

the beginning of

**VOWED AND WOWED** (from **FEMALE PERSUASION**)

a comedy by Rich Orloff

adapted from the short comedy  
"The Camberley Triangle" by A. A. Milne

*Place:* Betty's living room

*Time:* The present

*Characters:* BETTY, 20's, rather attractive  
CHARLOTTE, 20's, rather attractive  
FRANCINE, 20's, rather attractive  
(Keep in mind, the author finds most women rather attractive.)

A nice living room. Somewhere is a beautiful bouquet of flowers in a vase.  
As the play begins, BETTY is on the phone.

BETTY  
(stunned by what she just heard)

'Bye.

BETTY hangs up the phone. The doorbell RINGS. Betty answers the door.  
CHARLOTTE enters.

BETTY  
Darling!

CHARLOTTE  
Sweetheart!

They kiss passionately.

BETTY  
We must talk.

CHARLOTTE  
Okay, but that's not what my mouth does best.

BETTY  
I just got a call from Francine.

CHARLOTTE  
So?

BETTY

From the airport.

CHARLOTTE

I thought she was at the V.A. hospital.

BETTY

So did I. She wanted to surprise me.

CHARLOTTE

When I decide to surprise someone, it's with flowers.

BETTY

(near tears)

They're such beautiful flowers.

CHARLOTTE

I'm glad you like them.

BETTY

What are we to do, Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE

You know what I want you to do, Betty.  
Run away with me.

BETTY

But I'm married.

CHARLOTTE

It wasn't a real marriage. You were  
in no state to get married.

BETTY

Yes, we were. We were in Iowa.

CHARLOTTE

You met her in a bar, 48 hours before she  
was going to be shipped off to Afghanistan.

BETTY

We were in love.

CHARLOTTE

It wasn't love. You just wanted to do  
your part for the war effort.

BETTY

I would've enlisted if it weren't for my flat feet.

CHARLOTTE

You haven't seen her since.

BETTY

I wanted to, but she wouldn't let me visit her in the hospital.

CHARLOTTE

Listen, Betty, a year in a war zone –  
She won't be the girl you married.  
And you're no longer the girl she married.

BETTY

(pleased)

It's my new hairstyle, isn't it?

CHARLOTTE

I love you, Betty. Do you love me?

BETTY

I love you unconditionally and totally.

CHARLOTTE

Then run away with me!

BETTY

I can't. She fought for our country.  
She endured great hardships.

CHARLOTTE

If she ever runs for office, I'll vote for her.  
But you can't love someone out of patriotic duty.

BETTY

They did in 1940's movies. Oh, who am I kidding?  
(moving towards breaking down:)  
She'll probably tire of me in days. She'll  
probably decide there's nothing between us.  
She'll probably... probably... probably...  
She'll probably want a divorce.

Betty begins to cry. She's good at this.

CHARLOTTE

But that'd be wonderful.

BETTY

I don't believe in divorce.

CHARLOTTE

Don't think of it as divorce. Think of it as a chance for a marriage do-over.

BETTY

Oh, if only God would give me a sign.

The doorbell RINGS.

BETTY (cont'd)

Is that you, God?

The doorbell RINGS again.

BETTY (cont'd)

What are you telling me, God?

The doorbell RINGS again.

CHARLOTTE

I think God's telling you to answer the door.

BETTY

Oh. Right.

Betty approaches the door but hesitates in fear. The doorbell RINGS again.

BETTY (cont'd)

Coming.

Betty answers the door. FRANCINE enters. She has one arm behind her back. She also probably has some sort of visible injury. Nothing too extreme. War can do horrible things to people. But not in this play.

BETTY

Oh my God, you've lost an arm!

Francine reveals her hidden arm. She's holding a HUGE bouquet of flowers.

FRANCINE

Surprise!

Francine hands Betty the bouquet.

BETTY

Darling!

FRANCINE

Sweetheart!

They kiss passionately. Then Francine notices Charlotte.

FRANCINE (cont'd)

Oh, hello.

CHARLOTTE

Hello.

BETTY

Oh, um, Charlotte, this is the woman to whom I gave my sacred vows, Francine. Um, Francine, this is my friend Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE

We're more than friends.

BETTY

(peevied)

She's also my accountant.

Betty puts Francine's bouquet in the vase, squishing the flowers from Charlotte.

FRANCINE

Nice to meet you.

CHARLOTTE

Nice to meet you.

FRANCINE

(to Betty:)

I'm sorry I didn't let you visit me in the hospital. I didn't want you to look at me in the shape I was in. But now that I see you, I realize what a fool I was, for depriving myself of the *joy* of looking at you.

BETTY

(who *really* likes compliments)

Oh, really? Gosh. Thanks.

FRANCINE

You are as beautiful as I remember.

BETTY

Oh, gee, gosh, thank you.

FRANCINE

You haven't changed one bit.

CHARLOTTE

(erupting:)

You didn't notice her new hairstyle?!

(containing:)

Sorry.

FRANCINE

Who cares? I fell in love with a person,  
not a hairstyle. I fell in love not just  
with a body but with a soul.

BETTY

Oh, she's good.

CHARLOTTE

You knew each other 48 hours.

FRANCINE

It doesn't take more than a moment  
to know you've found your soulmate.

CHARLOTTE

It takes Betty longer to find her car keys.

FRANCINE

It's great to be home again... and to feel love.

Francine gazes at Betty, who likes this sort of thing.

BETTY

Well, Charlotte, thanks for doing my taxes.

CHARLOTTE

Betty –

BETTY

I'll call you when I get those 1099's.

CHARLOTTE

I'm not going.

BETTY

Please?

CHARLOTTE

Francine, you are a woman of the world, are you not?

FRANCINE

I certainly have become one.

CHARLOTTE

Then I ask for your understanding. Betty and I love each other, unconditionally and totally.

FRANCINE

(to Betty:)

Is this true?

BETTY

You were away. I was in pain. Her girlfriend left her. She was in pain. I comforted her. She comforted me. We both have *great* comforting skills... I'm sorry.

FRANCINE

Oh... Well... I understand.

BETTY

You do? Great! You accept my apology. See ya, Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE

What are you saying?

BETTY

I have very traditional values.

CHARLOTTE

But you fell in love with me.

BETTY

I'm also an incurable romantic. Sue me.

CHARLOTTE

But you're not in love with her, and you never were. You were in love with her uniform.

FRANCINE

If memory serves, she also did a great job of loving me even when I was out of uniform.

BETTY

Well, gosh, gee, thanks.

CHARLOTTE

Was it better than the passions we've shared?

BETTY

Please don't embarrass me.

CHARLOTTE  
(to Francine:)  
We've shared enormous and powerful  
and *frequent* passion.

BETTY  
Now you're just being rude.

CHARLOTTE  
Shall I show her the video?

BETTY  
No!

CHARLOTTE  
I want you, Betty. I need you  
and I love you and I want you.

FRANCINE  
Betty, you are my beloved wife.

BETTY  
(looks at both, then:)  
This *is* a conundrum.

FRANCINE  
Darling –

BETTY  
Francine, will you *always* love me?

FRANCINE  
Yes.

BETTY  
Charlotte, will *you* always love me?

CHARLOTTE  
Yes.

BETTY  
(thinks, then:)  
Well, that didn't solve a thing.