

MOUSE TRAPPED

Ten-Minute Comedy Duet

by
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AT RISE: *It is about 8 p.m. in a simple studio apartment. Packed boxes are everywhere. Two boxes are kitty-corner to each other. Asleep on the floor in a sleeping bag is BETHANY. SHE is a graduate student in her early 20's. All is dark. Her roommate GILLIAN enters with a key. SHE looks around, surprised to see BETHANY already asleep and tiptoes inside. Suddenly spying something going across the living room floor, GILLIAN emits an earth-shattering scream. BETHANY jumps out of bed with her baseball bat that SHE sleeps with for protection. SHE could also have eye patches on. This is the first night in a new apartment.*

BETHANY: Just leave-- okay-- we have nothing-- really-- take a box-- it's all labeled and packed up nicely-- take it-- I'll hold the door--here's the alarm clock-- I have the instructions somewhere-- it's nothing-- I want you to have it--

GILLIAN: Bethany--

BETHANY: The TV is being delivered tomorrow. I'll have it waiting for you-- it will be all boxed up and everything--

GILLIAN: Bethany! It's Gillian!

(BETHANY turns on a light.)

BETHANY: Gillian! What are you doing screaming at this time of night?

GILLIAN: It's just 8 p.m. Most people our age are getting ready to go out.

BETHANY: So, you screamed to get me up and out? Where are we going?

GILLIAN: Nowhere, Bethany. Go back to bed. It's silly. Really. I just thought I saw a mouse.

BETHANY: **(screams)** Oh, no! What do I do? Why did you have to tell me that? I was happier thinking you came to pillage and kill!

GILLIAN: Calm down. I'm sorry I screamed. It's a knee-jerk reaction. It's just a mouse-- doesn't even weigh an ounce. He's more scared of you than you are of him!

BETHANY: Why do people say that? I hate it when people say that. For your information, Mouse may be an over-confident rodent harboring delusions of gaining dominion over us and this apartment. I thought this building did not allow pets.

GILLIAN: He probably came in while we were moving. The air's getting chillier and he needs a home. Poor thing.

BETHANY: He is not a poor thing. He is vermin! Scum! Riff-raff, do you hear? Find him! Smoke him out! Annihilate him! He cannot live here unless he pays rent!

GILLIAN: Bethany? What are you doing asleep at 8 o'clock at night?

BETHANY: I open the coffee shop tomorrow. 5 A.M. First day as manager. For a whopping 25 cents more an hour, I get to have a title. It will offset my student loan by about \$100 a year. I need my sleep. Do not switch subjects on me. Find the rodent and execute him. Here-- take the bat. Bludgeon him!

GILLIAN: That's a little extreme, don't you think? I mean you are getting worked up over something that could fit in the palm of your hand!

BETHANY: Exactly. And I won't sleep until I know Mouse has no intention of crawling into bed with me and nesting in my hand or anywhere else. Otherwise, I'm never like this. Really-- never. Only when a mouse decides to be my roommate. Then I get dramatic. Okay. I'm breathing. This is good. Where is he?

GILLIAN: How do you know it's a he?

BETHANY: Of course it's a he-- coming into two females' home uninvited-- for warmth. Trying to get something for nothing. Yeah, it's a "he."

GILLIAN: I don't exactly know where he went--

BETHANY: That's not an answer. Go back to the door. See it in your mind-- concentrate. We have to know where he went and get rid of him or no one is sleeping tonight. Look at this place! There isn't even a chair for me to stand on!

(BETHANY goes into a bag digging for something.)

GILLIAN: I wouldn't do that--

BETHANY: No! I know they're in here-- I know I packed them in this bag--

GILLIAN: "He" could be in there **(BETHANY emits a yelp throws the bag up in the air and moves away. Some winter gloves, a hat and snow boots fall out. BETHANY puts on the snow boots.)**

So-- do you always put on snow boots when you need to catch a mouse?

BETHANY: Do you want Mouse to run across your feet? Think of it Gillian! Scratchy rodent feet touching your toes! Is that acceptable? I mean, have you ever looked at a mouse foot?

GILLIAN: Have any more boots in there?

BETHANY: **(throwing some work boots out)** Here-- my Dad gave these to me for an emergency.

GILLIAN: Your Dad gave you work boots for an emergency? What kind of emergency does he think an impoverished graduate student has where she would need work boots?

BETHANY: We need them now, don't we? Put them on before Mouse makes a run across your feet. **(GILLIAN does so)** Now, we need flashlights. The lamps don't give off enough light. Maybe we can blind him. Disorient him. Here!

GILLIAN: Were you a boy scout or something?

BETHANY: Dad thought if there was a blackout or something-- here-- just take it! Now-- let's go find Mouse.

(Armed with flashlights lit, GILLIAN and BETHANY search the apartment.)

GILLIAN: Bethany? What exactly are we going to do when we find Mouse?

BETHANY: You're going to send the little weasel to its heavenly reward.

GILLIAN: Bethany! I can't kill a defenseless creature.

BETHANY: Mouse is not a sympathetic creature! He is an invader! He has declared war! I will accept nothing more than a full surrender.

GILLIAN: Well, I'm not going to be the-- **(screams)**

BETHANY: What? You saw it! I know you saw it! Where is he? **(GILLIAN points between two boxes. BETHANY peeks and jumps back. SHE shudders.)** Did you see those horrid triangle ears sticking up like pyramids? A harbinger of death. And those tiny close-set eyes-- proving that Mouse is indeed a shifty creature. He's just sitting there quietly plotting for a way to take over the apartment. He has been found guilty of subversion. Execute him! Take the bat and smash it to bits!

GILLIAN: I can't. I get squeamish when I kill a bug and see the remains of-- insect essence where you smashed it. Imagine the blood trickling from something this big.

BETHANY: I thought you said Mouse was small.

GILLIAN: Alive-- he's small. Dead-- he's huge. Besides, blood stains. We might never get our damage deposit back.

BETHANY: The landlord rented this apartment under false pretenses. The rental agreement never mentioned this place was a refuge for wayward mice. Not only do we get our damage deposit back but by the time I am through with them, we'll get a little extra for pain and suffering.

GILLIAN: Gillian, we're talking about one measly mouse, here. One tiny, vulnerable creature. An innocent. You can't go to court over that.

BETHANY: This is America. Land of the red, white and sue, sue, SUE! If you want to play heroic rescuer-- go ahead. You have five minutes to do a 'catch and release.' Then I'm calling 911.

GILLIAN: That's not fair-- I need to-- think first. One just doesn't rescue a mouse without a plan. I'm sure I'll need supplies. **(BETHANY goes to another box and digs out some Tupperware and then goes to another box and finds some duct tape.)** What's all this for?

BETHANY: Improvise-- get Mouse to stick to the duct take then put him in the Tupperware and leave him outside.

GILLIAN: All right-- give me the duct tape.

(GILLIAN takes the duct tape and rips off a piece and with her eyes half closed SHE throws it down on Mouse. Then, SHE screams.)

BETHANY: What? Whaaat?

GILLIAN: It moved.

BETHANY: Of course it moved. You just threw a wad of duct tape on it. Now, peek. Is he sticking to it?

GILLIAN: **(peeking with slanted eyes)** He's-- I can't see-- he's--

BETHANY: Oh for goodness sake! **(peeks and emits a small yelp.)** Gillian!

GILLIAN: WHAT?

BETHANY: He's climbing up the duct tape. You provided him with a means to escape.

GILLIAN: It was your idea!

BETHANY: But you did it!

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