

## ASKING TOO MUCH

*Jess and David met in their twenties. They became good friends, and eventually roommates. They fell for each other right from the start, but as Mother Nature would have it, David is gay. Finally, the two of them decided to join forces in having a baby together. This scene tells the tale of their life together with direct addresses to the audience.*

### CHARACTERS

Jess: 20s

David 20s, Jess's best friend

### SETTING

Various locations and Jess and David's apartment

### TIME

The present

JESS: *(To audience.)* I met David twelve years ago while I was in law school. He was cute, had a sweet face. Poor guy was stuck talking to this freaky woman while I watched. I'm not good at parties. She was this performance artist named Nelina.

DAVID: That was her name. Nelina! I was making guacamole. She was telling me about the people she knew at this theater group. Apparently, the group's claim to fame was throwing green goop at a spinning record player center stage for a full two hours. Now, it's a little too Blue Man Group gone green to me, but back then I just thought — weird — really weird. Nelina wanted to talk all night. I saw Jess smirking a bit as she hung by the cheese mound. I mouthed "help!"

*(Going into the scene.)*

DAVID: Oh God! Hi! I didn't know you were coming, hon!  
*(David hugs Jess. She smiles and hugs him back.)*

JESS: *(To David.)* Me either. It's great to see you, darling. What a surprise!

DAVID: You look wonderful! I could eat you up. *(Whispers to Jess.)* Uh . . . ?

JESS: *(Whispers to David.)* Jess. *(Out loud.)* I'm so happy to see you too, uh . . . *(He whispers in her ear.)* David. I'm here for your nibbling pleasure.

DAVID: *(To audience.)* She gave an Oscar-winning performance. Nelina left the room when Jess started sucking loudly on my ear. After Nelina left, she said . . .

JESS: *(To David. Joking.)* So were we very much in love, David?

DAVID: Desperately. I hated to do that but nothing was working. I rue the day I lent that woman my gummy eraser. She's in the art program with me at Emerson.

JESS: Art program, huh? I thought you were in law school like the rest of us.

DAVID: You're one of them, huh? Is that how you know Brian? From law school?

JESS: No, my roommate knows everyone from everywhere. I go to B.C. actually.

DAVID: Oh good. Boston College. Can't drop the H-bomb then.

JESS: H-bomb?

DAVID: Harvard bomb. One drops every five seconds of conversation here. It's so dramatic. Pause, pause for applause. That's what impressed me most about Brian. I didn't learn that he went there until the third time I met him.

JESS: Are you roommates?

DAVID: No, no. Um, friends.

JESS: *(Looking around.)* I hate parties.

DAVID: *(He laughs.)* Was it something I said?

JESS: No, no. I feel stupid. You have to make small talk and act like you actually care.

DAVID: I hate 'em too. People across the room look like they're having such a good time.

JESS: I know. And then people pretend they're talking to you



but their eyes are always darting behind or around you like they're looking for someone more interesting.

DAVID: (*Pretending to be looking about the room.*) Huh? I was looking over . . .

(*She hits him in the arm.*)

DAVID: Oww. Touchy.

JESS: (*To audience.*) The next time we met, for brunch a few days later, I rushed in . . . popped the big question. (*To David.*) So are you gay, David, or what?

DAVID: (*Reacts.*) Wow. That's quite a segue. No idle chitchat about hash browns. Straight for the G drop. Does it make a difference?

JESS: Yes. Of course it does. It puts you in the correct category. Available, unavailable. Sugar Daddy —

DAVID: Sugar plum fairy. I don't hold it against you that you're straight.

JESS: Oh thank you. Very kind. I'm glad this is all clear now so we can move on. Do you have a dog?

DAVID: Yes, but you can't categorize him. He's fixed. And bit from what I can gather in terms of his sniffing preference.

JESS: (*To audience.*) After ten years, many failed attempts at long-term relationships, and twenty pounds of weight gain between us, things were looking doomy. (*To David.*) I hate men.

DAVID: So do I.

JESS: (*Toasting.*) To Alan and Lewis. (*To audience.*) Our cheating boyfriends.

DAVID: May they rot in hell!

JESS: (*Clinks glass.*) Or end up with each other.

DAVID: (*To audience.*) Each time we got back in the saddle again. Or sort of.

JESS: Have I seen this date in our living room before? Is he a repeat?

DAVID: No. But he looks like a couple of the other ones. I think it's love this time.

JESS: I think you're high on turpentine. Now, shut up and lis-

ten. I met the most terrific guy in the elevator. He asked to borrow my blow-dryer, just so he could return it later.

DAVID: Exciting. When he asks for your styling gel, you'll know it's love.

JESS: (*To audience.*) Each time, each relationship ended disastrously. (*To David.*) He's a jerk. Every time I let him into my bed, he leaves by dawn. Why can't he just dump me or at least have the decency to say, "You know, I'm so busy, I couldn't possibly get involved right now"? He promised me last night he wouldn't leave again.

DAVID: I don't know what his problem is, Jess. So stop asking me. He's just a jerk!

JESS: So where was the boyfriend last night? You have a new one every night lately.

DAVID: I think you're misdirecting your anger.

JESS: I'm not misdirecting anything. I'm asking you about this habit of yours.

DAVID: How can you put up with this guy? He leaves you every night. It's humiliating.

JESS: Humiliating? Who's up every night drinking and watching videos? Who can't connect to anyone unless it's totally meaningless? You're still hung up on Brian, and you know it. It's been years and years since Brian left. Now that's humiliating!

DAVID: Are you finished?

JESS: Yes! No! I didn't mean . . . Am I a bad person, David? Am I that ugly and undesirable? (*She reaches her arms out to him.*) I liked him so much. I thought he was the one. I didn't mean what I said.

DAVID: Sure you did. It *is* time for me to get over him. And you're none of those things.

JESS: I love you, David.

DAVID: You should. I hate you, by the way. You want to have my baby?

JESS: Absolutely. (*To audience.*) That became our pet phrase whenever expressing our solidarity. We'd just ask the other



if they wanted to have our baby. I'm not really sure when the phrase changed from being just a phrase. Maybe after my breakup . . .

DAVID: Why don't we go out and build a snow dog, Pooky! (*Jess shakes her head no.*)

JESS: Maybe we could make some popcorn in the microwave! We'll watch it pop as it goes round. And you can have my baby.

DAVID: OK.

JESS: When do you want to do it?

DAVID: Tonight is as good as any.

JESS: No, I'm serious. We talk about it all the time.

DAVID: We're joking all the time, Jess. It's a joke.

JESS: Is it? Neither of us is getting any younger.

DAVID: Yeah, but some of us are getting really crazy.

JESS: Why? I want a baby and you do too. You've told me a million times. I can't do it without a man and you can't do it without a woman.

DAVID: I can't do it *with* a woman either. That's the problem.

JESS: Have you ever tried?

DAVID: Well, no. Not exactly. (*Beat.*) And what if one of us gets involved down the line?

JESS: The more the merrier.

DAVID: Right. That's realistic. What if you get married and want to live in a house?

JESS: You can live in a section of it.

DAVID: What if I get involved?

JESS: You can get an apartment nearby.

DAVID: What if it's with your husband?

JESS: We'll move to San Francisco.

DAVID: (*To audience.*) I don't know how, but somehow this conversation started to convince me.

JESS: I've been looking into surgical fertilization, it's sort of expensive.

DAVID: Why not bear down and just do it?

JESS: David? Really?

DAVID: Quick, clean, and generically.

JESS: (*To audience.*) It's so sexy when he talks like that.

DAVID: (*To audience.*) How hard could it be? (*Beat.*) Hard.

JESS: Want me to do something butch to start off? Arm wrestle?

DAVID: Don't make fun. Do you want me to kiss you to get things rolling?

JESS: That might be good, but hey . . . I don't want to cramp your style. (*Beat.*) Relax, David. Enjoy the novelty. (*She goes to kiss him.*)

DAVID: What are you doing?

JESS: Lie back and think of England. (*To audience.*) Some way or other . . . he managed to pull it off.

DAVID: I did it. I did it! (*Throws up his hands.*) I did it! (*Sings.*) I am strong. I am invincible.

JESS: David, that's "I Am Woman."

DAVID: Oh yeah.

JESS: (*To audience.*) It did work. Quite surprisingly. And we quickly took to playing the roles. (*To David.*) I thought that was the point of being pregnant. To eat.

DAVID: Healthy.

JESS: Whatever you want!

DAVID: (*David puts his ear to her stomach.*) Hum? You'd like some prune juice and a nice salad, topped off with a fig? Sure.

JESS: Grab me the chocolate fudge ice cream cookies with carmel before I ram this cart back and forth over your body. I've a baby inside me who has mistaken my bladder for a trampoline and nothing is funny ever again. Ever, ever again!

DAVID: (*To audience.*) As you can see, everything would have been pure bliss, perfect, but I met someone. A nice someone named Tom. (*Jess sticks her tongue out.*) He wanted us to get together — all three of us. He understood. It was complicated, but he was interested. Maybe we'd go to a concert, a play, but Jess always said no. (*To Jess.*) You had to stay home for this? *The Fly* is your favorite movie?!



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-