

YOU CAN'T CON A CON

by Herbert M. Midgley

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TIME: Present

PLACE: A High Class Hotel in the South

CHARACTERS:

WENDY – A pretty girl in her late 20's. She was raised in a small Texas town and has good morals. She has on a nice green dress, that isn't too flashy for her old town ethics.
BERT – A regular looking guy in his early 30's. He was raised in a small Texas town and has good morals. He is dressed in a black suit, white shirt and power red tie.

Playwright's note. We all con each other all the time, however no one gets away with it.

BERT and WENDY are standing in a high-class hotel. Nice furniture and painting are everywhere.

WENDY

Bert honey, he didn't mean it! It's just part of the business you know?

BERT

Wendy shut your mouth. (Walks around her like a lion stalking his prey.) It's just business! Baby I taught you this business! If it wasn't for me, you would still be in the Hee Haw town working in that five and dime store that I found you in! So just shut it baby!

WENDY

All he did was kiss me. He didn't do anything else. (Beat) Hey, we got his money and he's paying for this place for the next three months, who cares!?

BERT

You conning me baby? Huh? You can't con a con baby, that was lesson number one.

WENDY

I remember. (Thinking) I remember when you came into that five and dime in Woden. You in that sharp suit talking you way out of paying for your soda and honey bun. It was so cute, I knew right there was you were doing.

BERT

That's lesson number two, we're all con men. It only takes seeing the light to make that talent come into fruition. When I saw those puppy dog eyes and that smoking leggy body you had with that sinister cute little smile, I knew right there you were going to be my next associate. (Beat) All I had to do was offer you the right con, and that was it!

WENDY

I'm truly glad you stopped in my Hee Haw country town. It changed my life! (She touches her fancy dress.)

BERT

Mine too kid. And my pocketbook thanks you too kid. (Beat) Having a hot piece of tawdy doesn't hurt business too much either. With that killer bod and that pure innocent face, you can make any man do anything you want. (Checking her out) Also when business is slow, it's good to have someone hot to look at.

WENDY

(Playfully) You're making me blush Bert.

BERT

Oh please, no man has made you blush since you figured out how to use, well those assets to your favor darling. Now you make men blush, love.

WENDY

You not mad anymore?

BERT

I'm still mad, but I don't care anymore. It's only business, love. Lesson number three, never let flesh temp you away from the green money trees. You can buy as much tawdy as you want, if you keep your head in the game. No, if you do a good enough job, you wouldn't even have to pay for it either.

WENDY

Bert honey, I know the rules. You taught me well. And this is was the big con that you had always told me about. The con that we could retire on! How much honey? What did we take him for?

BERT

Seven and half million clams. (Starts to laugh) And I could've taken even more, but I was raised in a small town and not all of my morals are gone let. Lesson number four, always leave a mark enough money that they can eat and take care of their families. That way, they won't chase after you.

WENDY

That's why you're the greatest Bert! All the other con men would've taking it all. But not my Bert. He knows when to pull his hand out of the cookie jar.

BERT

You had better believe it baby. Taking half of his money is enough. Now baby, to live that sweet life. Kicking it and leaving like royalty in South America! I'm king...

WENDY

And I'm your princess!

BERT

That's right baby! Easy street from here on!

(BERT grabs WENDY to give her a romantic kiss and she wiggles out of his arms pushing him back.)

WENDY

What are you doing Bert!?

BERT

I'm about to turn my princess into my queen.

WENDY

When donkeys fly! Bert honey, I don't think of you that way baby. You're my mentor in this crazy game. I don't want to mess with lesson number three, baby.

BERT

Wendy love, the business is over. We're retired. What has kept me going for this long, working so hard to get that golden egg was that when it happen, I would get you too. Baby maybe money was your prize, but you're my prize.

(BERT tries to kiss WENDY again, WENDY backs off.)

WENDY

So you never cared about the money.

BERT

Why do I need money, I can con my way out of a three-dollar meal or even easier a three thousand dollar meal. Money is useless to me. But you doll face, you're something money can't buy. I con you to love me, but I'm not going to. I want to be with you, and know you know it!

WENDY

Ok Bert honey, let's slow down. I... don't think of you that way honey. You're more like a flim flam uncle to me. An uncle that saved me from a life of hum dum, and I'll always be grateful for that honey, but I can't have any relations with you. (Squirms) That would feel just, well weird honey.

(BERT grabs WENDY kisses her this time. After the kiss, WENDY looks at BERT, shakes her head and sits down.)

BERT

Don't do that to me. You can't con me. I *know* what your thinking.

WENDY

All of these years I was just a piece of tawdy to you. I thought that we were going to con the world out of what we deserved and the whole time you were just thinking about me...well...(Quietly yelling) being with any clothes on! (Beat) So how often did you think about me like that?

BERT

A lot.

WENDY

How often is a lot? Once a month, a week...a day...an hour.

BERT

Baby more like every minute of the day. (Beat) I had a dream about you last night. For some reason I was in my shower and it was now four times as big. Then you came in, and well took a shower while I was watching. And the weird thing was that you didn't even get wet. You were standing there taking a shower in all of your glory and it was like not one drop of water hit you. It was amazing! And you, of course looked amazing too!

WENDY

(Dumfounded) I don't know what to say. (Angry) That makes me sick Bert! I have helped you con people out of their hard earn cash and never once did I feel sick about it. I don't think that I can move from this chair. I'm going to die in this chair. Thanks a lot Bert, now I'm going to die in this...pathetic chair! You have dreams about me taking showers and not getting wet! I'm going to hurl too!

BERT

Oh please baby, stop your Soap Opera acting on me. That's not going to work. I've seen it too many times over the last three years to be conned by it. Stop your acting and come over here and show me that you love me.

WENDY

Bert honey, I love you baby! Just not in that way.

BERT

That never stopped you before.

WENDY

You know that was different. That was business. Business is business. I've paid my dues, I'm retired baby. Time to live the sweat life.

BERT

Fine. (Hands her an envelope.) Here's your take. Enjoy your...retirement, baby.

WENDY

Awesome! (Opens the envelope) Thanks Bert! You're the greatest of the greatest.

BERT

Have a great life. (BERT heads for the door.)

WENDY

Bert honey, what are you doing?

BERT

My business is done here too. It's time to move on.

WENDY

Bert baby, I kind of thought that we were going to South America together. You know...to live the sweet life.

BERT

(Walks to her and gets in her face.) Listen *baby*, if you don't want to be with me, then take your money and go! I'm not part of that take. You never conned me, so take your prize and go walk into the sunset!

WENDY

Bert honey, don't leave me like that! Baby I need you! I can't run away to another part of the world alone!

BERT

You have enough *assets* that you'll do all right. Lesson number five, never ever be afraid to walk away if you feel like something isn't right. Well baby, something isn't right, so I'm walking away.

(BERT walks towards the door. WENDY runs and blocks him getting on her knees with her hands together.)

WENDY

Please baby, don't leave me. I do love you. In fact I've been in love with you since the first time I saw you. Well you never tried anything the whole three years we've been together so I thought that you didn't like me. Baby I'm begging you, (Sobbing) don't leave me like this!

BERT

(Starts to clap.) Get up. (Yells) Get up! (BERT grabs WENDY by her arm and drags her up.) You're forgetting who you're talking to! I'm a con man! I've been a con man when you were in diapers. Don't think you can use your tears to crack my heart.

WENDY

Don't say that. Don't talk to me like that!

BERT

Baby, I made you. I can talk to you any way that I want too! So pull yourself together and watch me walk out that door.

WENDY

I can't. Bert baby, I can't do that. I'm not ready.

BERT

Wendy, you've been ready your whole life. You never needed me for anything. All I did was led you to the water. You knew how to drink it.

WENDY

I don't want to do this alone. Please at least get me down to South America with you. Please baby. I'll do anything you want. Anything in the world.

BERT

I know. But what I wanted was to have you really *want* to be with me. You can't give me that.

(BERT opens the door. WENDY slams it shut.)

WENDY

Bert...

BERT

Hey baby, all good things right. (He takes out a handkerchief and dries the tears from her eyes.) It's over.

WENDY

You conned me. You never wanted me. You only wanted to see me cry. To see me cry for real!

BERT

Lesson number one baby. You can't con a con. Now you can see right through me.

WENDY

You're sick you know. I never want to see you again! Get out!

BERT

But I made you cry your real tears. (Laughing) But I didn't take them all. (Beat) Good luck kid.

(BERT walks out the door. WENDY sits down and starts to sob.)

FADE TO BLACK

THE END