

TWO HUSBANDS/THE DUET

TWO: When you were married did you like it? I mean did you like coming home to the same person every time?

ONE: You mean to or with?

TWO: Either. But I mean every time you went out.

ONE: The first time I was married I loved it. For a while. I kept forgetting to buy things on purpose from the grocery so I could lock my door and unlock it again and say "Hi, hon I'm home" and tell the grocer I forgot to buy something for "my husband." I loved saying "my husband." I have to pick up "my husbands" jockey shorts from the laundry. "My husband" loves my guacamole. Then I realized it wasn't about him. I didn't want to come home to him. I don't mean I didn't want to come home to somebody. I just realized I didn't want to come home to him.

TWO: Could we do the beginning again? Something doesn't feel right. I think you're working too hard. Why did you marry him? Let me lead here, okay?

ONE: Nobody says the word spinster anymore. Nobody calls anybody old maid. Now we have single parents and everything's hunky dory but the books in my mother's bookcase were Back Street and The Scarlet Letter.

TWO: You're not serious. Were you a virgin?

ONE: Not since Howie Kulik Jr. in Junior High School.

TWO: But you absolutely determined - not that hand, the other hand, no, the left hand - you determined you had to get married?

ONE: I don't know. I was twenty five and I thought if I don't marry somebody proper pretty soon I'm going to lose the bloom of youth like in Victorian novels if I haven't already lost it and I don't know what's going to happen to me and he was a school teacher and very ordinary.

TWO: Which you found attractive.

ONE: Ordinary seemed safe after screwing around for ten years and my mother was looking cross eyed at me and when I told her I met a school teacher she bought me Modern Bride magazine and began to crochet a garter.

TWO: What does that mean?

ONE: My mother crocheted blue garters for the "something borrowed, something blue" thing.

TWO: You really have to let me do this. What you're doing should look like a response to what I'm doing but if you do it that way it looks like you know what's supposed to happen before I initiate it.

ONE: I'm sorry.

TWO: Don't be sorry. It's not a big deal. It's just style. So you met this ordinary guy.

ONE: Sweetly ordinary. I don't want him to sound like a potato. I thought anyway I'm exotic enough for the two of us.

TWO: Exotic?

ONE: Maybe I mean eccentric. I mean my life style wasn't conducive to ordinary relationships. You're always getting undressed in front of the most beautiful men who are also getting undressed in front of you and you squeeze each other's tushes and sweat all over each other and I get sexy and they all go home to their boyfriends. I figure I need some ordinary kind of guy who when I take my clothes off has an erection.

TWO: And he was ordinary but he wasn't it. I think this is better. Could we try it once more with the music?

ONE: ~~Oh, he was it all right.~~ I'd like to do it one more time without. The problem was when he took his clothes off he didn't give me an erection

TWO: So it sounds like in the first place you didn't really love this guy and in the second place you weren't really attracted to him. I don't get it.

ONE: I had some very splashy love affairs with some very dashing guys but I couldn't bring any of them home to mama. This guy was suitable and it was time to buy a suit. I wanted a job. With a title. I took the job of Undersecretary of Wifeness. I took the job I could get. I had no idea it was actually different for anybody else. I'm still not sure.

TWO: How long did it last?

ONE: Until I met number two. Well even after I met number two for a while because I was really confused.

TWO: Don't lean on me here. My weight isn't centered.

ONE: Am I supposed to support you here?

TWO: I don't think so. You just can't lean on me. What do you mean you were confused?

ONE: Well, cake and eat it. Husband number one was the practical choice. The possible life partner. The possible father of some possible children. The man your parents happily march you down the aisle to meet. The man to celebrate your golden wedding anniversary with if you don't die of boredom first whereas husband number two was an artist, a painter. He was crazier than me. My parents pretended he didn't exist. We worked in the same health food store part time for the same minimal wage but he ate pepperoni pizza and coke and oreos for lunch.

TWO: But you married him.

ONE: He was really good looking. And he was smart. But he was really crazy. And he was short.

TWO: But you really loved him.

ONE: Well, I think I really loved him but what I really loved was how much he loved me because if he was so good looking I must be good looking and because if people in the art world thought he was something I must also be something. I know it sounds like a self help book.

TWO: I was just going to say.

ONE: Can you lift me a little lower. I mean your grip. You're squashing my tits. It hurts.

TWO: I'm sorry. This is better?

ONE: Yeah. The irony is the shoe got on the other foot and he ran off with some artsy beauty who was everything to him that he was to me and I didn't know that that was all the husbands I was ever going to have. Could we try it with the music now?



1: I'm exhausted.

2: You couldn't sleep?

1: I was up all night. My wife didn't feel well. I ate what she ate but I was okay.

2: You ate out?

1: Her rehearsal ended even later than ours and we were too tired to start cooking.

2: Us too, last night. We sent out.

1: We went downstairs.

2: The diner?

1: No, sushi.

2: ~~But~~ you eat sushi a lot, ~~right?~~

1: Yeah, ~~wouldn't~~. I don't know what happened.

2: She had the runs?

1: She vomited.

2: I hate when that happens. My mother used to hold my head, you know, with the palm of her hand. I was down on my knees with my head in the toilet bowl.

1: My wife doesn't like me to see her vomiting. I get up and go after her but she doesn't like it. She waves me away.

2: Dennis is like that. If I hover - are you okay? Can I get you something? He says he's okay. He'll take care of himself. "Don't worry - just leave me alone!"

1: Well, at least that's clear.

2: I wish. So, first I stand outside the toilet and every once in a while I say "Dennis? Are you okay?" and I hear retch retch and he doesn't answer me and the toilet flushes so I wait and I say "Dennis?" and I hear more retch retch and then I don't know what to do so I go back to bed.

1: Sometimes I eat something while I'm waiting but I feel guilty if she comes out of the toilet and sees me chewing.

2: Once I'm in bed my eyes close and if I fall back asleep before he comes back he makes so much noise getting into bed and he pulls the cover off me. First he wants me not to care - then he wants me to care.



- 1: She made an chiropractor appointment for after rehearsal which means we'll eat even later.
- 2: Why didn't she take the day off? Stay in bed and rest up or something?
- 1: They wouldn't be able to work on the new section without her.
- 2: One day. Big deal.
- 1: You don't know my wife. It has to be the end of the world for her to miss rehearsal.
- 2: I think that's nuts. If you're sick you're sick.
- 1: When you were coughing your brains out you came to work every day.
- 2: You know me - I like playing the martyr. So what'll you do about dinner?
- 1: She'll probably want plain rice cakes, or brown rice and zucchini, or kale, or something. That's what makes her feel safe when she feels frail.
- 2: You don't like brown rice.
- 1: Well, it's the health food take out. Everything gets half price after nine I think. Maybe I'll get a piece of salmon.
- 2: Why is she going to the chiropractor? She got hurt in rehearsal yesterday?
- 1: No, she did something to her neck when she was vomiting.