

TO BE IN YOUR SHOES

Helen and Todd, mid to late thirties, have been married for ten years and have two children. Though they are opposites, they've always had a lively, vibrant relationship. Helen is a successful gynecologist, and Todd is a school counselor. Their marriage has had its ups and downs and an occasional weird moment, but nothing this weird. A week ago, while attending a neighbor's New Year's Eve party, Helen and Todd, blitzed on tequila, made a New Year's wish with the party's hired fortune-teller. Each of them wished to spend a day in the other spouse's body. Neither of them suspected that this wish would come true. However, this morning when Todd rolled out of bed and used the bathroom, he discovered that he had turned into Helen, physically, during the night. (Special note: Helen should be played by a female, though "Helen" is really Todd inside. Todd should be played by a male, though "Todd" is really Helen inside.)

CHARACTERS

Helen: 30s, the body of Helen, the spirit or soul of Helen's husband Todd

Todd: 30s, the body of Todd, the spirit or soul of Todd's wife Helen

SETTING

Helen and Todd's bedroom

TIME

The present, 5:00 AM

HELEN: *(From the bathroom.)* It can't be. I, I, I can't be. This. Can't. Be. Helen? Helen? *(Yelling.)* Heleen!

TODD: *(Stirring, still very much asleep.)* What, what? What's going on? *(Eyes barely open.)*

HELEN: *(From the bathroom.)* Wake up, Helen. I need your help. This is crazy! I'm going crazy!

TODD: *(Turning over.)* I think I am too. Because somebody keeps yelling and yelling.

HELEN: *(Yelling from the bathroom.)* Helen, wake up!! Something is very wrong when I look in the mirror.

TODD: *(Still half-asleep.)* Oh, honey, it's not that bad. Trust me, I look at you every day.

HELEN: No, not bad. Wrong. It's wrong. It's all wrong! It's completely, utterly . . .

TODD: Wrong? You like that word, don't you? *(Looks at the clock.)* I'll tell you wrong. Small hand on five — now that's wrong. *(Looking around.)* Where are you, Todd?

HELEN: Bathroom.

TODD: Your voice sounds funny.

HELEN: Yours too. Yours too! Isn't that odd to you, Helen?

TODD: No, it's because I'm still half asleep, thanks to you. Wishing at this point to be *all* asleep.

HELEN: You don't understand. This is big. Huge.

TODD: What is? What's huge? You? Honey, you're not fat. Go to sleep. Or rather, I'll go to sleep.

HELEN: No, you don't understand. This is an emergency!

TODD: Emergency? *(Sitting up.)* Emergency?! Oh God! Are the kids OK?!

HELEN: Yes. Yes. The kids are fine.

TODD: Is the house on fire?

HELEN: No.

TODD: Did you kill someone?

HELEN: No.

TODD: Did I kill someone?

HELEN: No.

TODD: Then I'm gonna I kill you! For waking me up at this God-awful hour! So what is it?!

HELEN: I'm coming in, Helen. I'm coming in the bedroom now.

TODD: There's no reason to announce your appearance. I'm your wife. I see you every day.

HELEN: I have to warn you. I don't want you in shock. I thought I was dreaming myself.

TODD: What the hell are you talking about?

HELEN: There is no way to ease you into this. Let's just say you will be shocked.

TODD: All right. All right. I'll be shocked. What's it this time? A pimple?

HELEN: No. I have a perfect complexion — a lot like yours. Actually, exactly like yours.

TODD: Oh. Thank you, honey.

HELEN: I'm coming in now, Helen. Very slowly. Very, very slowly. I hope you're sitting.

TODD: I swear, Todd, I will never forget that you were a *drama* major. Come in.

HELEN: (*Entering.*) OK, here I am.

TODD: I swear you make a huge deal of everything! Every single, little, tiny . . . (*Looking. Gasping at first.*) Ahhh! Ohhhh! (*Giving voice to it.*) Ohhh. Ahhh. Ohhh. This is . . . I . . . You. Not. That. Can't. You're. How'd you? . . . Did you? . . . Are you? . . . Listen to my voice . . . I sound . . . Very low. Oh God, Todd, you're, you're, you look like —

HELEN: Uh-huh.

TODD: And I'm afraid my . . . I'm not sure how I look . . . I'm afraid to . . . my voice is . . . I'm, I'm —

HELEN: Uh-huh.

TODD: Oh God. This is wrong. This is very wrong! This is completely, utterly —

HELEN: That's what I said! I told you it was huge.

TODD: Yes, but you didn't happen to mention that you turned into me and I turned into — I mean, that's big. You just kept going on about how flabby you look in the mirror.

HELEN: It wasn't that, Helen.

TODD: Oh my God! You think I'm flabby?

HELEN: Not at all.

TODD: So why were you upset when you looked in the mirror?

HELEN: Are you telling me you wouldn't be upset if you suddenly changed into your wife?

TODD: I don't have a wife, idiot. Or at least I didn't used to.

HELEN: I think if you look in the mirror, you'll understand why I was so upset.

TODD: I don't want to look into the mirror. I get the gist of things. I don't want to look.

HELEN: I'm that unattractive?

TODD: No. I just, I don't want to look because, because I just don't. I think we're drugged.

HELEN: What? We're not. Who would have drugged us?

TODD: I don't know. Obviously. But I'm going to have Becky run a blood test when I get into the office this morn . . . Oh no! My patients. I have patients scheduled all day today, Todd. What am I going to do? This getting drugged is incredibly inconvenient.

HELEN: Well, it's not exactly a picnic for me either. Besides, we are not drugged, Helen.

TODD: How do you know?

HELEN: Because I can tell. I know what it's like to be buzzed.

TODD: How? Do you have some drug habits I'm unaware of? Because this might not be the best time to bring it up, considering you have my body. And you better not return it with any foreign substances, buddy!

HELEN: I'm just saying there's probably a reasonable explanation for all of this.

TODD: Oh yes, I'm sure there is. I'm sure people come in with this problem every day, Todd.

HELEN: I'm just saying we need to go over things.

TODD: Oh my God. I just realized what it is. We're dead.

HELEN: We're not dead. We're talking.

TODD: What difference does that make? You think conversation ceases when you die? Those souls in hell have to be tortured by something. Why not their husbands talking at them? (*Beat.*) Oh God, we're dead.

HELEN: No. That's not it. How would we have died?

TODD: Well, I don't know. You must have kicked the bucket first, since you were the first to wake up. You should know better than me.

HELEN: (*Gasps.*) Haaaaa! Remember the fortune-teller at the Hansons? The New Year's Eve party? We wished that we were each other, remember?

TODD: Oh. And this is the reasonable explanation I suppose?

HELEN: Don't you remember her asking us to make a wish for a day?

TODD: I guess. Yes. I remember. I thought it was ludicrous.

HELEN: I thought it was kinda sweet. Me asking to be you.

TODD: It was. That's not the point, Todd! If this is true, the point is it's entirely your fault!

HELEN: Mine?! You asked to be me too!

TODD: Well! That was only after you brought it up. How would it have looked if I asked for a million bucks after you're being all sweet, wanting to understand the female experience?

HELEN: Come to think of it, a million bucks wouldn't have been a bad idea.

TODD: Oh great! *Now* you tell me. (*Remembering.*) Hey? Hey? Did she tell us how long this wish would last?

HELEN: Oh yeah. She said it would last twenty-four hours. Do you think she was right?

TODD: Well, gee, Todd, how do I know? Medical school doesn't exactly cover this kind of thing. (*Beat.*) Ooh, I'm getting hot. I wonder if this 'causes a fever. (*Touching her forehead and then her face.*) Huhh! No!

HELEN: What, what, what?! What's wrong?

TODD: (*Still touching face.*) It's so weird. It's so, so weird. I have scruff.

HELEN: Oh, Sweetie, it's not that bad. Sometimes it's even fun to shave.

TODD: Oh yeah. It's fun to wear panty hose too, hon. (*Touching her chin.*) Oh God. All those years of making fun of Aunt Millie for her chin hairs. This is the payback.

HELEN: What are we going to do? We have to think fast. I have appointments all day. We have to wake up the kids. Do you think we should tell the kids?

TODD: Are you kidding? Do you want them to be in therapy for the rest of their lives?

HELEN: What about our jobs? Should we call in sick?

TODD: I can't call in sick. I have a completely booked day.

HELEN: Maybe we should put in a call to Matt . . . maybe we can be up-front with him. He's a great doctor. He'll take us to the hospital and run a whole battery of tests.

TODD: Are you out of your mind? He will put us straight into an institution.

HELEN: He respects your work.

TODD: Yes. As a gyno. But that doesn't mean if I go to him and tell him I now have my husband's exterior, he's going to say, "Hum. Gee, Doctor, I've seen this before. Let's run a battery of tests and see how you're both doing since you became each other."

HELEN: (*Touching belly.*) Owww. God. That hurts.

TODD: Oh great. I'm getting my period. I mean, *you're* getting my period. (*Happiness.*) You're getting my period!

HELEN: No! I don't know how to . . . I can't . . . you can't expect me to . . .

TODD: Oh, I'm loving this.

HELEN: Don't you ever tell anyone this. You hear? Swear you won't.

TODD: Jeez, I swear, Todd. It's not like something that I really want to share with all my friends — you having my period. On second thought, that might be kinda fun. (*Beat.*) Ooh. I think I have to go to the bathroom.

HELEN: Oh. Well put the seat down, OK? Because I practically fell in this morning.

TODD: (*Laughing.*) You did? I know. Not funny. (*Walking.*) I'll be right out. (*Beat.*) Wow. I get to do this upright. Ya know, this is kinda fun.

HELEN: Fun? How in any way is this fun?!

TODD: It's just fascinating. Everything. I mean, I've never felt what it was like to be a man.

HELEN: What about our jobs?

TODD: *(Beat.)* I'll go to school today. It might be fun. I'd like to play you.

HELEN: But you don't know what I do.

TODD: Come on, you're a school counselor. I'd love to hear all the juicy stuff about teenagers and their parents and their love angst. It would be fun.

HELEN: That's not all it is.

TODD: I know. I know. You're very sympathetic. I know you're good. How much damage can I do in one day?

HELEN: Well, if you get to do that, then I get to go give a bunch of gynecological exams. I'm sure your assistant can help me through it.

TODD: I know what you're thinking, but it's not like that, Todd. You're imagining a bunch of twenty-year-old knockouts that you might like to see a little more fully. Trust me, my day is half full of middle-aged women with sagging everything.

HELEN: I'm not that shallow. I don't mind sagging women.

TODD: Thanks. Is that a hint?

HELEN: So do you have any twenty-year-old knockouts? *(She gives him a look.)* I'm kidding. Actually, I'm just curious how women interact with women.

TODD: So now you're curious?

HELEN: Sort of.

TODD: Well, it's too dangerous. We can't do it. However, your mother and my mother have been begging me to do a girl's day out — hang out at the museum, go to the beauty parlor. This is a perfect opportunity to see how women interact with women.

HELEN: Uuh! I don't want to do that.

TODD: *(Flirtatiously.)* On the other hand, there are plenty of interesting things we could find out right here at home. Maybe without even leaving the bedroom.

HELEN: Really? That's not a bad idea. *(Eyebrows raised.)* I always wondered what I'd be like in bed. *(They smile at each other flirtatiously.)*

FLY RUDOLPH, FLY!

Tyler, thirties, has agreed to bring his wife, Alison, late twenties, on his hunting trip with a couple of friends. In the past, he has gone on these trips by himself because Alison isn't exactly the type to stay still and be quiet in the forest all day. This weekend Alison begged Tyler to take her along. She feels left out and wants him to know she can do it. She also believes that doing more activities together will bring them even closer as a couple. Tyler reluctantly agrees.

CHARACTERS

Tyler: 30s, a recreational hunter, Alice's husband
Alice: 20s, Tyler's wife

SETTING

The woods

TIME

The present

TYLER: *(Quietly.)* This looks like a good spot. What do you think, hon?

ALISON: It's all right. That was so rude. I still can't believe they made us leave.

TYLER: Yeah. Well, this is a nice spot too.

ALISON: The other was better.

TYLER: I know, I know, the caverns. The gorgeous waterfall.

ALISON: The proximity to indoor plumbing.

TYLER: I know. I know.

ALISON: Well, I just don't understand it, do you? We had a perfectly happy breakfast at the cabin. We were all happy. We were laughing —

TYLER: Yeah, but I'm not so sure Jeff thought that incident with the chipmunk and the air mattress was so funny.

ALISON: He didn't? So why did he tell it?