

THE WEDDING DOWNPOUR

By Bradley Hayward

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CHARACTERS

(10 Females, 2 Males)

EDWARD	40, a well-to-do business man.
DIANA	35, his lovely wife.
GERTRUDE	35, their frumpy neighbor.
BELINDA	50, a very bubbly housewife.
CAROLINE	50, the same, but even more perky.
MILDRED	55, a filthy rich snob.
RUTH	60, the town busy-body.
HELEN	100, her really old mother.
SALLY	40, a man hungry divorcee.
GWENDOLYN	25, the beautiful bride.
MAXINE	45, her incredibly sweet mother.
WILLIAM	40, a dapper delivery man.

SET

EDWARD and DIANA's posh living room. There are three exits; the main entry, one to the kitchen and a stairway to the bedrooms. Everything is immaculate and the decor extravagant. There are flowers everywhere, as always. Overall, their home is warm and inviting.

The Wedding Downpour was first presented at the Crystal Theater on October 16, 1999 in Flandreau, South Dakota. It was directed by Linda Parr with the following cast:

EDWARD	Bob Ullum
DIANA	Sarah Keupp
GERTRUDE	Nancy Richter
BELINDA	Gloria Johnson
CAROLINE	Linda Gundvaldson
MILDRED	Robin Kills-A-Hundred
RUTH	Beth Kayner
HELEN	Rhiannon Tye
SALLY	Beth Sechser
GWENDOLYN	Carrie Smith
MAXINE	Sally Johanson
WILLIAM	Neil Gundvaldson

Dedicated to Linda Parr and the entire cast of Flandreau's production, whose enthusiasm and creativity inspired me more than they will ever know.

THE WEDDING DOWNPOUR

by
Bradley Hayward

SCENE 1

AT RISE: EDWARD sits on the sofa trying to sew a button onto his shirt. HE has no idea how to sew, which is made apparent by the fact that HE is trying to sew the top button with the shirt still on.

EDWARD: For the love of Pete. How do you do this? (*pricks himself*)
Ouch! Of all mornings for me to lose a button. Ouch! And it has to be this one at the top. Ouch! I've got to stop poking myself. Ouch! (*calls up the stairs*) Diana! Diana, dear! Could you please come down here? I seem to be poking myself rather frequently and I need your help. (*The telephone rings.*)

DIANA: (*offstage*) Could you get that?

EDWARD: I just asked you to get it for me.

DIANA: (*offstage*) The telephone, Edward.

EDWARD: Oh, yes, of course. (*picks up the telephone*) Hello?
Anybody there? Must have been a wrong number. (*hangs up*)

DIANA: (*offstage*) Who is it, darling? Is it Mildred?

EDWARD: It was dead, dear.

DIANA: (*offstage*) Mildred is dead?

EDWARD: No, dear. The phone was dead.

(DIANA comes down the staircase like a queen. SHE obviously takes a great deal of pride in her appearance.)

DIANA: We have to get it fixed. I'm expecting a call from Mildred.

EDWARD: No, it's not broken. There was no one else on the other end.
(*The telephone rings.*)

DIANA: Oh good, it's fixed. Thank you, dear. (*SHE picks up the telephone. EDWARD resumes sewing.*) Hello? . . . Good morning, Mildred. Was that you calling just a moment ago? . . . Oh no, it was our end. It seems that Edward did something to the telephone. He broke it or something—

EDWARD: I didn't break it!

DIANA: (*into the telephone*) Pardon? Yes, I called last night, but you were out. I called because I wanted to ask if you would return my punch bowl. . . What's that? You broke it? Well, now what am I going to use for the party tonight? . . . I suppose I could buy a new one, but you know I liked that one. . . Yes it was lovely. . . No, I'm all right, it's

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just that it was the only punch bowl I had. . . Now all my china is either cracked or broken.

EDWARD: What's going on in China?

DIANA: Nothing, dear. **(into the telephone)** Oh, nothing, Mildred. Edward was just being daft. . . No, that's all right. I'll just go out to town and buy a new one. . . Don't worry about it. I'll buy a new one. . . I'll see you tonight at the party. . . Yes, bring the potato salad. . . Good-bye, Mildred. **(hangs up the phone)**

EDWARD: What did she have to say? And what are you going into town to buy?

DIANA: Nothing, dear. Mildred just broke my punch bowl. I have to get a new one.

EDWARD: Does she plan on paying for it?

DIANA: Probably not.

EDWARD: She's always breaking things of ours. Why do you keep lending things to her?

DIANA: Appearances. She is married to your boss.

EDWARD: You should have asked to borrow hers. Then I could break it. You get what you give.

DIANA: But it's plastic.

EDWARD: Then I'll throw it in the oven and melt the blasted thing.

DIANA: No, I mean I can't have a plastic bowl at the party. What will the ladies think? Why do you think she borrowed ours in the first place?

EDWARD: This party is going to send us to the poor house. I don't understand women, spending extravagant amounts of money on parties. Men are much more simple. A nice pat on the back will suffice.

DIANA: I must give the best party of the year. You know what that's like. You always have to win. Now it's my turn.

EDWARD: I do not always have to win.

DIANA: Oh please! Remember the Scrabble game we had a few weeks ago?

EDWARD: What about it?

DIANA: When I played the word "quirky" on a triple word square, you flipped your lid.

EDWARD: I seem to remember taking it like a man.

DIANA: Then why did you flush all the letters down the toilet?

EDWARD: I was being "quirky." You, on the other hand, are running up the credit card bill. We're the only couple who gets thank you cards from American Express.

DIANA: I have to impress everyone. Especially Mildred and Harvey.

EDWARD: I can't wait to move up the corporate ladder. Then we don't have to pretend to be their friends anymore.

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DIANA: Just for another few months. I heard they're leaving after Henry takes off for college. Then the vice presidency will be yours.

EDWARD: Are you kidding me?

DIANA: No.

EDWARD: Why would he leave such a wonderful job?

DIANA: I heard that they're getting a divorce. They want to start fresh after the split.

EDWARD: Why would they split?

DIANA: Apparently Harvey has been running around on Mildred.

EDWARD: You've got to be kidding me. Where did you hear all this?

DIANA: Church.

EDWARD: What a lowlife, dirty little devil.

DIANA: Yes, but if you don't hurry, that lowlife, dirty little devil will fire you. You're going to be late.

EDWARD: That's what I've been trying to do, but I have to get this button sewn on. I was hoping you'd do it for me.

DIANA: You know I have a million things to do before the party tonight. I don't have time for that button.

EDWARD: Please. You don't want me to be late for work, do you?

DIANA: You have about fifty shirts like that one in the closet. Put one of those on.

EDWARD: I want to wear this one.

DIANA: Fine then, but first take it off.

EDWARD: Take it off?

DIANA: Of course. You don't sew a button with the shirt still on.

EDWARD: Oh, of course not. **(takes off his shirt, revealing suspenders underneath)**

DIANA: Honestly! I don't know what you'd do without me! **(HE hands her the shirt.)** Edward, why are you wearing suspenders under your shirt?

EDWARD: Don't give me a hard time. Harvey wears suspenders and I don't want people to think I'm imitating him.

DIANA: Darling, all men wear suspenders to work.

EDWARD: Including Harvey and I don't want to resemble such a horrible man. Especially now since he is cheating on poor Mildred.

DIANA: "Poor Mildred"? Two minutes ago you were going to melt her punch bowl. Now she's "Poor Mildred"?

EDWARD: Any woman who's being cheated on, I have sympathy for.

DIANA: For heaven's sake, give me that needle. **(starts to sew the button on)** Oh, Edward—

EDWARD: Yes?

DIANA: Did I ask Mildred if she was bringing the potato salad?

EDWARD: I don't know, but if she is, I suggest you call back and tell her not to.

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DIANA: Why on earth would I do that? Every party needs at least one cold dish.

EDWARD: You've tasted her potato salad. It tastes like sewer residue.

DIANA: Now here you go hating her again.

EDWARD: Just because she's being cheated on doesn't make her potato salad any better.

DIANA: Make up your mind, darling. Either you hate her or you like her potato salad.

EDWARD: Fine. I'll go back to hating her. I'm not eating her potato salad.

DIANA: Here. **(hands him the shirt)**

EDWARD: Thank you, dear.

DIANA: Now put it on or you'll be late for work.

(EDWARD tries to put the shirt on, but DIANA has sewn the button to the front and back of the shirt, and HE cannot get his head through. DIANA looks for her duster.)

DIANA: Now where did I put the duster?

EDWARD: **(his head stuck in the shirt)** Diana. Diana.

DIANA: What now?

EDWARD: You seem to have sewn the button on incorrectly.

DIANA: Oh dear. How stupid of me.

EDWARD: Now what am I going to do?

DIANA: Just run upstairs and put on another shirt.

EDWARD: But my system will be messed up!

DIANA: I think for one day you can wear a shirt that is not hanging on the same hanger as the suit. Now where is my duster?

EDWARD: Fine. But if my day goes awry, you're to blame.

DIANA: Oh hush. If it wasn't for me, you would have sewn the shirt to your chest. Now just get upstairs and put on a shirt before you're late for work!

EDWARD: Oh, all right. **(exits up the stairs)**

DIANA: **(searches for her duster)** Now where is my duster? **(picks up the shirt)** Oh, this will do. **(SHE begins to dust as the doorbell chimes.)** Oh, good. She's here.

(DIANA answers the door. Enter GERTRUDE, DIANA's best friend. SHE's short and stocky, but pretty. SHE carries a bag full of decorations; pink streamers, pink bows, pink everything.)

DIANA: Gertrude, thank heavens you're here! I don't know what I'd do without you.

GERTRUDE: You probably wouldn't have as many parties!

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DIANA: I don't want you to think I'm taking advantage of you.

GERTRUDE: Well—

DIANA: Could you be a dear and run into the kitchen? I seem to have misplaced my duster.

GERTRUDE: (**confused**) I suppose I could.

DIANA: Good then. Very nice. And check the oven as well. I have a bird in there.

GERTRUDE: I'll be—

DIANA: Run along.

(GERTRUDE exits to the kitchen. EDWARD comes down the stairs wearing a new shirt, but no pants.)

EDWARD: Did you press my gray slacks last night?

DIANA: Edward, get upstairs right now! Put some pants on.

EDWARD: Darling, what are you getting so worked up about? Granted you haven't seen me this way in a few days, but nothing has changed.

DIANA: Gertrude is here!

EDWARD: (**looks around**) No she's not.

DIANA: She's in the kitchen!

EDWARD: What's she doing here?

DIANA: She's helping me with the party. Now get upstairs and put some pants on.

EDWARD: I'd love to, but I can't find the gray slacks that go with this shirt.

DIANA: Then put on another pair of pants! Hurry!

EDWARD: You know that I can't mix and match suits.

DIANA: Then put on your blue suit.

EDWARD: But, darling, it's Monday!

DIANA: Edward, I've been married to you for twenty years and I still don't understand this whole suit regiment of yours.

EDWARD: You don't have to understand. Just find my gray slacks.

GERTRUDE: (**enters**) I can't find your duster, Diana.

DIANA: (**shoving GERTRUDE back through the door**) Yes you can! Look harder! (**GERTRUDE is gone.**) Edward, get up the stairs right now! I can't have Gertrude seeing you like this!

EDWARD: Why not?

DIANA: A grown man should not be parading about the home in his underpants. Especially not in front of the neighbors.

EDWARD: But she's your best friend.

DIANA: Not for long if you keep on exposing yourself like this.

GERTRUDE: (**enters again**) Diana, I swear I cannot find the duster.

EDWARD: Hello, Gertrude.

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DIANA: Edward!

GERTRUDE: Edward, how lovely to see you.

(EDWARD bends over to kiss her hand as DIANA tries to cover up his legs with an afghan.)

EDWARD: How's Lawrence doing?

GERTRUDE: Wonderful. He's doing so well at the store.

EDWARD: Isn't that lovely. Did you hear that, Diana? Lawrence is doing well at the store.

DIANA: ***(blushing)*** Yes, I heard. Now didn't you have to be going?

EDWARD: Nonsense! We have a guest. Have a seat, Gertrude.

GERTRUDE: Thank you. How is work? Diana tells me you're up for a promotion soon.

EDWARD: She told me that, too, just a moment ago.

GERTRUDE: That's terrific.

EDWARD: Harvey wouldn't have to leave his job if he wasn't such an oaf. I never suspected he'd be the type to run around on his wife. If only he could keep his pants on.

DIANA: I was telling Gertrude you may be getting a promotion because of last month's business.

EDWARD: Not because Harvey is fooling around?

GERTRUDE: Harvey is fooling around?

DIANA: Edward, may I have a word with you?

EDWARD: Excuse us.

GERTRUDE: Certainly.

(DIANA and EDWARD exit out the swinging door, but we can hear them whispering. GERTRUDE hears every word as well. They're off-stage the whole time, and GERTRUDE reacts accordingly.)

DIANA: Will you please go upstairs and put some pants on?

EDWARD: Darling, you're making a fuss over nothing.

DIANA: Nothing? You have no pants on! And what did you bring up Harvey's affair for? You aren't supposed to spread that around.

EDWARD: I thought everyone knew.

DIANA: No! It's still a secret!

EDWARD: A secret? How was I supposed to know? You told me you heard it in church. I assumed everyone knew.

DIANA: Of course not.

EDWARD: Next time, tell me. You come home from church and I never know if what you're saying is fact or fiction. Is the sermon being read from The National Enquirer?

DIANA: Enough of that. Now get upstairs and put some pants on!

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EDWARD: I don't think Gertrude has even noticed I'm not wearing any pants.

DIANA: That's because she probably loves the idea of seeing you in your underpants.

EDWARD: You don't think Gertrude has a thing for me, do you?

DIANA: Of course she does! She has for years!

(GERTRUDE'S jaw drops, totally offended.)

EDWARD: Well, I can't help it if she thinks I'm charming.

DIANA: Oh please, you were all over her. If you were any nicer, I'd be picking out china for your wedding.

EDWARD: Diana, you're being foolish.

DIANA: I am not. You're shamelessly flirting with her right in front of my face.

EDWARD: I am not.

DIANA: Get out there and say goodbye. You have to get to work. And no more leading Gertrude on.

EDWARD: I'm not leading her on.

(EDWARD and DIANA enter and GERTRUDE scurries back to her seat.)

DIANA: We were just. . . fixing the drain. Clogs up all the time.

EDWARD: **(trying to be suave)** Did you miss me, Gertrude?

GERTRUDE: I certainly did.

DIANA: Edward!

EDWARD: It seems that I must be getting off to work. These are busy times, you know. **(puts on his shoes)** One cannot be late for work. It was lovely seeing you, Gertrude. Say hello to Lawrence for me. Well, good-day. **(to DIANA)** Good bye, dear. **(opens the front door and exits)**

DIANA: Edward— **(The door closes.)**

GERTRUDE: Diana, he seems to have gone to work without any pants on.

DIANA: Yes, I know.

GERTRUDE: Does he do that often.

DIANA: No. Only today.

EDWARD: **(opens the door and enters)** It seems that I've gone to work without any pants on.

DIANA: I think your gray slacks are in the upstairs bathroom. I forgot I was steaming them for you.

EDWARD: Thank you, dear **(exits up the stairs)**

GERTRUDE: That's quite the husband you have.

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DIANA: He's very quirky. Anyway, do you think we should get started with these decorations? We might as well get the easy jobs done first.

GERTRUDE: I agree.

(They begin to hang streamers.)

DIANA: Again, thank you for coming. There's so much preparation that goes into a wedding shower.

GERTRUDE: No need to tell me. I've had two this year.

EDWARD: ***(offstage)*** Darling, could you come here for a moment?

DIANA: What is it?

EDWARD: ***(offstage)*** I can't find my underpants.

DIANA: Just a second. Excuse me, Gertrude.

(DIANA goes up the stairs. Again, they are offstage, but GERTRUDE can hear every word. SHE hangs some decorations, but begins to eavesdrop.)

DIANA: Edward, what happened to the underpants you had on a few moments ago?

EDWARD: They don't match this outfit.

DIANA: Edward, just put on your suit!

EDWARD: You know I can't concentrate with a mismatched suit.

DIANA: Fine then! Put on that blue suit like I told you before.

EDWARD: But, darling, it's Monday!

DIANA: I don't care if it's Doomsday! Now put it on or you'll be late for work!

EDWARD: If I put that suit on, I just know everything will go wrong.

DIANA: You're getting far too carried away.

EDWARD: Oh all right! But I'm warning you. I've worn that suit on Monday before and nothing good came of it.

DIANA: If I have to say one more word, nothing good will come of this argument. Now get up there immediately!

EDWARD: Fine! ***(stomps to the bedroom)***

DIANA: ***(comes down the stairs)*** Um. . . the bathroom sink was clogged. We had to plunge it.

GERTRUDE: Certainly.

DIANA: Now back to the decorations.

GERTRUDE: Splendid idea.

(They begin to hang more decorations.)

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GERTRUDE: So, who have you invited? Hopefully not Mildred. Her nose is so far in the air, she might take down a helicopter. Snooty little thing.

DIANA: I had to invite her. What would Edward's boss think if I didn't invite his wife?

GERTRUDE: I suppose. Just so long as she brings her potato salad. Her potato salad is the best I've ever had.

DIANA: Yes it is. Will one cold dish be enough?

EDWARD: **(offstage)** Darling?

DIANA: What now?!

EDWARD: **(offstage)** I have my tie caught in my zipper. Could you please look at it?

DIANA: For heaven's sake! Excuse me, Gertrude. **(SHE exits up the stairs. The telephone rings. Offstage:)** Gertrude, could you get that for me?

GERTRUDE: Certainly. **(picks up the telephone)** Hello? . . . No, this is Gertrude. . . Pardon me? . . . Who is this? . . . Why hello, Harvey. . . How is Mildred? . . . You have to tell her to stop by some time for tea. . . Edward? He is. . . He already left for work. . . He's late is he? . . . Well, um, Diana told me he had some errands to run for tonight's party. . . Actually, I saw him and all he could say was how dreadfully upset he was because he didn't want to be late for work. . . No, I promise you, he's not here.

(EDWARD comes down the stairs, fully dressed in his blue suit.)

EDWARD: Who is it, Gertrude?

GERTRUDE: **(into the telephone)** Who's that? That's me. . . **(with a deep voice)** I'm Gertrude. . . I just thought you might have forgotten. . . No, he isn't here. . . If I see him, I'll tell him you called. . .

EDWARD: **(grabs the phone)** No use giving me a message. **(into the telephone)** This is Edward. May I ask who's calling? . . . **(panics)** Harvey! . . . Um, Edward isn't here right now. . . **(in a woman's voice)** This is Gertrude. . . **(throws the receiver to GERTRUDE)**

GERTRUDE: **(in a deep voice, into the telephone)** This is Gertrude!. . . No, I'm not on any medication. . . I will tell Edward you called, but I'm sure he'll be to work soon. . . Good-day, Harvey! **(hangs up)**

EDWARD: I'm sorry about that.

GERTRUDE: Perfectly all right.

DIANA: **(comes down the stairs)** Edward, what are you waiting for? You have to hurry or you'll be late for work.

EDWARD: I already am. Harvey just called.

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DIANA: That's who that was. I was hoping it was the flower shop. They should call before they come out. Anyway, you have to get going. You can't be in my hair all day or I'll never get anything done. Run along.

EDWARD: It was nice seeing you, Gertrude. (**kisses her hand**) Until we meet again. Do have fun at the party.

GERTRUDE: Thank you.

DIANA: Excuse us.

(DIANA and EDWARD exit out of the front door which is open. Again, GERTRUDE can hear everything.)

DIANA: (**continued**) Edward, don't forget to pick up the cake.

EDWARD: I won't. But then I'm going to the movies.

DIANA: I know. But don't forget the cake. Then you can be off all evening.

EDWARD: Because a wedding shower is no place for a man.

DIANA: Yes, I know.

EDWARD: You women turn into a bunch of cackling hens and I don't want to be around to see you lay your eggs.

DIANA: Yes, I know. Just don't forget the cake.

EDWARD: I won't.

DIANA: Now get going or you will be late.

EDWARD: Fine. Good day.

DIANA: Good-bye.

EDWARD: What, no kiss?

DIANA: Not today.

EDWARD: Why not?

DIANA: Lipstick, Edward. Lipstick. (**re-enters**) Um. . . the garden hose was plugged. We had to unplug it.

GERTRUDE: My, your plumbing seems to be turning on you.

DIANA: Yes it is. Now back to the decorations.

(They hang more decorations.)

GERTRUDE: Is Brenda coming tonight?

DIANA: No. She had better plans for the evening. Her dialysis or something.

GERTRUDE: That's just like her to blow you off. Tsk, tsk. How about Ruth?

DIANA: Sorry to disappoint you, but Ruth is coming.

GERTRUDE: How could you?! Ruth, the gossip! Word spreads faster with her than syphilis at a sea port. Everything that happens will be in the newspaper.

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DIANA: I know, I know. And that's not the worst of it.

GERTRUDE: What?

DIANA: She's bringing her mother.

GERTRUDE: She's bringing Helen? She's still alive? She has to be three thousand years old by now.

DIANA: I know. (**The telephone rings. DIANA is clearly closer but...**) Gertrude, could you get that?

GERTRUDE: (**shrugs her shoulders**) I suppose. (**crosses the room to the telephone**) Hello? . . . Diana, it's for you.

DIANA: Who is it?

GERTRUDE: (**into the telephone**) Who may I ask is speaking? (**to DIANA**) William at the flower shop.

DIANA: Tell him I want the flowers delivered at six o'clock sharp. I don't want them wilting.

GERTRUDE: (**into the telephone**) She wants the flowers delivered at six o'clock—

DIANA: Sharp.

GERTRUDE: Sharp. . . What's that? (**to DIANA**) He says the carnations all turned brown.

DIANA: Tell him he will turn brown if he doesn't get me those white carnations. They're Gwendolyn's favorite.

GERTRUDE: (**into the telephone**) You will turn brown if you don't get her those carnations.

DIANA: White carnations!

GERTRUDE: (**into the telephone**) White carnations. (**to DIANA**) Is that all?

DIANA: Yes.

GERTRUDE: (**into the telephone**) Yes.

DIANA: Good-day.

GERTRUDE: (**into the telephone**) Good-day. (**hangs up as the doorbell rings**)

DIANA: Gertrude, could you get that for me?

GERTRUDE: (**exhausted**) I suppose. (**SHE walks clear across the room to answer the door. There's nobody there.**)

GERTRUDE: There's no one at the door.

DIANA: That's strange. (**The oven timer dings.**) Gertrude, could you get that for me?

GERTRUDE: What?

DIANA: The oven.

GERTRUDE: Well—

DIANA: (**pushes her very hard**) Hurry! (**GERTRUDE flies out the kitchen doors.**) I wonder who was at the door. Well, I will get back to dusting. But where is the duster? (**The telephone rings.**) Gertrude!

(GERTRUDE comes rushing in, wearing an apron. SHE sprints across the stage and answers the telephone.)

GERTRUDE: **(into the telephone)** Hello? . . . What? . . . Have you got a problem or something? **(The oven timer dings again, so she slams down the receiver.)** Getting it! **(SHE runs out into the kitchen. SHE's gone for a moment as DIANA looks for the duster. GERTRUDE rushes back in with a bowl, stirring some pudding. SHE picks up the receiver.)** Hello? . . . The flowers have to be here at six. Because the party is at six! Are you stupid? **(The doorbell rings.)**

DIANA: Gertrude, the door.

GERTRUDE: Bloody heck.

(SHE slams down the receiver and answers the door. EDWARD stands there with no pants on, covered in leaves and branches. GERTRUDE returns to the phone.)

EDWARD: I can't do it.

DIANA: Edward! What's the matter with you?

EDWARD: I can't wear the blue suit.

DIANA: Where are your pants? Why are you covered in greenery?

EDWARD: I was standing on the porch with no pants on and the neighbor children walked by. I had to jump into the bushes.

DIANA: Oh, Edward!

GERTRUDE: **(into the telephone)** Can't you understand the basic concept? Are you mad? **(The oven timer dings again.)**

DIANA: Why does that keep dinging?

GERTRUDE: I'll find out! **(slams down the bowl and receiver and runs to the kitchen)**

DIANA: Put your pants on!

EDWARD: **(panicking)** They're blue! I got half way to the office and couldn't get out of the car!

DIANA: Edward, you're being ridiculous!

(GERTRUDE runs back in and picks up the bowl, stirs it with the receiver and puts the spatula to her ear. SHE's covered in the pudding.)

GERTRUDE: **(into the spatula)** Hello? Hello? **(notices her mistake)** Oh, bloody heck! **(takes the receiver out of the pudding, licks it and puts it to her ear)** They have to be here at six!

EDWARD: I'm going upstairs.

DIANA: Stay here. I'll get your pants. **(runs up the stairs)**

GERTRUDE: **(into the telephone, incredibly angry)** Just bring the bloody flowers! Good-bye! **(slams down the receiver.)**

EDWARD: Hello again, Gertrude.

GERTRUDE: Do you have a bloody problem?! **(The oven timer dings. It keeps dinging over and over and will not stop.)** Why does that keep dinging?

(GERTRUDE exits in a huff, but the timer keeps dinging throughout the scene. DIANA comes down the stairs with black pants for EDWARD.)

DIANA: Here you are.

EDWARD: Those are the pants I began with.

DIANA: And these are the pants you'll wear! Now put them on.

EDWARD: **(putting the pants on)** Fine.

GERTRUDE: **(offstage, yelling)** What the bloody heck is wrong with you, you stupid thing!

DIANA: Hurry! You're going to get fired!

EDWARD: I'm hurrying.

GERTRUDE: **(offstage)** Shut up! Shut up!

EDWARD: I'm ready.

DIANA: Don't forget the cake.

EDWARD: I won't. I won't.

DIANA: Now get to work.

EDWARD: All right, darling. I'll see you this evening. **(goes in for a kiss)**

DIANA: Lipstick, Edward! Lipstick!

EDWARD: Right. I forgot. **(exits)**

GERTRUDE: **(offstage)** Shut up, you stupid timer! **(enters with the dinging timer, absolutely frantic; shakes it, hits it, yells at it; totally insane with anger)** Why won't you be quiet? Do you have a bloody problem? SHUT UP! SHUT UP! SHUT UP!

(SHE gives up and throws the timer to the floor. It stops dinging. SHE pants furiously as DIANA sits calmly on the sofa.)

DIANA: Putting on a shower is hard work isn't it?

GERTRUDE: Bloody heck.

(GERTRUDE faints dead away as the lights blackout.)

SCENE 2

AT RISE: The living room is covered with decorations, ready for the party. The front door opens and EDWARD enters. HE looks around the living room.

EDWARD: Diana, I'm home from work! Diana? Are you home, Diana?

DIANA: (**enters in a tizzy, with an unlit cigarette in her mouth**) I'm so distraught! (**takes the cigarette out of her mouth**) How do you use this cigarette?

EDWARD: Hello, sweetheart.

DIANA: Don't start with that sweetheart stuff. How do you use this?

EDWARD: Where did you get that cigarette?

DIANA: From your drawer. Now how do you use it?

EDWARD: Give that back to me. It's mine.

DIANA: I seem to remember you using this with some sort of fire.

EDWARD: I want it back.

DIANA: You don't need it. I do.

EDWARD: You do not. It took me ten years to quit smoking.

DIANA: And you're still doing it.

EDWARD: I know, but it's been a good fight. Now give me that smoke.

DIANA: Fine, have it. But I'm not going to stand here calmly while you louse up everything else in our lives.

EDWARD: What have I been lousing up?

DIANA: Everything, Edward. The party! My life! The party!

EDWARD: My, your mood has certainly changed.

DIANA: My mood has done nothing. I cannot get this wedding shower together with you constantly in my way. Now stick to your business or just go somewhere else. I'm not going to take these interruptions anymore.

EDWARD: Interruptions? I just got home.

DIANA: You're always in my way, and I'm not going to take it!

EDWARD: And I am not going to hear this anymore. If you need me to be your shouting bag any longer, I'll be outside on the porch puffing my life away. You'll stay here, I assume?

DIANA: Where would I go?

EDWARD: I don't know. With this party you have planned, I don't know what else you're up to. And I don't want to see those women for even one second.

DIANA: Just go outside and quit smoking.

EDWARD: Fine. Do you have a light?

DIANA: You'll think of something. (**EDWARD exits to the kitchen.**) Now where is that duster? (**remembers something**) Oh dear! The cake! Edward!

EDWARD: **(offstage)** What now?

DIANA: Did you bring the cake home?

EDWARD: **(offstage)** Oh, dear. . .

DIANA: Edward! I told you. . . Nevermind. I'll do it myself. If you want something done right, do it yourself. **(puts on her shoes and goes out the front door, muttering)**

(The telephone rings. And rings. And rings. And rings.)

EDWARD: Diana, are you going to get that? **(enters)** Diana! Diana? Are you here? **(picks up the receiver)** Hello? . . . William who? . . . The flower shop? . . . Oh right, the party. . . Well, I'm sure Diana must have ordered them that way. . . Just bring them, I suppose. . . Alright, so they're brown! She must have ordered them that way. . . If she ordered them, you should bring them. . . Even if they are brown. . . Good-bye. **(hangs up)** Why on earth would she order brown flowers? **(shrugs)** Diana! Diana, love! Are you home? Where on earth did you get to? **(HE exits up the stairs. Then the doorbell rings. HE answers, offstage.)** Come in! Come in!

(The door opens. CAROLINE and BELINDA, two very exuberant, extremely perky women enter bearing gifts.)

CAROLINE: **(giggling)** Hello!

BELINDA: **(giggling louder)** Oh, look! There's no one here yet!

CAROLINE: We'll have to make our own excitement. Hello, Belinda! Nice to see you!

BELINDA: Hello, Caroline! How long has it been? **(They laugh hysterically.)**

CAROLINE: Have a seat, Belinda! Make yourself comfortable.

BELINDA: Oh, what a lovely home you have!

CAROLINE: Thank you! Thank you!

BELINDA: Oh, this is gonna be so much fun!

CAROLINE: Yes it is!

(EDWARD comes down the stairs.)

BELINDA: And who is this handsome man?

CAROLINE: He's so dapper!

BELINDA/CAROLINE: Hello, Edward!

EDWARD: **(not impressed)** Hello. I'm sorry, but I've forgotten your names.

BELINDA: Belinda.

CAROLINE: Caroline.

BELINDA/CAROLINE: We're Belinda and Caroline!

BELINDA: I am Belinda!

CAROLINE: And I am Caroline! *(They laugh even more hysterically.)*

EDWARD: *(stunned)* How could I have forgotten.

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