

UH-OH

(It's 7:30 on the same Friday night in the same alternate suburban reality. Lights up on BILL and SARAH in THE STUDY. Bill is wearing earbuds—watching episode 3 of season 4 of a very funny comedy on his iPad. Sarah reads from her iPad. Bill enjoys what he's watching. A lot. Sarah is irked by this. She shares this with us. She looks at Bill and gets his attention—maybe a little smack on the shoulder the leg.)

SARAH: Bill—...

BILL: *(De-earbudding.)* Yeah?

SARAH: *(She is full of something to say...but thinks better of it and instead says, laughing:) Nothin'. (Sarah goes back to her iPad; Bill re-earbuds. He enjoys what he is watching. Even more. Lots of laughter. Sarah is irked by this. She shares this with us. She looks at Bill and gets his attention again, probably with another little smack.)* Bill?

BILL: *(De-earbudding.)* Yeah?

SARAH: *(Full of something to say...and again thinking better of it, and smiling, and finally saying:) Nothin'.*

BILL: You sure?

SARAH: *(Totally convincing.)* Yeah. Yeah-yeah-yeah! *(Sarah goes back to her iPad. Bill re-earbuds. He enjoys what he's watching. Even more. Sarah is irked by this. She shares this with us. She looks at Bill and gets his attention again, probably with another little smack.)* Bill?

BILL: *(De-earbudding.)* Honey, what?!?

SARAH: *(Laughing at herself.)* Nothing.

BILL: Well, I'm watching something, here., Let me watch., Shh! *(Sarah just got shushed! By her husband! She takes this in. And stares at Bill while he re-earbuds and watches whatever he's watching. Even more laughter from Bill. Sarah is irked and decides that she really does have something to say to Bill. She gives him a smack to get his attention. Beat.)*

SARAH: Bill!

BILL: Honey, what? *(Little beat.)*

SARAH: Just...*(She wants to say something else, but instead says, smiling:)* I love you!

BILL: Well, I love you, too!, What's goin' on? >

SARAH: Nothing!

BILL: Are you okay?

SARAH: Yeah!, Yeah! I just...

BILL: What?

SARAH: Well...just—... Can I ask you something?

BILL: Yeah.

SARAH: (*Really ask the question.*) How long does it feel like we've been married?

BILL: (*Thrown.*) What? How long does it feel like we've been married?

SARAH: ...feel like we've been married—yeah—to you—yeah.

BILL: Um...well, about a year and a half, because // that's how—

SARAH: That's how long it feels like we've been married, to you, about a year and a half.

BILL: Um...yeah, because that's how long we've been married. Best year and a half of my life.

SARAH: Awww.

BILL: Why do // you ask?

SARAH: (*Little explosion.*) Wow! Only *one* little year. And a *half* of another one, huh?

BILL: Yeah. Does it feel...longer to you or something?

SARAH: What?!? No! Wait: Uh-oh. Yeah. It does. Maybe. A little.

BILL: What do you mean?

SARAH: Well, Bill: (*Beat as she searches for how to put this:*) I'm bored.

BILL: Oh.

SARAH: Yeah. I mean—it's a Friday night, and look at us. We're just sitting here. You're watching something; I'm reading something.

BILL: I thought we liked reading. And watching stuff.

SARAH: Well—we do, but I’m bored, and being bored—I mean, a year and a half *in*—is not what I hoped and dreamed, honestly.

BILL: Okay.

SARAH: Yeah, I feel like I’m *languishing*.

BILL: (*Receive and process.*) Languishing?

SARAH: Yeah, and I don’t want to languish. I want to have fun and do exciting things.

BILL: Okay. Okay, okay. Honey: I think I might know what this is. You’re just—I think...you know what? This is just what happens.

SARAH: Huh?

BILL: Yeah—I was just reading about this somewhere—(*Searches his iPad.*)—can’t remember where—I’ll send you the link—but...there was a big study done recently about how after the first year/year-and-a-half of marriage—the “honeymoon period” they call it—romance and passion can fade a little...And—when that happens, couples just have to work a little harder to figure out how to rekindle whatever it is they’ve lost, and the best way to do that—the study said—is for them to try to find the fun again. And maybe *we* just need to...find the fun again.

SARAH: Oh! Yeah! Maybe we do! (*Little beat.*) So let’s find it!

BILL: Huh?

SARAH: Let’s find the fun again right now! You first! Find the fun! Go!

BILL: Well, Honey, you know what? I don’t really feel like we’ve lost the fun, actually—

SARAH: Well, *I* do.

BILL: Well...can we find it tomorrow? I’ve had a long week and I just wanna [watch my show]—

SARAH: I don’t think I can wait that long.

BILL: Oka//y—

SARAH: Yeah, I need to find the fun *now*.

BILL: Oka//y.

SARAH: Because I don't wanna be bored, because being bored...well, it's just not good for people., Do you think it's good for people? >

BILL: No—

SARAH: 'Cause I don't think it is., 'Cause, see, I was just reading something, too, here, actually...*(Actively searches on her iPad.)*...Argh, I can't find it—but it was in an article that was written about a study that was done by...experts...on...people who just can't. Be. Bored.

BILL: Oh?

SARAH: Yeah, it's about how there are people in this world who just can't *help* themselves but take extreme *action* when // they get bored, and—

BILL: Wait, “extreme action?”

SARAH: Yeah.

BILL: Like what? Like skydive, bungee jump, bullfight—?

SARAH: No, like kill.

BILL: What?

SARAH: Kill. The theory is that that's what they'll do when they're bored. Kill.

BILL: What?

SARAH: Kill. In the cases cited in the article, kill the people they love most.

BILL: What?—no!

SARAH: Yeah. Because their hopes and dreams haven't been fulfilled. It's a “thing.” *(Indicates her head—it's a psychological thing.)* >

BILL: Really?

SARAH: They call it—argh!—I can't remember what it's called, but there are people who have this *thing*, // and —

BILL: Well, like people like who?

SARAH: Well, like people in prison.

BILL: Really.

SARAH: Yeah.

BILL: I had no idea.

SARAH: Yeah, it's a thing, and, well—I was just thinking (*Little beat.*): What if *I* was one of those people? What if when I got bored...I killed? I killed *you*. (*Little beat.*) What would you do?

BILL: Um—...

SARAH: Would you stay with me?

BILL: (*Considers.*) I—. I—...

SARAH: Yeah, it's a tough one. 'Cause if you stayed, I'd probably kill you, 'cause I'm bored. But if you left, you'd be a promise-breaker, because we *are* married, and you *did* promise stay with me in good times and in *bad*, for better or for *worse*, in sickness and in health, and—if you left me, you'd be breaking a vow. (*Little beat.*) That's a tough one. You'd kinda end up losing either way. (*Little beat.*) What would you do?

BILL: (*Receive and process.*) Um...well...I'd like to think that—A) that something like this would never happen, and B)...that...I'd stay. Because I love you. And because we'd be dealing with mental illness. And you'd need my help in dealing with that, so, yeah: I'd stay. And help you get better. Help you...not be bored.

SARAH: If you *knew* I was gonna kill you, you'd stay?

BILL: I think I would.

SARAH: Really.

BILL: Yeah.

SARAH: Really.

BILL: Yeah. I can't imagine my life without you, so...

SARAH: Aw, that's really sweet of you, Bill. (*Sarah gets her bag or reaches into a drawer.*)

BILL: What are you doing? (*Sarah produces a gun, which she points at Bill with conviction and authority and know-how.*) What—? Honey! (*He kind of puts his hands up because...what else do you do?*) What are you doing?

SARAH: Bill: I think I'm one of those people who kills the people they love most when they're bored, and I never-ever-ever-ever thought I'd get bored with you, with us, with things, but I did: Uh-oh.

BILL: What?!? You're—one of those people?

SARAH: Yeah.

BILL: Well, how do you know?

SARAH: I took a test. They had one of those tests, "Could You Kill?: A Personality Test," at the end of the article. And I did really well on it. Or—poorly. Anyway, I answered all the questions "right." I have all the symptoms. And it said that I. Could. Kill.

BILL: Oh.

SARAH: Yeah. How 'bout that, huh?

BILL: How 'bout that. *(Beat.)* Sarah... *(Bill tries to leave.)*

SARAH: Oh, n-n-no. Don't you *go*, Bill. You're not *going* are you? You said you wouldn't., You just said you'd stay with me., And help me get better.

BILL: Yeah, when this was all hypothetical!, Where did you get a gun?!?

SARAH: At the SuperCenter.

BILL: Oh.

SARAH: To keep us safe. From the outside.

BILL: Oh. *(Beat. Standoff. Then, a plea.)* Sarah. I love you, Sarah. Sarah, please...

SARAH: BAM! *(Sarah shoots Bill. At least 5 more times—fast. Bill screams. But—it's a water gun—and this should be a total surprise! To Bill; to the audience!)* Bam-bam-bam-bam-bam-bam-bam-bam-bam! *(Sarah soaks Bill's shirt. A light colored shirt shows the water stain. She continues to find places to shoot him throughout what follows.)*

SARAH: *(Joyful! She pulled off the best practical joke ever! Exploding with laughter.)* HAHAAHAHAHAHAHA!! I got you so bad! HAHAAHAHA!!! It's not *real*! It's a squirt gun! It's not *real*! I got you so bad!!! Oh, my God!, Your *face*! *Hilarious*! You thought I was gonna *kill* you?!?! I'm not gonna *kill* you! I'm your *WIFE*! I *LOVE* you! I'm not gonna *kill* you!

BILL: *(Distraught.)* Sarah!!!

SARAH: Oh, Bill! Baby, I was just *playin'*! I made the whole thing up! There's no such *study*! No...*test*! People who kill the people they love most when they're *bored*?!!? People don't do things like that! And if they do—well, they're crazy! And I'm not crazy! I would never do something like that. I'm sorry! (*She kisses him.*) I'm so sorry, Baby! I was just trying to wake us up. Shake things up. To help us find the fun again. You gotta find the fun in a marriage or it'll fizzle.

BILL: Yeah, well, that wasn't really very fun for me.

SARAH: Oh, Baby, come on! I was just playin', // silly goose!

BILL: (*Distraught.*) Sarah: (*A beat of him sorting through what has happened. He asks the hard question:.*) Do I...bore you? >

SARAH: No!

BILL: So much that you wanna kill me?

SARAH: No! Bill! Don't // be silly!

BILL: And is our life...not what you hoped and dreamed?!?

SARAH: Well, not exactly—but it's okay: >

BILL: Whoah—

SARAH: I've learned to adjust my expectations. (*Whoops.*)

BILL: *What*?!?

SARAH: I mean—

BILL: You shouldn't have to do *that*! I haven't had to do that! You've fulfilled *my* expectations! Exceeded them, even, and I want to fulfill yours! *Exceed* them, even!

SARAH: All right then: do it. Fulfill. Exceed. Right now: Go.

BILL: Well, I don't...feel like I know how to do that right now.

SARAH: Bill: How 'bout just...*try*.

BILL: Okay.

SARAH: And keep trying.

BILL: Oka//y.

SARAH: Every day.

BILL: Oka//y.

SARAH: And never stop.

BILL: Oka//y.

SARAH: Ever.

BILL: Okay.

SARAH: *(Pointing the squirt gun at him.)* Till the day you die. *(She playfully kisses him on the forehead. Or maybe squirts him in the face. Bill is still pretty freaked out and confused. Lights fade. Existential space vacuum sound/Music/Transition.)*

THE END *(And we move on to...)*

{Note to the actress playing Sarah: In my mind, this play begins as a test. You have a fairly cruel practical joke to play. And you're not entirely sure you want to play it—but, as the play unfolds, you're forced to play it, because your husband has failed you and has no idea that he has. Because he doesn't contribute to the fun factor in your relationship anymore. You believe that Friday nights and weekends should be for fun. And—for you—the past bunch of Friday nights and weekends have not been fun. They've been a total bore. And you don't want to be bored. So you are taking action—to save your marriage.

If, when you express your boredom on page 31, Bill responded with something like, "Oh, no! Honey! You shouldn't be bored! I'm so sorry! Let's go do something fun!" *that* would solve the problem, and there would be no need for you to execute the prank. But Bill doesn't say anything like that. He says, "Okay. Okay. Okay. Honey: I think I might know what this is. You're just—I think...you know what? This is just what happens." And that is unacceptable—and marks the point of no return. The gun must be pulled—in order for you wake Bill up and save your marriage.

Bill—and the audience—should have no idea that you are playing a joke. Good pranksters don't give any indication that they're playing a joke. And you should be **TOTALLY PUMPED** that you succeeded so wildly at pulling off your prank.}