

“Running of the Brides”

A Play in One Act

Written by Kevin T. Baldwin

CAST

SHANICE – A bride to be. 17, literally just out of high school. Getting married because all her friends married young and have children. Feeling peer pressured to get married and have a baby. Her fiancé is also barely out of high school and doesn't have a job lined up. They plan to live with her parents until he finds work and they can afford to move out. Urban character. Could be played by an African American.

OPHELIA – Shanice's friend. 18, married, and constantly texting on her cell phone with Shanice's other friend Chichi. Is pressuring Shanice to marry and have babies. Also urban character. Could be played by an African American.

AURORA – A bride to be. 35, a corporate executive. Marrying her fiancé more to elevate her own social position than for love. Spending an enormous amount of money on a dream wedding so she'll receive lots of presents.

PRUDENCE – Aurora's younger sister. 33, wants Aurora to marry for her own happiness and not for financial gain or social position.

COURTNEY – A bride to be. 22, impulsively decided to marry because her old boyfriend is getting married and because with her fiancé the sex is great...really, *really* great. Otherwise she is afraid of winding up incredibly lonely.

SYBIL – Courtney's seemingly much more conservative mother. 50, tries to convince Courtney that she is marrying for all the wrong reasons.

IRIS – A visibly pregnant Latino bride to be. 20, unlike Shanice, Iris is getting married to a man with a good career but with who she is not in love because of family pressure to raise a child with a husband.

LENORE – Iris's Latino mother. 48, the "family pressure". Wants Iris to get married so her grandchild will have a father and stable upbringing.

NINA – A bride to be, 25, and although she adores who she's marrying, her closest friend, Zoey, causes turmoil for everyone around them.

ZOEY – Nina's friend. 28, an outspoken proponent of human rights. Thinks the event is appalling.

Synopsis: Five engaged women, crowded in a line with their respective mothers, sisters and friends and hundreds more, are anxiously waiting for a store to open so they may get the best deals on wedding gowns. As they wait, the women converse about their lives, their men, their hopes, and respective lifetime visions of marriage with some surprising revelations about themselves.

“RUNNING OF THE BRIDES”

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

The time: Present

Setting: Millborough Convention Center for the Sixtieth Annual “Running of the Brides”

(LIGHTS UP on a bare stage with five sets of couples in a wide staggered or “V” pattern: SHANICE and OPHELIA upstage right, AURORA and PRUDENCE stage right center, NINA and ZOEY down stage center, IRIS and LENORE stage left center. There are background voices to indicate hundreds of women at the event. There may also be large photographs adorning the stage representing the crowds at other similar events. At LIGHTS UP, SHANCE and OPHELIA move forward to stand isolated just on the other side of NINA and ZOEY who do not see them and remain unseen in darkness during the following)

OPHELIA – (Looking at her cellular phone, speaking very quickly) Oh, baby, Chichi just texted me. She reminded me to tell you to make sure and get the right veil to go with the dress.

SHANICE – The right veil? There’s a right veil? I didn’t even know there was a wrong one.

OPHELIA – Oh, hell yeah. She told me that when she did this thing two years ago she got this really nice gown but needed to buy a new veil ‘cause the one she grabbed? Her mom used to cover a big hole in the middle of their couch.

SHANICE – Oh, no. Poor Chichi.

OPHELIA – (Laughing) I know, right? (After a beat) Couch looks really nice, though. (Texting) I remember Chichi showed me her bruises from when she did this.

SHANICE – Bruises?

OPHELIA – Hell, yeah. Told me she got knocked down by some bitch after her gown. Tons a people around, all fightin’ over dresses and shit.

SHANICE – She could have gotten trampled.

OPHELIA – Mmm-hmmm. (Stops texting) When she got up, not only was the veil gone, her gown was ripped and the shirt she was wearin' was torn. So, she had to go and find another wedding dress.

SHANICE – Well, at least she didn't get hurt. Did she buy it someplace else?

OPHELIA – (Texting again) Better than that. She knocked over this other bitch and got a really great deal on both the dress and veil.

SHANICE – The one on the couch?

OPHELIA – Right. Hey, a wedding is *the* most special day in your life, and you gotta look right. And you gotta be careful, too, cause you only get married once or twice in a lifetime, right? (Stops texting) Oh, that reminds me, Shanice. After the "Running of the Brides" we gotta go right out and get you some new shoes.

SHANICE – (Sighs, whining) Ophelia, what was wrong with the white shoes I just bought?

OPHELIA – (Returns to texting) Girl, those things my gay brother Charlie wouldn't even wear and he has *no* fashion sense. (After a beat) Go figure, right?

SHANICE – (After a brief pause) Ophelia, let me ask you somethin'. You just got married last year. You weren't even outta high school yet. You don't think you, well, I dunno, rushed?

OPHELIA – (Shaking her head, still texting) Nuh-uh. Honey, I was ready to get outta that school.

SHANICE – "Get outta school"? You married Emeka to "get outta school"? You didn't marry 'cause you loved him?

OPHELIA – (Stops texting and looks at SHANICE) I married Emeka because he knocked me up, you know that.

SHANICE – Right, but you do love him, don't you?

OPHELIA – (Returns to texting) Yeah, I guess. Be nice if he moved his sorry ass off the couch every now and then to help with the baby, though. (Stops texting and hugs SHANICE) Oooh, girlfriend, Chichi says she is gonna watch for us on the news tonight. Oh, this'll be so much fun. You get married, have your babies, then you me and Chichi can all hang together with the kids at the park.

SHANICE – (Smiling, but only half-heartedly) Yeah. Sounds nice, kinda'. I was hopin' to wait a couple years while Abraham gets a job someplace.

OPHELIA – You two will be stayin’ at your parents, ain’t you?

SHANICE – Yeah, but I don’t wanna be raising any babies in my parent’s house.

OPHELIA – Why not? I do it. Chichi does it, too. Great way to save up for a place of your own.

SHANICE – But...

OPHELIA – (Urging) You can’t wait. Look, Abraham dropped out so you two could get hitched. So, you *owe* it to him.

SHANICE – I didn’t ask him to drop out.

OPHELIA – You said you’d marry him, right?

SHANICE – Well, it happened so quick. I just said “yes” because it was such a shock. Next thing I know he drops out and we gotta set a date.

OPHELIA – Sure, it was a shock, a *good* one. Now you gotta get your act together for you and for him. And it’s my job as matron of honor to help you. (Returns to texting)

SHANICE – (Unsure) Right. (LIGHTS DIM on SHANICE and OPHELIA. LIGHTS UP on AURORA and her sister, PRUDENCE who move forward to stand isolated just on the other side of NINA and ZOHEY who do not see them and remain unseen in darkness during the following)

PRUDENCE – Look at all the women here. Must be hundreds.

AURORA – (On her cell phone) Yes, well the market report is on the shared “J” drive. (Pause) No, the “J” drive. (After a beat) The “K” drive? We don’t even have a “K” drive on the network.

PRUDENCE – There won’t be enough dresses to go around.

AURORA – (Still on the phone) Email the report to Ferguson. His address is fourth one down in my distribution list. (After a beat, annoyed) Well, it’s *in* alphabetical order. Shouldn’t be hard to find.

PRUDENCE – Aurora, are you going to be on that thing all day? They’ll be starting soon and you’re nowhere near ready!

AURORA – (Still on the phone) I’ve gotta run. (After a beat) No, run. (After another beat) I mean literally, run. I’ll call you back in an hour. Shoot me a text when you’ve sent the report. (After a beat) Okay. Bye. (Disconnects. Looks at PRUDENCE) What? It’s work.

PRUDENCE – It’s Saturday. Are you going to take this seriously or not?

AURORA – I wish I didn’t have to do this at all. It’s so...

PRUDENCE – Exciting?

AURORA - Depressing. All these women, Prudence, so desperate to save a few bucks on the gown that’s supposed to be the most important thing they’ll ever purchase.

PRUDENCE – It’s more than a few bucks and you know it. You can save hundreds of dollars. That being said, why *are* you doing it, then?

AURORA – Because I spent so much on the actual wedding and reception that I can’t afford the kind of gown I really want. I only hope people bring lots of gifts to the reception. I need to get back *something* after everything I’ve invested. These women have no idea just what I’ve gone through for this wedding.

PRUDENCE – (Sarcastic) And there you have it. My sister, the romantic fool.

AURORA – What? I’m *entitled* to my special day and just the way I want it. These women, on the other hand...

PRUDENCE – (Interrupting) These “women” ...these brides...may be trying to save for a house, a family, a future. I’ve been looking at them, and they are all so diverse. There are rich women, poor women, old, like you, young, like me...

AURORA – Two years. Don’t rub it in.

PRUDENCE – (Continuing) Catholics, Jews, Blacks, Asians, Latinas...

AURORA – (Disgusted) Ugh! Don’t remind me.

PRUDENCE – The point, “Miss Bigot”, is that you don’t know their reasons for wanting to do this. There could be a different story of every woman here, (driving the point home) *including* bad investments.

AURORA – (Defensive) It wasn't *my* fault that stock took a nosedive. Who could have anticipated those "Teenage Warrior Rat" toys would be recalled because the mice in people's houses were trying to mate with them?

PRUDENCE – (Amused) Yeah, how about that?

AURORA – They should never have added that "natural cheese aroma" feature when you squeezed their tummies.

PRUDENCE – Aurora, focus. We have hundreds of brides here and a limited number of gowns.

AURORA – Fine. Now here's my plan.

PRUDENCE – You have a plan? What a surprise.

AURORA – I do, Miss Smartass. We walk in...

PRUDENCE – (Interrupting) Run in. Walk and you might get trampled.

AURORA – Fine. We run in, grab the first five or six designer gowns off the rack that look my size. Then I try them on, pick the best one and then we just get the hell out of there.

PRUDENCE – Designer gowns? That's your plan? This is how you manage thirteen people at your office?

AURORA – I am not that particular, Sis. As long as the dress fits and has the designer name off this list I compiled (Handing PRUDENCE a list) there shouldn't be a problem.

PRUDENCE – You are out of your mind. This is how much you care about the single most important dress you'll ever wear? (AURORA shrugs) And just how much time do you think we'll have to look at designer labels? (Handing the list back to AURORA) By the time you get the gown and look at the little tag, someone will rip the gown out from under you, leaving you with just the little fucking tag in your hands.

AURORA – Fine. (Tearing up the list and throwing the paper shreds in the air) Then what do you suggest?

PRUDENCE – Given your attitude maybe re-thinking this whole idea. (LIGHTS DIM on AURORA and PRUDENCE. LIGHTS UP on COURTNEY and her mother, SYBIL who move forward to stand isolated just on the other side of NINA and ZOEY who do not see them and remain unseen in darkness during the following)

COURTNEY – (In the middle of a conversation with SYBIL, describing the type of dress she is looking for) ...and maybe some lace around the bodice. (Looking out at the crowd) Why don't they get started already? We've been here since five a.m.

SYBIL – Some of these women slept in *lawn chairs* here overnight. I mean, how desperate is that? We're lucky we have this spot so close to the front.

COURTNEY – (Anticipating) Two weeks. I can't believe in two weeks I'll be Mrs. Anthony Kwackens.

SYBIL – You'll also be *Courtney* Kwackens. Sounds like a God damn cereal put out by Elmer Fudd.

COURTNEY – Mom, please don't start.

SYBIL – Well I just can't believe you're doing this, darling. I mean, you just met the boy. You barely even know him.

COURTNEY – He's not a boy, Mom. He's all man. And, trust me...he's proven that...*plenty*.

SYBIL – (Disgusted) I do not need to be informed of your sexual escapades, young lady.

COURTNEY – That's a shame because it would sure make your eyes roll back into your head, let me tell you...

SYBIL – (Interrupting) Way too much information, thank you.

COURTNEY – (Chuckling, but apologetic) Sorry. I didn't mean to embarrass you.

SYBIL – I'm not embarrassed. I just don't need to hear about it, that's all.

COURTNEY – (Defensive) Fine.

SYBIL – (Defensive) Fine. (After a beat, decides she does want to know more) So where *did* you and the Kwackhead meet, anyway? At the Kwackerjack Factory? (Laughs)

COURTNEY – (Annoyed, sarcastic) Ha-ha. So funny. Just so happens we met at the "Singapore".

SYBIL – (Annoyed) A bar? You met "Mr. Wonderful" at a God damn bar?

COURTNEY – You know, you really should cut down on your swearing.

SYBIL – Lead a normal life and I might try it! (LIGHTS DIM on COURTNEY and SYBIL. LIGHTS UP on IRIS and her mother, LENORE who move forward to stand isolated just on the other side of NINA and ZOEY who do not see them and remain unseen in darkness during the following)

LENORE – Now, remember, just take it easy. We don't want to risk anything that might hurt the baby.

IRIS – Then why couldn't I have stayed home, Mama? I could get the dress I wanted on-line.

LENORE – At more than three times the price? I don't think so. It wasn't even white!

IRIS – Mama, I'm three months *pregnant*. White is a symbol of "purity".

LENORE – Purity in heart and in life, Iris, and in reverence to God (Blesses herself). That is you, baby.

IRIS – Mama. Look at me. You're being silly and old fashioned. Father Tomas told me blue is closer to the Virgin Mary, not white.

LENORE – Ridiculous. He didn't say that.

IRIS – He did. And I read in this magazine that white is what women used to wear to funerals. So, things change.

LENORE – My daughter will wear white for her wedding. Anyway, it doesn't matter. So what if you made a mistake? (Looks at IRIS then, after a beat) Okay, so maybe we get you an *eggshell* white instead of *ivory*, but that's okay.

IRIS – (Defensive) I didn't make a "mistake". Hector is doing what you want, isn't he?

LENORE – It's not what I want. It is the right thing.

IRIS – Hector has a good job. He could afford the dress I want.

LENORE – Hector is saving for a house. There are bridal stores here from all over the state. I'm sure we'll find you a nice dress...cheap.

IRIS – But I'm so tired, Mama.

LENORE – You're going to have a baby. In another few months sleep isn't going to be your friend. Might as well get used to being tired now. Did you eat the chicken sandwich I made you last night?

IRIS – Yes, I ate it after I couldn't get to sleep in the *lawn chair*.

LENORE – Well good, as long as you've eaten. We want to take care of my little grandchild you're carrying.

IRIS – Sometimes I think you care more about the baby than me, (teasing) "Abuela".

LENORE – (Annoyed) Ha-ha. Nonsense. I just want to make sure it is raised properly with a good home and a husband.

IRIS – (Disconcerted) You don't think I can take care of a baby on my own? I can get a job.

LENORE – A baby needs a *stable* home, a mother *and* a father.

IRIS – But Hector...

LENORE – What? You don't think Hector will be a good father to the baby?

IRIS – No, I didn't say that. I'm sure he'll be a wonderful father.

LENORE – Then, it is settled. (IRIS appears troubled as LIGHTS DIM on IRIS and LENORE. LIGHTS UP on NINA and ZOEY, center, who are both dressed in jogging suits and wearing short veils affixed to baseball caps, barely covering their eyes but enough to annoy ZOEY)

ZOEY – (Blowing the veil away from her face) I feel like a fucking asshat.

NINA – (Excited, anticipating) I wish they'd start already.

ZOEY – I'm not even the one getting married. We look like some weird lesbian couple.

NINA – But Zoey, you *are* a lesbian.

ZOEY – I know, but I'm not weird, and I certainly wouldn't be caught dead getting married in one of these things.

NINA – Well I, for one, can't wait to be married. (Looking out at the other contestants) It's so unbelievable. Hundreds of women, and, oh look, even a few men.

ZOEY – (Sarcastic) Yah-huh. So to speak.

NINA – Can you believe the town has been doing this for sixty years? Wow.

ZOEY – Yeah, whoopee. (Blowing the veil away from her face, annoyed) These aren't even veils we're wearing. I mean, what the hell did you make these out of, anyway? Doilies? They should be draped over a *couch* somewhere, not attached to a hat.

NINA – Shh. Stop it. It's a tradition. (Points to one side) Look! Here comes a guy with a starter's pistol.

ZOEY – (Explains) That's a cop...with a gun. He's probably working security so these idiot women don't kill one another in the stampede. Boy, I don't envy him.

NINA – "Idiot women"? Are you saying *I'm* an idiot?

ZOEY – (Putting a gentle hand on NINA's shoulder, looking at her veil) Yes, Nina, you're an idiot. (Urging) Don't do this.

NINA – Zoey, you've been my best friend since forever. Remember we used to dress up my Barbie dolls for weddings?

ZOEY – I remember...I was Ken.

NINA - That's why I wanted you involved. Can't you be a little more supportive?

ZOEY – (Trying to look at NINA in the eyes but finding it difficult because of the veil) Look, I'm trying. You know I'm here for you, kid. I'm just not good with a lot of this romantic shit. The rings, the planning, the vows, the wedding, the dress and...and... (Frustrated, takes her cap off) And this stupid veil keeps getting in my eyes and is driving me crazy!

NINA – (Urging) Don't' take it off! They could start at any moment.

ZOEY – Nina, I'm sorry, but I can't stand it, anymore. I mean, just look at this. Look at this! (Lights up FULL) This is the most pathetic display I've ever seen. Hundreds of women...

NINA - And a few of those guys...

ZOEY – Never mind them. Each woman debasing...no, humiliating herself to act like nothing more than reproductive cattle.

NINA – (Horrified, takes her cap off) "Cattle"? Oh, Zoey, that's awful. That's just mean. (SHANICE and OPHELIA edge closer, listening to NINA and ZOEY's conversation)

ZOEY – (Continuing) Here we are, prisoners of a male dominated industry, and because they needed a gimmick to sell more dresses, they came up with *this* insulting idea. Hemingway would have loved it. There's a reason they call it the "Running of the Brides", you know.

NINA – Zoey, stop it.

ZOEY – (Continuing) They cram women together in this "common feeder" line. The starter pistol goes off and the women rush like bulls stampeding down the streets of Pamplona. God help anyone who gets in their way. They burst through a six foot hole in a wall where a door *used* to exist. Once inside, absolute chaos ensues. They fight like a bunch of "Bridezillas", knocking each other down, tearing everything apart, stomping on one another...and for what?

NINA – (Smiling) To buy a pretty dress for the happiest day of their life?

ZOEY – Right. I'm better than that. (Puts the cap and veil back on her head) And so are you. (NINA is unsure how to respond. ZOEY blows the veil away from her face)

OPHELIA – Would you two just please shut up? Me and my girlfriend here are out to get her a wedding gown and we got no problem runnin' over people like you to get to it.

ZOEY – (To NINA) See what I mean? Typical.

NINA – (Embarrassed) Zoey.

SHANICE – Ophelia, please.

OPHELIA – (Coming up to ZOEY) Hey! I don't need no uppity dike comparin' my friend to no "Bridezilla".

SHANICE – (To NINA, indicating OPHELIA) She didn't say that.

NINA – (To SHANICE, indicating ZOEY) She didn't mean to offend...

ZOEY – (To NINA) No-no-no. Don't apologize for me. I can speak my mind. We're in public. It's a free country. Certainly freer than some of those countries where gowns are made using child labor.

SHANICE – What?

OPHELIA – Oh, please!

ZOEY – That’s right. Hand woven by the little hands of eight or nine year-old girls under deplorable conditions in some rundown mill. What do you think *those* girls will want to wear on *their* wedding days, assuming they live to see it?

SHANICE – (Feeling sick) Oh, God.

NINA – Zoey, please! You’re just being horrible. Stop it!

ZOEY - Didn’t I overhear one of you talking about having babies? Do you really want to buy a gown, one representing a woman ready to marry and bear children, knowing it was made *by* children forced to make it in a sweatshop?

OPHELIA – (After a beat) I ain’t got no problem with it, long as it’s cheap.

SHANICE – (Shocked) Ophelia. Those could be *your* kids a few years from now.

OPHELIA – If they bring home a steady check I ain’t gonna complain. Anyways, don’t let her con you. That can’t happen here.

ZOEY – So, because it happens someplace *e/else* makes it okay, I guess.

OPHELIA – (Threatening) You better shut it, bitch!

SHANICE – (To OPHELIA) I...I think...no. I can’t do this.

OPHELIA – (To SHANICE) Girl, what’re you sayin’? Baby, they’re gonna start any minute.

SHANICE – (Admitting) I love you and Chichi. I love Abraham, too. But I’m just not ready to be married. I wanna finish school. Maybe we’ll marry, maybe we won’t, but I wanna maybe work a few years before havin’ kids. And I certainly want more time to buy a dress that I know isn’t made by kids in some sweatshop. (Looks at NINA and ZOEY, then OPHELIA) I’m outta here. (Quickly exits off right)

OPHELIA – Shanice, wait! (To ZOEY) Nice goin’. Shit, now I gotta text Chichi about this. Shanice! Wait up! (Still texting, exits off right quickly in pursuit of SHANICE as AURORA and PRUDENCE move up, listening)

NINA – (To ZOEY) Are you happy?

ZOEY – What? What’d I do?

NINA – Now some poor guy is going to get his heart broken because of you.

ZOEY – All I did was point out a few things. People seem to forget, or they just ignore, how some things are made.

NINA – Don't you dare start that again.

ZOEY – What? Not speak about the toxic chemicals used in fabric treatments? The use of dyes that are harmful to both people and the planet? (WOMEN surrounding them drink from bottled water)

NINA – (Embarrassed again) Oh, Sweet Jesus.

ZOEY – (Continuing her rant) Nina, most wedding dresses are made from petroleum-based polyester.

NINA – I don't care.

ZOEY – (Continuing) You know how much that pollutes the planet? (Sees AURORA and PRUDENCE) And those kids working in sweatshops, they might as well be slaves.

AURORA – (Chiming in) She's right, you know. Dismal conditions. I invest heavily overseas and I can tell you sweatshops are everywhere. Unfortunately, in today's global economy, it's a necessary evil just like the chemicals used in clothing manufacturing.

ZOEY – (Shocked) Are you crazy, lady?

PRUDENCE – Aurora, we shouldn't get involved.

ZOEY – (To AURORA) Don't you realize how fabrics like silk are developed? They use pesticides and then it gets woven into fabric by these big electric looms which in turn damage the atmosphere. We're supposed to be thinking green these days. (Looks back at women with bottled waters, who put them away quickly)

AURORA – Oh, green shmeen, blah-blah-blah. Ecology is an acceptable consideration but only when it's cost effective.

PRUDENCE – (Shocked) What did you just say?

AURORA – Sure. Being green and ecologically minded is fine, but only if it's economically feasible, otherwise you'd see businesses go right back to *tried and true* methods of manufacturing.

ZOEY – like sweatshops?

AURORA – All right, sure, like sweatshops.

PRUDENCE – (To AURORA) How can you be so unenlightened, Sis?

AURORA – “Unenlightened”? I’m practical. Given your name you should understand that, “Prudence”.

PRUDENCE – Then you only believe in doing the right thing when it’s in your best interest?

AURORA – Of course. Why do you think I’m getting married?

PRUDENCE – (Surprised) What? AURORA – You really think I’m getting married because we’re “soul mates” or something?

PRUDENCE – You mean...you aren’t?

AURORA – Of course not. I’m getting married because it makes sense.

PRUDENCE – I can’t believe I’m hearing this. Love doesn’t always make sense, Aurora. Hell, most of the time it doesn’t make *any* sense.

AURORA – Marriage *must* or the entire merger could fall through.

PRUDENCE, NINA and ZOEY – (Simultaneously) “Merger”?

ZOEY – (To PRUDENCE) Jesus! Your sister here sounds like one of those fucking Trumps.

AURORA – (To PRUDENCE) Do you realize how much I have *invested* in this relationship? Three years. It took me three years to get him to ask me to marry him. For three years I cultivated, manipulated, *steered* this relationship to where I know it will do me the most good. (To ZOEY) My personal worth will jump ten times and my social position will put me in league with those “Trumps”.

PRUDENCE – This from a woman who lost money on cheese farting rodent toys? That man loves you, Aurora. How can you be so callous...

AURORA – (Snapping at PRUDENCE) He doesn’t *love* me! He *needs* me. He needs me for face value just like I need him.

PRUDENCE – “Face value”? What...?

AURORA – Think about it, Sis. If he truly loved me why did it take him three years to propose? Why couldn't he have loved me then...as much as I worshipped him? He doesn't love me. You know how he proposed? He said he “appreciated” me. That he “welcomes” what I contribute to discussions. He appreciates my business sense and my candor. He finds me valuable and thinks together there's nothing we can't accomplish. But emotionally...sexually? To him I'll always be more a “colleague” than lover.

ZOEY – Holy shit. (After a beat) He's gay, isn't he? (AURORA nods then, embarrassed, runs off left)

NINA – Oh, my God.

PRUDENCE – Sis! Aurora! Wait! (PRUDENCE exits off left after AURORA, as COURTNEY and SYBIL move up)

SYBIL – (Smart) Nice going. Any other lives you'd like to destroy today?

NINA – Hey! Don't look at me, lady. I didn't say anything.

SYBIL – (Mimicking NINA) “Oh, my God”.

ZOEY – (To SYBIL) Now hold on, lady. (Pauses briefly, recognizing SYBIL) Hey! Wait a sec. Have we met before? You look familiar.

SYBIL – (Condescending) I sincerely doubt it. I don't go to lesbian softball games.

ZOEY – (Insulted, but lets it go) Nice. Well, anyway, if anything it's all on me. Nina didn't have anything to do with that.

COURTNEY – (To SYBIL) Yeah, Mom. Chill.

SYBIL – Quiet, you. You're no better than the bride that just ran off.

COURTNEY – What? What the hell did I do?

SYBIL – You're marrying somebody you just met at that stupid Downtowner bar two weeks ago.

COURTNEY – Oh, here we go...

SYBIL – Yes, here we go! And you think you can expound upon true love? You’re getting married for sex, not love.

COURTNEY – Why don’t you like any of the boys I like?

SYBIL – That’s not true. But I *am* your mother and I *am* more selective. And I have a feeling you are more selective than you’re letting on, too. That’s why I know you’re only doing this to get back at Avery.

COURTNEY – (Apprehensive) Avery? What’s Avery got to do with anything?

SYBIL – I’m on Facebook too, honey, and I know Avery got engaged. He announced it two weeks ago, the night *before* you went to the Downtowner and hooked up with Anthony.

COURTNEY – Please don’t say “hooked up” like you’re trying to be hip or something. It doesn’t work.

SYBIL – Oh, darling, don’t marry this “Kwackhead” just because the sex was good. In the end, good sex is meaningless. Marry someone you can share your heart with, too.

COURTNEY – (Pointing out) The sex wasn’t good. It was *great*, actually...really, *really* great.

SYBIL – (Cautioning, strongly) Still...is it worth losing Avery?

COURTNEY – (Admitting) I already lost Avery.

SYBIL – Because you didn’t fight hard enough for him. Because you were scared of true love, like every one of us is at one time or another. Now you have a chance to fight for him and get him back before that little bitch sinks her hooks any further into him.

COURTNEY – How do you know she’s a little bitch?

SYBIL – Because I know her mother and her mother’s the biggest bitch in town and all her daughters are little bitches, just like her.

COURTNEY – I don’t know...

NINA – (To COURTNEY) I’m sorry. I know we don’t know each other, but can I just ask...who do you love? I mean truly, truly love?

COURTNEY – (Pauses to consider, then admits) Avery. (After a beat) And the sex wasn't bad with him, either.

SYBIL – Again, too much sharing, dear.

COURTNEY – (To SYBIL) Okay, Mom. I'll try. (Courtney exits as SYBIL watches her go. After a beat, ZOEY asks)

ZOEY - Hey, now I know where I've seen you before. You were at the Sling-a-Whore, I mean "Singapore", too, on Ladies Night. (NINA looks at ZOEY) What? I was there for the booze, two-for-one drinks. Anyway, you left with this young guy and...(Realizing) Oh, shit.

SYBIL – (Very slowly turns back to NINA and ZOEY) And the sex was great. Really, *really* great. (Rolls her eyes back, then SYBIL exits off right, smiling, as NINA and ZOEY just stand there, repulsed. IRIS and LENORE move up)

ZOEY – (Disgusted) Way, way, WAY too much information. I mean, how desperate is that?

NINA – I'm going to be sick. (Looking at ZOEY) What is it with you, anyway? At this rate...

ZOEY – Don't get started on me, Nina. *That* wasn't my fault. (Sees IRIS) Your *condition* has just got you upset, that's all.

LENORE – Excuse me, are you pregnant, too?

NINA – Why? (Concerned) What...Am I showing?

LENORE – No, it's just that my daughter is also with child. You're not looking for an eggshell dress too, are you?

ZOEY – (Confused) Huh? Eggshell? What?

IRIS – Mama.

NINA – (To IRIS) Pregnant? Really? How wonderful. How far along?

IRIS – A few months.

NINA – Aw, I bet your fiancé must be so happy about becoming a husband *and* father so *quickly*.

IRIS – Well, he...

LENORE – (To NINA) He is a hard worker.

NINA – I'm sure he is.

ZOEY – He better be.

NINA – Zoey, stop it. Haven't you caused enough emotional upheaval for one day?

ZOEY – I didn't cause it. It just sorta...happened.

IRIS – Hector, he is very sweet.

NINA – Hector? Is that the boy? Oh, what a great name. If it's a boy, is that what he wants to name the baby? I mean, what you *both* want?

IRIS – Well, if it is a girl I want to name her "Sabina" after mi abuela.

LENORE – (Smiling to NINA and ZOEY) My mother would have liked that.

IRIS – If it is a boy, I was hoping to name him "Castillo", after my Papa.

LENORE – (Not pleased) "Castillo"? You want to name him after a lazy car wash worker?

IRIS – (Defensive) Papa works very hard, Mama. Always puts food on the table, clothes on our backs. Put you through real estate school.

LENORE – (To NINA and ZOEY) Castillo works nine to three and when he comes home he doesn't move any muscles except those it takes to move a fork and beer can to his mouth.

IRIS – Mama!

LENORE – Sorry. (To ZOEY) But it's the truth.

IRIS – Not everyone is cut out to be a parent, Mama, but they do so because sometimes they feel they have no choice.

LENORE – You mean your Papa?

IRIS – I mean *you*!

NINA and ZOEY – (Simultaneously but overlapping, staggered, moving aside) Whoa. Oh, my. Shit.

LENORE – (Stunned) I have loved you your entire life. How dare you speak to me in this way?

IRIS – If you love me you won't force Hector to marry me.

LENORE – He must do the right thing.

ZOEY – (Butting in, to LENORE) Excuse me, but is that what Sabina said to *you*? (NINA pulls her back) Sorry. Just speculating.

LENORE – Castillo did the right thing! (Pauses, looks at ZOEY, then at IRIS) And, si. Yes...she did.

IRIS – Hector would be doing the right thing if he *didn't* marry me, Mama. He's nice, but I don't love Hector and I do not want to marry him.

LENORE – You don't?

IRIS – No, I thought I might love him, but really, I never did. And I know he doesn't love me. We're friends.

LENORE – Friends who will be parents soon.

IRIS – Si, but I want to raise my child my way. Of course I want Hector to be there for the baby, and I know he will. But it will be because it is what *he* wants and I know it will also be best for the baby.

LENORE – Really? Without a Papa? Without a home?

IRIS – I will give him a home. I will find a way. I will work hard. It is my baby and I will do what is right.

LENORE – (After a long pause, gently puts her hand on IRIS's shoulder) You won't be alone. I will help. And so will Papa, if he can ever get his sorry ass off the couch to help with the baby.

(IRIS and LENORE exit, leaving NINA and ZOEY alone on stage. They look around then at one another with devilish grins)

ZOEY – Well, that thinned out the herd a bit, didn't it?

NINA – See? I told you it would work. (They BOTH put their caps back on their heads and kiss each other)

ZOEY – “Good cop, bad cop”. Who would have thought that would work here? You are absolutely diabolical. Well, I know one thing for sure.

NINA – What’s that?

ZOEY – A lifetime with you is never going to be dull. (BOTH laugh and prepare to run)

NINA – Ready, “Ken”?

ZOEY – (Nodding) Yup. Ready, “Barbie”. Let’s take the rest of these bitches down!

RECORDED ANNOUNCER VOICE – Are we ready, ladies? Here we go! The Sixtieth Annual “Running of the Brides”! (JOINED BY MANY WOMEN’S VOICES) Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one, GO!

(NINA and ZOEY take one step forward as LIGHTS DIM. The sounds of screaming brides is heard)

Blackout

The End

“When you have two people who love each other, are happy and gay and really good work is being done by one or both of them, people are drawn to them as surely as migrating birds are drawn at night to a powerful beacon.” Ernest Hemingway – A Moveable Feast

“Running of the Brides gives insight into what goes on among the hundreds of women who wait for the opening of the store’s bridal department where they fight for a designer gown for their upcoming wedding. Ten women, brides, mothers and friends, discuss their views on love, marriage, men and sex in this witty one act.”

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