

Play Summaries

Not Just Money

After a housewarming party, Darby works up the courage to confront her friends about their behavior.

MILF

A family dinner goes awry after a guest talks about his experience in a cult.

Five Stars

An anxious groom on the way to his wedding finds solace in his Uber driver.

NOT JUST MONEY
By Kendall Whitmore

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CAST

DARBY - F 20s

SMITH - M 20s

BEAU - M 20s

MANDY - F 20s

CASTING

Actors can be any ethnicity. No accents, besides a slight valley girl accent for Mandy if possible.

SETTING

A modern day young adult's living room in America. Nice, but not too put together.

Lights up on a new, charming but slightly bare apartment. There's a new, sleek couch CS, a side table with the warm glow of a lamp on top to its right, as well as an arm chair that is nice but slightly dated, as if it's a hand-me-down. A coffee table sits in front of the couch and armchair, littered with red Solo cups.

DARBY(20s), a workaholic in need of a backbone, sits on the leftmost part of the couch and doses, clearly having tried and failed to stay awake. SMITH(20s), her boyfriend with a good heart but a touch of toxic masculinity, bursts into the room, beer in hand.

SMITH

Hey babe!

Darby's eyes shoot open and she immediately sits up.

DARBY

Hey.

Smith sits to her right.

SMITH

You have fun tonight?

DARBY

It was okay-

Smith, not listening, recalls something.

SMITH

Oh! So me and the gang were thinking... we should go to the beach tomorrow! I mean, we live so close now...

DARBY

Smith, I have work tomorrow.

SMITH

You've been working so hard this week already! C'mon, take some time off. For me?

He grabs her hands and kisses them. Darby sighs.

DARBY

I really can't...

BEAU(20s), that guy who definitely was the high school mascot, rumbles on in with MANDY(20s), a valley girl with a deadly appetite for conflict, trailing in behind him, both with red solo cups in hand.

BEAU
Hey hey!

SMITH
Was that the last of them?

Beau exhales and flops onto the couch on Smith's right. Mandy sits on the arm of the chair.

BEAU
Yep, finally got Lola to her Uber.

MANDY
She was *so* wasted.

BEAU
I told you guys not to get Pink Whitney!

The crew laughs. Darby leans on Smith's shoulder and starts to dose off again.

SMITH
Tonight was sick, showing everyone the place. Even Todd was impressed!

BEAU
I think that new girlfriend's been keeping him happy - she seems pretty sweet.

MANDY
I mean, how could she not be? He's been taking her to Miami, Amsterdam, Tokyo, Spain...

SMITH
Ugh, I miss Barcelona.

BEAU
We know dude, you bring it up *all the time*. "My semester abroad was life-changing!"

MANDY
"I felt so immersed in the culture, so one with the people."

Mandy, Beau, and Smith erupt in laughter. Darby startles awake.

SMITH(lightheartedly)
Shut up!

Darby leans back on Smith's shoulder.

MANDY

No, no, I don't blame you. I went to Madrid summer before sophomore year, it was *stuh-ning*.

SMITH

Ugh, I gotta get to Madrid.

BEAU

Yeah, Todd's girl is pretty lucky he pays for all those trips.

MANDY

Pretty sure he paid for those double-D's too.

SMITH and BEAU(unison)

Mandy!!

MANDY

What? I'm jealous! I'm still trying to convince my mom to upsize these mosquito bites. She's still trying to convince me of this "inner beauty" BS when she's had more botox than your average Kardashian.

Laughs and Darby wakes up again. She sighs and leans back on the couch before closing her eyes yet again.

BEAU

Well, I don't need big tits or trips to Spain. I got my friends right here. *This* is the sweet life.

Beau drapes his arm around Smith, squeezing his shoulder.

MANDY

Awww!

SMITH

You're so cheesy, dude.

BEAU

What? This place is everything I'd thought it would be and more.

Beau raises up a glass.

BEAU(cont'd)

To our home!

Mandy and Smith raise their drinks. They all freeze and turn to Darby, who's snoring.

SMITH

Babe! Join the toast!

Darby wakes up and sits up immediately.

DARBY

Oh! Sorry.

Darby grabs a random cup off the coffee table and raises it. The four clink and lean back into their seats. A pause as they all sip at their drinks. Beau lowers his drink and leans forward in his seat, looking at Darby.

BEAU

Darby, you good? Drank too much?

Darby forces a smile.

DARBY

No, just tired. I gotta work again tomorrow.

MANDY

Nooo!! I thought you were coming with us to the beach!

DARBY

I'd love to, but I really need these hours.

Beau sighs and looks to Smith, who shrugs. Darby looks between them both.

DARBY

What?

BEAU

Nothing. We just miss spending time with ya.

DARBY

I miss y'all too. I just don't have the luxury of going out every weekend.

Darby leans back in her seat and closes her eyes. Mandy glares at her, offended.

MANDY

It's not a *luxury*. We work too, ya know.

Darby's eyes snap open and she quickly sits up, dazed.

DARBY

No, I know. It's just... different for me.

MANDY

The hell do you mean "different"?

SMITH

Mandy...

Mandy gestures at Smith to zip it before leaning forward to talk to Darby.

MANDY

No, like, we threw this party, and you barely helped, which is fine, but then you have this whole attitude about it? And you've been off all day, and it's just freaking annoying. You're like, sucking the good vibes out of the room right now.

Darby, still dazed, stumbles over her words.

DARBY

I... I don't mean to suck the vibes.

Beau stands up and motions to try and calm the group.

BEAU

Let's all calm down. We just have sensed something off lately, and you didn't seem super happy during the party.

DARBY

I mean, I did feel kinda off.

Beau sits back down and looks into Darby's eyes.

BEAU

Okay, that's okay. What's going on?

DARBY

I just... felt a little excluded, is all.

SMITH

Who was excluding you? Why didn't you say something to me?

DARBY

Well, no one *specifically*.

MANDY

... okay? Then how do you expect us to help?

SMITH

Mandy. Let her talk.

DARBY

No, it's okay. Y'all didn't do anything. I just noticed I couldn't really relate to a lot of the conversations.

BEAU

What? How so?

Darby pauses, contemplating what to say. Smith nods at her and holds her hand.

DARBY

I mean, when everyone is just talking about their childhoods - things they've bought, places they've been, et cetera. I don't relate to that.

A pause.

DARBY (cont'd)

And when y'all talk about cars you've driven, or wines that you drank that I can't even pronounce.

Mandy scoffs.

MANDY

I don't see the issue. We're just talking about our lives.

BEAU

Yeah, Darby, we didn't think you cared.

DARBY

I didn't, until I saw everyone together like this. It felt like they looked at me differently, my beat up sneakers next to their Prada slides and shiny watches. It just felt like this... circle jerk of richness.

I felt... *invisible*.

A pause. Every one sips uncomfortably on their drinks.

SMITH

I'm sorry, Darbs. But look at us four! We've all ended up in the same place. That has to mean something, right?

Smith slings his arm around her shoulder and rubs it. Darby smiles and yawns, leaning back onto his shoulder.

DARBY

I guess so. I just think the circumstances on how I got here are different. My childhood and college and everything.

BEAU

Well, all that stuff we got as kids and all the stuff in the past doesn't matter in the long run. It's just money.

Darby's expression changes. She sits up completely, startling Smith.

DARBY

No. It's not just money. It's so much more than that.

It's the difference between being happy and sad, or having a home and living on the streets. It's not this disposable thing that y'all think it is.

BEAU

Excuse me? That's not what I said.

MANDY

That's not what he said!

DARBY

I'm sorry, I... I just think y'all should decondition yourselves a bit. Know that there's people in this world that haven't had your experience.

Mandy scoffs again.

MANDY

You know, Darby, just because our parents have money doesn't mean that we're shitty people.

DARBY

I didn't say that y'all were shitty!

Darby looks to Smith for his defense.

DARBY(cont'd)
Did I say that?

A pause.

SMITH
It's getting late, y'all. I think we should all get to bed and recuperate.

Darby stares at Smith.

MANDY
Whatever. Night. I'm gonna go smoke. With weed that *I* worked for and paid for. You comin', Beau?

BEAU
Yeah. Goodnight, guys.

*Beau and Mandy leave the room. A beat.
Darby turns her whole body to Smith.*

DARBY
Why didn't you say anything?

SMITH
Darby...

DARBY
You heard what I said! I didn't say anything *terrible*, right?

SMITH
I know, but we *live* with these people. I wanted to just nip it all in the bud.

Darby pauses and sighs. She rubs her eyes and yawns again.

DARBY
I'm sorry, I'm just... exhausted, lately, and tonight didn't help.

SMITH
I'm sorry you felt excluded. I'm just not sure what we can do. I mean, I can't just read your mind and come to the rescue.

DARBY
I know that.

SMITH

...do you want me to stop talking about my semester abroad? Or...

DARBY

No, no! I know Barcelona meant a lot to you.

A pause. Darby yawns again. Smith contemplates for a moment.

SMITH

You know, Darby... I worked *hard* to get where I am. And I don't have a Rolex or a fancy car.

DARBY

But... you have a 9 to 5 that pays a living wage. Beau's dad got him a job at his company, so he's fine. And Mandy still gets a check every month from her parents. I literally have to scrounge for tips every shift.

SMITH

You should quit!

DARBY

I don't have a bachelor's degree. Where would I even go?

SMITH

Back to school?

DARBY

With what money?

SMITH

Maybe your mom can help?

DARBY

You know she can barely take care of herself, Smith.

Smith sighs and puts his head in his hands.

SMITH

I don't know how to help you here.

Darby yawns, physical and mental exhaustion fully taking over.

DARBY

I don't need *help*. I just need you... to understand.

Smith sits up abruptly, frustrated.

SMITH

Understand what? That you had a shitty childhood? That's not my fault.

*A pause. Darby looks like she's been hit with a brick to the gut.
Smith's face washes over with regret.*

DARBY

No... Smith... I'm just so, so tired.

*A pause again. Smith observes her tired face, realizing the level of exhaustion she's reached.
He sighs.*

SMITH

Come here.

Smith pats his lap, and Darby lays her head on it. He runs his hand through her hair instinctively, like a million times before. It's a long, tender, moment, as Smith continues to ponder. He knows now that he was in the wrong, and his words are genuine.

SMITH(cont'd)

I'm sorry.

Darby is starting to drift off.

DARBY

It feels like we having nothing in common anymore.

SMITH

That's not true.

Darby is nearly asleep at this point, her words slurring together.

DARBY

We used to. Now we just share a refrigerator.

Smith sighs and continues to run his fingers through her hair. A long pause.

SMITH

I can help with all of this, Darby. I don't want you worrying about money.

Darby mutters out some final words before inevitably falling asleep.

DARBY

It's not just money, Smith... it's not just money...

Her voice blends into soft snores. Smith looks at her for a moment, then outward, still meditating on her words. Then, he reaches over to the lamp and turns it off.

Blackout. End of play.

MILF
By Kendall Whitmore

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CAST

BLAIR, F 17

BRIAN, M 15

BEATRICE, F 40s

MR. WILKINS, M 50S

ROSCOE - a bird.

CASTING

Characters may be any ethnicity. Blair, Brian, and Beatrice do not have to be the same ethnicity. No accents needed, besides a strange one of your choice for Mr. Wilkins on labelled lines.

SETTING

A modern day dining room.

Lights up on a dinner table with four seats. BLAIR(17), a rugged rebel in some obscure band t-shirt, enters the stage with plates, with her brother, BRIAN(15), a painfully awkward but sweet nerd, trailing behind with utensils and cups in hand.

Blair starts messily throwing down plates as Brian adjusts them in her wake.

BLAIR

Literally, screw this!

BRIAN

Geez, simmer down Blair. Don't let Mom hear you.

BLAIR

I don't care if she hears me! I'm freaking sick of these dumb dinners with these freaking hobos!

BRIAN

Mr. Wilkins is not a hobo! He's our neighbor.

BLAIR

So you mean to tell me he *has* a house but he's *invading* ours?

Blair plops down in the chair at the head of the table on SL. She instantly slumps. The position she's in barely counts as sitting and is more of a cool kid lay. Brian continues to perfectly adjust each place setting. He definitely went to cotillion.

BRIAN

I think it's kind that Mom provides these dinners. It shows the importance of hospitality in these harsh and foreboding times.

BLAIR

Quit sucking the fart out of her butcrack. You're already her favorite!

BRIAN

Okay, ew.

A beat. Blair sits up in her chair and mischievously grins at her brother.

BLAIR

You know what would make this dinner better?

Brian stops adjusting the place settings and notices the look on his sister's face.

BRIAN

What?

BLAIR

You let Roscoe go for a spin again.

BRIAN

Not happening. And for the record, he escaped and was freaking out. Poor Mrs. Fox... and her new coat. She was one of our nicer guests.

Blair dramatically slumps back down to her original position with a sigh.

BLAIR

Why did you get that dumb parrot if you weren't gonna have any fun with it?

Brian sits down in the seat next to her with perfect posture.

BRIAN

First of all, Roscoe is a Bronze Fallow Cockatiel. Second of all, we do have fun. We play numerous brain games to increase his vocabulary skills-

BLAIR

What skills? He can't even talk!

BRIAN

Cockatiels take a lot of training before being able to speak, and frankly I don't appreciate-

BEATRICE(40s), an incredibly clueless but well-meaning mother, enters the stage with a serving bowl filled with some sort of sludge. It does not look appetizing.

BEATRICE

Who's ready for some yummy wummy munchin'?

*MR. WILKINS(50s), a rugged gentleman with a few screws loose, enters on her coattails.
He raises a hand.*

MR. WILKINS

I am!

Mr. Wilkins plops in the seat next to Brian, as Beatrice frantically scoops the sludge onto people's plates.

BEATRICE

Don't be shy to ask for seconds, I made whole bunch of this good stuff!

Blair stares at the sludge on the plate, grossed out.

BLAIR

What is this, exactly?

BEATRICE

Some good, yummy wummy stuff!

BLAIR(sarcastic)

Oh, of course. Great.

BRIAN

It looks delicious, Mom.

Brian looks up at Beatrice with a grin, who ruffles his hair. Blair rolls her eyes.

BEATRICE

Thank you sweetie.

*Beatrice goes and sits on the final seat on the other end of the table SR.
The family starts to dig in, but Mr. Wilkins stays still.*

MR. WILKINS

Pardon me, but may we say grace? I just normally do that before every meal.

BEATRICE

Oh my goodness, of course, of course! I'm so sorry, Mr. Wilkins.

Mr. Wilkins outstretches a hand on either side, which Beatrice and Brian grab a hold on right away. Blair winces and hesitantly grabs Brian's hand. The family looks over to Mr. Wilkins, whose eyes are shut and head is down. A long, uncomfortable pause.

BRIAN

Um, I know Our Father. Or maybe Hail Mary-

Mr. Wilkins eyes burst open and he looks up to the ceiling. He all of the sudden has acquired some strange accent.

MR. WILKINS

DEAREST GREAT OVERLORD OF ALL DISGUSTING, SHRIVELED BEINGS.

Thank you for granting us another day of survival among this cruel world of flying beasts and rapture. We are not worthy, but we trudge along against the everlasting promise of death and destruction.

Thank you for this nourishment. And may one day our bodies provide great nourishment to the creatures that fly above us and stare down at our wretched, hopeless souls.

IN THE MYSTERIOUS GREAT OVERLORD'S NAME, AMEN!

The family lets out a series of scatted "Amen's", slightly terrified.

MR. WILKINS (cont'd)
Alright, let's eat!

Mr. Wilkins digs into his plate, but the family stares at him in shock. Brian clears his throat.

BRIAN
Uh, what denomination of Christianity are you, Mr. Wilkins?

Mr. Wilkins looks up from his plate, mouth full.

MR. WILKINS
Huh?

BLAIR
Yeah man, that prayer was super weird.

BEATRICE
Blair!

Mr. Wilkins swallows his food and shakes his head.

MR. WILKINS
Oh no, forgive me. It just was a popular prayer from where I used to live.

BEATRICE
Oh, well it was... lovely!

BRIAN
Thank you for sharing it with us, sir.

The family returns to eating. A long pause.

BEATRICE
... so, how are you liking the neighborhood so far?

MR. WILKINS
It's great, ma'am. Quiet, calm, above sea level. Pretty different than where I was before.

Blair sits up in her seat. Now she's invested.

BLAIR

Wait, where *did* you come from?

MR. WILKINS

A place called Milfville. About five hours north of here.

Blair bursts into laughter.

BLAIR

Milfville? Are you kidding me?

Brian elbows Blair and she stops laughing.

BEATRICE

I haven't heard of Milfville. Is that a big town?

MR. WILKINS

No, ma'am. There was only about a hundred of us. Five by the time I got outta there.

BEATRICE

Oh, what made everyone leave?

MR. WILKINS

Famine.

BEATRICE

Oh.

A long pause.

BRIAN

Um... I'm sure the weather was nice there! It's always so humid down south.

MR. WILKINS

Oh, I'm not sure actually. I spent most of my time in the Milf Haven.

Blair leans forward. She is deeply intrigued at this point.

BLAIR

What's the Milf Haven?

BEATRICE

You know Blair, sweetie, I think we've grilled him enough, let's just let Mr. Wilkins enjoy his dinner-

MR. WILKINS

No, it's okay ma'am. My therapist says it's good to talk about this.

He takes a deep breath.

MR. WILKINS(cont'd)

The Milf Haven is... or, was... an underground bunker that protected us from the outside elements. I stayed there for about three years before I was rescued.

Blair laughs.

BLAIR

Holy shit!

BEATRICE

Blair. Language.

BRIAN

With all due respect, sir, what were you hiding from? Climate change? Potential nuclear war?

Mr. Wilkins takes a deep breath once again. He looks up to the ceiling.

MR. WILKINS

The Lethal Flight.

Thunder strikes and lights flash and flicker. The lights return to normal as the family stares wide eyed at Mr. Wilkins.

BRIAN

... The Lethal Flight?

MR. WILKINS

Yes. We were MILFs. Men Isolated from Lethal Flight.

BLAIR

You guys really should've picked a different acronym.

BRIAN

Sir, what is The Lethal Flight?

MR. WILKINS

The demons. The watchers. The all-knowing.

A pause.

MR. WILKINS(cont'd)

But I guess the common people refer to them as 'birds'.

Blair cracks up again.

BLAIR

There was all this hub-blub over *birds*?

BEATRICE

I'm so sorry, Mr. Wilkins. It sounds like so much fear was instilled into you.

MR. WILKINS

Oh, you have no idea, ma'am. These past couple of months have been difficult.

BRIAN

I am happy you were rescued, sir.

MR. WILKINS

The rescue was the easy part. Now, I have to unlearn. It's been hard to minimize the chanting and prayers, and mornings are rough for me.

He shivers.

MR. WILKINS (cont'd)

So. Much. Chirping. But, I'm getting there. I'm learning that the Lethal Flight - or, birds, sorry - are not the enemy.

Beatrice wipes tears from her eyes.

BEATRICE

That's beautiful. What a tale of courage.

BLAIR

Yeah, so amazing, so brave, woohoo, whatever - what did they *tell* you in there?

BEATRICE

Blair! That's quite enough!

MR. WILKINS

No. I need to speak my truth.

*The family turns to Mr. Wilkins. A spotlight illuminates on him. He stands.
He does the same accent as before.*

MR. WILKINS (cont'd)

If you are ever to leave the Milf Haven, the Lethal Flight will ravage your soul. They will follow your every move and record it with their demon eyes. They will haunt your dreams with their tweets, chirps, and mating calls. They will sit on your windowsill, plotting their attack.

Then, one night, while their devil's song fills your nightmares, they will creep in through your chimney and peck out your eyes and feast on your bones. And they will LOVE EVERY BITE AND NEVER BE SATISFIED.

And the last things you will hear will be CACAW! CACAW! CACAW! CACAW!

*A rattling of cage is heard. The lights return to normal.
Brian and Blair stare wide-eyed at each other.*

MR. WILKINS (cont'd)

What was that?

BRIAN

Nothing!! Mom, may I please be excused?

Beatrice nods frantically and Brian runs off SR.

BEATRICE

Thank you, Mr. Wilkins for sharing all of this with us. But I think we should wrap up dinner. The kids have school tomorrow, and I gotta work-

MR. WILKINS

Oh, but I barely took a bite! This meal is *incredible* compared to the junk we were fed back in the Haven-

BLAIR

Jesus, that place must've really been torture.

*The lights flicker and go out before arising with a deep, menacing red. Then thunder rumbles as
ROSCOE, a cockatiel puppet held by a puppeteer, enters the stage.
Brian frantically runs after Roscoe, who squawks.*

MR. WILKINS

MY RECKONING IS HERE! OH, BUT IT'S TOO SOON!

Roscoe spots Mr. Wilkins and begins flying towards him, starting an epic chase. The two run around the stage as the red lights flicker and the thunder continues. Brian, Blair, and Beatrice try desperately to catch the bird.

Mr. Wilkins lunges under the table and Roscoe lands on his shoulder. Finally, the lights return to normal. The family stands around the table, watching Roscoe and Mr. Wilkins.

Mr. Wilkins, eyes closed and shaking, heavily breathes for a moment. He then opens his eyes to see the bird calmly perched on his shoulder. Dumbfounded, he comes out from under the table, Roscoe remaining on his shoulder.

MR. WILKINS
Um, hello.

He timidly reaches out a hand and pets Roscoe's head, who purrs.

ROSCOE(squawking)
Hello, friend.

BRIAN
Holy shit.

BLAIR
Did he just...

MR. WILKINS
Speak? To me? A meer mortal?

ROSCOE (squawking)
Hello, friend.

Mr. Wilkins tears up.

MR. WILKINS
Oh wow.

Beatrice walks over and puts a hand on Mr. Wilkins' other shoulder.

BEATRICE
See, Mr. Wilkins? This goes to show that birds are actually-

MR. WILKINS
I've found the Great Overlord!

BEATRICE

Um, what?

MR. WILKINS

So many years, I've been told to fear these creatures, when they are- or this fellow here - the ones to worship! And it appears I've been chosen as his disciple!

BLAIR

Whoa, is Roscoe Jesus?

BRIAN

What? No! This is ridiculous!

*All of the sudden, a white fluid pours down Mr. Wilkins' shoulder.
Beatrice gags. Blair laughs.*

MR. WILKINS

Thank you for gracing me with your excrement, my Lord!

Mr. Wilkins calmly takes Roscoe off his shoulder and hands him to Brian.

MR. WILKINS (cont'd)

Take good care of him. He is going to change the world as we know it! I'll be back to continue my learning.

Mr. Wilkins bows to Roscoe and backs offstage, continuing to bow.

MR. WILKINS (cont'd)

Oh, I've got to tell the remaining MILFs!

The family watches for a moment as Mr. Wilkins goes. Dazed and dumbfounded, they start to clear the table.

Beatrice starts to exit the stage with some plates.

BEATRICE

I think the next few dinners will be just us, okay kids?

Brian follows behind her.

BRIAN

I'm perfectly okay with that, Mom.

Blair looks after them for a moment and sighs.

BLAIR

Ugh. Just when things started to get actually *fun*.

*She follows them offstage.
Blackout. End of play.*

FIVE STARS

By Kendall Whitmore

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CAST

(In order of appearance)

| | | |
|-----------|-------|---------------------------|
| Benji | M 30s | A melancholy Uber driver. |
| Groom | M 20s | A nervous groom. |
| Bride | F 20s | A fiery bride. |
| Annaliese | F 30s | A hopeful wife. |

CASTING

Actors of any ethnicity may play any character.

TIME & PLACE

Present day.

NOTES

The set only needs a bench and chair. The steering wheel may be pantomimed. No major props needed besides a piece of paper.

Lights up. A chair is center stage with a bench placed behind it, mimicking the interior of a car. On the chair holding a steering wheel is BENJI(30s), a casually-dressed Uber driver with an unshakeable sadness about him. He “drives” for a bit before coming to a halt.

Enter the GROOM(20s), a jittery man adorned with a tux and a nervous grin. He walks from stage right to center stage and climbs onto the bench like he’s entering a car.

GROOM

Are you Benji?

Benji peers in his “rearview mirror” at his passenger.

BENJI

Yes sir.

GROOM

Awesome, awesome.

Benji reaches over to an invisible phone, seemingly checking the location.

BENJI

Johnson Event Center?

GROOM

Yes! Yes.

Benji begins driving.

The groom nervously shifts in his seat. He wipes his sweaty palms on his pants. He cannot stay still for the life of him. Benji curiously looks in the mirror at him again.

BENJI

You’re dressed up.

The groom snaps out of his state.

GROOM

What? Oh yeah. It’s my “big day!”

BENJI

Oh wow, congrats!

GROOM

Thank you. Thank you. I’m excited. I’m ready.

The groom is definitely trying to convince himself of this information.

BENJI
I'm glad.

GROOM
Yeah, it's been a long time coming. Everything seems to be perfect. I'm ready.

*Benji nods and smiles at him in the mirror. The groom goes back to his nervous state.
He looks out the window. Leans back in his seat. Rubs his temples.
Benji is concerned at this point.*

BENJI
You okay?

GROOM
I am! I mean, I absolutely love her. And the timing seems right. Totally. It's just...

BENJI
A big step.

GROOM
Yes! Exactly. I almost want to just sign a paper and not blow it up into an even bigger deal. But I know how much the ceremony and everything means to her. And it'll be fun, with everyone there. It'll be the best day of my life.

A pause.

GROOM (cont'd)
But my body seems to disagree. Are runaway grooms a thing?

Benji shrugs and chuckles.

BENJI
It's uncommon.

The groom chuckles too.

GROOM
I'm like, mostly joking. I love her.

He pauses, and then chuckles, remembering something.

After I proposed, my father-in-law sat me down and told me that marriage is like skydiving...

Benji scoffs.

BENJI
Without a parachute.

GROOM
Yes! Oh my god that's exactly what he said!

Benji chuckles, but the groom starts to panic.

GROOM(cont'd)
But what am I supposed to do? I'm plummeting towards the earth, at maximum velocity, and I have to search for a perfect patch of grass. I don't want to crash. I *really really* don't want to crash...

Benji frantically looks at him in the mirror.

BENJI
Whooooo, it's okay.

The groom closes his eyes, still hyperventilating.

GROOM
I don't want to crash... I don't want to crash...

BENJI
It's a metaphor.

GROOM
But the real thing is even scarier.

Benji sighs.

BENJI
I know.

The groom opens his eyes, slowing his breathing.

GROOM
Are you married?

BENJI
Yes. Seven years.

GROOM
What's it like?

Benji shrugs.

BENJI
A rollercoaster, honestly.

GROOM
In a fun way, or a terrifying way?

BENJI
It's both.

GROOM
Oh.

*This isn't comforting.
The groom breathes heavily still. Benji looks at him worriedly.*

BENJI
You'll be okay.

GROOM
Yeah?

Benji nods and smiles.

BENJI
You're compatible, right?

GROOM
Yeah, extremely.

BENJI
You've discussed everything?

GROOM
It feels like we have.

BENJI
Finances?

The groom nods to himself, starting to gradually calm down.

GROOM

We both have pretty steady income. We're gonna buy a house soon.

BENJI

Kids?

GROOM

We want two, for balance and easy travel.

There's a pause.

BENJI

...Sex?

The groom chuckles and grins.

GROOM

We're pretty good in that department.

Benji laughs.

BENJI

See? You're golden.

The groom smiles, his breathing having reached normal tempo now.

GROOM

Thanks man. Seriously.

BENJI

No problem.

*Comfortable silence. The groom reaches into his coat pocket and pulls out his phone.
A piece of paper comes out with it, which he picks up and unfolds.*

He smiles widely.

GROOM

No way.

BENJI

What is it?

GROOM

She sometimes leaves me little notes in my coat when I go to work... I didn't think she'd have the time to leave one today.

He clears his throat and starts to read.

GROOM(cont'd)

“To my soon to be husband...”

Lights down and a spotlight up on a BRIDE(20s) stage right. She wears a beautiful white gown and has the excited glow of most women on their big day. The groom's voice blends into hers as she expresses what she wrote.

BRIDE

If I know you as well as I think I do, you're probably freaking the fuck out. Which is okay. Trust me, I am too.

She takes a deep breath.

I mean, we've talked endlessly of this moment and the many moments that will come after, but it doesn't make it any less scary. You know that. Soon, we'll be legally bonded right down to the fine print. And that's a *lot* to think about.

The bride looks up to the audience and smiles widely. Her demeanor relaxes.

But I'm also the most excited I've ever been. I mean, we have all the people we love in one place, celebrating *us*. Every narcissistic bone in my body is on fire right now!

And that annoying part of my brain that thought I'd never get here- well, suck it, bitch, I'm marrying the love of my life! And I'm not letting her take that away from me.

She lets out a sigh.

Point is... don't overthink it, okay? It'll be okay. We're in this together.

A pause.

And stop letting my dad get in your head with his stupid “advice”! We both know he's full of shit sometimes.

Another pause.

I love you. I can't wait to dance to "Let's Stay Together" and stuff our faces with red velvet cake. Love, your *beautiful, amazing* bride.

She curtsies.

The spotlight goes down and she exits.

Lights back up on center stage with Benji and the groom still in the car.

BENJI

Wow.

GROOM

I know. She's incredible.

BENJI

"Let's Stay Together"?

GROOM

Yeah. Al Green. That's gonna be our first dance song at the reception.

Benji smiles fondly.

BENJI

That was ours.

GROOM

Really? It's a good one.

A long pause. Benji "arrives" at the destination. They both take a deep breath.

GROOM(cont'd)

Oh wow. Here already.

BENJI

Right here okay?

GROOM

Yeah, it's perfect. Hey, uh, by the way...

BENJI

What's up?

GROOM

The skydiving thing. Maybe it's like, you're falling, but you're with the person, and there's only one parachute, but you both have to figure out how to use it, you know? That way no one has to worry about crashing.

A pause as Benji ponder this.

BENJI

Hm.

GROOM

I don't know, maybe I'm just being corny 'cause it's my wedding day. I don't know.

They both laugh.

GROOM (cont'd)

You've been great, man. You're definitely getting five stars.

BENJI

Thanks. Good luck!

Benji pats his shoulder. The groom grins and climbs out of the car and exits off SR.

*Benji lets go of the steering wheel and leans back in his seat with a sigh.
He stays like this for a moment, deep in thought.*

Then, he sits up and pantomimes pressing a button on his dashboard.

BENJI

Play voicemail.

Lights go down again and rises on a spotlight SL on ANNALIESE(30s), a woman in pajamas and in need of a good night's sleep, or any sleep at all. She wears a striking white silk robe.

ANNALIESE

Hi honey. Uh. I'm sorry. You must be working, or driving somebody, or whatever. I just wanted to say you left your aftershave here and I was wondering if you would want to come back and grab it real quick. I know you love it and you left it here and...

Annaliese sighs and starts to get choked up.

Fuck. Sorry. It just feels so weird to call you right now. I thought about maybe sending a text, but that felt too impersonal since we haven't talked in a week, and then I paced around my phone for like two hours rehearsing what to say, and then it went straight to voicemail and now the script is just out the fucking window and...

She trails off and chuckles.

Ha. Me overthinking again. You know that more than anyone.

I hope you're doing alright, and your brother too. I'm happy you're able to stay over there and think things through. I know everything was so abrupt, so I hope you're in a better place than where we left it.

A long pause. We think she's about to wrap it up when..

I think my brain hates me.

Like, it's just constantly on overdrive trying to nitpick and fix every single thing. And you.. us... are no exception.

I'm so scared of us crashing into the ground that I've tried to do it myself.

And... I'm sorry, Benji. I really, really am.

I went to see a therapist yesterday. She had a really silly name and I came home wanting to tell you it and you weren't there and it sucked.

She chuckles.

It was Cathy Clutterbuck.

She told me to reach out to you, and to really just... try. And I was really nervous to, but now I feel a lot better. And I want to keep trying. With you, especially.

I guess I've been forgetting that we're on the same team.

Oh wow, my phone is telling me to wrap it up. I've never left a voicemail this long.

Uh. Let me know about the aftershave. Love you. Bye.

Lights down on the spotlight. Annaliese exits. Lights up again on CS. Benji stares off into the distance with a somber smile on his face. A long pause.

Finally, he presses a button on his dashboard again.

BENJI

Directions to home.

He presses something on his phone. "Let's Stay Together" by Al Green plays.

He puts his hands back on the wheel and his somber smile turns into a happy, beaming one.

Blackout. End of play.