

The B(r)idesmaid

A full-length play

By Danielle Nicholson

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

SAM, late 20s, an anxious young woman

ALEX, late 20s, an insightful server (a bisexual fairy godmother of sorts)

KATHERINE, late 40s - mid 50s, Samantha's controlling mom; jewelry store saleswoman

RUBY, late 20s, a confident but jaded artist

MARK, early 30s, a sweet but slightly awkward financial advisor

SCENE 1

SCENE: Chez Nous, a fancy French restaurant; there is a table with four chairs.

TIME: early January; three months before the wedding; the wedding tasting.

AT RISE: ALEX is wearing a white shirt with a black tie and black pants. She sets the table with cloth napkins, silverware, and four beautiful name place cards: Samantha, Katherine, Jackson, and Bridget.

SAM enters, wearing a winter coat.

ALEX

Are you here for the Williams party tasting?

SAM

Yes, hi, I'm Samantha - well, most people call me Sam.

ALEX

Well, Sam, I'm Alex. Welcome to Chez Nous.

SAM

Thanks, I think I'm a bit early.

ALEX

No worries, we can keep the food warm as long as it takes.

SAM

Ok, great. Are you the... chef? Caterer? Whatever it is.

Sam takes off her coat and sits.

ALEX

Nope, I'm just your server. Is there anything you'd like to taste while you're waiting?

SAM

Don't I have to wait for the bride and groom to get here?

ALEX

That is traditionally how wedding tastings work, but we always set aside a little something for any early-birds. These tastings can get a bit big, number-wise, and you never know who's gonna arrive when.

SAM

Oh, right, of course. I mean, no, I'm fine, but thank you. I'm the groom's sister, and our mom might be a little upset if I tried any of the food before she got a chance to form an opinion.

ALEX

(dry, discerning)

Sounds like quite an interesting woman.

SAM

Oh, yes.

ALEX

Well, suit yourself.

Alex starts to leave.

SAM

I don't suppose you have anything to drink?

ALEX

I have water, coffee, juice -

SAM

I was thinking something a little stronger.

Alex smiles.

ALEX

Red, white, or rosé?

SAM

Surprise me.

ALEX

Hmm, I think I have just the thing. I'll be right back.

Alex exits.

Sam picks up the "Katherine" place card and sighs. She puts it down.

She fidgets with her shirt.

She picks up a butter knife from the table and looks at her reflection. She frowns.

She tries to flatten her hair.

Alex enters, holding a bottle of wine and a glass.

ALEX

Ok, here we have a nice -

SAM

You don't have to explain, I can't tell the difference.

ALEX

Fair enough.

Alex pours Sam a glass of wine.

SAM

Thanks.

ALEX

My -

Sam immediately downs the glass.

... pleasure.

Sam stares at the glass. Alex stares at Sam.

Alex starts to walk away with the bottle.

SAM

Just one more, I think.

ALEX

Of course.

Alex pours another glass. Sam downs it as well.

Um... I mean, I don't want to overstep -

SAM

Please do.

ALEX

Are you ok?

SAM

Oh yeah, I'm great.

ALEX

Are you sure? Because you seem -

SAM

I'm fine. I've just... got some stuff on my mind.

ALEX

Ok.

An awkward silence.

SAM

Do you wanna sit with me?

ALEX

What?

SAM

Like, while we wait. I mean, if you're not busy. Nobody's here. You might as well sit.

ALEX

Oh, I'm really not supposed to -

SAM

Please? I... I just don't want to sit here in silence.
Waiting.

ALEX

(hesitant)

Ok.

Alex sits in the seat by the place
card "Katherine".

An awkward silence.

SAM

So do you guys cater a lot of weddings?

ALEX

Oh, yeah, lots. It's a pretty popular restaurant. We don't
normally accept orders this last minute, but your mom was...
very insistent.

SAM

I'm sure she was. She's going kind of crazy trying to plan
the whole thing in three months.

ALEX

Well, it's not impossible. I've done about twenty weddings,
between this place and a few jobs, and some of them were
planned in just a few weeks, so with her drive, I think she
can pull it off.

SAM

Twenty weddings? Jesus, you must be sick of them by now.

ALEX

I mean, not really. I love love - when it's right.

SAM

What does that mean?

ALEX

Well, some people get married because they really love each other, but a lot of people do it because they just don't want to be alone. So they just kinda grab whoever's closest and get hitched. And you can definitely feel the difference at the wedding.

SAM

Wow. That's... wow.

ALEX

Oh, god, I'm sorry, that was dark. Forget I said that. Are you excited about your wedding? I mean, not your wedding, of course, you're not getting married, but the wedding you're in? Are you... excited?

SAM

Oh, yeah. I mean, I'm excited for Jackson and Bridget, but not really me. The whole bridesmaid thing is kinda stressing me out, and my mom keeps pestering me about bringing a plus one.

ALEX

You don't have a date?

SAM

No. I mean, not yet. But I'm looking. She keeps asking me who I'm gonna bring, saying it's so important I don't show up alone, because what will people THINK, and I KNOW she's got some GUY lined up for me, and maybe he'd be fine, but maybe not.

ALEX

Do you know any other guys you'd wanna bring?

SAM

Well, that's the thing. I don't think I want to bring...

(sighs)

I want...

ALEX

(perceptive)

To bring someone else?

SAM

(evasive)

I dunno, it's whatever, I'll figure it out.

ALEX

Right. Yeah. I'm sure you will.

SAM

But I'm excited for Jackson. Bridget's so sweet, and definitely way too gorgeous for him.

ALEX

Ah, so you think he's marrying up?

SAM

Absolutely. I went with her to pick out her dress and she looked like a damn princess. I can't even imagine what it's like to be that graceful. I am not looking forward to standing next to that goddess in whatever crazy bridesmaid dress my mom picks out.

ALEX

Hey, who knows, you might just show her up.

SAM

Oh, no, I'll be lucky if I don't look like a foot. But we haven't picked the bridesmaid dresses yet, so who knows. Maybe it'll be decent. You're the wedding expert; tell me, what are my chances?

ALEX

Well, from what I've seen in my extensive wedding experience, there are tons of pretty bridesmaid dresses out there... but there's also tons of totally hideous ones.

They laugh.

SAM

Sounds about right. So I'm screwed?

ALEX

I mean, I wouldn't say totally screwed.

SAM

Thanks.

ALEX

I think it's more about the girl in the dress than the dress itself, you know? So in your case, you're gonna look beautiful no matter what you wear.

SAM

(flustered)

Jeez. Thanks.

They share A Look.

Actually... maybe I could get your advice on something.

ALEX

Shoot.

SAM

I've been thinking of telling my mom that instead of, uh -
(trying to communicate queer
subtext)

- wearing the dress she picks out for me, I want to... "wear a suit" to the wedding.

ALEX

(picking up the subtext)

Oh?

SAM

Yeah, but I'm not sure how to tell her. It's a bit... unexpected. I mean, she's never seen me... in a suit.

ALEX

You don't think she'll approve?

SAM

Well, I know she'll freak out if anything doesn't fit her idea of the perfect wedding, which means perfect bridesmaids in perfect dresses, with their perfect male dates, so... yeah, I guess I'm just worried she'll be upset.

That I'm wearing a suit. Instead of a dress. In front of everyone we know. I dunno, what would you do?

ALEX

I mean, I don't know all the details of your situation, but based on what you've told me, I would just tell her.

SAM

Really?

ALEX

Yeah. You don't want to wear a dress, right?

SAM

(more queer subtext)

It's not that I don't like dresses! I do! I mean, I've only ever... worn dresses, you know, growing up. Like, to school dances, prom, all of that. Because that's what was expected of me. But everyone I know is gonna be at this wedding, and this just seems like the perfect chance to finally... try something different. Even if it's against tradition.

ALEX

It's the 21st century, suits aren't that big of a deal. Women wear them all the time!

SAM

Exactly! That's what I'm thinking! Ok, so I should just tell her what I want. I'm gonna do that.

ALEX

Good for you! But seriously, just to double check, we're not actually talking about suits and dresses, right?

SAM

Right.

ALEX

Ok, just checking.

Beat.

SAM

Can I have another glass of wine?

ALEX

Of course.

Alex pours Sam a glass of wine.

They sit in silence for a moment.

SAM

It's almost time, isn't it?

ALEX

Well, your appointment technically starts at 2, but your mom booked this room for the next three hours, so it's no rush.

SAM

Three hours? God, kill me now.

ALEX

Oh, it won't be that bad.

SAM

Wanna bet?

KATHERINE enters.

KATHERINE

Samantha!

SAM

Mom, hey!

KATHERINE

Oh, you would not believe the kind of day I've had!

SAM

What happened?

KATHERINE

Well, I've been trying to tell my boss about a little workplace problem I'm having with this new salesgirl, Jacqueline - she's always giving me sass, and she keeps stealing customers from me, because she's a newlywed, so she thinks she's some expert on love, so everyone wants her advice on which ring to get - but my boss keeps ignoring me and saying I just need to work harder! Me, work harder! So today, ONCE AGAIN, Jacqueline tried to steal my customers when my back was turned, telling them how she just knew their love was gonna last forever, so they should REALLY invest in their ring, and there was no way I was gonna lose that commission, so I finally stood up for myself and said, "Jacqueline, you have no idea what you're talking about, so fuck off" -

SAM

Mom!

KATHERINE

- and the whole thing got blown out of proportion, and now I look like the bad guy, and they're saying they want to discipline ME!

SAM

That's crazy.

KATHERINE

I know!

Katherine notices Alex.

Who are you?

Alex stands up quickly.

ALEX

I'm Alex - your server. You must be Mrs. Williams.

KATHERINE

Ms. Williams.

ALEX

Oh, I'm sorry -

KATHERINE

But Katherine is fine.

Katherine sits where Alex was just sitting.

SAM

Are you ok -

KATHERINE

It's fine, I'm fine! But enough about me. How's your love life?

SAM

It's... fine.

KATHERINE

Any cute new guys?

SAM

Nope.

KATHERINE

You know, I was just talking with my friend Maxine, and she was telling me about her daughter, you met her at Maxie's Christmas party last year, you remember?

SAM

No.

KATHERINE

The one with the hair?

SAM

No.

KATHERINE

Oh, you remember! The hair? It was so... oh, you know.

SAM

I have no idea who you're talking about.

KATHERINE

Well, anyways, Maxie's daughter - oh, her name's Jessica - so Jessica was seeing this one guy, going on lots of dates, and she kept telling her mom all these wonderful things about him. You know, great job, great apartment, great hair - he sounded perfect.

SAM

But I'm guessing he wasn't?

KATHERINE

Exactly! Guess what he was?

SAM

A serial killer?

KATHERINE

What? Jesus, Samantha, no! Why would you say that?

SAM

I don't know, Mom. What was he?

KATHERINE

A drag queen!

Beat.

SAM

What?

KATHERINE

A drag queen!

SAM

No, I know, I heard you the first time. But... so she was dating a drag queen?

KATHERINE

Yes! Of course, she didn't know at first - he seemed so normal - until one night, he told her he wanted to show her something really special, something very important to him, and guess where he took her?

SAM

A drag show?

KATHERINE

Exactly! And guess who was performing in it?

SAM

Him?

KATHERINE

Yes! Isn't that crazy?

SAM

I mean, it actually sounds kind of cool. Did she - Jessica - did she like it?

KATHERINE

Oh, that's beside the point. As soon as Maxie found out, she said he was no longer welcome at her holiday parties.

SAM

What, why?

KATHERINE

Well, she's very image-conscious, you know. Imagine what people would say!

SAM

It's not like he was planning to show up to her parties in drag.

KATHERINE

But what if he did?!

SAM

Who cares? Those parties are boring as hell, maybe Maxine needs a drag queen to spice things up.

KATHERINE

Samantha, that's not very polite.

SAM

So?

KATHERINE

I thought I raised you to respect your elders.

SAM

Not when they're being pointlessly bigoted.

KATHERINE

Oh, come on, Maxine is not a bigot. She's just... very particular about her social circle.

SAM

Well, what about you?

KATHERINE

What do you mean?

SAM

What if I started dating a drag queen? Could I bring him to your holiday parties?

KATHERINE

(dry)

Oh, ha ha, you're hilarious.

SAM

I'm serious. What if I brought a drag queen to your Christmas party, in full drag, and paraded him around your house in front of all your friends and coworkers?

Beat.

KATHERINE

In full drag?

SAM

In full drag.

KATHERINE

Well, I suppose I... I don't know. But isn't that just a funny story, though?

SAM

Sure.

KATHERINE

(to Alex)

Isn't that funny?

ALEX

Oh. Uh, yeah. Drag queens. They're... fun.

Beat.

SAM

So, Mom -

KATHERINE

Oh, yes, we were talking about your love life! How's that going?

SAM

I told you, it's -

KATHERINE

I know you haven't exactly been putting yourself out there lately, but if you ever need any help in that department, I have quite a few friends with very nice sons, one in particular -

SAM

Mom, I told you, I don't need you setting me up with anyone.

KATHERINE

Ok, ok, I'm just saying -

SAM

You're always just saying.

KATHERINE

Well, what do you want me to do? Just watch as you let your life pass by you? Your biological clock is ticking, Samantha. If you want to have kids -

SAM

Mom!

KATHERINE

I'm just saying -

SAM

Stop just saying!

KATHERINE

Ok! I'll just sit here, in silence, until Jackson and Bridget come.

SAM

Mom -

KATHERINE

No, you wanted silence, you're getting silence.

Sam sighs.

An awkward silence.

KATHERINE

(to Alex)

Do you have anything to drink?

ALEX

Yes, we have a variety of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks. May I recommend -

KATHERINE

Pinot Grigio please, and don't be stingy.

ALEX

(just a hint of sass)

Ok, then.

Alex exits.

Sam fidgets.

KATHERINE

Why are you fidgeting so much?

SAM

I'm not!

KATHERINE

Yes, you are.

SAM

I'm not.

KATHERINE

If you say so...

Beat.

Do you think she's taking a bit long?

SAM

She's literally been gone five seconds.

KATHERINE

No need to take that tone.

SAM

There's no tone.

KATHERINE

If you don't want to talk -

SAM

Actually, I did have something I wanted to talk to you about.

KATHERINE

What?

SAM

I... I want...

KATHERINE

Speak up, I can't hear you.

SAM

(losing her nerve)

I want to... wear a suit. To the wedding.

KATHERINE

A suit?

SAM

(sighing)

Yeah.

KATHERINE

That's ridiculous. You're a bridesmaid - you have to match the other bridesmaids.

SAM

I know, I just thought -

KATHERINE

They're all going to be wearing dresses. Beautiful dresses, I might add, that I'm going to be picking out.

SAM

It's not like I hate dresses - I don't. I just thought -

KATHERINE

Then it's settled.

SAM

Ok.

Alex enters, carrying a bottle of wine.

Alex pours Katherine a glass.

KATHERINE

Thank you.

ALEX

My pleasure.

Katherine downs the glass
immediately.

KATHERINE

Another?

Beat.

Alex and Sam share a look.

Alex pours Katherine another glass.

Katherine downs it as well.

SAM

You might want to take it easy, Jackson and Bridget aren't
even here yet.

KATHERINE

Oh, it's fine.

SAM

Fine.

KATHERINE

(to Alex)

What did you say your name was?

ALEX

Alex.

KATHERINE

Is that short for Alexis?

ALEX

Nope.

KATHERINE

Alexandra?

ALEX

Just Alex.

KATHERINE

Well, Alex, have you ever been a bridesmaid?

ALEX

No, I haven't had the pleasure.

KATHERINE

Have you ever been to a wedding?

ALEX

Yes, quite a few.

KATHERINE

Have you ever seen a bridesmaid wear a suit?

ALEX

Not in person, no. But -

KATHERINE

Exactly, you just don't see it!

ALEX

Well, there are actually plenty of nontraditional weddings -

KATHERINE

I'm not talking about those eccentric types trying to make a social statement, I'm talking about real people, everyday people, with normal weddings.

SAM

Can we just drop it?

KATHERINE

I'm just saying -

SAM

Mom. Please, just drop it.

KATHERINE

Ok. Was that all you wanted to talk about?

SAM

Yeah.

KATHERINE

Well, then I have some wonderful news. I have found you the perfect date to take to the wedding!

SAM

What?

ALEX

I'll go check on the food.

SAM

Wait, no, don't go -

Alex exits.

KATHERINE

His name is Mark, he's my boss's son, and he's just a gem!

SAM

Your boss's son?

KATHERINE

Yes. But don't you get it - a gem? Because I work at a jewelry store? I made a pun.

SAM

I get it, Mom. But he's your boss's son?

KATHERINE

Yes, I've said that. What's your point?

SAM

Isn't that weird?

KATHERINE

Why would that be weird?

SAM

I don't know, it just is. Aren't you kind of in trouble at work right now?

KATHERINE

That's not important. Listen, he's a Harvard grad, he's got a good credit score -

SAM

You know his credit score?

KATHERINE

Well, not the specific number, but my boss is constantly bragging about the new house her son just bought - it's got FIVE bedrooms! Plus he's a financial advisor, so altogether I figure he must have a good credit score, so you know he'll be stable in the money department -

SAM

Mom!

KATHERINE

You have to think about your future! And money is a part of that. A man like Mark could make a very nice husband -

SAM

I thought we were just going on a date, now he's my husband?

KATHERINE

Oh, and he's got fantastic bone structure, so you'll have gorgeous children!

SAM

I don't even know this person and you're already imagining our children?

KATHERINE

Of course, you know how I like to plan ahead.

SAM

Enough! Please, just stop already.

KATHERINE

I don't know why you're so upset. I'm just trying to help you.

SAM

Well, you're not helping. I don't want to bring this Mark guy to Jackson's wedding.

KATHERINE

Why not?

SAM

Because!

KATHERINE

Because what? Full sentences, Samantha.

SAM

Because I... I want to bring my own date!

KATHERINE

Who?

SAM

Well, I don't have one yet, but I'm looking!

KATHERINE

Samantha, you're always making things difficult. Just take Mark, he's already agreed to come to the wedding, and he'll be a wonderful date!

SAM

Don't tell me you already invited him.

KATHERINE

Yes, I did! We met last weekend at the company New Year's party, and he didn't seem like the type who got out much, so I insisted he come.

SAM

You just met him?

KATHERINE

Well, yes, but -

SAM

Jesus!

KATHERINE

Why can't you just do this one thing for me?

SAM

Because I want to bring a woman!

Beat.

KATHERINE

What did you say?

SAM

I... I want to bring a woman.

KATHERINE

Like a friend?

SAM

No. As my date.

KATHERINE

I don't understand.

SAM

I want to bring a woman as my date, like in the romantic sense.

KATHERINE

You're a lesbian?

SAM

No.

KATHERINE

But you just said -

SAM

I'm bisexual, Mom.

KATHERINE

Are you sure?

SAM

Yes. I'm sure.

KATHERINE

Because I know some people go through a phase in college, and I know it's a bit later for you, but maybe -

SAM

It's not a phase.

KATHERINE

Oh. Well. Ok. That's fine.

SAM

Really?

KATHERINE

Why wouldn't it be fine?

SAM

Because, Mom! You're...

KATHERINE

I'm what?

SAM

Nothing. I just... So it's fine?

KATHERINE

I am completely neutral about the subject.

SAM

What does that mean?

KATHERINE

I don't have a problem with your lifestyle.

SAM

My lifestyle? Jesus, Mom, it's not like I'm into hard drugs.

KATHERINE

Just women.

SAM

Yes! I mean, not JUST women - but yes.

KATHERINE

And that's fine.

SAM

Are you absolutely sure?

KATHERINE

Yes. I mean, the bisexual part. Not bringing a woman to the wedding.

SAM

Excuse me?

KATHERINE

I still think Mark is the best choice.

SAM

Mom!

KATHERINE

What?

SAM

Are you even listening to me?

KATHERINE

I am, sweetie! But I just want what's best for you! It's fine to think the occasional woman is beautiful, but actually having a long-term relationship -

SAM

What's wrong with that?

KATHERINE

Nothing! Nothing's wrong with it, it's just... I mean, do you really think a woman will make you happy?

SAM

Why wouldn't she?

KATHERINE

What about children?

SAM

I don't know. We'd adopt. Or maybe foster, who knows?

KATHERINE

Well, who would provide for you?

SAM

We both would. We'd both have jobs.

KATHERINE

How do you expect to raise children with both people working full-time?

SAM

Everyone else is doing it.

KATHERINE

Nobody is doing it. Nobody that's happy, that is.

SAM

What about you? You raised Jackson and me by yourself.

KATHERINE

Exactly.

SAM

So you're saying -

KATHERINE

I just want you to be happy! I'm only thinking about your future, sweetie.

SAM

It's just a date. I'm not getting married.

KATHERINE

Exactly. Jackson's younger than you -

SAM

By like two minutes!

KATHERINE

- and he's settling down with a beautiful woman. When are you planning on doing that?

SAM

Settling down with a beautiful woman?

KATHERINE

Oh, you know what I meant. Bridget's condition isn't my ideal timing, of course, but they're going to have the perfect wedding in front of all our friends and family before she starts showing, and then afterwards, they'll have a head start on their family. Don't you want all of that?

SAM

Look, you don't have to worry, I'm sure eventually I'll find the perfect person and get married and somehow acquire all kinds of wonderful grandchildren for you to spoil. It's not like I plan to die alone.

KATHERINE

Then why not just go with Mark? It could be the start of a beautiful, lifelong relationship.

SAM

Because I want to try something different.

KATHERINE

A woman.

SAM

Yes.

KATHERINE

Any woman?

SAM

Well, not ANY woman. But... yeah. Basically.

KATHERINE

The wedding is coming up quickly. You really think you can convince a complete stranger to come with you - without the help of your own mother's social connections?

SAM

Yes.

KATHERINE

With your social skills?

SAM

What is wrong with my social skills?

KATHERINE

I'm just saying -

SAM

I can't believe you, you really have that little faith in me?

KATHERINE

I never said -

SAM

Do I seem that unlovable to you?

KATHERINE

No!

SAM

Then what's the problem? Why can't you just give me a chance to do something for myself even though it doesn't fit into your perfect plan for my life?

KATHERINE

Ok, ok! Fine. Bring a woman.

Beat.

SAM

Really?

KATHERINE

Yes.

SAM

I can bring a woman to Jackson's wedding?

KATHERINE

If you can find one.

SAM

Mom -

KATHERINE

I meant that to sound encouraging.

SAM

Well, it didn't.

KATHERINE

I'm trying here.

SAM

Are you?

KATHERINE

Yes! Bring a woman, bring two women, bring a whole army of them!

SAM

Now you're the one taking the tone.

KATHERINE

I'm trying to be supportive! I'm still your mother, you know. I've been here your whole life! I'm the one who stayed - the one who cooked and cleaned and made sure you had a good childhood.

SAM

I know!

KATHERINE

So stop treating me like I'm the villain here! I'm sick of everyone making me the bad guy.

Beat.

SAM

I'm sorry.

KATHERINE

I just want this wedding to be perfect. Jackson deserves it.

SAM

I know. So... You're really ok with this?

KATHERINE

I said yes.

SAM

Ok.

KATHERINE

On one condition.

SAM

What?

KATHERINE

If you can't find a woman - meaning a legitimate date, not just some friend of yours - to bring by the week before the wedding, you have to bring Mark.

SAM

I really don't think -

KATHERINE

Just - just promise me this one thing, ok?

SAM

Ok.

A silence.

Alex enters.

ALEX

So... shall we get started with the tasting?

The restaurant fades into a café.

SCENE 2

SCENE: a café; there is a table and two chairs.

TIME: two months before the wedding; the first date with a girl.

Sam is sitting at the table.

RUBY enters, looking around.

Sam stands.

SAM

You're Ruby, right?

RUBY

The one and only.

SAM

Ok, cool. I mean, of course you are, I know what you look like from your pictures - not that I was stalking you or anything, I just saw your profile and your social media, and -

RUBY

Are you ok?

SAM

I am, I am! I mean, this is my first real date with a girl, so that's a thing, but yes, I'm good. I'm Sam.

Ruby sits.

RUBY

Yeah, I know.

Sam sits.

SAM

Right, yes. Of course.

RUBY

This is a cute little café.

SAM

I'm glad you think so! I've never been here.

RUBY

Oh?

SAM

But I thought it would be nice. For a date.

RUBY

Well. It definitely seems nice.

SAM

Yep.

Alex enters in a green apron,
holding a notepad and pen.

ALEX

What can I get you two to drink?

SAM

You again!

ALEX

Oh, I remember you! Last month, the wedding tasting at Chez
Nous, right?

SAM

Yeah. What are you doing here?

ALEX

I told you, I work a lot of jobs. Speaking of which, what can
I get you guys? Our Valentine's Day special includes two
slices of cake for the price of one!

RUBY

Just a chai latte, please.

SAM

Uh, same. Thanks.

ALEX

(playfully)

No wine?

SAM

(embarrassed)

Nope, the latte's fine.

ALEX

Two chai lattes, coming right up.

Alex exits.

RUBY

So...?

SAM

What?

RUBY

Tell me about yourself.

SAM

Oh. Um. What do you want to know?

RUBY

Anything. What do you like to do?

SAM

I read a lot.

RUBY

You wanna expand on that? What do you like to read?

SAM

Just, you know, novels and stuff.

RUBY

Do you want me to go instead?

SAM

Yes, please.

RUBY

Ok. I'm an artist. I like to paint and sculpt, but my passion is figure drawing.

SAM

Like, naked people?

RUBY

Yes, like naked people. Specifically women. The female body is fascinating to me.

SAM

Oh.

RUBY

I've also done a few experimental performance art pieces, and I do a bit of modelling every now and then. But generally, I pay the bills with graphic design work. What about you?

SAM

Next to all that, I feel kinda uninteresting. You probably don't want to hear me talk about myself.

RUBY

We're on a date. That's what we're supposed to do.

SAM

Good point. Ok, so... I work as an administrative assistant in an office, nothing fun there. Let's see, what else? Oh, I'm a twin!

RUBY

Hot. So there's two of you running around?

SAM

Well, we're fraternal, not identical. My twin's a guy - Jackson.

RUBY

Less hot.

SAM

Yeah. He's a nice guy, though. He's actually getting married in two months. So, you know, if you wanna go to a wedding together -

RUBY

Let's see how this date goes first.

SAM

Right, right, good plan. Ok, um... oh, like I said, I've always liked to read. My mom has this huge collection of romance novels, so when I was a kid, I used to steal them from her room so I could read them while she was asleep.

RUBY

Ah, so steamy bodice-rippers were the cause of your sexual awakening?

SAM

I guess so.

RUBY

I found my brother's collection of Playboys when I was 7.

SAM

Good lord. That must have been... traumatizing.

RUBY

Meh. I think that's when I knew I was gay.

SAM

You've known since you were 7?

RUBY

Of course. When did you know?

SAM

Not until pretty recently.

RUBY

Well, you're bi, right? So it makes sense that it would take you longer.

I mean, it's easy to try and ignore girls if everyone's telling you to look at guys and they don't totally repulse you.

SAM

Right. So, uh... what about your parents? What are they like?

RUBY

I haven't talked to them in like, ten years.

SAM

Really?

RUBY

Oh yeah, I cut ties with them a long time ago.

SAM

You just cut them out of your life, completely?

RUBY

Totally! I mean, all they ever did was scream at me, so I figured what's the point in keeping them around?

SAM

It's just... wow. My mom and I have a tense relationship, but I never thought about actually cutting her out of my life.

RUBY

It's way easier than you think. And I mean, everyone does it their own way, but if you don't at least have some boundaries with your parents, they'll never stop trying to control you, you know?

SAM

Oh, yeah, I get that. My mom definitely tries to control me.

RUBY

You know, my parents used to make me do to church stuff like five times a week, and I was never allowed to have short hair or get any piercings, and I couldn't even hang out with my friends outside of normal school hours. In tenth grade, I tried to join a book club - like, literally the tamest social activity I could find - and they grounded me for two months!

SAM

God, that sounds intense.

RUBY

It was insane. But my brother, he could do whatever he wanted! It used to make me so mad.

SAM

Same! My mom spends all her time criticizing my life choices, even though I never actually do anything wrong, but my brother went and knocked up his first serious girlfriend, and now she's throwing him a huge wedding and treating him like he's her perfect angel child! It's so unfair.

RUBY

Guys have it so much easier. Parents definitely set the bar way lower for them.

SAM

Right? When I came out to my mom, I just wanted her to support me, but instead, she gave me this ridiculous ultimatum to find a date before my brother's wedding or I have to take this guy she knows.

RUBY

That's insane!

SAM

I know! She's so obsessed with me getting married and having kids.

RUBY

Man, fuck that. I'm so sick of shitty parents pushing their aggressive hetero agenda, you know?

SAM

Oh wow - I mean, yeah she's a lot, but that seems a bit harsh.

RUBY

Sometimes you have to be harsh. Parents are not perfect, even though they try to be. Sometimes they're just a piece of shit.

SAM

Ok, wait, my mom's not a piece of shit. She's definitely frustrating to deal with, but I can't just straight up insult her like that.

RUBY

I know it seems like an extreme thing to say about your parents, but sometimes you just gotta say it so you can finally free yourself from the years of internalized shame that they gave you.

SAM

I don't have internalized shame.

RUBY

Dude, we all do. That's like literally a building block of queer culture, at least for now.

SAM

(raising her voice a bit)

I don't!

RUBY

It's ok to admit it. For most of us, our parents fucked us up with all their shitty parenting. You just gotta admit it and move on. It's not that hard. You just say, "My mom is a piece of shit."

SAM

No!

RUBY

Look, I'm just saying -

SAM

Just shut up!

Beat.

RUBY

(sincere)

Ok, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to make you upset.

SAM

(cooling down)

I know. I didn't mean to snap.

RUBY

Look, clearly we are in different headspaces about, well, everything, I think. I've got my own baggage, and you've obviously got some stuff with your mom that you need to figure out -

Ruby stands.

SAM

Wait, don't go! I'm sorry, I didn't mean for things to get weird. Look, let's just order a nice dessert or something! Desserts are good!

RUBY

Right. You do that... and I'll be right back. Just gonna head to the ladies' room for a minute.

SAM

Ok -

Ruby exits.

Sam fidgets.

Moments pass. Sam looks around.

Alex enters, carrying a single cup.

ALEX

Sorry for the wait. Here's your latte.

SAM

Thanks. Have you seen my date? She's been gone a while.

ALEX

I think I saw her leave.

SAM

Oh my god. I can't believe I ruined my first date with a girl. I mean, I just snapped at her! I've never been so embarrassed in my life.

ALEX

Do you want me to sit with you for a minute?

SAM

Don't you have to work?

ALEX

I'm due for a break, it's fine.

SAM

Then yes, please.

Alex sits.

ALEX

I'm sorry things didn't work out like you expected.

SAM

I've never had much luck with dating, but god, this is the first time I've ever actually scared anyone off during the date.

ALEX

I know how you feel. I've gone on tons of dates with different guys and girls, and none of them ever really stuck, you know?

SAM

Wait, guys and girls? So you're bi?

ALEX

Oh yeah, totally! How do you think I understood your suits and dresses metaphor?

SAM

I guess I should have figured that out. I'm just so new to all this, I don't really know a bunch of other queer people.

ALEX

I feel that. You know, my first date with a girl - I was in college - I got so nervous I had to go to the bathroom to throw up THREE TIMES. When I came back the third time, she was gone.

SAM

God. Don't hate me, but that actually makes me feel better.

They laugh.

ALEX

Well, I'm glad someone can benefit from my pain. Look, dating as a bisexual is like a completely different experience than it is for anyone else. There's like a million weird little nuances that just make it so confusing and awkward. So if finding a partner is that important to you, then absolutely go for it. But honestly, my best advice is to first look inward and figure out what you actually want.

SAM

That sounds like a lot of work.

ALEX

It is. But you gotta do it if you wanna be happy in the long run.

SAM

Maybe you're right. But you know what I think would make me happy right NOW?

ALEX

What?

SAM

Cake.

Alex laughs.

ALEX

You want the Valentine's Day special? Two slices for the price of one.

SAM

How could I refuse?

ALEX

Coming right up.

Alex exits.

The café fades into a dressing room.

SCENE 3

SCENE: a dressing room; there are two chairs and a large mirror.

TIME: one month before the wedding; dress shopping.

Katherine enters, wearing a dark purple dress.

She examines herself in the mirror, genuinely smiling at her reflection.

SAM

(offstage)

How is it?

KATHERINE

Well, actually, I really -

Katherine looks at the price tag.
Her face falls.

KATHERINE

- oh. Um... no, I don't like it.

SAM

(offstage)

What? You were dying to try it on!

KATHERINE

I know, I know, but it's too... Big.

She looks at her reflection. It's
the perfect dress.

SAM

(offstage)

Really? We can go grab another size -

KATHERINE

No, no, I don't like the look of it either. It's just not my
taste.

SAM

(offstage)

Ok, if you're sure.

Katherine takes off the dress and
drapes it across one of the chairs.
She is wearing a slip underneath.

KATHERINE

Enough about me. You come out here, I want to see you in that
yellow one I picked out!

SAM

(offstage)

It doesn't fit!

KATHERINE

Let me help you.

SAM

(offstage)

No, really, it's way too tight. I'll just try on a different
one.

Katherine sits.

KATHERINE

Suit yourself.

(partly to Sam, partly to
herself)

You know, growing up, my mother and I used to buy new dresses for weddings all the time. My father always thought it was silly, but he humored her. A new one, for every wedding we went to! Sometimes I think she wanted to upstage the bride. She took me to so many weddings - friends, family, coworkers; she just loved them. And they were always so much fun. The food, the dancing, the ceremony, it was all so beautiful, every time.

(Beat.)

And I used to dream about what my wedding would be like. I must have filled dozens of scrapbooks with collages of floral arrangements and different themes of décor - you know, sandy beaches, old castles, enchanted forests - one was even Christmas themed, in case of a winter wedding. And of course, my favorite collages to make were for the dress. I used to cut the prettiest ones out of Mother's magazines - but she never got mad. She actually encouraged me. She used to say, you have to plan these things in advance if you want them to be perfect. The man's not going to help you with the planning, so you have to do it from a young age to make up for that. So I did.

(to herself)

And then I never got to have my own. Your dad never even proposed. He didn't even give me that.

(loudly)

How's that dress coming?

Sam enters, wearing a puffy pink dress.

KATHERINE

It's beautiful!

Katherine guides Sam to the mirror.
They look at their reflection.
Katherine smiles at it.

SAM

I look like a Peep.

KATHERINE

So? Peeps are delicious.

A quiet moment passes.

SAM

Mom?

KATHERINE

Hmm?

SAM

Do you remember when I was little, how we use to play dress up together?

KATHERINE

Of course I do.

SAM

I was always the princess and you were my loyal lady's maid. Why did we always stick with those roles?

KATHERINE

What do you mean?

SAM

Well, didn't you ever want to be a queen or something? Something different?

KATHERINE

I don't think you realize how much time it took me to make your fancy dresses, that's why you only got them for your birthday. I certainly wasn't going to make one for myself.

SAM

They were really pretty, those dresses.

KATHERINE

They were hideous. The sound of a sewing machine stills haunts me to this day.

They laugh.

But that is why we are here buying our dresses now. I want this wedding to be perfect. We can't show up looking like trash.

SAM

But Peep-couture is acceptable?

KATHERINE

Well, apparently three months notice wasn't enough for a proper dress shop to make our dresses. So here we are, one month away, shopping off-the-rack.

SAM

You're the one who wanted to rush things.

KATHERINE

I have to! Bridget is a lovely girl, but why couldn't Jackson have waited just a little longer?

SAM

I don't think he was trying to knock her up.

KATHERINE

But he did. Hence the rush.

SAM

Maybe it wouldn't be the worst thing in the world if they got married after she started showing.

KATHERINE

Samantha, just trust me on this one. Everything will be easier for them if we just get this done as soon as possible.

SAM

If you say so.

KATHERINE

You know, I feel like you've never told me about your dream wedding.

SAM

What do you mean? We've talked about it a million times.

KATHERINE

I know we've talked ABOUT weddings, but you haven't told me what YOU want. Not really, not now that you're actually old enough to really have one.

SAM

Oh. I guess not.

KATHERINE

So what do you want?

SAM

Can't we just focus on getting through Jackson's?

KATHERINE

You know I like to plan ahead, so just tell me: what do you want your perfect wedding to be like?

SAM

I don't know! There's a lot to think about.

KATHERINE

Let's start with the color scheme, that's easy.

SAM

Ok. Maybe dark blue and green -

KATHERINE

OR lavender and lemon!

SAM

It's a color scheme, not a dessert.

KATHERINE

Use your imagination! Come on, it's your PERFECT wedding. Think specifics.

SAM

Fine. It'd be... literature-themed.

KATHERINE

Really?

SAM

Yeah. Like, we'd all dress up as our favorite book characters, and there'd be lots of book decorations, or something like that.

KATHERINE

Maybe the cake would be shaped like a stack of books. And the invitations could double as book marks!

SAM

Exactly!

KATHERINE

See? That sounds wonderful.

SAM

It does.

KATHERINE

All the more reason to start looking for a groom now.

SAM

Or a bride.

KATHERINE

Oh. Yes. Or a... yes.

(Beat.)

So, have you found a date to bring to the wedding yet?

SAM

No, not yet.

KATHERINE

Well, I know Mark is still available. I called to tell him you weren't sure if you could come to the wedding, because you might be travelling for work, so he doesn't think you're blowing him off.

SAM

I'm not blowing him off. You invited him.

KATHERINE

Either way, it's rude to leave him in limbo.

SAM

That's not my fault! How would your boss feel about you trying to set me up with her son?

KATHERINE

That's irrelevant.

SAM

I'm just saying, it's weird.

KATHERINE

So you've said before. But I don't think it is. She's constantly flaunting her son's success, obviously peacocking on his behalf. I can't go a day at work without hearing about how excited she is to help him decorate his FIVE bedrooms. FIVE, Samantha.

SAM

Yes, I get it, he has five bedrooms.

KATHERINE

She even said one could eventually be a NURSERY. She's obviously hoping he'll find a wife and start a family soon, so if anything, I'm doing my boss a favor. I should get a promotion!

SAM

Wait, speaking of your work, what's actually going on with that? I know you said you were being disciplined or something? Are you still -

KATHERINE

Don't try to change the subject.

SAM

I'm not, I just remember how you made it sound like such a big deal. I'm genuinely concerned for you.

KATHERINE

And I'M genuinely concerned for your ovaries.

SAM

Good lord.

KATHERINE

Things at work are fine. Jacqueline and I are getting along swimmingly. Everything is fine. Now back to Mark. The wedding is coming up in a month and you've yet to find a date, and you promised me that if that happened, you would -

SAM

Hey, we agreed on a week before the wedding, not a month.

KATHERINE

Yes, technically, but you're almost out of time.

SAM

I can't just bring a guy that I've never met.

KATHERINE

Then go on a proper date with him beforehand.

SAM

I don't have time for more dates, between work and -

KATHERINE

And what? Your dates with women? How's that going?

SAM

It's fine.

KATHERINE

Is it?

SAM

Yes. So far, I have gone on several very successful dates with women.

KATHERINE

Yet you still have no one to bring.

SAM

Well, god, I just came out, I'm still figuring out this whole dating thing! It's a big thing to ask someone to come to a wedding with you, especially when you've just met them.

KATHERINE

That's what I told you.

SAM

Your added pressure isn't helping any.

KATHERINE

Why won't you let me take care of this for you?

SAM

Why is this such a big deal to you?

KATHERINE

Samantha, please! Just go on one date with Mark! That's all I'm asking. You might actually like him. And if you hate him, fine. But just try, for me.

Beat.

SAM

Fine. One date.

KATHERINE

Thank you. Now, I don't think all the other bridesmaids will look very good in that dress, and you all have to match each other. So, shall we try on some more?

SAM

Anything to get me out of this thing.

KATHERINE

Great! I'll be right back. I'm thinking we need more lace.

Katherine exits.

Sam sits. She sighs.

SAM

Fuck.

[If there was an act break, it would be here.]

The dressing room fades into a restaurant.

SCENE 4

SCENE: a restaurant; there is a table and two chairs.

TIME: two weeks before the wedding; the date with Mark.

Sam enters, wearing a dress. She tugs at it uncomfortably.

She stands by the table, looking around.

Alex enters in a red apron, holding a notepad and pen.

Alex! SAM

Sam! ALEX

Third job? SAM

Yep. ALEX

Of course. So you'll get to witness yet another disaster in my dating life. SAM

Oh come on, have some hope! It could go well! ALEX

Doubtful. SAM

Sam sits.

ALEX

Do you want me to get you anything to drink while you wait?

SAM

Wine.

ALEX

What kind?

SAM

Your cheapest, I don't care.

ALEX

Gotcha. Will do.

Alex exits.

MARK enters, wearing khakis and a sweater vest over a button down.

MARK

Samantha?

SAM

It's actually - I mean, Samantha is fine. So yes, that's me.

MARK

Hi, sorry, sorry, I didn't mean to be late!

Mark sits.

SAM

It's fine.

MARK

No, really, I tried to be on time. I just couldn't figure out what to wear.

SAM

Seriously?

MARK

Well, yeah. I'm a bit rusty, this is my first date in a while.

SAM

Yeah, I heard you don't get out much.

MARK

Oh.

SAM

Shit, I mean - sorry. That came out bad.

MARK

It's ok. It's true. I'm kind of a homebody.

SAM

That's cool.

MARK

It's not, but thanks.

SAM

No, really, it's fine. I don't get out much either. I mean, lately I've been going on a bunch of dates with - uh, people - but none of those have really worked out, so yeah. Other than that, I'm a homebody too. I mean, if I had a house with five bedrooms, I know I'd wanna stay home all day every day.

MARK

You know how many bedrooms my house has?

SAM

What? Oh. Um. Yeah. I guess my mom must have... mentioned it.

MARK

Huh. Right. So, uh... what are you?

SAM

What do you mean?

MARK

Like, what do you do for money? Not that I care about the money part. I mean - money is important, it's the foundation of a stable and thus happy life, but it's not THE most important thing. It's just that I'm a financial advisor so I think about it a lot - not that I obsess over it or anything! God, you know what, I'm just gonna stop talking now.

SAM

Oh, you mean my job! I'm an administrative assistant.

MARK

That's nice.

SAM

It's boring. But being a financial advisor must be... interesting.

MARK

I think it is. But it's not all numbers with me! I have other hobbies.

SAM

Like what?

MARK

I garden.

SAM

You what?

MARK

Wait, that doesn't sound very manly. I, uh, plant things. In the ground. You know, for sustenance. Like a... manly farmer.

SAM

So you grow vegetables?

MARK

Yes.

SAM

Wow.

MARK

I know, it's -

SAM

Awesome. That's really cool.

MARK

Really?

SAM

Yeah, man. I've read a couple books on indoor gardening but I've never actually done any. Not a lot of space in my apartment, you know? But it sounds really fun.

MARK

It is! So you like to read?

SAM

Definitely. I honestly just stay in and read most nights.

MARK

That sounds like a dream!

SAM

Right? God, I really miss it. I mean, I would have read so many books these past few months if I hadn't been trying to find a girl to bring to Jackson's wedding.

MARK

A girl? Like as a date?

SAM

Oh. Shit. Uh, yeah.

MARK

Wait. Are you bisexual?

SAM

Um. Yep.

MARK

No way! Me too!

SAM

Seriously?

MARK

Yeah!

SAM

Oh my god, I spent my whole life without knowing any other bi people and now they're just popping up everywhere!

MARK

When it rains, it pours.

SAM

God, this makes me feel so much better. I mean, no offense, but I really wasn't looking forward to this date.

MARK

None taken, me neither! I always feel like I have to hide that part of myself, you know?

SAM

Why is bi dating so difficult??

MARK

Like, it shouldn't be, but it is!

SAM

I'm so glad we're on the same page.

MARK

Me too.

Alex enters, holding a glass of wine. She gives it to Sam.

ALEX

Here you go!

MARK

Alex, good to see you again!

SAM

You know her?

MARK

Of course.

ALEX

He's my favorite regular. We bi's gotta stick together.

SAM

Oh my god. This is... surreal. But like, in a good way.

ALEX

Is there anything I can get you two?

SAM

Oh, I don't know. I thought we were gonna have dinner, but now I just kind of want some cake?

MARK

I second that.

ALEX

Two slices of our finest chocolate cake, coming right up.

Alex exits.

SAM

Wow. This did not go the way I was expecting.

MARK

I completely agree.

SAM

But I'm happy! I thought I was gonna have to spend the whole night awkwardly dodging questions about myself and trying to smile through it all, but now I feel like we can just talk, you know?

MARK

Exactly. Thank god. When your mom cornered me at that New Year's party and asked me to come to your brother's wedding with you, I was, you know, a bit concerned.

I mean, my mom always likes to parade me around company events, so I'm used to older women fawning over me, but this was a whole new level of intense.

SAM

Oh my god, I'm so embarrassed! She's obsessed with finding me a husband.

MARK

It's totally ok, I get the feeling. My mom's the same, she won't stop talking about how she wants to decorate the "nursery" in my house, and I keep telling her, the only babies I want are my plant babies.

SAM

You don't want kids?

MARK

Not really. I mean, they're fine and all, but not really my cup of tea.

SAM

Then why did you buy such a big house?

MARK

I told you, I have a lot of hobbies. I need one room to sleep in, one for my library, one for my hydroponic garden, and one for my music studio. The fifth will either be for a crafting nook, or I suppose if I find a partner, they can put their stuff there. But even that, I'm iffy on. I want my crafting nook.

SAM

Wow. That sounds... great, honestly. But still, I'm so sorry for my mom's crazy behavior.

MARK

It's really ok. I admit, I wasn't exactly excited about our date tonight, or even the wedding, but I said yes to both because I feel like I SHOULD be doing more social activities - like I said, I don't get out much - and now that I know you, I think a wedding could actually be fun to attend together.

But absolutely no pressure, I'm happy to stay home that night.

SAM

Well, shit, now I kind of want you to come. But...

MARK

Not as your date?

SAM

I don't know! I really like you, as a person! Just... I don't know, this is so confusing.

MARK

You don't have to force yourself to feel romantic feelings just because we get along.

SAM

It's just that I've spent so long looking for someone, you know? Someone to just... be there. For me. To... god, this sounds lame, but I guess to complete me? It sounds gross just saying it. And now, it's like the world is presenting me with this perfect person, who my mom adores -

MARK

She adores me?

SAM

Oh yeah. She's already imagining our kids.

MARK

Oh boy.

SAM

But like, it's not enough.

MARK

It's ok. I already think you're a great person, but if you're not feeling any romantic sparks between us, that's fine.

SAM

I don't know why I'm not feeling them, though!

MARK

It's really ok. You're not hurting my feelings. We've definitely got friendship sparks, at least, and that's enough for me.

SAM

But don't you want to find someone?

MARK

I mean, sure. Eventually. But I don't know if I'm even ready for a serious partner right now. I'm still working through a lot of stuff on my own.

SAM

Like what?

MARK

Well, for one, I still haven't come out to my mom.

SAM

Really? I thought I was weird for coming out at such a late age.

MARK

Not weird at all. I figure everybody's got their own situation and their own timeline.

SAM

Why haven't you told her?

MARK

I guess it's just easier that way. She's got so many expectations for me, and I know I'm not gonna measure up to everything she wants, so it seems like my best option for now is to just keep her out of my personal life.

SAM

Would you cut her out of your life? If she wasn't supportive?

MARK

Maybe. I can see why that's the only option for some people. But for me... I don't know. I mean, if she took it REALLY badly - but it would have to depend on the reason.

SAM

What do you mean?

MARK

Like, is it homophobia, or is she just upset that my future might not look the way she planned, you know? Like, wife and kids and all that. The way I look at it, it shouldn't be about who I'm with. I'm still me. And if she loves me, then she'll try to make our relationship work, even if she's not one hundred percent happy with my life choices.

SAM

I just feel like I'm such a disappointment to my mom. Like, if we were in a Jane Austen novel, I'd be considered a spinster at this age - and that is definitely how she sees me. An unmarried, childless spinster, here to torment her with my lack of family.

MARK

Oh wow. You're way off.

SAM

Excuse me?

MARK

Sorry, that was rude. I mean, you're wrong. No, that still sounds rude.

SAM

What do you mean?

MARK

I mean that I've only talked to your mom maybe twice, but my immediate impression was that she is a very passionate woman who loves you A LOT. Like, a crazy amount. From the second she walked up to me, all she could talk about was her amazing daughter, who always did so well in school, who worked her way through college, who's smart and funny and kind and beautiful - all of which is true, by the way.

SAM

Oh god, please don't compliment me right now, it just makes me feel even more guilty for not wanting to date you.

MARK

Sorry. The point is, nothing she said indicated that she was even a little bit disappointed in you.

SAM

She said all that?

MARK

Cross my heart.

SAM

God, why can't she say that stuff to my face?

MARK

Parents are weird.

SAM

Damn right, they are. Like, seriously, why doesn't she just tell me that stuff? Whenever I'm around her, all she does is point out all the ways I'm not living up to her expectations. It's exhausting. It'd be nice to hear some nice things every once in a while. Instead, she spends her time meddling in my life, asking strangers to go on dates with me.

MARK

True, but I mean, it's what led us to meet each other, right?

Sam laughs.

SAM

I guess so.

Alex enters, carrying two plates of cake.

ALEX

Oh my god, so sorry for the wait! There was a crazy mix-up in the kitchen, multiple plates were dropped, it was a whole thing. Here is your cake!

Mark stands.

MARK

Fantastic. I'm gonna go wash my hands.

SAM

You're not gonna sneak out, right?

MARK

Uh, no, wasn't planning to.

SAM

Ok, just checking.

Mark exits.

ALEX

So, how's your date going? I'm so shocked, I haven't seen Mark on a date in... probably ever.

SAM

Good. Well, for a date, bad. I think we decided to just be friends? But for a platonic hangout, it's going great!

ALEX

Oh. Ok, cool! I'm glad you're having a good time, it's always good to make new friends.

SAM

It is. It's just...

ALEX

What?

SAM

Ok, I know this might be out of place to ask -

ALEX

Do you want me to sit with you for a minute?

SAM

Just a minute!

ALEX

I got you, girl.

Alex sits.

SAM

So here's the thing. I didn't expect this date to go well, and I wasn't invested in the outcome, but then I met him and he's awesome, but I still don't want to date him, and I don't know what's wrong with me? Why can't I be happy like a normal person?

ALEX

I need some specifics. What do you mean when you say happy?

SAM

Just like... happy. With another person. Every time I go on a date, it's nice and all, but I keep waiting for everything to fall into place and for me to suddenly feel like, "Yes, THIS is IT, THIS is how I'm SUPPOSED to feel," and it never comes. It's like I'm looking for something but I don't know what it is. I've never had much luck dating guys, so I thought if I went on dates with girls, maybe that would be enough, but it wasn't, and then I thought if I found another bi person, maybe that would be enough, but clearly it's not, and I don't know. I feel like I'm never gonna find the right person.

ALEX

Well, there you go. If you base all of your happiness on finding a perfect partner, then of course you're gonna feel kinda empty. Everyone struggles with dating. I think you're putting way too much pressure on yourself to fall in love.

SAM

I can't help it. It's not like I NEED someone to take care of me, I'm a grown-ass woman, I can take care of myself. But I WANT... love, you know?

ALEX

I understand. But maybe your love issue isn't about romance?

SAM

What do you mean?

ALEX

Ok, I'm trying really hard not to overstep here -

SAM

Please overstep.

ALEX

I think you should talk to your mom.

SAM

What?

ALEX

I promise I wasn't trying to snoop on your date tonight - or the one at the café last month, or the tasting a couple months ago - but I couldn't help it. I caught some bits and pieces of your conversations, and basically, I think you've gotta straighten things out with your mom.

SAM

And once again, I say, what?

ALEX

How do I put this? So... clearly, you're looking for love and affection. But I don't think it's a partner that you need it from.

SAM

Oh.

ALEX

Yeah.

SAM

Well, shit.

ALEX

So, now that I've probably said too much... I should get back to work.

Alex stands.

SAM

Oh, right, of course. I mean, you didn't say too much. You helped. I think.

ALEX

I'm glad.

SAM

Hey, you're still catering the wedding, right?

ALEX

Yep. Gotta make that cash.

SAM

Then I guess I'll see you there?

ALEX

Definitely.

Alex exits.

The restaurant fades into an event hall.

SCENE 5

SCENE: an event hall; there is a table covered with wedding decorations.

TIME: an hour before the rehearsal dinner, the week of the wedding.

Katherine paces with a clipboard.

KATHERINE

Flowers, check. Centerpieces, check. Silverware, check.

Sam enters.

SAM

Mom, there you are! I've been looking all over for you.

KATHERINE

The rehearsal dinner is in an hour, Samantha. I can't be expected to stay in one place, I've got a million things to check up on.

SAM

You really should have hired a wedding planner.

KATHERINE

Nonsense, I am perfectly capable of managing all this on my own.

SAM

If you say so.

KATHERINE

I do.

SAM

I just wanted to tell you that I went on a date with Mark last week -

KATHERINE

What!?

SAM

- and it went well -

KATHERINE

That's fantastic!

SAM

- but I will not be bringing him to the wedding. Or pursuing a romantic relationship with him.

KATHERINE

I don't understand. You just said things went well.

SAM

They did! Well, sort of. The date was super fun, we just didn't click, romantically. But we still got along great, and I think he's gonna be an awesome friend to have in the future. I just think for this wedding, I wanna fly solo.

KATHERINE

Absolutely not.

SAM

Why not?

KATHERINE

Because that is unacceptable!

SAM

According to who?

KATHERINE

Me! You can't come to this wedding without a date, not after all the hard work I put into making it perfect.

SAM

I did what you wanted, I went out with Mark. This isn't even about the wedding, is it?

KATHERINE

What do you mean, of course it is.

SAM

So what if I don't bring anyone to the wedding? It's just one event.

KATHERINE

A big event - a potentially life changing event, the kind of event that would be so beautiful and moving, it would make a man feel so much joy and excitement about marriage that he just might consider it for himself!

SAM

Bringing someone to a wedding won't make them want to marry me!

KATHERINE

You never know until you try! With the right combination of charm and atmosphere, you could -

SAM

You're being so unreasonable! I'm finally putting myself out there, trying to find a partner - isn't that enough for you?

KATHERINE

No! You don't get an A for effort. Life is not about the journey, it's about the destination - love, marriage, family, long-term stability, ultimate happiness. Don't you want that?

SAM

Of course I do, but I can't force all that to happen with someone if it doesn't feel right.

KATHERINE

You said you like Mark!

SAM

I do, just not like that.

KATHERINE

Samantha, you're overthinking this. You found a man you like - a man with a beautiful face and a stable job and a gorgeous home with five bedrooms -

SAM

I don't care how many bedrooms he has!

KATHERINE

I'm just saying, he's a good man! Why can't you make it work? He liked you, didn't he?

SAM

Well, yeah -

KATHERINE

Then why can't you give it a chance and see if it turns into love?

SAM

Because I don't want to settle for the first person I get along with. I want to wait to find something that's really special.

KATHERINE

Then you'll be waiting forever.

SAM

Mom, please. I just want to take things at my own pace.

KATHERINE

You'll never get anywhere at that pace! You'll just keep waiting and waiting until every good opportunity passes you by, and then you'll be too old and nobody will want you, and then you'll be alone, forever.

SAM

Jesus Christ, Mom. Ok, so that's it. That's your biggest fear. Fine. Let's think about that. Let's imagine I'm gonna be alone, forever. What would be so bad about that?

KATHERINE

Everything!

SAM

Everything? Really? So my life means nothing without a partner?

KATHERINE

No, but you won't be happy, not really.

SAM

I'll have friends, and a career, and hobbies I love -

KATHERINE

It won't be enough.

SAM

Why not?

KATHERINE

Because!

SAM

Because, what? Full sentences, Mom!

KATHERINE

I just don't want this for you!

SAM

What?

KATHERINE

This feeling! Every day, all I feel is this hole inside of me, this gaping wound from being LEFT by your father, for no good reason, and I feel like everyone else sees it too, and they're all laughing at me, like, "Look at Katherine, nobody loves her!" Even my own mother looked at me differently when I told her what happened. I never want that for you. I want you to have a life you can be proud of.

SAM

You're not proud of your life?

KATHERINE

Of course not! What kind of life do I have?

SAM

You have friends, family, a job you love -

KATHERINE

Not anymore.

SAM

What do you mean?

KATHERINE

They fired me.

SAM

What? Why?

KATHERINE

You know, every day for the past twenty years, I've felt like an outsider next to all my happily married coworkers with their perfect lives. I've been constantly seeing perfect couples come into the store with their perfect relationships, buying beautiful, expensive jewelry to celebrate engagements and anniversaries.

And Jacqueline kept acting like such a smug newlywed, telling me how she knew I'd find love one day, I just had to be patient, and I just couldn't stand it because she's 25 years old and what does she know about being patient? Even after I told her off that one time in January, she still kept stealing my customers and being so goddamn smug! So last month, I finally I screamed at her in front of the whole store, saying, "Jacqueline, I'm sick of your shit, you have no idea what you're talking about, and I hope you get divorced!"

SAM

What the fuck, Mom? Are you insane? Why didn't you tell me any of this?

KATHERINE

Because it's embarrassing! I feel like a complete loser, I don't need my daughter thinking that too.

SAM

I don't think you're a loser, Mom. But, Jesus, you have to tell me this stuff. How are paying for this wedding if you don't have a job?

KATHERINE

I have savings, it's fine.

SAM

It's not fine! Jackson doesn't need all of this. He doesn't even need a wedding!

KATHERINE

Yes, he does! He got his girlfriend pregnant, and I'm not letting anyone think my son refuses to do the honorable thing.

SAM

He would never leave her, not like that.

KATHERINE

You never know what a man might do until he does it. Besides, it's too late, everything's already paid for.

If I don't get to have my dream wedding, at least somebody will. Jackson's probably my only chance to throw a wedding anyways.

SAM

Mom -

KATHERINE

What? You said it yourself, you might be alone forever.

SAM

I'm sorry you're unhappy. I truly am. But you can't project those feelings onto me. It's not fair. You have to let me live my life.

KATHERINE

And end up like me? You're young, you think you have everything figured out, but you don't. In time, you'll see I'm right. You'll see how lonely life can be, how unhappy it can make you. You'll see what it's like to have no one there to take care of you.

SAM

No one to take care of you? What about me? Does my love mean nothing to you?

KATHERINE

It's not the same.

SAM

You know, I've spent my whole life looking for someone to love me, just as I am, just like you told me to do, but what I really needed was for YOU to love me.

KATHERINE

Samantha, you know I love you.

SAM

Do you? You hardly ever say it.

KATHERINE

Of course I do.

SAM

Then say it. Say you love me - just as I am - and say you think I'm enough, without a partner. Say I don't need anyone but myself to be happy.

KATHERINE

I love you, but I won't lie to you.

They stare at each other.

SAM

I know you want what's best for me. But when you tell me I need a partner in order to be whole, I feel so small and insignificant and unloved.

KATHERINE

Sweetie -

SAM

I want to keep you in my life. Not just because you're my mom. But because despite the way you've made me feel about myself over the years, I still love you. But in order for this relationship to work, things have to change.

KATHERINE

What do you mean?

SAM

I think we need some space.

KATHERINE

Samantha -

SAM

It's Sam.

KATHERINE

I know you're upset with me, but there's no need to get dramatic.

SAM

This isn't dramatic. I just think I need to not see you for a bit.

KATHERINE

The rehearsal dinner's about to start.

SAM

You'll do fine without me. You're an excellent wedding planner.

Beat.

KATHERINE

Thank you.

SAM

I guess I'll see you at the wedding.

Sam starts to leave.

KATHERINE

Sam!

Sam stops.

I just want you to be happy.

SAM

I know.

Sam exits.

The event hall fades into a terrace.

SCENE 6

SCENE: a terrace outside the event hall; there are two chairs; muffled music plays in the background.

TIME: during the reception, post-wedding.

Sam enters. She looks hella fly in a suit with a dark green tie.

She loosens her tie, then sits, exhausted.

Alex enters, wearing a white shirt with a black tie and black pants.

ALEX

I'm surprised to see you taking a break from all that dancing, it looked like you were never gonna stop!

SAM

I would've kept going, but I never knew suits got so hot!

ALEX

It's all those layers! But I gotta say, you look fantastic.

SAM

Thanks.

Alex sits beside Sam.

ALEX

It was a beautiful ceremony today. Like, properly beautiful.

SAM

You saw it?

ALEX

I snuck a peak, I couldn't help myself.

SAM

What do you think? True love, or did they just grab whoever was closest and get hitched?

ALEX

Well, I can't make any legally binding predictions, but I would wager true love.

They laugh.

SAM

Bridget was a literal angel, as expected.

ALEX

She was quite lovely.

SAM

And Jackson cleans up surprisingly well.

ALEX

A very un-scruffy groom indeed.

(Beat.)

Your mom looked nice.

SAM

Yeah... I don't think we made eye contact with each other once during the entire ceremony.

ALEX

Are you ok?

SAM

I think I am. But I'm definitely gonna need some champagne if I'm gonna make it through the rest of this reception.

ALEX

Never fear, I'm on it.

Alex exits.

Sam takes off her tie, leans back,
and closes her eyes.

Katherine enters, carrying her own
drink. She pauses, sees Sam, and
clears her throat.

SAM

Well that was fast -

Sam opens her eyes.

KATHERINE

Were you expecting someone else?

SAM

Uh... yeah.

KATHERINE

I can go -

SAM

No, wait! I mean... You can stay. If you want.

KATHERINE

Ok.

Katherine sits next to Sam.

SAM

I didn't see you on the dance floor.

KATHERINE

I didn't have anyone to dance with.

SAM

You can dance on your own, you know. It's not like everyone was waltzing to the Mambo Number Five.

KATHERINE

I noticed you did quite a lot of dancing.

SAM

I did.

KATHERINE

Even during the first dance. When they asked all the other couples to join Jackson and Bridget.

SAM

Well, yeah. I figured, why miss out on all the fun?

KATHERINE

It did look a bit silly, you dancing by yourself, surrounded by couples.

SAM

Maybe. But I still had a good time on my own.

KATHERINE

Well. I'm glad.

SAM

Did you have a good time?

KATHERINE

Of course. The whole thing was beautiful, and tasteful, AND within a reasonable budget - not to mention flawlessly executed. I really did plan the perfect wedding.

SAM

You did. It was perfect. But did you have a good time?

Beat.

KATHERINE

I did. You looked beautiful up there, next to all the others. During the ceremony.

SAM

I didn't think you were looking at me.

KATHERINE

I was. You looked really... happy.

SAM

Thanks, Mom.

(Beat.)

Did you like the suit?

KATHERINE

You know what? I did, actually. Although I have my own thoughts about the tie you should have worn - pink would have gone much better with the other bridesmaids.

SAM

(smiling)

I guess we'll just agree to disagree.

KATHERINE
(smiling)

I guess so.

Alex enters, carrying a tray with
two champagne flutes.

ALEX

Oh. Hello.

KATHERINE

You again! Ally, right?

ALEX

Alex.

KATHERINE

Right, Alex. I remember you. You liked the suit idea.

ALEX

I did.

KATHERINE

Don't you think a pink tie would have been more fitting,
though?

SAM

Mom!

KATHERINE

I'm just saying.

ALEX

I think Sam looks amazing, just as she is.

Sam and Alex share A Look.
Katherine notices.

KATHERINE
(suggestive)

Well. Perhaps I'll leave you two alone.

Katherine stands.

SAM

Mom.

KATHERINE

No, no, I'll leave, I'm not one to interrupt a moment! But I'd better see you inside for the bouquet toss.

SAM

I wouldn't miss it for the world.

Katherine exits.

Alex sits next to Sam.

ALEX

She really is quite an interesting woman.

SAM

That she is.

Alex gives Sam a champagne flute.

ALEX

Here you go. But don't just chug it. This is some quality stuff right here.

SAM

I won't! I only do that when I'm nervous.

ALEX

You're not nervous now?

SAM

No. Not at all.

ALEX

Good.

SAM

What about you?

ALEX

Am I nervous?

SAM

Well, no, I meant aren't you gonna drink with me? There's an extra flute.

ALEX

That was just in case someone intercepted me before I made it back to you.

SAM

Ah, got it. Well, since you've got one to spare, do you maybe wanna... share a drink with me? I know you're working. But I just figured, a toast might be nice.

Alex smiles.

ALEX

I suppose one drink won't hurt.

SAM

Great.

They raise a toast.

ALEX

What are we toasting to?

SAM

I don't know. The future, maybe?

ALEX

Sounds good. To the future.

SAM

To the future.

They clink the flutes together.

THE END.