

# Almost Right

By

*Leonard D Goodisman*

**WHY I LIKE IT:** *Drama Editor JANET EHRLICH COLSON writes... Leonard D. Goodisman's wonderful short play Almost Right is a lifetime of love lessons in just six tidy pages. The play is funny and touching with dialogue between Hank and Sue that is so tightly woven there are no chances for missteps into sentimentality. Almost Right starts right at the core of the daily negotiations between Sue and Hank that bring them closer together and how they interact as well as where they find fault with each other. Sue wishes Hank "would do it a little differently." Hank thinks it's fine the way it is. Sue didn't say it was bad, but Hank doesn't like the way she said it. They both accuse each other of being too sensitive. What wasn't bad? Why can't they seem to get it right? What about some examples? Is it like buying a gift? With the minimalism of a Beckett play, the truth of the moment in Almost Right simmers with subtext and makes us wonder how any relationship can survive the constant loop of feedback in and out of the bedroom. It also shows us that sometimes being almost right might be close enough.*

SUE

It is not. It's not as if I want things a lot different. I like what you do, if you could just do it, you know, a little differently.

HANK

I thought we're so good, you know, together and everything.

SUE

We are, definitely, together, good, and everything.

*(Spacing is playwright's own. Please scroll down.) JEC*

ALMOST RIGHT  
Comedy  
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(Hank and Sue come out on stage in their pajamas.)

SUE

I like what you do. I really do. I like it just the way you do it.

HANK

You do? Great.

SUE

I just wish you would do it a little differently.

HANK

Really? What? No. That's no good. That's bad.

SUE

What's bad? It's just saying what there is to say.

HANK

The way you said it. It's bad. For me. For us.

SUE

It is not. It's not as if I want things a lot different. I like what you do, if you could just do it, you know, a little differently.

HANK

I thought we're so good, you know, together and everything.

SUE

We are, definitely, together, good, and everything.

HANK

But then you say do it differently.

SUE

Not very differently, just a little differently. You know. Don't be so sensitive

HANK

Don't call me sensitive, okay? It's bad enough you tell me I'm not doing it right; but now, on top of that, you say I'm sensitive.

SUE

Not so sensitive, just a little sensitive.

HANK

If I were going to be sensitive, I would think, I would want to be, you know, very sensitive, sensitive all the way.

SUE

What's wrong with being sensitive? Look, put your hand here.

HANK

There?

SUE

Not there, here. A little over.

HANK

Over this way.

SUE

Well, no, okay yes, but not quite that way.

HANK

Oh, now I'm not putting my hand in the right place, but not quite in the right place, not quite in the right way.

SUE

You're putting your hand in the right place but I was thinking you could put it, you know, like a little bit over, just a little bit differently.

HANK

Over here.

SUE

More, over there.

HANK

Over there.

SUE

Never mind.

HANK

Never mind? The next thing you'll be telling me never mind about is our whole history, our whole relationship, you and me and both of us. How could you never mind me?

SUE

No, I would never say never mind to both of us together, at the same time.

HANK

But to you and me separately? That would be okay? I would think when you have two people, especially if you think of them as a he and a she, or a she and a he, or a couple of some sort, then, if you throw away he or you throw away she, especially if you throw away both of them, even if it's one at a time, then, wow, then that's it!

SUE

That's what? You know it's okay the way you expressed it.

HANK

Expressed what?

SUE

Expressed what's going on between us. It's okay, but I would probably prefer, I think I would like it even better, if you said it, what's going on between us, just a little bit differently.

HANK

Like how, for example, for a little example.

SUE

Oh, an example. Now we're into examples.

HANK

We're not into examples, one example.

SUE

Of what?

HANK

I don't know. You brought up examples.

SUE

I did not. You did.

HANK

But you implied examples when you wanted something a little different. "Like what?" I had to say. You forced me.

SUE

To do what?

HANK

To ask for an example.

SUE

See?

HANK

See what?

SUE

You brought up examples.

HANK

Well, that in itself is an example, isn't it? Even if you don't call it that. It's still an example, of ...

SUE

Of what?

HANK

Of bringing up things without really bringing them up and then setting me up to try to figure out what we're talking about and I'm getting it sort of right but a little bit off. It's like buying gifts.

SUE

It's true. You know. The gifts you give me are wonderful perfect, like that watch and that shawl.

HANK

What watch? What shawl?

SUE

See you don't even remember but I can tell you. Those gifts were perfect, functional, beautiful, elegant, personal, perfect. But you know the watch doesn't keep perfect time, not perfect time and the shawl, the color, it's not exactly me, in the color I mean.

HANK

Howe can beautiful gifts I spent hours and hours finding not be perfect? Are you crazy?

SUE

Are you crazy? Everybody knows gifts are always, well, a little bit off. I have one of those. I don't want to go back and get a bigger size. That's last month's fashion. How can you bring up buying gifts when people are having a problem with...

HANK

With what? With their sexuality?

SUE

Is that what we're having a problem with? We are not. How can you say that to me?

HANK

No, of course not. I would never say that to you. I mean how could we be having that sort of problem?

SUE

That's right. How could we? Everything is perfect in that department. I only want some things to be a tad different.

HANK

That's a department? With tads?

SUE

I don't know. What's a tad?

HANK

Okay. forget that. I just want everything to be perfect so I need to know. What things need to be a little different?

SUE

I told you more than once what things might be, not need to be but might be, you know, a little other. And I'm a little bit shy, you know. I don't think I can tell you again.

HANK

I'll work on them, those things, if I know what they are. But I didn't get it when you said, sort of said it. I didn't understand. I still don't.

SUE

I didn't sort of say it. I said it.

HANK

Okay, sorry, but I guess I didn't understand.

SUE

No, of this I'm sure. You understood! And you do understand! You may not want to hear it or admit it or live it or have anything be any other way than the way it is. A person can be rigid and stuck in their ways, but you got it! I know that because I gave it to you!

HANK

It's not like a disease, like you gave it to me. Maybe it is. Please let me hold you. Hold me. I want it to be right.

SUE

(They move into each other's arms, maybe crying a little.) It feels, you know very good like this, very good. I may be crying, maybe inside, outside, I don't know, but this, this is, we are, you know, perfect.

HANK

I know. We are, lucky to have each other, to have found each other, in this perfect way.

SUE

I love you. But could you, you know, move your hand down a little bit, just a little bit.

HANK

What? Like this?

SUE

No, the other hand.

END

**THE PLAYWRIGHT SPEAKS:** *I love the psychological interplay in moments when we almost have it but something about us is critical, even mean, and can't let it just be good. Such a dramatic exploration is a breather for me from the larger societal themes, such as greed; but, I wonder whether they are entirely different or whether we sometimes exhibit an angry perspective that wants to deny others, even those close to us, simple love and acceptance. Ultimately, we know that's what we have to come back to; no one is the perfect you to fit the perfect, if imagined, me. Stylistically, I like to capture the conflict in the middle of these moments, when we're critical, showing our demanding side, even if it's a bit ugly. It's usually funny.*

## **AUTHOR BIO:**

### GENERAL

Leonard has written in various genres. Theater is his first love. Besides creating plays, he's enjoyed producing, and all aspects of theater. His work entertains but also, stimulates and inspires one's sociological, psychological, and political consciences, and through these one's spirituality.

He was Development Director at Eclectic Theater and artistic director at the Pocket Theater until each closed, also a TPS reviewer / rater for local plays.

### PLAYS

Substance and vision drive the length of a play.

Leonard has written about three dozen full length plays, including two musicals, many more one act plays. Some have won prizes. Ten full length plays have been produced, some in developmental productions: "Missy's Trial"(2011), "Laramie, Equal Rights" (2012), "Clara" (2013), "Chekov in the Sun"(2014, "Che"(2015), "The Gate"(2015,2017), "My Backyard", "Die"(2016), "Laramie, Equal Rights"(2012), "The Sandstorm"(2019), "The Voyage of Sally Hemings" (2021). Many one acts have been produced.