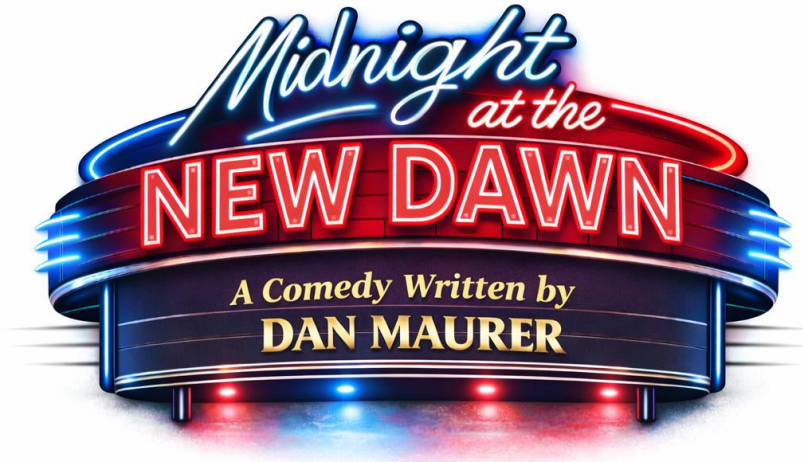


OPEN AUDITION CALL

JOIN OUR CAST AND HELP CREATE SOMETHING NEW AT KELSEY THEATRE

**Kelsey Theatre in association with Maurer Productions OnStage and
Maurer TheaterWorks Present the World Premiere of**



It's New Year's Eve at the New Dawn Diner

**FOUR COUPLES
TWO HOURS TO MIDNIGHT
ONE LAST CHANCE**

Love, Laughter, and Heartache are on the Menu

AUDITION DATES

Saturday, June 6, 2026 - 11am - 5pm

Sunday, June 7, 2026 - 11am - 5pm

Tuesday, June 9, 2026 - 6pm - 9pm (callbacks with vocal audition)

Auditions held at Mercer County Community College, CM Building
1200 Old Trenton Road, West Windsor, NJ 08550

[Click Here to Learn More and Sign Up to Audition](#)

Email questions to mpoauditionsinfo@gmail.com, or call (609) 462-5551

UP TO 20 ROLES, INCLUDING ENSEMBLE

A Perry Award-winning creative team reunites at Kelsey Theatre to premiere this intelligent, wickedly funny, and deeply human ensemble comedy. This promises to be an actor's show, with many fun and fulfilling characters to play and one all-cast comic musical number.

Note that this is an unpaid, non-union opportunity.

FOUR PERFORMANCES WILL BE HELD AT KELSEY THEATRE

Fri. Oct. 16 & Sat. Oct. 17 at 8 p.m.

MATINEES: Sat. Oct. 17 & Sun. Oct. 18 at 2 p.m.

CONTENTS

1. Diversity Statement
2. Letter from the Playwright
3. The Play
4. The Producers
5. The Playwright & Director
6. About Kelsey Theatre
7. The Creative Team
8. The Main Characters and their Stories
9. Available Roles
10. Recommended Listening
11. What You Need to Know Before Auditioning
12. Audition Application
13. Conflict Calendars
14. Audition Monologues



Maurer Productions OnStage,
Maurer TheaterWorks, and Kelsey Theatre are
committed to advancing an environment of
diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism in all our
productions and programs. We aim to foster an
inclusive environment for people of all races,
genders, religions, sexual orientations, creeds,
socio-economic statuses, nationalities and abilities.

A LETTER FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT & DIRECTOR

Spring 2026

Dear Fellow Theater Artist,

I am personally inviting you to audition for something I believe is genuinely special – the world premiere of ***Midnight at the New Dawn***, a new original ensemble comedy that I have written and will be directing this fall at Kelsey Theatre.

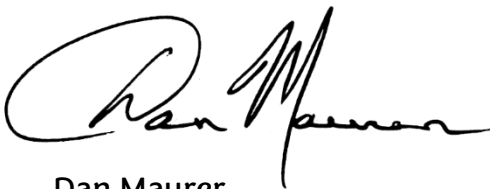
Inspired by the wit of Neil Simon – and fueled by the delightful chaos of internet-age relationships – ***Midnight at the New Dawn*** is a wickedly funny, tender ensemble comedy about love, risk, and the choices we make as the clock runs out.

What makes this opportunity unique is the chance to be part of the creative process. Actors who are cast will be invited to participate in the play's development over the summer – character discussions, table readings, and collaborative conversations that will directly inform rewrites ahead of and during rehearsals. This is not simply performing a finished script. This is the rare chance to help shape one. Your voice, your instincts, and your artistry will leave a mark on this production that will last far beyond opening night.

The play features four interwoven storylines – four couples, four very human dilemmas – performed by a dynamic ensemble. Many roles are available for actors of a wide range of ages and experience levels. This is a true company piece, and I am looking for performers who bring both comedic instinct and emotional depth to their work.

Audition details, monologues, and scheduling information are contained in this audition packet. In the meantime, please reach out with any questions. I hope to see you in the room.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Maurer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long, sweeping tail.

Dan Maurer
Playwright & Director
Midnight at the New Dawn
Maurer Productions OnStage / Maurer TheaterWorks

THE PLAY

This special co-production reunites an acclaimed, Perry Award-winning creative team for the world premiere of an original new comedy, *Midnight at the New Dawn*. Inspired by stage legends like Neil Simon – and fueled by the delightful chaos of internet-age relationships – this high-energy ensemble play is a recipe for laughter.

It's New Year's Eve. The coffee is hot and the clock is ticking at the New Dawn Diner, where the lives of several couples converge. As midnight approaches, old loves are tested, new sparks fly, and everyone must decide who they're bringing into the new year, and who they're leaving behind.

Wickedly funny, yet tender, and full of heart and heartache, *Midnight at the New Dawn* is a romantic comedy about risk, resilience, and hope. It's Neil Simon with a Wi-Fi connection.



THE PRODUCERS

Maurer Productions OnStage (MPO) was founded in 2004 by John and Diana Maurer to support the community through creative opportunities for actors, artists, and theater craftsmen. Later that year, Dan Maurer joined as co-producer, marketer, and director. Their first collaboration – MPO's inaugural adult production, *The Foreigner* – opened in January 2005 at Kelsey Theatre.

Together, they assembled a company board featuring some of New Jersey's top community theater talent. Known for raising the bar in production values, the MPO team went on to stage some of Kelsey Theatre's most popular shows during that period, including *Monty Python's Spamalot*, *Avenue Q*, *Shrek the Musical*, *Singin' in the Rain*, and *Elton John & Tim Rice's AIDA*.



In 2014, Dan stepped away from MPO to focus on his writing. He published and earned national recognition for his screenwriting before turning to playwriting. After his short plays received readings and productions around the state, he launched Maurer TheaterWorks to develop his original material. Now, more than a decade later, Maurer Productions OnStage and Maurer TheaterWorks unite – in association with Kelsey Theatre – for this special co-production: *Midnight at the New Dawn*, an original ensemble comedy written and directed by Dan Maurer.

THE PLAYWRIGHT & DIRECTOR

Dan Maurer is a theater director, playwright, screenwriter, author, and member of the Dramatists Guild. He spent ten years co-producing and directing plays at Kelsey Theatre with Maurer Production OnStage. During that time, he helped co-produce over 20 plays and musicals and directed acclaimed productions of *Driving Miss Daisy*, *Hollywood Arms*, and *Elton John & Tim Rice's AIDA*. He won several NJACT Perry Awards for his directing, producing, and sound design. In 2015, Dan was inducted into the NJACT Hall of Fame. He founded Maurer TheaterWorks in 2026 to focus on the development of original stage productions. Meanwhile, his screenwriting works have been named a finalist in the Austin Film Festival, semi-finalist in the Page International Screenwriting Awards, and winner of the WeScreenplay Feature Screenwriting Lab competition. His thriller, *Snow Day*, is available on Amazon.com. His short plays are available online at www.newplayexchange.org.



ABOUT KELSEY THEATRE

With seating for just under 400, Kelsey Theatre is a professionally equipped theatrical facility housed on the campus of Mercer County Community College in West Windsor, NJ. It is home to about ten independent community theater companies and presents a year-round season of full-length family and adult events featuring talent from around New Jersey, professional booked in events, student shows, and The Kelsey Players. Kelsey Theatre is also home to Tomato Patch, Central New Jersey's premiere multi-disciplinary summer arts program offering workshops in theater, dance, vocal music, visual art and video production for students aged 7 through 18.



THE CREATIVE TEAM

Writer, Director, Co-Producer: Dan Maurer
 Scenic Designer, Co-Producer: John M. Maurer
 Props/Set Dress, Co-Producer: Diana Gilman Maurer
 Stage Manager, Master Carpenter: Jeff Cantor

Music Director: Laurie Gougher
 Lighting Designer: M. Kitty Getlik
 Sound Designer: Judi Parrish
 Costume Designer: Anthony Remer

THE MAIN CHARACTERS AND THEIR STORIES

The following storylines are interwoven into one piece and take place simultaneously in the same New Jersey diner in the two hours leading to midnight on New Year's Eve.

JULIE & KRISSY:

When Julie (owner-operator of The New Dawn Diner) asks her friend Krissy to host her reality relationship web series "Truth Be Told" live during the diner's New Year's Eve bash, the two women get more than they bargained for.

CLAIRE & LOUIS:

Louis meets his "lifestyle influencer" wife, Claire, at the diner hoping for one last chance to salvage their marriage before divorce papers are signed. But he quickly finds she is crafting a "brand-boosting" break up announcement for her online followers; it's her public declaration of independence. How does he reconcile the person he thought he married with the woman sitting across from him now?

LUCY & OWEN

Lucy submits a story to her otherwise all male writers group that is meeting at the diner, but doesn't tell them the piece is autobiographical. As the men deliver their scathing critiques, it quickly becomes evident she has a very different story to tell than the one on the page, and her avoidant boyfriend sitting across from her is in the crosshairs.



NICOLE & JAKE

Washed up actor Jake tracks down Nicole, his award-winning actress ex-wife at the diner to ask her for a mysterious favor. They quickly start reminiscing about the day their rocky marriage was careening toward divorce when the studio forced them to add an explicit love scene to the movie they were shooting. They faked it in real life, they reasoned; why not fake it for the camera. But when the intimacy coordinator showed up, the results had implications that still resonate years later.

TOBY & EMMA

High school theater kid Toby has a problem. His girlfriend, Emma, is infatuated with him. And he loves that she loves him. But when Krissy's reality web series *Truth Be Told* forces him to face the fact that he is confused about his own sexuality as well as his relationship with Emma, Toby has a difficult choice to make.

AVAILABLE ROLES:

ROLES	M/F	DESCRIPTION	CATEGORY	AGE RANGE
Krissy	F	Host of an internet web series called “Truth Be Told” designed to stir up trouble amongst couples by getting them to tell the truth about their relationships.	Principal	30s
Brad	M	Earnest, but slightly outmatched. Caught in Krissy’s crosshairs during a man-on-the-street interview. Sasha’s boyfriend, but maybe not for long.	Featured	20s-30s
Sasha	F	Brad’s girlfriend; sharp, perceptive. Beginning to question why she’s with Brad.	Featured	20s-30s
Julie	F	Waitress who has inherited the diner from her late mother. Gets involved in her customers lives a little too much. Serves as the lens through which the audience sees the couples and their stories.	Principal	30s-40s
Claire	F	Budding internet influencer who has filed for divorce from her husband and is writing a public divorce decree for her followers. She’s performative, image-driven, but confused about who she is.	Principal	20s-30s
Louis	M	Claire’s confused husband who struggles to understand his wife while trying to save their marriage.	Principal	20s-30s
Lucy	F	Romantic, searching, a member of a writers group who is trying to get her boyfriend (another member of the group) to acknowledge his feelings for her.	Principal	30s
Owen	M	Lucy’s boyfriend (if that’s what you want to call it) and another member of the writers group. Cautious, avoidant, emotionally unavailable. Hides behind the other writers and their stories.	Principal	30s
Walt	M	Another member of the writers’ group. Blunt, cynical, the Simon Cowell of the group on the surface, but wounded inside.	Supporting	50s-70s
Miles	M	Analytical, smug, a member of the writers’ group who never feels like anything is good enough.	Supporting	30-50s
Ted	M	Earnest, eccentric, a widower who seems to be the only member of the writers group besides Lucy who understands empathy and relationships.	Supporting	50s-60s
Nicole	F	Award-winning actor who has come home for the holidays. Approached by her ex-husband and forced to relive the time they were in the middle of their divorce and forced to act out a love scene together.	Principal	40s
Jake	M	Nicole’s ex-husband, a philanderer, D-List celebrity in mid-career meltdown, recovering alcoholic.	Principal	40s
Hildie	F	Intimacy coordinator for Nicole and Jake’s love scene. German accent. Broadly comic.	Supporting	50s-70s
Toby	M	Emma’s boyfriend. A high school theater kid. Pleasant, attached to Emma, but confused about his own sexuality.	Principal	Teens
Emma	F	Toby’s girlfriend. Another high school theater kid. Emotionally naïve. Over the moon infatuated with Toby. Sick with puppy love. Hasn’t got a clue about Toby’s truth.	Principal	Teens
Ensemble	F/M	Various diner staff and patrons – servers, hostess, kitchen worker, diner patrons, etc. Ever present. Creating the world of the diner. Some ensemble actors will double for some of the other characters listed above.	Ensemble	Teens – 70s

RECOMMENDED LISTENING

The following music was helpful to the playwright while crafting the play. While none of this music will be heard in the production, you can think of this as an unofficial soundtrack for *Midnight at the New Dawn*. We recommend actors give it a listen to get the vibe of the show.

1. Don't Give Up on Me, Andy Grammer
<https://youtu.be/ouEezpuPc3A?si=TfnpxSx4KOpe6RIO>
2. Blind Spots, Andy Grammer
https://youtu.be/KfyjHMI_mS8?si=fOyluDDxsTXCAIro
3. Can't Always Get What You Want, Rolling Stones
<https://youtu.be/ZUqSNbJuGOw?si=Xgjh663oLkzDJXpN>
4. Ain't Talkin' 'Bout Love, Postmodern Jukebox
<https://youtu.be/p1rb57CEKKA?si=vQsKw9Xu64f993wV>
5. Best of You, Andy Grammer
<https://youtu.be/kjT-YBzqMCE?si=sxstuupmzNsgRLOt>
6. Unpack Your Heart, Phillip Phillips
https://youtu.be/myHWD6Pch8U?si=_5ngAQE3TjMio6TQ
7. Lease on Life, Andy Grammer
https://youtu.be/JOJ_VE4_MIs?si=als36SBuQmemb-FR
8. Awake My Soul, Mumford & Sons
https://youtu.be/aK1lsgJSKbU?si=CQHB_9NiWZOi-FOb
9. Home, Phillip Phillips
<https://youtu.be/HoRkntoHkIE?si=laBLSAittdjWwZFi>
10. Over, Phillip Phillips
<https://youtu.be/fzdUZn3DEtO?si=2nWTuUSjKQuwDQF7>
11. Iris, Goo Goo Dolls
<https://youtu.be/NdYWuo9OFAw?si=zk5uQXEuTUdOjSpd>
12. I Will Wait, Mumford & Sons
<https://youtu.be/rGKfrgqWcuO?si=wl5RyGKUgzgHdTmA>
13. Roll Away Your Stone, Mumford & Sons
<https://youtu.be/2O-BwVODDUY?si=smUKWuW7yrCCzu81>
14. I'm Yours, Jason Mraz
<https://youtu.be/EkHTsc9PU2A?si=Vgr6D1VtzdPnJSYo>
15. Ho Hey, Lumineers
<https://youtu.be/zuCBSSwgtg4?si=tfedsjXuqAzOcyjR>
16. Better Days, Goo Goo Dolls
<https://youtu.be/i-kHleNYIDc?si=nuWObmgZPI69emsa>
17. Starting Over, Chris Stapleton
<https://youtu.be/A3suABDnmio?si=OfKcctjhAOmaCiae>
18. Breakfast at Tiffany's, Deep Blue Something
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ClCpfeIELw>

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW FOR BEFORE THE AUDITION

1. This is an unpaid, non-union opportunity. There will be four live performances of this original production held at Kelsey Theatre (1200 Old Trenton Road, West Windsor, NJ). Performance dates are Friday, October 16 at 8pm, Saturday, October 17 at 2pm and 8pm, and Sunday October 18 at 2pm. Call times for all performances are 2 hours before curtain.
2. Actors who are cast in the show will be invited to participate in the play development process over the summer. This may involve character discussions and bios, as well as table readings that will help inform rewrites ahead of rehearsals.
3. For the most part, the play is set in the present. Actors will be responsible for their own hair and make-up during the run of the show. A costume designer is assigned to the show. He will curate and acquire or make the costumes as necessary. However, actors will also be asked to contribute items from their own wardrobe to complete their costumes.
4. Rehearsals will begin August 15 and run until the show opens on October 17. You should expect 2-3 rehearsals per week with at least one occurring each weekend during the rehearsal period. Rehearsals will be held on the campus of Mercer County Community College. Not all actors will be required for all rehearsals. Call sheets will be made available to the cast to tell you which rehearsals you will need to attend. However, all cast members should plan to be available most evenings for the three weeks before the show opens. All actors are required to attend all tech rehearsals the week before the show opens.
5. [CLICK HERE](#) to go online and book an audition appointment. Follow the instructions. You will need to provide your resume, headshot, and a completed copy of the audition application found in this document.
6. If you have trouble signing up online you may call (609) 462-5551 or email us at mpoauditionsinfo@gmail.com to schedule an audition time. But please try your best to sign up online. If all audition slots are full, or you are not available during the posted audition times and you still wish to audition for the show, please call and we will try to set up another time for you to audition. Walks-ins are always welcome, but an appointment is recommended.

7. After booking your audition appointment, you must complete the audition application and conflicts calendar contained in this packet. You must bring your printed copies of your completed application and conflicts calendar to the audition.
8. All actors including teens are required to provide their own transportation to and from the audition and all rehearsals and performances.
9. All actors are required to audition with one of the monologues provided in this packet. There is one, comic all-cast song in the show. You will not be asked to sing in the initial audition round (June 6th and 7th). If invited to callbacks, you will be taught a musical piece to sing. (It's just one song. Don't sweat it. 😊)
10. Actors should arrive at least 10 minutes before the start of their audition time. The audition process may last 30-45 minutes. During that time, the actors, whether individually or in a group, will be asked to perform one of the monologues provided and fill out paperwork.
11. The read-through will be on Saturday, August 15. Your attendance on this day is crucial as we will be discussing and possibly measuring you for costumes as needed, collecting bios, completing important paperwork, and introducing the production team.
12. All cast members are asked to assist with load in and load out. Load in occurs on the Sunday evening (October 11th) before opening night, and load out occurs after the last Sunday performance (October 18th).

Audition Application for MIDNIGHT AT THE NEW DAWN

PERSONAL

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email Address #1: _____

Email Address #2: _____

Gender (Present as) _____ Age Range: _____ Date of Birth (Month/Day): _____

ROLE

What Role(s) are You Auditioning For? _____

Would you be willing to take a different roll than requested? Yes ☐ No ☐

SKILLS

Voice: (Circle One) Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Baritone, Bass Vocal Range: _____

Years of Formal Voice Study: _____ Years of Formal Acting Study: _____ Years of Formal Dance Study: _____

How Do You Rate Your Dance Skills: _____

Are You *Currently* Studying Acting, Singing, or Dancing? If so, where/with whom? _____

Do You Read Music? Yes ☐ No ☐

Have You Studied an Instrument: Yes ☐ No ☐

List Special Skills [e.g., juggling, magic, unicycle riding, play band instrument, gymnastics (cartwheels, walkovers, etc.):

Background

My Resume is Attached: Yes ☐ No ☐ (If no resume, see below)

My Acting, Singing and Dancing Experience Includes (List Shows, roles, dates, etc.): _____

Midnight at the New Dawn -- Conflict Calendar

Please Tell Us Your Scheduling Conflicts

Please list all your scheduling conflicts on the following calendars. (This should include holidays, work, family commitments, travel, etc.)

Please put an "X" in the date you have a conflict. If you feel it necessary, briefly explain the conflict (optional), please write your notes below the calendar.

NOTE: Attendance at in-person script development meetings (table work, public readings, etc.) is highly recommended, but optional. These meetings are expected to take place a few times between June and early August depending on cast availability and progress of the script development.

NAME:

June 2026 (For Script Development - Optional)

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
--	1	2	3	4	5	6 Audition
7 Audition	8	9 Audition	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	--	--	--	--

Midnight at the New Dawn -- Conflict Calendar

NAME:

July 2026 (For Script Development -- Optional)

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
--	--	--	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	--

Midnight at the New Dawn -- Conflict Calendar

NAME:

August 2026 (For Rehearsal Scheduling -- Required)

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
--	--	--	--	--	--	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	--	--	--	--	--

Midnight at the New Dawn -- Conflict Calendar

NAME:

September 2026 (For Rehearsal Scheduling -- Required)

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
--	--	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	--	--	--

Midnight at the New Dawn -- Conflict Calendar

NAME:

October 2026 (For Rehearsal Scheduling -- Required)

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
--	--	--	--	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 Load In	12 Tech Reh.	13 Tech Reh.	14 Tech Reh	15 Final Dress	16 Show 8pm	17 Shows 2pm, 8pm
18 Show 2pm	--	--	--	--	--	--
--	--	--	--	--	--	--

AUDITION MONOLOGUES

JULIE

You want to know the secret to this job? You stop hearing the words and start hearing the music. Like right now — table four is playing "I Love You But I'm Leaving You," table nine is doing "I Ruined Everything And I Know It," and the writers group over there is stuck somewhere in the second verse of "Why Won't Anybody Understand Me." I've heard every song in the book. Thirty-seat diner, New Year's Eve, and I've got a dissolving marriage, a washed-up celebrity, a woman who just renamed herself after a Spice Girl, and a writers group that is one bad critique away from a homicide I will have to mop up. And you know what? I wouldn't trade it. This place, these people — this is mine. My mother built it and I kept it going because every night something happens in this diner that matters to somebody. It's not easy, but it's worth it. Some people call that damage control. I call it Thursday.

KRISSY

People always ask me, "Krissy, doesn't it bother you? Getting in people's faces, asking the questions nobody wants to answer?" And I say — no. Because here's what I know after four years of doing my relationship web series "Truth Be Told." Nobody actually wants to keep the secret. They're dying to say it. They've been rehearsing it in the shower, in the car, at two in the morning staring at the ceiling. They just need someone to point a camera at them and ask the right question. That's what "Chaos Krissy" does best. And all I have to do is just point the mic and ask. The rest is already there, loaded and ready to go. (beat) Now, do things occasionally go sideways? Yes. Has someone thrown a drink at me? Twice. Has a couple gotten engaged on camera and then broken up two days later? Sure, once, but the breakup views topped the engagement views, so honestly? Win-win for me. The point is — truth is good content. And good content is truth. I didn't invent that. I just monetized it.

CLAIRE

Okay so Pippa says — and she is genuinely the most spiritually evolved person I have ever met, she has a following of two-point-three million and a rescue labradoodle named Aura, so she knows — Pippa says that your personal brand is not what you tell the world you are. It's what the world sees when they look at you. So, I've been really sitting with that. Really doing the work. Because the thing is, I know who I am. I'm Vivica. I'm a sharing, vulnerable, deep, self-loving, adventurous woman on a journey of radical authenticity and spiritual metaphysicalization. Which is a real word, by the way, I don't care what Louis says. And yes, the dress has to go back in the morning, and yes, technically I'm still legally Claire, but energy doesn't wait for paperwork. Pippa says that. She also says it's thirty-seven dollars for the full course, but honestly? Cheapest therapy I've ever had.

LOUIS

I just want to understand the timeline. Because as far as I can tell, my wife — soon to be former wife — has, in the span of approximately four months, quit her career as a dental hygienist via a tweet, enrolled in a twelve-part online course called "Becoming an Incredibly Awesome Influencer," renamed herself Vivica, decided that our marriage is holding back her Katra — which is either her life essence or something from Star Trek — and is currently trying to read our online divorce announcement to me in a diner while planning a photo shoot on a rooftop at midnight. All of this is real. This is my life. I want to be very clear: I did not see any of this coming. We were fine. We had a good life before she ran out of the diner and left me there. We had a Ruben sandwich and a little indigestion and plans and -- *(beat)* I had plans. *(long beat)* She left her jacket in the diner, though. She wouldn't leave the jacket if she wasn't coming back. It's Valentino. She wouldn't abandon a Valentino. That's something. It means she's coming back... doesn't it?

LUCY

I am a writer. I understand subtext. I practically invented subtext. My entire canon of work is textbook subtext. So believe me when I tell you that I've been dropping the most exquisitely crafted, narratively rich, emotionally layered hints at a man – Owen -- who is sitting approximately four feet away from me for the past two hours. And yet, he has responded with the emotional acuity of a golden retriever watching a ceiling fan. Let it be clear; that is not a failure of execution on my part. That is a fundamentally unreadable audience. *(beat)* He straightened my chair. Did I mention that? He reached over and straightened my chair before I sat down – without saying a word – did it naturally, instinctively. He just did it. That is not the behavior of a man who doesn't feel something. That is the behavior of a man who feels everything and has decided that furniture is a safer outlet than words. *(beat)* I'm a writer. I know how this story should end. I just need him to read the damned subtext.

OWEN

So, there's this woman in my writers group. She writes this story — ninety pages, she calls it short fiction, we've all agreed to let that go — about a woman named Ellen who is in love with a man named Roger. And Roger knows how he feels. He's certain how he feels. He just can't, under any circumstances, in any social or emotional context, manage to say it out loud. *(beat)* Now. We sit around a table and take turns explaining what's wrong with Roger. Walt thinks Roger is a coward. Miles thinks Roger needs a stronger act two break. Ted — who is the only genuinely perceptive person in the room — thinks Roger is a lucky guy who screwed it up. *(beat)* And I sit there. With my notes. Nodding. Saying things like "the writing is economical yet lyrical" and "flawed characters are inherently more relatable" and "I hope you keep Roger in the story." *(beat)* Very thoughtful. Very buttoned up. Very much the carefully considered feedback of a man who has absolutely not recognized himself on every one of those ninety pages. *(long beat)* Walt called the Roger character a coward. *(beat)* I'm going to lose sleep over that. *(beat)* Roger needs to get his act together... I'm working on it.

TED

So I've been working on this novel. Science fiction. An advanced alien species — highly intelligent, deeply empathetic, extraordinary capacity for music and language — who land on Earth and attempt to make contact with humanity. And every single person they encounter takes one look at them and says "that's a chicken." *(beat)* Which, yes, fine, superficially, the DNA is similar, there are certain unavoidable physical — the point is it's a metaphor. It's clearly a metaphor. It's about how we project our assumptions onto things we don't understand and miss the profound truth right in front of us. *(beat)* Walt thinks it needs less metaphor and more plot. Miles thinks it needs a stronger inciting incident and also more sex. Owen says the internal monologue where the alien sings its emotional truth is structurally unsound. *(beat)* And every week I come back. With my pages. Because Lucy — Lucy gets it. Just like my Stella use to... *(beat)* Anyway -- Lucy said the piece has huge potential. And she knows what she's talking about. *(beat)* Also I've put five years into this chicken and I'm not starting over.

MILES

Okay so "Save the Cat." I know. I know what you're going to say. I know the face you're making right now — that is the exact face Walt makes, that is the exact face Lucy makes, that is honestly the face my ex-wife made right before she cited "creative incompatibility" in the divorce proceedings, which I maintain is not a legal term but apparently in New Jersey anything goes. *(beat)* But here is my position. Blake Snyder identified fifteen universal story beats that recur across every successful narrative in the history of human storytelling. Fifteen. That is not a coincidence. That is a pattern. And patterns are information. And information is power. And power is — *(beat)* Look, the point is the methodology works. The Roger character has no clear want, no clear wound, no save the cat moment on page twelve, and a dark night of the soul that is buried so deep in subtext that I have read the manuscript four times and I'm still not sure it's there. *(beat)* Ted told me to put the cat down last week. *(beat)* Ted can write his chicken book without me.

WALT

I've been writing for fifty years. Fifty years. I've written nine novels, four of which were published, two of which were reviewed, one was even reviewed favorably, and that one good review was in a regional literary journal in Albuquerque that I'm fairly certain is no longer in print. *(beat)* I've been in this writers group for eight years. Thursday nights. Same diner. Same turkey club with double extra mayo. Same argument about whether Ted's alien is actually a chicken – it's a chicken – and same conversation about subtext, which Miles treats like a religion and I treat like a hiding place for writers who don't have the guts to just say the thing. *(beat)* Say the thing, damn it! That's my philosophy of writing and also of life. If you mean it, say it. If you feel it, put it on the page. Naked and unafraid. That's the job. *(beat)* Do I always follow my own advice? *(long beat)* I've been working on a story for three years that I haven't shown anybody. *(beat)* It's about a guy who doesn't say the thing. *(beat)* It's autobiographical.

NICOLE

I want to be very clear about something. I am a successful actor. I have won an Oscar. I have worked with the best directors in the world. I have done my own stunts in three franchises. I once filmed a scene in forty-degree water in the North Atlantic and hit my mark on every take. I have performed Shakespeare at the National, and a romantic comedy opposite a CGI dog that somehow got me my second nomination. I am not a person who complains, I am not a person who makes a scene. *(beat)* And then I get cast opposite Jake -- my cheating, soon-to-be-ex husband. What's worse, the studio thinks it would be funny to add a last minute sex scene between the two of us. *(beat)* This is what I will say about that experience. Hildie — Hildegard Braun, intimacy coordinator, German, terrifying, genuinely the most competent human being I have ever encountered in twenty years of this industry — Hildie managed to create one genuine human moment between two people who had absolutely no business being in a bed together. *(beat)* That woman deserves an Oscar, a Tony, a Nobel Peace Prize, and whatever the German equivalent of sainthood is. *(beat)* My agent is getting a strongly worded email. Hildie is getting a fruit basket.

JAKE

Phil — my agent, loosely speaking, more of a creditor at this point — Phil says I need to "rehabilitate my brand." His words. He sent me a twelve-point plan. Twelve points. I have made three career-defining mistakes, and the man gave me twelve points. Point one was "no more underaged women." Point two was "avoid public incidents," which sounds suspiciously like Point one. Point three was hard to read because he wrote it in pencil on the back of a greasy Chinese menu — I think it was "consider therapy" or possibly "buy a better hat," it was hard to tell. The rest was nearly illegible, but they were basically variations on "stop being yourself." *(beat)* Which, fair enough, if I'm being honest. My brand has gotten me tabloid covers and a Golden Razzie and the distinction of being the only person in Hollywood who's a bigger asshole than Shia LaBeouf. *(beat)* But here's the thing. I'm six months sober. Six months and eleven days. And for the first time in a long time I'm thinking maybe I don't need a new brand. Maybe I just need to be a better version of me. *(beat)* Phil's going to hate that.

(Note: the following monologue has two versions to aid actors with the dialect)

HILDIE the Intimacy Coordinator (Please read a with German accent)

People, they ask me: Hildie, how does a woman from Stuttgart become the most sought-after intimacy coordinator in the American film industry? And I say: talent. Dedication. And also, I am very comfortable with discomfort, which is a quality most Americans do not possess. I have worked with the greatest actors in the world. I have choreographed passion, grief, fury, and the full range of human physical expression on stages and sound stages in twenty-two countries. I have a PhD in human intimacy from the University of Cologne and a certificate in conflict de-escalation that I earned in circumstances I am not permitted to discuss. *(beat)* And yet. And yet, in all of this — in all of my years of distinguished professional service — I have never had a couple like Jacob and Nicole. *(reaches into bag, takes a swig from flask)* This couple... *(another swig)* ...is a gift to the profession. They are a reminder of why we do the work.

HILDIE the Intimacy Coordinator (Written w/German Dialect)

People, zey ask me: Hildie, how does a voman from Stuttgart become ze most sought-after intimacy coordinator in ze American film industry? And I say: talent. Dedication. And also, I am very comfortable with discomfort, which is a quality most Americans do not possess. I haf worked with ze greatest actors in ze vorld. I haf choreographed passion, grief, fury, and ze full range of human physical expression on stages and sound stages in twenty-two countries. I haf a PhD in human intimacy from ze University of Cologne and a certificate in conflict de-escalation that I earned in circumstances I am not permitted to discuss. *(beat)* And yet. And yet, in all of zis — in all of my years of distinguished professional service — I haf never had a couple like Yakob and Nicole. *(reaches into bag, takes a swig from flask)* Zis couple... *(another swig)* ...is a gift to ze profession. They are a reminder of vhy ve do ze vorrrk.

TOBY

So the thing about wearing green face paint and an ogre costume to a New Year's Eve fundraiser cabaret is — and I want to be clear that this was not my idea, this was the drama teacher's concept, Mrs. Donnelly has very strong views about "bold theatrical choices" — but the thing is, once you're up there, once the lights hit and the piano starts, none of it matters. Not the paint, the foam ears, or the fact that you look like Kermit the Frog's more ambitious cousin. None of it. It's just you and the song. *(beat)* And then you finish and the room goes quiet for one second before they start applauding and in that second you know exactly who you are — and they love you for it. *(beat)* I want to do this forever. That's the thing nobody knows about me yet. Well, one of the things. *(beat)* There are actually two things. And I'm working on how to say the second one to my gir— to Emma. It's not going to be easy. I-I love her. I've loved her since we were seven, but... I have to tell her. Tonight, I think... Tonight.

EMMA

Okay so I know how it looks. I know. I have been told – by multiple people including my mother, my sister, my therapist who I see bi-weekly, and honestly Krissy McGee just now on a sidewalk – that I am "a lot." And I accept that. I fully own that. I am a lot. I feel things at full volume, I make plans approximately three to five years ahead of schedule, and yes, I applied to the same college as my boyfriend because we are a team and teams go to the same college, that is literally the definition of a team. *(beat)* But here's the thing about being a lot. You love a lot. You show up a lot. You are in it, completely, all the way, no hedging, no half-measures. And I think – I genuinely think – that's not a flaw. That is a feature. *(beat)* Also I sang "On My Own" tonight and everyone cried so I think I'm doing fine.