

HOTEL for Hollywood Has-Beens

By Regina Ballard

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Did you ever wonder what happened to your favorite TV actors from the 60's and 70's? In this hilarious parody, young Taylor Williams, an aspiring actress, has just been hired by Mr. Has-Been to work as the front desk clerk at a rather strange hotel. The hotel decor is outdated, her new boss talks like a game show host, and his nephew Jeffrey talks in rhyming monotone.

Taylor soon realizes that the hotel caters to a very different clientele when Berney Life, the Bradley Bunch, Gulligan, Jenja and the Honz check in. When Taylor thinks she has finally seen it all, things get even crazier when she finds out that the hotel is in deep debt. The owners, the three Bubbas, have come to collect the overdue mortgage with plans to turn the hotel into a country music palace if Mr. Has-Been doesn't pay up.

In a desperate attempt to raise the money, Taylor stages a show using the talents of the hotel guests. There's romance in the air and what happens next is crazier than you can ever imagine.

NOTE: Actors can learn the mannerisms and characteristics of their characters by watching TV reruns of "The Brady Bunch," "Gilligan's Island," "The Andy Griffith Show," "Happy Days," and "Bonanza." Fun homework! An optional idea: arrange to have other actors dressed as recognizable television characters in the lobby before and after your production. They and Mr. and Mrs. Howl might even make an entrance into your theatre right before Scene 3 as though they are part of the hotel's audience.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(12 m, 8 w)

TAYLOR WILLIAMS: A 90's woman in a 70's hotel.

MR. HAS-BEEN: Owner of the almost-broke hotel.

JEFFREY: Has-Been's strange nephew.

BERNEY LIFE: Nervous, self-important deputy.

GULLIGAN: Clumsy, not a good sailor.

JENJA: Hollywood star and real flirt.

JANE BRADLEY: One of three Bradley sisters.

MARLA BRADLEY: Another.

WENDY BRADLEY: Another.

GRIG BRADLEY: One of three Bradley brothers.

PEDRO BRADLEY: Another.

BUDDY BRADLEY: Another.

THE HONZ: Ultimate cool dude.

BUBBA BOSS CUTTHROAT: A bully, one of three brothers.

BUBBA BILLY: Another.

BUBBA LITTLE JOE: Another.

BELLHOP GIRL 1: Adores the Honz.

BELLHOP GIRL 2: Another.

MR. HOWL: Rich man to the rescue.

MRS. HOWL: His high-brow wife.

Playing Time: About an hour.

SYNOPSIS

Scene 1: Current day. Friday, 10 AM.

Scene 2: Later that afternoon.

Scene 3: The next week, Saturday evening.

COSTUMES

Because the hotel and all its guests are throwbacks to the 70's, all decor and clothing should reflect that time period. Taylor first enters in current day fashions, then changes to 70's clothes like those worn by the Bradleys, the more outrageous the better. Mr. Has-Been first wears a leisure suit, wide tie, and white shoes, then changes into a ruffled tux for the talent show.

Jeffrey wears typical nerd clothes until the show when he looks like the Honz with black leather jacket, white T-shirt, and black pants.

Jenja wears glamorous, Hollywood starlet clothes with lots of sequins. Gulligan wears a wild shirt, white sailor hat, and white, bell-bottom pants.

All the Bubbas wear western style clothes and cowboy hats.

Bellhop Girls dress alike in short jackets, black shorts, and red, square hats.

Mr. Howl wears a dark suit with several rings on his fingers and Mrs. Howl wears a rich-looking ladies suit and hat with matching handbag and shoes and lots of jewels. She also carries hand-held glasses.

SET DESIGN

All action takes place at the Has-Been Hotel which is not rundown, just stuck in a timewarp! The colors, furniture, fixtures, everything down to the shag carpeting, should reflect the 70's.

The main focus of the room is the check-in desk located USC. A phone is on the desk, room keys hang behind it. SR is a door to outside while USR and USL are hallways to back offices. SL is to the guest rooms. Various chairs and sofas are grouped DSC. They are moved to the sides of the stage for the talent show.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: Enter TAYLOR, SR with briefcase in hand. She walks in slowly, looking around in amazement at the hotel's outlandish and outdated decor. Finally, she approaches the front desk. She looks around and finding no one, rings bell on desk.)

JEFFREY: (Jumps up from behind counter, in rhyming, monotone voice.) Welcome to Hotel Has-Been. Can I help you check in?

TAYLOR: (Jumps in surprise.) Oh, you scared me. (Regaining composure.) My name is Taylor Williams and I have a 10:00 appointment with Mr. Has-Been.

JEFFREY: (Still talking monotone in rhyme.) Just a minute, that's my plea, I will see if he is free. (Picks up phone.) Hello, Uncle Has-Been, the clock says it is ten. Your appointment is here without a doubt, shall I tell her you'll be right out? (Nods, then replaces phone receiver.) Please have a seat, take a load off of your feet. Uncle Has-Been said to say, that he will soon be on his way. (Disappears again under counter.)

TAYLOR: Th ... anks (Takes a seat on couch.)

(Enter MR. HAS-BEEN from USL.)

MR. HAS-BEEN: (Speaks in a game show host voice and uses extravagant hand gestures.) Welcome to ... Hotel Has-Been! The Hollywood Hotel with a special clientele. You must be Taylor Williams! (Extends hand to welcome HER.)

TAYLOR: (Standing.) It's nice to meet you, sir.

MR. HAS-BEEN: I'm glad you could come on such short notice. The employment office said you really needed a job and I really need a new desk clerk. Did you meet my nephew, Jeffrey? (Motions behind HIM towards the front desk.)

TAYLOR: Well, sort of.

MR. HAS-BEEN: Then I'm sure you noticed he's not exactly Mr. Personality. (*Whispers.*) He is a little strange the way he rhymes everything, thinks he's Dr. Seuss or something. (*Raises voice.*) But, I had to have him fill in until I could find a replacement. My regular desk clerk walked out on me this morning and a big group of my regular guests will be checking in soon. They are going to expect to have someone with personality and flair greet them. That's why I wanted to interview you. The employment office said you were an actress.

TAYLOR: (*Brightens.*) I am, or at least I'm trying to be. It isn't as easy as I thought to break into show business.

MR. HAS-BEEN: (*Nodding head.*) It never is. (*Singsong.*) There's no business like show business except when you are unemployed. That's why this hotel is so important to its guests. We treat all our guests like they are stars! (*TV Game Show voice.*) Taylor Williams, in the next fifteen seconds, show me how you would greet my guests.

TAYLOR: (*Moves a step DS and puts on big smile.*) Welcome to Hotel Has-Been! We hope you will enjoy your stay with us!

MR. HAS-BEEN: Ding ding ding. Good answer. Yes Taylor, I think you'll do fine. Can you start right away?

TAYLOR: (*Nods head.*) Yes and thank you so much for the opportunity, Mr. Has-Been. I really need a job.

MR. HAS-BEEN: (*Looks at watch.*) You won't have much time to learn, the first group of guests are due to arrive within the hour. Just remember, treat them like stars! I'll have Jeffrey show you the ropes. I'm sure you'll catch on fast. (*Calls.*) Jeffrey!

JEFFREY: (*Rises from behind desk.*) Yes Uncle Has-Been, I am here. You don't have to shout, when I am so near.

MR. HAS-BEEN: (*Johnny Carson style.*) Here's ... Taylor, our new desk clerk. I want you to show her how to check the guests in and operate the switchboard.

JEFFREY: Come on over, let's get started. Hope you don't smell, where I just farted. (*Looks at TAYLOR who giggles.*)

Hotel For Hollywood Has-Beens

- 7 -

MR. HAS-BEEN: Oh brother. Just try to tolerate him for a little while. I've got a few things to take care of. I'll check back with you later to see how things are going. *(Hums "No Business Like Show Business" as HE exits USL.)*

(TAYLOR joins JEFFREY behind counter.)

JEFFREY: *(Picks up phone.)* When the phone rings, answer like this. *(Demonstrates.)* "Has-been's Hotel," then you check the guest list. When someone wants to check in and get their room key, just look behind you, *(Points to row of keys behind desk.)* and collect their room fees.

TAYLOR: OK, what else.

JEFFREY: That's all there is, there's not much to it. Anyone with half a brain could probably do it.

TAYLOR: *(Nervous laugh.)* Well, it sounds easy enough.

JEFFREY: I have done my part. See you later, I have to get ready, to double as a waiter.

TAYLOR: Wait a minute. Don't you think you should stay here to make sure I check in the first couple of guests correctly?

JEFFREY: You said it sounded easy enough. What's wrong? Aren't you show business tough?

TAYLOR: B-but ...

JEFFREY: It was nice to meet you. You'll do just fine, but when in doubt, make up a rhyme. *(Exits USR.)*

TAYLOR: *(Sighs aloud to HERSELF.)* Well, I guess I'll just wing it.

(Turns with HER back to audience to straighten keys. Does not hear BERNEY LIFE enter from SR. Berney approaches counter.)

BERNEY: *(Calls.)* Young woman, hello. *(TAYLOR turns around. BERNEY smiles nervously and waves.)* Uh, hi there. I'd like to check in please.

TAYLOR: *(Energetically.)* Oh, hello! I didn't hear you come in. What is your name please?

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