Acting Edition

Significant Other

by Joshua Harmon

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SAMUEL FRENCH

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SODA CREEK SONGS (ASCAP)

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SIGNIFICANT OTHER was developed during a residency at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center's National Playwrights Conference in 2013. Preston Whiteway, Executive Director; Wendy C. Goldberg, Artistic Director.

The world premiere was produced in New York City by Roundabout Theatre Company (Todd Haimes, Artistic Director; Harold Wolpert, Managing Director; Julia C. Levy, Executive Director; Sydney Beers, General Manager) at the Harold and Miriam Steinberg Center for Theatre / Laure Pels Theatre on June 18, 2015. The cast was as follows:

JORDAN BERMAN . . . . . Gideon Glick
LAURA . . . . . Lindsay Mendez
VANESSA . . . . . Carra Patterson
KIKI . . . . . Sas Goldberg
HELENE BERMAN . . . . . Barbara Barrie
WILL / CONRAD / TONY . . . . . John Behlmann
ZACH / EVAN / ROGER . . . . . Luke Smith

The Roundabout Theatre Company production of *SIGNIFICANT OTHER* premiered on Broadway at the Booth Theatre on March 2, 2017. The performance was directed by Trip Cullman, with scenic design by Mark Wendland, costume design by Kaye Voyce, choreography by Sam Pinkleton, lighting design by Japhy Weideman, and sound design by Daniel Kluger. The production stage manager was Samantha Watson. The cast was as follows:

JORDAN BERMAN . . . . . Gideon Glick
LAURA . . . . . Lindsay Mendez
VANESSA . . . . . Rebecca Naomi Jones
KIKI . . . . . Sas Goldberg
HELENE BERMAN . . . . . Barbara Barrie
WILL / CONRAD / TONY . . . . . John Behlmann
ZACH / EVAN / ROGER . . . . . Luke Smith

CHARACTERS

JORDAN BERMAN – late twenties
LAURA – late twenties
VANESSA – late twenties
KIKI – late twenties
HELENE BERMAN – eighties
WILL – late twenties, also plays **CONRAD**, **TONY**
ZACH – late twenties, also plays **EVAN**, **ROGER**

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The scenes of this play should bleed into each other.

Because love bleeds.

Ugh.

"When I'm twenty-eight, I'm going to get married and be very much in love with someone who is poor and fascinating until he's thirty and then fabulously wealthy and very secure after that. And we're going to have children who wear overalls and flannel shirts and are kind and independent, with curly blond hair. And we'll have great sex and still hold hands when we travel to China when we're sixty."

– Janie Blumberg in *Isn't It Romantic* by Wendy Wasserstein

ACT ONE

*(**KIKI**'s bachelorette party. A low-key affair, but still, she's decked out in a tiara, feather boa. She's emotional. And a little drunk. Maybe they all are.)*

KIKI. I wasn't looking. That's the point – that's the point I've been trying to make.

LAURA. Right.

KIKI. When I was looking, when I was looking, I never found anyone. And I got so depressed. Because I was like looking for someone to validate me, or to want me, and by wanting me, that would somehow validate me. But then I just stopped thinking about other people and I got to this place where it was all about me.

JORDAN. Like, selfish?

KIKI. Totally selfish. Totally a selfish place. It was like, I'm just gonna do me for a while, you know, the way black girls are like, I'mma do me, have you heard that –

VANESSA. I'm familiar, yes.

KIKI. And then I woke up one morning, and I was like, I'm a genius. I'm gorgeous. I'm amazing. I like basically just like fell in love with myself, and I treated myself the way I would want a man to treat me – better, actually, than any man ever had treated me or even frankly ever could. I bought myself presents *all the time*, anything I saw that I even remotely was like, oooh mayyybe – I bought it, and I would just compliment myself CONSTANTLY. I didn't tell you this because part of me was embarrassed, but I became OBSESSED with myself. But honestly? It was the best two months of my life. And then one night, I was looking in the mirror,

and I was like, hey, foxy lady, what do you want? And I was like, I want an amazing dinner, so I took myself to *Jean Georges*, like, I just took myself there, because no one else was gonna take me, so fuck it, I have the money, sort of, and I want to go, so I went, and that's when…

(She waves her hand to suggest "that's when everything happened," then takes a drink.)

JORDAN. That's amazing! That's – isn't that amazing?

LAURA. It's great, Kiki.

JORDAN. But if you'd asked me, freshman year of college, which one of us would be getting married first, I must admit –

KIKI. LAST! LAST PLACE! LAST!

JORDAN. I wouldn't have – yeah. So Kiki: here's to you. An amazing bachelorette who is going to be an amazing… uhm, an amazing… wife.

KIKI. Oh my god are you kidding? I'm gonna be such a fucked up wife.

VANESSA. Cheers!

LAURA. Cheers!

JORDAN. Mazel Tov, sweetie!

KIKI. To Kiki!

(They all cheers. And sip their drinks.)

You guys?

VANESSA. Yes?

KIKI. Who are you even bringing to this fucking, this wedding?

JORDAN. Each other.

KIKI. Ew. Creepy. No. Why aren't you bringing George?

VANESSA. Because, Kiki. I'm trying to *end* things with George. But then he was like… "don't." So…

KIKI. He's so old.

VANESSA. He isn't that old.

LAURA. How old is he?

VANESSA. Like, mid-50's.

KIKI. EWWW! That's so old. That's so gross. You should bring him.

(To **LAURA**.*)* Now for you, my little school marm... I'm gonna set you up with my cousin Barry, who's disgusting but he'll totally do for a night.

LAURA. I am not a school marm.

KIKI. Oh sweetie. You're like, inside your body, so you can't see what we see, but you're a total scho–

*(***LAURA** *stands up.)*

LAURA. Does a school marm do this?

*(***LAURA** *does some crazy dance move.)*

JORDAN. Go Laura!

LAURA. Or this?

(Some other crazy thing.)

JORDAN. Go Laura!

LAURA. Or this?

(A third dance move.)

KIKI. Fucking YES.

VANESSA. School marms gone wild.

*(***LAURA** *sits down.)*

KIKI. *(To* **JORDAN**.*)* And then this one. This punim. This little punim.

JORDAN. Too hard, Kiki, you're squeezing too hard.

KIKI. Oh my god Will! You'll bring Will. Done.

LAURA. Who's Will?

KIKI. The new guy... At *work*!

VANESSA. We don't *work* with you, drunky. Only Jordan does.

LAURA. Jordan. Who's Will?

JORDAN. I have no idea. We work with four hundred people, how would I know –

KIKI. The new guy, we just hired. I did his screening interview. He's reallllly cuuuuuuute?

JORDAN. And he hasn't been banging down my door? What a shocker.

KIKI. Stooooooop! You're such a pessissist.

JORDAN. Is he even gay?

KIKI. He *looks* gay.

JORDAN. What does *that* mean?

LAURA. Jordan. No.

VANESSA. Don't. Don't.

*(***KIKI** *feels under her crotch.)*

VANESSA. Uhhhhh…

KIKI. For a second I thought I just peed. But I didn't.

(Quick beat.)

Did I? Feel.

LAURA. Uhm, no!

KIKI. Ok then I have to pee. Like, now.

VANESSA. I'll take you. Come on.

KIKI. His name is *Will*. Ok? *Gay* Will. He's gay.

VANESSA. We know. He's a gay. We got it. Thank you.

KIKI. Vanessa?

VANESSA. Kiki?

KIKI. You're the best.

VANESSA. Thank you?

KIKI. No, I'm trying to tell you, you're my favorite. But you can't, you can't tell anyone. You have to – Shhhh.

VANESSA. Uh huh, ok, let's go.

(They exit.)

JORDAN. What did you order her?

LAURA. We should have said something.

JORDAN. Like what?

LAURA. I don't know: Don't marry him?

JORDAN. Oh.

LAURA. Yeah.

JORDAN. Yikes.

LAURA. Yeah.

JORDAN. I mean, he doesn't beat her.

LAURA. Is that our litmus test?

JORDAN. Or, like, verbally abuse her. That I know of.

LAURA. It would be really hard to verbally abuse someone who talks as much as Kiki.

JORDAN. That's true. Poor Kiki.

LAURA. Poor Kiks.

JORDAN. We should just marry each other.

LAURA. Name the date.

JORDAN. I'd be such a good husband to you.

LAURA. Oh I know.

JORDAN. I would cook for you.

LAURA. You'd have to, since I'm totally inept –

JORDAN. And like, rub your feet. Seriously. Buy you magazines when you were sick. Do you remember when you got the flu right when we moved in and I washed your face with a damp towel?

LAURA. You did?

JORDAN. Yes. I even cleaned your *armpits*.

LAURA. I have no memory of that.

JORDAN. Are you fucking kidding me? Laura, I cleaned your fucking armpits.

LAURA. Sorry.

JORDAN. Fuck you.

LAURA. Fuck you.

*(***LAURA** *and* **JORDAN** *lean their heads together.)*

JORDAN. I wish we still lived together.

LAURA. Grown-ups live alone.

JORDAN. We're grown-ups. I keep forgetting that.

But we could still maybe have kids maybe?

LAURA. A boy and a girl?

JORDAN. Obviously.

(Quick beat.)

LAURA. How would we do it?

JORDAN. Turkey baster?

LAURA. So it'd be a sexless marriage.

JORDAN. Would you want to have sex with me?

*(***LAURA** *pretends to throw up.)*

LAURA. What would we name our kids?

JORDAN. We should do one, like, really beautiful biblical name, you know, like Noah, and then –

LAURA. I like Noah.

JORDAN. But the girl should have, some, like totally anachronistic name.

(They think.)

Irma.

LAURA. Irma Berman?

JORDAN. It's a great name.

LAURA. Uh uh.

JORDAN. Is it weird that I mostly want to have kids so I can discipline them?

LAURA. What would our wedding song be? A jazz standard?

JORDAN. Eh. Wouldn't it be more fun to be like, ever-so-slightly subversive with the whole thing?

LAURA. What do you mean?

JORDAN. Like, pick something that's romantic but which is also horrifyingly embarrassing, which you know there are people who choose that song without any irony but if we did it, it'd be like sure it's romantic, but also we're secretly ironically dancing to some *retarded* Mariah Carey early nineties number.

LAURA. Eh. Whitney?

JORDAN. Whitney. Is not. Ironic.

LAURA. No, I guess not.

(Beat.)

JORDAN. Celine.

LAURA. Celine.

(Long Island accent.)

A hundred percent.

JORDAN. *(Same accent.)* A hundred percent.

LAURA. My Heart Will Go On?

JORDAN. That would work –

LAURA. No no no. YES! NO: Because You Loved Me!

JORDAN. You were my strength when I was weak

JORDAN & LAURA. You were my voice when I couldn't

(Unsung: "speak.")

You were my eyes when I couldn't see
You saw the best there was in me
Lifted me up when I couldn't reach
You gave me faiiiith 'cause you believed
I'm everything I am
Because you loved me…

LAURA. Ew!

(They laugh. Beat.)

JORDAN. I would go to City Hall right now.

LAURA. I would too. But it's closed.

JORDAN. I know. It's just… I know life is supposed to be this great mystery, but I actually think it's pretty simple: find someone to go through it with. That's it. That's the, whatever, the secret.

LAURA. You make it sound so easy.

JORDAN. No that's the hardest part. Walking around knowing what the point is, but not being able to live it, and not knowing how to get it, or if I ever even will…

—

(In the office kitchen. **JORDAN** *stands, struck, when* **WILL** *enters, pours a very full cup of coffee, and takes a sip.)*

WILL. Hey.

JORDAN. Hey.

*(***WILL** *exits.)*

—

(At MoMA. Sitting on a bench.)

VANESSA. I broke up with George.

JORDAN. No.

VANESSA. I had to. It had been two years, he's married, it had to stop. He was a wreck. Sobbing, and all like, "it's gonna be so hard to see you in the office every day, you have no idea how much you mean to me."

*(***VANESSA** *laughs to herself.)*

Do you think I'm dead inside?

JORDAN. I think it's good you broke up with George. You've made room for someone new.

VANESSA. Kiki wants to set me up at the wedding with one of *Conrad's* friends. Death cannot come soon enough. And the fucking bridesmaids dresses cost a fortune, so…

JORDAN. But you don't have to pay for that?

VANESSA. Oh yes I do.

JORDAN. That sucks.

VANESSA. But Kiki was like, don't worry ladies, I know it's a lot but it's worth it 'cause you can definitely wear it again.

JORDAN. Can you?

VANESSA. You'll decide when you see it. What's she having you read?

JORDAN. I think something from Dr. Seuss?

VANESSA. Of course she is.

JORDAN. It's gonna be fun.

VANESSA. Have you ever been to a wedding?

JORDAN. I mean, not since I was like eight.

VANESSA. They're not fun. They're disturbing.

(Quick beat.)

Being alive is so weird.

(They stare at the painting in front of them.)

Why am I so obsessed with this painting?

JORDAN. I guess Rousseau just speaks to you. The jungle, the naked lady on the couch –

VANESSA. The whole thing. Yeah.

JORDAN. Who are you?

VANESSA. Uhm… I think today I'm maybe, maybe I'm that bird, near the top, sitting on the orange tree.

JORDAN. Go on.

VANESSA. Birds have wings so they can fly. But that bird's just sitting there. It's not flying. But it can.

JORDAN. Vanessa! That was so hopeful! I am so proud of you!

VANESSA. Fuck you who are you?

JORDAN. I think I'm the black woman in the middle playing a flute.

VANESSA. That's not a flute.

JORDAN. I'm like playing this song and the naked person on the couch doesn't even care but everyone looks at the naked person anyway so I might as well not even be in the painting at all.

VANESSA. Do you want to maybe unpack that feeling a little bit?

JORDAN. It was that office pool party last week.

VANESSA. What happened?

JORDAN. I don't even know, and just like, even just the fact that I have to say my *office pool party* makes me want to kill myself. We go to the CFO's country club, we all

have to schlep out to Westchester but, you know, free booze, and the pool, a bunch of the guys go off and play golf. Very Gatsby-esque-ish. It's actually kinda nice, actually.

VANESSA. Ok.

JORDAN. I never swim. Obviously. I would never take my shirt off in front of people I work with.

VANESSA. You have this image of yourself as being, like, Shamu the baby orca whale. You're actually totally adorable, you have to –

JORDAN. I hate my body, let's not go into it, just let me tell my story.

So I'm just like, pasty boy on the side with the like sad polo shirt drinking, like, a drink, or whatever, and –

KIKI. Conrad's mom is being so cheap and I'm like, lady, I agreed to have this wedding in Kentucky for *you* so give me my goddamn photo booth.

JORDAN. Kiki's going a mile a minute but I'm not listening.

EVAN. Oh my god! Oh my god!

JORDAN. This really annoying laugher from work is going *crrrrazy*. I've told you about Evan? He's this kinda hideous graphic designer and he's like always laughing but he can't laugh without screaming Oh my god like a million times which makes me want to never make him laugh. But he's gay, so he always sits with us at office parties, and he comes over and is like:

EVAN. Heyyyyy girls.

JORDAN. Which seems inapprorpriate at a work thing, but whatever. Kiki's jabbering on and Evan's oh my goding, and then I see Will getting out of the pool and it's like… time just, stops.

*(***WILL** *emerges, in his bathing suit, wet.)*

He stands there for a second, pool-water running down his body, and you can see he's trying to remember where he put his towel but he can't, remember, but for like four seconds he's standing totally still, the

only thing moving is the water, and like, instantly my brain became a video recorder and like instantly hit RECORD and for four seconds I just… memorized.

VANESSA. What did you memorize?

JORDAN. Everything. Everything. His shoulders? His shoulders are kind of narrow but they're sweet and round at the top, almost like knees. He has an amazing neck, the skin on his neck – especially when it's wet, is just, so soft and… fresh. He has just a little soft brown hair on the top of his chest, covering his collarbone, the kind of light crop dusting that looks like, like if you blew on it, like a dandelion, it would fly off, kind of dance in the air for a second and then get carried away in the wind. His nipples are red. And hard. Obviously. Since he was just swimming. And some nipples gross me out, but Will's are… His biceps have just the lightest little hint of muscle. One single vein runs up each arm in this beautiful line, like a Miro painting, not quite straight, but it draws your eyes immediately to the canvass. You can see his little ribs, and you can just tell, if you held him in your hands, he'd be sturdy, but also, feeling those ribs protruding… you'd know that this was something precious, that deserved to be treated with… tenderness. His belly button is this totally adorable little innie, and he doesn't have a six pack, but he doesn't not have one either. It's just a sweet little stomach, the kind you would, if you were curled up in bed next to him, and you wrapped your arm around him and rested your hand on his stomach, when you landed there, you would instantly just feel glad to be alive in a world where there are men whose stomachs are so sweet, and you can hold them, in your bed.

VANESSA. You memorized his body.

JORDAN. And then time unfreezes, and Kiki's like:

KIKI. But Conrad's *mother* was like, "I just hope I don't show you up at your own wedding," and I was like, don't worry Pudgemeister, I'll be fiiiiine –

JORDAN. And Evan's screaming:

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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