**Bill & Stephanie**

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Characters:

*Nate,* 30, Clara’s husband, Daphne’s brother

*Clara*, 32, Nate’s wife

*Daphne*, 25, Winter’s girlfriend, Nate’s sister

*Winter,* 26, Daphne’s girlfriend

*Stephen*, 24

Setting

*The aftermath of a wedding reception.*

Notes on style and length:

I use line breaks to provide different types of

Rhythm

And choices

For actors and directors.

Would an audience experiencing the script aurally feel

Their presence?

I don’t know.
I’m not

Sure.

Also, there are lines that are word

Splat vomit stream of consciousness description.

These are meant to be moments of non-realism.

A “pause” is a speed bump. Pauses vary greatly in length and size.

A “silence” is felt. It is heard. A song could fit into a “long silence.”

This play is 70-80 minutes long.

“I believe that love when used as a verb is true and when used as a noun is a lie.”

-Taylor Mac, “I Believe”

“We don’t have a word for the opposite of loneliness, but if we did, I could say that’s what I want in life. [...] It’s not quite love and it’s not quite community; it’s just this feeling that there are people, an abundance of people, who are in this together. Who are on your team. When the check is paid and you stay at the table. When it’s four AM and no one goes to bed. That night with the guitar. That night we can't remember. That time we did, we went, we saw, we laughed, we felt. The hats.”

 *–*Marina Keegan, *The Opposite of Loneliness*

*It’s four in the morning,*

*And what was a cool, crisp evening became a rainy night*

*Hours ago.*

*The stage is*

*A corner of a ballroom:*

*Big round tables,*

*Gold chairs,*

*Ornate centerpieces,*

*A half-eaten wedding cake in the corner,*

*Near the bar.*

*The ballroom is huge,*

*And stretches far beyond the stage and behind the audience.*

*There might be the remains of a DJ booth,*

*Or a violin case and an abandoned cello,*

*Or, a wedding band’s pun name on a drum set,*

*Near the dance floor,*

*Which is barely onstage.*

*Stephen is sitting down,*

*Alone at a table,*

*With his head is in his hands.*

*It’s hard to tell if he’s asleep*

*Or crying,*

*But he’s crying*

*In a tuxedo.*

*Winter enters and takes a few tentative steps toward Stephen.*

*Then,*

*Deciding he’s not worth the trouble*

*Right now*

*She backs offstage.*

*Slowly,*

*Guiltily.*

*Stephen tries to gather himself;*

*He wipes his eyes.*

*Nate enters.*

*He has on a similar tux,*

*A nicer one, though,*

*And he’s taken off his jacket and tie,*

*And rolled up the sleeves.*

**Nate**

Dude.

*Pause.*

Hey

Hey hey hey hey hey

Hey.

Hey.

**Stephen**

I’m sorry.

I’m sorry.

Weddings make me cry.

Weddings and funerals

Weddings and funerals.

*Pause.*

I’m sorry.

Ok.

Okok

Here we go.

Here.

We.

Go.

*He makes a motion with his arms,*

*Like he’s trying to stand up,*

*But the rest of his body doesn’t move.*

*Stephen looks up at Nate.*

*And holds his arms out so Nate can hoist him up.*

*Nate does nothing.*

*Stephen’s arms flop to his sides,*

*Then lap.*

*A small, awkward silence.*

*Stephen’s eyes well up with tears.*

It’s just

All those people

Here

For them

Bill

When he was standing up there

And

Stephanie

Walking down the

Rose petals

Rings

It was

And then when they were up there

Together

So

It was so

*Slight pause.*

Have you ever felt that?

Like

To be so

*Big pause.*

Like

*A big awkward pause.*

**Nate**

Oh, buddy.

C’mere, buddy.

Buddy, buddy, buddy

Buddy.

*Nate holds Stephen.*

*Nate is much larger than Stephen.*

*This is the only way Nate really knows how to comfort.*

Buddy…

Shhh….

*He looks around for other people,*

*But can’t detach himself from Stephen.*

**Stephen**

I’m sorry,

I’m sorry.

**Nate**

What’s wrong?

*Stephen mumbles.*

Huh?

Talk to me, come on.

Come on.

**Stephen**

It’s just…

To have that?

**Nate**

What?

**Stephen**

Yeah

I don’t know.

You know

You have it.

**Nate**

I…

**Stephen**

With Clara.

**Nate**

Oh,

Yeah.

Yeah.

*An awkward pause.*

*Daphne runs on,*

*Winter follows.*

*Daphne runs straight to Stephen.*

**Daphne**

Are you ok?

Are you

Are you…

**Stephen**

What? Yeah.

Weddings and funerals

**Daphne**

Are you

What is he talking about?

**Nate**

He’s fine.

**Winter**

Sorry

I was just worried

So I got

**Stephen**

You were..?

**Daphne**

She came and got me and

**Winter**

He was crying and

**Nate**

Yeah? So?

**Stephen**

Can’t I

**Daphne**

You know what-

**Nate**

It was only

**Winter**

Seemed really sad

**Daphne**

We have to be

**Stephen**

Seriously?

**Winter**

So I ran and got

**Nate**

Letting off some steam

**Stephen**

Weddings and funerals

**Daphne**

I’m just trying to be-

**Nate**

CAN’T A GUY

HAVE A GOOD

MOTHER

FUCKING

CRY

EVERY NOW AND THEN

IN FUCKING PEACE

WITHOUT PEOPLE

BUTTING

IN HIS

MOTHER

FUCKING

BUSINESS

???

*Silence.*

*Nobody looks at Nate.*

**Stephen** *(Breaking the tension)*

Really, guys.

I’m fine.

I’m not sad.

I’m not crying because I’m sad.
I’m crying

Well

Not joy

But tears of

...

I don’t know

**Daphne**

Oh.

Uh

Ok.

Great.

**Nate**

I don’t see what the big deal is

Here.

**Winter**

Daph–

**Daphne**

Nate

**Nate**

What?

Let the guy be

**Daphne**

*Nate.*

**Stephen** *(to Nate)*

Well,

Uh,

I don’t think you know that, uh

I went missing a few months ago

So that’s why

I guess

They’re worried.

**Nate**

What

**Stephen**

I wanted to see

How long it would take

For people to notice

I was gone?

So I ran away.

It was stupid,

Stupid.

**Daphne**

We were looking all over

His roommates

His family

Nobody knew where he was.

It was terrifying.

I was terrified.

**Winter**

She was.

**Stephen**

Apparently,

It was a big deal.

**Daphne**

Apparently?

**Stephen**

But, yeah

I had to spend time in uh

Psychiatric care

After that.

Three weeks

Or whatever.

And I feel good now.

It feels like a long time

Almost a lifetime

It’s been a long time since then

It’s nothing

Really

Really

You guys don’t have to

**Nate**

So that wasn’t-

**Stephen**

I always cry at weddings.

Really.

Always.

*Clara enters.*

*With a raised, half-empty glass.*

**Clara** *(Sing-song, a toast and a roast)*

Bill and Stephanie

Stephanie and Bill (**Nate** )

Kissy kissy kissy (Ohh boy.)

On a

Hill

Married together

Forever more

Three kids and a beach house

On the shore

Thirty-year mortgage

Nine-to-five jobs

Imported cars

In their parking garage.

What could end

This bliss?

Death

Kidnapping

Or a younger mistress.

*She bows.*

*Pause.*

We used to sing that

All the time.

Every day

Remember that?

*Pause.*

What?

**Nate**

Nothing.

**Clara**

What??

**Nate**

Nothing..

**Winter**

I remember it

**Daphne**

I can’t believe we

**Clara**

I tried to get it going tonight

**Nate**

We heard.

Everyone heard.

**Daphne**

And then

**Stephen**

You tripped

**Winter**

That poor waiter

**Nate**

His poor shirt

**Clara**

You should never wear anything to a wedding

You’re afraid will

Get stained.

**Daphne**

In any case

**Stephen**

Boom!

Ruckus

Pandemonium

People yelling

Taking pictures

Applauding

The whole event ground to a halt

So people could see who was causing trouble.

**Nate**

And

You were too busy laughing

And bowing

And waving

To keep on singing.

Which was good.

And then I brought you upstairs

And put you in your PJs

And poured you a glass of water

So you could drink it

And then *sleep.*

**Clara**

But I’m not tired.

I don’t want to go to sleep.

**Daphne**

Bill’s mother was *not* happy.

Poor Susie.

**Winter** *(to Daphne)*

You were drunk.

**Clara**

We were all drunk.

**Nate**

You were pretty drunk,

Hon.

**Winter**

You were like

So drunk.

**Daphne**

So drunk

The most

Like,

*Clara glares.*

So so so so

Sososoosososooooo

Drunk.

*Daphne laughs at herself.*

**Clara**

You’re drunk.

**Daphne**

Huh what?

**Stephen** *(at the bar)*

We’re all fucking drunk.

It’s 4 in the morning

Our friends just got married

With an open fucking bar

Of course we’re all drunk

We drank

We’re drunk

It is what it is.

**Nate**

I can’t get over

Stephanie and Bill

The way they were

Here

After the ceremony?

Together

**Clara** *(singing)*

Bill and Stephanie

Stephanie and Bill

**Nate**

I’m SAYING

They were like

Acting like-

Bill doesn’t dance

But he was dancing

Steph doesn’t sing

But she killed karaoke.

Where did that come from?

**Daphne**

Their love?

For each other?

**Nate**

Nonononono.

That’s not love

That’s adrenaline.

That

Watching that

Watching them

Made me feel so

I looked around

During the ceremony…

Everyone was crying.

All these people

Crying

Weeping.

And it’s like…

You don’t understand

That-

*(to Clara)*

I miss falling in love

Going on dates

Trying to impress each other

Bragging to my friends about you

About myself with you.

Keeping secrets

From you

(Feet trash tv farts phobias plans).

Keeping us a secret

From the office?

**Clara**

This is how he talks to me

About me

To my face.

**Nate**

You don’t feel the same?

**Clara**

I love

How we’ve changed.

You used to not know how to cook,

Now you make dinner.

You used to sleep in,

Now you’re up before I am

Reading the newspaper

Running

Fantasy football whatever.

**Nate**

Yes.

And you’re still sleeping in.

I don’t know why I’m the only one who has to work

These days

On myself

On us.
It’s fucked up.

**Clara**

You’re not

**Nate**

I am, I am

I fucking am.

Who tackled a waiter tonight

And who carried who upstairs to our hotel room?

**Clara**

I tripped

**Nate**

Which one of us came downstairs

And dealt with his sister’s friend

Fucking crying

For no reason

And which one of us came down

To sing a fucking SONG

We MADE UP

When we LIVED IN GODDAMN BROOKLYN.

We are supposed to be adults

Getting older

Aging

And you’re just

Drunk.

**Stephen**

We’re all drunk.

*Silence.*

*Nate is the only one standing.*

*He’s riled up,*

*Pacing, maybe,*

*Or doing something with his hands*

*Like he can’t let them be still*

*But can’t release his frustration*

*Either.*

*He looks around at all of them.*

*For a moment,*

*Combativeness,*

*Then,*

*Relaxation.*

*An exhale.*

**Winter**

I wonder if we’re keeping anyone up.

**Clara**

Oh

I don’t care.

**Daphne**

The people

**Clara**

If they’re actually tired, they’ll sleep.

**Nate**

There’s nowhere else to go.

The place is

Alright

But it’s the middle of nowhere

**Stephen**

It’s her hometown!

**Nate**

That doesn’t mean it’s not

Nowhere.

**Stephen**

Look.

Let’s go look.

We’ll see

We can see.

There are things,

Right?

Come on.

**Nate**

You’re–

*Daphne’s catches Nate’s eye,*

*And he stops short.*

*He sighs.*

Fine, fine.

*Stephen grabs Nate and they run outside.*

**Clara**

People should stay up late.

It’s a wedding!

What do you think people do after weddings?

It’s not just the bride and groom.

**Daphne**

I know

**Clara**

And in a hotel…

*Pause.*

What?

What else is there to talk about?

**Daphne**

I don’t know.

**Winter**

What about you and Nate?

Where did you

Meet?

**Clara**

I don’t remember.

**Daphne**

Work.

**Clara**

Oh, right.

Work.

**Winter**

That’s nice.

We met at a gallery.

At an opening.

Friends of friends’ show

Even in a place as big as

New York Chicago Paris LA Berlin Tokyo

It still feels like a small scene

Small world

Everyone knows everyone

Pretty much.

**Daphne**

It wasn’t until we hung out

Alone

That we realized

**Winter**

That we knew

**Daphne**

That we like…

That we got along.

*She looks at Clara, excited.*

*Clara clearly isn’t interested.*

*An awkward pause.*

**Daphne** *(changing the subject)*

What was that music?

That they were playing?

**Clara**

Disco?

**Daphne**

Is that what it was?

**Winter**

No-

**Daphne**

It was

Crappy but good.

You could really dance to it.

And we were dancing

Oh!

You’re a good dancer!

You’re really good.

You were like

*Daphne imitates Winter dancing*

*She tries to get Winter to join in.*

*Winter doesn’t.*

**Daphne** *(cont’d)*

Come on!

*Nate and Stephen reenter*

*They are soaking wet.*

*Nate more than Stephen,*

*Who’d used his jacket as an umbrella.*

**Nate**

What a crappy night.

**Stephen**

It’s really raining.

**Daphne***(still dancing)*

Mhm.

**Clara**

Look at you.

**Nate**

Holy fucking shit

It’s so fucking wet

**Clara**

At least it waited until everyone was inside.

**Nate**

Yeah, well

I was right

There’s nothing out there.

**Stephen**

A little rain never hurt anyone!

**Winter**

Is it that bad?

**Clara**

It’s fine, you’re fine.

He’s fine.

**Nate**I need a towel.

*(Into the hall)*

Towel!

**Clara**

Jesus.

**Winter**

Here.

*Winter gets some rags from behind the bar.*

*The men dry off with them*

*As best they can.*

*They hear footsteps upstairs,*

*And all look up,*

*Or out towards the lobby.*

*Like kids who are caught somewhere they’re not supposed to be,*

*Because*

*They don’t know if they’re supposed to be there*

*Or not.*

**Nate**

We did see some lights on upstairs.

*Everyone waits, nervously, for another moment.*

*Nobody comes in.*

*They relax into a long silence.*

*People get drinks,*

*And settle in,*

*Now lounging on the floor*

*Or on tables*

*Or the bar.*

*The ballroom that was so unfamiliar to them at the beginning of the night,*

*Now feels almost theirs.*

*They listen to the rain for a while.*

**Clara**

You know what they say about rain on your wedding day.

**Winter**

I don’t.

Do you?

**Daphne**

No.

**Nate**

It’s their wedding night

Now

Not day.

So it doesn’t matter.

**Clara** *(not caring)*

It’s supposed to be bad luck, isn’t it?

Right?

**Winter**

I’ve never heard that.

**Daphne**

Makes sense.

**Clara**

Like, there’s the song.

**Winter**

What song?

**Clara** *(tentatively misquoting* Funny Girl)

Don’t rain on my wedding…?

**Daphne**

Oh shit!

**Nate**

Shit, fuck yeah!

**Clara**

You know the song?

**Daphne**

We know that song.

**Nate**

Babs.

**Daphne**

We *love* that song.

**Nate**

Baaaabs.

**Daphne**

But it’s

*Daphne and Nate set themselves up*

*To impersonate Barbara Streisand,*

*In a way that makes it clear*

*This isn’t the first time they’re doing this:*

**Daphne** *(cont’d)*

NOBODY NO NOBODY

IS GONNA

RAIN ON MYYYYYYYYYYYYYYY

**Daphne & Nate**

PAAAAAAAAAARAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAADE!

*They stand there,*

*Panting,*

*For a sec.*

*A stunned silence.*

**Clara**

So you know the song.

**Daphne**

Of course we know it.

But it’s about a parade,

Not a wedding.

And I think it’s more of a metaphor?

Like an extended metaphor

Not, like

A superstition.

**Stephen**

Rain,

On your wedding day

It’s actually a good thing.

**Winter** *(looking on her phone)*

Here it just says “tears.”

*Clara, Daphne, and Nate clump around Winter’s phone.*

**Stephen**

Uh, it-

**Clara**

It does.

Huh.

**Nate**

I can see that.

**Daphne**

I can totally, totally see that.

**Stephen** *(who nobody is listening to)*

Actually,

It’s supposed to symbolize,

Uh,

Fertility,

Bounty,

Unity, uh,

Washing away your past and starting fresh

…

Et cetera.

Traditionally.

I think a lot of people just don’t like rain, so they think

They say that

It’s God crying

Or some bullshit like that

To get other people to think it’s bad luck

**Daphne** *(reading from phone)*

Other things that are supposed to symbolize tears at weddings:

Pearls

And almonds

Onion soup

Peonies

Yellow roses.

Those are all bad luck.

So is seeing a nun

Or a monk

Or a pregnant woman

Or dropping your ring

Or wearing your dress beforehand

Or making your own wedding dress

Oh, oh, oh!

But here

*Here*

It says that crying is actually *good* luck.

If the bride cries

It means she’s shed all her tears

Before the marriage

And the marriage itself will be happy

And tearless.

**Winter** *(to Daphne, genuinely)*

I love you.

**Daphne**

I love you.

**Clara** *(to Nate)*

I love you.

*Nate moves to the bar*

*He gives this speech from behind it,*

*Like a gregarious bartender,*

*Entertaining his late-night regulars.*

*Partway through, he discovers an unopened bottle of champagne.*

**Nate**

Back when Bill and Steph met

And when we met them

I didn’t think they’d stick it out

But,

Here we are

At their wedding.

Let’s drink to that.

*(to Clara)*

They were our neighbors,

Back in that

(God)

That building in Brooklyn?

That apartment–

Slanted floors grubby windows smelly carpet.

We’d run into them

In the street

And talk about how we were all going to move

Out of there.

**Clara**

I *loved* Brooklyn.

*Nate opens the bottle.*

**Nate**

My point is

They were fighting constantly

Back then.

And now

They’re making the whole thing legally binding,

Till death do they part.

Isn’t that something?

Can you believe people still do that?

**Clara**

You did it.

You’re married.

To me.

**Nate**

And now we’re the ones fighting.

**Clara**

What?

And that’s my fault?

**Nate**

No, I

**Clara**

I wanted to get married to you

Because I love you

And I did

And I do.

But I loved where we lived, too

That apartment-

*She shakes her head.*

I can’t start talking about it,

I’ll get too angry.

**Stephen** *(looking at the wedding cake)*

It is a big commitment.

**Clara**

Yeah, of course it is, but *(to Nate)* you don’t have to-

**Daphne**

So intense about it...

**Winter**

Life or death.

**Stephen**

Way, way too intense.

*Nate is too busy handing out the champagne*

*To notice*

*Or care.*

*A pause:*

*People sip their drinks.*

*Everyone is tired.*

**Daphne**

But it is a super intense thing…

Like

Have you ever been cliff jumping?

Nate and I when we would go up North growing up,

There were these cliffs you’d jump off of

Nothing crazy, like 20 feet

And you’d, you’d

You’d be standing there

At the edge

And you knew you could do it,

Because your friend did it

But you’d still have to, you know, say in your head,

One two

Three.

And on three you’d jump,

And you’d fall down,

And there was always just enough time

When you were in the air

Before you hit the water

That you could really *feel* that

Like, you were so *aware* of

You’re falling
And then SMACK the water hits your feet

And it stings and you swim up as fast as you can

Because you go so deep

And you gasp for air

And everyone cheers

And it’s all ok

And good

And when you think back on it,

It was all really fun and worth it,

But when you’re up there waiting…

*Silence, for a moment.*

*Then Stephen speaks into the silence.*

**Stephen**

I met

The happiest couple that I’ve ever met

When I left–

When I was in

Vermont.

They were so happy

I wanted to

Uh, like,

Punch them in the face?

You know?

*Pause.*

**Daphne**

No.

**Stephen**

Yeah

So this couple

In line for coffee one morning

After I’d been there for a couple of days.

They had on those big hiking backpacks,

Bandanas,

Rain jackets,

Boots,

You know,

Gear.

Tall guy, tiny lady,

Beard sunglasses smile

Rosy cheeks blue eyes

Loud voices.

This old guy

That they’d met online somehow

Took us to his farm

About a half an hour out of town,

Yeah.

When we got to the farm, the old guy led the three of us to the guest bedroom.

 “There’s only one bed,” he said to us, like,

We were gong to have to fight for it

The tall guy had already laid down on it, over the covers, kicking off his boots.

“No problem partner,” he told the guy, “no problem at all.”

I wound up sleeping on the floor.

We ate dinner that night with the old guy

And his family.

All of their kids hated school

And whined about it

So much

All night.

We worked there next few days

Fixing things, feeding the animals,

Simple stuff.

The couple

They liked moving things around,

A lot

Collecting piles of plywood

Then moving them

15 feet further down the grass

To where I was fixing this huge fence.

Then another 15 feet

And another

And another

Talking the whole time

About

People places dog breeds food air fares hiking boots vistas.

Eventually, they told me they were moving on.

I decided to stay.

I kept on working

Mending the same fence

Until

Until it was all mended.

*Pause.*

**Clara**

Did they have rings?

**Stephen**

I don’t remember

**Clara**

You have to check!

**Daphne**

They probably weren’t even married

**Nate**

Doesn’t sound like it.

**Winter**

They could just be traveling together

Like

Platonically.

People do that all the time.

**Stephen**

They were definitely together.

**Clara**

How do you know?

Are you sure?

**Nate**

No wait

They didn’t

They didn’t like

Do

*It*

Or anything

When you were

I mean

Sleeping

On the floor

Next to them

Or anything?

**Stephen**

Yep.

*Everyone groans.*

**Winter**

Doesn’t mean they were married

Or dating

It just means

**Nate**

That is rough.

**Stephen**

It really-

**Daphne**

Yeah that is pretty rough.

**Nate**

What about the people who lived above us

Clara?

So many parties.

In Brooklyn?

And it was like

Close the gym

Am I right?

**Clara**

I thought we weren’t talking about

**Nate**

It just reminded me

Because we could hear them

*You know*

Too.

So

**Clara**

Yes but that’s not what we’re

**Nate**

I know but

**Daphne**

Nate-

**Winter**

Let them-

**Stephen**

Guys-

**Nate**

I don’t understand why

You care about

That apartment.

We left it.

We’re past it, and

We’re married now

We’re old.

That’s who we are.

And what, living like college kids

In some hobo first apartment

Would change that?

Having three jobs, scraping by?
I want a career

I want stability

I want a family.

We’re supposed to be working towards all that

Together.

We’re getting older

Growing old

Together.

That’s the choice we made.

**Clara**

I wake up every day

*We* wake up

And we make the choice

The active choice

To keep this thing

Our marriage

Our *love*

Going.

It’s not something we did

And are stuck with.

We get older,

We change,

We improve ourselves,

We make sacrifices,

But…

Yes, there were cockroaches in that apartment

Sometimes

Yes, the floor was slanted

But only in the kitchen!

Its little porch

Our neighbor’s basil, mint, and thyme in their window box

The way they smelled when you unlocked the front door

That friendly fat cat

And old, quiet dog

That would lay out near the door in the summer.

Whose were those?

The single-digit apartment numbers

The old lady landlord who could never pronounce my name.

*Cl-air-uh, Cl-air-uh, Cl-air-uh*, she said.

And I’d say, “It’s Cl-are-uh, actually?”

And she’d say, “Sorry Cl-air-uh!”

The park just around the corner from our house

Strollers mommy-bloggers overpaid babysitters.

All you remember is the dirt.

Then where did we move?

Why?

**Nate**

We

**Clara** *(getting angry now)*

Because when we left work

We’d get on the opposite platform

As the people we worked with?

Because you’d see them,

Over there

Ties loose

Chatting

Laughing

Connecting

And you wanted to be a part of that?

Because,

Eventually,

You had it with those long train rides

Across town

To see your friends on weekends.

You’d never take a book

Or headphones

You’d sit there

Next to me

Staring

Staring

Staring at the stops left before we got home.

And even though I was happy

With where we were

We moved

To a glass building

Iron and glass and granite and keyless doors

Sleepy doormen

Barking dogs

Trash on the street

For what?

So you’re in the right neighborhood?

*Silence.*

You can’t tell me that I don’t do this

For love

Because

If I didn’t love you I’d have stayed in Brooklyn.

Where I can breathe.

*A long silence.*

*Nobody relaxes.*

**Winter**

Well you can hardly blame them.

**Stephen**

For

**Winter**

For thinking the poor guy was asleep and doing it

In a bed

Right next to him.

**Nate**

Oh god.

**Winter**

What?

They can’t

Want each other like

That?

*Pause.*

**Stephen**

I got used to it,

Really.

**Nate**

No

Yeah

They can

**Winter**

Daphne and I

When we first met

Well,

When we first started going out

All we would do was have sex.

Every time we hung out.

Nighttime

Daytime

Around other people

It didn’t matter.

We’d fuck.

We’d go to a gallery opening,

Talk about it,

See friends,

Eat some cheese and crackers,

Go home,

And fuck.

Go to a reading,

Mingle, talk literature,

Go home,

And fuck.

Go to a movie,

And fuck.

Go out to dinner,

Get ice cream,

Have a nightcap,

And fuck.

It got to the point

Where

Every night

For a stretch, a long stretch

Too long

We’d be at each other’s houses

Until two, three, four, five, six,

Seven in the morning.

Sleeping, not sleeping,

Fucking, not fucking,

Watching TV,

Listening to music,

Ignoring the TV,

Ignoring the music,

And fucking.

*Pause;*

*Winter remembers.*

**Daphne**

How is that supposed to make him feel any better?

**Winter**

I don’t know.

I just thought

**Daphne**

Well now everyone knows how much we

Fucking fucked

Right?

So…

**Clara**

I liked it.

**Winter**

I didn’t even talk about the

**Stephen**

Hey.

Hey.

I’m just wondering

Why does everybody feel like they can give me advice all the time?

Just because, you know

You’re all married.

**Nate**

What? No.

**Winter**

Stephen…

**Daphne**

We’re not married

**Winter**

Absolutely not

**Daphne**

Absolutely not?

**Winter**

Well,

**Nate**

Yes?

**Clara**

Nate.

**Daphne**

Well, don’t you think that

I mean we might

One day

You don’t think about that?

**Winter**

Are you asking

**Daphne**

No!

**Winter**

No?

**Daphne**

No, I mean-

Yes I mean no

Like

You know

I’m just *thinking* about it.

**Winter**

We don’t have to talk about this now.

**Daphne**

I want to,

Though.

**Winter**

I mean

I don’t know

If I believe in it

In that way?

**Daphne**

What

**Winter**

Like,

Why do you need to be so

Make such a big deal out of

What’s our little thing

**Daphne**

Little?

**Winter**

I didn’t-

**Nate**

No one is going to deny

My baby sister

The wedding she’s been dreaming about.

No one is going to keep me

From giving the toast

I’ve been working on

Every evening commute

Since I got married

So that

The time comes

When I get to transfer this note

To Microsoft word

And print it out

To put into the breast pocket

Of a rented tux

And read it.

In front of everyone we’ve ever known and loved throughout our entire lives

On the biggest most important special spiritual day

Of my sister’s life.

You can’t deny me that.

**Clara**

So that’s what you were doing

On the train

That’s what you were thinking about

That whole time

When we were

When I was standing next to you

In a crowded

No room to breathe,

To think

To put my headphones in

And you’d be there, next to me

Falling over at every stop and start

Grabbing onto my arm to stay on your feet

Staring at your phone

Staring at the stops left

At the ads

And I’d ask what you were thinking about

Or how your day was

Or where we should have dinner

And you’d say

Nothing fine anywhere I’m not that hungry.

That’s what you were doing

Instead of

Looking at

Being with

Me?

*Pause.*

**Nate**

Yes.

**Clara**

Ugh.

**Winter**

Well, I’m not

**Daphne**

It’s fine

**Stephen**
It’s not about you,

Dude.

**Winter**

He’s right.

**Stephen**

It’s about them

And their

Love

Or whatever.

**Nate**

Who are weddings for

If not the families?

You

You suffer through it

You…

Standing up there in something itchy.

Do you think Bill and Stephanie like string quartets?

Do you think they danced their first dance

To their favorite song?

A song that will remind them

Of each other

For all-fucking-time?

No.

They’re going to hear that song

In a few months

At another wedding

And one will turn to the other

And say

“Didn’t this play at our wedding?”

And the answer will be yes

Because it was Grandma’s favorite

And she insisted on it.

**Clara**

What about our wedding?

You didn’t think about me?

I was thinking about you

About us, our future

The whole time.

I’m serious

It didn’t matter how uncomfortable

How boring

How the wax burned my hand when we lit the candle together

How your mother talked to you more than I did at dinner

Your sister’s crappy music taste

Those goddamn cigars.

None of that got in the way of

It couldn’t ruin what was still

Our

*Our* day

To me.

Our one day

Our beginning.

**Winter**

A wedding is a wedding,

Is a wedding,

Is a wedding.

No matter how you do it.

There are steampunk weddings

Bathtub weddings

Space-themed weddings,

Underwater weddings,

Televised weddings,

Unplugged weddings,

Shotgun weddings,

Mass weddings,

Intimate weddings,

Reality TV weddings,

Spiteful weddings,

Young people weddings,

Old people weddings,

Country club weddings,

Second weddings,

Third weddings,

Fourth weddings,

Triumphant weddings…

It’s the same

If you say your vows in gibberish

Or Latin.

**Clara**

But

I saw you

Crying during the ceremony.

And you

And you

And…

*Clara can’t call out Nate,*

*Because she can’t find him.*

*They all look around for him.*

*He’s snuck back into a corner*

*Where the cake is,*

*And is slicing it.*

*Quietly.*

*They notice him, there,*

*And watch him*

*Cut the cake.*

*There is some silence.*

*And then some more.*

*He only starts talking when he realizes that everyone’s looking at him.*

**Nate**

I don’t want to say that we got married when we were

Too

Young naive passionate physical idealistic

But…

There’s nothing wrong with getting married young

Is what we told ourselves

And it’s true

For some people

But for us…

We made this promise to each other

Our old selves made this promise to each other

And now

Neither of us are those people.

That doesn’t mean we don’t

Or didn’t

Or do

Love.

But…

And I’m not saying that we should

(Ugh)

(Divorce)

Or you know

Anything like that

But I’m saying that things change and we

Struggle

Are struggling to

Keeping up with those changes,

Aren’t we?

Yes, we’re trying

And we’re going to keep on trying.

And it will be ok

It will be

Alright.

*There is some silence after this.*

Can someone help me out with this cake?

**Winter**

Gluten-free.

**Daphne**

A small slice

For me

Very small.

I have nightmares if I eat before bed.

**Winter**

Really?

**Daphne**

Oh shut up.

*Clara, Daphne, and Stephen go to the cake,*

*And collect some*

*From Nate.*

*A long silence.*

**Stephen**

When I got back to New York

By the time I got on the train back

From Vermont

My phone was dead,

My clothes were dirty,

And I was dead tired.

I got back to my apartment around 2am.

My roommates were asleep.

I’d been gone for about a week and a half.

When I went into work the next day, there was someone else

There.

Sitting at my little desk.

When they asked who I was, I just left.

When I got home

I looked at Facebook for the first time in two weeks

And I just had this moment

Like

My friends

My world

Had carried on without me.

It felt like

Being gone

Those nights sleeping on the floor in Vermont–

That was my real life.

Like where I was

In the city,

Surrounded by people,

Noise

Chaos

That was where I was running away to,

Not the other way around.

I’m here

With you all

Who are

You know

Together

And I’m

You know…

**Clara**

It’s nothing like that.

**Stephen**

It is! It is.

Isn’t it?

It totally is.

It’s exactly that.

**Winter**

Stephen, calm down.

**Nate**

Stephen, buddy.

**Daphne**

I don’t want to say that I’m worried about you

In a way that would be

Condescending

Or anything.

But…

**Winter**

We all seem to be growing up, getting older.

**Nate**

With each other

**Winter**

With other people, yeah, and

**Nate**

Now we’re starting to think that

That

**Clara**

Where’s that person for you, right?

Like

**Nate**

We want this thing for you

Not because we think you *need* it

No, no it’s not that

At all.

**Winter**

We’re just a part of these

Things

That, yeah, are hard

But they keep us going

**Daphne**

It keeps me going.

**Nate**

They keep us going.

**Clara**

Right.

**Daphne**

And we want that, for you,

Right?

We all do, I think.

*Pause.*

**Stephen**

Great.

*Silence.*

**Winter**

Do you know that feeling of

Your neck is tight

Your arms are tired

And you think

I just need a massage

Or something

And you rub your own neck

And roll your shoulders

Or take a hot shower

But the knots stay.

Your shoulders don’t relax.

You’re not

Relaxed.

You need someone else

That

You can call when you’re walking home

For no reason.

Someone you have dinner with

Every night

Unless you make other plans

And if you were to eat without them

Or vice versa

It would be strange.

It might not even feel like dinner.

**Nate** *(to Stephen)*

Hey

How about I introduce you-

**Stephen**

No

**Daphne**

What if

**Stephen**

No

**Nate**

Someone from

**Stephen**

No

**Clara**

I know this

**Stephen**

No

**Daphne**

Why don’t you call

**Stephen**

Really

**Daphne**

Or I can email

**Stephen**

Thanks but

**Nate**

Makes great salmon

**Stephen**

I appreciate

**Nate**

Steak?

**Stephen**

Guys

Guys guys guys

Guys

Guys

Guys guys

Guys.

I’m fine.

*Pause.*

It’s fine

It’s totally totally totally...

Fine.

I’m fine.

*Pause.*

**Winter**

We talk about marriage

But we never talk about why we think it’s

Necessary.

When we talk about it

We really just mean
Like

Adult life.

Why legally codify something

A relationship

That’s so personal

And organic?

**Daphne**

I don’t know.

**Clara**

Because it’s what we need

To be secure.

Right?

To be sure that it won’t disappear

Poof

Like that.

To be held,

Beholden

Legally

To another person

Should totally be intimidating and scary and institutional

But that shouldn’t stop

That shouldn’t keep us

From actually caring

From really trying

Nurturing what we-

**Winter**

I mean,

Other animals don’t have

Weddings

Do they?

**Daphne**

I wish they did.

Imagine that

Imagine that.

**Nate**

I am.

**Winter**

But there are

Monogamous species

Beavers

Albatrosses

Penguins

Macaws

Vultures

Barn Owls

Turtle Doves

Wolves

Swans

Just to name a few,

But did you know

In the five thousand different kinds of mammals

Only

Three

To five

Per-cent

Mate for life?

**Daphne**

Which makes us the exception to the rule.

**Winter**

If we are

In fact

Exceptions to the rule.

Who really knows?

**Nate**

They haven’t figured that out.

**Winter**

Science isn’t perfect.

Nobody can predict the weather

Perfectly

It’s all just guesswork.

**Daphne**

But

There’s NOAA

And

Radar

And everything.

**Winter**

Educated guesswork.

*Silence.*

*Nobody has anything to say.*

*Droopy eyes yawns heavy limbs thoughts of sleep.*

**Clara**

It’s late.

**Nate**

Yeah.

**Clara**

I can’t figure out what anyone’s talking about

Anymore.

**Nate**

Yeah.

**Clara**

Let’s go to bed.

**Nate**

Yeah.

Oh!

No.

Wait

Waitwaitwaitwaitwaitwaitwait

Wait.

*Nate runs behind the bar,*

*And finds an aux cord*

*For his phone.*

*He plugs it in, and it makes that horrible crunching sound in the speakers.*

*He plays a wedding song,*

*That he and Clara danced to*

*At their wedding,*

*And comes out from behind the bar.*

**Clara**

Oh.

What is

?

**Nate**

Can we

Do you want to

One more

A last

Dance

Before bed?

**Clara**

Oh.

Yes.

*The song starts.*

*He puts his arms around her.*

*She leans into him.*

*The rest of them watch.*

Is this from…?

**Nate**

No.

**Clara**

Oh.

It sounds like

**Nate**

I know.

*They dance, the two of them.*

*Then, Winter and Daphne dance, too,*

*Close by,*

*Once Nate and Clara have forgotten*

*They’re not alone*

*In the room.*

*Stephen does a little twirly thing*

*By himself.*

*A solo.*

*Before fixing himself a drink*

*And settling down.*

*The couples move across the stage,*

*Sometimes in sync,*

*Sometimes on totally, completely, different wavelengths.*

*Nate and Clara stop dancing before the song is over,*

*Wave goodbye to Stephen,*

*And skirt around Winter and Daphne,*

*Who are still dancing,*

*On their way out.*

*By the time the song fades out,*

*Winter and Daphne sit together*

*Holding each other*

*Far away (across the stage) from Stephen.*

**Daphne**

Do you think I could

Guess the weather?

Correctly?
Like exactly exactly right?

**Winter**

How would you-

**Daphne**

I don’t know.

Send a balloon into space

With a little camera.

Or just guess

Something

I want to guess something right.

Nothing terrible

Just like

A tornado in Oklahoma

Or a thunderstorm in Oregon

Or a cold snap in Minnesota

Something common

But uncommon enough

That it’s still special.

**Winter**

I have no idea what you’re talking about.

**Daphne**

I love the Weather Channel

All those awkward people

Don’t you?

You don’t

Don’t you.

**Winter**

I like listening to music

Podcasts

Things that people made.

Art,

Not

**Daphne**

But but but

They’re sweeties!

**Winter**

You don’t like

*Watch* them

You just put it on.

**Daphne**

Do you remember

The stars

When we went for

A walk

Last summer?

**Winter**

When?

**Daphne**
When we went

Up North,

Ya dingus.

**Winter**

Oh, oh yeah.

*That* walk.

**Daphne**

There were so many

And the Milky Way

Up there too.

You never see that in the city.

Only in the middle of nowhere.

**Winter**

Can we go back soon?

**Daphne**

If I can get vacation days

**Winter**

And if your parents let you use the cabin after

**Daphne**

The stain came out!

The stain came out

She thinks she can still see it but

The stain came out.

**Winter**

I know

I know

I know

I know

I know.

*They fall asleep*

*Accidentally*

*Together.*

*If there are windows in this ballroom*

*We can see the first light of the morning.*

*If there aren’t,*

*Stephen looks at his watch.*

**Stephen**

Good morning.

*Silence.*

*Then, with a smile:*

Good mornin’,

Good mornin’,

We’ve talked the whole night through.

Good mornin’,

Good mornin’,

To you…

Ba-da ba-da ba-da ba-da-da-da-da.

Do you ever wake up

Too early?

And since you can’t fall back asleep

You walk out

You go outside

Down your block

And everything is closed

And no one is around

And it’s terrifying.

Because if you go out late

Like late at night

There are still things happening,

Really really late into the night,

But early in the morning, it’s…

Stillness

Silence

Sleep.

*He looks to the audience for a response.*

Me neither.

That morning

When I ran away

When I left New York

It had been another week of plans falling through.

People forgetting to meet up

Or follow up

Or getting lazy

At the last minute

Refusing take the subway to meet me

Refusing to go to the restaurant

Where I was

Because we’d made reservations

There

Yesterday.

That morning

I woke up early

(Which I usually don’t do)

I woke up so early

That

It felt completely dark outside.

I went to the kitchen

To make coffee

An entire pot

For me and my roommates

The three of us.

I looked outside our kitchen window.

The sun was just beginning

The sky was getting brighter

Like it is right now.

The city was still.

The city is never still.

I closed my eyes for a second

I tried to take a snapshot of that stillness

The darkness

The morning light.

I was concentrating so hard.

And then

A car drove by

A dog barked

And I opened my eyes.

There was a lady walking her dog,

On the street below the window.

It was sniffing the trashcan below my building

For a few minutes

Before she started yelling at it.

TAKE A PISS
TAKE A PISS
PISS PISS PISS

PIIIIIIIIISS.

The dog looked up at her with this look, like,

“There should be nothing that stops you from sniffing wherever you want, for as long as you want, as long as what you’re sniffing is fascinating and satisfying to you, why can’t you understand that?”

That’s when I knew

I had to leave.

*Stephen stands up,*

*And moves*

*Closer to the couple onstage,*

*Carrying his glass along with him.*

There’s this diner in Rutland

Where I ate

The waitress asked what I was doing there

Like

She knew

That I was gone

That I had left somewhere.

I told her that I had to get out of New York.

She nodded.

“Too many people down there,” she said.

“That’ll fuck you up.”

I asked her where she was from,

She said Staten Island.

Isn’t that funny?

I asked her why she moved to Vermont

And she said ‘for school’

And when I asked why Rutland

She just said

“Husband.”

Not in a resentful way.

With a shrug:

Just,

“Husband.”

*A long pause.*

*Maybe he refills his glass.*

I’m not scared of being by myself

I like being alone

I like

Reading.

But being alone forever…

I was the kid who was afraid of roller coasters.

Who would hold my friends backpacks

While they waited in line

And went on the ride

And I’d watch

And breathe in the theme park fumes

And sweat through my shirt

And count how much cash I had left

For the midway

And make sure that my car keys were still in my pocket

And look next to me on the bench

There are always waiting benches

At the mothers

And babysitters

Who were there

Watching the kids on the ride

With me.

They’d be reading

Or knitting,

Sometimes.

But mostly they just watched

They just sat there

In their comfortable pants

And watched the ride

Looking for their kids

Following their progress

So they could stand up

So they could be ready

Right when the kid came wobbling out of the gate

Smiling green-faced windswept amped up thrilled

To go to the next ride.

I think about that

Sometimes

And I worry I’m still watching the ride

Instead of getting on.

*Silence.*

*Stephen straitens his tuxedo as best he can.*

*He clangs a fork against his glass,*

*Shattering the silence:*

*Ding-ding-ding-ding-ding!*

*At this point, he is downstage of Daphne and Winter,*

*In his own light,*

*In his own focus,*

*For the first time,*

*Really.*

You don’t need to impress each other

To have a good marriage.

You don’t need to be codependent

Or, even, exclusive

Sexually, romantically

To have a good marriage

Or relationship

Or whatever it is

For the two three four five of you….

You don’t have to like the same rides

Or restaurants

To have a good marriage.

You don’t need the same friends

You don’t need a dog

You don’t need a bidet

You don’t need to laugh at each other’s jokes.

You don’t need to show your love in the same way

Or need to be loved in the same way

To have a good marriage

You don’t need to stay married

To have a good marriage.

There are so many things you don’t need

Because

You have each other.

*Pause.*

*Stephen opens his mouth,*

*Closes it,*

*And raises his glass.*

To Bill and Stephanie.

*The End.*