

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING

Ten-Minute Comedy-Drama Duet

by
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AT RISE: As light go up, the audience sees a desk and chair, and a love seat, arranged as if on a talk-show set. A video camera is pointed to capture the talking head of a person sitting in the love seat.

BETSY: Come right in, Mr. Horowitz. Don't be shy.

JOHN: Oh, believe me, I'm not. I'm just still not sure...

BETSY: Whether Video Partner is right for you?

JOHN: Well... **(sits down, pulls out a tissue from his pocket, and begins tearing it into tiny pieces, oblivious of the fact that HE's letting the pieces drop to the floor)**

BETSY: Let me guess. You're a Video Dating Virgin. I'll be gentle! So, John, the way this works, I ask some questions, sitting here, off of camera range, and you answer the questions, looking right at me. Just pretend we are having a conversation. That way, in a minute or so you'll forget the camera's even here.

JOHN: I'm a screenwriter. Camera doesn't make me nervous.

BETSY: Well, something is, because you have been tearing that tissue in your hand into little, tiny pieces. So, maybe it would help if you threw away the tissue... **(reaches out to take it)** And put your hands in your lap. Folded. So they look natural.

JOHN: Okay. **(tries to fold his hands, but they flutter around nervously)**

BETSY: Plan B, one hand in the pocket, the other relaxed on the arm of the chair. **(poses him like a mannequin)** That's better. Now, I'll just turn the camera on, and we'll begin. **(hits a remote control button on her desk)** Now, tell me, John, what do you feel is the most important thing about a woman?

JOHN: That she love life, and be able to find a way to love me.

BETSY: How about other things? What sorts of physical qualities are you looking for in a mate?

JOHN: The physical stuff...so trivial. None of that matters anymore. Not an issue.

BETSY: Isn't there anything, anything at all, that you can say so someone out there might look at your video, and know she'd be right for you? Do you like exotic women? Or athletic women? Athletic, exotic women? They seem to be popular.

JOHN: There's one thing I haven't mentioned that might help. She has to be willing to get married within a week. Two weeks, tops.

BETSY: Are you sure you want to say that on your video?

JOHN: Somebody out there is going to hear those words, and they will be music to her, and then, then...

BETSY: Maybe the sorts of women who would find that... musical... wouldn't be a good match in the long run. Isn't it more important to find someone you can live with the rest of your life...

JOHN: **(pulls another tissue out of his pocket, starts tearing at it)** The rest of my life? Who knows what will happen tomorrow? You can be in your office, minding your own business, and suddenly hear this sound...and it gets louder. So you talk louder into the phone, imagining it will go away. But it doesn't. It gets louder, and louder, then, the impossible thing that never happens, that no one imagines could ever be, suddenly is. And the plane hits your floor. Or the floor above you, or below you. And you're killed instantly. Or you aren't, but wish you were, as you see the floor slowly start to collapse from the impossible impact that could never happen but just did, and you run away as fast as you can, which means you end up on a ledge, and you have just enough time left in your life to decide, jump, or be crushed, jump, or be crushed.

BETSY: **(turns the video off, moves from her desk, sits next to him on the love seat, and holds him as HE cries, rocks him like a child)** Oh, don't cry. Don't cry...Did you know somebody in the towers?

JOHN: No. Did you?

BETSY: No, thank God. But we all feel like crying, don't we?

JOHN: You feel like this?

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