so well known."

RODNEY: **(mockingly wounded, turns away)** Oh, stop--stop! I can't take any more! It's all so cruel!

ABBY: If you had any decency, you'd apologize.

RODNEY: I'll apologize for the review if you'll apologize for the play.

ABBY: Admit it. There is no way you can justify your review.

RODNEY: I don't have to justify it. It's my opinion. Why do you care what I think, anyway?

ABBY: I don't. But other people seem to. We had a great opening, but now people are staying away. It's because they saw your review.

RODNEY: Or maybe they saw your last play.

ABBY: You have more venom than a snake.

RODNEY: A snake only contends with small rodents. He doesn't have to go to the theater three times a week.

ABBY: Nobody at the newspaper forces you to go. You want to.

RODNEY: Sad, but true. It's my addiction. **(takes a drink)**

ABBY: One of them, anyway.

RODNEY: Ah-ah. I only drink between the closing curtain and midnight. After everything I witness, I need this to dull my senses.

ABBY: And when your senses are dull enough, you write your review.

END OF FREE PREVIEW