



Greg Elsassser

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**BIG DOG PUBLISHING**  
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The Baby Who Came to Dinner

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*For Scott and Gina*

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The Baby Who Came to Dinner premiered at the Gordon Griffiths Theatre in Downey, CA, May 20, 1997: Greg Elsasser, director.

**GINA:** Briana Gonzales

**SCOTT:** C.J. Bruner

**MS. HATHAWAY:** Katie MacIssac

**PHILIP:** Jesse Ibarra

## The Baby Who Came to Dinner

**COMEDY.** Gina is afraid to tell her overbearing mother that she is pregnant, married to a teacher, and lives in a dumpy apartment. Gina thinks her secrets are safe until she gets an unexpected call from her mother, who happens to be in town on business. Gina has only minutes to disguise her husband as a plumber and to hide her pregnancy before her mother arrives for dinner. But the stress of her mother's arrival is too much for Gina, and she starts to go into labor. And if that isn't enough, Gina's mother arrives bearing more than Chinese food—she's brought along a prospective husband for Gina! This fast-paced comedy features plenty of one-liners, hilarious situations, and physical humor to showcase the comedic talents of your actors.

**Performance Time:** Approximately 30 minutes.

**NOTE:** For a full evening of comedy, combine this play with Greg Elsasser's *Shoe Booties* or *North of Pelican Rapids*.

## Characters

(2 M, 2 F)

**GINA:** 20s, 8½ months pregnant; pregnancy isn't obvious to the casual observer.

**SCOTT:** 20s, Gina's husband, a teacher; wears a white tank undershirt, a cap, and low-hanging jeans.

**MS. HATHAWAY:** Gina's overbearing, critical mother.

**PHILIP:** Executive at Ms. Hathaway's company; clean cut.

## Setting

**Dining/living room of a one-bedroom New York apartment.**

The apartment is plain, but not tacky or messy. There is a couch DSC with an afghan thrown over the back. Immediately SR of the couch is a phone stand with a cordless phone or cell phone on it. A small wooden coffee table sits in front of the couch. Gina's purse and an unwrapped Twinkie with a strip of mayonnaise on it are on top of the coffee table. There are also a few magazines fanned neatly across the coffee table. There is a small circular dining room table with four chairs around it placed at SL center. Off SL is a small hallway that leads to the kitchen. A coat rack stands next to it. Off SR leads to the front entrance and to the bedroom.

## Props

Squeeze bottle of mayonnaise	Receipt
Twinkies	Purse, for Gina
Cordless phone	Checkbook
Book, <i>What to Expect When Expecting</i>	Cell phone
Wedding rings, for Gina and Scott	Electric drill
Heavy jacket, for Scott	Dinnerware
Briefcase	Napkins
Magazines	4 Water glasses
Containers of Chinese food	Loaf of burnt bread
	Tongs
	Towel
Plastic bag	

## Sound Effects

Doorbell  
Cell phone ringing

“Can you just forget  
for a few hours  
that I’m an overbearing mother  
and you’re a somewhat self-centered,  
self-absorbed, critical daughter,  
and together make this  
the most special moment  
of our lives?”

—Ms. Hathaway

## The Baby Who Came to Dinner

*(AT RISE: The dining/living room of Gina and Scott's New York apartment. Gina is on the phone, her eyes betraying a look of panic. She hangs up. Note: Gina's discomfort/pain from contractions should realistically increase as the play progresses.)*

GINA: *(Stunned.)* Goodbye, Doris. *(Hangs up.)* Oh...crap!  
*(Walks to the coffee table, picks up a Twinkie, and starts to nervously devour it.)* What am I going to do...what am I going to do? Okay, wait, think...think...take a bite... *(Takes a bite.)* Think... *(As she squeezes another line of mayonnaise onto the Twinkie, her look of alarm turns to surprise, and she slowly stands up, feeling around her abdomen. She gasp, sits back down on the couch, grabs a copy of "What to Expect When You're Expecting" off the cushion and thumbs through it madly. She finds what she's looking for and reads it, mumbling over various passages. She checks her stomach again then takes off for her bedroom, taking the book with her. A couple of moments pass and she comes back out again, assured this is finally happening. She grabs the phone and dials, breathing heavily and excitedly as she waits. She hits "0" on the phone. Into phone.)* Hi, this is Gina Ronalds. I think I'm having contractions, and I think my water is just starting to break. *(Pause.)* Dr. Rounds, yes. Listen, I've heard the statistics, but can you tell me exactly how long a person can be in pre-labor before she starts to deliver? *(Pause.)* So you think around 24 to 48 hours might be considered an average? *(Slowly takes off her wedding ring and stares at it.)* Oh, yeah, sure. Okay, well, listen. I think we're just going to wait awhile to make sure this isn't a false alarm....sure, well, thank you. *(From off SR, Scott is heard entering. She looks up, putting her ring back on.)* Forty-eight hours?!

*(Scott enters, wearing a heavy jacket and carrying a briefcase.)*

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SCOTT: That naked hotdog vendor with the kazoo and tie clip is back on the corner. He's really drawn a crowd tonight. Did you see him?

GINA: Yes, I bought a couple hotdogs off him.

*(Scott gives her a peck on the cheek but she's distracted.)*

SCOTT: You know, I don't even recognize this city anymore. Every 24 hours, one building is torn down and another one is in its place. *(Takes off his jacket.)* Everybody's wandering around with these confused expressions on their faces. I even stopped to give a cabbie directions.

GINA: Really...

SCOTT: Hey, I found out about the CLAD. All I have to do is take a test, and I'll have my CLAD certificate. We'll have the whole summer off.

GINA: Did you eat?

SCOTT: No, not yet. I figured I'd order some Chinese or something. Chinese okay with you?

GINA: Doesn't sound too appealing right now, no.

SCOTT: Whatever you feel like. *(Takes her hands and stands her up.)* Look at you. Eight and a half months pregnant, and from the outset, you don't look any different than the day I married you. I thought women were supposed to gain a whole bunch of weight with their first pregnancy.

*(Pause.)*

GINA: We have to talk.

SCOTT: Again? I thought we closed the subject. I don't like the name Dilbert. It's no name for a child.

GINA: No, it's not that. We have a bigger problem.

SCOTT: What's that?

GINA: *(Reserved.)* My mother called. She's in town.

SCOTT: Here in Manhattan?

GINA: She wants to stop by and have dinner with me...or rather, us.

SCOTT: Us? What "us"? She has no idea there's an "us." Did you tell her?

GINA: Ah, no...not exactly.

SCOTT: Ah, Gina...

GINA: Now, Scott, I tried. I really did. She hung up before I could. You know how she is...I never get a word in. She's always in a rush to get off the phone.

SCOTT: No, I wouldn't know. I wouldn't know at all! Every time she calls, you make me go hide in the bedroom in case I sneeze or breathe too loudly.

GINA: I know, I know...don't get started.

SCOTT: Fine, then, at least she's coming over here tonight. We can finally tell her everything. Everything! The marriage, the baby, everything!

GINA: No, not yet, Scott!

**[END OF FREEVIEW]**