

WEDDING DUET

Lauren Wilson

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Wedding Duet was first performed at the Downstage Theatre, Sarah Lawrence College, in December 2005. It was directed by Lori Leigh. The cast was as follows:

BRIDE Lindsay Doleshal
GROOM Randall Whittinghill

A closed door. Laughter behind it. A key is put into the lock—more laughter. The knob turns and the door opens. The GROOM stands on the threshold, carrying the BRIDE.

BRIDE: Oh my God. This is so perfect!

GROOM: Can you lift up your dress any?

BRIDE: It's so adorable! Look at the little fireplace!

GROOM: Very cute. Here, can I put you down while I get a better grip?

BRIDE: ~~You can't put me down here!~~

GROOM: Okay, let me just give you a boost then.

(He does.)

BRIDE: Watch the train!

GROOM: I will.

(Boosts her again.)

That's better.

BRIDE: Hang on, my veil's pulling.

GROOM: Why don't you just take it off?

BRIDE: I can't take it off yet! I think your foot's on it.

GROOM: It is?

(He steps aside.)

BRIDE: No, other way.

(He moves again.)

GROOM: Look, let's just go in. My arms—

BRIDE: Okay, but wait. The photographer's not here.

GROOM: We don't need a picture of this. Let's just remember it.

BRIDE: You're right. Let's take it all in so we'll never forget this moment.

(They do.)

GROOM: Honey?

BRIDE: Wait a minute. Just one more second.

GROOM: My arms—

(He drops her on the threshold.)

BRIDE: Oh my God!

GROOM: Are you all right? Did you hit your head?

BRIDE: No, I'm all right. Are you all right?

GROOM: Sure, I'm fine. I just couldn't hold on anymore.

BRIDE: I'm sorry. It was my fault. I shouldn't have made you—

GROOM: No, it was my fault. I should have braced my—

(They look at each other and laugh.)

BRIDE: Can you believe this? Who else but us?

(More laughter.)

GROOM: Dropping you right on the threshold!

(They laugh again. Her laughter turns to crying.)

Honey?

(She is sobbing hard now. She turns away and faces the door frame.)

GROOM: Sweetheart?

BRIDE: It's just so—

(Sobs more.)

GROOM: Is it the dress? I'm sure your mother can—

BRIDE: It's not the dress! It's the whole thing! The whole disgusting, hideous thing!

GROOM: Which disgusting, hideous thing?

BRIDE: Everything!

(He contemplates this. She sobs.)

I mean, of course I fall down in the threshold! Of course! I can never do anything right!

GROOM: Well, but like I just said, it wasn't your fault.

BRIDE: Yes, it was! And now it's all ruined!

GROOM: Now, look. Let's not turn this into a . . . you know, okay? So you fell down in the threshold. Big deal!

BRIDE: It is a big deal. It's a symbol!

GROOM: No, it's not. It's just something that happened. And the longer we talk about it . . .

BRIDE: But we have to talk about it. If we don't talk about it I'll just keep feeling bad about it.

GROOM: Okay, let's talk about it. Why don't we go in and make a fire in the little fireplace?

BRIDE: No! We can't just go in there!

(He considers this. He sits down beside her, squeezed into the door frame.)

I just feel this huge sense of, I don't know . . . doom.

GROOM: Doom.

BRIDE: Like when I woke up this morning. I just had this feeling that I was totally alone. It's not that I didn't want to get married, that's not what I'm saying at all. I wanted to get married. It's just . . . Oh, God, I don't know!

GROOM: So are you saying—

BRIDE: And then all those roses. My God! My God!

GROOM: (*Waits for more.*) You mean—

BRIDE: All I could think about was how much money it cost, and how one day my parents are going to die, and how tomorrow—tomorrow!—the roses are all going to be thrown in the trash somewhere. Or tonight! They're going to be rotting in some Dumpster and filling up a landfill and I'm going to have to put my parents in the ground one day and throw dirt on them.

GROOM: I think this is getting kind of . . . I don't know.

BRIDE: What?

GROOM: Blown out of proportion. I mean, if I hadn't dropped you, would we be having to sit here and talk about all this stuff? No, we'd be in there having fun.

BRIDE: You mean you're not having fun?

GROOM: No! Well, I mean, not right this second.

BRIDE: Are you unhappy?

GROOM: What do you mean? I just said—

BRIDE: I mean, being married. Are you unhappy being married?

GROOM: No! How do I know? We've been married for three and a half hours!

(She looks at him, he looks at her. They burst out laughing. The laughter grows, becomes hysterical, then subsides.)

Okay? Are we okay now?

BRIDE: I think so. I just had to—

GROOM: I know. You don't have to explain.

BRIDE: Will you carry me across now?

GROOM: Absolutely. Let's do this thing.

(They stand and prepare.)

BRIDE: Ready?

GROOM: Ready.

(She jumps into his arms.)

BRIDE: Here we go!

(He hesitates.)

Honey?

GROOM: Hang on.

BRIDE: What is it? What's wrong?

(He puts her down.)

GROOM: It's . . . I don't know.

BRIDE: What?

GROOM: It's the thing about the symbol. I wish you hadn't said that.

BRIDE: I just meant—

GROOM: I know what you meant. But I hadn't been thinking that way until then, and now that you said it, it's all I can think about. Suddenly I'm just this groom person and you're just this puffy bride—

BRIDE: Puffy?

GROOM: I don't mean puffy.

BRIDE: But you said puffy.

GROOM: I was just trying to make a point, which is that as long as we're talking about the symbol, what does it mean that I'm carrying you, anyway?

BRIDE: I think it means you're going to support me and hold me for the rest of my life.

(He looks at her. He considers this. He sits down.)

Honey?

GROOM: Just give me a minute.

BRIDE: Isn't that what it means?

GROOM: I don't know what it means. I thought we were just walking through a door.

BRIDE: Maybe it's not a symbol at all.

GROOM: Oh, it's a symbol, all right. It's definitely a symbol.

BRIDE: Well, if you don't want to carry me, why don't you just say so?

GROOM: Why don't I? Well, because . . . Do you really want to know?

BRIDE: Yes.

GROOM: Because you'll flip out.

BRIDE: No, I won't.

GROOM: You won't?

BRIDE: No.

GROOM: All right. I don't want to carry you.

(She considers this.)

BRIDE: Would you rather shove me?

GROOM: See, I knew you'd flip out.

BRIDE: I'm not flipping out. I'm joking.

GROOM: No, you aren't.

BRIDE: Yes, I am!

GROOM: And now that you're flipping out it means we're going to spend the next three hours—

BRIDE: But I'm not flipping out! I'm trying to tell you that I'm not flipping out!

(A pause.)

GROOM: Look—

BRIDE: Oh, great. Here we go.

GROOM: What?

BRIDE: Nothing. Go on, I'm listening.

GROOM: I was going to say, the vein in my temple is starting to throb, and maybe if I just lay down on the bed for a minute—

BRIDE: On the bed!

GROOM: Yes . . .

BRIDE: In there?

GROOM: Did you want room service to put a cot in the hallway?

BRIDE: But you can't lay down on the bed! You can't just ignore it! We have to resolve this!

GROOM: But we're not going to resolve this by standing here and talking!

BRIDE: I can't believe this. You'd actually do that to me?

GROOM: Do what?

BRIDE: Leave me standing here alone on the threshold?

GROOM: No! No! Just for, like, ten minutes. I'll come get you as soon as my head stops pounding.

BRIDE: (*Crying.*) And what am I supposed to do in the meantime? Just stand out here in the hall?

GROOM: I don't know. Maybe some of the guests are still down at the party.

BRIDE: Down at the party! Down at the . . . The bride can't go back to the party!

GROOM: Okay, fine. I give up. You don't want to come in, you don't want to go downstairs, you just want to stand here and be miserable for the rest of our lives.

BRIDE: No! No! Not be miserable. Talk it over! Talk it over!

GROOM: Talk what over? We've already talked so long I can't even remember what we're fighting about!

BRIDE: You can't remember?

GROOM: No! I have no idea what we're fighting about! We're not fighting about anything except about how we're fighting!

BRIDE: I can't believe you just said that.

GROOM: Oh, fine, sure. I'm a jerk because I can't remember. All right then, you tell me—what are we fighting about? I bet you can't remember either.

BRIDE: We're fighting because you're not willing to work through conflict.

GROOM: Not willing to! Are you kidding? I've never worked so hard in my life! It's like pulling a train uphill with my goddamned teeth! And no, that was not a reference to your weight!

(They glare at each other.)

BRIDE: Now you listen to me, buster. We're married now!

GROOM: Oh, yeah, you got that right. You got that perfectly right!

BRIDE: Either you stay here and talk about this with me or . . .

GROOM: Or what?

BRIDE: Or I'm leaving!

GROOM: You're leaving.

BRIDE: Yes.

GROOM: You're leaving.

BRIDE: Yes.

GROOM: You're leaving.

BRIDE: That's what I said.

GROOM: Leaving as in leaving to walk around the block, or leaving as in leaving sayonara?

BRIDE: What?

GROOM: As in leaving for good!

BRIDE: Well, I don't know. All I know is, I can't be with someone who doesn't know how to work through conflict.

GROOM: Okay. Okay, I get it now. It's all making perfect sense. What you're saying to me, what you're actually saying to me on our wedding night is that if I don't stand here in the god-damned threshold of this cheesy-ass shithole friggin' backwoods country inn—

BRIDE: Shithole?

GROOM: —until I drop dead from exhaustion in the attempt to find whatever combination of words is going to “resolve the conflict”—

BRIDE: Shithole? Shithole?

GROOM: —and make you feel like the world isn’t ending, which is not my responsibility, you know, and which I refuse to—

BRIDE: I wanted to get married in Cancun, remember? You were the one who—

GROOM: Don’t—

BRIDE: You were the one who said let’s save the money—

GROOM: Don’t change the subject—

BRIDE: I brought all the brochures home and had the whole thing—

GROOM: I’m not talking about that! I’m talking about the fact that you—

BRIDE: No, I’m talking about—

GROOM: Would you please stop interrupting me?

BRIDE: But you told me to find an inn!

GROOM: I didn’t mean—

BRIDE: And now all of a sudden—

GROOM: That's not the point! That's not the point! I didn't even want to get married!

(A silence. She screams. He tries to stop her, but she won't stop. He slaps her hard across the face. She slaps him back. They wrestle each other in the doorway, trying to kill each other, until they wear themselves out. She lies panting on the ground; he leans exhausted against the frame. He reaches into his mouth and removes a tooth, spits blood onto the floor. He cleans his mouth with his tie.)

Are you all right?

(She doesn't answer.)

I said, are you all right?

BRIDE: No.

GROOM: Maybe we should—

BRIDE: Don't talk to me.

(She pulls herself up the door frame to her feet. One of her ankles hurts.)

GROOM: Here, let me—

BRIDE: Don't touch me. Don't ever touch me again!

GROOM: Fine.

(They stand next to each other.)

BRIDE: I think my ankle's broken.

GROOM: Do you want me to look at it?

BRIDE: No. All right.

(He kneels and does this. She winces.)

GROOM: Maybe you should get it X-rayed.

BRIDE: I just want to lie down.

GROOM: Here—

(He puts an arm around her. They stand awkwardly like this.)

Do you want to lay on the bed?

BRIDE: All right. No. Wait.

GROOM: What?

BRIDE: You really didn't want to get married?

GROOM: Of course I did.

(He smiles at her. She smiles at him. They kiss passionately. She pushes him away.)

BRIDE: Your mouth's bleeding.

GROOM: I know. Let's go in.

BRIDE: Okay.

(They kiss again. She pushes him off.)

Why did you say it, then?

GROOM: Say what?

BRIDE: That you didn't want to get married.

GROOM: I don't know. Did I say that?

(He tries to kiss her; she holds him off.)

BRIDE: Yes.

GROOM: I meant at first. When you brought the brochures home. That's all I meant.

BRIDE: Oh, good.

(They kiss again.)

When did you change your mind?

GROOM: Jesus Christ! Can we not do this?

BRIDE: Do what?

GROOM: Start fighting again?

BRIDE: Okay.

(He puts his arm around her.)

GROOM: Can you walk?

BRIDE: I think it's broken.

GROOM: Here.

(He picks her up in his arms.)

BRIDE: Honey?

GROOM: Yeah?

(He waits for a response.)

What is it?

BRIDE: Nothing. Never mind.

(They look at the room through the doorway. He gives her a boost. Lights down.)

END OF PLAY