

HAPPY TOES



(front to rear
and left to
right) Julien
Arnold as Alex,
Davina Stewart
as Janine,
Leona Brausen
as Cora, Jeff
Haslam as Tony,
Ron Pederson as
Edgar in *Happy
Toes*. Photo by
Dan Riedlhuber.
Courtesy of the
Edmonton Journal.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Happy Toes was first performed by Teatro La Quindicina in August of 2008, at the Varscona Theatre in Edmonton. It was part of the Edmonton International Fringe Theatre Festival.

CAST

Tony – Jeff Haslam

Edgar – Ron Pederson

Alex – Julien Arnold

Cora – Leona Brausen

Janine – Davina Stewart

Director – Stewart Lemoine

Costume Designer – Leona Brausen

Lighting Designer – Bobby Smale

Set Designer – Jeff Haslam

Stage Manager – Rachel Rudd

CHARACTERS

Tony

Edgar

Alex

Cora

Janine

Tony, Alex, Cora, and Janine are all in their early to mid-forties. Edgar is in his early thirties.

SETTING

Happy Toes takes place in an unnamed Canadian city in the present day. The action spans the spring and fall of a single year.

In the premiere production, the coffee shop and bank counter were fixed settings on either side of the stage. All other scenes took place in a central carpeted area with four moveable chairs. Since the Varscona stage is necessarily a black box during the Fringe, all set pieces and furnishings were light-coloured wood, which helped establish a bright and airy visual tone.

MUSIC

The music which played at the beginning and end of the play, and in transitional scenes was *Les Barricades Mystérieuses*, a piece originally written for solo harpsichord by François Couperin (1668–1733). Though we began and ended with the harpsichord version, the excerpts heard over the course included solo arrangements for piano, lute, banjo, and harp, and in the concert scene, Alex and Cora listened to a chamber arrangement for woodwinds and strings by Thomas Adès, which features a prominent clarinet part for Edgar. The appeal of Couperin's piece, with regard to *Happy Toes*, lies in the way it maintains an unerring, almost methodical sense of forward motion, even in the face of some fairly unexpected harmonic shifts and suspensions.

HAPPY TOES

Scene One

Edgar and Tony enter as music plays and sit in chairs. There's a little table between them and they have cups of coffee. Music fades.

Edgar: The strangest thing happened today. I was doing some banking . . .

Tony: Oh yes?

Edgar: Yes, I was just depositing some cheques from my students, and it had been raining, so the teller asked whether it looked like it was going to clear anytime soon. I said it didn't seem likely and then she said that she wished it was still thundering out because that meant there was a better chance the bank would be hit by lightning.

Tony: Really? That is a bit strange. Must have shaken your confidence a little, as you handed over your money. I mean, to have the custodian of your funds wishing the place would maybe burn.

Edgar: It was less dramatic than that. She just said that if it happened, there'd probably be a long blackout and she'd get to go home early.

Tony: That's a bit better, I guess . . . But she's lucky you weren't a bank inspector. What did you say?

Edgar: I said that the bank would get hit if that's what it deserved. She laughed a little. Politely, I'd guess.

Tony: Do you think a bank can deserve to be struck by lightning?

Edgar: Well, not the structure necessarily, but maybe the people who run it. No, you know, I'll just say that I don't think anyone deserves to be struck by lightning.

Tony: So your remark to the teller was . . .

Edgar: Pointless. A spit in the wind.

Tony: You could have just bawled her out for wishing an inconvenience on all the customers who were planning to bank later in the day.

Edgar: I thought about it. But you know . . .

Tony: Yes?

Edgar: When she said it . . . when she wished the bank would be struck so that she might be free . . . she was radiant. She wasn't irritated at all, just sort of briefly elated by possibility. Why would I want to squelch that, particularly?

Tony: There's no earthly reason to do so.

Edgar: Yet certain people *would* do it. You even thought of a couple of valid objections.

Tony: Yes, but like you, I probably wouldn't have given voice to them. Objections can and should be part of an overall contemplation of life, but there's surprisingly little to be gained from sharing them at every available opportunity.

Edgar: Does the same go for praise, then?

Tony: One can overdo that. Look, here's Alex.

Alex enters.

Edgar: Aha, yes. Good morning, Alex.

Alex: Edgar. Tony. Hello.

Tony: Good morning.

Edgar: We don't see you running anymore.

Alex: No, well, I guess I've stopped for a while. I shouldn't have.

Tony: It's okay. You can stop and start. It's not bad for you.

Edgar: Yes, we're just glad you're not running with other people. You know, cheating.

Alex: Cheating. Right. With a bitter little laugh. That.

Edgar: Alex?

Alex looks from one to the other.

Alex: I . . .

Tony: Something is troubling you. Can we help?

Alex: I think my wife is having an affair.

Tony: Oh no.

Edgar: That's terrible. You're certain?

Alex: I think so. It's very peculiar. Can I tell you a couple of things?

Edgar: Of course. Or maybe . . . To Tony. I'm presuming, perhaps. You might not want to know . . .

Tony: I offered to help. If listening is helpful, we should do that.

Alex: Thank you. It's been going on for nearly two weeks. I come home and she has beautiful dinners prepared and we eat by candlelight and there's wine and she speaks in the most intimate way and initiates the most surprising . . .

Well, I don't think I need to explain all that in detail. But then she meets me for lunch and she's made reservations in restaurants where we sit in dim little corners, and yesterday she said she had a surprise for me if I'd book a couple of hours in the early afternoon, so I did and she picked me up and we drove to a hotel. Near the airport. And we checked in.

Edgar: And then?

Alex: Do I really have to say?

Edgar: Well, I'm not following entirely. It doesn't exactly sound like cheating behaviour on her part.

Tony: Unless what you're saying is that your wife is having an affair . . . and it's with you.

Alex: Yes. Exactly. That's what I think is happening.

Edgar: I'm not sure that's a very valid cause for worry.

Alex: Isn't it? Why would she be doing this all of a sudden? Something must have gone wrong. I mean . . . I thought our marriage was great. It's been fine for twelve years and out of the blue there's this and it's just so drastic and strange and I feel like I must have been missing something that should have been obvious to me, and I'm so afraid of what it might turn out to be.

Edgar: You haven't asked her? In your intimate talks?

Alex: Oh no. It's . . . not that kind of intimacy.

Edgar: Oh. Wow.

Alex: Yes, she's sort of an unstoppable train.

Tony: So it isn't completely unpleasant?

Alex: In the moment, no. But afterward . . . the guilt just devours me. I'm nervous at work. I'm afraid to go home . . . Listen, I'm sorry. You must think this is ridiculous and I'm sorry to burden you with it. I just thought maybe if I said all this out loud it'd seem preposterous and I could dismiss it, but I don't think that's the case.

Tony: Well, there's no need to apologize. You've given us something to think about, certainly.

Edgar: Yes, it's a remarkable quandary and I don't think I've got much to offer in the way of advice.

Alex: Oh, that's fine. You offered to help and then did just that by letting me speak. I should be off anyway. Wouldn't you know, I'm meeting her for lunch.

Edgar: Oh. Well . . . Squeezing his hands. Courage.

Tony: Give her our regards.

Alex: I'll do my best to work that in, but . . . You know, two weeks ago I'd have said I was completely happy. Pause. Well, good-bye.

Tony: Good-bye.

Edgar: Bye-bye.

Alex exits.

Edgar: Well well . . . what a thing.

Tony: Isn't it.

Edgar: Poor Alex. Just completely happy and then . . . I wonder if *l'll* ever be completely happy.

Tony: I don't know. I don't know if that's possible. For anyone, I mean. Not just you.

Edgar: Why?

Tony: Well . . . completely happy . . . What does that actually mean? Shouldn't it mean happy for good? Permanently?

Edgar: No, I think it'd be more a matter of being as happy as one could possibly be in a particular instance.

Tony: Happy from your head right down to your toes?

Edgar: Exactly.

A pause. They consider.

Tony: So, here's a question for your bank teller . . .

Edgar: Yes?

Tony: What's at home?

Edgar: What?

Tony: Didn't she say that if the bank were struck by lightning, she'd get to go home? She didn't say she'd get off work or leave early, did she?

Edgar: No, you're right. Is that odd?

Tony: Well, when people get unexpected time off, don't they usually try to maximize it with some sort of fun excursion? Lunch, a movie, shopping . . .

Edgar: Yeah, and she just wanted to go home.

Tony: She must just love it there.

Edgar: Or else she's got a bunch of chores she needs to catch up on.

Tony: But you said she was radiant at the prospect of –

- Edgar: Of going home! Yes, she was. You're right to have commented on this.
- Tony: What sort of person was she? Young?
- Edgar: Not especially. She seemed like more of a supervisor teller type. Cora . . . that's her name.
- Tony: Is it odd then that she'd be so frank with a customer? That's more what you'd expect from a junior teller, wouldn't you say?
- Edgar: From a coltish trainee? You're probably right. So this is seeming pretty unusual.
- Tony: I think it is. She's maybe a little reckless.
- Edgar: Yet still a homebody.
- Tony: A figure of real fascination.
- Edgar: Yes, like Alex's wife.
- Tony: Right. Her. What's her name? Janice? Justine? Janine.
- Edgar: Janine! The reason Alex has a fear of going home. But Cora at the bank has no such fear.
- Tony: Yet she can't be at home when she most wishes to be.
- Edgar: Barring natural disaster. Shaking his head. These are troubled people.
- Tony: Troubled? Or troubling?
- Edgar: What's the difference? Things are out of whack in both cases. I'm going back to the bank.
- Tony: Why?
- Edgar: If you'd seen her . . . I just really want an answer because I think there's a fairly good chance it'll be delightful.

- Tony: So, enjoying contemplation of the vast array of possibilities isn't really a viable option for you?
- Edgar: No. That sort of thing is for . . . well, for you, I guess. Hey, do you want a ticket to my concert tonight? It's our little chamber group . . . in the church hall. Taking out tickets. I've got some free tickets. I mean they're free at the door too, but here's one now!
- Tony: Oh, thanks.
- Edgar: You don't have to use it.
- Tony: No, I expect I will. I enjoy those events. I get to think a lot during them. That's permitted, right?
- Edgar: It's what they're for. Do you want two tickets? You can have –
- Tony: No, that's fine. One's good. I'll see you after, maybe?
- Edgar: Yes, and who knows what I'll have to share?
- Tony: Good luck. I hope you don't get slapped.
- Edgar: It's all about risk.
- Tony: Meh.

They exit in opposite directions.

Scene Two

Cora is at a counter. Edgar approaches her.

- Cora: Oh hello. You're back.
- Edgar: You remember me?
- Cora: Sure. Well . . . not your name.
- Edgar: Edgar.

- Cora: Yes. That was it. Did I make a mistake? I didn't give you a balance. I'm sorry if –
- Edgar: No, it's something else. I wanted to ask you about a different thing. Cora.
- Cora: Oh. Alright. You have some questions about your account?
- Edgar: No no. It was . . . Well, you remember I was here during that storm this morning and you said you hoped the bank would get hit by lightning so you could go home early?
- Cora: Oh yes, I'm sorry about that. It wasn't really appropriate of me. It's a huge inconvenience for everyone when the bank closes down.
- Edgar: Well sure, but that's not what I want to talk about. You really don't have to apologize.
- Cora: Alright.
- Edgar: In fact you might recall that I suggested people here might deserve to be struck and electrocuted, and that's gotta be fairly inappropriate too.
- Cora: Maybe, but at least it's funny.
- Edgar: Okay, well, that's a relief, but –
- Cora: Yes? This is going somewhere, right? You have a question?
- Edgar: Cora, what's at home? Why would you specifically want to be there during your found time? You know, instead of out and about?
- Cora: After a pause. Umm . . . Well . . .
- Edgar: You know I've just realized how truly odd this question must seem, coming from a random customer, so if you don't care to answer, by all means –

- Cora: No no, it's okay. I don't know why you'd come in just to ask that and nothing else, but . . . you get a bee in your bonnet and . . . I think all it is is that at home I'm at my most relaxed.
- Edgar: And here you're tense?
- Cora: Not tense. Just attentive, necessarily. All day.
- Edgar: Oh. Pause. Good answer there, Cora.
- Cora: Thanks.
- Edgar: I don't know why it wasn't more obvious to me.
- Cora: Maybe you aren't really relaxed at home. Some people just aren't, I think.
- Edgar: Yes, well, your home becomes something a bit different when you start to give clarinet lessons there. Which is what I do.
- Cora: Oh, that's interesting.
- Edgar: That's what all those cheques are for. That I deposit. They're from my students. From their parents, actually.
- Cora: You teach clarinet. You're a music teacher?
- Edgar: Well, I play also. In ensembles and sometimes with the orchestra.
- Cora: That's interesting. I always wanted to learn an instrument. I don't know anything about the clarinet, but . . . Looking off. Oh, now people are waiting. We shouldn't really be chatting.
- Edgar: Oh, right. Sorry. Looking off. Sorry, sir. I'll be gone in a second. To Cora. I know exactly how much he hates me. I'll see you next time, I guess, and thanks again for your forbearance.

Cora: Not a problem. Have a nice day.

Edgar: Bye-bye.

He exits. Cora signals to the next customer. The light fades on her.

Scene Three

Tony is sitting on a bench, outdoors. Alex walks by, a little preoccupied.

Tony: Alex!

Alex: Oh hi. Tony! Again!

Tony: I'd ask how lunch was, but that now seems like an outrageously personal question.

Alex: It was kind of what I expected. Sitting. We went to a restaurant, but first we spent some time in the car.

Tony: Driving?

Alex: No. Just . . . in the parkade. I'm glad we have those tinted windows. I don't know that they're entirely legal, but then neither is . . .

He lowers his head and covers his face with his hands.

Tony: So you didn't talk about . . . things? Afterward.

Alex: No. In the restaurant, it was just . . . renovations she'd like us to do. The neighbour's holiday . . .

Tony: So . . . as though nothing else had happened?

Alex: That's always how it is. It's like there are two completely disconnected women, and if I were to speak frankly to either of them, I think they'd be shattered. She would. No, they. Ahhh . . .

Tony: It's an unpleasant prospect, but confrontation might actually lead you to a happy resolution.

- Alex: You think?
- Tony: I've thought about your options. I don't know that there are any.
- Alex: I thought about hiring a private detective. Isn't that what cuckolds usually do?
- Tony: Sure, but it's kind of an inappropriate step for a lover to take. And like it or not –
- Alex: Yes, I see what you're saying. Well I think I'm just going to stay the course with avoidance for now.
- Tony: Sure. There's lots of precedent for that. Clouds shift. Winds change.
- Alex: I told her I had to work late tonight. I don't, but I'm just not ready to go another round.
- Tony: You know that's not avoidance, right?
- Alex: What?
- Tony: It's active deception.
- Alex: Oh dear God, you're right. Still –
- Tony: It's okay. You're entitled to have time alone if you think you need it.
- Alex: I don't actually have anything to do at work. It'll be awful. I'll just sit there, feeling guilty. Maybe I should go to a movie.
- Tony: You know, Edgar is playing in a concert tonight. You could go to that.
- Alex: Yeah? What is it exactly?
- Tony: Chamber music. I'm not sure what all is on the programme.

- Alex: But it might be pleasant? Soothing?
- Tony: It's a really great forum for private thinking.
- Alex: Oh, I don't know if I'm up for that.
- Tony: Then just pay attention.
- Alex: Are you going?
- Tony: Probably. But . . . Taking out ticket. I'm going to give you this ticket. I can get another one at the door. I might be a little late anyway.
- Alex: What'll I owe you?
- Tony: Oh nothing. They're free.
- Alex: Really? So are they not very good chamber musicians?
- Tony: No, I think they're excellent. They just have their own . . . code of conduct. And expectations.
- Alex: Okay, great. I'm glad I ran into you, Tony. This has been helpful. I know it's still just avoidance but –
- Tony: But now with a dash of cultural enrichment.
- Alex: A soundtrack makes everything better.
- Tony: Yup.

Scene Four

Edgar is in the coffee shop, reading a magazine. Cora enters.

- Cora: Oh, hello again. Edgar.
- Edgar: Cora! You're homeward bound finally?
- Cora: Oh no. It'll be a couple of hours yet. This is just my coffee break. I'm glad to see you, though. I'm sorry our conversation was interrupted.

- Edgar: Well, I suppose it couldn't be helped.
- Cora: If that fellow behind you had taken the time to make sure his twenties were all face up with the heads on the same side before coming in, then we might have had an extra minute or two.
- Edgar: I knew he was trouble. So did you have a question for me maybe? Something musical?
- Cora: Well, yes. You said you give clarinet lessons and that made me wonder about music lessons in general. Do you think it's really possible for someone my age to take up an instrument?
- Edgar: It's not impossible.
- Cora: But . . .
- Edgar: But it doesn't often work. Statistically. I'm sorry.
- Cora: No no, don't be sorry. I've heard that sort of thing before and it's your field, so I certainly believe you.
- Edgar: It's not just *your* age. It's mine too. I mean, if I hadn't started when I was nine . . . Sometimes adults have more luck with the guitar or the piano.
- Cora: Why do you think that is?
- Edgar: I guess it's because one finger is one note on those instruments. Maybe . . .
- Cora: That makes sense. So if I'm good on an adding machine . . .
- Edgar: You still might not be ready for chording. I'm sorry. I don't mean to be discouraging. You should try whatever you want. There are no rules.
- Cora: Well, you know, I think maybe what I want is to be a more educated listener.

Edgar: Oh, for sure. Hearing it well can be as satisfying as doing it. And we who make the music are always happy to enlarge the audience. So, to that end . . .

Cora: Yes?

Edgar: Taking out a ticket. I'm playing in a concert tonight. It's chamber music, but really pleasant. Accessible. If you want to come, I've got some free tickets.

Cora: Really? Just like that? I get to hear you play?

Edgar: If you're not doing anything. It's at 7:30. Handing her a ticket. The address is on here.

Cora: Oh yes, I know where that is. But I can certainly pay.

Edgar: Actually, it's free for everyone, but we find if we give out tickets, people are more likely to show up.

Cora: Smart. Well, I'll definitely be there.

Edgar: Good. Stick around after. Someone usually brings cheese.

Cora: Nice! Well I should go, but I'll see you later.

Edgar: Did you want to bring a friend? I have more tickets.

Cora: No, that's fine. It'll just be me. See ya.

Edgar: Bye-bye.

She exits. He sits alone for a moment. Janine enters and notices him.

Janine: Oh . . . hello! Um . . .

Edgar: Hi! Janine! It's . . . Edgar.

Janine: Yes, that's right. Edgar. Alex's friend . . . from that running group . . . that he was in . . . when he ran.

Edgar: I just saw Alex this morning, actually. He said you were having lunch together today.

Janine: Oh really? He did?

Edgar: I think. Or maybe he meant . . . uh . . .

Janine: Oh I'm just teasing. Yes, we just had lunch. It was highly satisfactory. Better than running, probably. Do you still do that?

Edgar: Oh yeah.

Janine: Right, you play the . . . oboe?

Edgar: The clarinet.

Janine: Right. Edgar the clarinetist. And you run because it's all about your lungs. You see, I remember. How's your other friend? The zillionaire.

Edgar: Tony? I'm not sure he's worth that yet. I have a connection at the bank, though. I could probably check.

Janine: What was his money from? Peat? Sod?

Edgar: Dirt. It was a family dirt business. His dad invented a particularly good kind, and they never looked back.

Janine: How do you invent dirt? It wouldn't occur to me to try doing that.

Edgar: I know what you mean. There are just so many good ideas in the world and I'm not having anywhere near enough of them. Tony's fine, by the way. Idle. Rich.

Janine: And happy?

Edgar: He stays on a pretty even keel. Unlike most people, I think.

Janine: Right. You see, I'm still struggling toward that. I'm going for a manicure, but first I need a coffee. It's an endless struggle. Always uphill.

Edgar: You don't ask to be born. Don't they give you coffee in salons? As part of the pampering?

Janine: Oh, but it's terrible. And it's always in clear glass mugs, which I just can't bear.

Edgar: Is there a special occasion looming? Something you're primping for? Someone?

Janine: Edgar! What are you suggesting?

Edgar: Uh . . . nothing? I'm sorry.

Janine: Oh, I'm just teasing you again. Lighten up. Actually I'll be spending an evening at home alone. Alex is working late tonight and I suppose it was inevitable that might happen when I insist on meeting him for lunch as often as I do.

Edgar: Well, if you're bored and lonely, you can always come to a concert I'm playing in tonight. It's a chamber music thing. I've got free tickets . . . Taking them out. Maybe you want one?

Janine: Oh . . . That might be interesting. I never go to chamber music. I don't know anyone who does. Is it formal?

Edgar: Not at all. But you won't be shunned for having nice nails.

Janine: Fine then. I'll probably come. But I'm happy to pay for the ticket.

Edgar: Oh no, they're all free. No one's paying.

Janine: Then why are you doing it?

Edgar: Uhh . . .

Janine: Never mind. I'm sure it'll be clear.

Edgar: You can have two tickets. If you want to bring a friend.

Janine: Oh, I never do that. See you later.

She exits. Light fades.

Scene Five

A row of four chairs. Cora is sitting in one on the end, looking at a leaflet. Alex enters, also with a leaflet. He looks at the chairs.

Alex: No one's sitting here?

Cora: I don't think so.

Alex: Oh. Good.

He sits, one seat away from Cora. They look at their leaflets.

Alex: Actually, do you mind . . .

He moves into the seat next to hers.

It kind of drives me crazy at things when single people leave gaps. Then couples and friends can't sit together.

Cora: Yeah, I know what you mean. It's fine, though . . . Looking around. It seems like it won't be that full.

Alex: Maybe not. I'm new to this sort of thing.

Cora: Oh, me too. A friend gave me a free ticket.

Alex: I think that's something we all have in common.

Cora: I know one of the musicians a little. Hardly at all. The clarinetist.

Alex: Oh yeah? Edgar?

Cora: Yes. You know him too?

Alex: I do. He didn't give me the ticket, but . . . well
I guess indirectly he did. I'm Alex.

Cora: Alex, I'm Cora.

Alex: Shaking her hand. Nice to meet you, Cora.

They look at their leaflets.

So what are we in for?

Cora: I don't know. None of these things listed really
mean much to me, but that's probably my fault.

Alex: I don't know. Looks deliberately obscure to me.

Cora: I guess it's an adventure either way.

Alex: So how is it you know Edgar?

Cora: From the bank. Where he banks. I'm a teller.

Alex: Oh.

Cora: And you?

Alex: I'm a lawyer. With an insurance company. But
you were actually asking how I know Edgar.

Cora: Yes.

Alex: From running. We ran together. In a group.

Cora: But then you dispersed?

Alex: I just stopped. Running.

Cora: Was it hard on you? I'd think it might be after
a while.

Alex: A bit of that, and it can be boring. I'll probably
do it again. I'm kind of in the mood to be bored.

Cora: Well maybe you're in luck. I think they're about to start.

Alex: Oh yes. Well here's hoping for . . . something.

Music is heard. They listen and the light fades.

Scene Six

After a moment light is restored and Alex and Cora are seen applauding politely at the conclusion of the piece.

Alex: Well that was . . . gentle.

Cora: It was. It made me happy.

Alex: Me too. I didn't always pay attention.

Cora: I did. I think I did. Not in the way I do when I'm counting money, or . . . It's just very satisfying.

Alex: It is, but I wonder if it'll get a little more vigorous. I might need caffeine before long.

Cora: There's free coffee, just in that other room. I saw it as I came in. There's an urn.

Alex: Oh? Maybe I'll . . . Is this an intermission? It seems a little soon for that.

Cora: Looking at leaflet. It's just a pause. It says they'll take a few minutes between the pieces to rearrange the music stands.

Alex: Oh, great. I'm going to get a coffee. Do you want one?

Cora: Sure, why not. I don't want to fade after such a promising start.

Alex: Getting up. Exactly. Cream and sugar?

Cora: Yes please.

Alex: Be right back.

He exits. Cora sits and peruses her leaflet. After a moment Janine enters. She approaches the row of chairs.

Janine: Excuse me, are any of these free?

Cora: Indicating. Someone's using this one, but these other two are available.

Janine: Oh, good. Sitting in the aisle seat. I was a little late, so I had to go to the balcony. It's kind of steep, though. I didn't feel safe.

Cora: Well, you were right to move down, then.

Janine: I thought so. I don't think these are meant to be white-knuckle events.

Cora: Probably not.

Janine: Looking at her leaflet. Oh say, all my favourites.

Cora: Really?

Janine: Mm . . . no. It's my first time.

Cora: Mine too. It's pleasant so far, though.

Janine: And you can't beat the price.

Cora: Do you know any of the musicians?

Janine: One, a little. He's a friend of my husband's. From his running group.

Cora: Oh, that's funny because . . . Well, maybe it's not. It's probably a big group, so it'd make sense that . . .

Janine: I beg your pardon?

Cora: Sorry, I'm just babbling. Thinking out loud.

Janine: Oh, then I shouldn't listen.

They laugh. Alex enters with two cups of coffee.

Alex: Here we are. Excuse me . . . wha . . .

Janine: Alex?

Alex: Janine. Hi.

Janine: You're here. You're here?

Alex: Yes. You're here too . . .

Janine: You're not at work?

Alex: No. I . . . came here instead.

Janine: Evidently.

Alex: I got a free ticket.

Janine: Yes, well . . . who didn't? Why do you have two coffees?

Alex: Oh . . . this is . . . Handing a cup to Cora . . . yours.

Janine: What . . . who . . .

Alex: Cora, this is my wife, Janine.

Cora: Oh, hello. I mean, not . . . hello exactly. We've already been speaking.

Janine: Alex, what's going on? You said you had to work late tonight and instead you're at a concert. With a woman I don't know and have never heard of.

Alex: Janine, hang on. What are you implying? That's so ridiculous.

Janine: Ridiculous? Is that what it is when you lie to your wife about your plans for the evening?