

THE BEDROOM AND THE BLACK SHOE
by Kris Thompson

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Cast of Characters

JEFFREY BECK Smug ex-husband to Elizabeth in his early 40s.
ELIZABETH BECK Pretty, angry ex-wife to Jeffrey in her early 40s.

Setting

Elizabeth's tidy upper-middle-class suburban bedroom that she used to share with Jeffrey before the divorce.

Time

Current day. Early evening, after work.

Act I
Scene 1

SETTING: Elizabeth's tidy upper-middle-class suburban bedroom. Elizabeth's discarded work clothes and purse are laying on the bed and shoes on the floor.

AT RISE: JEFFREY, dressed in business suit with tie loosened, having obviously just come from a long work commute, is standing inside the doorway, next to the bed, fiddling with his keys, bored from waiting, checking his watch.

(ELIZABETH enters in a long, tattered, bulky (not sexy) robe, sexy slip or bra and panties unseen underneath, barefoot, hair up in towel. During scene she's putting on makeup, perfume, and lotion etc...so that she is more and more attractive as the scene progresses.)

JEFFREY (impatient)

You called?

ELIZABETH (startled)

Shit! Jeff, you scared me!

JEFFREY (more impatient)

You called?

ELIZABETH

I see you used your key. I asked you not to do that.

JEFFREY

Still my house, Liz.

ELIZABETH

Your name may still be on the mortgage but this is no longer your home. Please don't use your key again. You only have it in case Ben forgets his.

JEFFREY

OK Elizabeth. Now, what do you want? Sounded urgent and you didn't answer your cell.

ELIZABETH

It's about Ben. He's having trouble at school. That boy Zach was picking on him again. You really need to talk to him.

JEFFREY

I did.

ELIZABETH

Well, obviously it didn't do any good. Maybe you need to spend a little more time with him. He needs you Jeffrey.

JEFFREY

Don't tell me how to be with my son. I know how to talk to him. He's fine. He just needs to toughen up, simple as that. You always over analyze these things. Sometimes things are just the way they are.

ELIZABETH (sarcastic)

(Sits and starts putting on makeup and continues to do so throughout the scene until she removes her robe.)

Don't I know it.

JEFFREY

What's that supposed to mean?

ELIZABETH

Never mind. It doesn't matter.

JEFFREY (exasperated)

(Rubs his forehead.)

God...Are we going to rehash this thing again Liz?

ELIZABETH

No. I've had enough of rehashing to last a lifetime.

JEFFREY

You're so dramatic. You know, Liz, couples go through divorce every day. It's not the end of the world.

ELIZABETH

(Turns to JEFFREY.)

Damn it Jeffrey, I know it's not the end of the world. Just the end of our marriage. It may not have been a big deal for you but it was for me. (beat) You're so incredibly selfish.

JEFFREY

Geez...Here we go again.

ELIZABETH

No. Wait. Sorry. That's the old Elizabeth talking. I'm done with all that. I was just calling to tell you about the trouble at school. He's spending the night at Justin's house, so maybe you can pick him up in the morning.

JEFFREY

Justin's house? I thought you didn't like Margaret.

ELIZABETH

She's ok. They're having pool party sleepover for the base-ball team. I said it was alright as long as he stays in the shallow end.

JEFFREY

(Points at ELIZABETH.)

And there it is. (mimicking) Stay in the shallow end, Ben. Don't sit too close to the TV, Ben. Let me cut up your hotdog so you don't choke Ben. (end mimicking) That's the way you live your life...afraid of everything. You're turning him into a Mamma's boy. It's no wonder he gets picked on!

ELIZABETH

If you think I'm such a bad mother then why didn't you fight for custody?

JEFFREY

(long pause) No, you're right. You're right. Sorry. I don't think you're a bad mother, Liz, really, I don't. Just over-protective. (long pause) So...you getting ready to go over there?

ELIZABETH

No. It's just for the kids. Margaret said to pick Ben up sometime before ten in the morning, ok?

JEFFREY

Yea, ok. So....what are you getting ready for? Girls game night?

ELIZABETH

No. Not exactly.

JEFFREY

What then. (pause)What?

ELIZABETH

If you must know...I have a date.

JEFFREY

What? With who? Since when are you dating?

ELIZABETH

Since...since it's really none of your business anymore Jeffrey.

JEFFREY

Bullshit. Anything that comes into Ben's life is my business.

ELIZABETH

Oh, for heaven's sake, Jeff. I'm going on a date. I'm not moving in with someone. (pause) What?? It's ok for you to fuck your secretary but I can't go out on a date?

JEFFREY

God, Liz. You've got such a mouth.

ELIZABETH

Oh...yes Jeffrey. It's so much worse to say it than to do it. Get out.

JEFFREY

Not until you tell me who you're going out with. Donald Ramsey?

ELIZABETH

Oh my God! Enough with Donald. I told you a million times. Donald and I work together. Nothing more. Never has been. Never will be.

JEFFREY

Well I always thought...

ELIZABETH

I know what you thought! You were wrong then and you're wrong now. Unlike you, I took my vows seriously. I never cheated on you. Never even considered it. I loved you. I loved our family. I would never have let anything jeopardize that.

JEFFREY

OK. Here it comes. Saint Elizabeth the holy one! Miss perfect. Look. I've told over and over. I am sorry! I'm sorry I fell in love with someone. I'm sorry I hurt you. It's not like you can control falling in love.

ELIZABETH

Wrong! When you're married you don't put yourself into situations where can fall in love.

JEFFREY

I didn't. It just happened.

ELIZABETH

What happened is that you got a little bit of attention from a younger woman and your ego just couldn't get enough.

JEFFREY

Look. We've been over this and over this. Let's not rehash history.

ELIZABETH

History! You say it like it happened ages ago! I wouldn't classify nine months as history.

JEFFREY

It's ten months and it is history. Move on Liz. I have.

ELIZABETH

Yes, your affair. You moved on alright...While we were still married!

JEFFREY

You keep calling it an affair, Liz. I told you we did not have sex until after I moved out. (long pause) We didn't!

ELIZABETH

(Clinton impression) I did not have (makes air quotes) sexual relations with that woman. (own voice) You'd have made a great wingman for Clinton.

JEFFREY

Christ.

ELIZABETH

Yea, I'm pretty sure he's on my side.

JEFFREY

Oh wow. Now you're religious. That's hilarious.

ELIZABETH

I'm just saying...an affair is an affair. You don't have to put it in to commit the sin.

JEFFREY

Oh, now you're writing poetry about it. That's rich.

ELIZABETH

Oh Jeffrey, I could write a book. Could you please leave? I need to get ready.

JEFFREY

Who is it Liz?

ELIZABETH

It's none of your business. Please leave.

(Picks up skimpy red dress from chair and inspects.)

JEFFREY

You're wearing that?

ELIZABETH

(Looks from JEFFREY to dress and back.)

What? You're not my husband any longer. Your opinion no longer counts.

JEFFREY

Well it would be nice if the mother of my child didn't go around dressed like a floozy. You haven't dressed like that since we were dating. This is what you picked out for a first date?

ELIZABETH

So now I dressed like a floozy when we were dating. And who said it was a FIRST date?

JEFFREY

It's different when you're twenty-five wearing a dress like that. And what do you mean it's not a first date?

ELIZABETH

Not that it's your business but it happens to be a third date. (pause) So you think this dress is for a younger person. I'm a bit too old and worn out to pull it off?

JEFFREY

Your words, Liz.

ELIZABETH

I'll bet you think Amanda would look fabulous in it! What is she, ten years younger than you? I swear, I... (pause) Never mind. This is pointless. We didn't fight this much when we were married. Are you leaving or must I dress in front of you?

JEFFREY

(Crosses arms over chest.)

I'm not going until you tell me who the hell you're going out with.

ELIZABETH

(Crosses arms over chest.)

It's none of your damn business. (long pause) OK. Suit yourself.

(Picks up two pair of sexy high heel shoes, one red one black.)

You think the red or the black?

JEFFREY

Elizabeth...tell me.

ELIZABETH

I couldn't decide at the store so I bought both. I was going to take one pair back, but you know...I like them both so much. I think I'm going to keep both!

JEFFREY

Liz, damn it. Tell me!

ELIZABETH

But which ones to wear tonight. Hmm...I'll try them with the dress and see which I like better...don't you think?

(ELIZABETH starts to slowly, seductively untie her robe and then removes while JEFFREY looks on and is amazed, quickly becoming turned on.)

ELIZABETH (Cont.)

Why Jeffrey, I don't think I've ever seen you speechless before. I guess you didn't know I've been working out. With a personal trainer.

(Sits on the edge of the bed and pulls on a stocking.)

It's amazing what you can accomplish in nine...wait...you said it was ten, right? In ten months if you really put your mind to it. (pause) I'm not making you uncomfortable, am I?

(Pulls on the other stocking.)

I did ask you to leave, remember?

(Stands, removes hair towel to reveal dry, sexy hair so she's standing in stockings, sexy matching underwear and bra.)

Oh for goodness sake, we were married for twelve years. I must have dressed in front of you a thousand times. Now, shoes. I think the black ones, don't you?

JEFFREY (getting turned on)

Um....

ELIZABETH

(Gets shoes, sits on bed, puts the black shoes on and extends a leg.)

What do you think, Jeffrey? (pause) What's wrong? (pause) It isn't bothering you to see me like this, is it?

JEFFREY (clearly turned on)

(Clears throat.)

No.

ELIZABETH

Good. Maybe you can give me the male perspective on something. Since I have the house to myself tonight, let's say I want to seduce my gentleman friend. Do you think this pose would do it?

(Sits on bed seductively.)

(long pause) No? Well it has been a lifetime since I've had to seduce a man.

(Leans back on bed seductively.)

Is this sexier?

JEFFREY (very turned on)

Oh God Liz. What are you doing?

ELIZABETH

You know, Jeffrey. It has been over ten months since I've had sex. And twelve years since I had sex with anyone other than you. I feel like I'm going to explode. I know I won't be able to think straight tonight. How about this pose?

(ELIZABETH stretches out seductively on the bed. JEFFREY jumps on bed, grabs ELIZABETH and they passionately kiss.)

JEFFREY

Oh God, Liz. What happened to you? You're so...hot.

(More passionate kissing.)

ELIZABETH (coming up for air)

What about Amanda?

JEFFREY

Forget Amanda. God Liz, I want you.

(JEFFREY starts kissing ELIZABETH'S neck.)

ELIZABETH

Oh Jeff. You know I don't really want to sleep with anyone else. Not yet. Maybe we could do this, like once a week until I'm ready to get back out there.

JEFFREY

Yes, Liz. Yes. Once a week. At least. It will be our secret.

ELIZABETH

Jeffrey, I want you-

JEFFREY

I want you too.

ELIZABETH

No Jeffrey, I want you to-

JEFFREY

Me too. Let's do it.

ELIZABETH

No Jeffrey, I want you to get the hell off me!

(ELIZABETH pushes JEFFREY off the bed, landing him in a heap on the floor.)

JEFFREY

What the hell?

ELIZABETH

Sorry Jeffrey. I needed to find out just how weak and pathetic you really are. (pause) And, I guess if I'm being honest, to prove to myself that I've still got it. Mission accomplished!

JEFFREY

Huh? What...Who the hell are you?

ELIZABETH (proud)

I am Elizabeth Susan Beck. I'm a divorced 40 something mother to a wonderful little boy. I like moonlit walks on the beach, Bronte, Shubert, dark chocolate, and anything that makes me laugh. I like my coffee light and my margaritas weak. But I like my men strong. You're not strong Jeffrey. Tell Amanda that she's welcome to you.

JEFFREY

(Stands up, totally perplexed.)

But...

(ELIZABETH ushers JEFFREY to the door.)

ELIZABETH

Now I really need to get ready. Big night. Oh, and don't forget to pick up Ben tomorrow. Before ten, ok? I think I'm going to sleep-in.

JEFFREY

Yea, ok.

ELIZABETH

Oh...and Jeffrey...

JEFFREY

Yea?

ELIZABETH

Thanks for your advice on the shoes.

(Turns leg out, sexy.)

The black, definitely.

END