

BERT AND ERNIE: PART 1

by LORNA LEE

GENRE: Drama

SYNOPSIS: Roberta and Ernest (a.k.a. Bert and Ernie) are strangers who meet at the bus stop and whose conversations about God lead them on an interesting journey of discovering who God really is.

DIRECTOR'S TIP: If you have the technical capabilities, you can do this effectively with lighting. Use a twilight cue when the actors exit (blue hues), then bring up a morning cue (yellow/orange hues) for each scene. Alternate these cues to show passage of time. The actors can wear a neutral basic costume and add colorful pieces: a sweater, hat, jacket, scarf. Each time the actors exit, they would change their pieces and come on as if it is a day, week, month, year later. Have a third actor cross the stage with a sign ("Three days later") or, have a miked actor offstage say, "Three days later..."

TIME: Over 5 minutes

CAST BREAKDOWN: 2

TOPIC: Faith, Truth, Redemption

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Job 8:22, Romans 8:1-39

CHURCH YEAR SEASON: Any

SUGGESTED USE: Seeker Services

CHARACTERS:

ROBERTA—a woman in her 30's

ERNEST—a guy in his 30's

PROPS: Bible, work items (lunch box, briefcase)

COSTUMES: Work/business clothes for each

SOUND: Wireless microphones

LIGHTING: General stage

SETTING: Bench

Drama Ministry

service@DramaMinistry.com

www.DramaMinistry.com

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Bert and Ernie: Scene #1

Park bench and bus sign are slightly SR; not perfectly symmetrical on stage. ROBERTA, with briefcase, enters stage left with nose in a book. She is engrossed in the text and looks up just enough to make her way to the bench. She holds it upright enough so the cover is readable. Sits. Ernest enters in business garb, holding travel coffee mug, rushing to bench, looking down the “street” (stage left) and at his watch.

ROBERTA: *(Looks up at his abrupt arrival)* Mornin’.

ERNEST: *(Distracted, hurried)* Hi. Did I miss the #6?

ROBERTA: *(With a smile)* Hope not, that’s mine too. *(Looks at her watch)* Should be about four to five minutes. *(Nods, returns to reading)*

ERNEST: *(Sits with legs crossed, hums, taps foot for a few seconds, then with breezy friendliness)* So... you work downtown?

ROBERTA: *(Engrossed in book, reluctantly lifts head to look at Ernest)* Uh, yeah. *(Back to book)*

ERNEST: *(Another few seconds of toe taps, points to self)* Seventeenth and Curtis.

ROBERTA: *(Embarrassed at her absorption, makes effort to be courteous)* Oh, sorry. Sixteenth and Cleveland, World Trade Center.

ERNEST: *(Big exhale)* Bet they wish that was renamed. Creepy reminder, huh?

ROBERTA: *(Slow to understand)* Oh, twin towers. Yeah, I guess so.

ERNEST: *(Moving on quickly, looks at her book title, trying to make it all out)* “Where...Is God... When It Hurts.” *(Jerks finger at book with cynicism)* S’pose that’s a popular book since 9/11.

ROBERTA: *(Looks at title herself)* Well, I think it’s always been a pretty good question, don’t you? *(Retreats into her book again, squirms a bit at his forwardness)*

ERNEST: *(Silent reaction to her last question, re-crosses legs, turns away from Roberta, says to himself almost involuntarily)* Nowhere.

ROBERTA: Huh? *(Inquires timidly)* Excuse me?

ERNEST: Sorry, slipped out. I just said nowhere. God is nowhere when it hurts.

ROBERTA: *(Reluctant but tries to comfort with pat phrase)* I understand. Sometimes it’s hard to feel like God is near. But he promises—