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Waiting

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Waiting

A Ten-Minute Play

By: Jennifer Nesbitt

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The play *Waiting*, looks at two couples who are presently waiting for a next big thing, so much that they are taking for granted what is happening in the present and this causes conflict; evermoreso, when the one you're waiting for is not aware that you're waiting.

Characters:

EZRA: Joy's husband. Middle aged, 45, Stocky, starting to lose his hair. Wears plaid and/or flannel shirts with suspenders, a belt, wrinkled khaki pants, eye glasses, a watch. Quick to become defensive with Joy, tends to be self-loathing, desperate, and constantly bitter with not reaching his ideal of success.

JOY: Ezra's wife. 37, wears loose fitting/comfortable clothing, likes long, pocketed cardigans, flats. She's a chatterbox, tidy, Intelligent and most of the time overly patient with Ezra, until she's not. Feels like she's losing grips with her marriage, questioning Ezra's love, and trying desperately to hold it all together even though she wants to scream.

PHILIP: Late Twenties, in long-term relationship with Chloe. Wears business casual: sweater on top of button up shirts and skinny tie, skinny slacks, low-top board casual canvas lace up shoes. Sets, and achieves, his long-term goals, relies strictly on his pocket calendar, and is not very adaptable to change.

CHLOE: Late Twenties, in long-term relationship with Philip. Modern hippie style: patterned shirt, skirt, boots, stone rings and necklace, fun wrist bangles. With Philip it would seem like opposites attract. She is coming into her own, reconsidering her career path, wanting more spontaneity and a free-spirited lifestyle.

Setting: The Present.

Note: When another character starts speaking before a character finishes it will be marked with: /

At Rise:

SR a small kitchen. SL a small pub with bar stools. Each setting is completely dark, or silhouetted, as the other one is lit.

Scene 1: Kitchen

(Lights rise SR. Joy and Ezra are seated having dinner. Ezra finished eating, reading a newspaper. Joy eating her food.)

(Moment of Silence)

JOY

Ezra?

EZRA

(Reading his paper)

Joy?

JOY

How was your day? How'd the meetings go-

EZRA

Fine.

(Another silent moment. Ezra more content with it than Joy.)

JOY

What are you reading about?

EZRA

Nothing, I'm thinking of starting my crossword.

JOY

Can we just have a nice dinner *together*? I want to hear about your day-

EZRA

(Still reading paper.)

Like I said, it was fine.

JOY

EZRA?

EZRA

(putting down his paper.)

Joy.

JOY

I want to talk about having a baby.

EZRA

You know that I don't think it good-

JOY

Good-timing, yeah, but I'm not in my prime anymore Ezra. I want little baby snuggles and picnics at the park with a mom's group. Besides that, imagine / the love a child could bring us!

EZRA

I can imagine the two AM feedings, my boss wondering why I'm half asleep all the time. I need to focus, Joy.

JOY

Doesn't your boss have / kids?

EZRA

No, he doesn't.

(Ezra goes to the liquor cabinet and pours himself a bourbon on the rocks.)

JOY

Is all you care about anymore work? It's exhausting. I miss you...I miss us.

(Lights Down Ezra and Joy.)

Scene 2: Bar

(Lights rise SL PHILIP and CHLOE are seated at the bar. Music plays.)

PHILIP

Can I ask you a question? *(not entirely waiting for a response)*
I was reading the paper the other day when I came across this pol. The pol stated that most men know that they want to marry a girl, or not, after a year and a half into the relationship.

CHLOE

Where'd you read that...you think that's true?

PHILIP

It just got me thinking...Chloe...have you ever thought about wanting to marry me?

CHLOE

Sure.

PHILIP

When? Cause you haven't given me any sign to let me know that you've been thinking about it!

CHLOE

I don't know-

PHILIP

Well I think about marrying you all the time lately! / I was watching DR. OZ and if you don't get married in your thirties, the chances that you will by 40 drops 43%!

CHLOE

Really?

CHLOE

(After Philip finishes his line above.)

What?

PHILIP

They also were saying how Newsweek had an article and if you were single at the age of 40 you were more likely to die in a terrorist attack than ever say I do!

CHLOE

I'm 26! *(sudden realization)* oh my god...are you proposing to me...right now?

PHILIP

Do you want me to?

CHLOE

Sure...Someday, maybe.

PHILIP

Sure? Someday, maybe?!

CHLOE

I don't know...Phil...

PHILIP

Can you just answer a question for once with something definitive, something truthful?

CHLOE

I am being truthful! / Stop attacking me!

(downs the rest of her beer)

PHILIP

I just want to know what our future looks like. I'm not attacking-

CHLOE

I...I'm going to get another round.

(Lights down SL on CHLOE and PHILIP. Lights rise SR to Ezra and Joy.)

JOY

Our anniversary is coming up. I thought we could go to the cabin...get all cozy by the fire, have some us time, unplug, take a jacuzzi bath... *(no response from Ezra, now fidgeting with and cleaning his glasses.)* ...Okay then, how about we go down to the pub, go dancing like we always used to do.

EZRA

Actually, Joy...something has been on my mind lately...I've been wondering if you could pick up some more hours at work.

JOY

This is about last week? There is nothing wrong with needing to take days off. unlike you, I don't feel like working 261 days a year.

EZRA

There are 365 days in a year Joy.

JOY

Actually, in a non-leap year there are 52.14 work weeks in a year minus weekends, multiply that by 5 and you get 261.

EZRA

Well actually you get 260.8-

JOY

Whatever. I'm going to use my sick days if I want to!

ERZA

Most of the time you're not even sick. They're called sick days Joy, not personal days.

JOY

Will you just stop?... It wouldn't hurt you to use one of your *sick* days and take a *personal* day with me once and a while. Where the hell did your spontaneity go? Let's-

EZRA

I don't have time to be spontaneous.

JOY

Your mind is sooo consumed lately. (*lingering pause*) There's something I've been meaning to tell you to Ezra-

EZRA

My boss let me go / a few months ago.

JOY

What!?!

EZRA

I've been going to stupid interviews that I find in the paper. Damn-it! Why can't there be just one good job for me / in all these listings?

JOY

A few months ago,...you don't have time for spontaneity?!

EZRA

I thought I would have work by now. Hell, I never thought I'd get laid off in the first place. I thought at my age I'd have a great job. So, that we...so that I would not have to spend ALL my time in a fucking cubical and have time to start a family! But no. Instead I've lost almost all our savings paying my part of the bills these last few months, and for what? To come home to you nagging at me all the time about wanting a fucking baby. I can't do this.

JOY

You don't mean that...I don't nag you *all* the time...

EZRA

Joy.

JOY

(In haste)

I'm going out for a bit / I need some fresh air.

EZRA

JOY!

JOY

No! Maybe if that's how you truly feel, it's best if you're not here when I get back.

(Lights Down SR on Ezra and Joy. Lights up Cole and Page.)

CHLOE

I've been meaning to talk to you about something.

PHILIP

Okay?

CHLOE

I dropped out of my Master's program.

PHILIP

You did / what!?!

CHLOE

I need some time to think. I think I'm gonna hit the open road for a bit.

PHILIP

Oh? Because of your newfound obsession with Kerouac.

CHLOE

What's so wrong about wanting to get an RV and explore...I need to find my inner self...my true calling. It's not here getting a master's in Education Admin. That's not what I want anymore. Public, government funded, education, in my opinion, has stopped caring about fulfilling the needs of all the children it serves.

PHILIP

Yeah, and that's why we want to work in Administration. To change that!

CHLOE

Jack says that one should live; travel and have adventures, and that I shouldn't be sorry.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

(Pulls out "On the Road" out of her purse.)

He says that... (finding the page) "things are so hard to figure out when you live from day to day in this feverish and silly world." ... and that's how I feel right now. I'm not going to figure out anything here.

PHILIP

Maybe we should cut you off / for the evening.

CHLOE

I'm not even tipsy...Philip...You should come with me.

PHILIP

You're not being logical. I don't want to travel. I'm just about to start my career, get-

CHLOE

You want to play it safe.

PHILIP

You need to grow up! Stop running around with these hair-brained false ideals.

CHLOE

I happen to enjoy my ideals.

PHILIP

Your ideals are nonsensical.

CHLOE

(gets up)

I don't want to fight...I'm going to head home.

(Phillip rises, trying to stop her.)

NO! you just said my ideals are nonsensical.

(CHLOE Exits. Philip pours another beer. JOY enters and sits at the bar next to Philip, a moment of silence.)

JOY

I didn't expect this place to be so crowded.

PHILIP

It is Friday night.

JOY

Good old Friday night.

PHILIP

(fills a glass and passes it to JOY.)

Here! I need some help with this.

JOY

That's okay-

PHILIP

Nope. No excuses.

JOY

Are you always this indiscriminately friendly?

PHILIP

Nope.

JOY

Thank you, but-

PHILIP

Ahh, you must be more of a wine drinker. Bartender! It's on me, white or red?

JOY

Red...actually, I don't know what I'm in the mood for. I didn't really come in for a drink per se.

PHILIP

Why would you come, here, if not to have a drink?

JOY

For nostalgia?

PHILIP

Oh...

JOY

I'm pregnant.

(Phillip takes back the beer he tried to push on her.)

JOY

That's the first time I've said that out loud. I'm pregnant!

PHILIP

Congratulations!

JOY

(quickly rambling, almost running out breath.)

I've been trying to tell my husband, but no, instead we fight-God-think about the fights we'll have about my maternity leave-he continually makes everything about him, it's always about him. Sorry. Here you are, probably having a really good night, and now I'm here word vomiting all over you.

PHILIP

If only there was a playbook. I bet we'd be running it straight down the field.

JOY

I bet I could write you a playbook.

PHILIP

You a writer?

JOY

NO, accountant.

(Pause)

PHILIP

Question. Why is it that only women are known to be hormonal ticking time bombs?

JOY

I don't know. Why is it that men get to be fertile till death? If you ask me, it really creates a damper on syncing our futuristic timelines.

PHILIP

That's funny. My girlfriend just stormed out because I wanted to, as you say, sync our futuristic timelines...

JOY

What does she want?

PHILLIP

To waste time, buy an RV, and explore the world.

JOY

That sounds awesome!

PHILIP

I don't have time to jump into an RV!

JOY

Why not?

PHILIP

Because I should begin my career, make a name for myself.

JOY

Nonsense.

PHILIP

How is that nonsense?

JOY

Does it have to be one way or the other, why can't you do both?

PHILIP

Sometimes you have to do things you don't want to do.

JOY

Who told you that, your mother?

PHILIP

Well yeah, but-

JOY

You want to know the truth? The truth is, in life you never really know what curveballs you'll be thrown. So, sometimes, we just need to stop and smell the joys of spontaneity!

PHILIP

Don't you mean stop and smell the roses?

JOY

Whatever floats your hat. You know, I would love to jump in my RV and get away right now.

PHILIP

Don't you *need* to work for a living?

JOY

You do realize that most people don't work 365 days a year, right-

PHILIP

Well yeah / no need to get snooty about it.

JOY

And that when you do get a job you're usually eligible for paid, or even unpaid, leave?

PHILIP

Sure.

JOY

Hell. I've been at the same job for so many years that I've accumulated all sorts of paid leave. Don't get me wrong, I'm not telling you not to put in the work. I'm just saying, in my opinion, people shouldn't feel bad about taking some personal days once and a while.

PHILIP

Where would you go?

JOY

What?

PHILIP

In your RV, where would you go?

JOY

Up north to my old cabin for a couple days I guess. Who am I kidding, my RV's been in storage for so long I probably should just sell the old gal.

PHILIP

Or... maybe it's not such a hair-brained idea to dust it off and hit the open road, and like you said, smell the joys of spontaneity a little.

JOY

Don't encourage me.

PHILIP

Why not?

JOY

Because I might just go bananas, jump behind the wheel, and drive into a never-ending highway of bliss.

(They share a laugh.)

PHILIP

How about we stick to "everything in moderation" for now. I really should go.

(Joy nods. Philip, putting some money on the bar, starts to leave. Joy gives him her business card; he reads it.)

PHILIP

Joy, that suits you. I'm Philip. I really hope everything works out.

JOY

If you end up needing an RV call me. Who knows, I might could just loan it to you.

(Philip Exits. Joy looks at her phone, dials, leaves voicemail.)

Hey. Letting you know I'm okay...I saw you called, several times. My phone was on silent... *(EZRA Enters)* ...it's a relief to finally know why you've seemed so distant lately...I need to tell you somethi-

EZRA

JOY! Why didn't you answer? I've been looking all over the place for you.

JOY

EZRA, I'm-

EZRA

No. I'm the one who should be sorry. I didn't mean to tell you like that.

JOY

But you did.

EZRA

I should have been more truthful with you.

JOY

You think?

EZRA

Maybe we could go up to the cabin.

JOY

I'm pregnant.

EZRA

What!? You're going to have a baby?

JOY

We're going to have a baby.

EZRA

We're going to have a baby...Sure...what the hell, like you said, let's fucking be spontaneous! *(with vigor)* I'm going to be a father!

JOY

But earlier tonight...

EZRA

(with greater vigor)

I'm going to have a son!

JOY

Or daughter, / but about earlier.

EZRA

It doesn't matter.

JOY

Oh, it matters. We can't have secrets like this. You're *my* husband Ezra. I do love you but this can't work without-

EZRA

I know.

JOY

Without us being on the same page.

EZRA

I know. *(pause)* Hey, how about I treat you to a virgin Shirley Temple; and a dance?

JOY

Sounds like a good start.

(Music. They Dance. Blackout.)