

ROUTINE

CHARACTER NAME	AGE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	GENDER
LAUREL	43	A politician, married to George for twenty years.	Female
ALLEN	43	A stay at home father. Married to his wife for 10 years. Has 3 daughters and one son.	Male
CYNDI	33	Allen's wife.	Female
GEORGE	50	Laurel's Husband	Male

#### NOTES ON MARKINGS

- Any time a “/” is used the next line should begin where that mark states.
- Any time a word is made **red** both Allen and Laurel should be saying that line together simultaneously
- Any time a word is **blue** both Cyndi and Allen say those words together simulatenously.
- Any time a word is in **Green** both Cyndi and George say those words together
- Any time a word is **ORANGE** both George and Laurel say those words together.
- Any time a word is in **Purple** everyone says it together.

George and Laurel “lie” next to each other on a bed. Allen and Cyndi stand on either side of them.

CYNDI:

(To Audience)

There’s two phases of relationships: The now, and the then.  
And the now we have to bear--witnessing how we exist inside of it. We can’t change what we can’t assume.

GEORGE:

But the then we remember fondly even while knowing--  
We fall out more than we fall in  
To what happens at the beginning of an affair and the end of one.

LAUREL:

(To Audience)

I used to love him/ more.

ALLEN:

My wife means everything to me.

CYNDI:

What’s funny is when the falling happens.

GEORGE:

Because when one person goes down--the other stays where they were. The whole time.

CYNDI:

(To Audience)

But either way it always leaves bruises.

GEORGE:

And both the “now” and “then” become a discolored kind of purple.

LAUREL:

(To Audience)

And I really think the only reason I don't love him now is because of me.  
And that's a shame.

ALLEN:

She meant everything to me.  
Now she doesn't.

And that's a shame.

CYNDI + GEORGE:

Huh.

LAUREL + ALLEN:

The now:

GEORGE:

Entering the scene.

Stop. Your feet are/freezing.

LAUREL:

Your legs are warm. Come here. Hug me.

GEORGE:

George, you're freezing!

LAUREL:

I don't have socks on.

GEORGE:

That was your idiot choice.

LAUREL:

They're socks.

GEORGE:

Just stop.

LAUREL:

Fine. Your nose is /cold.

GEORGE:  
(kissing Laurel's nose)

I'm cold because you keep putting your feet on me.

LAUREL:

A beat.

Want to watch a movie?

GEORGE:

I have work tomorrow.

LAUREL:

So.

GEORGE:

I'm tired.

LAUREL:

GEORGE:  
(goosing her waist)  
Come on, Laur. Play with me. I want to play.

LAUREL:

No.

GEORGE:  
I'll cook you breakfast in bed Sunday morning if you play with me now.

LAUREL:

Then there'll be church.

GEORGE:

Come on.

LAUREL:  
You're whining's not gonna get me elected--church will. So god wins.

GEORGE:

Come on!

LAUREL:

No, so...

GEORGE:

So what?

LAUREL:

Be responsible.

GEORGE:  
I just want to have fun, with you. With my wife.

Laurel groans.

GEORGE:

Is that really such a chore now. I'll make you cheese grits. Do bribes work on you?

LAUREL:

Not funny.

GEORGE:

Do they?

A pause.

LAUREL:

Fine. One movie. For cheese grits. And then bed--and then work and then church--and no more come play with me's.

GEORGE:

Cross my heart hope to die.

LAUREL:

You're a ten year old. It's exhausting.

GEORGE:

And you're a hard-ass and it's no fun.

LAUREL:

You used to like that.

George reaches over preparing to set an alarm.

GEORGE:

What time do you have to get up tomorrow?

LAUREL:

6:00...I guess. I don't know. Set it for 5:00 so I can make you push snooze 80 times.

GEORGE:

Okay. Love you.

(A pause.)

LAUREL:

(Concerned)

George. Stop being so nice.

GEORGE:

You had a hard week, I just want to/ help.

LAUREL:

You're always so *nice*.

GEORGE:

It's not a big/deal.

LAUREL:

Why are you always so nice? I don't deserve that.

GEORGE:

Yeah, you/ do.

LAUREL:

It makes me feel bad.

GEORGE:

Why?

A pause.

LAUREL:

I'm tired.

GEORGE:

I'm sorry.

He kisses her forehead. She winces.

LAUREL:

No movie. I'm going to bed.

GEORGE:

Wait, no that's not what we/ said.

LAUREL:

Yeah. Well I'm sleepy.

GEORGE:

Okay fine. Then let's put the movie in and you can just--stop worrying.

LAUREL:  
Quit it.

GEORGE:  
I won't. You work/ too hard.

LAUREL:  
See, that's what I mean. You're being so/ nice.

GEORGE:  
What are you talking about, I just want to relax/ with you.

LAUREL:  
Well I don't.

GEORGE:  
Okay.

A pause.

GEORGE:  
Come on, let's start it. Two hours of fun with me, then sleep.

He smiles kissing her forehead. She flinches.

LAUREL:  
(A pause.)  
I don't really want to do anything now. And stop putting your feet on me. They're cold.  
You're freezing me out.

GEORGE:  
You don't have to keep being so/mean.

LAUREL:  
Goodnight George.

GEORGE:  
Are you serious?

LAUREL:  
Goodnight.

GEORGE:  
Fine. Love you.



LAUREL:  
Yeah. Goodnight.

Allen and Cyndi enter standing together.

GEORGE:  
(To Audience)  
Sometimes it's hard to tell what's colder--my feet or her.

Cyndi steps forward.

CYNDI:  
(To Audience)  
I try and find who to blame. I do that a lot. If I could point my finger maybe it would be better instead of this kind of sad. In Our Then:

Entering Scene.

CYNDI:  
Where were you?

ALLEN:  
Work.

CYNDI:  
Are they making you stay late? I don't like that you're staying late.

ALLEN:  
Don't worry about it.

CYNDI:  
You think that's reassuring or something, but it makes me think maybe you're not telling the truth.

ALLEN:  
It's work. Don't worry about it.

CYNDI:  
Could you include me please? Instead of saying "stop worrying". Could you maybe, tell me how your day was? Did you have a nice one? Did you smile? Did anyone make you laugh? What'd you eat for lunch? Did you go out with one of your co-workers? Like that one girl/ you--

ALLEN:  
I just lived it, I don't want to talk about it, too.

CYNDI:

For me? Did you go out with/ her?

Allen rolls his eyes.

ALLEN:

I worked, at work.

CYNDI:

Allen--

ALLEN:

I like your hair like that.

A pause Cyndi's stunned.

CYNDI:

I've been growing it out.

ALLEN:

I know, I like it.

CYNDI:

I--wow.

ALLEN:

What?

CYNDI:

You don't say stuff like that a lot.

ALLEN:

Yeah I do.

CYNDI:

You don't, when you do--it's just, off-putting I guess.

ALLEN:

I give you a compliment and it's off-putting?

CYNDI:

No, I just. It's more special when it comes from/ you.

ALLEN:

It should be.

CYNDI:  
I know. Thank you.

ALLEN:  
Why would it be off-putting?

CYNDI:  
You're not soft. You know that. You've got hard edges. Hard edged people--well they make compliments better. I like your compliments.

ALLEN:  
I feel like you're insulting me in this.

CYNDI:  
I'm/not.

ALLEN:  
Blaming me or something. First you think I lied about coming home, now my being kind to you happens few and far between?

CYNDI:  
I just--you surprised me. That's all.

ALLEN:  
Cut your hair, if you want. I don't care.

CYNDI:  
Allen--that's not what I--

ALLEN:  
It doesn't matter to me.

CYNDI:  
No, I like that you like it.  
I just--you stay out late every night.

ALLEN:  
Yeah.

CYNDI:  
Well I--

ALLEN:  
Do you not trust me?

A pause. Cyndi nods.

Okay then. ALLEN:

Okay. CYNDI:

Everything's a fight with you. ALLEN:

Is it? CYNDI:

It is. ALLEN:

Okay. CYNDI:

You don't have to fight me on everything. ALLEN:

I feel like I do. CYNDI:

Why? ALLEN:

She doesn't answer.

It's annoying. ALLEN:

Okay--I'm sorry. CYNDI:

Sure. ALLEN:

Allen, I'm sorry. CYNDI:

Yeah. ALLEN:

A beat.

CYNDI:

(To Audience)

Our Then--at one point *was* our Now. And we were just as stuck in who we were, then in what we were becoming. Together. Fingers are hard not to point.

GEORGE:

Next Morning. *Now* Early Morning, too early. Laurel's Routine, My wife.

LAUREL:

(Groans)

Five minutes. Please. Five minutes. Please. Five minutes/ Goddamn George, press the snooze button.

GEORGE:

I am. I am. Just stop yelling.

LAUREL:

I'm barely even talking. Sleepy. Don't want to work today.

GEORGE:

(Mumbled)

You have to make sure something about the pictures on the thing. You told me. You always tell me. Why am I your work calendar?

A confused silence. Laurel finally laughs.

LAUREL:

What?

George groans and rolls over.

GEORGE:

You have to go in today.

LAUREL:

You are not half-asleep helpful.

GEORGE:

I'm not trying to be. Goodnight.

LAUREL:

It's my morning. So-wake up.

GEORGE:

Work doesn't start till 8:30.

LAUREL:  
That's just not fair.

GEORGE:  
Shhh.

LAUREL:  
That's annoying.

GEORGE:  
Go. Get your ass out of bed.

LAUREL:  
No.

GEORGE:  
Call in sick.

LAUREL:  
No.

GEORGE:  
Then get your shower. It'll wake you up.

LAUREL:  
No.

GEORGE:  
I don't want to listen to you whine. I want to sleep.

LAUREL:  
Let's play. Let's not do life today okay?

GEORGE:  
(Annoyed)  
That's a change. You didn't want to last night.

LAUREL:  
I didn't not want to. I was just tired.

GEORGE:  
You're always tired.

LAUREL:  
I am not. I am not tired/ all the time.

GEORGE:

Well fine then. You're awake. I'm awake.  
Let's have sex.

LAUREL:

Come on.

GEORGE:

(Pissed)

Come on, what?

LAUREL:

You're not even funny.

GEORGE:

I wasn't joking.

LAUREL:

Fine.

GEORGE:

Good.

He starts to move towards her.

LAUREL:

It's five in the morning.

GEORGE:

So?

LAUREL:

I have work. I don't have time for this.

GEORGE:

That's right. I almost forgot. You don't have time for this.

LAUREL:

Well I don't.

GEORGE:

Because *god forbid* you have time for this.

Are you mad? LAUREL:

Should I be? GEORGE:

Of course not. LAUREL:

Well, I kind of am. GEORGE:

You're being ridiculous. LAUREL:

Well you're a bucket of cold water thrown in my face every single day so--it gets frustrating. GEORGE:

I'm getting up. LAUREL:

She gets out of the bed and stands. Not moving. Angry.

I love you. GEORGE:  
(Sighing)

Yeah. Morning. LAUREL:

I do. GEORGE:

Okay. LAUREL:

I love you. GEORGE:

Yeah. Love you too. I'm tired. Do you need the bathroom? LAUREL:

Go ahead. GEORGE:



(To audience)

It's too early for conversation.

And with her it sounds farther from familiar the longer I hear it.

Cyndi and Allen take a step forward. It's their routine now.

CYNDI:

(To audience)

Now: Midday, his Routine. He sleeps too much. My husband. Jobless. I try and leave him chores...it's not working.

(To Allen)

Did you put the socks in the drawer?

(Pause)

Allen did you put the socks in the drawer?

(Pause)

Hey. Did you put the socks in your drawer?

The navy ones don't go there. I have them separated. Otherwise you wear your navy socks with your black slacks and it just looks tacky. Okay? And these are mine. The ones with the gold toe.

An oven dings.

Can you go get the brownies out of the oven for the girls?

(Silence)

Allen.

ALLEN:

Yeah.

CYNDI:

Did you hear me?

She mimes pulling socks out of a dresser drawer.

Were you putting up laundry earlier?

ALLEN:

I did it last night, don't worry about it.

CYNDI:

You didn't do it right. It's a mess. You're gonna end up mixing up your nice clothes.

ALLEN:

Doesn't matter.

CYNDI:

Please look nice tonight. Please? For me.

ALLEN:

It's a school thing. Who do I have to impress?

CYNDI:

The parent board that we're both on?

ALLEN:

It's not a big deal.

A baby cries.

God damn it, Seth. Can you get him please? His crying is awful.

CYNDI:

Maybe if you got him every once in a while you would start to not mind it.

ALLEN:

Yeah.

CYNDI:

Just get ready please? I hung up a fresh towel for you. Use it.

ALLEN:

Sure.

CYNDI:

I love you.

ALLEN:

Love you too.

CYNDI:

(To Audience)

When you hear it enough--love you--I love you--love ya--you're the one I love--I love you--love you so much--it's like it's not even being said--and then it's not even felt.

Love you.

ALLEN:

Yeah.

Cyndi and Allen take a step back.

GEORGE:

(To audience)

Now: It's a Monday. She's in a worse mood on Monday's. She hates them. I miss happy. I miss the newness.

I miss being scared to not be attached to her for a minute. I miss the lack of distance.  
Because we actually held hands.

In The Then:

Laurel and George step out of the bed. They present forward.

LAUREL:

Bring me a piece?

GEORGE:

I don't know, pretty good cake. I might keep it for myself.

LAUREL:

Please?

GEORGE:

Anything for you.

LAUREL:

Anything?

GEORGE:

Of course.

LAUREL:

Then bring me a glass of milk too.

GEORGE:

I say you can have anything and that's it? You ask for milk?

LAUREL:

I don't abuse power.

GEORGE:

Sure.

LAUREL:

Well fine, if you're insisting then bring me a blanket.

GEORGE:

Just a blanket?

LAUREL:

A blanket, a glass of milk, and a piece of cake.

GEORGE:

That's it.

LAUREL:

That's three whole things.

GEORGE:

It just seems like wishing small.

LAUREL:

Small?! It's huge! By asking for three things I have you in my pocket.

GEORGE:

Yeah?

LAUREL:

Yeah. Because now I want a fourth thing.

GEORGE:

Which is?

LAUREL:

Come kiss me.

GEORGE:

I guess so.

LAUREL:

You said anything.

Cyndi and Allen turn to face each other.

CYNDI:

(To Audience)

Now: Today's Wednesday the 10th. Family night at the school. Honey we're having left overs. He never preheats the oven. Dinner's late.

(To Allen)

Come on, we'll just pick something up/ on the way.

ALLEN:

I'm grabbing my wallet. Let me get my stuff.

CYNDI:

We need to hurry.

ALLEN:

Well you shouldn't have gotten in the shower so late.

CYNDI:

I had to wait on /you.

ALLEN:

Don't blame this on me. You always do that.

CYNDI:

I do not.

ALLEN:

Yes, you do.

CYNDI:

Do you really/think that? I don't blame things on you.

ALLEN:

Arguing about this is just making us later. And then you'll ask me why I couldn't drive faster. If it were up to you on Tuesdays I'd probably be blamed for earthquakes, and Wednesdays I'd be blamed for the grass growing too tall.

CYNDI:

That's/ ridiculous.

ALLEN:

See, always trying to pick fights. Now come on. We need to go/, right?

CYNDI:

We're meeting Cate's teacher at 7.

ALLEN:

She should study more. She needs to study more.

CYNDI:

She does study.

ALLEN:

She needs more motivation.

CYNDI:  
(Under breath)

Her unemployed father doesn't seem to help.

ALLEN:

Have you seen my wallet?

CYNDI:

Top drawer of your bedside table.

ALLEN:

Found it.

CYNDI:

I forgot my earrings. I'm gonna go run/ and get them.

ALLEN:

You don't need them. We have to go.

CYNDI:

But you got your/ wallet.

ALLEN:

Don't argue with me. Come on.

George crawls back into bed. Laurel stands next to it.

LAUREL:  
(To audience)

6:00 Am. Wake up. Groan. Husband moves...just/ barely.

GEORGE:

The good times. Then.

Laurel turns to face George, the past.

LAUREL:

Good morning. Love you.

GEORGE:  
(To Audience)

The Bad times: Our Now.

Laurel turns away from George, the present.

GEORGE:

(To Laurel)

Good morning. Love you.

(Laurel groans.)

And the good times again. What I miss. Remembering *then* to escape from her *now*.

LAUREL:

Come shower with me.

GEORGE:

We need to get ready.

LAUREL:

So save time and shower with me.

GEORGE:

Sure.

LAUREL:

Come on.

A pause. George has a sad smile, wistful, on his face.

LAUREL:

What are you thinking? You've got a far away George face on right now.

GEORGE:

It's nothing.

LAUREL:

No, come on, tell me.

GEORGE:

Really?

LAUREL:

Yeah, I want to know.

GEORGE:

Okay. Sometimes it feels like things disappear. Like it's bittersweet how things end.

LAUREL:

You sound like yesterday's fortune cookie.

GEORGE:

See, that's why I wasn't telling you.

LAUREL:

You need to learn how to laugh at yourself.

GEORGE:

I'm trying to talk to/you.

LAUREL:

(Through her giggles)

I'm sorry. What's this about? You okay?

GEORGE:

Do you think we'll ever get burned out?

LAUREL:

What do you mean?

GEORGE:

You know. Like all marriages or I guess divorces--or something. It seems inevitable. People aren't meant to like other people this long. Do you think we'll get burned out? Do you think you'll roll over on a Thursday and look at me and say "his nose is bigger than I remember and I just don't like him anymore." Then maybe you'll get up and leave and put a sticky note on the pillow. I'll roll over and wake up to it realizing that the same love I had a week before changed in a happenstance way that erased it from existence in the span of a seven day business hours kind of time frame. But only in the mind of my wife. I'm still super in love and left behind to watch my world burn down and turn to a pillar of salt from how much broken hearted crying I'll have left to do. Which will be the worst ten years of my divorcee life. Do you think an entire relationship of home-building could black out? Can you stop loving me?

LAUREL:

You sound insane.

GEORGE:

I'm serious. Could you wake up one morning and not think of a millisecond reason why you married me. Do you think that could happen? Could you, my wife--is it possible for you to forget why you loved me?

LAUREL:

No. Why would you say that?

GEORGE:

It's possible. I can imagine it. And that's terrifying.

LAUREL:

Where is this coming from?



GEORGE:  
(To Audience)

People fall out more than they fall in.

GEORGE + CYNDI:

And I'm left waiting.

GEORGE:  
(To Audience)

And it's expected that they might fall out. So when they do--it's less about pain and more--about apathy.

LAUREL:  
(She gets defensive.)

I'll always love you. Is that a toss up in your head?

GEORGE:  
(Back in scene)

And I believe you, but what if... what if we do burn out? I've watched you do this before. You fall madly for something, like clarinet, remember that? You wanted to pick it up. You're so/passionate about it and then you hate it for the rest of your life.

LAUREL:

Fuck you. Don't compare this to anything else. My hobbies? The Clarinet?! Are you serious George, your comparing this to my hobbies? What if you burn out first?

GEORGE:

I couldn't.

LAUREL:

You couldn't but I could? Thanks for the goddamn vote of confidence. I'm getting my shower.

GEORGE:  
(Grabbing her waist)

No. You're not understanding me.

LAUREL:

Are you waiting for me to fall out of love with you?

GEORGE:

You're not taking this right.

LAUREL:

Well here George, let me fetch you the goddamn divorce/ papers.

Laurel.  
 GEORGE:

I'm getting my shower.  
 LAUREL:

Fine.  
 GEORGE:

Fine.  
 LAUREL:

Fine.  
 GEORGE:

Fuck you.  
 LAUREL:  
 (Muttered)

They start laughing.

I'm sorry / it's a stupid fear.  
 GEORGE:

I shouldn't have taken it seriously.  
 LAUREL:

Right.  
 GEORGE:

(To Audience)  
 I guess we've always been volatile.

ALLEN:  
 My new Now: It's 11 in the afternoon and I'm watching television. It's 11 in the afternoon and I woke up from napping. 10 seconds ago. The girls are at school and Seth is in his crib. All taken care of. And I'm bored.

(An afterthought)

My feet are cold.  
 When I was a kid I never used to have cold feet. I'd wear socks. Now I don't wear socks. She doesn't want me wearing socks. / It's a weird thing to not want.

LAUREL:

We went to the zoo. George and I. For our one year anniversary. Our one year of married anniversary. It was nice I guess. We saw a monkey and it jumped on his head. He's been my monkey ever since and it's the background on my phone. Him and his monkey hat. It doesn't make me laugh like it used to.

Drudge to the shower. Take off shirt first, then underwear, then socks. Feet so cold.

ALLEN + LAUREL:

I hate cold feet.

LAUREL:

Turn on the faucet. Heat up full blast. Muscles clench and then relax. Clenching muscles then relax. Wash hair. Shampoo on right hand, pump with left. Rub together then apply to head.

Laurel mimes Shampooing her hair

Rinse. Use hands as a shield for eyes. Sensitive eyes. Horrible childhood memories of mom getting shampoo in eyes.

GEORGE:

When I first moved in with Laurel, when we were just college kids, she would make me buy the tearless shampoo, the kind for children that comes in the fish bottles. I used to think that was cute...When soap got in her eyes she 'd tear up. She hated that. And now instead of talking to my present wife--I remember how I liked her better. The Then Again: Before we chose which way to fall apart.

Laurel and George face each other.

LAUREL:

Why spaghetti squash?

GEORGE:

Because it's good for you and delicious?

LAUREL:

No, why is it called that?

GEORGE:

Have you never seen a spaghetti squash be turned into spaghetti?

LAUREL:

I don't think so, actually.

GEORGE:

You shred it and it tastes kind of like spaghetti but more...watery? I guess.

LAUREL:

Can we just have normal spaghetti? With garlic and butter. And more butter?

GEORGE:

We're trying to be healthy.

LAUREL:

You're trying to be healthy.

GEORGE:

We're doing it together.

LAUREL:

We don't have to do everything together.

GEORGE:

Just be supportive--for me. Maybe? I want to do this.

LAUREL:

And so you make spaghetti squash?

GEORGE:

And so I make spaghetti squash.

LAUREL:

What are you gonna fix with it?

GEORGE:

You really need to learn how to cook.

LAUREL:

I'm good at driving through for Chinese? And ordering things on the phone. I have the menus memorized.

GEORGE:

*I'm* gonna teach you how to cook.

Now, grab the salt and fill a pot with water.

LAUREL:

Okay. Done.

GEORGE:

Then put the pot with water on the stove and start letting it boil. Dash the salt in there.

LAUREL:  
Do I have to?

GEORGE:  
It'll go faster.

LAUREL:  
You're so impatient. Why don't you just wait for the water to boil?

GEORGE:  
Because I'm the one always cooking and I don't want to have to wait.

(A pause.)

LAUREL:  
That seemed bitter.

GEORGE:  
Just throw the salt in.

LAUREL:  
Are you bitter at me? For not cooking? I do other stuff, you know.

GEORGE:  
I'm not bitter at you.

LAUREL:  
Doesn't feel that way.

GEORGE:  
Laurel.

LAUREL:  
Yeah.

GEORGE:  
Throw the fucking salt in.

LAUREL:  
No-you don't get to tell me what to do, and you don't get to be passive aggressive just because *you* always cook for *you*. Deal with it. You're an adult.

GEORGE:  
Are you mad right now?

LAUREL:

You really have to ask if I'm mad?

GEORGE:

Well, yeah. A lot. Why are you always so quick to be angry?

LAUREL:

Damn it George, I'm not angry so teach me how to cook.

GEORGE:

(Handing her imaginary spaghetti)

Here.

LAUREL:

Real spaghetti?

GEORGE:

Real spaghetti.

LAUREL:

Thank god.

GEORGE:

How about just "Thank you."

LAUREL:

See. Bitter.

GEORGE:

(To audience)

But, then again maybe we didn't choose to fall apart--we were always just falling.

ALLEN:

(To audience)

It's 11 in the afternoon and I was at work last year. Now I'm not at work this year. My wife said "that's okay"--but what I heard was "God, you're losing it.". So it's 11 and I'm on a couch.

To Seth: His baby

Don't grow up. But do. You're gonna grow up to be just like daddy. A deadbeat loser with a wife who nags. She'll be great at first. You'll love her. I don't know. I don't know if I love her. Is that awful? She's great. She really is, great wife.

She's so sad all the time. / I love your mamma Seth. I promise. I think. I have to, right?

But try not to grow up. The more you can be given in life the better. Kids don't earn things, they're just handed them. I miss that.

CYNDI:

The kids scream like banshees if I don't have someone stay with them...we could hire a nanny but I figured once he got laid off from his job it would just be...he's so strong and sure of himself. And now he kind of flops around like a dead fish? I need him to be... I mean/ It's hard. For him. Must be.

LAUREL:  
(Quiet and Fast.)  
Conditioner next. Pump  
with right hand put on  
left. Rub thoroughly;  
avoid the  
scalp, hair already oily.  
Rinse thoroughly. Private  
areas, wash rag, body  
wash, rub back, rub  
front, rub back, rub front,

ALLEN:  
(Normal Volume and  
pace)  
I stand. I walk. I grab a  
beer from the fridge.  
Wow...it's 11 in the  
afternoon and I'm having a  
beer. I sit back down in  
front of the television and  
pick up yesterday's paper.

LAUREL:

Sometimes masturbate...like today. Need to feel human. Fuck. I'm gonna be late. Do I care....

Did you print the posters?  
Do I have any calls for today?  
Any appointments.

No. You can't fudge the margins on the petition. Make it as clean and concise as possible.

You have another page of the speech for me to memorize? It's today!  
I can't handle th-

/The posters look great. Really. Fantastic.

ALLEN:

I look at the job listings on the back. McDonalds is hiring again. Someone working at McDonalds right now is working harder than me.

I've always wanted to be an ice cream taster. I think I'd be good at that. I don't get brain freezes. Never have. I do however really love ice cream. But where the hell do you even get a job as an ice cream taster.

I was a lawyer.

Now I'm nothing.  
My wife says that's okay.  
It's really not.

GEORGE:

Bright lights. Fake smiles. X-rays...kids movies. Over and over and over and over and...

Don't get me wrong I love being a dentist. I love getting to pick things out of peoples teeth. It's therapeutic but it's not staying home with Laurel. It's not sex with her and mornings where I can sleep till 2 in the afternoon.

I've seen Finding Nemo over 80 times.

I've seen Toy Story even more.

And I come home and I really just need to hit something, and scream, or sex, and testosterone, and beat my own chest or else the fact that/ I'm a man seems to disappear all together.

CYNDI:

Kids on the playground.

I hate when they fall and get gravel in their knee. I'm only glad it's not my babies. I can take care of the blood if it's not my babies. Babies are so personal, they come from inside you. It's like the doctors removed a vital organ and now I'm an empty kind of/ hollow.

LAUREL:

Go over the words with water rolling over me. Words words words...crap what's the one in the middle. It's funny how when you memorize something, when you know something so well you almost are it--it tends to disappear in a forever kind of way and not an "on the tip of your tongue way".

So at work.

Who the hell thought it was a good idea to bring me another page. I don't have time for this. I don't have time to work on another page.

I have to be believable. Please...

Let me sell this.

GEORGE:

(To Audience)

Laurel was always one for taking long showers.

LAUREL:

Please let me sell this.

GEORGE:

I'd almost say it was to avoid me.

ALLEN:

The laundry buzzes. I start to fold. / Seth starts crying. I ignore him.

CYNDI:

He shrunk my underwear. I mean...he tries he really does...but seriously? How hard is it to do the laundry right. / I'm exhausted.



ALLEN:

It's good to ignore your crying children. It teaches them that one-day they're going to be on their own. They'll have to take care of themselves.

LAUREL:

Stand in shower. Pray. Maybe. If I feel like it. Who am I praying too? Good question.

ALLEN:

Seth cries. God damn it Seth. It's piercing. The boy's gonna end up in one of those fucking boy choirs. Cyndi would love that.

LAUREL:

Stand in steam. Good for skin? That's what they say. Bullshit. I'm a politician. I know bullshit. Can I just recite the fucking constitution? Can I just recite the pledge of allegiance? Jesus Christ it's early. Unbutton the blue blouse. Left arm. Right arm. Shrug. Shit...did I put on my bra? I didn't. Unbutton. Find bra in drawer. Slide bra on. Walk into bedroom. "Honey can you hook my bra?" He groans and rolls over. Well...fuck him too. Slide bra clasp to the front hook then spin.

I had a boyfriend in college who saw me do this. It freaked him out. He said it made him think of backwards boobs.

ALLEN:

I go to the baby and pick him up. He looks like me. Blue eyes, dark hair, tan skin. I had 16 girlfriends in high school. I slept with 16 of them. God bless my son.

CYNDI:

When you see the man you love with girls prettier than you, it's an automatic kind of slap to the face. It was never easy for me to forgive him. And they were before me, they should be easy to forgive and forget. Because he's blameless. I'm good enough. He's faithful--right? Of course. / But lately...he just seems so distracted.

LAUREL:

Pencil skirt, better with thong. God damn it I hate thongs. It is too early in the morning for thongs. I don't even wear thongs anymore do I? I'm 43 why the hell do I even own these things. Find shoes. They have to trust me. I've been trained on how to dress. Black leather short heels. Correct. Always politically correct. Always watching everything and never being...well...

With that boyfriend in college.

Sliding off my bra backwards.

Nope.

It's all...political and neat.

Slip on shoes. Damn it...I forgot the stockings.

Sleep. ALLEN:

Wake up. LAUREL:

Eat. ALLEN:

Late. LAUREL:

Shit. ALLEN:

Home. LAUREL:

Sleep. LAUREL AND ALLEN:  
Sex.

Neglected. CYNDI+ GEORGE:

Suspicion. GEORGE:

Distracted. CYNDI:

The beginning of their affair. CYNDI + GEORGE:

Allen and Laurel face each other.

Bruises. LAUREL:

He's not gentle. He grabs me and sometimes when I get in the shower the next morning I see bruises on my sides. They're big. Purple. Ugly.  
And the most beautiful things I've seen on my body in years.  
The most colorful. He's not gentle. **What are you thinking?** Sometimes he'll ask, and I'll just tell him what I want him to do. How I want to feel him.

Because feeling is better than having to answer “check yes” “check no”. When what I really want to do is scream at a wall that did nothing but be a wall. And he is *so* much more interactive than a wall.

...But other times I let him tell me what he wants to do. Because I’m a nice person.

I think.

I haven't acted this way since I was 16. When spreading my legs was less of who I was fucking and more about what I was saying “fuck off” too.

High School Football players play rough, but female politicians with a 50 year old husband...they don't play with other men. Not if they know they might get caught.

But having your hands stuck halfway down the pants of the cookie jar -- kind of feels good.

Every once in a while--it even seems sweet.

He just holds me. And I need to be held. And I didn't know that--until he was holding me.

It's like when he undoes the button on his jeans I feel my face get hot and I haven't had that happen since the early 90's. It's been years since I was turned on by anything that wasn't my self.

Cyndi begins to sort through mail (that was on the dryer top). George begins to eat.

And it's more than that.

**What are you thinking?** That's what he says to me. What am I thinking?

I haven't had to think for myself.

Speech writers, people who tell me how I should dress, people who do everything for me.

George who always takes care of me.

And so I don't know

**What are you thinking?**

**How do you feel?**

I feel a little...conflicted.

I feel like I'm having sex.

I feel like you're touching me.

I feel not apathetic to life anymore because you're touching me.

I feel connected.

I feel...

**How are you feeling?**

**What do you want me to do?**

Just be inside me. Be physical with me. Because I can't give you emotion. It's not something I'm comfortable sharing.

George begins to clean the dishes and clear the table.  
Cyndi begins to hang up clothes.

Yesterday was our anniversary. My husband and mines.  
His name's George.

George breaks his tableau to wave at the audience.

George is nice.  
He came home from work.  
We went to dinner.  
We came back.  
**We had sex.**

GEORGE:  
(To audience)

It was great!

LAUREL:

It wasn't better than ours. This...this...---

**I can be what you need me to be. You give me energy.**

Be my energy. I need energy so bad. I need it like a drug. Like a caffeine fix. There's never enough coffee. Be my energy.

And so he does.

And it's simple.

And it's the most wonderful thing in the world--for the minutes it lasts--because I feel like he is looking at a half undressed mess of a woman that I can call me--and not the statue of a stone idol who looks like the corpse this job has made me into. And I feel like a person until I have to make my way back home and back into a cold bed that's only cold because when I sleep at home...

My back is always towards him.

GEORGE:

Not me.

CYNDI:

The bed is cold.

GEORGE+CYNDI:

I miss you.

LAUREL:

When I sleep here.  
My forehead is always on yours.

Be my energy.

Then I can feel you brush up against me and I get excited and nervous.  
And then you grab me and kiss me.  
And kiss me.  
And I don't have to undress myself. I am so tired of undressing and dressing and undressing and dressing and when you're undressing me I can ask you  
What's your middle name?

Thomas

And I want to have sex with you because your middle name is Thomas  
And because I need a reason to have sex  
Because I'm 43 with my head buried in sand like a half dead ostrich.  
And I don't really know how to get out. And I don't really want to until--  
Until I'm active.  
And so the weight of you on me is surfacing. You have a crooked Penis.  
Did you know that? Not really bad...but sort of.  
You shouldn't be **ashamed**.

CYNDI:

(To Audience.)

I gave him that /**shame**.

LAUREL:

You have freckles too. Just a few over the bridge of your nose.  
It's imperfect--so it's perfect.  
There's an eyelash that's slightly longer than the others.  
It falls off.  
I tell you to make a wish.  
But the weight of you crushing me is gravity  
And gravity gives me back to reality so--  
I'm thinking of the words to tomorrow's speech.  
And then you're finished--it's disappointing but  
I feel...  
Satisfied for now. The sex is just--*satisfying*.  
And you're not even my husband. You're my affair.  
And I can only feel satisfied. And that's sad.  
But it's good...because its active...it's different...it's incorrect.  
And I am so tired of being correct all of the time.  
And you're finished. And I'm finished. With this whole life we're bubbled inside of.

And then we sleep.  
 I can never remember my dreams.  
*What are you thinking?*  
 Hm.

Cyndi and George turn and present to the audience.

GEORGE:  
 Performance anxiety.

CYNDI:  
 He's distracted. I'm exhausted. Suspicion...not really. /Depression.

Cyndi is now in the "kitchen" and George is now in the "bedroom" Cyndi proceeds to wash dishes in the sink and George proceeds to dress for work. Picking shoes, tie, etc.

ALLEN:  
 She smells good. She's not loud. She has a life. A personality. She aspires.  
 I have a TV guide--and a remote.  
 She has achievements.  
 I have fake cheese dust on my fingers from chips.  
 I am nothing and she's everything so I hate her. But at least hating is passion.  
 Passion is sexual.  
 And I've resigned myself to thinking like a caveman--since that's basically what I am now.  
 My living room cave with my easy chair rock and the only time I speak is to grunt at my wife for food. And turning on the TV every morning---well you'd think I'd made fire.  
 And so I fuck her.because that's what you do in a relationship with someone who's not your wife. And she's really good at it. She's really good at everything which makes me hate her more, but I hate her less because she is *really* good at sex.  
 Then I think of Seth.

CYNDI:  
 It's a boy honey. After 3 girls it's your/ little boy.

ALLEN:  
 So I grab her even harder because, god--  
 Why would I think of Seth?  
 And then I think of my/ girls.

CYNDI:  
 Girls, don't forget to get your lunches/ for school.

ALLEN:

And then I think of Cyndi.

And then I'm finished because at the end of everything my wife's face is all I want to see.

She's all I want to feel.

But I need bright. I need alive. I need passion. I need someone who wants to be something because somewhere I want to be something and instead I take naps until 11:00. I woke up at 11:00 today. It's 11:00 right now.

I'm with her--not my wife.

I've been awake for 12 hours.

And 2 of them have already been spent fucking her.

And I don't know her name--or at least, she doesn't tell me. So I don't ask. If she's named--it's not Cyndi. So I don't want to know her name.

I already know who she is.

Television, radio, newspapers, bullshit politics.

But right now she's just a woman.

A woman who's not Cyndi.

What are you thinking?

Cyndi's eyes are blue. I couldn't help but love her eyes. They were bright and colorful. So much better than all these other girls eyes. I was proud of Cyndi's eyes. The older I got though...they started to look like water. Like dirty bath water. Like the kind that sinks down the drain in the last 2 seconds of the tornado that forms when the water rushes out of a tub.

What are you thinking?

About Cyndi.

About leaving her.

And so I do. For a moment. Because it's a release, because it's not my family.

Because it makes me happy.

No.

Because it gives me something to do.

I had a really hard class my senior year of college. That was the same year I cheated on Cyndi the first time.

CYDNI:

(Still Washing dishes, talking to herself)

I forgave him.

ALLEN:

I slept with her friend to get rid of the anxiety.

CYNDI:

(Throws a "dish" down angrily)

I understand.

ALLEN:

It's a problem. It only happened once though. Once. Once in college. We'd been dating on and off. It was one of those off moments, in my head at least. But only once! She forgave me.

CYNDI:

(Picks dish back up and proceeds to scrub)

I guess I can't.

ALLEN:

And I've fallen back into it.

What are you thinking?

How low can I sink.

George and Cyndi both stop what they're doing and put their face in their hands.

GEORGE + CYNDI:

What were you thinking

ALLEN:

I can't stop feeling guilty around her...around Cyndi.

LAUREL + ALLEN:

What are you thinking?

ALLEN:

She'll forgive me for this one too right?

LAUREL + ALLEN:

What are you thinking?

CYNDI + GEORGE:

What were you thinking?

George and Cyndi both drop their hands.

ALL:

I can't believe I thought-

LAUREL + ALLEN:

What are you thinking?



ALLEN:

Cyndi has a problem with depression.

Nope. **Fuck her.**

I like this one. I like--not my wife. Not anymore. I need this feeling. This person. She's passionate. She makes me feel-

Half alive.

She makes me feel,  
good.

She feels right.

And my entire mind is a check list of:

Yes.

No.

Cyndi. Seth.

Girls.

School.

Daddy-----

Have to be back home by 1.

And she erases that check list and so I have to be grateful to her. And I have to reward her.

By hurting Cyndi.

God damn it.

**What are you thinking?**

At least I'm doing something.

**What are you thinking?**

Ha.

CYNDI:

He won't look at me.

GEORGE:

She's so tired all the time.

CYNDI:

He's not smiling at me. What happened to my smile?

GEORGE:

I hate her.

CYNDI:

(Loudly)

Hey,  
 I love you. Please know  
 that I love you so  
 Much. I think I've always  
 loved you more. Do you  
 remember why you first  
 loved me? Loved seems  
 like--not even a word  
 anymore. But do you,  
 remember? Because--the  
 funny thing is, I can't.  
 Was it my hair? Cause  
 after the kids I cut it short.  
 So what is it? I stare at  
 ceiling fans trying to  
 remember why I was ever  
 special and--I have loved  
 you for years and I love  
 our kids, but I can't do  
 this anymore. You are  
 enough for them. They  
 don't even...they don't  
 really know me.  
 They...you're more  
 important in their lives,  
 they can do without me.  
 I'm just so tired. I'm just  
 exhausted. I need sleep. I  
 love you.

GEORGE:

(Quietly)

I hate her. She's sleeping  
 around. She's sleeping  
 with someone else. She  
 thinks I can't tell. I know  
 that face. I was the person  
 on the receiving end of  
 that face when I first knew  
 her. I hate her. I hate that  
 she lied. I hate that she  
 qualifies when I'm  
 around. "I guess that's  
 good enough's". I hate  
 that she feels "away" from  
 me. I'm disappointed in  
 her. Once a liar always a  
 liar and I hate her. I can't  
 trust you. I'm leaving. She  
 deserves to take care of  
 herself. I gave you  
 everything and I hate her--  
 for just not taking what I  
 gave. **Guess she fell out.**

The dual dialogue becomes all four characters talking at once. Each character gets loud in one specified area chosen by the director so the sound rolls off in waves. Laurel should be the last one talking. **ALL FOUR SPEAK ON NEXT PAGE. FLIP QUICKLY.**

CYNDI:

(Fast and Medium  
Volume)

**I'm sorry**, tell Seth I'm sorry too. Girls mommy loves you. I'm sorry I'm bad at this. **It's not your fault.** I'm tired. I'm just gonna go to sleep. For a while. I love you. I'm sorry.  
Allen...it wasn't you. It's never your fault. I guess. And more. I just can't keep crying myself to sleep. I keep doing that and **I'm not...happy.** I love you. Goodbye.

GEORGE:

(Fast and Quiet)

She used to make me buy that special shampoo. She takes forever to dress even though almost everything's planned out for her. She goes over speeches subconsciously like when she makes me grilled cheese sandwiches. Laurel has been the prettiest girl to me for year and years and years. She always asks me to hook her bra at ungodly hours of the morning. She comes home and smiles. **She's mine.** She's always been mine. And now she's a liar who was **more than happy to cut me out of the picture.** I don't live with liars. I can't. Goodbye. **Look what you threw away.**

LAUREL:

(Medium Volume and Medium pace)  
 What do you mean? Why are you Talking like that? Come back please? You Seem so angry why are you so angry George? Look! I told you I was gonna be late! I can't always Be at home for you to fix the fucking Toilet when it gets clogged up! It's your shit that's in there anyways Not mine.  
 Fine...fine...it's both our shit I don't give a fuck because you need to start Cleaning your own damn house, and your own Things because I have a job! I have something I Have to do too! It's just as important as being a dentist  
 George! Just as fucking important! **You fix six year old's cavities and one day I will heal nations you fucking ass hole now fix the Pipe!**

ALLEN:

(Quiet to loud and quick paced)  
 Cyndi. Cyndi. Cyndi? Cyndi! Cyndi! Where are you? Cyndi! Cyndi! Honey, **Seth is crying!** Why is he Crying? Cyndi! Are you in the bedroom? Cyndi what's going on where are the Girls? Cyndi! God damn it, where The hell are you? Where'd you go? Is the faucet in the sink on? Where's Seth he's not in his crib but I can hear him? Cyndi! I'm home! Where the hell are you? The faucet is on! We're trying to cut back on Spending this year please Remember to turn it off!? Cyndi! Cyndi? Cyndi.  
**Cyndi...oh my god.**

Cyndi by the end of the 4 person speech is gone. She should leave as the individual actor finishes talking. Laurel and Allen and George still stand.

GEORGE:

Do you ever think we'll get burned out?

George exits.

ALLEN:  
No...Cyndi?

LAUREL AND ALLEN:  
*What are you thinking?*

ALLEN:  
It's bittersweet when things end.

LAUREL:  
8:00 Am. Don't feel like getting up early. Late for work. Yawn. Stretch. Roll. Floor. Groan. Husband not there anymore. *Cold bed.* Really cold.

(Beat)

ALLEN:  
It's 11 in the afternoon and I've been awake since yesterday. I can't sleep. I have to watch her. I have to make sure Cyndi's okay. She keeps crying. 10 seconds ago she cried. She cries more than Seth.  
It's 11 in the afternoon and the girls are outside and baby's in the crib and Cyndi is in bed. And I am alone. Watching TV.

Afterthought

/My feet are cold.

LAUREL:  
Feet so cold. George always kept my feet warmer. *What are you thinking?*

LAUREL AND ALLEN:  
*I hate cold feet.*

LAUREL:  
The last 3 months. The last 3 days. George isn't here. He didn't even seem angry when he left. He just got his suit case and--walked. Hollow man. It was terrifying. *"You screwed up Laurel. How...I can't even...I can't look at you."* I screwed up George. I screwed and screwed until I couldn't feel myself anymore. I wish I had said that. Then he might have been mad.

ALLEN:  
I work now. We have a baby sitter for the day. To help Cyndi. I don't think she likes our kids very much. I think she doesn't like me very much. She doesn't like life much. So I watch her. But today's my day off. So we're together as a family. I don't like it. It's Saturday. It means I have to be with them. It means I'm with them without her. Oh sure, she's in her bedroom. But she's not there anymore. I don't know who Cyndi is. It means I hear Seth Crying. *Damn it Seth.*  
Cyndi's sick--and it's my fault.

Reading each other's letters out loud.

LAUREL:  
 Look, I know this seems sudden but we can't do this anymore. It's destroying my wife. She...she's sick. And I have kids. You were great really, but fuck. I just can't.  
 Sincerely,

ALLEN:  
 Lets meet tonight. 2 o'clock. There's no George anymore. No husband. He's gone. I'm stressed out and I need you. I'll see you tonight. Thanks.  
 Sincerely,

Oh my god.

LAUREL+ ALLEN:

Back to the routine.

LAUREL:  
 Sometimes masturbate...not today. Not since George left. I'm gonna be late. Later then late. But the words...the words are routine. Shower words shower words...drowned out the rest. Words words words...crap what's the one in the middle. The one he said. "I just don't know you anymore." ...Right. Those words. Ouch.

ALLEN:  
 The laundry buzzes. Seth starts crying. I ignore him. I ignore everyone. Cyndi does so why can't I?

LAUREL:  
 George is gone.

ALLEN:  
 It's good to ignore your crying children. It teaches them that one-day they're going to be on their own. They'll have to take care of themselves. Like when their wives swallow too many pills because I kept fucking. When their wives end up clinically depressed and stop being human beings because you keep choosing other people over them. Because I did. I kept...and I still don't want to hear her name. A love affair with no title.

LAUREL:  
 Stand in shower. Pray. Maybe. If I feel like it. Who am I praying too? Good question. But I need it this time.

ALLEN:

Seth cries. God damn it Seth. It's piercing. The boy's gonna end up in one of those fucking boy choirs. Cyndi would love that. Maybe I'll put him in one for her. God, she would really love that. Maybe then she'd talk to someone?

LAUREL:

“Plates smashing. I could kill you. I should kill you. Hell maybe I'll kill you. Angry. So angry. So angry with words that I didn't have memorized. Punches, kicks, screams, biting teeth. So that's how it's gonna be. I gave you everything. I gave you everything.”

But that's not even what he did. He just stood there. And looked.

Disappointed.

He gave me everything. He was my only thing not...politically correct. Please. George. I didn't mean too. /And then he said that I couldn't do anything that could change his mind. Nothing. Not even a new routine. On a Monday. Monday had a routine. Monday was correct. Now I'm ruined. Because of a love affair with the middle name Thomas.

ALLEN:

I go to the baby and pick him up. He looks like me. Blue eyes, dark hair, tan skin. I had 16 girlfriends in high school. I slept with 16 of them. But I married my wife. God bless my son. Now his mother doesn't care about him. And it's my fault. / You shouldn't have looked like me Seth. Bad genes.

Cyndi enters

CYNDI:

I forgave him. God damn it---Seth. The girls...I can't just walk.

Cyndi starts to fold laundry

LAUREL:

“Goodbye Laurel.”

That's it.

Well fuck you too.

And now there's no...

George enters, he pantomimes pouring a cup of coffee and hands it to Laurel

With George.

Asking him to hook my bra.

Drinking coffee together while he reads the paper to me.

Nope.

It's all...nice and clean.

Because I was wrong.

George was my husband.

Middle name Thomas, made me feel good for 2 months, was my love affair.  
 And I lost him to semantics and bullshit politics. I lost them both to never being correct but  
 always being stuck in schedules and bad routines.

Sleep. ALLEN:

Wake up. LAUREL:

Eat. ALLEN:

Late. LAUREL:

Shit. ALLEN:

Home. LAUREL:

Sleep.  
 Sex. LAUREL AND ALLEN:

Alone. LAUREL:

Allen and Laurel break the invisible “separation” and face  
 each other. Cyndi and George do the opposite facing  
 away from that separation.

What are you thinking? LAUREL + ALLEN:

What were you thinking? GEORGE + CYNDI:

God damn it... ALL:

Seth. ALLEN+CYNDI:



LAUREL:

We fall out more than we fall in.  
Maybe I'll sleep in tomorrow too.

Cyndi and George are still. Laurel and Allen begin to pantomime, Laurel taking some pills and then setting her alarm to get up and continue for the next day. Allen cooks breakfast as the lights fade to black.

EXIT.