

Betty Rose- The Survivor
By: Pearl Oppenheimer

Act 1, Scene 2

During the following monologue, The set changes to the WAGA Station. There is a small desk and office chair, and A poster of Ben Gunn on the wall.

YOUNG BETTY:

(Addressing the audience and still jabbing at the dirt with the broomstick)
Ain't no babies coming up from the ground! I've known known that since I was small...smaller. I think Mother told me to "dig for babies" just to get rid of the weeds.
(Looking around)

Although, we barely have weeds. Heck, nobody's got real grass round here because nobody's got nothing. The Depression hit like Babe Ruth - Crack! No stopping it. Of course, by trying to figure out why mother asks me to dig for babies, I am over analyzing my situation.

You know, before this shin dig really gets going, I wanna ask every one of you to do me a little favor. Stop analyzing things! Haven't you ever appreciated something for what it is at face value? Believe me, you enjoy life less the more you analyze.

"The WAGA Station, Atlanta, Ga 1952" flashes up on the screen.

A recording of Betty Singing harvest moon plays on the radio. Young Betty observes as her older self scurries to the desk to start typing up a freshly dictated report.

BETTY VO:

*"Snow time ain't no time to stay outdoors and spoon
So shine on
Shine on harvest moon for me and my gal"*

YOUNG BETTY:

Wow, I look pretty good these days. Can you believe I pulled off that hairstyle?

RADIO ANNOUNCER VO:

“That was The Boots Woodall Band, and Betty Cornwell singing Shine on Harvest Moon. Coming up next at the top of the hour, the Local News with Ben Gunn. Stay Tuned to WAGA. We're in Atlanta Georgia!

BETTY:

(Talking to herself.)

Betty, country music is not your forte.

Betty does not recognize that her younger self is in the room.

YOUNG BETTY:

Why don't we sing some Ella Fitzgerald, Bing Crosby, or maybe some Andrews Sisters?

BETTY:

"When they begin, beguine"

YOUNG BETTY:

"It brings back the sound of music so tender"

BETTY AND YOUNG BETTY IN UNISON:

*It brings back a night of tropical splendor,
It brings back a memory ever green.*

Betty stops singing and begins humming the rest. She places a new sheet of paper in the typewriter.

YOUNG BETTY:

It's not even the depression anymore and I gotta do this?

Ben walks over to a nearby water fountain. While taking a drink he hears Betty's humming and sees her at the desk.

BEN:

"Tis good; though music oft hath such a charm
To make bad good, and good provoke to harm."

BETTY:

I'm sorry, I didn't realize how loud I was.

BEN:

No objections here. I don't recall seeing your charming face before.

YOUNG BETTY:

(Directed to the audience.)
Oh my god, it's Clark Gable!

BEN:

(Leaning on desk.)
The name's Ben Gunn.

YOUNG BETTY:

Scratch that, it's Ben Gunn.

BEN:

I'm a newscaster here.

BETTY:

(Pointing to promotional display for Ben Gunn.)
I'm aware, Mr. Gunn.

BEN:
How convenient? You have the advantage then.

BETTY:
I suppose...

YOUNG BETTY:
Sister, he's making a pass.

BEN:
Let's level the playing field a bit. What's your name?

BETTY:
Sir, the playing field could not be more uneven.

YOUNG BETTY:
Knock it off Betty and introduce yourself. Be friendly.

BETTY:
However, it's nice to finally meet you. My name is Betty Gunn.

BEN:
How convenient! You don't mean to say we're kin Miss Gunn?

BETTY:
Did I say Betty Gunn?... Lord have mercy, that's not- I, I'm Betty Cornwell.

YOUNG BETTY:
You hit that one outta the park.

BETTY:
I mean, I was thinking of you -your name, and I- It's nice to meet you Sir Gun- I mean sir.

BEN:
That's a shame you're not "Betty Gunn". The name has a nice ring to it. Although I'm pleased to hear we're not kissing cousins.

BETTY:
That would put a bit of a strain on this professional environment WAGA is so committed to.

BEN:
Yes, it's best not to mix work and pleasure.

BETTY:

Indeed.
(Long pause. Betty)

BEN:
Can I ask you something personal?

BETTY:
I'm not married.

BEN:
(surprised)
That wasn't exactly the question...

BETTY:
(With an awkward laugh)
How about you, are you married?

BEN:
I was.

BETTY:
I'm sorry, it's just I've heard a lot about you. I don't know what's true and what's-

BEN:
How about this? To avoid any further confusion, interview me. Verify any *facts* you've come across.

BETTY:
I don't know.

BEN:
Come on! I need to warm up before we go on air.

BETTY:
Okay, Let me see, you're putting me on the spot...
(Pretending to be a newscaster)
Tell me Mr. Gunn, do you have children?

BEN:
Yes, Miss Cornwell. I have 3: Ben Junior, Wesley, and Cindy. Charming little rascals.

BETTY:
And how long were you married?

BEN:
(With a wink)
Long enough for three.

BETTY:

Guess you didn't like playing cards. Now, please do tell our audience where you're from.

BEN:

I was born in Georgia, but my mother sent us to live with relatives all over the east coast. She was a model. My brother and I would stay with whoever would take us in so we lived in the Carolinas, Florida, Martha's Vineyard, Hell's Kitchen,

BETTY:

Why did you come back to Georgia?

BEN:

I've learned you simply can't beat southern hospitality, and southern beauty.

BETTY:

Thank you, Mr. Gunn, that's certainly been quite enough. And thank you for tuning in to WAGA.

BETTY AND BEN IN UNISON:

We're in Atlanta Georgia!

BEN:

Say, that was pretty good! We could switch it up today. You report, I'll type.

BETTY:

Think I'll leave that to you. I love singing, but I'm not much for talking.

(Looks at watch)

It's been very nice getting acquainted Mr. Gunn. However, I should get back to it, and you're about to go on.

BEN:

I never got to ask my real question.

BETTY:

All right, you have time for one question.

BEN:

What does your schedule look like at 7 o'clock this evening? I'd like to learn more about you.

The music for "Begin the Beguine" begins to play. Ben takes Betty's hand and dances with her in front of the set change.