

**LOX AND LOADED**

A Comedy In One Act

By William A. Smith  
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## SCENE ONE

SETTING: Bernie's shabby one bedroom apartment  
TIME: Afternoon  
AT RISE: Bernie is pacing, wringing his hands. Occasional outbursts, e.g. "Where is he?" He goes to the window, peeking out through the curtains, pacing the floor, etc. After awhile, Sol enters - Bernie is beside himself with anxiety

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BERNIE

What did they say?

SOL

*(Sol takes his time)*

Well, as you can see, they didn't kill me.

BERNIE

But what did they say?

SOL

Simmer down and let me get my coat off already.

BERNIE

I've been waiting here for three hours, where the hell have you been?

SOL

Whaddaya mean where have I been, I've been where I told you I was going. I went to see your bookie.

BERNIE

*(Gritted teeth, anger building)*

I know that you irritating bastard, what I meant was what the hell happened? You've been gone three stinking hours!

SOL

And you're thinking I don't know how long I've been gone? Besides, if what you meant was 'what the hell happened?' you should not have asked me 'where the hell have you been?'

BERNIE

*(Angry)*

Stop playing games with me and tell me what they said!

SOL

*(Calmly)*

All you had to do was ask.

BERNIE

I did ask... you... Son-of-a...

SOL

*(Flatly)*

Bernie Bloomberg has an anger management problem.

BERNIE

I DO NOT HAVE AN ANGER MANAGEMENT PROBLEM!...I HAVE A SOL RABINOWICZ PROBLEM!!!

SOL

*(Sol just stares at him blankly, then quietly, after a moment)*

Aren't you going to offer me something to drink?

BERNIE

*(Deflates)*

I got Tang. You want Tang?

SOL

Tang? Who drinks Tang?

BERNIE

Astronauts, that's who. You want to complain about astronauts now?

SOL

I would like a nice cup of coffee.

BERNIE

*(Smart ass)*

Oh, you do, do you? Well, Sir, would you like some fancy schmancy flavoring in your 'nice' cup of coffee? Maybe some 'nice' French vanilla or some 'nice' hazel nut syrup?

SOL

No, thank you, but I've been a little jittery, so I would like it decapitated.

BERNIE

De... what?

SOL

Decapitated.

BERNIE

That's not a word.

SOL

It is a word.

BERNIE

Well, it is a word, but it's not THE word. It's the wrong word.

SOL

What do you know. Decapitated. Oh, it's the right word.

BERNIE

*(Bernie stares at Sol for a moment, then turns and leaves the room, to get coffee. From offstage:)*

So, did you see Joey? What did he say? Are they gonna kill me, cut off my fingers, or what?

SOL

*(Yelling)*

I'll wait until you get back to...

BERNIE

What?

SOL

I said I'll wait until...

BERNIE

I can't hear you. Wait until I get back.

SOL

Bring the coffee. We'll sit, we'll talk.

BERNIE

*(Returns, gives coffee to Sol and sits)*  
*So talk already.*

SOL

Alright so, I talked to Joey Pants...

BERNIE

Legs.

SOL

...Joey Pants Legs...

BERNIE

Legs! His name is Joey Legs!

SOL

Whatever.

BERNIE

No, not whatever, his name is Joey Legs. You said Joey Pants.  
It's not the same thing.

SOL

Who cares?

BERNIE

Whatever! Shut up and keep talking!

SOL

So, I talked to Joey LEGS, surrounded by his numerous swarthy  
goons. All with very large weapons tucked into their waistbands...

BERNIE

Yeah, yeah... go on.

SOL

Bernie, you gotta understand, you owe Joey a LOT of money. It's  
\$40,000 plus interest.

BERNIE

I know that. That's why you were there, remember?

SOL

Joey doesn't like it very much when people owe him money. He told me that several times.

BERNIE

Were you scared?

SOL

No I wasn't scared. Of course I was scared. I was terrified, I was putrified...

BERNIE

Wrong word.

SOL

What?

BERNIE

You used the wrong word. You said putrified.

SOL

Right. Putrified. And I was.

BERNIE

I don't think that word means what you think it means.

SOL

Whatever! I was scared, alright? I was afraid he was gonna kill me.

BERNIE

And me?

SOL

And you.

BERNIE

And...

SOL

And what?

BERNIE

Is he?

SOL

Is he what?

BERNIE

IS HE GOING TO KILL US?!

SOL

*(Calmly)*

You know, Bernie, you really do have anger issues.

BERNIE

*(Pacing angrily)*

SOL

Bernie, listen. sit down and let me tell you the story. You've got yourself so full of reprehension.

BERNIE

Wrong word.

SOL

Whatever. You're upset. Sit and I'll tell you what happened.

BERNIE

*(Bernie sits, grudgingly)*

SOL

I know you're upset and you're angry, but there are some things I need to say to you and you need to listen. Will you listen?

BERNIE

What?

SOL

Will you sit and listen and not interrupt and not get angry at me and not tell me 'wrong word'?

BERNIE

*(Bernie thinks and simmers down)*

I'll listen and I won't say 'wrong word' UNLESS you use the wrong words!

*(Sol stares at him)*

I'll listen, I'll listen.

SOL

Bernie, this money, this money you owe, it's because you can't control your gambling, right? You could have come to me, Sol, your best friend for all our lives, you could have come to me for help with this. Instead, you wait until you have Joey Pants Legs and his goons leaning on you, to ask for help. So, what do I do? I help, of course. In all of our years, as friends, and as partners running the hardware store, did I ever not help you when you bequested my assistance?

BERNIE

Wrong! Sorry, go on.

SOL

When you asked for help I was there, right?

BERNIE

Yes, you were there... AND I was there for you!

SOL

Yes you were. You were there for me as well. Like the time we almost lost the store.

BERNIE

Yes.

SOL

And you came up with the money to pay the back taxes. You remember?

BERNIE

Of course I remember.

SOL

So you understand, then, that when I was standing before Joey's Legs, surrounded by his thugs, and they had guns stuck in my ribs.

BERNIE

Yeah.

SOL

It was very important to me that I make this all turn out well for you...for us. And I told Joey that we were partners and we are in this together, all the way.



BERNIE

What are you saying? Spit it out. Is he going to kill me? Break my legs? What?

SOL

He is not going to do any of those things.

BERNIE

Yes!

SOL

Yet.

BERNIE

What?

SOL

He is not going to kill us yet.

BERNIE

What do you mean 'yet'?

SOL

Bernie, these are dangerous people. I had to tell them something. You don't have the money. I don't have the money. What am I going to say?

BERNIE

What did you say?

SOL

Well, I sort of told him that we, uh... that are um... gangsters.

BERNIE

What?

SOL

I told them we was gangsters and if they tried to hurt either of us, then Big Tony Lorenzo would not rest until they were all sleeping with the fishes.

BERNIE

Did you use those words? Did you say 'sleeping with the fishes'?

SOL

Of course. Sounds very 'gangster', right? They say it in the movies.

BERNIE

Why is it, that I should be in fear for my life but instead, I am just very embarrassed? Sol, you idiot! Don't you realize what you've done?

SOL

What? They didn't kill us.

BERNIE

But we don't even know Big Tony!

SOL

Joey Legs doesn't know that. He thinks we work for Big Tony.

BERNIE

Sol! 'Sleeping with the fishes'? Joey does not believe for a second that we work for Big Tony!

SOL

Yes, he does.

BERNIE

How do you know that?

SOL

Because that's why he didn't kill us. Joey said he would not whack us if we would turn rat on Big Tony and be moles for Joey in Tony's organization.

BERNIE

Oh, dear God. Oy Vey!

SOL

I don't know about you, but I would feel bad, doing that to Big Tony.

BERNIE

SOL! We don't work for Big Tony! WE DON'T EVEN KNOW BIG TONY!!

SOL

Yeah, but it kind of feels like we do, don't it?

BERNIE

Sol, you have really done it now. I've known you all of our lives and you have done some stupid things. Remember when you spent all of your savings on that mail order crap because you were convinced that sea monkeys were the 'next big thing'?

SOL

Yeah.

BERNIE

That was stupid.

SOL

I was only thirteen!

BERNIE

Yeah, that was good year for stupid. Remember your bar mitzvah? When you were reading from the Torah and you thought it would be funny to put Alka-Seltzer in your mouth? You had foam dripping from your lips as you read and you rolled your eyes back in your head. I don't think the Rabbi ever recovered from that.

SOL

Yeah.

BERNIE

Stupid!

SOL

It was funny.

BERNIE

But, Sol, this is the worst. They're going to kill us and if they don't, Big Tony will. Stupid, stupid, stupid. You don't even understand what you've done, do you? This is horrible!

*(Bernie is pacing and getting himself more worked up. Sol is getting more somber.)*

SOL

Sorry.

BERNIE

You should be sorry. You don't even know what this is about. You don't know about the money and why.

SOL

What about the money?

BERNIE

Nothing. Forget I said anything.

SOL

No, what about the money?

BERNIE

LET IT GO SOL!

*(They sit in awkward silence)*

SOL

*(Quietly)*

I have a plan.

BERNIE

*(Bernie just stares at Sol blankly)*

SOL

To fix this.

BERNIE

Sol-

SOL

No, listen to me. You're right. All those things were stupid. This is stupid and I did it. Although it's your gambling that started it all.

BERNIE

Don't go there.

SOL

Fine. Whatever. But I do have a plan and it's going to sound stupid to you, I know, but if you really think about it, it's our only option. Please just hear me out and don't call me stupid until I finish.

BERNIE

*('Stupid' is the only word he wants to say, so he tightens his lips and gestures for Sol to continue. Sol removes a revolver from his pocket and*

*lays it on the table. Bernie looks from the gun to Sol and back again.)*

BERNIE

What is this?

SOL

It's a gun. Now who's stupid?

BERNIE

What I mean is, what does your plan say we're going to do with the gun?

SOL

Bernie, we have no choice. You know that. We have to do what we have to do to protect ourselves, and what we have to do is... we have to... kill Joey Pants.

BERNIE

Legs.

SOL

Whatever.

BERNIE

*(Bernie paces and ponders this for a long time, while Sol watches his every move. Finally Bernie returns and sits.)*

Alright, tell me the plan.

William A. Smith

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CHARACTERS 7943

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