

SIDE A: The Beginning: Charlotte & Eugene

Set-up: Charlotte has just discovered she is pregnant. Eugene believes this is a typical Friday night when Robert will come over, but in fact Robert is bringing his new puppy, Bella.

SCENE:

CHARLOTTE

No, no. This can't be happening, not now, not today- not with Robert finally... well, this is just a big night for us, Eugene, that's all I'm saying. I'm saying it was already a big night, I was already kinda freaking out - but now? Now!?

EUGENE

Yes, I find this all... quite perplexing.

CHARLOTTE

Who knows what's going to happen now! And not knowing what to expect, Eugene, is almost always a precursor for generalized anxiety, you know? You know what I'm saying, Eugene? Generally? Yes? Oh my gosh, he'll be here soon. What am I going to say?

EUGENE

Well, you will say, "Why, hello, Robert. How splendid to see you, much as we do every Friday night and yet this has never been a cause for concern--"

CHARLOTTE

Tonight is a very special night, Eugene!

EUGENE

I'm not trying to argue with you, Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE

And to think- we were gonna surprise you! How ridiculous is that?

EUGENE

(very seriously)

I don't like surprises, Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE

The cruelest of ironies.

EUGENE

You already know this about me, Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE

Whatever, shake it off. Here, let me fix your sweater. Is it itchy? Are you comfortable?

EUGENE

Stop fussing with me!

CHARLOTTE

You know what? Actually, this could be good. I mean, tonight was all about the next big step... taking it, and such, so... okay, the next step became a giant, unfathomable leap. But that's totally fine.

EUGENE

You're worrying me, Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE

'Cuz, I mean, everything so far has been great. Robert is really great. He's funny and tall and smart -

EUGENE

(snorts)

Smart?

CHARLOTTE

He's considerate, and kind- he treats me very well- even you, for that matter.

EUGENE

Ah, it's been a real fairytale.

CHARLOTTE

He's always looking out for us. And when I falter, he consistently reminds me I can do anything I put my mind to.

EUGENE

Yes, because it's healthy to have unrealistic expectations for our lives.

CHARLOTTE

And he's got that smile that just flips your heart. Robert's a good guy; a really great guy.

EUGENE

Robert is tolerable.

CHARLOTTE

He has some exceptionally fine qualities.

EUGENE

Somewhat tolerable.

CHARLOTTE

I mean, you like him, right, Eugene?

EUGENE

I just said he's tolerable! Why must you keep pressing me?

SIDE B: Robert's Entrance: Charlotte, Eugene, Robert

Set-up: Charlotte has just discovered she is pregnant (no one else knows). Eugene believes this is a typical Friday night when Robert will come over, but in fact Robert is bringing his new puppy, Bella.

SCENE: CHARLOTTE opens the door and ROBERT enters the room carrying a large plant/small tree.

ROBERT

Okay, tonight's the night! She's in the car, in the lot - she's fine, she's got a blankie, all snuggled up - okay, she wasn't thrilled I left her alone, but I wanted to check that we're good. We good?

CHARLOTTE chuckles, taps her cheek. ROBERT obliges.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Gosh, I'm all over the place, I'm so excited. You look beautiful.

CHARLOTTE

Aren't you nervous?

ROBERT hands Charlotte the plant.

ROBERT

I'm never nervous.

CHARLOTTE

Okay. Thank you, for this... this shrubbery. I'll put it over here.

CHARLOTTE places the plant near EUGENE, who is horrified.

EUGENE

(horrified)

And what is this?

CHARLOTTE

If it's not the right time, Robert, we don't have to force it.

ROBERT

Of course it's the right time; why wouldn't it be the right time? I've been looking forward to this all week. Heck, you really do look beautiful. Like, extra great.

EUGENE

Excuse me, but do I have a say in any of this? I mean, of course you look beautiful- positively glowing- but about the other stuff. Most pressingly, what is this sad looking foliage doing in our abode, intruding-

ROBERT

Well hello, Eugene!

EUGENE

- intruding upon our space? And who in Cleopatra's name is in the car?

ROBERT

Well, look at you! Don't you look cute?

EUGENE

(aghast)

Cute?!

EUGENE stomps away to his toy chest, pouts.

CHARLOTTE

Isn't he the best?

ROBERT

Sure. Definitely. Definitely the best. You're the best, dude!

EUGENE

(mocking Robert)

You're the best, dude!

ROBERT

Is he feeling all right?

CHARLOTTE

Eugene? He's fine. Maybe he's nervous. I'm not gonna lie, I feel a little sick... about it myself, them meeting, and all. I wonder if we've been putting this off.

ROBERT

Hey, it's only been two months, so we put it off two months, and that ain't bad. You do look a little pale.

CHARLOTTE

Perhaps we've been avoiding this, and that's pretty selfish, you know - making everything about us, us, us. They should've met a long time ago, like right when you got her, to see if they gel, if they blend.

ROBERT

They'll gel fine. They'll be gellin'.

EUGENE

Nobody talks like that.

CHARLOTTE

I mean, forget about Eugene, what if she doesn't like me? Oh gosh, maybe we've been avoiding this because we're afraid it will all go terribly wrong and everything will be ruined.

ROBERT

What? Charlotte, you're acting very strange.

EUGENE

You do seem extra weird today.

CHARLOTTE

Am I? I don't think so. I mean, look at you - you're the one carrying random shrubs around.

EUGENE

Please remove that thing immediately.

ROBERT

My mom always said you should have a plant, then a dog, then maybe you're ready to have a kid. Not that, not that I'm saying we're ready for a kid or anything, God, no, but I figured, you know, we could handle the plant.

CHARLOTTE looks at the plant, attempts a smile.

CHARLOTTE

Okay.

ROBERT

Didn't wanna skip too many steps, y'know. Charlotte, is tonight some kind of make it or break it deal for you? 'Cuz I'd really like to know what I'm getting myself into here.

CHARLOTTE

Robert, no-

ROBERT

Like a heads up.

CHARLOTTE

I'm not gonna blindside you; not like that.

ROBERT

Okay, because, you know, nothing is make it or break it for me with you, Charlotte. Everything is make it.

CHARLOTTE

Oh. That's very sweet.

EUGENE

No, it's not.

ROBERT

It's not sweet-

EUGENE

Thank you/

ROBERT

/It's true. I'm just telling you the truth.

CHARLOTTE

It just would've been nice for all of us to have spent some time together, you know? Like all together, if that's, like... the ultimate goal. Us. All together.

ROBERT

Ah, I'm picking up what you're putting down.

EUGENE

Nobody talks like that.

CHARLOTTE

And then maybe Eugene wouldn't be so lonely.

EUGENE

Excuse me?

SIDE C: Bella Arrives: Charlotte, Eugene, Robert, Bella

Set-up: First introduction to Bella (Robert's new puppy). He rescued her two months ago, and this is the big introduction to Charlotte and Eugene. Charlotte wants to be liked, and Eugene wants to be left alone.

SCENE:

CHARLOTTE

Where is she?

ROBERT

Right in the hallway. C'mon Bella, let's meet Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE

Was she okay in the car?

ROBERT

Oh yeah, she's totally fine. C'mon, Bells. She must be feeling shy.

BELLA

(from hallway)

Ha!

ROBERT

Yes, good girl. Come here, Bells.

BELLA

(hysterically from hallway)

No! I think you should come here! I don't want to go there - you should come here!

EUGENE

Oh good, because that's what we need right now. Histrionics.

ROBERT

Bella...

BELLA enters. She is decidedly grumpy.

CHARLOTTE

Awwwww, hey Bella! Look how cute you are!

BELLA

(warming up)

Awww, yeah. That's true.

ROBERT

Come on inside, Bella. This is Charlotte.

BELLA moves very close to Charlotte.

BELLA

Oh, hellooooooo.

CHARLOTTE

Oh, she's adorable, Robert.

ROBERT

Yup, she's my little fluff 'n stuff.
(musses Bella's hair)

BELLA

I am! He loves me so much and I love him so much, and we love each other!

CHARLOTTE

Nice to finally meet you, Bella.

BELLA

Right? He talks about you constantly. *(To Robert)* You talk about her constantly. *(To Charlotte)* I've never even seen you and I'm already kinda sick of your face.

CHARLOTTE

She's lovely.

BELLA

You smell nice. I like snacks. *(To Robert)* She's not as pretty as you said she'd be.

EUGENE has listened to enough.

EUGENE

Hogwash and fiddlesticks!

BELLA

Oh, hey hi! I didn't see you there!

EUGENE

She is the prettiest human person in the world! Get out of my house you stupid, uninformed creature!

BELLA

(yelling)

Oh my goodness why are you yelling at me? I don't even know you!

CHARLOTTE

Oh! Look, Robert - they're saying hi to each other.

ROBERT

She seems a little anxious, actually.

ROBERT moves to comfort BELLA; she pulls away, glares at Eugene.

BELLA
What is wrong with you, mister?

EUGENE
I'm perturbed you would malign my person's quite apparent pulchritude.

BELLA
Huh?
(Spots plant, runs to it)
Oh my God - Alfred, what are you doing here?

EUGENE
Please apologize to Charlotte immediately.

BELLA
(to plant)
Are you feeling okay? I missed you so much!

EUGENE
You are not even remotely aware of anything I'm discussing with you.

BELLA
(to plant)
I was thinking about the conversation we were having in the car, and you were right - we'd be together again!

CHARLOTTE
What do you think, Eugene?

EUGENE
This is with whom you expect me to align myself?

BELLA
I don't think I like you, mister uppity pants.

EUGENE
Do you think I care what you think, miss "fluff 'n stuff"?

BELLA
Hey! Don't talk to me that way! (To Robert) Don't let him talk to me that way! (To Eugene) Why are you talking to me? Who are you, anyway?

EUGENE
Isn't it obvious? I'm your new friend.

SIDE D: Suzanne Arrives: Suzanne, Charlotte, Robert, Eugene

Set-up: Introduction to Suzanne. She has been trying to enter for the last few minutes while the dogs freaked out. Typically she would be at Samba lessons on Friday, so she's never met Robert (whom Charlotte has been dating for 8 months). Something happened between Suzanne and the dance instructor, though, so she's staying home tonight and decided to crash the party, unaware that tonight is the big "meeting of the dogs".

SUZANNE enters, loud, abrasive, tipsy. She wears a vivacious dance costume/dress and wig (if needed).

SUZANNE

Good Lord, people. Pull yourselves together. I take a night off, thinking maybe I should finally, you know, meet this man you've been puking up sparkles about and what do you do? You barricade the door with barking bohemian beasties.

CHARLOTTE

Suzanne, I'm so sorry. I should have warned you. The dogs just met each other and it's been a little crazy -

SUZANNE

Okay, pause. Pause it all right there. Your dogs just met?

CHARLOTTE

Yes.

SUZANNE

As in, they had a meeting.

CHARLOTTE

Yes.

SUZANNE

As in a pre-arranged, specially planned meeting, just for your dogs?

EUGENE

Clarify it as many times as you'd like.

CHARLOTTE

Yes, Suzanne. They wanted to meet.

EUGENE

I was pretty clear about that not being the case.

ROBERT returns; CHARLOTTE takes his arm.

CHARLOTTE

We wanted them to meet so we planned for them to meet.

SUZANNE

Lordy, well, that's your primary issue. Eh, no, your primary issue was becoming a dog owner in the first place. Your secondary issue was dating another dog owner-

(acknowledges Robert)

-regardless of how attractive. Hello, I'm Suzanne.

ROBERT

Hi, it's nice to finally meet-

SUZANNE

Don't bother with formalities. I have very little patience for anyone willing to sacrifice their own personal needs for the whims of a whiny canine. I respect that everyone has their deep-seated Freudian issues or whatnot, but it's messed up.

CHARLOTTE

Suzanne!

SUZANNE

It's messed up! I'm sorry, but it's true. They urinate on your hardwood floors and you consider it the Mona Lisa.

ROBERT

I really don't think my dog's urine is a work of art-

SUZANNE

And I just can't get behind the whole idea of sleeping with the same creature that just rubbed its fecal matter across the living room carpet.

ROBERT

(nods head slowly)

I can appreciate that.

EUGENE

Excuse me?

SUZANNE

Am I gonna get a name?

EUGENE

Slanderer!

CHARLOTTE

Shh, Eugene.

SUZANNE

Do we have a name?

ROBERT

Name? Oh, sorry; her name is Bella.

SUZANNE

(to Charlotte)

See? This is what I'm talking about - this, this is why I'm worried about you, Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE

Honey, I think she meant your name. Suzanne, this is Robert. Robert, this is my neighbor, Suzanne.

SUZANNE

Nice to meet you, Robert. Unless you prefer I call you Bella?

EUGENE

He might.

ROBERT

Robert is fine.

SUZANNE

Wait, how have we not met? How have I not met this guy? Have you been hiding him away? (*Appreciatively*) Mm, Mm, Mm.

CHARLOTTE

Nothing of the sort, Suzanne. We're hardly ever here except on Fridays, and you've been busy with your rumba lessons.

SUZANNE

Samba. And yeah, I'm done with all that. It was good while it lasted, but Alejandro only had so much to offer me, and it just... wasn't enough. If you know what I mean, Bobby.

ROBERT

Uh, no. I... nope.

SUZANNE

I've gotta say, Bobby-

CHARLOTTE

He prefers Robert.

SUZANNE

Well, Bella, here's the deal. Charlotte's like a daughter to me. I know I may seem abrasive, a bit rough around the edges, but... well, it's true. I'll kill ya. I'll kill ya when you least expect it and I'll leave that ridiculous little pompadour to die alone in her crate.

SIDE E: A Potato Flower: Suzanne, Bella, Eugene

Set-up: Opening of Act II. At the end of Act I, Suzanne discovered the dogs trashing the apartment, and since then has apparently resigned herself to drinking and chatting with them. The night has caught up with her, and she is feeling the ups and downs of self-awareness, self-confidence, and the trials of romance.

SCENE:

EUGENE is squished between SUZANNE and BELLA on the couch. Suzanne, drink in hand, continues to expound:

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

Tell me, furry little creatures. Do you ever think about metamorphosis?

THEY have been there a while.

EUGENE

Not particularly a Kafka fan.

SUZANNE

You know - metamorphosis. Changing. Becoming something different, something better.

EUGENE

I wasn't aware I could actually be improved.

SUZANNE

A better representation of yourself, a better version.

EUGENE

I hear you; I am simply unable to relate.

SUZANNE

Sometimes, my skin just feels wrong, you know?

EUGENE

No, that's concerning, actually. You should look into that.

SUZANNE

I'm a... I'm a delicate flower, you know.

EUGENE

I can see that, yes.

SUZANNE

I feel things quite intensely. Alejandro never got that, never understood me. I think I scared him. *(Pause)* Maybe if my outsides were delicate like my insides... I don't know, maybe he could... Maybe it would be easier to love me.

BELLA

Ooh, no, no, I understand! Like, like how I'm cute and adorable and everybody loves me!

EUGENE

Your sense of empathy is sadly misaligned.

SUZANNE

I'm a delicate flower!

BELLA

You are!

EUGENE

Au contraire, Suzanne; delicate flower you are not.

BELLA

Eugene, you're not helping!

EUGENE

No, perpetuating misconceptions regarding Suzanne's sense of self is not helping, which will only lead to continued confusion and repeated capitulation into her cups followed by subsequent feelings of confusion and despair.

BELLA

Oh, that sounds terrible. (*To Suzanne*) I think you're a beautiful flower.

EUGENE

I give up.

SUZANNE

(defeated)

I'm a potato.

EUGENE

Ah, there! Now we have found a more appropriate appellation.

BELLA

No! Eugene!

EUGENE

Don't "Eugene" me; let's at least start from a more reasonable postulate. Suzanne, let's say you are a potato.

SUZANNE

I am a potato!

EUGENE

Excellent.

BELLA

Suzanne, you are not a potato.

EUGENE

I said she's a damn potato!

SUZANNE

I am a potato!

EUGENE

All right, capital, yes - but! Suzanne, let us specify - what kind of potato are you?

SUZANNE

But... I am a sweet potato!

BELLA

A very sweet potato!

EUGENE

A moderately saccharine sweet potato.

SUZANNE

With freshly churned butter.

BELLA

And brown sugar!

SUZANNE

And a scoop of brown sugar slathered on top. All mixed together *y delicioso*.

EUGENE

All right, well, we just lost most of the nutritional value of said potato, but simultaneously gained an important insight. Suzanne, yes, you may be a potato- but you are an exceptional one.

BELLA

Eugene, that was very kind.

SUZANNE

I feel like you two really understand.

BELLA

Oh, we do!

EUGENE

I do.

SIDE F: The Breakup: Charlotte, Robert, Eugene

Set-up: Charlotte and Robert just returned from dinner; the dogs (and Suzanne) have trashed the house. Charlotte found out this morning that she's pregnant (hasn't told anyone) and she's freaking out - she already kicked Suzanne out of the house. Robert is a little blind-sided by Charlotte's onslaught of emotion but is trying his best to ride the wave, because he was planning on proposing to Charlotte tonight.

SCENE:

CHARLOTTE

Robert, why did you bring me that plant?

ROBERT

What plant?

CHARLOTTE

(points)

That plant.

ROBERT

Well, because- I told you, because I thought you might like it, you and Eugene.

EUGENE

Please do not presume such things in the future, Bobbert.

ROBERT

And I thought it might be a nice way to mark, to mark this step in our relationship.

CHARLOTTE

Well, did you consider that maybe I wouldn't want to do that? Wouldn't want that sort of responsibility? It's a living thing, you know. A living thing that you just waltzed into my home and handed to me and now I have to take care of it and keep it alive so it doesn't die.

ROBERT

Well, I... I didn't really think...

CHARLOTTE disembarks the couch.

CHARLOTTE

No, you didn't. (Pause) I can't do this anymore.

ROBERT

Do what?

CHARLOTTE

This. Us. You and me.

EUGENE and BELLA turn and pay attention.

ROBERT

Um, I must've blacked out here for a second because this feels like it's coming out of nowhere.

CHARLOTTE

We only just met each other and it's way too soon.

ROBERT

For our dogs to meet?

CHARLOTTE

For all of it. All of it. All the things.

ROBERT

We've been dating for almost a year, Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE

Okay, yeah, and what do you really know about me?

ROBERT

I'd like to think I know a helluva lot.

EUGENE

(snorts)

What you know about this fascinating woman could fit into the small end of a stick.

CHARLOTTE

Well, well... do you know that I sometimes wear the same socks two days in a row?

ROBERT

No, but that's... not really... a prob-

CHARLOTTE

And that occasionally I'll wake up and eat ice cream in the middle of the night like a starving little mouse -

EUGENE

Yeah, that's pretty adorable.

ROBERT

I mean, that's actually kind of cute-

CHARLOTTE

It's not cute. None of this is cute. I'm not some wonderful creature come into your life made of sunshine and rainbows and just puking up sunshiny things.

ROBERT

I never thought-

CHARLOTTE

You did. You think I'm great. And tidy and together and disciplined like a damn butler and apparently perfect. Well...
(looks around, knocks something over) I'm not! See?

EUGENE promptly fixes the upturned item.

EUGENE

Charlotte, I mean really.

ROBERT

Okay, okay... so maybe I don't know everything about you, and I'm not sure where the butler thing came from, but that's okay! We can still have a great life together.

CHARLOTTE

But how can you possibly know if you want a life with someone that you don't even possibly know?

ROBERT

What? That doesn't make a whole lotta... (shakes his head)
Nope, never mind. I just want to. I want to know everything about you.

CHARLOTTE

No. You'll find stuff that, I don't know, but you'll find stuff you don't like, and then I'll be... It just seems like perfect is a long way to fall.

ROBERT

Is that what's bothering you?

CHARLOTTE

Maybe? I don't know. No. I'm sorry, I'm all over the place. Robert, there's something we need to talk about-

ROBERT

Charlotte, you will never disappoint me.

CHARLOTTE

What? Are we in the same room having this conversation? Of course I will! Robert, I'll disappoint you, like, all the time - and you will disappoint me and we'll disappoint each other, all the time. Be serious.

EUGENE

You rarely, if ever, disappoint me, Charlotte. I think you're over-re-

CHARLOTTE

(to Robert)

And don't tell me I'm over-reacting! I'm being serious.