

JESS: My favorite with an insect for the lead.  
DAVID: This timing with Tom has been all wrong. Maybe I should call it off — end it.  
JESS: Lamaze class was awful. Everyone thought I should divorce you.  
DAVID: But we're not married.  
JESS: I think I should divorce you, David.  
DAVID: I didn't say good night to the baby. *(He kisses Jess's stomach and rubs it gently.)*  
JESS: I'm serious. I don't think I can do this, David. *(He looks at her.)* I wanted to look over during class tonight and have you magically appear. I wanted to kill Tom for taking you on a date. I've gotten myself too attached. To you.  
DAVID: Jess? I'll marry you if you'd like. For real. Please. I'll be a good husband. Won't cheat with other women. I don't even mind that you're knocked up.  
JESS: I'm not joking this time, David.  
DAVID: Neither am I.  
JESS: It's not fair. To either of us. It means we give up the hope of ever really being in love. *(Pause.)* Will you leave tomorrow?  
DAVID: *(To audience.)* And that was it. The end of our marriage. No big fireworks. No divorce papers. Just a big D drop. Plain and simple. I left the next day. We weren't hopeless.  
JESS: We still had Samantha.  
DAVID: Seven pounds five ounces. All parts in good working order. She's quite a girl. It's lucky that we didn't give up. We found "someones." They're quite a lot better than what we had hoped for.  
JESS: I won't say it isn't complicated. But life's complicated, isn't it?  
DAVID: Yes. Complicated . . . and wonderful. *(Beat.)* Were we very much in love, Jess?  
JESS: *(Beat, thinks.)* Desperately.

## PU PU SURPRISE

*Beth, twenty-five, and Tom, twenty-six, are planning a wedding in the next eight months. This evening, they are celebrating their third anniversary of dating. Tom is fifty-four minutes late to their romantic dinner, making it not at all romantic. Beth is angry, worried, and suspicious all at the same time. Tom was supposed to be checking out a new property inspector so that they can buy a home or condo before the big day. Unfortunately, Tom got caught up in certain details. He arrives at Ming Wong to find Beth rather cool — but seething.*

### CHARACTERS

Beth: 25

Tom: 26, Beth's fiancé

### SETTING

Ming Wong restaurant

### TIME

The present, evening

TOM: Hey sweetie. You look absolutely beautiful. I'm sorry I'm a bit late. This looks great. I told someone today we were going to Ming Wong for our anniversary, and they said it was just great. I'm afraid to take off my shoes though, Beth, because, because well, *(Whispers.)* that fungal problem last August. Are you OK, Beth? You look pale.  
BETH: *(Composed.)* A bit? A bit late? You think you are a bit late?  
TOM: Well . . . maybe it's a bit more than a bit.  
BETH: Try fifty-four minutes late, Thomas.  
TOM: No? That late? It can't be. *(Looks at watch.)* Oop. Well, time flies sometimes.  
BETH: *(Still feigning calmness.)* So does flatware. And chop-



sticks. Hell, I bet this table will fly if I give it a college girl try.

TOM: Well, it's a long story, honey.

BETH: That includes ambulances and emergency care I trust.

TOM: Right. *(To waiter.)* I'll have a shot of —

BETH: Nothing. He'll wait. *(To waiter.)* Give us a few minutes.

TOM: I was meeting with the property inspector like you told me to, Beth.

BETH: That was at three o'clock. I was doing laundry at three o'clock. But do I now have bleach in hand? No. *(She shakes her head.)* Because between three o'clock and eight o'clock, there are five hours. *(Holding her hand up.)* Five. After washing *your* disgusting laundry —

TOM: I told you not to do my workout stuff.

BETH: I promise it'll never happen again. *(Continuing from earlier.)* I called your mother because I was worried about you. By the way, she hadn't heard one word from you.

TOM: Teaming up on the guilt trip now?

BETH: I visited three reception halls and environments and made a down payment on one.

TOM: You did? Which hall?

BETH: Environment. The Hanson Gardens. We can do the ceremony and the reception there. It's gorgeous and the food is out of this world.

TOM: You got free samples? I told you *I love* free samples. Like the cake place?

BETH: Don't distract me. Besides, I tried to call your cell phone to see if you wanted to meet me and *have* free samples. No answer. I left a message. Waited for an hour. Nothing. I came home. Balanced my checkbook. Showered, dressed, perfumed. I assumed you'd be doing similarly since it is our anniversary. I drove here. De-shoed and settled. Sat crossed-legged ready to eat a Pu Pu Platter for our special occasion. But guess what? Guess what?

TOM: They don't have a Pu Pu?

BETH: No. You were the Pu Pu! Because you weren't here! Not

only were you not here, you were not here for the next fifty-four minutes. You may wonder what went through my mind.

TOM: No. I think I have a pretty good idea.

BETH: He's dead! He's lost. He's hurt. He's dead! I'm alone. I'll kill him!

TOM: *(Trying to comfort her.)* Oh honey.

BETH: *(She smacks him.)* Don't touch me! *(He pulls back.)* I thought, he better be dead.

TOM: I was just trying to figure out if this property inspector had the right credentials to be deciding where we live. This may be the biggest investment of my — our life.

BETH: Are you telling me that you spent five hours with him?

TOM: Her.

BETH: Her? Ohhh. Her. So what property were you inspecting?

TOM: Chris Thomas is a her. Who knew? She's really great.

BETH: Um-hum.

TOM: Now, honey, wait. Don't be ridiculous. It's not like that. I visited a few houses and condos with her and a friend. She has a friend, Lydia, who's a real estate agent.

BETH: Without me? You went without me? You went with Lydia, and the property slut?

TOM: Well you put a down payment on a hall without me.

BETH: Environment, environment. That's what they call it.

TOM: The point is that you got free samples.

BETH: And they were *really* good.

TOM: *(Whiney noise.)* I was simply trying to scope out a place you might love.

BETH: I told you what I love. The cute, little, green-and-white-trimmed house with the rose garden. But nooooo —

TOM: It looked like it was sinking on its foundation.

BETH: Well so do you, Pudgeball. You wouldn't even call the realty company to have them show it to us.

TOM: That's because I thought it looked too expensive. And big. And it is big. And nice.



BETH: How do you know? (*Realizing.*) Ohhh. Did you go see it with those icky people?

TOM: Well . . . I . . .

BETH: You did? (*Angrily.*) You did!

TOM: Well, I wanted to see what Chris thought.

BETH: Naturally. And what did she think?

TOM: She said it was sinking on its foundation. But it's two hundred years old and houses that old do that. Besides, the slanted attic might be great for kids. It's perfect for race cars. Chris and I thought that was cool!

BETH: Did you?

TOM: It's big. It has four bedrooms.

BETH: Great. That'll give you plenty of rooms to sulk in alone. (*Whining.*) I drank two and a half pots of green tea waiting for you.

TOM: I'm sorry, honey. But I'm here now. Let's just celebrate.

BETH: Celebrate?! I had to pee like twenty-four times. Do you know how embarrassing that is? And the host kept looking to see that I had no date, no date at all. He looked at me all pathetic-like.

TOM: Oh baby. I didn't mean to be running so far behind schedule.

BETH: And do we have no forms of communication to communicate such lateness?

TOM: Well, I didn't have your cell phone number on me.

BETH: What? You don't know it? We're getting married and you don't know it?

TOM: I sort of know it.

BETH: No, no! You either know it or you don't.

TOM: I never call it. I programmed it into my cell phone.

BETH: Well. Where was your cell phone?

TOM: Home.

BETH: Great. So why didn't you leave me a message at my place? So I wouldn't worry? (*He shrugs sheepishly.*) I had this fantasy that you were late because you were buying me a gift — a big gift — a fifty-four-minute-type gift.

TOM: Gift? What kind of gift?

BETH: Well, duh. An anniversary gift.

TOM: I understand. But you told me no gifts. You said that the other day. Tuesday. You said no to gifts. You said we should save up for the house and the wedding plans.

BETH: I didn't say no gifts. I said no *big* gifts.

TOM: No, no. I know you said no gifts. On Tuesday morning when we were in bed naked.

BETH: No, I said no *big* gifts.

TOM: No. Time out. Unfair. Untrue.

BETH: Well, I don't know what I said. But just because I *said* that doesn't mean . . .

TOM: Oh God. Was this one of those times when you say something that means the opposite?

BETH: I thought you knew that.

TOM: But how could I . . . I was going to . . . But you said no. You said no —

BETH: I bought *you* a gift.

TOM: Oh no! No. No. I don't want it. Take it back.

BETH: It's at home. It's that CD player you wanted.

TOM: Oh God. Well, I'll get you something this week. Whatever you want.

BETH: No, I don't want anything. The whole anniversary thing is ruined. We're late, and I'm beyond starving. And I seem all mean now. And you like the, the property slut. And I just wanted everything to be romantic, and perfect and Chinese. And I love you.

TOM: Oh honey. I love you too.

BETH: You don't act like it.

TOM: I love you. I so love you. And I wasn't flirting with anyone. I was thinking the whole time of you. Lost in what it would be like for us to live together finally.

BETH: Aww, Tommy. Really?

TOM: Really. I was looking at places you liked the best. And I never thought the psychic was going to take so long.

BETH: Um. Tommy? What psychic?



TOM: I didn't mention her?

BETH: No, no. You didn't happen to. You stopped to see a psychic?

TOM: No. I didn't stop. She was just there. Actually, strangely, she lived in the green house with the white trim.

BETH: Oh-kay. So you thought you'd chat with ole . . . ?

TOM: Rosa.

BETH: Rosa. The psychic. So how much did you drop on Rosa, while bringing zippo to your fiancée on her anniversary?

TOM: It was fascinating. She even analyzes handwriting too.

BETH: I repeat. How much?

TOM: OK, twenty bucks. But she did a complete analysis of that note you gave me with all the questions to the inspector. She was right on the money. She didn't charge me, but I felt obligated to give her a tip. *(Realizing.)* Oh, now that's kind of a gift I could give you. *(He pulls it out to hand it to her.)*

BETH: My note to you on the side of a ripped envelope is a gift?

TOM: No, well her perception of your personality is sort of interesting in a sort of very pre-gift kinda — more like door-prize-kinda way. I'm never getting out of this, am I?

BETH: No. Well, what's the next gift? A piece of priorly chewed gum?

TOM: Actually, I talked to Rosa so long because I thought she was the type I could endear myself to. Actually, I genuinely liked her. *(Beth gives him a look.)* Not like that! The house had a good feeling to it. Rosa loves it, but all her kids moved out. It's too big. She seemed like the type to come down on the price if she liked me . . . us. Do you want to see her analysis?

BETH: I'll give you an analysis. You seduced a crazy old psychic and gave her my note.

TOM: She analyzed you and assessed how we'd be together as a couple.

BETH: You actually asked her to do that? How dare you —

TOM: She said we were very well suited.

BETH: That's not the point — She did?

TOM: But opposites. I was gentle, calm, and spontaneous.

BETH: Oh great. And I'm fierce, bitchy, and rigid, right?

TOM: She put it as strong, intense, and organized actually. *(Holds out the note.)* See?

BETH: *(Grabs the note out of his hand.)* Let me see that! Ridiculous bull! *(Reading.)* "The considerable difference in length of upper T's and P's portrays the writer's never-resting ambition, passion, and goals." *(She looks up.)* Well, she's got that right. *(Reading.)* The higher form level, angularity, and regularity in arrangement and pressure of the letters reveals that the writer possesses good intelligence and hardworking qualities. *(She looks up.)* Aww. That is sweet. I'm liking this present more and more, Tom.

TOM: *(Grabs it away.)* That's a good representation. I forgot. I don't think she gets this next part right at all.

BETH: *(She pulls it back.)* No, it's my gift. I'll read it. *(Reading.)* "The compressed quality of the writing, together with the largely missing or down-reaching counterstrokes reveals the writer is selfish and whiney. And the ink-filled ovals suggest a violent temper, quick to judge." Selfish, huh? Whiney, huh? Violent temper, huh? *(She looks up from the envelope, saying nothing. Pause.)*

TOM: See. She's way off there. Totally wrong on everything. I'm sorry. I'm really sorry, Beth. She's just a psychic. *(Beat.)* Beth? Beth? Why don't you speak? *(He looks closer.)* Beth? Beth, I think you are quiet and sweet. None of this is true.

BETH: *(Whining.)* Yes it is, Tom. *(He shakes his head. Furious.)* Yes, it is!! It just proves we'll be in an unhappy marriage. We are not meant to be. You'll always be late and carefree, and I'll always be organized and hungry. I'll buy presents for you professing my love and you'll buy me nothing. It'll never work.

TOM: Beth, I think you're overreacting. If you only knew the whole reason I was late.



BETH: Well, tell me already! I haven't heard one good explanation.

TOM: I put a bid on the green-and-white-trimmed house.

BETH: See! See, you don't have one good . . . you did? *(Beat.)* You did?

TOM: Yeah. It was going to be a surprise present. It worked with Rosa. I knew you loved the place. I wanted to surprise you. I was hoping they'd give me an answer right there. Rosa told me her people will call us back tomorrow.

BETH: Oh, Tommy. *(She reaches her arms out.)* You're so wonderful. I love you so much. My little smoochy wooshy. *(Changing tone.)* But if you ever leave me waiting for fifty-four minutes again, I'll kill you! *(Beat.)* Let's have some Pu Pu

## RETURNING CARESSES

*Edward, twenties, has come to Bath, Mat, Towels, Etc. to return a foot massager that he purchased a few days ago. Fearful of getting fired again, Molly, a clerk, is overly friendly. She tries valiantly to handle Edward's "little problem."*

### CHARACTERS

Molly: 20s, store clerk

Edward: 20s, a customer

### SETTING

*Bath, Mat, Towels, Etc. store*

### TIME

The present

MOLLY: *(Enthusiastically.)* Welcome to Bath, Mat, Towels, Etc. Happy Holidays and hello!

EDWARD: Hi. Happy Holidays? We haven't even celebrated Halloween yet?

MOLLY: Well, we don't care at Bath, Mat, Towels, Etc. We celebrate all holidays all year long!

EDWARD: Even when there isn't one?

MOLLY: Especially when there isn't one. That's what makes us special. And there's always a holiday on the way. If it's not Halloween, it's Thanksgiving, or Fourth of July, or Rosh Hashanah, or Ramadan —

EDWARD: OK, OK. I get the point. But don't your customers find that annoying?

MOLLY: It's in our employee handbook. In an adjunct memo entitled, "Hello."

EDWARD: *(Beat.)* I don't mean to be rude, and I know you don't write the policy yourself, but don't you think that customers find this holiday wishing all the time disingenuous?

MOLLY: Well I, I . . . Great weather today, huh?