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Telling the Story of Us

By Jeremy Simmons

I don't know why.
I've always been big on happy endings.
To me, the most romantic,
beautiful love stories...
...were the ones where
two people meet, fall in love...
...then 50, 60 years later
one of them dies.
A few days after,
the other one dies...
...because they just can't live
without each other.
Not that that's such a happy ending.
You got two dead people.
That's how I thought things would be
for Katie and me.
Not that we'd be dead,
but that we would be together forever.
Now, High/Low.
Who wants to go first? Erin?
Okay, my high today is that I sat
next to Austin Butler at lunch.
-Nice.
-He has the three-legged dog?
Joel has the three-legged dog.
Austin has the snoring turtle.
And your low?
-Camp.
-What about camp?
I don't know.
You had such a good time last year.
-I know.
-What is it?
Are you afraid you'll lose touch
with Austin?
-I don't know.
-You can write to each other.
You can put X's and O's on there.
Guys love that, right?
Can't get enough of it.
Honey, you'll have a great time.
What about you?
What was your high today?
Gary Ellis' mom bought a new juicer...

...and I went to his house
and drank a chicken.
And your low?
I don't have a low.
You gotta have a low.
I've been racking my brain.
I do not have a low.
We'll enter the chicken smoothie
in the high and low category.
How about you, Mama?
I know. It's your anniversary.
What are you guys doing tomorrow?
-I'm taking her to a romantic dinner...
-Dad's taking me dancing.
...and possibly some dancing.
But you're right.
That is our high.
I'd love to stick around
for your low...
...but the Dodgers are playing the Giants.
-Can I go too?
-Go.
I really don't care what we do
tomorrow night.
Even if we're
at different restaurants.
Just as long as the kids see us leaving
together and coming home together.
On our first anniversary,
I gave Ben a plastic spoon.
You know, the takeout kind
from a Chinese restaurant?
It was the one we had used...
...when we shared our first bowl
of won ton soup in the park.
He was afraid he'd lost it...
...and I remember how
his face lit up...
...when he opened the jewelry box
I had wrapped it in.
I keep asking myself:
"When is that moment in a marriage...
...when a spoon becomes just a spoon?"
When I met Katie,

I wrote on a comedy show...
...and she had been hired as a temp.
I don't know. It's hard to explain.
There was an instant connection...
...this simpatico.
I felt like she just got me.
And there is no greater feeling
in this world than to feel gotten.
The loudest silences are the ones...
...filled with everything
that's been said...
...said wrong, said 300 times.
You're not hearing me.
You're so goddamn critical!
It's hard with two kids.
I don't need a third.
You're perfect, and I've done
nothing right in 15 years!
You're not listening!
You can't let go of anything!
You never listen!
You hold on to everything!
Why should you be responsible
for anything?!
You're critical of every
fucking thing!
I take care of everything here.
-Fine!
-Fine!
-Fine!
-Fine!
Until fighting becomes the condition
rather than the exception.
And suddenly, it turns into
the language of the relationship...
...and your only option is
a silent retreat to neutral corners.
-Okay, are you a person?
-Yes.
Are you a man?
-That's debatable.
-Debatable?
-Do you have a mustache?
-A thick one.

-Aunt Rose.

-Right.

Good old Aunt "5:00 Shadow" Rose.

God, it's almost 9.

We're gonna miss the camp bus.

Now, that is what I call

a mobile home.

Can you get around it?

It's 5 to 9!

-They must change their zip code a lot.

-It happens as we speak.

Look. 91 604. 91 604.

-Pass it.

-Their mailman must go crazy.

The kids will miss their bus.

Up on the second floor!

Somebody's about to use the bathroom!

We're in the line of fire!

Would you just pass

the goddamn house?!

Look, the house is making a right.

When I was in college,

we had to write a term paper.

It was for some philosophy course

I was taking...

...on any book we considered...

...to be the one that best depicted

how we viewed the world.

I remember some people picking books

by the great thinkers...

...like Kierkegaard and Plato.

Some kids chose the Bible.

I did my paper on

Harold and the Purple Crayon.

It's a small book

about a little boy...

...who draws the world

the way he wants it to be...

...with his magic crayon.

And I just loved that book because...

...it was about everything

that I wasn't.

You wanna write crossword puzzles?

That's a job somebody wants to do?

And you'd get paid to do this?
So you know stuff like
Ra is the sun god.
And the symbol for radium
and the abbreviation for regular army.
Should I be impressed or terrified?
I find it soothing and reassuring...
...because you know
there are always answers.
Yeah, but not to the really
big questions like:
"Does God exist?"
"What is the meaning of life?"
"Why does my pee smell funny
when I eat asparagus?"
Aspartic acid, hence the name.
And this soothes you?
Yes, since you'll never find
the answers to the big questions...
...there's a comfort in finding
the answers to the little ones.
When you finish, there's this...
...wonderful sense
of closure, knowing...
...that that little world
on that half-page is complete.
You left yourself wide open.
Come to Papa!
But the problem in a marriage is...
...if one person is always Harold,
drawing the world the way they want...
...the other person has no choice
but to draw it the way it is.
Which is why they never wrote a book
about Harold's wife.
-They're leaving!
-They're not!
Grab your bags!
Wait! Wait!
Hold it!
Two more coming!
-Thank you, Marty.
-No problem.
I love you.

Have a great time.

-All right, kid.

-Bye, Dad.

-Take your sister's bag.

-Have a great time.

Love you.

-I love you.

-I love you.

If you need me for anything,

I'll be at the Oceana.

Anything comes up with the kids,
give me a call.

Of course.

Isn't this the moment
where one of us says:

"This is ridiculous.

We love each other.

All couples go through this.

Let's give it another try"?

My ass was on television this morning.

What are you telling us?

I'm telling you,

my ass was on TV.

That's right. That was that special.

"The Kennedy Center Salutes

I went to the doctor, he took a tube
with a little camera on it...

...stuck it up my ass and we
watched it on a monitor in his office.

-You had a sigmoidoscopy.

-Exactly.

That's different
than your ass being on TV.

-How?

-First of all...

...a network can't cancel your ass.

Point well taken.

What demographics

do you hope to knock down...

...with that big crack

winking at you?

We're in public. Can we

elevate the level of conversation?

-Fine with me.

-Good.

I jerked off to your secretary.

Do you mind?

-Why should I mind?

-I don't know.

I wanna forge ahead

with a clear conscience.

Pound away.

You're a good friend.

Larry wanted to have sex last night.

He even gave me the 30-second massage.

You mean the "I really care

that you had a bad day" back rub...

...that stops just before you relax...

...then quickly heads south

towards the promised land?

So did you make love?

-I was too tired.

-How'd you get out of it?

I pretended to fall asleep

during the massage.

I did that heavy breathing thing.

So he thinks you're in deep REM?

But it backfired,

because when I really fell asleep...

...the baby started crying,

then Larry pretended he was asleep.

Fool! If he had just gotten up

with the baby, you would've...

...opened the gates and welcomed

the troops home for Christmas.

In a heartbeat.

What's up with you and Charlene?

Oh, we had a great night last night.

And you still claim

you're not cheating?

I maintain that

with every fiber of my being.

On-line sex isn't cheating.

How do you figure?

It's 3 a.m., your wife and kids

are sleeping upstairs...

...and you're downstairs

fucking some bimbo in cyberspace.

First of all, we're not fucking.

We're typing.

Second, and this is me
taking umbrage...

...Charlene is not some bimbo.

She's a stockbroker named Ralph...

...pretending to be some bimbo
named Charlene.

Why piss on something so beautiful?

What'd I say?

It's not an affair.

Teresa never had sex with him.

They just kissed.

-A kiss is an affair.

-You think so?

Absolutely.

Once you establish anything
truly intimate with another person...

...even talking...

...it affects the person you're
the most intimate with.

But Teresa could fuck her husband,
she just couldn't kiss him.

I mean, really kiss him.

It's not so crazy.

Sometimes I'm so angry at Stan,

I could fuck him...

...but I don't want

that cow tongue near me.

A kiss can be so much more
intimate than sex.

Why is that?

Because fucking means,

"Yeah, I love you." But a kiss....

A kiss means, "I like you."

That's so right.

I haven't made out, I mean,

really made out with Larry for years.

Doesn't that make you sad?

Not really.

Why?

I don't know.

Because it's inevitable.

It's the wear and tear of the job.

The diapers, the tantrums,
the homework.
The kingdom, species,
your mom, his mom.
Suddenly, all you're aware of is
the wet towels on the floor...
...he hogs the remote and
he scratches his back with a fork.
And you come face to face with
the truth that it's impossible...
...to kiss a person who leaves
the new roll of toilet paper...
...on top of the empty cardboard roll!
God forbid he takes the two seconds
to actually replace it!
Does he not see it?!
I'm telling you, marriage is
the Jack Kevorkian of romance.
Oh, God!
Jesus! Shit!
-He hit me!
-I didn't!
I was leaving the room,
she stood in my way.
-He did it on purpose.
-Guys, hold on!
Ben? What?!
Katie, you won't believe
what I'm standing in front of.
They're tearing down
our old apartment.
-What?
-See?!
Josh, did you hit her?
She started it!
I told her never to come in my room
without asking.
It's heading for Mrs. Gutierrez's.
There goes her window!
You borrowed her Discman
without asking?!
Yeah, but she was done with it.
She hasn't used the Discman
in two days!

Just hit Jack Roikman's place.
Remember his patriotic orgasms?
"God bless America! God bless America!
Land that I love!"
Can't you let him use yours?
No! He never lets me use it!
Ben, I can't talk right now.
This is where you and I started.
This is where we became an "us."
Just hit where we used to
measure the kids' heights.
Ben, I-- Josh, you shouldn't have
hit your sister. No TV for a week.
You're so unfair!
Wait until I tell Dad!
Jesus Christ! I gotta go!
Are you okay?
Goddamn it!
Fantasizing isn't cheating?
Oh, please! Who is getting hurt?
Yesterday, I met this
stunning blond woman...
...at the Beverly Center food court.
She had a little ring
in the bellybutton.
But you know what?
I forgave her because
it wasn't in her eyebrow or tongue.
Beautiful. We start chatting...
...and we strike up a conversation,
waiting for our turkey.
I'm telling you,
she's smiling, I'm smiling...
...and just that
...will do wonders for me when
I'm shaking hands with the sheriff.
I know exactly what
you're talking about.
-Am I wrong?
-No, you're right!
The other day, I told a joke
to this intriguing woman...
...that I met at the cleaners.
If this were the '30s,

she'd be a Communist...
...or at least
a Communist sympathizer.
But the point is, the way
she laughed at that joke...
...reminded me of how Rachel
used to laugh at my jokes.
You gonna follow up?
I could never do that.
I think the Ten Commandments were
probably a lot easier to stick to...
...when you dropped dead at 35.
I mean, we--
They should be amended.
A little amendment,
like the Constitution.
"Thou shalt not covet
thy neighbor's house, wife or ass.
But if you have to covet
your neighbor's wife's ass...
...don't do it
in thy neighbor's house."
A simple amendment, two-thirds
majority, slide through both Houses.
Seriously, name me one guy you know
who's never cheated on his wife.
I wasn't cheating!
I walk into your office,
and I hear you telling some Sara...
...intimate details about our
relationship, about our problems.
Obviously there's something going on
between you and her.
Nothing is going on between us!
We were just talking!
About us?! About our life?!
We were just talking!
That's not talking!
That's a relationship!
Why didn't you tell me about her
if there's nothing to hide?
I just needed somebody to talk to!
Bullshit! Why didn't you talk to me?!
Mommy, I need a drink of water!

I'll be right there!
You wanna know why
I don't talk to you?
You treat me like I'm a big pain
in the ass that gets in the way...
...of what otherwise would be
a normal, organized life!
Have you ever thought that
everything isn't always about you?
Maybe I'm tired! Maybe I'm dealing
with 5000 things all day long!
Maybe every need you have
doesn't have to be met...
...at the exact moment
you need it to be met!
God, we have actual kids here, Ben.
I am not a third child!
I am not talking about having
each of my needs met!
I'm talking about a connection!
A look! Something that says
that we're on the same side here!
Why don't you talk
to your girlfriend?
I'm sure she can help us
get back on the same side.
To have a happy marriage is to accept
the chasm between men and women.
Which is?
He can mend a fight with sex.
She can't have sex
until the fight's resolved.
Why is that?
It's the difference between
the penis and the vagina.
A penis is a thruster,
a battering ram, if you will.
Even if it's mad, it can ram.
Sometimes it even helps.
It's the "mad-ram principle."
However, the vagina....
The vagina!
The vagina has to be relaxed
in order to open and receive.

It can't be a gracious hostess
in a state of anger.
That goes for blowjobs
and kissing too.
Every female point of entry needs
to know that the penis is coming...
...in peace.
-Do you have Sweet'N Low?
-Is Equal okay?
Whatever.
I've always felt no matter what
we were going through...
...no matter how painful things got...
...if our feet found each other
under the blankets...
...even just the slightest
connection...
...it'd tell us we'd entered
the demilitarized zone...
...that we were gonna be okay,
that we were still an "us."
There are some hurts that you
never completely get over.
And you think that time will diminish
their presence...
...and to a degree it does...
...but it still hurts,
because, well...
...hurt hurts.
If you lose your room key...
...contact the front desk.
And if you've got valuables,
keep them in the hotel safe.
It's complimentary.
For family dining,
how about a pizza poolside...
...from our Wolfgang Puck Caf?
Then it's a quick walk to
the Santa Monica Pier and beach.
When the kids are acting up,
the waves will set them straight.
The Patriot is proof positive...
...that missile defense works.
As we've been taught

by Saddam Hussein....
Something about how that man says
"Saddam" makes me want you even more.
Oh, my God!
-The tooth fairy.
-Where?
Josh's tooth. We forgot to put
money under his pillow.
Josh is asleep. I'm sure
this can wait a few minutes.
No, no, baby, we might forget later.
Who goes?
Rock, paper, scissors!
Shit!
Mr. President, I'm entrusting you
with my soon-to-be-naked wife.
Take care of her, the country.
My love to Barbara.
I'll be right back.
I'll be right back!
Everything that's important in
the world is in this bed right now.
I love you.
I love you.
Hi. You've reached the home
of Jordan, Jordan, Jordan and Jordan.
Nary a Jordan is present now.
If you wanna leave a message
for Katie, Ben, Josh or Erin...
...what better time than....
Hi, it's me.
I'm just calling to see
how the kids are doing.
See if you got any post cards
from them.
Anything comes up,
you can give me a call.
Bye-bye.
Listen, I just got your message.
I was in the shower when you called.
The kids seem to be doing really well.
I just put the post cards
in an envelope.
You should be getting them tomorrow.

Good.
You okay?
Yeah, I'm okay. You okay?
Yeah, I'm okay.
Bye.
Bye.
It's me.
How are you?
I'm good. Yeah, really good.
Good.
What's up?
What's up?
I was thinking about the upstairs
bathroom, and I wanted to remind you...
...to schedule that guy
to recaulk the tub.
I've already done it.
Well.
Good.
Then...
...bye.
Bye.
I'm calling to see if you remember
the name of that tree surgeon we used.
Joey Bishop.
Yeah, but no.
-But it was one of those Rat Pack guys.
-Right.
Frank Sinatra?
Dean Martin?
Sammy Davis Jr.?
That's it! Joey Davis Jr.
Joey Davis Jr., the tree surgeon.
I can still see the sign
on that blue truck of his.
Right. Okay, thanks.
Bye.
Listen, your shirts came back
from the cleaners.
Cool. I'll come by and get them.
I can drop them off.
It's fine. I'll be happy
to come and get them.
What would be a good time?

I don't know....
Why don't you come over tomorrow?
I'll be home by 7.
You can stay for dinner.
You sure?
No.
See you tomorrow.
You look like...
...like you.
You too.
I guess I could stand on the porch
all night. I've seen the house.
How many times have we said,
"We should use this porch more often"?
Come in. My house is
literally your house.
Thank you.
-There's my dry cleaning.
-Yeah, I left it out for you.
Good. I'll remember
to take it with me.
Because I could put it
in the closet, but I--
That is perfect
dry cleaning placement.
-You want a drink?
-You want something--?
Want some wine?
I think I remember where it is.
-If memory serves, you like red wine.
-Right.
Yeah, it's all coming back to me.
Wine is breathing a lot better
than I am.
You'll never believe
what I did last night.
I attempted to do
one of your crosswords.
I have a question.
What was 3 down?
Just couldn't get it.
Four letters, "Feeling of
psychological discomfort."
"Blah."

Blah.

Cheers.

Cheers.

Was this always here?

No, I bought it last week.

Any other new appliances

I should know about?

Well, as long as we're
spilling our guts here...

...I also got this new garlic press.

The body's not even cold,
and she's out buying garlic presses.

How do you think the kids are?

From the cards,
it sounds like they're good.

I think Erin misses us,
but she's okay.

Yeah. She seems okay.

You think she's okay?

I think she's okay.

Because I think she senses
that we're not okay...

...and Parents' Weekend is coming.

We'll just have to give her...

...a lot of extra attention...

...and really love her up.

Should we eat?

Yeah, I could eat.

This is really good.

Thanks.

High/Low?

Sure.

Your high?

Honestly?

Right now.

And your low?

Every minute of the last two weeks.

How about you?

My high would have to be the Cuisinart
because I wanted it ever so badly.

And your low?

The garlic press. It's not nearly
as handy as I thought it'd be.

I lay myself open, and you mock me

with kitchenware.
All the while making me
more attractive to you.
Is that your intention?
I'm not sure.
It's working.
It looks like I haven't been
doing too much reading.
Okay, I'm ready. How about you?
-I....
-What?
Come on. Remember
what Dr. Tischner said:
"If you had it once,
you can always get it back."
Was that Dr. Tischner
or was that Dr. Hopkins?
The one with the sibilant "S."
Right.
Wrong. It was a lateral lisp.
Sex is simply a symbolic expression...
...of the emotional status
of a relationship.
Sustained lack of sex is
symptomatic of disassociation.
No, the one with the lateral lisp
was Dr. Rifkin.
Dr. Hopkins was the one with the
Rorschach birthmark on his forehead.
It looked like California. How could
you pay attention to what he said?
This cycle of closeness,
then estrangement...
...you've both told me about...
...what instigates it?
First thing that comes to your mind.
-Sacramento.
-Governor Gray Davis.
My personal favorite was the Freudian
with the prostate problem.
When two people go to bed...
...there are actually six people
in that bed.
If you'll excuse me.

Are we allowed to talk when he's gone?

I don't know.

What do you think?

To be on the safe side,
maybe we better not.

The six people in bed are
the two of you...

...and your parents
and your parents.

Now, the key is....

Will you excuse me, please?

He charged us for the full session.

The man was peeing on our time!

All that therapy was
a waste of time and money.

Where did all that therapy
really get us?

It got us here,
laughing about it.

-He's right.

-Once it's broken, it can't be fixed.

-I don't know.

-The queen has spoken.

-Maybe it's too soon.

-What are you talking about?

The whole point of having a fight is
playing "hide the salami" afterwards.

Let hard times bring you together.

Nobody said it'd be easy.

Can't hard times bring us together?

Nobody said it'd be easy.

Like the Andrews Sisters.

After "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" ...

...before "Don't Sit

Under the Apple Tree."

Big career slump there.

Like the Andrews Sisters before

"Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree."

The Andrews Sisters?

They didn't stop

because of a few flops.

They hung in there.

The rest is history.

Don't sit under the apple tree

Why are you bringing up
the Andrews Sisters now?
-You're singing!
-It's an example.
They're in trouble,
and you're singing?
Dot, put out once in a while.
Your face won't be so tight.
Slut.
I don't know what their career slump
has to do with our marital problems.
What should we do?
Make matters worse by dwelling
on every little thing all our lives?
Is that what you think I do?
-You're a child.
-I just dwell on everything?
You're a 72-year-old infant!
There are real problems that we
haven't even begun to deal with.
Don't you think I know that?
What happened to you?
What happened to that fun girl
with the pith helmet?
You don't think I ask myself
that every day?
You beat her out of me!
There's no room here for her!
You think it's all fun and games.
So it's my fault you hang on
to every little thing!
It's my fault you can't
let go of anything!
It's my fault you turned
into your mother?!
Fuck you!
-I still think that there's a chance--
-Ben, you love who we were.
You couldn't possibly love
what we've become.
I think I spotted us
at dinner tonight.
We can't stay together
just because we...

...get a glimpse of "us"
every once in a while.
It was less than 15 minutes ago.
All we proved is, if we're apart
for weeks at a time...
...we might get through a dinner.
That's not a marriage.
It's over.
A book about your grandmother?
Yeah. She was an extraordinary woman.
I'm sure she was.
Did she fuck a President?
No. Did she discover uranium?
A cure for cancer?
Nothing like that?
Why would anybody wanna read
a book about her?
She was 4'9" . She emigrated
from Europe as a little girl.
She worked in a sweatshop making
buttonholes 14 hours a day and yet...
...raised five kids and stayed married
to the same man for 57 years.
Dave, this will be the greatest
love story ever told.
Let me explain something to you.
Not as your agent.
This is as a friend.
Come here.
You see all these people?
They're getting into buildings.
They're driving cars.
They're crossing the street.
They're walking around.
Every single one of these people...
...is going to die someday...
...and they all know it.
Which is why...
...they regard the time they have
on this planet as precious.
There are things that take up
that time...
...even if they don't enjoy it.
They have to go to work.

They have to get dressed,
wait in lines...
...clean yards, get batteries.
They visit the eye doctor.
They're doing all these things.
Now, add that to the time they spend
sleeping and eating...
...and washing up and voting...
...and buying gifts for people
they don't like, and you see...
...why they're so choosy about
how they spend their leisure time.
You can understand why
unless she went down on somebody...
...really interesting, they won't
waste their valuable time...
...reading a book about
your fucking grandmother!
So if I read you right,
you don't like the idea.
It's not that.
You know, I find the Ariana
much more fragrant than the Raphaela.
I'll keep that in mind.
-How you doing?
-Fine.
I never got a chance to thank you
for holding the camp bus.
Anytime you need a bus held,
I am your guy.
-Erin's teeth are looking good.
-Thanks to you.
I hope she remembers to wear
her retainer.
You know how kids are at camp.
The minute my Kevin gets off that bus,
it's "Goodbye, biteplate."
Is that for you?
When Deirdre and I divorced,
I decided to learn how to cook.
The Wok-y World of Thai Cooking?
I'm branching out.
I'm taking a Thai cooking course
this summer.

Really? I've always been interested
in Asian cooking.

Really?

Why don't you join me?

When I think about it...

...over the years there were

less and less moments...

...in the course of the day...

...when Ben and I actually made
real eye contact.

You are not gonna believe
what happened.

-What?

-He's almost asleep.

Maybe it was the stuff of life.

Who's taking Erin to school?

Who will pick up Josh
from his clarinet lessons?

After a while, there was
a disturbing comfort...

...in not having to deal
with each other...

...because somehow you just
get used to the disconnection.

Even at night, when we could finally
come together, we faced forward.

Yeah, we were tired,
but I think we were afraid...

...that if we faced each other,
there'd be nothing there.

We're learning Mee Krob next week.

Mee Krob.

I'll let you know.

I'll call you. Oh, you call me.

When we drove to the camp
for Parents' Weekend...

...I was scared to face the kids.

You'd talk about it with a best friend.

But Katie had been my best friend.

Now I didn't know what we were,
except Josh and Erin's parents.

What?

Nothing.

--is nothing?

This is not going to be easy.
The kids do not need to be burdened
with our problems.
They have half a summer left.
Like my plan was to burden
the kids with our problems.
Jesus Christ, will you give me
some fucking credit?
I missed you.
I missed you so much.
I missed you both so much.
Dad, pull yourself together.
Dad, get off of me!
You guys both look terrific!
Show us your bunks.
I wanna see your bunks too.
Did you get your favorite room?
The Acorn Cabin?
Yeah, we did.
We got the Acorn Cabin.
God, I hate lying to them.
Me too. We're not even good at it.
Even if we were good at it,
they'd still know.
What is that?
What's what?
-The thing you just put in your mouth.
-It's my biteplate.
-Biteplate?
-Yeah. It's my biteplate.
-Why do you have a biteplate?
-For my bite.
What's wrong with your bite?
It's askew.
Askew?
Yes, it's askew.
So this would be an attempt
to de-skew it?
You order room service?
-What's the matter?
-Nothing. I'm okay.
Honey, are you okay?
I'm okay. I'm fine.
I couldn't sleep, so

I snuck out after lights out.
I just wanted to sleep
with you guys.
It's okay. I'll call the camp
and let them know you're here.
Why is the bed made up on the couch?
Daddy was doing a little reading,
and I didn't wanna wake Mommy up.
Sometimes you just can't
climb out of the abyss.
I thought of last summer,
when we still hoped...
...that if we put ourselves
in some idyllic setting...
...we'd somehow get rid
of all the tension...
...jump-start our marriage...
...and rediscover why we fell in love
in the first place.
So last year,
after Parents' Weekend...
...we thought maybe
in a trattoria in Venice...
...looking at a beautiful sunset,
next to a bottle of Chianti...
...we just might find a set
of jumper cables.
How you doing?
Two Italian ices, please.
Honey, you don't have to say Italian.
We're here. They know.
So if I'm in Belgium, and I order
a Belgian waffle, I just say waffle?
Like if you were in Ireland
and you wanted Irish stew...
...you'd just say stew.
If you're in China and
you want Chinese food...
...you say, "Bring on the food."
We couldn't help but overhear
your delightful repartee.
We're the Kirbys from Cleveland.
And you are...?
-The Mansons.

-From Spawn Ranch.
That's a good one.
Look, sweetie. There.
The red cape.
I like that.
It's you...
...people.
-The Kirbys from Cleveland.
-Joanie and Eddie.
How could we forget?
We haven't stopped talking about you.
This is fate. We have to
get together, break bread.
Sounds great.
We're at the Hotel Pasta e Fagioli.
You call us.
We're at the Europa Regina.
Great. We'll call you.
Oh, right on!
Look at this.
-This is beautiful.
-This way.
-Thank you.
-Canal-side seating.
Very nice.
Oh, my God!
Meant to be!
Kismet! Kismet!
We went looking for your hotel,
but we couldn't find it anywhere.
-Yeah, it's pretty hard to find.
-Well, all's well that ends well.
It was just like fate,
the first time I met Joanie.
I worked on the 6th floor,
and Eddie worked on the 4th floor.
-Hand to God.
-Every day in the cafeteria...
-...on the third floor--
-I saw Joanie at the salad bar.
And she smiled at me.
Not just a smile.
I mean, a really big smile.
One day at the salad bar

at Beefsteak Charlie's...
...I thought I saw her
at that salad bar.
-But it wasn't me.
-It wasn't Joanie!
What are the odds of another person
at a salad bar looking like Joanie...
...and yet not being Joanie?
What, like a trillion to one?
Could be higher than that.
Anyway, when I realized it wasn't
Joanie, I was so disappointed.
And I began to think about how much
I'd hoped that it was Joanie.
But at this point
you still hadn't met.
No. And I couldn't get over how much
I wanted this person to be Joanie.
And I think that was
the defining moment.
I went back to my wife at the table
at Beefsteak Charlie's...
...and I realized I felt more alive
thinking about that stranger...
...I thought was Joanie than I did
with the stranger who was my wife.
We were both in marriages
we'd outgrown.
You know, maybe I didn't
wanna admit it, but maybe...
...I didn't like myself enough
to be with someone who liked me.
Can you imagine anybody
not liking Eddie Kirby?
I'm not so perfect.
Beg to differ!
That year we both mustered up
enough courage to leave our marriages.
So at this point you had met.
Still hadn't met.
But, you know, after you've had
such a horrible marriage...
...you don't wanna make
the same mistakes twice.

So I made an inner pact with myself.
I said, "Eddie, you will never
let anger build up to the point...
...where you don't like
your partner."
-I made the same pact.
-That became our credo.
"Never go to bed angry."
So now we talk everything through.
We won't let even the tiniest pea
be under our mattress.
That's why we never eat in bed.
Me too.
Who'd have thought the Kirbys...
...the happiest couple
never to have met...
...would be the greatest
aphrodisiac known to man?
If only you could bottle
that unfettered state of mind...
...that comes with being
on foreign soil...
...to just hold on to it...
...even for a day, an evening...
...an hour.
Last year, when we
got back from Italy, God knows...
...we gave it a try.
Hey, look at this.
While we were away, we got a message
from His Holiness, the Dalai Lama.
About a softball team
he's getting started.
You wanna write a letter to the kids
together, let them know we're back?
"Dear Josh...
...and Erin."
Oh, sure. You get the easy part.
"We're...
...back."
"From...
...Europe."
That's not a sentence.
It's a preposition and a continent.

I crossed out your period
and made a sentence.
See? "We're back from Europe."
Your turn.
Thank you.
Exclamation point.
Comma. Close parentheses.
"But I...
...don't want to talk...
...about grammar."
Colon. "I want to...
...make love to...
...your mother."
No, you didn't write that.
What? I do. I want to.
After we finish the letter.
No, let's make love right now.
Then we write the letter.
Come on, we only had
a couple of sentences to go.
In Europe, you would've
made love first.
-What's that supposed to mean?
-Nothing.
-That I'm not spontaneous?
-I'm not saying that.
But that's what you implied.
That in Europe I'd have
made love, but here--
I don't want us to get to the point...
...where we can't make love unless
there's a concierge downstairs.
I wanted to take three minutes
to finish a letter to our children...
...who I haven't seen--
What's that supposed to mean?
That I don't care about our children?
If I finish the letter,
I could be spontaneous.
That's not spontaneous!
That's making an appointment!
I was in the mood
for unscheduled affection...
...but sorry, we're home. I forgot...

...everything's gotta be
on a schedule!
You try raising children
where everything's unscheduled...
...when everything's spontaneous!
You know what? The kids need
a little spontaneity too!
I know that!
I'm sick and tired of being
the designated driver of this marriage!
Nobody designated you!
It's a role you gave yourself!
Bullshit! You gave me that role!
Because God forbid Ben should ever
remember to cancel the newspapers...
...or put washer fluid in his car...
...or participate in disciplining
his children...
...instead of flirting on the phone
with your girlfriend!
You're not bringing that up again!
You're damn straight
I'll bring it up again!
I haven't spoken to her
in six months!
Not once have you seen it
through my eyes!
We don't have a pea under our mattress.
You know what we have?
A fucking watermelon!
And you never wanna deal with it!
Oh, fuck it!
Jesus!
Welcome home.
Bye, Dad.
-Thanks.
-I love you.
-Bye, Mom.
-Buddy.
Love you.
See you guys in a month.
Bye, you guys.
-Bye, Daddy.
-Couple of weeks.

-Watch your toes.
-See you.
Bye, kids.
Do you think we should get
one lawyer or two?
One.
Maybe we can at least
make this part....
All I care about is that we make it
as easy for the kids as possible.
I'm sure you noticed the bathroom has
the original tiling from the '20s.
It's nice.
You know, since you're a writer,
I know you'd appreciate...
...that the sister
of Bette Davis' chauffeur...
...once had Thanksgiving
in the apartment next door.
Really?
Are there any other kids
in this building?
Oodles! Including, if I might add,
the nephew of the actor...
...who jumped third into
the fourth lifeboat on Titanic.
Rent the film, you'll see.
I'll introduce you.
I'm showing it to another family today,
but if you're interested...
...I can hold it for you,
give your wife a look-see--
I'm interested.
Who wouldn't be? Look how the light
from that window fills the room.
When I showed this apartment...
...to the man who did the voice
of Charlie the Tuna...
...he said, and I quote,
"Wow," unquote.
I think that says it all.
First, you put olive oil...
...garlic and tofu.
Saut until garlic turn light brown.

Make sure that your wok have
a strong heat underneath it.
Now take an egg and crack it
to the hot oil.
Make sure all the ingredients
are cooked thoroughly.
You okay?
Yeah, I'm fine.
Now we add some Pad Thai noodle.
I saw Deirdre up at Parents' Weekend,
but I didn't see you.
I went up the weekend before.
You know, since the divorce...
...it's a lot easier for everyone
if we come up at separate times.
Kevin and I took a great hike
up to that waterfall.
You and Ben take that hike?
Yeah, it was beautiful.
Spice it up with some chili pepper.
You know, spicy food
make a better lover.
The hotter you eat,
the hotter you get.
Well, the spicier the better for me.
Rice vinegar.
Does Ben like Thai food?
You and Ben been to Tommy Tang's?
Ben and I are di--
Separated.
Gee, I had no idea.
We're not really telling people.
I understand.
I'm so sorry. How long?
...depending on when
you start counting.
I'm really sorry.
I know how hard it can be.
This will sound crazy...
...but I always enjoyed
Erin and Josh's appointments...
...because it gave me a chance
to get to know you.
But when you called me

about your bite...
...I felt myself looking forward to it
because I knew we'd be alone.
And just tell me if it's too soon...
...but I wondered if maybe you
wanted to have dinner sometime?
We are having dinner.
I was thinking of something
that didn't involve a teacher.
You always hear people say...
...they stayed too long
in a bad marriage.
For the longest time, I never thought
of my marriage as being bad.
I thought love was something you
were allowed to fall in and out of.
You know, peaks and valleys.
But after a while...
...the peaks get lower
and further apart.
Then one day you find yourself
wondering, "Is this who I really am?
Someone who has taken up permanent
residence in the valley?
Or is this just who I am
with this person?"
And then, you ask yourself:
"Maybe there is another version
of my life, of myself...
...that's a happier one. "
Bullshit.
"Yossel looked into Minnie's eyes
and felt...
...nothing.
For two years they'd been apart.
And now, as she stepped off the boat...
...he realized he was
looking into the eyes...
...of a stranger.
A girl he no longer knew.
He had become an American.
And she was still the poor...
...unaffectionate...
...daughter...

...of a blind Lithuanian violin maker."
It's fear. It was all about fear.
Fear's what kept them together.
This whole time I've idealized my grandparents' marriage.
But this was not the love of the ages.
The two stayed together because they were terrified.
Fear of loneliness, fear of failure, fear of the unknown.
Sure, fear. That's the main motivator for everything.
That and guilt are the two emotions that keep a society humming.
You and Rachel stay together because of fear?
-In a word, yes.
-You're okay with that?
In three words, yes and no.
See, it's not that simple.
You're looking for clear-cut answers.
In reality, there's nothing clear-cut.
Life is not clear-cut.
Life is gray.

For instance:

What do you see right here?
-What are you asking me?
-I'm asking you, what do you see?
I see your ass.
That's what you think you see.
But in reality, there is no ass.
What the f--?
What are you telling me?
There is no ass, just the fatty part at the top of each leg...
...that is butted up against each other.
Hence the word "butt."
See, essentially...
...what we're dealing with here is just a continuation of the leg.
Okay, all right, now you lost me.

It's all illusions.
There is no such thing as an ass.
Just like there's no such thing as
the perfect marriage, job or child.
The whole notion of staying together
and living happily ever after...
...all illusions.
You're saying you don't believe
in everlasting love?
You're seeing the ass again
and not the tops of the legs.
Love is just lust in disguise.
And lust fades.
So you damn well better be
with someone who can stand you.
Katie and I have moved way past
being able to stand each other.
We've moved right
into the hatred part.
I wouldn't worry about it.
Hate fades.
Hate fades?
That's what you're gonna send me out
into the world with?
"Hate fades. Love is lust.
There is no ass."
What a disappointment
you've turned out to be.
Just promise me one thing.
Please promise me that you will not
say any of this to Rachel.
Are you crazy?
This conversation ends here.
When Stan called me,
I couldn't believe it.
I knew it was rough for you guys--
We didn't wanna say until we knew
we weren't getting back together.
Oh, my God.
How are you doing?
I don't know.
I thought I'd be devastated.
Maybe it just hasn't hit me.
-You're having an affair.

-What are you talking about?
You're only not devastated
if you're seeing someone else.
I'm not seeing someone else.
Are you serious about
who you're not seeing?
I don't know.
I know he's nothing like Ben.
He's responsible, plans ahead,
has a Swiss Army knife.
He even wants to cook me dinner.
-He's a sandbag.
-A what?
He's just a sandbag
against the storm...
...holding off the inevitable
devastation.
Rachel, you okay?
Honey?
I'm sorry.
I know I'm supposed to be the one
holding your hand...
...but I just feel terrible.
I mean, the thought of you guys
not being together....
You're our best friends.
Fourth of Julys and Thanksgivings
and Christmases.
You guys were our
Fred and Ethel Mertz.
We thought you guys were
our Fred and Ethel Mertz.
Really?
I never thought this was
going to happen to me and Ben.
I thought we were going to be the ones
to go the distance.
But I just couldn't seem to get him
to put down that purple crayon.
But that's Ben.
That's who you fell in love with.
Katie, you are at 80
who you are at 8.
People don't change!

People change over time.
You've got to expect that.
The only way a relationship works is
if people grow and change together.
Mr. and Mrs. Cogen, Mr. Jordan.
Nice to have you tonight. Is Mrs.
Jordan not joining us this evening?
No, she's not. Stan, I told you
to make the reservation for three!
-I forgot.
-How could you forget that?
Say it louder. The guy
in the lot didn't hear you.
It wasn't that loud.
Did you see Sunday's 7 down?
-I missed that one.
-Five-letter word.
"Wants, requirements."
Rhymes with weeds.
"Needs"?
Exactly.
It was a direct attack on me.
Come on. You're being silly.
It was just a clue
in a crossword puzzle.
I know my wife.
She was specifically attacking me.
And for what?
For having needs.
Like having needs is
some terrible thing.
Show me one person
that doesn't have needs.
Try this bread dipped in
the olive oil. It's delicious.
Stan, give Ben the bread!
Why must you yell?
-Who yelled?
-You.
That's not a yell.
He hears everything as a yell.
On anyone's yell-o-meter,
that was a yell.
Was that a yell?

He didn't hear it as a yell.
His mom was a yeller.
He still hears her.
How could I hear her?
You drown her out.
It's true.
The last few years,
when Katie opened her mouth...
...all I'd hear was her mother.
Dot.
It wasn't easy for Katie to be raised
by a woman as complicated as Dot.
Please, she wasn't complicated.
She was an idiot who made
everyone else's life complicated.
You wouldn't believe the beautiful
psychological heirlooms...
...this snapping turtle handed down.
Everything's gotta be
in a neat little box...
...with a little blue bow on it.
Punctual.
Ordered.
God forbid anything unexpected
should happen...
...any perchances, happenstances...
...left turns, serendipities!
Nope, no way! Not allowed!
Out-of-bounds! Foul ball!
Too much time being spontaneous!
Everything's gotta be connected.
Gotta connect the dots.
Maybe that's why they call her Dot.
You notice that her name wasn't
Gay or Joy or Fun!
Try the bread--
You can't even fuck
unless everything's just right!
Like a plane waiting for takeoff.
Windows shut? Check.
Doors locked? Check!
Heat on? Check!
Have we covered every possible,
single reason...

...why everything is my fault?!

Houston, we got a problem
and her name is Dot!

-Ben, bread.

-There are people like Katie and Dot...
...who color inside the lines,
and people like you...
...who wander outside.

That can be a very endearing quality.
That's why Katie fell in love
with you. Once you have kids--
I am not a third child!

Excuse me if my watch
has no hands on it.

That's fine. It's just, somebody
has to establish the routine--
Are you saying it's all my fault?!

It's nobody's fault!

When people say it's nobody's fault,
they don't mean that.

They mean it's your fault!

The nobody's fault things are...
...hurricanes, earthquakes,
tornadoes, acts of God!

But when a marriage fails,
it's gotta be somebody's fault!

And it's not mine!

Take that fucking bread and shove it
up the tops of your legs!

Maybe I'm tired! Maybe I'm dealing
with 5000 things all day long!

Maybe every need you have
doesn't have to be met...
...at the exact moment
you need it to be met!

I'm sick and tired of being
the designated driver of this marriage!

Nobody designated you!

It's a role you gave yourself!

Not once have you seen it
through my eyes!

We don't have a pea under our mattress.
You know what we have?
A fucking watermelon!

You okay?
Take me to Katie's.
What are you doing here?
I wanted to know what
your high was today.
You should've called.
My high was about you.
Tonight I saw myself
through your eyes.
And I'm sorry.
It might be a nice touch...
...if you add some roasted peanuts
to the sesame--
At some point we should discuss
how to tell the children.
How you doing? Come on in.
This is nice.
Thanks.
It's close to the park.
The kids and I can walk.
You want something to drink?
I'll take water if you don't have
anything else.
We have pretty much
anything you want.
Beer, Gatorade...
...fruit juice, iced tea.
Iced tea is fine.
Here you go.
You have a watch.
Come on in.
Sit down here.
I think we should....
When we pick the kids up Thursday,
we should just tell them that night.
We don't have to tell them right away.
Why?
What will change
between now and Thursday?
Katie, you're seeing someone else.
I'm not seeing him.
We're just talking.
Right.
I won't put up with any more of this

bullshit lying to the kids.
We take them to Chow Fun's, their
favorite restaurant, to tell them.
We can't really talk at Chow Fun's.
We'll go to the house
and tell them at dinner.
After dinner.
We'll all sit down and....
Jesus, how do we say this?
We'll just tell them
how much we love them...
...how amazing and beautiful
they are...
...so they don't think
that any of this is their fault.
That's the important thing.
We'll just say that...
...Mommy and Daddy...
...or Mom and Dad....
You think Mom and Dad?
Mommy and Daddy.
We'll say that Mommy and Daddy
have grown apart.
I was just thinking about Erin.
She'll probably say something like:
"Well, there must be something right
about you guys...
...for you to produce
such beautiful and amazing kids."
She might say something like that,
you know?
We'll just tell her that they were...
...born in love and we'll
always love them...
...but Mommy and Daddy
don't love each other anymore.
Well, wouldn't it be better
if we told them...
...we still love each other,
but in a different way?
Fine.
-We shouldn't say that?
-I said it was fine.
Well, it was kind of a weird "fine."

Should I be thrilled about how we
love each other in a different way?

-Who is it?

-Mr. Jordan, your couch is here.

Where have you guys been?

Come on in.

They were supposed to be here
first thing this morning.

I'll pick you up at 5:00
on Thursday?

So is there...

...anything else

we need to talk about?

Like what?

Nothing.

Bye.

What happened to you?

What happened to that fun girl
with the pith helmet?

You don't think I ask myself
that every day?

I'm talking about a connection!

A look! Something that says
that we're on the same side here!

Isn't this the moment
where one of us says:

"This is ridiculous.

We love each other.

All couples go through this.

Let's give it another try"?

It was supposed to rain today.

Glad it didn't.

Me too.

Turn here. If you take Sepulveda....

What?

Nothing.

Do you, Katie, take Ben...

...to have and to hold...

...in sickness and in health...

...for better or for worse...

-...till death do you part?

-I do.

It's a boy.

It's a girl.

It's a bunny!
It's a home run!
It's chickenpox.
It's over.
I love you.
Damn you!
I love you.
Damn it!
I love you.
I love you. I love you. I love you.
I hate you!
Fuck me. Fuck me.
Fuck you!
I love you.
I'm pregnant.
My goldfish died.
My hamster died.
My father's dying.
I'm pregnant.
Maybe we should separate.
Mom! Dad!
You ready?
What's up? It's good to see you.
How you doing?
What's the matter?
She just missed you, that's all.
You've both just grown so big.
Look at you guys.
I hardly recognize you. Wait.
Which one is Erin?
Check it out, Dad.
I guess we know what your high
is today. "Best All-Around Camper."
Congratulations. Look.
I guess this calls for a celebration!
Come on! Riverdance!
I'm the best all-around Riverdancer
Come on. Kind of like
a little "Latin Lupe Lu" thing.
Go with the big finish!
Come on! What?
-I have to see these kids next summer.
-Come on, we're hungry.
Okay. All right.

Let's go home.
I think we should go to Chow Fun's.
Chow Fun's?
We agreed that we
couldn't talk at Chow Fun's.
I know.
What are you saying?
I'm saying Chow Fun's.
Are you saying Chow Fun's
because you can't face telling them?
If that's why, don't say Chow Fun's.
That's not why. I'm saying Chow Fun's
because we're an "us."
There's a history here...
...and histories
don't happen overnight.
In Mesopotamia or ancient Troy...
...or somewhere, there are cities
built on top of other cities...
...but I don't wanna build
another city. I like this city.
I know where we keep the Bactine...
...and what mood you're in
by which eyebrow is higher.
You always know that I'm quiet in
the morning and compensate accordingly.
That's a dance you perfect over time.
And it's much harder
than I thought it would be...
...but there's more good than bad.
And you don't just give up!
And it's not for the sake
of the children.
But they're great kids, aren't they?
And we made them!
I mean, think about that.
There were no people there,
and then there were people.
And then they grew.
I won't be able to say to some
stranger, "Josh has your hands" ...
...or "Remember how Erin threw up
at the Lincoln Memorial?"
And I'll try to relax.

Let's face it, anybody will have
traits that get on your nerves.
Why shouldn't it be your annoying
traits? I'm no day at the beach.
But I do have a good sense
of direction, so I can find the beach.
Which is not a criticism of yours...
...it's just a strength of mine.
God, you're a good friend.
And good friends are hard to find.
Charlotte said that
in Charlotte's Web.
I love the way you read that to Erin.
You take on the voice of Wilbur
with such commitment...
...even when you're bone tired.
That speaks volumes about character.
And ultimately...
...isn't that what it comes down to?
What a person's made of?
Because that girl
in the pith helmet...
...is still in here.
I didn't even know she existed
until I met you.
And I'm afraid if you leave...
...I may never see her again.
Even though I said you beat her
out of me. Isn't that the paradox?
Haven't we hit the essential paradox?
Give and take, push and pull.
The best of times, the worst of times.
Dickens said it best.
The Jack Sprat of it. He could eat
no fat. His wife could eat no lean.
But that doesn't apply here, does it?
I guess what I'm trying to say is...
...I'm saying Chow Fun's because...
...I love you.
I love you too.
Did you hear that, kids?
Your mom wants to go to Chow Fun's!
Isn't that great?
I love Chow Fun's!

The egg rolls are good,
but not that good.
The egg rolls are fantastic!
They're warm, crispy,
greasy as all hell.
-Everything you want in an egg roll!
-Exactly!
High/Low. Erin, you first.
My high for the summer is,
Austin wrote me 111 times.
How did you come up
with High/Low anyway?
I don't know.
But I've got another game.
I'm thinking of seven words.
What are they?
Do I get a hint?
A category?
-Any seven words in English.
-That's right.
Fair enough.
"MacArthur Park is melting
in the dark."
"And they lived happily ever after."
That's six words,
but you're very close.
"And they lived mostly happily
ever after"?
I hope so.
I think so.
Think so?
I do.
I do...
...too.