



Christian Kiley

BIG DOG PUBLISHING

Copyright © 2009, Christian Kiley

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Z ero to Love in 6.5 Seconds is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, and all of the countries covered by the Universal Copyright Convention and countries with which the United States has bilateral copyright relations including Canada, Mexico, Australia, and all nations of the United Kingdom.

Copying or reproducing all or any part of this book in any manner is strictly forbidden by law. No part of this book may be stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means including mechanical, electronic, photocopying, recording, or videotaping without written permission from the publisher.

A royalty is due for every performance of this play whether admission is charged or not. A "performance" is any presentation in which an audience of any size is admitted.

The name of the author must appear on all programs, printing, and advertising for the play. The program must also contain the following notice: "Produced by special arrangement with Big Dog Publishing Company, Sarasota, FL."

All rights including professional, amateur, radio broadcasting, television, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved by Big Dog Publishing Company, www.BigDogPlays.com, to whom all inquiries should be addressed.

BIG DOG PUBLISHING

P.O. Box 1400

TALLEHAST, FL 34270

*"P.M. (Planet Male)"
is dedicated
to Kenny Gonzalez, Jr.
who believed in this original work so strongly
and helped a writer believe in himself again.*

*"Zero to Love in 6.5 Seconds"
is dedicated
to Misty
for her patience
in a world
that doesn't always produce
as quickly as a sports car assembly line.*

*"New Parent Boot Camp"
is dedicated
to Ella and Sophia.*

“P.M. (Planet Male)” was first produced at the University of La Verne One-Act Festival on February 23, 2006, by the Etiwanda High School Advanced Acting class, Rancho Cucamonga, CA: Christian Kiley, director; Madison Ramos, assistant director.

LEADER: Damone Williams

MIKE: Jarek Smith

DOUG: Ted Brooks, Jr.

SPENCER: Nicholas Hedstrom

STEVE: Kenny Gonzalez, Jr.

JENNIFER: Madison Ramos

“Z ero to Love in 6.5 Seconds” was first produced at the University of La Verne One-Act Festival on February 21, 2007, by the Etiwanda High School Advanced Acting class, Rancho Cucamonga, CA: Christian Kiley, director; Alexandria Smith, assistant director.

CUPID: Miles Ornales

STEVE: Kenny Gonzalez, Jr.

RUBY: Donna Soutar

SID: Damone Williams

SAMANTHA: Ashley Desiderio

TOM: Theodore Sawyer III

CRISSY: Alexandria Smith

DOUG: Camrun Penrose

KATIE: Brooke Mertan

CHARLIE: Ralph Garcia

FRANKIE: Jessica Jones

"New Parent Boot Camp" was first produced at the Rancho Cucamonga High School One-Act Festival on December 8, 2007, by the Etiwanda High School Advanced Acting class, Rancho Cucamonga, CA: Christian Kiley, director; Alexandria Smith, assistant director.

INSTRUCTOR: Donna Soutar

HAPPY: Kenny Gonzalez, Jr.

HALO: Alexandria Smith

NORMAN: Damone Williams

NANCY: Jessica Jones

OLIVE: Casharel Brown

OSCAR: Theodore Sawyer III

STEVEN: Camrun Penrose

STAN: Craig Littleton

Zero to Love in 6.5 Seconds

"Planet Male," winner, Outstanding Production,
University of La Verne One-Act Festival, 2006.

COMEDY COLLECTION. With the use of an electric man zapper, a therapist tries to help four fem-phobic men overcome their fear of women in "Planet Male." In "Zero to Love in 6.5 Seconds," 10 individuals search for true love but instead discover the horrors of speed dating. And in "New Parent Boot Camp," an overzealous parenting coach schools four couples on the art of childbirth by inserting a 7-pound watermelon inside her unsuspecting husband's stomach and feeding him chocolate laxatives. Your audience will fall in love with this hilarious collection of short plays.

Performance Time: Approximately 45-60 minutes.

P.M. (Planet Male)

(5 M, 1 F)

LEADER: Therapist who leads a group of men trying to overcome their fear of women.

MIKE: Suffers from a severe case of obsessive-compulsive disorder.

DOUG: Pseudo tough-guy.

SPENCER: Creates secret potions for overcoming his fear of women.

STEVE: Obsessed with the inadequacy of men's restrooms.

JENNIFER: Female volunteer.

Zero to Love in 6.5 Seconds

(5 M, 5 F, 1 flexible)

CUPID: Upset that he may be replaced by the speed-dating craze; flexible.

STEVE: Speed dater who is in over his head.

RUBY: Aggressive speed dater and stalker-in-training.

SID: Self-absorbed amateur psychic and speed dater.

SAMANTHA: Reluctant speed dater.

TOM: Sci-fi fan and speed dater.

CRISSY: Speed-dating conspiracy theorist.

DOUG: Speed dater who has a poor memory for names.

KATIE: Speed dater who is frustrated with relationships.

CHARLIE: Speed-dating dentist; female.

FRANKIE: Speed-dating dental patient; male.

New Parent Boot Camp

(5 M, 4 F)

INSTRUCTOR: An intense parenting coach with a grudge; female.

HAPPY: Peaceful guy.

HALO: Happy's wife, the most positive person on earth.

NORMAN: Upper-class intellectual bully.

NANCY: Norman's wife.

OLIVE: Older than the national average for expectant mothers.

OSCAR: Olive's husband; speaks in rhyme.

STEVEN: Recently divorced and chronically late; looks disheveled.

STAN: Instructor's husband who has discovered that he is "pregnant" with a watermelon.

Setting

P.M. (Planet Male): A group therapy class. There is a podium and six chairs set up in semi-circle.

Zero to Love in 6.5 Seconds: A speed-dating session. There are five speed-dating stations with two chairs at each station and a small table (optional).

New Parent Boot Camp: A workshop for soon-to-be parents in a makeshift classroom. There are four changing tables, two SR and two SL, angled into a “V” to allow the Instructor to move freely between the tables and demonstrate the various techniques.

Props

Planet Male: Six chairs, 2 small bottles, shocking device (see note below).

Zero to Love in 6.5 Seconds: Bell, 10 nametags, 10 chairs, five tables (optional), lottery ticket, camouflage paint, and hunting outfit for Ruby.

New Parent Boot Camp: Padding for pregnant mothers and Stan, 4 baby dolls, 4 baby blankets, 4 baby bottles, 4 diapers, baby powder, diaper cream, stuffed toy, baby toy, rope, and gag, sound effect for watermelon birth (optional).

NOTE: For the shocking device, the actor can place a metal splint on his finger. The Leader can use a simple battery-operated buzzer when he administers a “shock,” or a buzz sound effect can be used.

“Remember,
an X and Y chromosome
and a remote control
is all You need to be happy.”

— Doug

P.M. (Planet Male)

(AT RISE: A group therapy class. The Leader stands at a podium. Mike, Doug, and Spencer are sitting on chairs that have been set in a semicircle.)

LEADER: Who would like to start today? (*Silence.*) What are the steps to recovery? (*Calls on.*) Mike.

MIKE: Look within, love what's in, spread it, and begin.

DOUG: I really don't think that credo, slogan—whatever that is—makes any sense.

LEADER: Why, Doug?

DOUG: No. You're not going to use this as some lame decoy to get me to share.

SPENCER: (*To group.*) I said "hello" to a woman today.

LEADER: Now that's something...tell us about that.

SPENCER: She was a supermodel. Her name was Hilga and she—

DOUG: Lived on the planet Venus. What a crock.

LEADER: Please, Doug.

SPENCER: Yes, Doug...please.

DOUG: Why don't you shut it?

SPENCER: Oh, you want a piece of this? (*He poses to look tough.*) This? (*Different pose.*) Or this?

DOUG: That's what you would be in...pieces.

(*Steve enters.*)

STEVE: Guys, listen. Really, I don't know if you've ever had the occasion to go into a ladies' restroom. (*Pause. No response.*) I didn't think so. But it's something that crosses over into the realm of Technicolor fantasy. Really. I had just finished dinner at Café Sol, and I asked to be directed to the restroom. Standard, right? Server points to a hallway. Phones, two doors, the regular split: men, women. But

before I can go into my gender-specific facility, I hear this loud laughter coming from the ladies' restroom. Not a polite chuckle or pleasantries. I'm talking volcano of pleasure...full and uninhibited belly laughter, like when you're on vacation far away from your troubles and you are in your own private bungalow. So I take a step closer and I hear music. Not all that strange. Often music is piped in through the speakers. But this sounds like a live band, a string quartet, I think. So I crack the door a little. At this point, I have gone over "the line," but I've lost the ability to reason in the way a man does when he is captivated by the siren's song. What is in there? I thought if I was going to actually take this plunge, I should do it. Linger outside the ladies' room was like wearing a name tag, "Hi, I'm a pervert." At least if I went in, I could use the "Oops, wrong door" or the "My wife has been in here a long time" excuse. So I did. I felt like an early explorer or an astronaut. I knew nothing about the planet's surface. The aroma hit me like a wave. Rosebuds and vanilla blossoms, and maybe jonquils, I think. I don't really know what the heck a jonquil is but it smelled like the perfume department at Macy's. There was a huge velvet curtain and an enormous magazine rack that stood eight feet tall, with a ladder like you would see in an enormous library. In the center, there was an atrium and a few doves, a baby deer drank from a small waterfall. The hot tub was next to the juice bar and a few massage tables. There was more, but from my position, the large ice sculpture at the center of the buffet table was obstructing my view. I heard footsteps, and the cry of a tropical bird, and then it all went black. *(Pause.)* I woke up in the men's restroom curled up under one of the urinals. Urine on the floor, unflushed toilets, leaky faucets. They try to give us something by pinning the sports section to a corkboard over the urinals. Nice touch. And what in the world is that smell? Look, guys, there is a better place. I've seen it. It is like nothing you've ever dreamed of.

DOUG: Are you siding with *them*?

STEVE: If you are asking if I am considering becoming a woman? Yes.

DOUG: Remember, an X and a Y chromosome and a remote control is all you need to be happy.

MIKE: And some beef jerky. But what is up with beef jerky? For real. There was a man at a rest stop near the Grapevine who contracted viral pneumonia from touching a piece of beef jerky. It's because they leave them all in there together. Naked. I mean it is an obscene thing. All that dried, shriveled flesh. It's a freakin' mosh pit at the senior center in those containers. I've been writing letters to convenience stores to implore them to package each piece of beef jerky separately. And I have heard nada. Nothing. It's sad.

LEADER: Okay, I appreciate the sharing, but we need to stay on task. What is it that we are afraid of?

DOUG: Not *we*, Doc. You're a married man.

STEVE: That's true, Doctor. You don't know what it's like to be fem-phobic.

SPENCER: Women. All right. I said it. We fear them. Their smell, their voices, their estrogen. But I have a solution. (*Produces a small bottle labeled "Sensitivo."*) In this bottle is a magic elixir that will forever change your life. In fact, it will change the life of all men who dare to ingest it. It's called Sensitivo! The ability to be sensitive for eight hours...uninterrupted and profound sensitivity. If a flower blooms 20 miles away, you will feel it. You will be in tune with women—their needs, their desires—and you will be able to listen. The first bottle is free and comes with a bottle of Machismo! (*Produces a second bottle labeled "Machismo."*) The ability to be masculine for eight uninterrupted hours. You will be the big blue Papa Pimp in a land full of Smurfettes. You will exude sensuality. It will ooze from every pore. (*Looks around. The others look skeptical.*) I see looks of skepticism. And I understand. That is why I will

demonstrate. Which one would you like me to drink? How about both?

LEADER: I really don't think this is such a good idea...

SPENCER: I have been cautious for far too long. *(Drinks the first and then the second bottle. He now has a split personality—half male, half female. Female.)* What a beautiful day, and you make it even more beautiful. Is that a new robe? *(Male.)* I sense the world is lacking my TNT—testosterone, nether parts, and testosterone. *(Female.)* It seems like you have something on your mind. Would you like to talk? *(Male.)* The talking can be saved for when the lovin' is through. *(Female.)* Though that may be awhile...I think we should take things slowly. *(Male.)* I've got a copper top battery, if you know what I mean. *(Female.)* Would you like a foot rub? Let's see what's on Lifetime! *(Male.)* SportsCenter! *(Female, indicating TV.)* I think that if she wants to meet her real mother, she should be able to. *(Male, indicating TV.)* What kind of call was that, ref? *(Female.)* Do you like what I did with the bathroom? I thought the teal curtains were nice. *(Male.)* Wooooo! Look at that bacon-double-cheese-if-you-please-booty. *(Female.)* Why can't we just snuggle? *(Male.)* The fellas are coming over! *(Female.)* Am I asking for too much if I just want to hold hands? *(He starts to melt down and become confused.)* The fellas, snuggle, cheese-if-you-please, snuggle with the fellas...

(Leader guides Spencer back to his seat.)

STEVE: Now, that was something. I tell my friends group therapy is where it's at.

(Steve gives Doug a pathetic high-five.)

LEADER: Spencer just needs a little time to recuperate. Today, I have a special guest that I have been planning to

bring in for some time, and I think the time is right now. I want to warn you that this guest will be one who will test your courage.

DOUG: I hope it's a ravenous mountain lion.

STEVE: Or a golden retriever.

MIKE: Who is it, Doc?

LEADER: Her name is Jennifer.

DOUG: *Her?*

STEVE: Perhaps you used the wrong pronoun.

LEADER: No, this is part of your therapy and it is time.

MIKE: Are you crazy? That's like taking a person who is afraid of heights to the top of the Empire State Building for a little field trip.

LEADER: I'm going to bring her in. *(Starts to exit.)* I'll be back in a minute. *(Exits.)*

STEVE: We've got to be strong...together. We could build a wall.

DOUG: Out of...?

(Steve starts to move the chairs to block the entrance like a makeshift barricade.)

STEVE: Chairs and...chairs. No, a figurative wall of strength.

MIKE: The best thing to do is take this head on.

(Mike moves close to the entrance of the room. Leader re-enters with Jennifer. The men all scatter like frightened prey. Mike tries to hide under a chair.)

LEADER: Group, this is Jennifer. Jennifer, this is Mike... *(He is holding the chair over his head.)* Steve... *(He gives a reluctant wave and sits.)* Doug... *(He acts disinterested.)* And Spencer. *(He is still spaced out.)* Thanks for coming, Jennifer. *(The men are huddled together in the most dignified way they can muster, which is not very dignified.)* Is everyone all right?

MIKE: I'm okay.

DOUG: Can't believe you're scared of a girl.

STEVE: Woman, woman, she is definitely a woman.

SPENCER: *(Noticing Jennifer for the first time.)* Oh, oh, oh...major malfunction. Fight or flight instincts kicking in. Evacuate.

(Spencer tries to make a break for the entrance. Leader runs and tackles him. Leader then helps Spencer up and guides him back to his seat.)

LEADER: We are going to take part in an experiment. Each of you is going to go on a brief hypothetical date with Jennifer. This exercise is a form of behavior modification. *(Produces buzzer.)* When you hear this little buzzer, you will receive a short electrical charge, or shock, and that will indicate to you that you need to change an answer, attitude, or behavior. Who would like to go first?

[END OF FREEVIEW]

**“We would be a perfect match
if I was schizophrenic.”**

— Katie

Zero to Love in 6.5 Seconds

(AT RISE: Cupid stands frozen downstage. Four couples sit frozen at four small tables, which are placed in a semi-circle. Cupid springs to action.)

CUPID: *(To audience.)* We are a society addicted to speed. We want our Quickie Mart and our 24-hour fast-food drive-through and our high-speed Internet and our fast pass at Disneyland and our FasTrak on the freeways. We want it downloaded and linked up and TiVo-ed and cued up as fast as we can think it. We wait for no one and nothing. Santa Claus, too slow—drop 30 pounds and stop riding a moose with a nightlight strapped to his beak to work. The Easter Bunny—why hop when you can take performance-enhancing drugs and bounce like Tigger after an all-night bender of venti lattes. The tooth fairy—replace the wings with a hydrogen jet pack. Why use the oven, microwave anymore? Heck, use a flamethrower. Breathing takes too long—cut out the exhaling, save half the time. Why make a turkey or ham for Thanksgiving when you can have three hotdogs for 99 cents from your local 24-hour scarf-and-gulp convenience store? Stop reading or seeing plays—go to Sparks Notes, in fact, boil the great works down to a few words. “Hamlet”—ah, ghost, father, revenge, stab, stab, die. “Of Mice and Men”—farm, rabbits, crushed dreams, run, bang, die. “Romeo and Juliet”—rivals, party, kiss, kiss, die. “Grapes of Wrath”—depression, sadness, despair, die. “Lord of the Flies”—crash, Darwinism, die. “Great Expectations”—dreams, die. “Oedipus”—die. And the one thing that I thought was safe, the one bastion of hope, the beacon of optimism in the world...love...is under attack. Someone asked me the other day if I would consider retiring my bow and arrow and replacing them with a machine gun. “Why make the clients fall in love one at a time. Mow them

down!" Really? Really. That's what it's come to? Have Monet paint by numbers and Bach play a symphony on the kazoo he got in his free Happy Meal that wasn't ready in 30 seconds or less. Turn love into an ATM machine, or the Starbuck's drive-through, or an auction. Don't get to truly know anyone. Make your choices based on fast superficial snapshots, become commercials rather than films, pamphlets rather than novels, shots of neon-colored energy that will give us the impression that we are flying. So here! You want it. Go ahead. Urinate on love. No, wait. That might take too long. Dump a baggie of your prepackaged urine on love. And here is what you have made: Fast cars and fast dates, a world where we can go from zero to love in 6.5 seconds. And after you see this, if you still want me instead of Match.com or Soulmate-in-a-second.com, I'll be right over here, ringing my little bell.

(Cupid goes SL. We are observing a speed-dating session. NOTE: The men rotate counter-clockwise and the women rotate clockwise. In between each date, the actors can repeat "love, love, love" until they get into their positions for the next date to add to the over-stimulated quality of the speed dating. The background couples can remain frozen during the dialogue of the downstage date or move subtly so as not to distract from the primary action. When Cupid rings the bell, everyone goes to their new assigned seat. Steve and Ruby sit at the center station.)

STEVE: *(To Ruby.)* So what personal attributes and qualities do you look for in a—

RUBY: You sure are good looking.

STEVE: That's fine, but can we—?

RUBY: I mean, I could spend half an hour just talking about your lower lip.

STEVE: This is speed dating, so I don't—

RUBY: Who cares what words are coming out! Just keep them lips moving!

STEVE: That is very flattering, but—

RUBY: Take me now!

STEVE: Hold on a second! Now, when men reduce women to their physical features, we are harshly reprimanded and I think—

RUBY: Reduce me, reduce me! I am on the clearance rack!

STEVE: *(Makes a beeping sound.)* Oh, looks like we have to switch.

RUBY: Sounds more like dinner is ready, and it smells good. You with a side of steamy mashed you. Luckily, I carry my butter spray with me at all times. You just never know...

STEVE: Don't you find this the least bit strange?

RUBY: The fact that your formaldehyde is causing me to behave in a primitive way, a way that I cannot control, a way that is transforming me into some sort of wild beast... Listen. *(She makes a strange cat-like sound.)* Hear what you have done to me?

STEVE: Listen to me. This is ridiculous. We cannot find our soul mate in seven seconds. I get a lightning-fast oil change or super fast checkout in the ten-items-or-less line, but what's next—?

RUBY: Speed mating. *(Makes the cat-like sound again.)* I hope...

STEVE: *(Desperately wants session to end.)* Ring.

RUBY: Really? So soon? I ain't that kind of girl. Stability would just clip my Tinker wings. That's a funny image...and kinda sad, too, actually. Yeah, more sad. I don't feel so good. The sight of little Tink all clipped and unable to fly. I used to think my thoughts could actually make things happen. Like that "Fire-starter" chick. I sometimes feel like I have so much passion inside of me that I can make things burst into flame. So don't try to run from me, or you'll be the flaming shish kebab that fell through the barbeque grill never to be saved.

(Cupid rings bell.)

STEVE: *(Extends his hand to her.)* Good luck.

RUBY: Yummy.

(Ruby smells and then enthusiastically kisses his hand. Steve runs to the next station. Samantha and Sid move to the center station.)

SID: *(To Samantha.)* Don't tell me...you are a Capricorn.

SAMANTHA: No.

SID: The intensity of your eyes...a Scorpio.

SAMANTHA: No.

SID: A Leo.

SAMANTHA: Since there are only 12 signs, you could keep guessing, but we're on the clock.

SID: You have a golden retriever named...something from Greek mythology...

SAMANTHA: Apollo.

SID: Yes!

SAMANTHA: No. Haven't had a dog since I was—

SID: Ten. A tragic accident...in the front yard...I can see the car speeding away...and you are crying...

SAMANTHA: Chocolate Lab. Seven. Gave him away, and I have had extensive tear duct damage my whole life—never been able to cry.

SID: Well, Samantha...

SAMANTHA: Good.

SID: The nametag. I just read it. You are a...something with computers...

SAMANTHA: I do use a laptop frequently for my job.

SID: Good, good. It takes me awhile to warm up with some people. You are a complex and layered person. You write—

SAMANTHA: Yes! Now quit while you're ahead.

SID: An advice column for teens.

SAMANTHA: No.

SID: Science fiction novellas.

SAMANTHA: No.

SID: Investment predictions...something with money market accounts and stock market futures.

SAMANTHA: If I say "yes," will you stop?

SID: (*Getting up to leave.*) Forget it.

SAMANTHA: Don't go.

SID: Why? You hate me. I'm a self-absorbed amateur psychic.

SAMANTHA: I wouldn't use the word "psychic"...maybe guesser.

SID: See. (*Starts to walk off.*)

SAMANTHA: Don't. (*Sid stops.*) I think they will assess me a penalty if you leave.

SID: Oh, I see. I see. Wouldn't want to shorten your time with a cute guy who listens carefully and responds to your every whim and desire.

SAMANTHA: Look, I didn't mean it that way.

SID: No, no, that is exactly what you meant. You don't have to be a...well, a psychic to figure that out. But let me tell you something...I picked lottery numbers today, and they will hit tonight and Sid Seer the psychic will not be laughed at anymore.

SAMANTHA: What did you say?

SID: I will not be laughed at anymore.

SAMANTHA: No, your name, your name.

SID: Sid Seer. What? Oh, I see, make the freak show repeat his name. (*Realizes.*) Hey, you don't think it's real. Well, I have news for you, I come from a long line of psychics. As a young girl, my grandmother predicted the stock market crash. But did anyone listen? No. They were too busy laughing at her name.

SAMANTHA: Sorry, Sid. Really.

(*Cupid rings bell.*)

SID: Some heroes' capes are invisible.

(Sid storms off to the next station as Samantha moves guiltily to her next station. Crissy and Tom move to the center station.)

TOM: *(To Crissy.)* Hi, I'm Tom.

CRISSY: You know what this is?

TOM: A chance to meet new people.

CRISSY: Government control of the populous.

TOM: Oh.

CRISSY: Be careful what you say. They are recording everything.

TOM: Like "1984" or the "Matrix" or something?

CRISSY: What?

TOM: You know, the George Orwell novel and the movie with Keanu Reeves?

CRISSY: The pages of books steal our fingerprints as we turn them. And when you lend them to someone, or sell them—or worst of all—return them to the library, your identity is taken by the government to use in a covert cloning process. These clones are being stored in a warehouse somewhere in New Mexico, where they will be used one day very soon for the complete and systematic annihilation of the human species.

TOM: Awesome. And what about movies?

CRISSY: Subliminal messages mostly.

TOM: Like "eat more popcorn" and "upgrade to the extra large soda"?

CRISSY: More like messages about the tracking microchips that have already been embedded in your body. The signals, imperceptible to the human ear, activate these microchips and cause people to return to the mother ship.

TOM: "Return to the mother ship." That is a metaphor, right?

CRISSY: Metaphors are just English teachers helping the government to distract you from what is real. When everything is figurative and symbolic, we are distracted from the real meaning of things.

TOM: You creep me out more than a little bit, but you're hot!

CRISSY: Your attraction to me is simply your body being poisoned by your hormones. In the late 1970s, on one of the lesser known Galapagos islands, a government agent was bitten by a finch and brought back to the United States a rare but very dangerous version of M.H.P., or Male Hormone Poisoning. Most men have it by now. You have probably noticed that most adolescents are going through puberty at a much younger age—a common side effect of M.H.P.

(Cupid rings bell.)

TOM: You are better than re-runs of the “X-Files” and the “Twilight Zone” put together. Would you consider marriage?

CRISSY: Don’t be fooled. We are easier to pick off in pairs. Stay single, eat freeze-dried food, and don’t bathe or drink tap water.

TOM: But I love you...

CRISSY: It may be too late for you. Love is the final stage of the reprogramming process.

(Crissy and Tom go to their next stations. Doug and Katie sit at the CS station.)

DOUG: You’re not going to believe what happened, Kate.

KATIE: Katie.

DOUG: “Kate” reminds me of “The Taming of the Shrew.”

KATIE: Katie reminds me of me.

DOUG: I am a mess. That last woman said some things...well, things I can scarcely repeat.

KATIE: Were they hurtful?

DOUG: Karen, they sure were.

KATIE: Katie.

DOUG: I had a sweet Aunt Karen. You remind me of her.

KATIE: But I’m Katie.

DOUG: She said I was a wuss. What’s a wuss?

KATIE: A milk toast, a wimp, a spineless jellyfish, a coward...someone who is afraid of his own shadow, a scaredy-cat, a frightened turtle, a—

DOUG: Nicole, you seem to be enjoying this a little too much.

KATIE: Katie is enjoying this.

DOUG: Is someone else here with us?

KATIE: No, no. Just the two of us. Doug and Kat-ie.

DOUG: Oh, Maybelline, you have a good sense of humor. I like that.

KATIE: Maybelline is a line of cosmetics, and I'm pretty sure an oldies song. I am a person and I have a name—

DOUG: Yes, Zaneth, yes, you do.

KATIE: Zaneth? What am I? A lost planet in the Andromeda Galaxy?

DOUG: Don't worry. Debbie is a lovely name. And, plus, you can always change it. After all, it wasn't your choice, Andrea.

KATIE: Speed dating is about to become speed homicide.

DOUG: Do you like those crime investigation shows, too, Vanessa?

KATIE: We would be a perfect match if I was schizophrenic.

DOUG: Samantha, you are as normal as I am.

KATIE: No!

(Katie runs away screaming. Doug sits alone for a moment and then Cupid rings the bell. Charlie and Frankie move to the CS station.)

[END OF FREEVIEW]

**“Congratulations!
You just gave birth
To a healthy melon.”**

— Instructor

New Parent Boot Camp

(AT RISE: A makeshift classroom. There are four stations. Each station is equipped with 4 baby dolls, 4 blankets, 4 bottles, and other items suitable for a newborn. Each of three couples is standing next to one of the tables. The Instructor enters with an aggressive flare.)

INSTRUCTOR: There are two types of parents. The parents who show their child the entire movie "Finding Nemo." Those are the sugar-coated parents. And then there are the parents who only show the first part up to the point where the barracuda eats the wife and all the babies, except little gimpy-finned Nemo, and then they...turn...it...off. These are the parents that you want to be. The realists. This is what we want: well-adjusted infants, who become well-adjusted toddlers, who become well-adjusted children. Children who can watch the ten o'clock news without weeping, children who know the difference between the world of the tooth fairy and the world of tooth decay and root canals, children who prefer a plummeting drop on a roller coaster over "It's a Small World." Children who can survive on a stick of chewing gum and eight ounces of water for a week. The future. It's in your hands...literally. But first things first. You are going to have to go through the little ritual of pain and agony they call "childbirth." Forget all the hoodoo nonsense you hear about tranquil music and deep breathing and inflatable toys that you squeeze. This ain't no trip to the beach. You are going to writhe and wrestle. I want all the men to close their eyes for a moment and imagine that a pool ball is coming out of one of their nostrils and that this process will take 12 hours. I don't think you're going to want your wife whispering, "Come on, baby, we can do it."

HAPPY: We are going to have a water birth.

HALO: Yes, little Hug will be a water sign, so...

INSTRUCTOR: I'm a Leo. Does that mean I should have been born in a zoo?

HALO: Please, your waves of negativity are going to make Hug flinch.

NORMAN: "Hug"...that's an unusual name.

NANCY: It's unique, Norman. There is nothing wrong with unique.

HAPPY: *(To Norman.)* Have you decided on a name?

NORMAN: Norman Junior.

HALO: Very...nice.

OLIVE: We got started on our family a little late.

NORMAN: I couldn't tell, Grammy. You guys don't look a day over 90.

HAPPY: That was...mean.

OSCAR: Age is just a figment of the mind,
Just move forward,
Don't try to rewind.

NORMAN: I'm not sure what that means, Dr. Seuss.

HALO: *(To Olive and Oscar.)* Good for you two!

NORMAN: *(To Olive and Oscar.)* Aren't there a lot of risks with having a child when you are older?

NANCY: Norman, honestly.

NORMAN: It's true.

NANCY: And none of your business.

INSTRUCTOR: I want the ladies to say the meanest thing they can think of to their husbands. This is practice for the hellacious barbs that will spew forth from the volcano of your mouth during childbirth. We'll start with... *(Indicating Halo and Happy.)* ...you

HALO: I don't know if I like this.

HAPPY: It's okay, angel, give it a try.

HALO: You...you...you—. *(To Instructor.)* Can I try later? Maybe if I hear someone else first.

INSTRUCTOR: *(To Nancy.)* You.

NANCY: *(To Norman.)* I wish you would think before you talk...sometimes...most of the time...nearly always.

NORMAN: What? I try to be very methodical and earnest in my communication.

NANCY: Like your crass comment about their baby's name.

NORMAN: Hey, the theme of the workshop is raising honest children. And "Hug" sounds like one of the Care Bears.

NANCY: See.

INSTRUCTOR: *(To Halo.)* Okay, how was that for an example?

HALO: *(To Happy.)* I wish you would stand up for yourself sometimes....more than sometimes.

HAPPY: Good, sweetie. You expressed yourself very nicely.

HALO: See, and you let that man make fun of our baby's name.

HAPPY: His comment was harmless.

NORMAN: *(Proud.)* I did put your cutie-pie baby name down.

HAPPY: Well...I can smile through it.

NORMAN: Did you get a sunshine enema this morning?

HAPPY: That was...mean.

INSTRUCTOR: *(To Olive.)* What do you have?

OLIVE: *(To Oscar.)* I wish you'd stop acting like you are still 25. You're not.

OSCAR: Until my body is ash and my bones dust, I see no need to complain about rust.

OLIVE: Are you nuts? Why do you talk like that?

OSCAR: If my words do not suffice, let my actions entice. *(He starts to move in a strange dance.)*

OLIVE: Please.

NORMAN: Give the geezer gigolo hokey-pokey a rest for now.

OSCAR: When you can't compete, retreat.

(Steven rushes into the room. He is chronically late and characteristically disheveled.)

STEVEN: Sorry.

INSTRUCTOR: Let me guess...your wife is parking the car.
STEVEN: Not even close. She is my ex-wife and is in her 4,000-square-foot home with her new husband. Maybe try to guess my weight or birthday instead.
INSTRUCTOR: This class is designed for parents.
STEVEN: Which I will be.
NORMAN: Your wife left you when she was pregnant. She left you and picked up another man while she was pregnant.
STEVEN: Unusual but not completely unheard of...
NORMAN: I've never...have any of you guys ever heard of such a thing?
OSCAR: You go, brother from another mother!
OLIVE: More like grandson.
NANCY: You don't think I could get a man right now. Right now, round-bellied and all, I could get a man.
NORMAN: No, dear.
NANCY: Steven, do you find me attractive?
NORMAN: *(To Steven.)* You don't have to answer her. In fact, don't.
STEVEN: *(To Nancy.)* You are a beautiful woman.
NANCY: See, Norman. See.
NORMAN: That hardly proves anything. You put the guy on the spot. What is he going to say? "No, you're a cocker spaniel."
STEVEN: I think your wife is beautiful. Maybe you should treat her better.
NORMAN: Sorry if I don't take marriage tips from a guy who just lost his wife.
HAPPY: That was...mean.
INSTRUCTOR: Despite the seething commentary, we are going to have to continue. Grab a diaper from your station, everyone. I want to talk you through a common scenario that you might encounter with your new baby. You have just taken off a dirty diaper, and now you are in what I call the "danger zone." Your baby is a ticking time bomb that many parents underestimate—a time bomb of urine and

feces and vomit and spit that can unleash a tempest at any moment. You will find a poncho and safety glasses at your station. Please put them on.

HALO: This seems so unnatural and sterile.

INSTRUCTOR: This is the closest thing I've ever seen to demonic possession. If you want to go into the spiraling inferno unprotected...do so at your own risk.

(Students put their ponchos and safety glasses on.)

INSTRUCTOR: Who would like to volunteer to put on a diaper?

OLIVE: We will.

NORMAN: You sure, Old Mother Hubbard? You ain't changing your own diaper.

OSCAR: Let the wisdom of age help turn the page.

INSTRUCTOR: Three, two, one...go! *(Olive and Oscar demonstrate as Instructor narrates/instructs.)* The baby is peeing. Block the pee. Block the pee. Get the diaper on. The baby is crying. Double team. One distracts, one puts on the diaper. Oh, there's a rash. Cream and powder. Cream first, then powder. The baby has grabbed something and put it in his mouth. Scoop it out! Diarrhea. Double blockers. Cover and roll. Go! Go! Secure the diaper and sing a lullaby.

OLIVE: *(Sings.)* "Rock-a-bye baby on the tree top—" *(Instructor makes a crying sound.)* A, B, C, D, E, F— *(Instructor continues to make a crying sound. Sings.)* "The itsy bitsy spider went up the water spout—"

NORMAN: That may have worked in the 1800s, Granny, but it's not going to cut it today.

HAPPY: That was...mean.

OSCAR: Baby, baby, don't you cry.

Don't be afraid to touch the sky.

With our help,

You can fly.

Just a little effort

All you got to do is try.

NORMAN: Great. Your child's head just detached from his body and launched into outer space.

HAPPY: That was—

NORMAN: Mean. Yeah, I know. It ain't raining Skittles every day in the real world.

INSTRUCTOR: Okay, kiddies, time for a little role reversal.

The men will imagine that they are pregnant, and the ladies will assume the role of coach—or as I call it, spectator—because what the man does is not coaching, or in many cases, even good cheerleading. It is watching. You might as well bring in a bag of cheese doodles and a 6-pack of your favorite beverage to the birth. When I say “hit,” that means a contraction has riddled your body with the kind of pain that is equal to a 300-pound drill sergeant kicking you in the stomach repeatedly with a steal-toed boot. Ladies, try to be as supportive as you can. *(Shouts.)* Hit!

(Note: The following reactions should slightly overlap.)

NORMAN: Ahhhhhh!

HAPPY: A miracle is in the process of taking place.

OSCAR: The pain...it rains...it's...in-sane.

NANCY: *(To Norman, completely disinterested.)* Are you hurt?

HALO: *(To Happy.)* A miracle? Who would say that during labor?

OLIVE: *(To Oscar.)* Not even the Cat in the Hat would rhyme while delivering a litter of kittens.

INSTRUCTOR: The ladies seem dissatisfied, not to mention we had one mommy who did not participate.

STEVEN: Mine was silent pain.

INSTRUCTOR: To get your completion certificate, you must participate in all class exercises. So we'll have you try alone.

We need someone to step in as his partner.

NANCY: *(Quickly.)* I will.

NORMAN: Nancy.

(Nancy stands very close to Steven.)

INSTRUCTOR: Hit! *(As she says this, she knees Steven in the groin. Steven screams.)* A little lesson in method acting. So much for silent pain now.

NANCY: *(To Steven.)* Are you all right?

(Nancy caresses Steven's face and impulsively kisses his cheek.)

NORMAN: That's it. Come on! *(Takes fighting stance.)*

STEVEN: I would love to accommodate you, but I am a little preoccupied right now.

INSTRUCTOR: That which does not kill us—

STEVEN: Prevents us from having children.

[END OF FREEVIEW]