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SF PERUSALS

# Happy

Robert Caisley

A Samuel French Acting Edition

SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830

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ISBN 978-0-573-70169-6

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## IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

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***HAPPY*** was first produced in a rolling world premiere, as part of the National New Play Network's Continued Life Program at the following theatres:

***HAPPY*** opened on October 19, 2012 at Montana Repertory Theatre (Gregory T. Johnson, Artistic Director) in Missoula, Montana. The director was Jere Hodgin; the set design was by Jason J. McDaniel, featuring original paintings and sculptures by Bradley Allen, Kevin Bell and Jennifer Combe; the costume design was by Laura H. Alvarez; the lighting and sound design was by Morgan Cerovski; the production dramaturg was Anna Dulba-Barnett; the stage manager was Randi Berg. The cast was as follows:

**ALFRED** . . . . . Andy Myers
**EVA** . . . . . Hillary Sea Bard
**EDUARDO** . . . . . Andrew Roa
**MELINDA** . . . . . .Angela Billadeau

***HAPPY*** opened on November 30, 2012 at New Theatre (Ricky J. Martinez, Artistic Director; Eileen Suarez, Managing Director) in Miami, Florida. The director was Ricky J. Martinez; the set design was by Ricky J. Martinez, featuring original visual art by Theresa Marie Callouri; the lighting design was by Eric J. Cantrell; the sound design was by R. Kent Wilson; the production stage manager was Jerry Jensen. The cast was as follows:

**ALFRED** . . . . . Scott Douglas Wilson
**EVA** . . . . . Maria Corina Ramirez
**EDUARDO** . . . . . Ernesto Miyares
**MELINDA** . . . . . Jessica Marion Welch

***HAPPY*** opened on April 5, 2013 at 6th Street Playhouse (Craig A. Miller, Executive Artistic Director) in Santa Rosa, California. The director was Lennie Dean; the set design was by Jesse Dreikosen, featuring original sculptures by Boback Emad; the costume design was by Liz Fay Smith; the lighting design was by April George; the sound design was by Craig A. Miller; the production stage manager was Beulah Vega. The cast was as follows:

**ALFRED** . . . . . Edward McCloud
**EVA** . . . . . Rose Roberts
**EDUARDO** . . . . . Brian Glenn Bryson
**MELINDA** . . . . . Liz Jahren

***HAPPY*** opened on May 30, 2013 at New Jersey Repertory Company (Gabor Barabas, Executive Producer; SuzAnne Barabas, Artistic Director; Jane E. Huber, Managing Director) in Long Branch, New Jersey. The director was SuzAnne Barabas; the scenic design was by Jessica Parks; the costume design was by Patricia E. Doherty; the lighting design was by Jill Nagle; the sound design was by Merek Royce Press; the stage manager was Jennifer Tardibuono. The cast was as follows:

**ALFRED** . . . . . Michael Irvin Pollard
**EVA** . . . . . Susan Maris
**EDUARDO** . . . . . Mark Light-Orr
**MELINDA** . . . . . Wendy Peace

The author wishes to thank Jere Hodgin, Marta Praeger, Jason Loewith, Jojo Ruff and NNPN, the Missoula Writers Colony, Ricky J. Martinez, Eileen Suarez, Lori Celaya, the Idaho Commission on the Arts and National Endowment for the Arts for their support during the development of this play.

## CHARACTERS

**ALFRED REHM –** 40s; he is happy

**MELINDA –** his wife; 40s; she is happy

**EDUARDO –** his friend; 60s; extraordinarily vibrant for his age; speaks with a slight accent; he is happy

**EVA –** 20s, she is not happy

## SETTING

The entire action of the play takes place in Eduardo's apartment, an artist's loft cum living space. There are high ceilings, tall windows, and lots of light.

Whatever furniture exists, it exists amidst the artistic clutter. There are several "industrial" sculptures in progress. One is draped in a tarp.

The space is great; the neighborhood is not.

*This play is dedicated to Jere Hodgin*

*Happiness is the perpetual possession of being well-deceived.*

– Lytton Strachey

# ONE

*(In the darkness before the lights come up we hear a police siren and other sounds of the inner-city.)*

*(At rise:* **ALFRED***, with a bottle of wine and his briefcase, stands awkwardly just inside the entryway to the apartment, in a puddle of water.)*

*(He is drenched from the waist down and is trying to dry himself off, unsuccessfully, with a handkerchief. He is not the least bit perturbed by his saturated condition.)*

*(***EVA** *appears. She's wearing only a towel, having stepped fresh from the shower.)*

**ALFRED.** Oh, sorry. Hello.

**EVA.** Are you a pervert or something?

**ALFRED.** The door was open.

**EVA.** I'm kidding.

**ALFRED.** Oh.

*(He laughs. He smiles.)*

Sorry. I shouldn't have just barged in.

**EVA.** You're all wet.

**ALFRED.** Yes. *(pointing again to the doorway)* The um…Did I startle you? I'm really sorry.

**EVA.** That makes two of us.

**ALFRED.** You're sorry as well?

**EVA.** I'm wet as well. *(snaps her fingers)* Snap!

**ALFRED.** Pardon?

**EVA.** Snap!

It's a stupid game my brother and I played when we were kids. You know: if we *said* the same thing or *wore*

the same shirt or *did* the same thing at the same time. We'd go 'snap!'

*(She snaps her fingers again.)*

**ALFRED.** Oh. I see.

*(He smiles.)*

That sounds fun.

**EVA.** No, it's lame. Kids are lame.

**ALFRED.** *(Not necessarily agreeing)* Right.

*(Beat.)*

**EVA.** You have kids?

**ALFRED.** Yes. A daughter.

**EVA.** You don't look like a father.

**ALFRED.** Well, I am. She's fifteen. *(Enthusiastically)* Want to see a picture?

**EVA.** Not really.

*(Beat.* **ALFRED** *looks around the apartment.)*

**ALFRED.** Must have been nice.

**EVA.** Nice?

**ALFRED.** *(Smiling)* Growing up with a brother. I was an only child.

**EVA.** My brother's dead.

*(***ALFRED** *stops smiling.)*

**ALFRED.** I'm sorry.

**EVA.** You didn't know him.

He threw himself from a hotel window.

A balcony overlooking the Winooski River, spring break of his senior year.

On account of a girl.

*(Long pause.* **ALFRED** *is lost for what to say.)*

**ALFRED.** Where exactly *is* the Winooski River?

*(Pause.)*

**EVA.** Who are you?

**ALFRED.** I'm early, aren't I?

**EVA.** Depends.

**ALFRED.** On what?

**EVA.** What were you expecting?

**ALFRED.** Eduardo?

**EVA.** *(Instant recognition; her demeanor changes.)* Oh, you're that *guy!*

**ALFRED.** Am I? That guy?

**EVA.** Albert.

**ALFRED.** Alfred.

**EVA.** Right!

**ALFRED.** Alfred Rehm. I'm a colleague? At the college. He said dinner Friday.

**EVA.** He did, did he?

**ALFRED.** I think so, yeah. It's Friday night, right?

**EVA.** Yeah, I dunno, I don't keep track.

*(beat)*

Dinner, huh? Well, I guess I have to pay my way somehow.

*(She re-tucks her towel.)*

**ALFRED.** Look, I can come back later.

**EVA.** You wanna drink?

*(She heads to a drinks table and splashes some gin into two glasses.)*

**ALFRED.** I think I'll wait until...

*(She returns, handing* **ALFRED** *the drink he didn't order.)*

**EVA.** Hope you like gin.

**ALFRED.** Fantastic.

**EVA.** There's no ice. I have sensitive teeth.

**ALFRED.** You're Eva, aren't you?

**EVA.** You tell me.

**ALFRED.** Eduardo told me there was someone new in his life.

**EVA.** I guess that would be me then, huh?

**ALFRED.** I guess.

**EVA.** Unless he's keeping secrets.
'Someone new in his life.' Is that what he said, Alfie?

**ALFRED.** That's what he said.

**EVA.** Sounds kinda temporary, doesn't it?

**ALFRED.** I think it sounds hopeful.

**EVA.** I'll guess we'll find out.

*(beat)*

**ALFRED.** Well, it's nice to meet you. Finally.

**EVA.** Is it?

*(pause)*

What's your daughter's name?

**ALFRED.** Claire.

*(***EVA** *just stares at him.)*

*(***ALFRED** *looks around the apartment at some of the sculptures, many in progress.)*

Looks like he's been busy.

**EVA.** Eduardo said you were married.

**ALFRED.** I am married.

**EVA.** You don't look married.

*(***ALFRED** *holds up his hand comically, showing her his wedding ring.)*

**ALFRED.** Fourteen years.

**EVA.** What's that supposed to mean?

**ALFRED.** Nothing. Did Eduardo...?

**EVA.** How come she's not here?

**ALFRED.** Hmmn?

**EVA.** The wifey. Whatsername.

**ALFRED.** Oh, she um, Melinda, we took separate cars, she'll be here.

**EVA.** Belinda.

**ALFRED.** Melinda.

**EVA.** Are you sure?

**ALFRED.** *(smiling)* Pretty sure.

*(weak attempt at humor)* It has been fourteen years.

We took separate cars, we're breaking in a new babysitter, so...

**EVA.** I think Eduardo thinks her name's Belinda. You might wanna clarify that.

*(***ALFRED** *thinks he's supposed to laugh.)*

**ALFRED.** Thanks. I will.

**EVA.** Babysitter? Thought you said your kid was fifteen?

**ALFRED.** Yes.

**EVA.** Your kid's fifteen and he still needs a babysitter?

**ALFRED.** *She.* She has some medical issues.

**EVA.** When I was fifteen I had a parole officer.

*(He's not sure if she's joking.)*

What kind of medical issues?

**ALFRED.** Did um, Eduardo say when he'd be back?

**EVA.** The conversation not scintillating enough for ya?

**ALFRED.** *(laughing)* No, no, I just meant, I could go, you know, and then come back when you're ready. I fear I arrived in the midst of...

*(She smiles.)*

**EVA.** Midst of what? What makes you think I'm not ready?

*(***EVA** *looks at* **ALFRED***.)*

**ALFRED.** Your towel for one thing.

**EVA.** Maybe I always entertain company in a towel. What do you think of that, mister?

What would you say...if I told you...I always entertain company in a towel?

*(beat)*

Hey, how tall are you?*

**ALFRED.** Sorry?

**EVA.** I thought you'd be taller.

**ALFRED.** No, I'm...this tall.

**EVA.** Yeah, when Eduardo said, "My friend Alfred Rehm and his wife might be coming for dinner," I don't know I just pictured this guy who was, you know...taller.

*(***ALFRED** *sets down his briefcase.)*

*(He stands as erect as possible.)*

Is your wife tall?

**ALFRED.** Taller than me.

**EVA.** Well, that's probably why!

**ALFRED.** Why what?

**EVA.** Musta pictured Belinda.

**ALFRED.** Melinda.

**EVA.** That's what I said.

*(She glares at him. He smiles.)*

**ALFRED.** If you prefer I'll withdraw...

*(She guffaws.)*

What's funny?

**EVA.** Some of the things you say. "If you prefer I'll withdraw?" "I fear I arrived in the midst..." Yeah, I don't think people actually say things like that. I mean, do they?

**ALFRED.** Well, I just did, so...the evidence suggests...

**EVA.** See, there you go again: "the evidence suggests."

**ALFRED.** Well, perhaps you have a point.

---

*Please see the Appendix at the end of the script for alternate dialogue.

**EVA.** I do.

I have lots of points.

*(She crosses to refill her glass. She also takes out a cigarette.)*

You smoke?

**ALFRED.** No.

**EVA.** Figgers!

**ALFRED.** Not since college, and then only at parties. When I was drunk. To impress girls.

*(He smiles dumbly. She stares at him.)*

**EVA.** Stay there. I'll be right back.

*(She steps onto the fire escape.)*

*(off)* Eduardo gets pissed if I smoke inside. I've been banished to the fire escape.

**ALFRED.** Oh, no!

**EVA.** *(off)* I'm actually quitting.

**ALFRED.** Good for you.

**EVA.** *(off)* I'm doing pretty good, too.

**ALFRED.** You doing one of those patches?

**EVA.** *(off)* No, it's my own system. I started by limiting myself to three puffs per cigarette, then two, and now I'm down to one little puff. It's pretty affective.

**ALFRED.** Great, how long you been on the program?

**EVA.** *(off)* Four an' a half years.

*(She steps back in, blowing smoke out the door.)*

All done!

You teach English, right?

**ALFRED.** Not really, I...

**EVA.** Eduardo said you were this great writer.

**ALFRED.** That's not accurate.

**EVA.** Got published in the *New York Times* and everything.

**ALFRED.** I wrote a few things. And it was *The New Yorker.*

**EVA.** What things?

**ALFRED.** A few short stories.

**EVA.** About what?

**ALFRED.** A long time ago.
Before I started teaching.

**EVA.** Teaching *English.*

**ALFRED.** Well, no, I teach French Literature, actually.

**EVA.** Sounds boring.

**ALFRED.** I enjoy it.

**EVA.** Oh, yeah?

**ALFRED.** Mostly 18th and 19th Century.
Dabble from time to time in some Post-War stuff.

**EVA.** Still sounds boring.

*(beat)*

So you speak French?

**ALFRED.** Well...

**EVA.** The last guy I lived with was bi-lingual.

**ALFRED.** Great.

**EVA.** But he was a dick.
He hit me once and I said 'If you touch me again I'll kill you' and I meant it too. He got all apologetic, like guys do, and sort of laughed it off, but I knew he would do it again. So when he went off to his shit job the next morning...?

**ALFRED.** *(slack-jawed)* Uhuh.

**EVA.** ...I poured lighter fluid all over his mattress and sheets and pillowcases and the sweats he slept in and when he flopped into bed that night, he was all, what the fuck is that smell? And I walked out of the bathroom, with my bags packed, a candle burning and I walked up to him, walked right up beside the bed and leaned in real close all sweet and sexy like and I said, 'I can either stay or go, stay or go, it's entirely up to you. What do you want me to do?'

*(She turns to* **ALFRED**. *Beat.)*

**ALFRED.** I'm not bilingual.

My French is...passable...at best.

**EVA.** I thought you said you teach French Literature?

**ALFRED.** I do teach French Literature.

**EVA.** How can you teach French Literature with passable French?

**ALFRED.** French Literature in *translation.*

**EVA.** Translation into what?

**ALFRED.** English.

**EVA.** So: you *do* teach English!

**ALFRED.** Ah, that's...another one of your points.

*(simultaneously)*

**EVA.**...the point I was trying to make.

**ALFRED.** Snap!

*(***ALFRED** *laughs at his own joke.)*

*(***EVA** *looks at the floor where* **ALFRED** *is standing.)*

*(There's a puddle forming.)*

**EVA.** You want another drink?

**ALFRED.** I'm good.

*(She pours him another drink anyway.)*

**EVA.** You made a puddle on Eduardo's floor.

**ALFRED.** *(He hasn't noticed until now.)* Oh, god, I'm sorry, I've just been standing here like an idiot, chatting away, do you have anything to mop it up?

**EVA.** What like a towel or something?

*(***ALFRED** *looks concernedly at her as she adjusts her towel.)*

I'm kidding. You should see your face.

Your eyes went like...

*(She gives a moronic wide-eyed look.)*

Take 'em off.

**ALFRED.** Excuse me?

**EVA.** Pants.

**ALFRED.** No, that's fine.

**EVA.** Come on, dummy, strip. I'll hang them over the vent, they'll be dry in no time. I don't want you sitting down to dinner in wet chinos. It'll fuck up the leather.

**ALFRED.** Well, I...

*(She starts out.)*

**EVA.** I'll grab you a pair of sweats or something.

*(***ALFRED** *closes the front door and then sheepishly removes his wet slacks and socks. He keeps his boxers on self-consciously.)*

**EVA.** *(from off)* Hey, as long as you're here, what d'ya want for dinner? You don't have any allergies do you?

**ALFRED.** No. Anything's fine.

**EVA.** *(off)* What about Belinda?

**ALFRED.** Melinda.

**EVA.** *(off)* Right, what about her? She allergic?

**ALFRED.** Really, we'll eat just about anything, don't go to extremes.

**EVA.** *(off)* Extremes?
How about shish kebabs?

**ALFRED.** Great!

**EVA.** *(off)* We got a grill out on the fire escape.

**ALFRED.** You need any help?

**EVA.** *(off)* Yeah, we got a grill out on the fire escape.

**ALFRED.** Oh, okay, got it!

*(***ALFRED** *exits briefly.)*

*(off)* Is there a trick to this?

**EVA.** *(off)* Yeah, you see the button?

**ALFRED.** *(off)* Uhuh.

**EVA.** *(off)* The red one?

**ALFRED.** *(off)* Okay?

**EVA.** *(off)* That says 'Push to start'?

**ALFRED.** *(off)* Yeah?

**EVA.** *(off)* That's the trick.

*(We hear the 'click' as he starts the grill. He returns.)*

**ALFRED.** It's all fired up.

**EVA.** *(off)* Thank god there's a man in charge.

*(***ALFRED** *laughs at himself.)*

Eduardo went to get wine by-the-way. In case you're wondering where your bosom buddy went.

**ALFRED.** Oh, I brought some too.

*(He unwraps his bottle of wine and places it on the drinks table.)*

**EVA.** *(off)* I don't know why. He's got like three hundred bottles back here he's "saving for a special occasion" but no occasion ever seems special enough...

*(***EVA** *reenters in an oversized work shirt that obviously belongs to Eduardo and a pair of woolly and hideously colored socks. She has pair of Adidas tracksuit pants over her shoulder. She has lotion.)*

*(***ALFRED** *can't help but look at her legs.)*

**EVA.** *(cont.)*...so when he's at school I drink his good shit.

*(She tosses* **ALFRED** *the towel she was just wearing. He begins to sop up the puddle he made.)*

You're not gonna rat me out are you?

**ALFRED.** No. No, no, it'll be our little secret.

**EVA.** You promise?

**ALFRED.** I promise.

**EVA.** Swear?

**ALFRED.** I swear.

*(She finally hands him the tracksuit pants. He goes back to cleaning his puddle. She applies lotion to her legs.)*

**EVA.** Were you just looking at my legs?

**ALFRED.** I, sorry?

**EVA.** Were you: looking at my legs?

**ALFRED.**...no, I, what?

**EVA.** Don't lie, Alfie.

**ALFRED.** I...I...

**EVA.** I'm kidding!!! You are so easy to get.

*(***ALFRED** *laughs.)*

You were though, right?

*(***ALFRED** *stares at her.)*

It's okay. I have nice legs. I'm not oblivious. You can tell me.

*(***ALFRED** *smiles awkwardly. Beat.)*

**EVA.** *(cont.)* You don't mention the wine, I don't mention the legs. Deal?

*(***ALFREDS** *nods.)*

How'd you get so wet anyhow?

**ALFRED.** Oh, yes, well, funny story, all that rain we had yesterday? I got here, I parked my car across from the pharmacist...

**EVA.** It rained yesterday?

**ALFRED.** Yeah, yes all day. All week, actually, there's been a deluge. You didn't notice?

**EVA.** I was asleep.

**ALFRED.** All week?

*(She frowns at him and reclines on the couch with her gin.* **ALFRED** *finishes cleaning up the mess and stands shyly behind the couch.* **EVA** *makes no attempt to give him any 'privacy.' He turns upstage embarrassedly and sneaks his boxer shorts off before slipping on the track pants.)*

**ALFRED.** Anyway, I'm trying to cross at the corner by that pawn shop...and there's this puddle, I mean, I'm talking on the scale of Lake Superior...

**EVA.** Yeah, I sleep a lot okay? Is that a crime or something now?

*(Beat.* **ALFRED** *resumes his story.)*

**ALFRED.**...and I think to myself, I can navigate around this, or leap over it, and as I'm assessing the most favorable route...this guy, this...

**EVA.** *(sits right up)* What guy?

**ALFRED.** This...I don't know, some guy in an SUV...he flies past and all I see is this wall of water, this *tsunami* about to engulf me. So.

**EVA.** Fucker!

**ALFRED.** Well, *he* didn't know...

**EVA.** Bullshit.

**ALFRED.** No.

**EVA.** Bullshit, I bet he gunned it, I bet he saw you standing there, a prime target, and I bet you anything that fucker gunned it right for that puddle.

**ALFRED.** I think it was an accident.

**EVA.** Yeah, right. What color was the SUV?

**ALFRED.** I don't know...

**EVA.** *(sotto voce)* That fucker!

**ALFRED.** I'm sure had he known what transpired he'd have felt terribly. I'm just happy my reflex was to back up. You know? If I hadn't stepped back from the curb like I did it would be more than my pants that are drenched. So: silver lining.

*(She suddenly smiles and nods her head.)*

**EVA.** Oh, right, that's right!

**ALFRED.** Hmm?

**EVA.** Makes sense.

**ALFRED.** What?

**EVA.** Eduardo told me that's how you were.

**ALFRED.** How am I?

**EVA.** Happy.

**ALFRED.** Happy?

**EVA.** You're happy. He said you were this really happy guy.

**ALFRED.** I am?

**EVA.** Like all the time. Like nothing bothers you. Like ever.

**ALFRED.** He said that? Eduardo...

**EVA.** 'He's a cheery fucker.' His *exact* words. *(imitating* **EDUARDO***)* You know in that *accent.*

*(***ALFRED** *and* **EVA** *for the first time exchange a shared laugh at* **EDUARDO***'s expense.)*

**ALFRED.** Interesting.
I never really thought about it.

*(He thinks about it:)*

I suppose I am fairly content.

**EVA.** No, he said it was more than that, more than content, he talked about you like it was...

**ALFRED.** What?

**EVA.** You know, like it was, like you were...

**ALFRED.** Uhuh?

**EVA.** I don't know...'freakishly happy'...

**ALFRED.** Freakish?

**EVA.** His words, not mine.

**ALFRED.** How can one be freakishly happy...?

**EVA.** That's exactly what I said.

**ALFRED.** That's funny. That's...that's funny, he said that?

**EVA.** And then goes, 'Happy in spite of everything.'

*(She crosses for another drink.)*

Sure you don't want another drink?

*(beat)*

**ALFRED.** In spite of everything?
That was the actual phrase?

Huh.

Weird.

*(beat)*

What do you think he meant by that?

**EVA.** Got me.

**ALFRED.** When was this?

**EVA.** Oh, he loves you, Alfie, don't worry about it.

**ALFRED.** I'm not worried, I just...*you* know...out of curiosity.

**EVA.** I guess you guys are pretty close, huh? He calls you his brother.

**ALFRED.** I think that's just his Cuban eccentricity.

**EVA.** He said you really saved his ass after his divorce.

**ALFRED.** He had a rough patch there for a while.

**EVA.** He talked about these little weekend trips you two would go on together. Little male getaways.

**ALFRED.** We did a few of those, yeah, years ago. It was fun.

**EVA.** *Man*cations. That's what you called 'em?

**ALFRED.** That's what *he* called them. That's ancient history.

**EVA.** Yeah, well he talks about it all the time. Said you really helped him out. You healed him. Just to be around someone who was so happy all the time, in spite of everything, it really helped him put his own shit in perspective.

**ALFRED.** Hmmn.

He said that?

**EVA.** He didn't mean anything by it, he was just filling me in on your...character, you know, giving me some background and stuff, in anticipation of our eventual meeting, I guess.

*(beat)*

You know, so I'd be prepared.

**ALFRED.** Prepared?

**EVA.** So it wouldn't be a surprise.

**ALFRED.** What?

Surprised by what?

**EVA.** So I wouldn't be put off by you.

**ALFRED.** I don't under...

**EVA.** Your demeanor?

**ALFRED.** No...what exactly?...I'm not exactly sure I'm following the thread of your...

*(She has returned with the bottle of gin, and dribbles some more into* **ALFRED***'s glass. He instinctively takes a gulp and she dribbles in a little more, then returns to the couch and nurses the remainder of the bottle.)*

Thanks for the pants by the way.

**EVA.** You're welcome.

Don't take this the wrong way.

**ALFRED.** Okay.

**EVA.** Alfred. I don't trust happy people.

I never have.

Eduardo knows this about me.

He was just being gallant.

**ALFRED.** *(vaguely)* Right.

**EVA.** I think they're phoney.

I think they're hiding something.

I think they're devious.

**ALFRED.** Devious?

**EVA.** I think *so.* Yeah.

**ALFRED.** *Happy* people are devious?

*(She nods.)*

**EVA.** They're lying to themselves, and everyone around them. I only trust people who are unhappy. Authentic people.

**ALFRED.** That's um...interesting philosophy.

*(He smiles. He scratches his head.)*

What are you doing with Eduardo then? *(laughs)* Pardon my cheekiness.

**EVA.** Eduardo's not happy.

**ALFRED.** Eduardo's not happy?

**EVA.** Is that some strategy? Repeating what I say?

**ALFRED.** I'm confused.

**EVA.** Eduardo.
He's not happy, okay?

**ALFRED.** Yes he is.

**EVA.** Trust me, he's not.

**ALFRED.** Sure he had a dark spot, but that was years ago. Now he's one of the happiest people I know.

**EVA.** Prove it. Can you prove it?

**ALFRED.** He's got his work...

**EVA.** *(makes the sound of a game show buzzer)* Wrong answer!

**ALFRED.** ...he's highly respected in his field...

**EVA.** His *field*?

**ALFRED.** ...his paintings sell for big money, his son just had a baby. He's a grandfather now.

**EVA.** Big whoop!
That's not happy.
He's not happy. Ask him.
He's miserable.

**ALFRED.** He's got *you*.

**EVA.** I'm not happy.
Do I look happy?

**ALFRED.** You look fine.

**EVA.** I've been drinking gin all day.

*(beat)*

I don't know a single person that's not high that's happy.
Are you high, Alfred?

**ALFRED.** You mean *high* high?
Am I...?
No.

**EVA.** And yet you claim you're happy.

*(***ALFRED** *laughs.)*

He laughs.

**ALFRED.** Well I am. So's my wife. We're very happy.

**EVA.** And I say you're not.

And Eduardo feels the same way.

*(pause)*

**ALFRED.** Don't be ridiculous.

Don't be ridiculous.

**EVA.** You don't believe me? Ask him.

When he comes through that door. Ask the man.

*(She stares at him.)*

*(He gives a little laugh.)*

*(He looks at his watch.)*

**EVA.** *(cont.)* You like bell peppers?

**ALFRED.** Uhuh.

**EVA.** Those shish kebabs aren't gonna shish themselves.

*(***EVA** *exits.)*

*(***ALFRED** *stands there for a moment silently looking off in the direction she left.)*

*(He crosses to the drinks table and begins to open the bottle of wine he brought.)*

**ALFRED.** *(calling off to her)* Melinda should be here any second.

**EVA.** *(from off)* Who?

**ALFRED.** Melinda.

It's not that far of a drive.

And there was plenty of parking right in front.

I should probably warn her about that puddle though, right?

And the puddle bandits.

Preying on innocent victims.

*(***ALFRED** *walks around the loft, looking at some of the sculptures.)*

Eduardo.

He's never said that to me before.

The happy thing.

Never mentioned anything of the kind to me before. Ever.

**EVA.** *(off)* Men don't tell other men what they're really thinking.

**ALFRED.** Yes they do.

*(beat)*

Why not?

**EVA.** *(off)* Do you?

**ALFRED.** We're very close.

**EVA.** *(off)* That wasn't the question.

**ALFRED.** We've been friends for years.

**EVA.** *(off, prophetically) Fourteen* years!

Onions okay?

**ALFRED.** How long have you been together?

**EVA.** *(off)* A month, ten days, half-hour, what does it matter?

**ALFRED.** Out of curiosity.

**EVA.** *(off)* That killed the cat, didn't it?

**ALFRED.** Why would he confide something like that to you and not to me?

**EVA.** *(poking her head briefly back into the room)* You're not fucking him.

*(***EVA** *disappears again.)*

*(***ALFRED** *takes a sip of wine, as…)*

*(***EDUARDO** *pushes energetically through the door, with baguettes and several bottles of wine tucked under both arms.)*

*(His energy and charisma is instantly enchanting, and we should never for a moment wonder why such a young woman as* **EVA** *is living with him. His hair is wild, and*

*he is unshaven. He wears a ridiculously brightly colored scarf, which he never takes off, and a ratty t-shirt under a very expensive full-length camel hair topcoat. He is limping.)*

**EDUARDO.** Hello brother!

**ALFRED.** Hi stranger.

**EDUARDO.** Come here you fucker!

*(***EDUARDO** *wraps* **ALFRED** *in a bread and wine bottle embrace and kisses him on both cheeks.)*

**EDUARDO.** *(calling off)* Honey, I'm home! *(to* **ALFRED***)* I like to say that. It's our little joke. *(Re: a bottle)* Grab that. Get the door, can you?

*(***ALFRED** *relieves him of one of the bottles, closes the door.)*

*(***EDUARDO** *crosses to the bar to set down the bottles of wine and baguettes.* **ALFRED** *notices his limp.)*

**ALFRED.** Are you okay? What happened?

**EDUARDO.** Some asshole tried to run me down in the street.

**ALFRED.** What?

**EDUARDO.** I memorized his plate number, I see this bastard again, I kick out his taillights.

*(***EDUARDO** *records the plate numbers in his smartphone, and finally sits.)*

This neighborhood. I fucking love it.

Great spaces.

Shit neighbors.

Two years from now it'll be hip to live here and there'll be a Starbucks and tapas bar on every corner. For now, we have to be vigilant.

*(He suddenly looks at* **ALFRED** *as if for the first time.)*

Look at you! Your stupid face!

It's good to see you, man. How long has it been?

**ALFRED.** Too long.

**EDUARDO.** Come here you fucker!

*(***EDUARDO** *rises; his ankle gives him some trouble.)*

**ALFRED.** Oh my god. You should ice that.

**EVA.** *(off)* Hey, is that my lover returned?

**EDUARDO.** It's Eduardo.

**EVA.** *(off)* Oh, okay, let me know when my lover returns.

**EDUARDO.** This is her joke every day. She's crazy, I love it. Sorry I abandoned you, we needed wine. And this bread, I had to get this bread, smell this bread.

*(***EDUARDO** *sticks the baguette right under* **ALFRED***'s nose.)*

**ALFRED.** It's fine, don't worry about it.

**EDUARDO.** No, it's amazing, right?

**ALFRED.** Yeah, wow, it is good.

**EDUARDO.** This Armenian guy.

**ALFRED.** Your ankle?

**EDUARDO.** Little family bakery, it's ten blocks, but worth every step, I need a drink. You want a drink? So, did you meet Eva?

**ALFRED.** Yes, we um...I did.

*(***EDUARDO** *limps over to the drinks table, pours himself a glass of wine.)*

**EDUARDO.** *(He calls off.)* Eva, I got the wine!

**EVA.** *(off)* We didn't need wine, d'you get bread?

**EDUARDO.** I got bread!

**ALFRED.** Is your ankle okay? Do you need some ice or something?

**EDUARDO.** There is no ice on the premises. She has sensitive teeth.

So what are you drinking?

**ALFRED.** I had some gin. I brought some wine.

**EDUARDO.** So what do you think?

**ALFRED.** I prefer the wine.

**EDUARDO.** No, stupido. Eva. What do you think? She's great, no?

**ALFRED.** She's great.

**EDUARDO.** *(conspiratorially)* She has a tattoo.

*(beat)*

Where's your wife?

**ALFRED.** Running late.

**EDUARDO.** She needs to meet Eva.

They're so alike.

*(***ALFRED** *doesn't think so.)*

They'll be great friends. Like us.

They can have lunches together.

They can walk through museums.

It'll be fantastic.

Eva doesn't have any friends.

**ALFRED.** Really.

**EDUARDO.** It's weird, because she's so...accessible, you know?

So she better show up.

**ALFRED.** She'll be here.

**EDUARDO.** I've been telling Eva all about her.

**ALFRED.** Yeah?

**EDUARDO.** How she's starting her own company now you've got in-home care. What is it again?

**ALFRED.** Promotional items.

**EDUARDO.** Right!

**ALFRED.** Listen Eduardo...

**EDUARDO.** Pens, refrigerator magnets...

**ALFRED.** She didn't seem to know.

About Claire.

Asking me questions like she had no idea, you know?

**EDUARDO.** She was being polite.

Of course I told her.

Or maybe...maybe she's unsure of how to approach the subject.

She doesn't know you.

*(***EDUARDO** *walks* **ALFRED** *out of earshot of* **EVA**.*)*

But honestly, brother. What you think of her? It's important to me. I have these feelings, you know?

These deep feelings.

It's fucking weird.

It's been a long time.

And I swore to myself...

I value and trust your opinion in all things, so whatever you got to say.

*(pause)*

**ALFRED.** I just met her

**EDUARDO.** *(laughing)* Me too!

Seriously!

I don't think it's even a month!

**ALFRED.** *(not a question, an observation)* And she's moved in already.

**EDUARDO.** Isn't that great?

*(like it's some grand philosophical statement:)*

I mean, there was this moment...when she *wasn't* here, and then she *was* here, and everything just made sense, you know?

*(***ALFRED** *doesn't know.)*

**ALFRED.** How old is she?

**EDUARDO.** Hhhmm?

**ALFRED.** Out of curiosity.

*(***EDUARDO** *has never actually considered this question.)*

*(He considers the question:)*

**EDUARDO.** I don't know.

**ALFRED.** You don't know?

**EDUARDO.** It never came up.

**ALFRED.** The topic never...?

**EDUARDO.** We talk of other things.
Life. The universe.

*(***EDUARDO** *looks at* **ALFRED***.)*

*(pause)*

*(calling off)* Eva?

**EVA.** *(off)* Is that my lover calling?

**EDUARDO.** It's Eduardo.

**EVA.** *(off)* Oh, you're still here?

**EDUARDO.** I'm still here.

**EVA.** *(off)* Don't let my lover find out. He's insanely jealous.

**EDUARDO.** I have a question:

**EVA.** *(off)* So do I:

**EDUARDO.** You go first.

**EVA.** *(off)* Is Alfred a vegetarian?

**ALFRED.** I'm not a vegetarian.

**EDUARDO.** He's not a vegetarian.

**EVA.** *(off)* What about his wife?

**EDUARDO.** What about your wife?

**ALFRED.** She's not either.

**EVA.** *(off)* What did he say?

**EDUARDO.** They're both carnivores.

**EVA.** *(off)* Okay your turn.

**EDUARDO.** Hold old are you?

**EVA.** *(off)* Twenty-two.

**EDUARDO.** She's twenty-two.

*(***ALFRED** *nods.)*

*(***EDUARDO** *considers* **EVA***'s age for first time.)*

*(Then he suddenly notices the track pants* **ALFRED***'s wearing.)*

**EDUARDO.** Hey. Are you wearing my pants?

*(***EVA** *enters.)*

*(Both men stare at her.)*

*(She is now dressed in a very tight, very sexy, but very elegant cocktail dress. She looks entirely different than she did at the start of the play. Her makeup and hair is totally Goth.)*

**EDUARDO.** Ay, Dios mio! You look amazing.

**EVA.** I know.

**EDUARDO.** Come here.

**EVA.** Say please.

**EDUARDO.** Come here, *please.*

*(She walks over to him very slowly.)*

Kiss me.

**EVA.** Beg me.

**EDUARDO.** I beg you!

**EVA.** Beg me some more.

**EDUARDO.** I beg you some more.

*(They kiss.)*

*(It's a long one.)*

*(***ALFRED** *watches them, then gets uncomfortable.)*

*(He drinks.)*

*(***EDUARDO** *pulls away.)*

**EDUARDO.** *(cont.)* You've been smoking.

**EVA.** No I haven't.

**EDUARDO.** I can taste it.

**EVA.** I had one puff.

**EDUARDO.** Did you smoke inside?

**EVA.** *(Shakes her head)* Uh-uhn.

**EDUARDO.** Are you lying to me?

**EVA.** I don't lie.

Ask Alfie.

*(***EDUARDO** *looks at* **ALFRED***.)*

*(pause)*

*(We hear a knock at the door, and then from off, a tremulous voice:)*

**MELINDA.** *(off)* Guys? Hello?

**EDUARDO.** There she is!

**ALFRED.** Come in, honey

**MELINDA.** *(off)* I'm sorry, I know I'm late.

**EDUARDO.** Get in here.

*(***MELINDA** *appears.)*

*(She is absolutely drenched from head to foot.)*

*(She is clutching what must have been a lovely bouquet of fresh flowers, which is now quite droopy and bedraggled. She stands, herself droopy and bedraggled, in the entryway.)*

**MELINDA.** Hello.

**ALFRED.** Oh, my god!

**MELINDA.** Could I bother you for a towel?

**EVA.** *(snapping her fingers)* Snap!!!

*(blackout)*

## TWO

*(A few minutes later.)*

*(***MELINDA** *is in the bathroom. We can hear a blow-dryer going.* **ALFRED** *is trying to arrange the bedraggled flowers in a vase.* **EDUARDO** *is setting out plates and pouring wine.)*

**EDUARDO.** This prick.

**ALFRED.** Eduardo...

**EDUARDO.** This prick's been terrorizing the neighborhood for weeks.

**ALFRED.** She didn't say it was a black SUV.

**EDUARDO.** How much you wanna bet?

**ALFRED.** ...and even if it *was*...

**EDUARDO.** ...I'll put money on it. You wanna put money on it?

**ALFRED.**...you know how many black SUVs are on the road?

**EDUARDO.** How many?

*(beat)*

**ALFRED.** Okay I don't have a *figure* for you...

**EDUARDO.** I'm telling you, it's the same guy. A skinny fucker.

**ALFRED.** You're funny, you know that?

**EDUARDO.** Skinny fucker with a floppy hat. He got you, he tried to get me and now he's assaulted your wife.

**ALFRED.** Assaulted? We got splashed with dirty rain water, not robbed at knife-point.

*(***EVA** *enters with a sizzling plate of shish kebabs still on the skewers.)*

It's a coincidence.

**EVA.** Bullshit.

**ALFRED.** And I think 'terrorizing' is an overstatement. That looks delicious, Eva.

**EVA.** Thanks Alfie.

**EDUARDO.** The guy who nailed you, was he wearing a hat? Think!

**ALFRED.** I have no idea. I didn't see what he looked like.

**EDUARDO.** Think!

**EVA.** Was he tall or short?

**ALFRED.** I didn't see what he looked like.

**EVA.** He was short, right? Slinking behind the wheel.

*(***MELINDA** *appears wearing a plush bathrobe. Her hair is 'poofy'.)*

**MELINDA.** Hey, guys, sorry.

**EDUARDO.** Dinner's ready.

**MELINDA.** Wonderful.

**ALFRED.** Hi, sweetheart, you okay?

**MELINDA.** I'm fine now. Thanks.

**EVA.** Nice hair.

*(***MELINDA** *and* **ALFRED** *both laugh as* **MELINDA** *pats her hair down.)*

**MELINDA.** Oh, gosh, how embarrassing. Is it all sticking up? I'd just had it done, too.

**EVA.** Want some product?

**MELINDA.** No.

**EVA.** I can fix it up. My mom was a stylist.

*(***EVA** *exits.)*

**MELINDA.** No, it's no bother.

**ALFRED.** It looks fine.

**MELINDA.** Seriously, I'll be fine. I'll just try not to call too much attention to myself for the remainder of the evening.

*(***MELINDA** *laughs at her own joke, then notices the flowers drooping in their vase.)*

Oh dear. Sorry about the flowers. I don't think they're going to make it.

*(***EVA** *returns with some hair goop. She situates herself behind* **MELINDA** *on the couch, sort of straddling her.)*

**EVA.** Scootch forward. Keep still.

**MELINDA.** Oh, okay.

Thanks for the robe, by the way. This is really soft *(to* **ALFRED***)* feel this *(to* **EVA***)* where did you get this?

**EVA.** At a store.

*(***EVA** *starts applying product to Melinda's hair.)*

**ALFRED.** Your color's coming black. I was worried. You were blue.

**MELINDA.** My teeth were chattering while I was drying my hair.

**EDUARDO.** We heard.

*(simultaneously)*

**ALFRED.** We heard.

**EDUARDO.** *(pushing her wine glass toward her)* Here get this down you.

**MELINDA.** Thanks.

I always think of my childhood when my teeth chatter.

**EVA.** Why?

**MELINDA.** You know. Little kids.

**EVA.** No. Why?

**MELINDA.** They seem impervious to the cold when they're out tearing around having fun. The minute they come through that door, their little teeth start chattering and they can't stop. And it's very funny.

**EVA.** Do you have kids?

*(***ALFRED** *looks at* **EVA***.)*

**MELINDA.** Yes. Yes we do. Just one.

**EVA.** Do his teeth chatter?

**MELINDA.** Her. We have a daughter.

**EVA.** That's cool.

**MELINDA.** Her name's Claire.

**ALFRED.** *(smiling)* I told you that.

**EVA.** Did you? Shit, I'm sorry.

**EDUARDO.** She's forgetful.

**EVA.** I was discombobulated. Alfred surprised me in the shower.

*(***EDUARDO** *pops a cork on another bottle.)*

*(***MELINDA** *looks at* **ALFRED***.)*

**MELINDA.** What...?

**EVA.** I'm kidding.

*(***EVA** *tilts* **MELINDA'***s head up to sculpt her bangs.)*

Chin up. You've actually got great hair.

**MELINDA.** Oh, thanks.

**EVA.** You just don't wear it in a cut that's particularly flattering.

*(pause)*

**MELINDA.** I left my wet things in the tub if that's okay.

**EVA.** You should go shorter. Accentuate your features.

**MELINDA.** It's always been this length.

**EVA.** That's what I'm saying. It's like you're hiding behind all this *length*. Who does your hair?

**MELINDA.** There's a woman I've...

*(***EVA** *stands.)*

**EVA.** She sucks. I could do it right now if you want.

**MELINDA.** What?

**EVA.** Cut your hair.

Right now.

Bring you up to date.

**MELINDA.** No, no really, I...

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