

THE WINE CELLAR

A dark comedy - one act play

By

Barbara Bellman

© Barbara Bellman, 2012

Barbara Bellman
1420 Locust Street, 31K
Philadelphia, PA 19102
301-233-8000
bellman.barbara@gmail.com

THE WINE CELLAR

SCENE ONE: LIGHTS UP ON DINA

Scene opens on Dina (50-ish), the soon-to be-ex-wife of Dr. Saul Gordon (60-ish). DINA is inside their downstairs home wine cellar going from bottle to bottle with a portable clothes steamer, carefully steaming off the labels and putting them onto a spiked spindle. Hundreds of labels are impaled. Partly drunk, DINA hums pieces of old “love gone bad” tunes, as she steams.

DINA

One of these daaaaaays . . . you're gonna miss me honeeeey . . . one of these days, days, days . . .

DINA stops to read the label.

1980 Haut Brion. Let's see, that was a good year I suppose. We bought this to celebrate our engagement, Saul. You said we'd drink it for our 50th anniversary. Yes, that was a very good year.

DINA sings and sips and sways to the music - mocking the whole wine mystique.

You're gonna miss my . . . I remember when the only thing I knew about wine was that it came in red, white and pink. Now I know about Chardonaaaay, Cabernaaaay, Boujelaaaay, Carmenaaaay . . .

Exaggerates reading label.

La . . . bour . . . aay. Hmm. And what are *you*, little mystery? Something expensive, I'm sure. (Pause) La . . . bour . . . ay. (Pause) You taught me well, didn't you, Saul? And I learned . . . I learned. Like a good student, I learned. I studied . . . and watched . . . and listened . . . *didn't* I, Saul? (BEAT) I learned you were a two-timing son of a . . .

Grabs glass, swirls aggressively, sips- pretends to be a wine snob.

It's an impudent little wine. A touch of pepper. A bit of . . . how do you say . . . spice. Yessss. I'd let it breathe a bit before serving, wouldn't you?

Phone rings. Lights up on SAUL in office.

SAUL

You home?

DINA

Where else would I be? With my tennis pro?

SAUL

Are you . . . ? You sound like . . . you're drunk!

DINA

Could be. Could very well be . . .

SAUL

It's the middle of the day.

DINA

I didn't notice.

SAUL

It's . . . unbecoming.

DINA

Un . . . become . . . ing. How perfect. I'm becoming un-done, un-married, un-loved, un-hinged, un . . .

SAUL

Get a hold of yourself.

DINA

Yes . . . yes . . . I *should* get a hold of myself. That's *just* what I plan to do.

DINA reaches for bottle.

Let me get a hold of . . .

SAUL

Never mind. Haven't got all day. (Pause) I just called to say I'll be stopping by later to get my tuxedo . . . so you won't be surprised.

DINA

Surprised? Aren't you thoughtful! What's the occasion?

SAUL

No need to upset you.

DINA

Too late.

SAUL

The opening of the Regency Club.

DINA

Shall I assume you'll not be dining alone?

SAUL

Dina, don't do this. Don't go there.

DINA

You know, Saul . . . I read somewhere that a new relationship can be *very* stressful. It's right up there with the death of a spouse. But who am *I* to lecture you on matters of the heart? *You're* the doctor.

SAUL

Nothing wrong with my heart . . . anymore.

DINA

No. I suppose not. So now that you've had your bypass, you're good to go, right? Good as new. (BEAT) Maybe I should have let you die, but I keep just forgettin' . . . it's *MY* heart that's broken.

SAUL

You'll get over it.

DINA

Is that a *medical* opinion?

SAUL

Look, stuff like this happens all the time. We're practically a cliché.

DINA

Now . . . that's a comfort! (BEAT) Somehow I just didn't think *we'd* be a cliché . . . I mean, any more than we've ever been.

SAUL

Listen, Dina, I appreciate you. Really . . . *I do*. You're a good and decent woman. I'm sure you'll find someone else . . . *eventually*. Maybe on J-Date.

DINA

J-Date? That's your advice? That I should go on J-Date? (BEAT) Is that what YOU did?

SAUL

Oh, forget I brought it up. We're like oil and water talking to each other.

DINA refills glass, sings absently.

DINA

It's been a long . . . days . . . night . . . and I been lookin' like a . . . so how ARE those long nights with Jac . . . quel . . . ine?

DINA sips loudly.

Just a *smidge* tannic, I think. But it has potential.

SAUL

What are you talking about?

DINA

The Haut Brion. (BEAT) Did she say, I *love* you, before or *after* you bought her TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS worth of Louis Vuitton luggage?

SAUL

How did you kn . . . what Haut Brion?

DINA

The 1980. (BEAT) Oh, Saul, did you really think I wouldn't discover your little tryst in New York? (LAUGHS) How could I not? You're so predictable! You leave evidence like rat droppings. (LAUGHS) And you *are* a rat, that's for sure.

SAUL

Look Dina, I never meant to . . . you didn't open the Haut Brion, did you?

DINA squints to read a label.

DINA

Why, yes, I did . . . I did . . . and you know, I think it's worth every penny you paid for it. (BEAT) One thing about you, Saul . . . you're a meticulous record keeper, a god damned BRILLIANT record keeper. Every receipt of your little affair carefully filed in a manila folder, LABELED. Every dollar spent, LABELED. Every place you went together, LABELED. (BEAT) By the way, do you know it only takes fifteen seconds to remove a label?

DINA hangs up the phone as SAUL screams.

SAUL

Dina!!!!

Lights down on SAUL.

Cell phone rings.

DINA answers impatiently -cradles phone on shoulder - flutters impaled labels with her free hand.

DINA

What do you want now!? (BEAT) Oh . . . sorry, Liz. I thought it was Saul. (BEAT) Well . . . yes, I'm drunk, for starters. What time is it anyway? (BEAT) It is?

Laughs and stabs another label onto the spindle.

Well, I guess it's happy hour somewhere . . . not to put too fine a point on it. (Pause) Where was I? Oh, yeah, well, this has become a bit of a *sticky* situation . . . *one* way or another. (BEAT) Um, hmm. Have you spoken to Saul? He did? Well *that* was fast. It just proves the way to THAT man's heart is through his wine collection. (BEAT) Me? Impulsive? Let's just say I'm keeping a *SHARP* eye to what my next step will be. (BEAT) Mad? (LAUGHS) Let's just say, what's the point getting all steamed up about this? (LAUGHS) Listen, I've got more work to do. Later . . .

DINA hangs up and resumes singing, drinking and steaming.

Sooner or later, love is gonna getcha . . . sooner or later, girl you've got to get love . . . (WEEPS) What happened to us, Saul? We were supposed to beat the clichés, weren't we? We had a life. WE had a life, didn't we? (SINGS) *This time we almost made it . . . didn't we . . .?*

Lights up on SAUL calling from his convertible.

Cell phone rings.

DINA

Yeah? Oh . . . it's you again.

Sound of car, driving fast.

SAUL

Dina, listen, just what is it *exactly* you're doing right now?

DINA

What am I doing? What AM I doing? What am I DOING? Well, I'm taking inventory if you must know . . . of our life together. Our FORMER life . . . together. You know . . . all the things we used to enjoy. (BEAT) The memories . . . the wine. Yes, I'm definitely enjoying that.

SAUL

You mentioned the Haut Brion. You didn't . . . you *haven't* . . .

DINA

The Haut Brion? Well, let's just say you'd have surely loved it. Definitely one of the best. Top ten, for sure. (BEAT) Tell you what, Saul . . . I'll save some for you . . . maybe.

Sound of horns honking.

SAUL

Jesus! I'm on my way. Don't do anything stupid!

DINA

Don't drive too fast! It's not like I'm going anywhere.

SAUL

We need to talk . . .

DINA

That's touching; it really is, though a bit late for that, don't you think?

SAUL

Dina, look, you know I care about you . . . I mean, I still love you . . .

DINA

DON'T . . . don't you DARE say you love me . . . not THAT kind of love. I'm not your BFF. Or your SISTER. And it's too damned late to talk about the "We've been through so much together" love.

DINA stabs another label onto the spindle.

No . . . you can take *that* and shove . . .

SAUL

Look, Dina . . . it happens. We just grew apart. And I wanted something . . . someone . . . new . . . And you were my first . . . my only . . .

DINA

That's your excuse? Well, you were my first and only too, but I didn't think our sex life needed to be compared . . . like some goddamned *Robert Parker* score! *Is it the BEST or is there something BETTER?*

SAUL

It isn't that . . .

DINA

Never mind. *NEVER MIND!* Don't go there! Anyway, I'm busy . . . I told you. I'm taking inventory, starting with our wine collection.

SAUL screams into the phone.

SAUL

WHAT? You b . . .!

DINA

Holds phone away from her ear.

You *heard* me. *OUR* wine collection. This *IS* a community property state, after all.

SAUL

How the hell do you know *that*?

DINA

Let's just say I've used this time alone to bone up on my rights.

SAUL

YOUR rights! What rights do you have to my wine cellar, you greedy . . .?

DINA

You heard me. *MY* rights. And while you've been out BONING . . . oh . . . am I being too indelicate? (Pause) My bad.

SAUL

Look, I'm almost home. Will you just stop what you're doing and stay right there?

DINA

Hell yes, I'll stay right here! Me and my (Sings) *99 bottles of* . . . oh, fuck, what's the point? Goodbye Saul. I'm done with this call.

DINA hangs up and re-dials.

Liz? It's me. I just have one question. Are you and Ted going to the Regency Club tonight? (BEAT) You are? Well this may be awkward for you. I won't be coming but Saul will . . . and you'll finally get to meet *Jacqueline*. (BEAT) You *have!*? (BEAT) Where? (BEAT) When? (BEAT) And were you ever planning to tell me? (BEAT) I see. Well *of course* I'm hurt! Wouldn't *you* be if Ted flung *his* affair in *your* face? WHAT affair? (LAUGHS). Oh PLEASE. This is *news*? (BEAT) Well ask HIM. THEN let me hear your lecture about how I need to *not overreact*. After all, it's just a marriage, right?

Slams down the phone to resume steaming, singing and drinking.

One of these daaaaaaaays, you're gonna miss me honeyyyyyyyyyyy . . . one of these day, ay, ayes . . .

Lights dim.

SCENE TWO: INTERIOR OF WINE CELLAR, AN HOUR LATER.

DINA has steamed off all the wine labels (hundreds) and stacked them onto the spindle to overloading. Her glass and the bottle are empty.

SAUL runs down steps into cellar. He's out of breath and frantic. He grabs the spindle and screams.

SAUL

Oh my God . . . Dina, what have you . . .? What the *HELL* have you done? Have you lost your *FUCKING* mind?

DINA, drunk and tired, answers slowly.

DINA

Yesssss . . . I think I have . . .

SAUL

Distraught, SAUL clutches at the labels.

My *wine* . . . my COLLECTION! How am I supposed to . . .?

DINA is suddenly sober.
She grabs some of the labels and shuffles through them, finds one and reads it.

DINA

Show off to your friends? Impress them with your . . . 1986 Chateau Lafitte Rothschild, or, wait, let's see if I can find it. Yes . . . here it is . . . your 1979 La . . .bour . . .et. That *is* how to pronounce it, isn't it?

SAUL

Ruined! You evil *bitch*! My collection is *ruined*!!! How will I know which . . .?

DINA

Why don't you host a blind tasting and put the labels back on?

SAUL

Seething, SAUL turns on DINA.

Why you . . . I could . . .

DINA

Slowly gets up, steadies herself against the table.

Could what, Saul? Kill me? (Beat) Too late.

SAUL

You know . . . coming home today I thought . . . maybe . . . just maybe there was a chance for us again . . . a chance to avoid divorce. But now . . .

DINA

But *NOW*? Do you REALLY think we could be a couple again? Which friends would you tell *first*? The ones who've ALREADY met *Jac . . . quel . . . ine* or the ones who've just heard the gossip?

SAUL

Looks around the room, frantic.

You're crazy . . . you know that? I'll have my lawyer . . .

DINA nods, quietly, talks slowly so as to not slur her words. She picks up the spindle to flutter the labels then turns to walk up the stairs, not looking back as SAUL slips to his knees, clutching his heart.

DINA

You . . . do . . . that . . . Saul. You have your lawyer . . . sue me. Draw up the . . . papers. Let . . . the games . . . begin. (SINGS) *Crazy, crazy for thinkin' you loved me . . .*

SAUL

My WINE . . . ruined . . . you've RUINED it!

DINA mocks his whining.

DINA

My wine. Ruined! Don't *WHINE*, Saul. It's so . . . *un-becoming*.

SAUL

SAUL is having a heart attack and tries to reach her but she doesn't see him fall to his knees.

Dinaaaaa . . .

DINA is preoccupied as she climbs the stairs, talking to herself – unaware of SAUL'S distress.

DINA

But . . . I suppose *Jac . . . que . . . line* occupies the space I once filled, assuming I ever did.
(To herself) Funny, I never thought I'd be divorced.

SAUL

Slips lower onto the floor, still clutching at his heart.

Dinaaaaaa . . .

DINA

Oblivious, she continues to climb and talk as SAUL finally collapses.

Widowed perhaps . . . but . . . never *divorced*.

SAUL

Dinaaaaaaa . . .!!!

END SCENE.