

BE RIGHT BACK

By Scott Haan

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BE RIGHT BACK

A Ten Minute Dramatic Comedy Duet

By Scott Haan

SYNOPSIS: Jeff needs to run what should be a quick errand, but Emma continually stalls his departure with a barrage of inane questions. She seems bound and determined to prevent him from getting back in time to watch the game...or does she have an ulterior motive?

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 female, 1 male)

EMMA (f) Loving wife. *(52 lines)*

JEFF (m) Loving husband. *(53 lines)*

TIME: Present day. Early evening on a Monday night.

SETTING: This show could be performed on a blank stage. A house or apartment setting could also be used, if already standing.

PROPS

- Chair
- Table
- Hand-Written Grocery List
- Cookbook
- Novel
- Pen or Pencil
- Purse
- Car Keys

PRODUCTION NOTES

The ages of both characters are flexible, but for best results, they should be roughly the same age. The banter between Emma and Jeff should be playful. It should not sound hostile or insulting whatsoever. All of their good-natured jokes are delivered with a smile.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Be Right Back was first presented on June 6-7, 2014 as part of the Second Annual 10-Minute Play Festival at the Civic Theatre of Greater Lafayette in Lafayette, IN. The roles were performed by the following cast:

EMMA Julie Doan
JEFF Timothy Devery

Directed by Steve Martin
Produced by Steven Koehler

Be Right Back was next presented on June 27, 2014 as part of The Puzzle: Marble's Theatre Festival in New York City, NY. The roles were performed by the following cast:

EMMA Elisa Pupko
JEFF Joe Ditmyer

Directed by Justin Bennett
Produced by Brian Hampton and Marya Spring Cordes

AT RISE: *JEFF is standing SR, reading from a hand-written grocery list. EMMA is seated in a chair CS, holding a book. There is a table on the SL side that holds a cookbook, a pen or pencil, and Emma's purse.*

JEFF: *(Reading from the list.)* Bread, milk, eggs, a pound of ground beef, salt, cottage cheese...only small-curd will do...sliced provolone, "war-chester-shire" sauce... *(Butchering the name Worcestershire.)*

EMMA: It's pronounced "WORE-stir-sheer."

JEFF: WORE-shtesh-shteer...

EMMA: *(With a chuckle.)* Don't hurt yourself.

JEFF: *(Giving up.)* THAT sauce...two garlic cloves, lasagna noodles, Corn Flakes, Pop Tarts, and mint chocolate chip ice cream.

EMMA: That's the most important one. If you forget that, don't bother coming home.

JEFF: Got it. Anything else?

EMMA: No, I think that's everything.

JEFF: All right. Be right back.

EMMA smiles at him and looks back down at her book. JEFF turns to SR and starts to walk out. Suddenly EMMA sits bolt upright, eyes wide as if startled by a sudden thought. She looks up sharply and calls out to stop him.

EMMA: Wait!

JEFF: What?

EMMA: Something's not right. I do think I'm forgetting something.

JEFF: *(Distastefully.)* Oh, no. You don't need any, um, hygiene products, do you? The looks I get in line...

EMMA: No, not that. I feel like there's an ingredient I missed. Let me check the recipe again.

EMMA walks to the table, opens the cookbook, and studies a page during this dialog.

JEFF: *(Checking his watch.)* You do know I'm in kind of a hurry, right? I want to get back before the game starts.

EMMA: Why does it matter? It's on TiVo, you won't miss anything.

JEFF: It matters. I don't care if we watch "Walking Dead" on TiVo, but not sports. *(Feel free to substitute a different TV show name.)* I like to watch the game live, as it's happening. It's more exciting that way...makes me feel like I'm part of it.

EMMA: You feel like part of it? On the couch, scarfing down Cheetos and pork rinds?

JEFF: Ooh, Cheetos! Thanks, I almost forgot!

He gives her a quick peck on the cheek, takes a pen or pencil and writes a new item on his shopping list.

EMMA: *(Consulting the cookbook's list of ingredients.)* Yep, yep, yep, already have it, have it...Did I say provolone?

JEFF: On the list.

EMMA: Well then, I think that really is everything.

JEFF: Good. Hey, by the way, where would one find garlic cloves, anyway?

EMMA: In the— *(Standing.)* You know what? You're gonna screw it up. I'm going.

JEFF: *(Commanding, he forces her back down into her chair.)* No, you're not. It's my turn, I'll just ask someone. Relax. Sit and read your book.

EMMA: *(Smiling gratefully.)* Hey, you're not the boss of me.

JEFF: No I'm not, or I would have fired you years ago.

EMMA: Cute.

JEFF: *(Starts to leave again.)* Be right b—

EMMA: *(Interrupting.)* Wait.

JEFF: Now what?

EMMA: Don't get the generic brands.

JEFF: Good grief. Emma, I don't want to have this conversation again. You can't tell the difference.

EMMA: *(Pointedly.)* Yes you can, Jeff. I can. If you put Corn Flakes in one bowl and Crispy Corny Flake Shapes in another, I can tell you which is which.

JEFF: Bull. It's the same stuff, made in the same factories, just slapped with different labels. Plant workers on production lines have confirmed this. Next time there's a food recall, you watch...one manufacturer will recall a product under multiple names, because it's the SAME THING. You're paying more for advertising, not food quality.

EMMA: Listen, never argue with a woman about shopping, all right? (*Sets one foot loudly on the floor.*) Look, my foot is down. No generic. I want Kellogg's Pop Tarts, not Super Value Club Toaster Pastries.

JEFF: Tell you what. Today only, to make you happy, I will buy the name brands. I will pay extra, for no reason. BUT, I am going to save the boxes. And the next time I go shopping, I will buy the generics, and then pour the generic contents into the name brand boxes before I get home.

EMMA: Oh, you would be in so much trouble.

JEFF: No I wouldn't, 'cause you would never know, 'cause you can't taste the difference.

EMMA: Can so.

JEFF: Nope, and I will gladly prove it soon with a blind taste test, but for now, I'm outta here. (*He starts to leave again.*) Be right b-

EMMA: (*Interrupting.*) Wait.

JEFF: How did I know that was coming?

EMMA: (*Stands and walks over to the table to get into her purse. Rummaging through her purse.*) Take my car. I'm on empty, so if you fill it up for me now, I won't have to stop for gas on the way to work tomorrow. (*Finds the keys and pulls them out.*) Here you go. (*Does an underhand toss to throw him the keys, but it's a lousy throw; they barely get halfway there.*)

JEFF: Wow. You throw like a girl. (*Walks to the keys and picks them up.*) Maybe it's a good thing you're not driving, because you clearly have no depth perception.

EMMA: Doesn't matter when I'm looking at you. You HAVE no depth.

JEFF: (*Sarcastic.*) Ha ha.

EMMA: Make sure to get gas FIRST so you don't forget. Just go right to Speedway and get it over with.

JEFF: Fine, but if I miss the kick-off, I am so divorcing you.

EMMA: Ooh, promises, promises.

JEFF: *(Starts to leave again.)* Be right b–

EMMA: *(Interrupting.)* Wait.

JEFF: Are you kidding me with this?

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