



ZION THEATRICALS

Newport, Maine

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THE WAY WE'RE WIRED

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Cast of Characters

2M 1TB 5W 1TG

ANDY: A vet in his mid forties

TERRELL: Proprietor of a bowling alley, late forties

KYLE: Darlene's 17- year old son.

DARLENE: A receptionist, mid thirties

APRIL: Telemarketer, mid thirties.

CALLIE: Data processor, early thirties

KATIE: Teacher, almost forty.

SANDRA: An administrator, early forties

MINDY: Katie's daughter, 15/16 years old

THE WAY WE'RE WIRED by *Eric Samuelsen*. 2M 1TB 5W 1TG. Pull out a microscope, put any LDS singles-over-30 group on the glass slide, and take a peek. You will most likely find the same characters there as you do in this production. At first glance they may look like a bunch of misfits chumming together, but then you realize you know them and, in fact, could be one of them. "The Way We're Wired" presents a painfully funny view on the varieties of LDS singles and how they function — almost as a counter-culture. As is stated early in the show, "to be an LDS single over 30, you've either never married, you're widowed or divorced. In other words, you're a loser, a pity-case, or a failure. *Wired* is very much a journey of discovery. It concerns itself with the power and efficacy of change. Of how much control we have in our own life and why we are where we are and what we can do about it. **ORDER # 2026**

Eric Samuelsen taught at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio before joining the faculty at Brigham Young University in 1992. He became head of the Playwriting program at BYU in 1999. He has also taught as an adjunct faculty member in the Religion department. He retired from BYU in 2012.

As a playwright, Samuelsen has had twenty-seven plays professionally produced in Utah, Indiana, Louisiana, New York, and California. Some of his plays include *Gadianton*, which has seen three professional productions across the country, *A Love Affair with Electrons*, *Family*, *The Plan*, and *The Way We're Wired*. He is resident playwright at Plan B Theatre Company in Salt Lake City, who has designated their 2013-14 season a 'Season of Eric, including productions of six plays.

He is a member of the Playwrights' Circle, and the Dramatists Guild. He is three-time winner of the Annual Award in Playwriting offered by the Association for Mormon Letters (AML) and he became president of AML in 2007. In 2013 the organization awarded him the Smith Pettit Award for his lifetime work as a playwright. He has been a staff writer for the on-line satirical magazine *The Sugarbeet*. He was also featured in the book *Conversations with Mormon Authors*, edited by Chris Bigelow. He is a noted Ibsen translator, and has also published scholarly articles on 19th and 20th century Scandanavian Theatre, and more recently, on LDS drama and film. He blogs at Mormoniconoclast.com.

NOTE: *Singled Out*, a novel version of this play, adapted by the author, is available at Amazon.com

ACT ONE

(Enter SANDRA.)

SANDRA: Okay, people. We're ready to start here.

(She claps her hands. Waits for people to settle in, looks the audience over.)

Do I look okay? In Mormon culture, there's three ways you become a Single Adult. You never married, or you were widowed, or you're divorced. In other words, you're either a loser, a pity case or a failure. Labels, just labels, right? So, do I look okay? Normal, non-threatening, conservative, active? Hair, makeup, clothes? All standard Mormon issue, right? I dressed for success tonight: I am, after all, a success. That's how *I* see myself. Do I look okay to you? Okay: Loser. Pity Case. Failure. She's Single. They're Singles. Unmarried, spouseless, alone, lonely. Now, admit it, that's how you have me *defined*. And if I move into your ward; you notice my single status immediately. It's not just me. A family moves in to your ward, and maybe they're from a different racial background, or maybe they're handicapped. They're different. You want to show you're not prejudiced. You want to be open and friendly. But you're not really *comfortable* inviting them to dinner, or a neighborhood picnic. You just don't know . . . what to *say*. Am I right? Let's talk. You bought your tickets; I put tonight in my planner. We have a couple of hours together. Let's spend it wisely.

(She signals offstage; the other characters enter.)

I'm here to introduce some friends, and to help tell their stories. It is a love story, among other things. And it's about change, and friendship, and it's about . . . all kinds of things. Bowling. International finance. And it has a happy ending. I hope all our stories do.

(Stands to the side. As each character speaks, s/he steps forward.)

ANDY: One time I was examining this beautiful Irish Setter, and she looked over at her owner, and the owner said "look at that look she gave me. Tell me that's not pure Irish Setter love." That's what people think. That their pets really love them.

SANDRA: April.

APRIL: My major: I switched from Humanities to History to Linguistics, went on my mission to Hong Kong, and I learned Cantonese, and while I was there I decided to learn Mandarin too; just meant an extra two hours earlier every morning to study; I mean, why not learn what you can while you're there?

SANDRA: Katie.

KATIE: So he says to me, 'it's not really you, you know. Nothing you did, nothing you said. It's me, the blahs, the blues, mid-life whatever.' I need some space.' 'Get my act together.' 'Get my head screwed back on straight.' What is it with guys, huh? Can they even think in anything but clichés?

SANDRA: Darlene.

DARLENE: Said he was my home teacher, cutest guy; blushed practically ever time I cussed. He was so great, kept telling me like how if I wore dresses a little longer and maybe a bit less makeup, I'd have an easier time getting a job like in an office, you know, sitting? Typing; I can type. And file. I got skills and all.

SANDRA: Terrell.

TERRELL: The Pro Bowlers Tour discriminates against bald guys, especially white guys, and I can prove it.

SANDRA: Callie.

CALLIE: I . . . I shouldn't even be here.

(Pause.)

I should just leave.

DARLENE: But, you know how job interviews go sometimes, the wrong cuss word at just the wrong time,

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dress too short, and it gets all misunderstood.

ANDY: I think we endow. We think, 'okay, she's a dog, she's not human. She likes me like dogs like the leader of their pack or something, but she does like me, at least the way a dog likes another dog.'

TERRELL: It's true, you have no chance if you're going thin on top.

APRIL: So when I got off my mission, I decided to go for a second degree, in International Relations, and a semester into it, someone suggested a double major, International Relations and Business, and that just made all kinds of sense.

KATIE: 'Just need to get my act together.' Right.

SANDRA: Sorry. I'm busy that night. And I've already seen that movie.

DARLENE: New perm, nice new skirt, looser and mid-calf, toned down the mascara.

TERRELL: They want 'em to look good on TV.

DARLENE: And so I went and applied at this place, real high class joint you could tell.

KATIE: Yep, it was all about him, all right. Him and Brooke: boobs like cantaloupes, butt like an Olympic cyclist, and a brain the size of a dust mite. Massage therapist. Twenty-three; high school dropout. That was my rival. Like: she used 'like' every other word. "Like, he was, like, so, like, cute and all, and, like, had this, like, Ferrari."

(Pause.)

I never had a chance.

DARLENE: Maybe it was the look, a confidence thing, but I totally aced the typing test. But then came the personnel interview.

ANDY: Every once in a while, I'll clean out a cyst, or repair an impacted eyelash, the kind of procedure where there's instant relief. And you'll get this look. Almost like . . . gratitude. You endow.

APRIL: So I had a couple of offers after graduation, but a lot of businesses were gun-shy about China, and so I decided to go back to school and pick up Korean and Japanese which took me four more years, but it was really worth it, because then I heard about this combination MBA/JD thing you could do, just added a year to grad school, and then you've got a law degree *AND* an MBA.

KATIE: That was how he 'got his act together.' Chugging down Viagra like breath mints.

TERRELL: Bowled 300, once, three round score of 845. You know what they told me? It was how the lane was oiled. Any excuse.

KATIE: *(Hopefully.)* Can't be good for his heart.

DARLENE: But the interview went great, and I got the job! The skirt, the new makeup, the new perm. My home teacher was right. It worked.

APRIL: And I've worked eighteen jobs the last five years since I passed the bar because nothing is quite right and I'm basically overqualified for everything and three different law firms wanted me for like insurance law, which I could do but how do I get from there to where I want to be? Cause most businesses are leery of hiring a woman to run things anyway, throw in the Asian culture thing, sexism is multicultural, not that I'm complaining, of course I understand, I don't blame them, I'd be leery too. Experience, that's what it's really all about, not gender, they just want someone experienced, which I'm not, just really really qualified, you know?

ANDY: It's a mistake even some vets make.

APRIL: And in the meantime I tele-market, and it's really not that bad a job, really it isn't.

CALLIE: I really shouldn't be here.

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ANDY: But it's not true. Animals really don't feel anything for us, not in terms we can comprehend. It's how they're wired: stimulus-response. Purely instinctual. We really are endowing when we anthropomorphize their feelings.

CALLIE: It's not safe.

ANDY: And to tell the truth, we're not wired all that differently. How much of love is real? How much is physical response to stimuli, endorphins, a survival mechanism we've evolved?

KATIE: And since he's been with her, he's even gotten dumber. Can too much sex make you retarded?

ANDY: Animals aren't like us, thinking, feeling. We're much more like them. Reacting. Instinctual.

DARLENE: So I really owe that home teacher dude big time, his advice about how I could present myself. Years past, Ida prolly triedta do the HR guy, or something, right there on his desk. But this was way better, and the job is just great. They even like pay for health insurance. Wo. So I figure I'd better pay him back, that home teacher, and what he wanted was for me to come to church.

SANDRA: Mindy and Kyle.

(MINDY and KYLE see each other.)

KYLE: *(With a confident grin.)* Hey.

MINDY: *(Shy smile and giggle.)* Hi.

(And with that, they're a couple, maybe not even touching, but together.)

KATIE: *(Looking at them.)* Oh, brother.

SANDRA: *(To the Audience.)* The Single Adult Activity for August. A dude ranch.

(The stage clears, except for KATIE and MINDY.)

MINDY: *(Looks around.)* So this is it.

(Exaggerated Western accent)

The "bunkhouse" where we "cowpokes" rest from a hard day on the range.

KATIE: That's quite enough, young lady. Only one of us gets to be cynical and mocking at a time.

MINDY: Not me. Hey, I'm looking forward to just a . . . a stellar weekend. Rahdin' them broncos, rustlin' up them longhorn steers. Eee-hah.

KATIE: All right.

MINDY: When I think what I could have been doing this weekend. . . .

KATIE: Here it comes.

MINDY: Going out with Jeremy Holliman, raddest guy on the team--

KATIE: Yes, well, that was not going to happen anyway.

MINDY: What do you have against Jeremy Holliman?

KATIE: Good looking, on the football team; listen carefully, you can hear the Mom alarm going off in my head. Besides, you're fifteen--

MINDY: Sixteen in two weeks.

KATIE: *And* I don't know him. He may be great. He may be a rapist.

MINDY: He's not a--

KATIE: I haven't scoped him out yet, young lady, and until I do, no way were you going with him to a party that was gonna last 'til four in the morning.

MINDY: Which I know. Which is why I'm being cheerful and cooperative.

KATIE: Here it comes.

MINDY: I just want to point out, unfairly playing one parent against the other, that Daddy woulda let me go.

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KATIE: Hey, you had your chance, kiddo. This was his weekend: you coulda gone with your brothers.

MINDY: Yeah, and spent the weekend, as usual, 'bonding' with 'my new step-mom', while he played catch with Travis and Justin. No thanks.

KATIE: That's not all. You could have spent your Saturday babysitting precious little Angela, so he could enjoy a night on the town with Brooke.

MINDY: She's not so bad.

KATIE: Brooke? You hate Brooke.

MINDY: Angela. Brooke's an airhead loser. Angela's adorable.

KATIE: She's eighteen months old; she has to be adorable: federal law.

MINDY: Whatever.

(Sighs.)

Are there going to be any boys at this thing?

KATIE: Hey, this is about my social life. Not yours.

MINDY: I know. Mom?

KATIE: Yes?

MINDY: Look, I know you want this to go okay. I mean, the last two activities--

KATIE: Hey, if eight people show, that's a successful activity. There aren't thirty active singles in the whole stake.

MINDY: Whatever. Point is. You could help. Help your own cause.

KATIE: In what way?

MINDY: You know. Mouthy Mom. The negatory comments. The put-down for every occasion.

KATIE: Did I ask for a social advisor?

MINDY: Just sayin'--

KATIE: I did not.

MINDY: I'll be good if you will.

KATIE: Do I look like someone who makes deals with daughters?

MINDY: I don't even want to be here.

KATIE: All right.

MINDY: I'm a teenager, it's the weekend, I'm supposed to be having fun.

KATIE: You chose to come with me, choose to have fun.

MINDY: *(Exaggeratedly making the best of things.)* Horsies! How wonderful!

KATIE: Oh grow up.

MINDY: Well, I would if my Mom would let me.

(Enter SANDRA, chatting with CALLIE and APRIL.)

SANDRA: So that's the thing. We wouldn't have these problems if he'd just try a more diplomatic--

(Sees KATIE.)

Katie.

KATIE: *(A certain coolness.)* Hello, Sandra.

SANDRA: These windy roads, it's a relief to see a familiar face.

(To KATIE as CALLIE and APRIL enter.)

Katie, word of advice; you know I had this calling before you did. On your flyer, say "turn 446. Don't say 'east.' It's clearer.

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KATIE: Thank you so much.

SANDRA: No problem.

KATIE: Except that if you're coming from the south, you turn left, so I figured saying east. . . .

(But SANDRA's attention is already elsewhere.)

SANDRA: Do you have your bag, April?

APRIL: Got it. Katie, hello again, loved your last round of e-mails. That one about how the chicken crossed the road. . . .

KATIE: Yeah, I thought it was funny. You've met my daughter, Mindy?

MINDY: Hi.

APRIL: I swear, Katie, you just don't look old enough to have a daughter. . . .

(To MINDY.)

You're fifteen?

MINDY: Sixteen.

KATIE: In three weeks.

APRIL: *(Wonderingly.)* Sixteen. Almost a Laurel.

SANDRA: *(Who has waited impatiently through all this.)* And this is Callie, she just moved into Greencastle ward. From, um, Minnesota?

CALLIE: *(Shortly, abruptly.)* Callie, right, Minneapolis.

KATIE: Hi.

(CALLIE turns away. KATIE, to herself.)

Nice to meet you too.

(An awkward pause. To SANDRA.)

So. Sandra. Did you hear if anyone else--

SANDRA: I heard that Terrell was coming.

KATIE: Terrell, really. And he *still* hasn't made it on the bowlers' tour. Imagine that.

APRIL: *(Snickering.)* Katie, you're awful.

SANDRA: And I think there was another woman who I didn't know. Inactive type, you know how they can be.

KATIE: Well, more the merrier.

APRIL: Well, this is going to be great. It's been years since I rode horseback. Gosh, you know how things get, you just get so busy you forget all about the . . . you know, the great fun stuff you used to . . . well, you know.

KATIE: Yeah.

(An awkward pause.)

So, Sandra, how's work?

SANDRA: Oh. Usual. You know I was just telling everyone. Like this week, he sends out this memo saying "no requests for leave will be processed for the week of December nineteenth through twenty sixth."

KATIE: Christmas.

SANDRA: And so everyone's furious, shop steward's on our case, and who gets to deal with them? Me. Peacemaker me. As always.

APRIL: Pretty dumb memo. Don't you think, uh, Callie?

CALLIE: I read it.

SANDRA: I actually got Callie a job with us, data processing. Anyway, I just bided my time. His daughter's

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wedding is coming up in October, in Texas. So he sends out this memo saying he'll be out of the office that whole week? And I send him a memo back, saying "no requests for leave will be processed for the month of October." Got his attention in a big hurry.

APRIL: Good for you!

KATIE: Yeah. Nice.

(An awkward pause.)

SANDRA: So who else is coming? What about what's her face? LeVerne Something, from Utah?

KATIE: The one who wanted to teach belly dancing that one time?

APRIL: *(Still trying too hard.)* No! Really? Belly dancing?

KATIE: Yeah, real appropriate for a Church activity.

APRIL: Actually, I've heard it's quite aerobic.

KATIE: And what it leads to is even more aerobic. LaVerne Atwater. Moved to Chicago.

SANDRA: And Mark Hathaway had his quadruple bypass and Cynthia said she needed to spend the time with her kids. I think we're it.

KATIE: We're it.

APRIL: Well, I for one have been looking forward to this for weeks. Healthy fresh air fun.

SANDRA: Oh, me too. Get away from work, anyway.

(Enter TERRELL and DARLENE.)

TERRELL: Knock knock.

SANDRA: Terrell.

TERRELL: *(Just as suave as all get-out.)* Hello ladies.

DARLENE: Hi!

TERRELL: This is Darlene. I think this is her first time at one of our little get-togethers.

DARLENE: Actually, I've just sort of gotten back into the Church thing. Active and all. You know.

(They all ad lib 'hello.')

APRIL: Well, that's great. Isn't that great, everyone? We'll certainly try to make you feel at home.

KATIE: How goes the bowling, Terrell?

TERRELL: The Tri-lateral Commission has nothing, nothing on the Pro Bowlers Tour.

KATIE: That's what I've heard.

DARLENE: Actually, I hope you don't mind. My son. His father was supposed to have custody this weekend, but you know how it goes, couldn't make bail. Usual. So I kinda got stuck. Is this okay? He can ride and all.

APRIL: Of course.

SANDRA: Katie's in charge. Katie, what's your policy?

KATIE: I brought my daughter. How old is your--

DARLENE: Just a sec. Kyle! Come on in, honey.

(KYLE enters. MINDY, who has been wandering, bored, at the periphery of the group, is suddenly riveted.)

KYLE: *(Sees MINDY. With a confident grin.)* Hey.

MINDY: *(Shy smile and giggle.)* Hi.

(And with that, they're a couple, maybe not even touching, but together.)

KATIE: *(Looking at them. To herself.)* Oh, brother.

SANDRA: Well, it looks like we're all here. I stopped at the main office on our way in, Katie, hope you don't

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mind, they said the horses were ready for us.

TERRELL: So we head that way, towards that barn?

KATIE: Actually, I thought we might unpack--

(Enter ANDY.)

ANDY: Single Adults?

(A moment while they check him out. Warily.)

SANDRA: Hello.

APRIL: Come on in.

KATIE: I don't believe we've met.

ANDY: So I've found it.

KATIE: Yes, you certainly have. I'm Katie. The name on the flyer.

ANDY: Right. I'm Andy.

KATIE: Andy, this is my daughter, Mindy.

MINDY: *(Who only has eyes for KYLE.)* Hi.

APRIL: April.

DARLENE: *(The only one not playing it cautious.)* I'm Darlene. How're you?

SANDRA: I'm Sandra.

TERRELL: I'm Terrell, nice to meet you.

KATIE: And this is Callie, I believe.

(CALLIE ignores this.)

ANDY: Looks like you all know each other.

TERRELL: You could say that.

KATIE: So. You're new to the area?

ANDY: Actually, yes. I just moved here from Pennsylvania.

KATIE: Pennsylvania, really?

APRIL: What brings you to Indiana?

ANDY: Oh, the usual, I guess, better job.

DARLENE: So what do you do?

ANDY: I'm a vet, actually.

TERRELL: A veteran, eh? Iraq, Afghanistan?

ANDY: Sorry?

TERRELL: Where you served?

ANDY: Um . . . No . . . Oh! Sorry. Veterinarian.

TERRELL: An animal doctor!

ANDY: That's right. I bought out a practice in Bedford.

APRIL: Really?

DARLENE: I just love animals.

TERRELL: So how do you find Bedford? Artesian City, we call it. Onnacounta the artesian wells.

ANDY: Really?

TERRELL: Hundreds of artesian wells. Cut right through the limestone.

ANDY: Yes. . . .

TERRELL: So they called the town Artesian City. Onnacounta the wells.

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ANDY: I gathered as much. It's fine. A good practice.

APRIL: That's great.

DARLENE: I just love horses.

SANDRA: Uh . . . this a horseback riding activity, actually. Do you . . . uh --?

ANDY: Do I ride?

DARLENE: If you don't, I can show you. I just love horses.

ANDY: Well, usually when it comes to horses, my first order of business involves a thermometer in its . . . well, where you put a thermometer. But I can manage.

KATIE: You'll fit right in then. You'll be amazed how many of our Single Adult activities involve dealing with horses' asses.

(There's a pause here, as no one finds this funny. Especially SANDRA.)

ANDY: I beg your pardon?

MINDY: Mom--

(Suddenly, CALLIE laughs, a harsh, brittle laugh that threatens to turn to hysterics. She whips around, covers her face.)

CALLIE: I'm sorry. I . . . I shouldn't even be here.

(Pause.)

I should just leave.

SANDRA: Callie?

CALLIE: This is a huge mistake, I have no idea what I was thinking, leaving my kids home with a total stranger. . . .

SANDRA: Ed and Jamie Snow, they're wonderful people, your kids'll be. . . .

CALLIE: I don't even know them, I just met them three Sundays ago, and here I'm leaving my kids

SANDRA: Your kids are going to be

CALLIE: No, this is wrong. This is wrong. I'm sorry, I've gotta go.

SANDRA: Callie, look. . . .

CALLIE: I have to go now.

SANDRA: Callie. . . .

CALLIE: I need you to take me home now.

SANDRA: I'm not taking you.

CALLIE: Sandra, you're the only person I know. . . .

SANDRA: No way. Callie, this is good for you, this is just what you need. A weekend to relax. . . .

CALLIE: I need to be with my kids.

SANDRA: Sorry, but no. For your own good.

(Pause.)

CALLIE: Then I'll hitch.

(She exits.)

SANDRA: I'm sorry for the hysterics. She's going through some issues.

ANDY: Is she --?

SANDRA: She's fine.

KATIE: Well, someone has to take her home.

SANDRA: Better for her if she stays.

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KATIE: I'm not comfortable making that decision, Sandra.

SANDRA: Well, I'm not taking her.

KATIE: Fine.

(Pause. Bugged, but sees no way out.)

Then I will. I'll take her.

TERRELL: Are you sure?

KATIE: My activity, my calling. Three hours each way, I'll be back in time for dinner.

SANDRA: Katie, really, it's better if she stays. She needs this, some unwinding time.

KATIE: She doesn't seem to think so. Mindy?

MINDY: *(Eyes on KYLE.)* I'll be fine.

KATIE: Well. . . .

MINDY: I'm good. Looking forward to riding horses.

KATIE: Well. . . . Do you guys mind keeping an eye on her?

APRIL: Of course we will.

TERRELL: Sure.

KATIE: Well . . . okay.

ANDY: You're sure?

KATIE: Hey, we'll have all day tomorrow to ride, right? Have fun.

(She exits.)

SANDRA: Well, that's a big mistake.

APRIL: Gosh. I don't know.

ANDY: Anyway, it looks like the decision's been made.

DARLENE: I dunno 'bout you folks, but I'm here to ride. Where're the horses?

TERRELL: Let's go.

(They all start to exit. SANDRA lingers behind.)

SANDRA: Well, I really thought Callie'd be better off staying. But now, I look like the insensitive ogre, and Katie looks like the big martyr. And it was her awful joke that set Callie off in the first place! Well, we rode all the rest of that day, had a great time, and some six hours later Katie finally joined us. And we all got to enjoy her bubbling personality.

(MINDY gets two chairs, sets them down. All exit except MINDY and KATIE.)

Heck, I probably drive her nuts too. And she drives me nuts. And yet we both keep coming; the stalwarts of the group. This riding thing, though, was not one of the great activities. Chafed thighs; if there's hell on earth, it starts with chafed thighs.

(She starts to go, then stops.)

Mindy and Katie talked in the car on the way home. But a word first about Andy. His arrival in our little group was . . . interesting, but not more than that. It's not as if we don't have lives.

(She exits. KATIE and MINDY drive home. Pause.)

KATIE: She really doesn't get it. Callie was desperate to get home, I mean, desperate. And there's Sandra saying 'I know what's best for you.' Brother.

MINDY: What's she like? Callie.

KATIE: Preoccupied, silent. One word answers, no matter what I asked her. I kept turning the radio off and on, trying to find something other than Rush Limbaugh out here.

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MINDY: And then you joined the party, and charmed us all.

KATIE: I know.

MINDY: Did you really have to shout 'thar she blows' every time your horse dropped a load?

KATIE: It was funny.

MINDY: Once. And the vet jokes.

KATIE: I didn't tell any vet jokes. I don't know any vet jokes.

MINDY: Cat jokes, dog jokes, canary jokes, crocodile jokes, elephant jokes. If it had an animal and a punchline, we heard it, my Mom's personal stand-up act.

KATIE: What are you trying to say?

MINDY: Hello? You were like totally hitting on him.

KATIE: Andy? Get real. And we don't say 'like.'

MINDY: Whatever.

KATIE: Look, what's yellow, has four wings and weighs a thousand pounds? Two five hundred pound canaries.

MINDY: I heard it.

KATIE: What do they say as they walk down the street at night?

(Deep bass voice.)

Here kitty kitty kitty.

(Pause.)

And you're telling me that's a come on?

MINDY: Not a *good* come on.

KATIE: Big people are supposed to be jolly. Andy laughed. A few times.

MINDY: Embarrassed chuckles. And Sandra, well, cross her off your Christmas card list.

KATIE: *(Depressed.)* All right.

(Shifts in her chair.)

My butt may never recover from that saddle.

(Pause.)

I was a little tense, maybe. Trying to keep tabs on you and Kyle.

MINDY: He never even kissed me.

KATIE: I should hope not!

MINDY: Can I help it if I think he's cute?

KATIE: Seems to come from a great family, too. Darlene--

MINDY: He lives with his father. Mostly.

KATIE: When good old Dad's out on bail, right?

MINDY: All right, Mom.

KATIE: He does know who his father is, I hope. With Darlene, you could never be quite sure.

MINDY: Kyle is as embarrassed by his Mom as . . . well, lots of people could be, by their Moms..

KATIE: Touché.

(A pause.)

MINDY: Speaking of cute. . . .

KATIE: Andy *again*? Mindy, leave it alone.

MINDY: I mean, can you believe he just showed up? Good looking, good money, owns his own practice.

Former high councilor. Funny and bright. Never married.

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(Pause.)

Kind to animals.

KATIE: Gay.

MINDY: He is not.

KATIE: I am not taking the bait, darling. My relationship to Andy right now is that of 'Single Adult Rep' to 'Potential Pain in the Rear.'

MINDY: Mom, you've been going to these things for five years now; organizing 'em since May. Zip. Nada. A group of men that someone like Terrell looks good next to. Then, out of the blue, in he walks. Doctor Andy. I don't blame you for telling canary jokes.

KATIE: Sweetie, marriage to your father was, sorry to have to say this but it's true, hell. I am not interested in going through all that again.

MINDY: Okay.

KATIE: Besides. Realistically? Me and Andy?

(Shakes her head.)

MINDY: Why not?

KATIE: Because basically the Andys of the world do not go for the Katies of the world.

MINDY: Sometimes they. . . .

KATIE: No. But see, here's the thing. We've got our little group, you know? We're friends, we get together once a month; it's fun. Now Doc Andy shows up, and he's got the look. Single, in his forties? In the immortal words of Aretha Franklin, T-R-O-U-B-L-E.

MINDY: I thought that was R-E-S-P-E-C-T.

KATIE: You spell it your way, I spell it mine. Hey, look, a DQ. Come on. I need ice cream.

MINDY: It's not good for you--

KATIE: That's why. Come on.

(They get out of the 'car.' ANDY and DARLENE take their places. KYLE brings in a third chair, sets it behind them, sits.)

DARLENE: Years past, I'd a prolly tried ta do the HR guy or something, right there on his desk. But the job is just great. So I figure I'd better pay him back, that home teacher, and what he wanted was for me to come to church.

(A long pause.)

I'm sorry, that was like the skankiest thing to tell you, wasn't it?

ANDY: No, not really.

DARLENE: Here I'm trying to make an impression, and I come across like some kind of 'ho.

ANDY: I never thought you. . . .

DARLENE: See, that's the point. The church has been good for me. I don't do stuff like that anymore. Really, I never did much, unless, like, I had to, get a cop off my back or something. But now, hey, I even have a calling. Right, Kyle?

KYLE: That's right, Mom.

ANDY: Good for you.

DARLENE: Seriously, I'm like Primary pianist--didn't know I could play the piano, didja, but I can. I've really changed.

ANDY: I believe you.

(Pause.)

Actually, you remind me of someone I used to home teach.

DARLENE: No kidding? Tell me about her.

ANDY: Well, she . . . I'm sorry.

DARLENE: What?

ANDY: It occurs to me that I'm about to hurt your feelings.

DARLENE: I have, like, the most unhurttable feelings in the world.

ANDY: The thing is . . . she was a stripper. And here I say, you remind me of her, and . . . I don't mean that you remind me of a stripper.

DARLENE: No, that's cool. I've never been like a stripper or nothin', but you know, slept around, three divorces, widowed once. I'm pretty upfront about who I am.

ANDY: Well, anyway, that was Paige. And really, what it all came down to was . . . it sounds overly simplistic, but she really didn't believe that she was worth anything. She'd be with men, she told me, and she wouldn't even enjoy it much, but she'd go ahead with it because she knew she'd feel lousy afterwards, depressed and miserable, and that's how she felt she deserved to feel.

(Amazed pause.)

DARLENE: Me. Me me me me me me. Right down the line. What happened to her?

ANDY: She turned it around. It was really amazing to watch. It took a lot of counseling, and a lot of repentance and prayer. Two steps forward and one step back. But she turned it around.

DARLENE: And you were part of that for her.

ANDY: Oh, I don't know. To a very limited extent, perhaps.

DARLENE: You made a difference, though. That's so cool. Like that home teacher dude did for me. Quit smoking. Hardly ever cuss, unless like some guy cuts me off on the highway or something.

ANDY: That one hardly even counts as a sin.

DARLENE: For sure. So what about you, Andy?

ANDY: What do you mean?

DARLENE: Well, I told you my history, divorces and disfellowshipped and all. You got any deep dark secrets?

ANDY: Not really.

DARLENE: Ever married?

ANDY: No. I've been engaged. Actually more than once.

DARLENE: Yeah? How many times?

ANDY: Actually . . . it's embarrassing . . . four times.

DARLENE: No kidding?

ANDY: Things just never worked out.

DARLENE: Uh huh.

(Motioning.)

Here it is, then take the second left. The thing is, what I really need is to meet the right kind of guy.

KYLE: It'd help if you knew them a little better before you married them.

DARLENE: Like I've always had a choice about it. All except for that one time, and then it just turned out I was late one month, didn't find out till after I'd married him.

KYLE: You'd known Daddy what, three weeks?

DARLENE: Two. Okay. I'm over all that now. I've repented and everything, like to the bishop, so really, next

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time it'll be like I've never been married before. Repentance kinda revirginizes you, right?

ANDY: Interesting thought.

DARLENE: So I'm after you.

KYLE: Mom--

DARLENE: What? It's not like all the other gals at that ranch thing weren't thinkin' about it. That Katie with all her parrot jokes. I just got first shot at you 'cause I talked you into taking me home.

ANDY: I really don't know if--

DARLENE: Don't tell me I'm scaring you off.

ANDY: You're a little more direct than I'm used to, I'll say that.

DARLENE: Kind of refreshing?

ANDY: Maybe so.

DARLENE: See, that's me. Refreshing and direct. You're in my sights, mister.

KYLE: Mom, geez. . . .

DARLENE: Am I embarrassing you, honey?

KYLE: What do you think?

DARLENE: Get over it. So let's see. You want a girl with . . . let me guess, you being a doctor and all, with education.

(Ringing it up.)

Ka-ching! Two years community college.

ANDY: That's . . . very impressive.

DARLENE: Ha! Am I like psychic? Classical music, right, like, Mozart? Impressed? I took music appresh in college.

ANDY: *(Laughs.)* You've nailed me.

KYLE: Mom--

DARLENE: And Mozart bored the hel . . . heck outa me. So okay, give me Def Leppard.

(Tragically.)

Can these two lovers find happiness?

ANDY: Hey, I even saw Def Leppard.

DARLENE: No kidding? Where, when?

ANDY: Three Rivers Stadium in Pittsburgh, 1985.

DARLENE: So cool. What do you say? We an item?

ANDY: Why don't we start with friendship.

DARLENE: Deal. Here's the place, with the porch. Pull in.

ANDY: I enjoyed this.

DARLENE: Well, no need for it to end. It's six-thirty. I could whip up some spaghetti or something.

ANDY: I really should get back home--

DARLENE: Come on. How can I put the moves on you if you won't even come up to my apartment?

(Pause.)

ANDY: Spaghetti sounds great.

DARLENE: Okay, give me five minutes, then, onnacounta I'm this totally slobular housekeeper, and don't want you to like throw up when you walk in the door. Keep him company, Kyle.

ANDY: Five minutes, then.

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DARLENE: Hey. I'm sorta kidding with mosta this. Puttin' moves on and all.

ANDY: I figured.

DARLENE: I like you. But I am who I am. Okay?

ANDY: I like who you are.

DARLENE: I don't. Not really. But I'm trying to change. Five minutes.

(She exits.)

KYLE: Hey, I'm sorry. My mom, she's kinda weird.

ANDY: I like her.

KYLE: Seriously?

ANDY: Very much.

KYLE: You gonna, like, date her and stuff?

ANDY: Look, I just moved here. Don't know a soul. Sure, probably.

KYLE: But like, seriously?

ANDY: Is that a problem?

KYLE: No, I just . . . you're not the kind of guy she's ever dated before.

ANDY: I bet she's terrible with spaghetti, too.

KYLE: Uneatable.

ANDY: I'll take my chances. Hey. Five minutes are up, I think. Let's eat.

(They exit. Enter SANDRA into Telephone light. A phone ringing.)

SANDRA: *(To audience.)* Phone calls.

(On 'phone.')

Yes, this is Sandra.

(Long pause.)

Thanks for the invitation. But, I'm sorry. I'm busy that night. And I have already see that movie. Sorry.

(Phone ringing. APRIL enters Telephone light.)

APRIL: Hi! Sure! Dinner, wow. Mmmm. Sounds yummy. Sure. Sure.

(Phone ringing. CALLIE enters phone light. She stands there, irresolute, as it rings. Finally she exits. Phone ringing. Enter MINDY. She answers phone.)

MINDY: Hello. Oh. Yeah. Uh, the thing is . . . I don't generally babysit.

(Long pause.)

I mean, I could. I suppose. I just generally

(Pause. Sighs.)

Sure. Seven o'clock.

(She crosses the stage to CALLIE. Unenthusiastically.)

Hi.

CALLIE: Hi. I can't tell you how grateful I am for this.

MINDY: It's fine. Just for an hour, right?

CALLIE: That's all, I promise. I can't tell you how grateful I am. I don't know anyone here, young people. And your mother was so kind to me last Friday, driving me home the way she . . . and I just . . . you're the only person I could

MINDY: It's fine, whatever.

CALLIE: Anyway. . . .

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(She starts to go.)

MINDY: Do you have a number where you're gonna be?

CALLIE: I . . . I don't have a cell.

MINDY: If there's some kind of emergency.

CALLIE: It's just the library.

MINDY: The library? Like, Monroe County library?

CALLIE: That's right.

MINDY: You want me to babysit so you can go to the library?

CALLIE: I will pay you.

MINDY: No, it's just . . . why do you need a babysitter just so you can go to the library? They've got a whole kid's department there.

(Pause.)

CALLIE: I shouldn't have asked you.

MINDY: No, it's okay.

CALLIE: I am really sorry to bother you.

MINDY: It's not a bother. I just don't understand. . . .

CALLIE: You can go home. I won't be needing you after all.

MINDY: Hey, I'm still willing to. . . .

CALLIE: Goodnight.

(She exits. MINDY stares after her. SANDRA faces the audience.)

MINDY: Whatever.

(She exits.)

SANDRA: Single Adult Activity for September. Hike up Greene Mountain.

(She stands aside. We see TERRELL enter, puffing, KATIE runs a little ahead of him.)

KATIE: And . . . I win!

(She collapses on the ground.)

TERRELL: *(Trying to catch his breath.)* Wo . . . that's . . . some climb.

KATIE: Not . . . so bad really. We just . . . pushed it.

TERRELL: Yeah.

(A moment while they catch their breath.)

Wo.

KATIE: This is some view, isn't it?

TERRELL: Left them all in the dust.

KATIE: I love this place. I mean, it hardly counts as a mountain, just a hill, really. But bare enough at the top to see out.

TERRELL: Whipped their butts.

KATIE: All the trees swaying below you.

TERRELL: They haven't even gotten past that tree stump.

KATIE: It's so great in the fall, too. Look at the leaves, the reds, browns, the yellows. Indiana can be the prettiest state.

TERRELL: Smoked 'em. Smoked 'em all.

KATIE: Don't you think?

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TERRELL: About what?

KATIE: *(Slight exasperated pause.)* Do you think China should be granted most favored nation status?

TERRELL: Oh. Well. That would depend on any number of factors in the . . . the international. . . .

(Notices she's tuned him out. Flounders on.)

international . . . uh --

KATIE: Save it.

TERRELL: Then of course there's the whole United Nations--

KATIE: Terrell. . . .

(She shakes her head. He quits.)

You're in pretty good shape.

TERRELL: Professional athlete, what do you expect? *(Darkly.)* I would be, if they'd give me a chance.

KATIE: Yeah, what's with that?

TERRELL: Have you ever seen me bowl?

KATIE: Can't say I've had the pleasure.

TERRELL: When I'm feeling it, when I've got the rhythm, there's totally nothing I can't do. Cross alley hook, right in the 1-2 pocket every time. Complete command.

KATIE: Good for you.

TERRELL: The Pro Bowlers' Tour discriminates against bald guys, especially white guys, and I can prove it.

KATIE: So that's what you wanna do? Join the tour?

TERRELL: It may take a lawsuit.

(Enter APRIL, CALLIE and SANDRA.)

APRIL: Whoosh! That's some hike.

KATIE: Yes it is.

APRIL: You beat us by . . . ten minutes. I'm impressed.

SANDRA: How did you . . . get in such good shape?

KATIE: Chase around a classroom of seventh graders all day. Best exercise I know.

CALLIE: Where are my kids?

KATIE: They're right over there, with my boys.

CALLIE: *(Close to panic.)* They got away from me, and I was losing my breath

KATIE: Hey, it's fine, I had 'em in sight the whole way.

(Shouts, off.)

Justin! You let her climb that tree if she wants to.

CALLIE: Oh, no, it's much too danger. . . .

(Hurries off.)

Excuse me.

TERRELL: Katie beat me, and I'm a professional athlete.

SANDRA: Impressive.

KATIE: Where's Darlene and Andy?

SANDRA: They said they wanted to take their time, come up a little more slowly.

KATIE: Did they?

APRIL: Wow. I mean, is that some view or what?

KATIE: Doncha love the leaves?

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SANDRA: Spectacular.

APRIL: They say you can see five counties from up here.

TERRELL: You can't possibly see five counties.

SANDRA: Well, I think she may be right, Terrell. Monroe, Morton, Greene, Clay, Tippecanoe.

APRIL: Five.

TERRELL: You cannot see Tippecanoe County from here.

APRIL: I bet you can. If the weather's just right.

TERRELL: And I say, categorically, that it is physically impossible to see any part of Tippecanoe County from here.

APRIL: Terrell, I heard that just past that fire tower--

TERRELL: That's still Greene County.

SANDRA: I don't think so.

TERRELL: I'm absolutely certain.

SANDRA: Well, Terrell, I'm just as certain.

TERRELL: Well, as a native Hoosier, let me say--

SANDRA: Oh, I see, a *transplanted* Hoosier can't read a map, is that it?

TERRELL: When you've grown up in the state--

APRIL: Terrell, Sandra, we're not going to argue about something neither of you can prove.

(Pause.)

TERRELL: Well, as soon as we get back, I'm getting my topo map and--

APRIL: Terrell, tell me something useful. Who are the counties named after?

TERRELL: What?

APRIL: Clay county is obviously Henry Clay. Monroe is James Monroe.

TERRELL: Well, Tippecanoe is . . . that other president, the one who went with 'and Tyler too.'

APRIL: Harrison, the first one, William Henry.

TERRELL: Right, him.

SANDRA: Morton?

TERRELL: *(Proudly.)* Oliver Perry Morton. Civil war governor.

APRIL: See, that's so interesting.

SANDRA: And Greene County?

TERRELL: *(A bit deflated.)* Well . . . Greene County is named after --

KATIE: Someone named Greene.

(She moves away from them.)

SANDRA: Works for me.

APRIL: Where are you going, Katie?

KATIE: Check on Callie.

(Exits.)

SANDRA: And there she goes again. I mean, Callie is my friend.

APRIL: She's awfully quiet.

SANDRA: She just showed up in our ward one day. I think she picked Indiana more or less at random, stabbed a finger at a map one day.

TERRELL: So you got her a job?

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SANDRA: Data entry. Pretty boring work, but it was all we had on short notice.

APRIL: Good for you, though.

SANDRA: Well, you do what you can.

(Enter Katie.)

Everything all right?

KATIE: My Justin, the little scamp, was trying to show Callie's little girl how to do a Tarzan swing from that vine.

APRIL: Ah.

KATIE: You'd think that climb would have taken it out of him, but no.

(Enter KYLE and MINDY, holding hands.)

SANDRA: You were right about this place, Katie. What a magnificent view.

KATIE: *(Sees KYLE and MINDY.)* And there's a not so magnificent view.

APRIL: How serious are they?

KATIE: I'm fighting it.

SANDRA: Careful. At that age forbidden equals attractive.

KATIE: Plus first boyfriend . . . issues. I know.

(Starts to cross to MINDY. Changes her mind. Looks down the mountain. Enter DARLENE and ANDY. He's holding binoculars.)

There's another not so great sight.

APRIL: You mean Darlene and Andy?

ANDY: Okay, right there. Eastern bluebird. On that branch . . . see it?

(He hands her the binoculars, trying not to move where they're aimed. She reaches up, quickly kisses him, takes the binoculars, giggling.)

SANDRA: I can't believe it, they're kissing.

APRIL: You shouldn't watch.

SANDRA: *(Watching.)* I'm not.

ANDY: No, see, you're swinging them around too much, you won't see . . . let me stand behind you, help you aim.

(He stands right behind her, aiming the binoculars. They're very close.)

SANDRA: My gosh, look at that.

TERRELL: What's . . . what's going on?

KATIE: Really none of your business.

APRIL: Or ours. Darn it, all I can see is his back.

SANDRA: It was a kiss, all right.

APRIL: Pretty perfunctory, if so.

TERRELL: Um--

KATIE: Look Terrell, go find some acorns and practice your bowling.

DARLENE: It's got kinda a blue back, but its front is red.

ANDY: That's right, Eastern bluebird.

KATIE: Darlene. I can't believe he'd go for Darlene.

APRIL: I don't think they're dating. Not really.

KATIE: Oh, you don't. Gosh, silly me for thinking this slow stroll up the mountain twenty minutes behind the

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rest of us with smooch breaks every hundred feet means something.

APRIL: They're bird watching.

KATIE: So that's what it's called.

DARLENE: He's beautiful.

(Puts down the binoculars.)

ANDY: There was a sighting of a bush towhee around here. I'd like to document it; we're pretty far west for a towhee.

DARLENE: What do I look for?

ANDY: It's a ground bird, check out those bushes. Looks kinda like a robin, red apron, but with a black hood.

TERRELL: So this is about Andy, in other words.

KATIE: Terrell, look, don't take this personally, but you're a known quantity. Andy's an unknown quantity and therefore mysterious and intriguing. And much more fun to gossip about, okay?

TERRELL: Okay. . . .

KATIE: Anyway. There it is. Darlene the champeen.

SANDRA: You think so?

KATIE: *(Gesturing down the mountain.)* Well?

APRIL: I don't.

KATIE: Hello, they just stopped again. See, I'm all for it. Andy and Darlene: that's great. Better than him dating each of us in turn.

SANDRA: Uh, yeah. . . .

KATIE: I'm thinking of the group, right? We don't need . . . romantic complications.

TERRELL: And you think of me like a brother, right? Thanks, Katie.

KATIE: You know what I mean. You haven't been, you know, *pushy* about anything.

TERRELL: And you thought Andy might be?

KATIE: I was worried about it, sure.

DARLENE: Is that it?

ANDY: *(Leans over her to look through binoculars.)* No, just a starling.

KATIE: Anyway, there you have it. Andy and Darlene.

APRIL: He asked me out two days ago.

(A shocked pause, while KATIE takes this in.)

And he took Sandra out a week before that.

SANDRA: He did not.

APRIL: He told me he'd asked you out.

SANDRA: I told him no.

KATIE: Jerk. Darlene can have him.

APRIL: He hasn't called you?

KATIE: Of course not. He can't stand me.

APRIL: If you say so. Anyway, he's clearly playing the field.

KATIE: Asking you out, then kissing Darlene in clear view like this? Uh, yeah. Doc Andy is officially a playa.

APRIL: Pretty harsh, doncha think?

KATIE: *(Pointing down the mountain.)* Uh, harsh????

APRIL: He says he's trying to get to know us.

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KATIE: Looks like he's getting to know Darlene pretty well. Her lips, her tonsils. . . .

(Watches for a bit.)

ANDY: Oh, my goodness, look at that. Up there, above those maples. You can't miss it.

DARLENE: What is that, an eagle or something?

ANDY: Red-tailed hawk. Isn't he something?

SANDRA: *(To APRIL.)* You're not going out with him, of course.

APRIL: Well. . . .

SANDRA: April?!?

APRIL: I don't know. I kind of wonder how *that* is any of my business?

SANDRA: If he's going out with you it is.

APRIL: Well . . . I said yes.

DARLENE: What's he doing?

ANDY: Hunting. Mice, squirrels, rabbits. Snakes.

(DARLENE shivers, gives him back the binoculars, takes ANDY's arm, wraps it around her. ANDY watches the hawk, rapt.)

SANDRA: Awfully cozy.

APRIL: It's tomorrow night, too.

KATIE: Watch out for her braces.

(Suddenly laughs.)

SANDRA: Excuse us?

KATIE: I don't know. It all seems so junior high, watching those two. For some reason, I was thinking. . .

APRIL: What?

KATIE: We had a couple of kids, last week, they were playing spin the bottle? And their braces got all entangled. The girl's Mom was telling us about it at PTA, watching 'em come up the stairs sideways, their faces together. They had to go to the emergency ward, take out these wire cutters. . . .And then I watched Darlene . . . weird connection, I know. Sorry.

SANDRA: We're talking about April's dilemma.

KATIE: I know, and he likes Darlene, but maybe he also likes April, and Sandra too, and . . . we just need to tell her best friend to tell his best friend.

SANDRA: Right now, our friend needs our best advice--

KATIE: I think April is a grown up and can make her own decisions.

DARLENE: Is that little bluebird okay?

ANDY: Probably. Hawks prefer to hunt small mammals.

(She snuggles closer.)

TERRELL: Well, now I am interested. Would you go out with him? After watching him kiss Darlene?

KATIE: Me? It's purely hypothetical, believe me.

APRIL: But really, Katie. Would you?

KATIE: I was married to a playa—hard to be objective. Dinner or a movie?

SANDRA: Movie.

KATIE: Oh, totally. I love seeing first run movies for free. Especially something good. Justin and Travis are all about Transformers.

APRIL: What about dinner?

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KATIE: I don't know. You'd have to make conversation; so much more work.

(Pause. ANDY hands back the binoculars.)

ANDY: He sees something. He's ready to stoop.

(DARLENE can't not watch.)

APRIL: I guess maybe I will. One date, right?

SANDRA: Your call.

APRIL: And, Katie, in your case, I doubt it will remain hypothetical.

KATIE: Andy asking me out? Listen, do you hear it? That sizzling, cracking sound? It must mean, yes, it does . . . hell really has frozen over!

(They all laugh. DARLENE shudders as the hawk stoops to kill. She embraces ANDY. KATIE looks down the mountain.)

I bet he's a lousy kisser, anyway.

(They all start to exit, except MINDY and KYLE. They kiss, a long, slow; lingering kiss. KATIE sees it. Uncertainly.)

I'm next, huh. Fat chance.

(They exit, except for SANDRA.)

SANDRA: A few days later, though, ANDY *did* call Katie. And so he did try to date each of us, in turn, which is a bit tacky, frankly, though he was, to his credit, open about it. For a second, I was, I admit, a bit intrigued. But I simply did not have time.

(We hear a phone ring. Callie crosses, stands in phone light.)

CALLIE: Hello? Yes?

(Pause.)

No. You didn't offend me.

(Pause.)

I'm not really in need of a babysitter right now.

(Pause.)

I'll keep that in mind. Thank you. I do appreciate the offer. Good night.

(Starts to hang up, then quickly reconsiders.)

Mindy?

(ANDY brings on a table, MINDY and KYLE bring on two chairs and restaurant silverware and china. They set the table. ANDY sits in one of the chairs. Enter APRIL who sits in another chair.)

APRIL: . . . not that I'm complaining, of course I understand, I don't blame them, I'd be leery too. Experience, that's what it's really all about, not gender, they just want someone experienced, which I'm not, just really really qualified, you know?

ANDY: That's terrible.

APRIL: Well, sure, it sucks. But, that's the way things go.

ANDY: I'd be furious.

APRIL: Oh, well. I don't really get . . . furious.

ANDY: Fluent in Mandarin, Cantonese, Japanese AND Korean. An MBA AND JD. And just . . . nothing? I'd be livid.

APRIL: *(Pleased at his anger)* Well, I have gotten jobs. Two different law firms. But doing work I just hated. And so . . . I've basically drifted along.

The Way We're Wired by Eric Samuelsen

ANDY: But telemarketing.

APRIL: It's not all I do. I have two ESL classes I teach. But that doesn't pay so well. Telemarketing; my bishop knew I was out of work, and said they were hiring. Thing is, I'm not very . . . forceful. You think I should be more forceful?

ANDY: Sure.

APRIL: Pound on the desk or something. . . that's not really me.

ANDY: Couldn't hurt to try.

(APRIL stands. KATIE crosses to the table and sits. APRIL exits. A very long pause.)

ANDY: So. Pretty slow service here.

KATIE: Sure is.

(Another pause.)

ANDY: I've never been here before. Have you?

KATIE: Once.

(Pause.)

Service was slow then too.

ANDY: No kidding.

(Little chuckle.)

I wish you'd warned me.

KATIE: I don't mind. Gives us a chance to enjoy the pleasures of good conversation.

ANDY: *(Little awkward chuckle: is she kidding?)* Yeah.

(Another pause.)

The weather's been nice.

(Really floundering.)

Fall in Indiana. Beautiful.

KATIE: Yes.

(Starting to enjoy his discomfort.)

This is the best part of a date, doncha think? Really getting to know each other.

ANDY: I . . .

KATIE: Talking about things that really matter. Like . . . autumn.

ANDY: Okay. . . .

KATIE: Pretty soon we can talk about something even more exciting. Like: winter. And then maybe: spring.

And then summer, and then let's hope they show up with some food.

ANDY: How about your job? Can we talk about that?

KATIE: Whatever you want.

ANDY: You're a teacher? What grade?

KATIE: Seventh.

ANDY: For how long?

KATIE: Eight years.

ANDY: Do you like it, teaching?

KATIE: Good days bad days. Smaller classes would help. The Indiana education system --

ANDY: I've heard it's terrible.

KATIE: Not terrible, but underfunded. Right up there with Utah. Both of them Republican states--do we sense

a pattern here?

ANDY: Isn't there a history of the Ku Klux Klan and politics?

KATIE: Yeah, there's something to be proud of. Indiana's the only state in US history with a Grand Dragon for governor. Back in the thirties.

ANDY: Ouch. And I thought Republicans were bad.

KATIE: Wait, you're a Democrat?

ANDY: I was even a campaign volunteer for Hillary Clinton.

KATIE: Not Barack?

ANDY: I was kind of a Hillary guy. Came around for the general, of course.

KATIE: That's the first thing you and I have had in common. The first.

ANDY: I don't know about that.

KATIE: The first.

(Pause.)

Did that waiter have a heart attack or something?

ANDY: They are awfully slow.

KATIE: Anyway, job, kids, I manage. And I get out of school the same time my kids do, so it really works out pretty well.

ANDY: I have such admiration for that. Junior high teachers.

KATIE: Why?

ANDY: World's most awkward age. Twelve to fourteen.

KATIE: It's not so bad. You spend a lot of time just keeping a lid on things. But every once in awhile you feel like you've really gotten through to a kid. Makes it all worthwhile.

(Pause.)

Look, can I ask you . . . you really are a Democrat?

ANDY: Lifelong.

KATIE: I can't get over it. A Mormon Hoosier Democrat; there are like eight of us in the state.

ANDY: I've only been a Hoosier for four months.

KATIE: Still . . . It's so . . . defining. A Democrat. And you think Rush Limbaugh?

ANDY: Joseph Goebbels, only fatter and funnier. You know Barney? The purple dinosaur?

KATIE: Oh yeah.

ANDY: Do you realize Rush Limbaugh and Barney have never been seen in public together? Coincidence? I think not.

(KATIE laughs.)

KATIE: My ex adored Rush Limbaugh, total Dittohead.

ANDY: What did he think of Barney?

KATIE: He was, to his credit, sound on the Barney question.

(They laugh.)

And here I am laughing, and I don't even like you.

ANDY: You don't?

KATIE: You're a complication. I don't have time for complications.

ANDY: I'm sorry, I just thought. . . .

KATIE: And here we are; nice restaurant having dinner. Why? Especially when you don't like me either.

The Way We're Wired by Eric Samuelsen

ANDY: What?

KATIE: You don't.

ANDY: That's not . . . why would I be out with you, here, tonight, if--

KATIE: Well, see, that's what I'm trying to figure out. And now you're even a Democrat. And we go out, are out. What's going on?

ANDY: It wasn't easy for me to call you.

KATIE: *(Pause.)* Now I am confused.

ANDY: I . . . it's hard to explain.

KATIE: So, while we're having a hard time explaining things, try explaining Darlene.

ANDY: Darlene's a friend. Like April, like Sandra.

KATIE: Please. You two are a thing.

ANDY: No. That's what you think?

KATIE: You lag behind the rest of the group up the mountain. Slow stroll, stop to kiss.

ANDY: We were birdwatching.

KATIE: But you did kiss her.

ANDY: Darlene is . . . she's physically demonstrative. It's part of her whole . . . it's the way she acts around men. We've dated a few times. I like her.

KATIE: Good for her.

ANDY: But we're not dating. We're not a couple. There's nothing --

KATIE: Andy how old are you? If you act like a couple, behave like a couple. . . . like it or not, you're a couple.

ANDY: We're not--

KATIE: You've kissed her. That's not a . . . a what, a relationship-neutral act.

ANDY: I'm sure we both understood--

KATIE: That it was just casual? Sorry. You act like a playa.

ANDY: A player? Me? No!

KATIE: If you act like a playa. . .

ANDY: No, I guess I can see that.

KATIE: Andy, what do you think *she's* supposed to think?

ANDY: I'm going to have to talk with her--

KATIE: *(A little angry now.)* She's physically demonstrative. So this is her fault?

ANDY: No, I didn't mean --

KATIE: She's Potipher's wife? You know, Joseph, I didn't see you running away.

ANDY: No. I didn't. . . It wasn't . . . what it looked like. Really it wasn't.

KATIE: If you say so.

(Pause.)

Then there's me. I mean, you don't even like me.

ANDY: I do too.

KATIE: Look, jokes and stuff, humor, usually that's my best feature. Some guys like it, some don't. You're in the don't column.

ANDY: I like your jokes.

KATIE: That pained look on your face every time I crack wise?

ANDY: Not thoughtful? I was going for thoughtful.

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KATIE: Like I'd farted in church.

(Pained expression on his face.)

See? Right there.

(ANDY has the grace to look embarrassed.)

Andy, here's what I think is going on.

ANDY: Yes?

KATIE: You kissed Darlene, you dated April, you asked Sandra out. Callie?

ANDY: I've tried. She's reluctant to leave her kids.

KATIE: So you really haven't left *anyone* out. Me included.

ANDY: If that's what you thought . . . well, why did you accept?

KATIE: So I could ask you why you asked me.

ANDY: All right. All right, then. Here's the thing. I'm forty one years old. I've been a member of the Church for fourteen years, and unmarried. You start thinking. About temple marriage, children.

KATIE: Okay--

ANDY: I don't do well with change. I like things . . . settled.

KATIE: Sure.

ANDY: But I moved. Bought my own practice. Those are big changes, for me. And I suddenly thought, while I'm on a roll, why not . . . go for the big change.

KATIE: So you scouted out 'Prospects.' 'Potentialities.' Nice.

ANDY: I'm sorry. You did ask.

KATIE: Don't lose sleep over it. Anyway, I get the picture. It's time to Find A Wife.

ANDY: Sort of. I want to get to know you. All of you. One at a time. And then, I don't know. Wait.

KATIE: Wait. For what?

ANDY: You're gonna think this is silly.

KATIE: Not even a little.

ANDY: Well . . . Wait to see if it happens. Wait to fall in love.

KATIE: *(Pause.)* And that's it? You're just waiting to fall in love with somebody.

ANDY: That's all.

KATIE: So. Take us all out a few times each. Make out, maybe, if the opportunity presents itself. But everyone understands that it's all very casual. And then pretty soon Cupid's going to show up, bow and arrow in hand, and he'll do the hard part, the falling in love part, and then you'll get married and live happily ever after.

ANDY: I think that's how we're wired.

KATIE: I'm sorry, how we're --

ANDY: How we're wired. People. Human beings. We're wired to fall in love.

KATIE: You're losing me.

ANDY: Look, my life is spent working with animals. And people like to . . . anthropomorphize their pets, endow them with human feelings, characteristics.

KATIE: My precious little doggie must love me because I love it.

ANDY: Exactly. But it's not true. Animals really don't feel anything for us at all, not in terms we can comprehend. It's how they're wired: stimulus-response. Purely instinctual. I just don't think people are wired all that differently.

KATIE: You've got to be kidd--

The Way We're Wired by Eric Samuelsen

ANDY: I mean, what is love? How much of it is real? How much is physical response to stimuli, endorphins, a survival mechanism we've evolved?

KATIE: And that's what you think love is?

ANDY: I think that's part of what love is.

KATIE: But your physical response to Darlene's stimuli . . . doesn't carry enough endorphins?

ANDY: If you're going to make fun of me--

KATIE: Not me. I just wish you wouldn't waste both our time with this bogus. . . .

ANDY: Bogus? What do you--?

KATIE: Andy, I was married for a very long time. Nineteen years, which translates to about ninety in dog years. Which is what it felt like. If there's one thing I learned, it's the infinite capacity of guys for rationalization.

ANDY: I'm not. . . .

KATIE: I even fell for it with Mel. You know? He says to me, 'it's not really you. Nothing you did, nothing you said. It's me, the blahs, the blues, mid-life whatever.' 'I need some space.' 'Get my act together.'

ANDY: And it turned out. . . .?

KATIE: Never mind. The point is, you're doing it too. I'm on your list; unfinished business. Date me too, like all the others. See if I fall in love.' Hah!

ANDY: How can you say that?

KATIE: I want you to be honest with me, okay?

ANDY: All that.

KATIE: Okay, here goes. Do you find me attractive?

ANDY: Oh, come on, that's not --

KATIE: I just want you to be upfront. Do you . . . think I'm pretty?

ANDY: Do you think you're pretty?

KATIE: No no no, we're not doing it that way. This isn't some self-esteem seminar. Easy question, yes or no. Do you physically find me attractive?

ANDY: You really want to know this?

KATIE: I do. Seriously.

ANDY: Okay. The answer:

(Pause.)

No. Not really.

KATIE: Okay.

(Pause. She's shocked at how much this hurts; she expected the answer.)

So, okay.

ANDY: I'm sorry. I did not mean to hurt your feelings.

KATIE: Hey, I asked, right.

ANDY: I find so many things about you attractive--

KATIE: (She gets up.) No. You don't.

ANDY: I really do.

KATIE: Cut the crap. I'm on your list; you needed to be able to check me off. So.

(She makes a check-off sign.)

ANDY: That's not at all. . . .

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KATIE: So, since there obviously won't be any endorphins flowing around in the stale air currents of this restaurant--

ANDY: Katie, please. I'm so sorry.

KATIE: No, the thing is, I'd be wasting both of our time, right? Because, okay, the whole plan is to see if we're, what, endocrinologically compatible, and we're not, right, so no endorphins, so no affection, so no relationship, so no nothing, ever, right? Ever? Right. So why the hell am I wasting both our time?

(Standing.)

Goodbye, good luck, good night.

ANDY: Wait. Will you wait?

KATIE: For what?

ANDY: It could still happen that--

KATIE: No, see, it can't, because, what, we're not wired right or something. So that means we'll really never get so much as *started* on a relationship. . . . so --

ANDY: Don't go.

(Pause. Pleading.)

Please.

KATIE: Ever.

ANDY: I --

KATIE: Ever. We're doomed. Forever. Chemically.

ANDY: I don't want you to go.

KATIE: Why not? Because I'll tell you right now, the chances of this evening ending up in a make-out session just fell from slim to . . . well, fat. As in fat chance, buddy.

ANDY: Don't.

KATIE: *(A pause.)* Well?

ANDY: First. You were wrong about . . . I do think you're funny.

KATIE: You think I'm *funny*. So there are *laughter* endorphins, and the sound waves from my jokes float through the air and trigger--

ANDY: No. I mean . . . you're funny. I don't know how to say this.

KATIE: I haven't left yet. Yet.

ANDY: Second. Of the five women I've met here so far, you're the one who scares me the most.

KATIE: I *scare* you. What is *that* supposed to mean?

ANDY: It's like you can read my mind, almost. It scares me, how . . . close to me you seem.

KATIE: Andy, what am I supposed to say to that?

ANDY: So I want to pursue it. Whatever it is we have going.

KATIE: Pursue it?

ANDY: I want to.

KATIE: Pursue what?

ANDY: Friendship, maybe. Maybe more.

KATIE: Friendship. And you want to pursue this friendship.

ANDY: I'm saying this all stupidly, I know.

KATIE: The part about not finding me attractive needs work.

ANDY: As I've said, I don't find you unattract--

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KATIE: Well, I'm sorry Andy. I'm really sorry. But I don't have time for whatever it is you're offering.

ANDY: Katie--

KATIE: I have a very good life, thank you very much. A job I like, and great kids and friends . . . and I don't have time or emotional energy to waste on a relationship that's . . . chemically doomed.

ANDY: Not doomed. I find so many things about you attractive that--

KATIE: My mind, maybe? My sense of humor, my spirit, my soul.

ANDY: All that.

KATIE: Not. Good. Enough.

(Stands again to leave.)

Let me give you some advice, Andy, my friend: Get rewired. Because I don't deserve this. I'm better than that. I deserve, dammit, someone who can look at my body, you know, this body, this fat, middle-aged . . . *this*, and say right from the heart, absolute honesty, 'you turn me on. Your *body* is beautiful to me, because I love you, as you, for you.' Get rewired, buddy, because I'm not about to settle for your, whatever, appreciation of my precious sense of humor, my spirit, my soul, my --

ANDY: Katie --

KATIE: I'm sorry. I'm just . . . I'm sorry.

(She starts to exit. Stops.)

I think maybe that this was the rottenest conversation of my life. And I've had some doozies.

(She exits. ANDY stares after her, sadly. Exits. Enter SANDRA.)

SANDRA: A friend of mine moved into a new ward, and was visited by her new Relief Society president. They had a nice visit, a welcome to the ward kind of thing, and it went well, my friend thought. And then, right at the end, the Relief Society President said, 'oh by the way. One more thing.' And then she got extremely serious and said 'I want you to know my husband is off limits.' That's the assumption; that we singles are just so desperate . . . Most people aren't that insulting, of course. But those who are . . . well, it's only natural. How much of LDS culture defines itself in terms of marriage? And therefore defines us . . . out. Sorry, but it's so.

(Looks at DARLENE, who enters.)

And then, sometimes, we do get into relationships, and because we're human, we're as prone to blunders and miscommunications as anyone. And the person with unhurt feelings can sometimes be hurt the worst.

DARLENE: Hello? Hey! Andy, I was just thinking about you, I got this friend, she can get us this really great deal on motorcycle rentals, and anyway I was wondering . . . What? . . . Oh.

(Long pause.)

Oh.

(Long pause. Forced cheer.)

So, okay. Hey, it was never anything but for fun, right?

(Pause.)

Yeah. See ya.

(She stares at the phone, devastated. Then, fiercely.)

I am not going to cry over this. Not going to happen.

(Calls, off.)

Kyle! We're going out.

The Way We're Wired by Eric Samuelsen

(Enter MINDY, at CALLIE's door.)

CALLIE: Mindy! Hi.

MINDY: Here I am.

CALLIE: I can't tell you how much I appreciate this. Come in.

MINDY: *(Goes 'in', looks around.)* Nice place.

CALLIE: It's tiny and it's dingy and the wallpaper's peeling. But. It is better than I had before.

MINDY: Really?

CALLIE: Immeasurably.

MINDY: So. You'll be at the library?

CALLIE: Yes. The kids should be no trouble. I've fed them, they're in their jammies. They're doing this major Legos project; I'll be home before it's time to put them to bed. An hour, tops.

MINDY: Sounds good.

CALLIE: *(Starts to go.)* This is just heaven. I can't tell you what it means to me.

(As she finishes getting ready.)

My husband, my . . . ex-husband. He didn't like me to read. If I was reading, I wasn't Making His Home a Castle. If he caught me with a library card. . . . and of course, I couldn't even go out, anywhere, without his permission.

MINDY: He wouldn't let you?

CALLIE: No, of course not. So. This is such a treat. Do you like to read?

MINDY: I'm not really a book loving . . . type of person.

CALLIE: Surely you have a favorite author? Anyone?

MINDY: I don't know. Well. I used to like a writer named Patricia Wrede. Spelled with a 'W.'

CALLIE: *Dealing with Dragons!* It's one of my favorite books! I can't wait for my daughter to get old enough to read it to her.

MINDY: Yeah, it was great.

CALLIE: I love fantasy. I've already decided: tonight I'm going to look for a new Melanie Rawn. A C.H. Cherryh. A Patricia Riggs. And then maybe just a classic Mercedes Lackey.

MINDY: Great.

CALLIE: And then the kids will be in bed, and I'll have two solid hours just to . . . read. And I've got dishes in the sink, and my bed wasn't made, and laundry, but tonight, this place is going to be a *castle*.

MINDY: Good. Uh. You'd probably better. . . .

CALLIE: Yeah. I'm off. Thanks again. Thanks so much.

(She exits. MINDY looks around, shaken.)

MINDY: *(To herself.)* Wouldn't let her read? What's that about?

(SANDRA enters.)

SANDRA: Single adult activity for October. Sock hop.

(We hear the opening chords of Chuck Berry's Johnny B Goode. With the music, TERRELL enters.)

TERRELL: Come on!

(SANDRA, APRIL, DARLENE, KATIE, CALLIE enter.)

What's wrong with you people?!? Sandra, come on.

SANDRA: I really am not dressed for this, Terrell.

The Way We're Wired by Eric Samuelsen

(She dances self-consciously with him. Suddenly he grabs her hands, and flings her around in a wild swing step.)

TERRELL: People, it is time to rock and roll!

(Enter ANDY and DARLENE ostentatiously moves away from him. He heads towards KATIE. She does the same.)

ANDY: Would any of you . . . care to dance?

APRIL: I'd love to.

(They dance, sweetly and awkwardly.)

TERRELL: *(Sees them.)* Come on people. Rock and roll!

(Runs over to APRIL.)

Do you remember the whale? Remember that?

APRIL: I don't think I--

TERRELL: The whale.

(Demonstrates.)

It's easy. Katie come here.

KATIE: No, I really don't . . . I'm serious.

TERRELL: How 'bout the surfer. Can you do the surf?

KATIE: I don't dance, really I --

TERRELL: Left foot behind the right foot. Balance.

(The Beatles "Twist and Shout" is next.)

We can twist, can't we? I mean, everyone can twist.

(He begins a wildly exaggerated twist.)

Callie, come on.

(CALLIE wanly tries a tentative little twist.)

That's great! Come on, everyone. Let's twist.

(Self-consciously awkward, they all begin to twist.)

APRIL: This is the kind of dance my big sister would do.

SANDRA: Hey, it's not my generation came up with these.

KATIE: I, for one, feel like a complete idiot --

TERRELL: Then you're not doing it right!

(He runs to her, twists right in front of her. Grinning, she responds, a little. Music change. Beach boys, "Fun fun fun.")

What step--

DARLENE: *(Who has been holding back, at the periphery. Suddenly.)* It's a good song for a frug.

TERRELL: Frug! Right. Everyone, come on. Let's frug!

(They begin to frug. Then CALLIE with a sudden whoop, shouts.)

CALLIE: If we're gonna frug, then by gosh, let's frug.

(She throws herself into a frug, wild abandon, laughing. KATIE joins her.)

KATIE: When you're right you're right. Time to frug, folks.

(And she begins to frug too. They all begin frugging wildly. Enter MINDY and KYLE, who stare at the rest in utter horror.)

MINDY: Uh . . . we've got the kids settled in front of a video. Justin's in charge.

The Way We're Wired by Eric Samuelsen

KATIE: *(Frugging wildly.)* Great.

MINDY: Mom? Are you okay?

KYLE: Mom, geez--

KATIE: If you're here, you're gonna frug.

MINDY: Mom!

(KATIE grabs her, pulls her into the group. MINDY begins to frug too.)

KYLE: This is just . . . What am I . . .? What the heck.

(Jumps right in the middle, and frugs more wildly than most.)

KATIE: So Mindy. Is this what they call 'gettin' jiggy wid it?'

MINDY: Mom. No. Don't.

TERRELL: That's right! Let's get jiggy wid it, folks!

(Dances more wildly. Music starts to fade, we hear Jerry Lee Lewis, "Great Balls of Fire.)

DARLENE: What are we gonna do, what we gonna do.

SANDRA: I know, um . . . I think it's called . . . The Swim?

TERRELL: The swim!

(Everyone ad libs "The Swim! Great!" They dance even more wildly than before. SANDRA is the first to break away.)

TERRELL: Sandra, come on!

SANDRA: *(Winded.)* No, I really don't do this. . . just give me a --

TERRELL: Get out here!

(Grabs her, pulls her back into the crowd.)

CALLIE: Dance!

(Finally, the song ends. They all collapse.)

SANDRA: I don't know

(gasp)

when I've had this much . . . fun. If my employees could see me now.

KATIE: I've got a hidden camera; I'll sell you the negative for ten thousand dollars.

SANDRA: Ha! What if I send your principal shots of you getting jiggy?

KATIE: It's getting jiggy wid it. Wid, not with.

MINDY: Mom, please. Don't try.

KATIE: I didn't even know I knew how to frug.

MINDY: You guys had weird dances back then.

KATIE: I noticed you dancing with the rest of us.

MINDY: 'Cause my Mom, like, made me.

KATIE: Poor abused child. And we don't say 'like.'

MINDY: Like, sorry.

KYLE: Do you guys have anything slower?

TERRELL: Sure.

(We hear Unchained Melody, Righteous Brothers.)

KYLE: Perfect. Mindy, may I have this dance?

MINDY: We should check on the kids. . . .

KYLE: Justin's got 'em.

The Way We're Wired by Eric Samuelsen

MINDY: Well . . . I'd be honored.

(They begin slow dancing. TERRELL stands.)

TERRELL: Darlene? I would be honored if you --

DARLENE: Thank you. I'd love that.

(She gets up, and begins to dance slowly. Without meaning to, the others all look at ANDY.)

ANDY: I think maybe I'll sit this one out.

(A pause, as they all take this in. Then APRIL stands.)

APRIL: Ladies' choice?

ANDY: Fine by me.

(He and APRIL begin dancing. We see the three dancing couples.)

SANDRA: *(To audience.)* Andy and April. Hmm. Interesting. The first act is over. Restrooms are out that door.

(FIRST ACT ENDS.)

thirty one more pages make up ACT TWO

REVIEW

The Way We're Wired (drama)

By Eric R. Samuelsen

Reviewed by Jacob Proffitt

On 5/13/1999

Genre: Drama

1999 AML Award: Drama

To start with, I'd probably better make it clear that I'm not much of a theater critic and that I lack the skill and vocabulary to point out all those things that are done particularly well or those that require improvement. I should also probably admit that I'm personally a fan of Eric Samuelsen and that I've liked all his plays I've read or seen. This play is no exception.

Okay, I liked this play. It worked very well for me and made for a wonderful and enjoyable evening with my wife. Which is rather ironic when you consider that all the characters are single and the subject of the play is primarily concerned with the trials faced by singles in LDS society.

Wired is a very emotional play. It swung to and from high good humor and solemn troubled topics without warning and without break. While this technique is often very manipulative, I think it worked very well to draw me tightly into the characters and their lives as presented. I found that I believed in the characters and came to care very much about all of them, well, most of them anyway. Their emotions became mine and that allowed me to participate in their journey.

Wired is very much a journey of discovery. It concerns itself with the power and efficacy of change. Of how much control we have in our life and why we are where we are and what we can do about it. Tellingly, all but one of the characters evidenced very real journeys during the course of the play and brought about positive changes in their lives. The exception was the narrator character.

Wired undermines itself on some interesting levels. The narrator interacts actively with the audience and is openly aware that the action being portrayed is a play. She also participates with the other characters and serves as a continual reminder that this is a play and that it contains parallels that we are meant to observe and analyze. She is also the only character who not only experiences no change during the play, but actively avoids elements of change. This puts her in a position of representing a more general singles experience and allows her to act as a virtual observer herself. This is somewhat problematic as I reject some of her statements as being as representative of LDS life as she claims (I don't think that *every* ward is wary of singles or that very many active LDS women fear single women as competition).

I had one minor problem or area of discomfort during the course of the play. I'm not a particular fan of Eric's politics and they seemed to intrude in this play much more specifically than in some of his other works. The identified Democrats are all sympathetic and the single identified Republican is not. Also, more than one political comment is tossed out as an unsupported generalization with no support or rebuttal. The play wasn't about politics, and had no room to explore these political nuances. I found them intrusive and ultimately unnecessary to the development of the characters. That the main characters shared some ideals as lone Democrats in a largely conservative church is fine and their affiliation could easily have served as a short-hand method to identify shared heritage without indulging in the odd cheap-shot as well.

That said, I found the play immensely enjoyable and would go again if I could stay in town longer. I particularly liked the character Terrell, though not the main story, he was a great example of a very nice guy doing his best. Kyle was another refreshing character, played superbly, as a teen with character and the strength of his convictions.

REVIEW

Stage review: LDS singles magnified in 'Wired'

By Genelle Pugmire -- Deseret News staff writer

Thursday, Feb. 6 2003

The fine line between laughter and tears is walked precariously by Eric Samuelsen in his award-winning play, "The Way We're Wired," which he is also directing.

THE WAY WE'RE WIRED, Nauvoo Theatrical Society, Center Street Theatre, 50 W. Center, Orem, continues through March 1. Tickets: (801) 225-3800. Running time: two hours, one intermission.

OREM — The fine line between laughter and tears is walked precariously by Eric Samuelsen in his award-winning play, "The Way We're Wired," which he is also directing.

Pull out a microscope, put any LDS singles-over-30 group on the glass slide, and take a peek. You will most likely find the same characters there as you do in this production. At first glance they may look like a bunch of misfits chumming together, but then you realize you know them and, in fact, could be one of them.

"The Way We're Wired" presents a painfully funny view on the varieties of LDS singles and how they function — almost as a counter-culture. As is stated early in the show, "to be an LDS single over 30, you've either never married, you're widowed or divorced. In other words, you're a loser, a pity-case, or a failure."

You ask what's so funny about that — and conclude nothing . . . and everything.

This cast does a wonderful job with the Samuelsen characters. They include Sandra (Diana Graham), the narrator and professional business woman who hasn't the time for romance but loves her cat; Andy (J. Scott Bronson), the new guy in town, a never-been-married 40-something who believes singleness happens because of a person's internal wiring; and April (Chelsey Richardson), a woman so academically qualified she has no work experience, leaving her stuck in a telemarketing job.

Other characters include Katie (Lynne D. Bronson), a divorced mom whose former spouse needed a break "to find himself" and ended up marrying a "younger" woman; Darlene (Donna Harlow), the seen-it-all, done-it-all woman who puts the moves on as she journeys down the road to repentance; Terrell (Richard Beach), a man so caught up in himself, he's forgotten how to have a relationship — a real punch-bowl hugger; Callie (Johanne Frechette Perry), a single mom whose one wish is to be normal again; Kyle (Nate Hoffman), Darlene's teenage son, and Mindy (Angela Cason), her teenage daughter.

If you go, you'll laugh a whole lot, but inside, you'll cry too.

For this reviewer, the script was real and close to home. This is one production where you leave the theater and want to go somewhere to talk about it. Give it a shot; you may learn something about yourself — and others.

Review

The Way We're Wired (drama) By Eric R. Samuelsen

Reviewed by Paris Anderson

On 2/21/2003

Genre: Drama 1999 AML Award: Drama

I too liked *The Way We're Wired* a whole lot. To be honest, though, it's kind of humiliating to me. Not that the play offended me in anyway -- it helped me understand. When I came out of the play I saw Eric Samuelsen in the foyer and first I congratulated him, then said, "You're going to make me start liking people."

In the play the characters are so well drawn. I've known people like the characters. They always seemed like freaks -- really, really weird -- and I never much liked them. I never much liked hanging out with Mormons. But in the play I got to understand why the characters were like they were. And the most surprising thing of all, I understood they had become like that. Like that's not really how they were . . . they just became like that in response to the dirty world thing. I understand that. The same thing happened to me. If people become freaks because of the world -- maybe I can forgive them. Maybe even like them.

It's hard to explain. The reason that was humiliating was that that little nugget of wisdom is so elementary and obvious, it makes me wonder what else I'm missing. Some times I feel like an alien.