

Divorce Towne

By

Everett T. Ruth

DIVORCE TOWNE

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DIVORCE TOWNE

CAST

NICK TOWNES	30s, soon to be ex-husband
TRACEY TOWNES	30s, soon to be ex-wife
VICKY	30s, Tracey's best friend/Nick's mortal enemy
KEVIN THE MAILMAN	40s, the mailman/Vicky's love interest
MR. PEARSON	60s, the landlord
MS. SNODGRASS	60s, Mr. Pearson's lustful lady friend
TYLER	19, would-be party crasher
AURA	18, would-be party crasher
SANDY	18, would-be party crasher

TIME: The present.

PLACE: The living room of the Towne's soon-to-be former apartment.

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ACT 1

SCENE 1

The living room is almost empty. A lone sofa sits in the middle of the room. A coffee table sits directly in front of the sofa. It is bare, save for the divorce papers that sit atop it. NICK and TRACEY TOWNES are about to sign their divorce papers. They sit on opposite sides of the sofa – they resemble two opponents about to face off in a heated debate.

TRACEY TOWNES. *(to Nick)* So... Here we are.

NICK TOWNES. Here we are.

TRACEY TOWNES. Who would've thought we'd be sitting here, about to sign our divorce papers?

NICK TOWNES. *(reading from an imaginary obituary)* Herein lies the remnants of the marriage between Nick and Tracy Townes. They fought. A lot. The end.

TRACEY TOWNES. *(with a twinge of sadness)* I guess that says it all.

NICK TOWNES. Yeah...

TRACEY TOWNES. Are you ready to sign?

NICK TOWNES. I've been ready to sign since our wedding day. *(with a sudden burst of energy)* Hand me that pen!

TRACEY TOWNES. Not so fast - you make it seem like it was all bad times. Y'know, we had good times, too.

NICK TOWNES. Yeah, and I can count them on one finger; in fact, I can't even count that far, because your so-called best friend Vicky was with us the whole time. She rained on all our parades. *(with fake sadness)* I'm gonna miss her...

TRACEY TOWNES. You always hated Vicky!

NICK TOWNES. Hate is a strong word - but I'll take it.

TRACEY TOWNES. Look, I know Vicky wasn't your cup of tea –

NICK TOWNES. No - she was my glass of vodka, which I heartily drank in abundance whenever she came to visit, which was quite often. And she always overstayed her welcome. How can a person not understand the

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words, "Leave bitch, you're not welcome here!" (*spelling out the word bitch*)
B-I-T-C-H... How can you not understand that? I just don't get it...

TRACEY TOWNES. (*defensive*) Vicky isn't *that* bad.

NICK TOWNES. Actually, I love Vicky - I love that she gave me a reason to drink! (*Nick takes out a bottle of vodka and pours some into a glass. He holds it up in the air. Tracey looks on with disgust*)

NICK TOWNES. To Vicky – cheers! (*Nick quickly downs the vodka.*)
Good stuff...

TRACEY TOWNES. You blame everyone but yourself for the failure of our marriage.

NICK TOWNES. No, I blame Vicky and that bartender - what's-his-name - that never serves me fresh peanuts. And your mother. Just because. (*to Tracey*) Hey - you're right!

TRACEY TOWNES. Maybe if we could've sat and talked once in a while, maybe things would be much better.

NICK TOWNES. Maybe is a pretty big word.

TRACEY TOWNES. Not as big as divorce.

NICK TOWNES. No, divorce is an *expensive* word, not a big one. Alimony is even bigger. (*Nick rifles through the pile of documents lying on the table. He reads from one in particular.*)

NICK TOWNES. Look at this - this is the alimony I have to pay you until you die or remarry, whichever one comes first.

TRACEY TOWNES. (*looking at the document*). It doesn't say die.

NICK TOWNES. Oh, I added that. (*matter-of-fact*). I mean, technically, that *is* accurate.

TRACEY TOWNES. You would want me to die?

NICK TOWNES. I said nothing of the sort.

TRACEY TOWNES. But you didn't answer the question...

NICK TOWNES. (*changing the subject*) How's your mother?

TRACEY TOWNES. Are you really that heartless? Would you really wish a premature death upon the mother of your children?

NICK TOWNES. One - I didn't say premature. Two - we don't have any children.

TRACEY TOWNES. Well, we might've if things would've worked out.

NICK TOWNES. Can you imagine us as parents?

TRACEY TOWNES. That would've been something else.

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NICK TOWNES. Yeah, something else to argue about.

TRACEY TOWNES. Nick, we didn't argue all the time. There was a time when we truly got along and enjoyed each other's company.

(Nick is strangely silent.)

TRACEY TOWNES. What? No witty comeback?

NICK TOWNES. I'm still trying to think of a time when we got along...

TRACEY TOWNES. C'mon, you know there was a time when we were each other's best friend. We did everything together - we were like twins in every way.

NICK TOWNES. No, we were like triplets, because your *real* best friend, Vicky, never gave us any alone time. She was always there, all the freakin' time. Let me repeat - all the freakin' time! Let me say it for the hearing-impaired - *(shouting)* ALL THE FREAKIN' TIME!

TRACEY TOWNES. Vicky was not a third wheel.

NICK TOWNES. No - she was more like a sixth tire. A truck tire.

TRACEY TOWNES. How dare you talk about my best friend like that!

NICK TOWNES. Like you said, she's *your* best friend, not mine. I can talk about her any way I want. She was and is a total loser with a capital L.

(At that moment, VICKY JAMES enters the apartment through the front door.)

NICK TOWNES. Why it's Vicky! We were just talking about you...

VICKY JAMES. *(with fake politeness)* Hello, Nick. I've come to see how my best friend is doing. *(to Tracey)* Did you sign the papers yet?

TRACEY TOWNES. No - we've been reminiscing about our marriage.

VICKY JAMES. What's to reminisce? You hated each other's guts and now you're getting a divorce. End of story.

NICK TOWNES. No, that's not accurate. I hated *your* guts. *(pause)* By the way, where did you park your broom? They're cleaning the streets today...

VICKY JAMES. I'm ignoring you, Nick.

NICK TOWNES. Oh, lucky me!

VICKY JAMES. I am going to sit down in the middle of this sofa and wait for my best friend to sign these divorce papers and move on with her life.

(Vicky sits down on the sofa between Nick and Tracey. She resembles a referee separating two combatants.)

NICK TOWNES. Wow, this is just like old times - you right in the middle of everything, just sucking all the air out the room. *(with dramatic effect)* I feel

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a little faint...

TRACEY TOWNES. You stop it, Nick Townes! I won't have you disrespecting my friend like that!

NICK TOWNES. I'm not disrespecting her - I'm just telling it like it is. Your "best friend" has always been an impediment to our relationship.

VICKY JAMES. (*impressed*) Impediment? Look at Nick using big words!

NICK TOWNES. Well, let me spell it out and make it easier for you to understand. Impediment - (*spelling out the word*) V-I-C-K-Y - impediment.

VICKY JAMES. Screw you, Nick.

NICK TOWNES. Screw yourself, Vicky. I'm sure you're an expert, being that you've never had a boyfriend for as long as I've known you...

VICKY JAMES. (*defensive*) I've dated lots of men!

NICK TOWNES. But have they dated you? I mean, I've dated lots of women in my mind – (*to Tracey*) No offense.

TRACEY TOWNES. None taken.

NICK TOWNES. But that doesn't mean that they're um, shall we say, *real*.

VICKY JAMES. I don't have to prove anything to you!

NICK TOWNES. Sure you do, 'cause if you don't, it will eat you alive that I got the better of you. And you can't let that happen, because you've always got to be right. Vicky James can never be wrong. No, that can *never* happen!

VICKY JAMES. That's not true! (*to Tracey*) Tell him, Tracey! (*Tracey is silent*).

VICKY JAMES. Tracey?

TRACEY TOWNES. Well...

VICKY JAMES. (*getting upset*) Well? I've had your back all these years and you can't come to my defense one time? You're supposed to be my best friend!

TRACEY TOWNES. I *am* your best friend; well, actually, *you* said we were best friends. There was never a formal declaration...

VICKY JAMES. So now we have to formally declare that we're best friends?

TRACEY TOWNES. I'm just being honest, Vicky. You can be a bit, shall we say, pushy at times...

VICKY JAMES. So now I'm pushy? Is that what you're saying?

NICK TOWNES. I believe that's what she's saying...

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VICKY JAMES. Stay out of it, Nick!

NICK TOWNES. You should've taken your own advice.

VICKY JAMES. What's that supposed to mean?

NICK TOWNES. You were always in the middle of our relationship, always ready to put your unwanted two cents in. That's what I mean.

VICKY JAMES. I was just being a friend.

NICK TOWNES. No, you were being pushy, just like Tracey said.

(to Tracey) Go ahead, Tracey. Tell your "best friend" how pushy she is.

TRACEY TOWNES. I really hate you right now, Nick.

NICK TOWNES. *(matter-of-fact)* Of course you do. That's why we're getting a divorce. Now go ahead and tell her how pushy she's been all these years.

TRACEY TOWNES. Listen Vicky -

NICK TOWNES. *(interrupting)* Wait - I need to pour another drink. *(Nick pours another glass of vodka.)*

NICK TOWNES. As you were...

TRACEY TOWNES. Vicky, I didn't mean to call you pushy. It's just that sometimes you have a way of forcing your way into things that might not concern you.

NICK TOWNES. Like our marriage...

TRACEY TOWNES. Nick, I can handle this -

NICK TOWNES. Can you? I mean, all these years when Best Friend Vicky was undermining our marriage, you never had anything to say. In fact, you always defended her – “She's just lonely, Nick, she doesn't have any other friends, guys don't like her...”

VICKY JAMES. Tracey, you said all those things?

NICK TOWNES. I added the part about guys not liking you, but Tracey said all the other things...

VICKY JAMES. How could you, Tracey? I thought you were my friend!

TRACEY TOWNES. I *am* your friend. I'll always be your friend. It's just that sometimes three was a crowd.

NICK TOWNES. Actually *two* was a crowd, but we were married, so...

TRACEY TOWNES. Do you ever stop with the smart remarks?

NICK TOWNES. No. *(with pride)* That's why you married me.

TRACEY TOWNES. And that's why I'm divorcing you.

NICK TOWNES. You can't deal with my intellect.

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TRACEY TOWNES. No, I can't deal with your total lack of empathy and caring. You never listen to anything I say. You may *hear* it but you never *listen*.

NICK TOWNES. *(to Tracey)* Did you say something?

VICKY JAMES. See - that's why she's divorcing you!

NICK/TRACEY. Stay out of it, Vicky!

VICKY JAMES. *(hurt)* I don't have to stay here and take this! I'm leaving!

TRACEY TOWNES. Don't leave!

NICK TOWNES. Please leave!

TRACEY TOWNES. Vicky, don't go. Please stay - you can be our mediator... Help us work out these last few issues before we sign the divorce papers.

NICK TOWNES. Vicky's been the so-called "mediator" throughout our relationship and look where it got us!

TRACEY TOWNES. It wasn't her fault, Nick. We are where we're at in this relationship because of us, not Vicky.

NICK TOWNES. Tell that to my man parts. We spent a lot of lonely nights together because you were too busy consoling Best Friend Vicky here about her lack of a social life. In fact, my man parts - I call them Three Deep - they're a trio, y'know - are *my* best friends. *(pause)*

I'd say this calls for a toast! *(Nick pours himself another glass of vodka.)*

NICK TOWNES. To friendship! Cheers! *(Nick quickly downs the drink.)*

TRACEY TOWNES. That bottle should've been empty by now. You've been drinking from it all day.

NICK TOWNES. *(matter-of-fact)* Jesus had his fishes- I've got my vodka...

VICKY JAMES. *(outraged)* That's blasphemous!

NICK TOWNES. No, it's Smirnoff. It's right here on the label - Smirnoff. See it? *(Nick holds the bottle up for Vicky to see.)*

VICKY JAMES. I can't do this, Tracey. He's insufferable.

NICK TOWNES. I believe the word is drunk. *(Vicky grabs her things and puts on her coat.)*

NICK TOWNES. Must you leave so soon? I mean, it's only been twenty-four years...

VICKY JAMES. I'm ignoring you, Nick. Tracey, call me when you're ready and I'll help you take your things to your parents' house.

TRACEY TOWNES. Okay.

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NICK TOWNES. Vicky?

VICKY JAMES. What is it, Nick?

NICK TOWNES. I was trying to find something nice to say but I got nothin'...

VICKY JAMES. You're unbelievable.

NICK TOWNES. Again, the word is drunk. (*Vicky exits the apartment.*)

NICK TOWNES. (*to Tracey*) Can she not pronounce the word drunk?

TRACEY TOWNES. You're not drunk, Nick. You're hurting.

NICK TOWNES. If I'm hurting, it's because I'm not drunk enough.

TRACEY TOWNES. No, you're hurting because it's the end of the road. It's the end of *our* road.

NICK TOWNES. Where were we going?

TRACEY TOWNES. Good question. I don't have the answer.

NICK TOWNES. Well, wherever it is, I hope they have a bar...

TRACEY TOWNES. See? You always do this - you hide your feelings behind the pretense of being drunk. You just don't want to face the truth - you just don't want to face *me*. (*Nick sets the glass down on the table.*)

NICK TOWNES. Don't want to face the truth? What do you think I've been doing for the past twenty-four years? What do you think *we've* been doing for the past twenty-four years? Wait - I know - we've been playing dress up with our marriage, with our relationship... putting on a good front in front of our relatives and friends. I'm tired of it and I know you're tired, too.

TRACEY TOWNES. Maybe I *am* tired. Maybe us getting a divorce is for the best. But I still feel like we could've salvaged this somehow. Maybe we could've fought harder. I'm just saying...

NICK TOWNES. I've always loved that about you, how hard you fight - that never say die attitude that never wants to quit. In this case, though, I think it's time we give up the ghost. We've been fighting a losing battle for years, Tracey. It's over. (*annoyed*) Why'd you have to get all serious? Now you've got me feeling all melancholy. I'm usually a pleasant drunk.

TRACEY TOWNES. Excuse me for caring. (*Tracey picks up a picture and gazes at it.*)

NICK TOWNES. Is that our wedding photo?

TRACEY TOWNES. Yeah... (*wistful*) We did make a great-looking couple.

NICK TOWNES. Looks aren't everything...

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TRACEY TOWNES. That was a magical day - everything came together. No mishaps, no drama - it was all about celebrating our union.

NICK TOWNES. Let me see that picture - *(Tracey hands Nick the picture. Looking at the picture)* I knew it - this is the one your mother took. She cut half of my body out of the picture!

TRACEY TOWNES. You know my mom's eyesight is bad.

NICK TOWNES. Yeah - she couldn't stand to see me in the picture!

TRACEY TOWNES. My mom didn't dislike you.

NICK TOWNES. She didn't welcome me with open arms, either. Actually, she didn't welcome me at all - she kept her arms folded throughout the ceremony. Anything to keep from hugging her new son-in-law... Now, your dad on the other hand - that was my buddy!

TRACEY TOWNES. *(laughing)* Yeah, your drinking buddy!

NICK TOWNES. Damn right! Now that man appreciates a great beer! We got along famously. *(pause)* Why couldn't you take after your father? Maybe our marriage might've lasted.

TRACEY TOWNES. Maybe you should've married my father instead.

NICK TOWNES. Maybe you're right, even though we'd be fighting over the last beer...

TRACEY TOWNES. You're silly.

NICK TOWNES. And you're Tracey... *(wistful)* How I used to love to say your name - Tracey, Tracey, Tracey - it had a certain ring to it. I would have this big smile on my face whenever I said your name. I smiled a lot back then.

TRACEY TOWNES. You did. I miss your smile.

NICK TOWNES. I do, too. I wonder where it went? *(trying to remember)* The last time I saw it was right before your mom announced that she was moving in with us -

TRACEY TOWNES. My mom was recuperating from surgery - she needed around the clock care.

NICK TOWNES. Why couldn't your dad do it?

TRACEY TOWNES. You know how much overtime he worked. He was never home.

NICK TOWNES. Smart man...

TRACEY TOWNES. My mom was not a burden!

NICK TOWNES. No, she was a very heavy package, with a flap that never

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closed. (*Nick takes a swig of vodka from his glass.*)

NICK TOWNES. Whoever invented vodka must've had a mother-in-law...

TRACEY TOWNES. Well, what about *your* mom?

NICK TOWNES. What about her? She's dead. Try again.

TRACEY TOWNES. Well, your relatives weren't that great, either.

NICK TOWNES. What are you talking about? They welcomed you with open arms.

TRACEY TOWNES. Especially your uncle Delroy - he flirted with me big time at the reception.

NICK TOWNES. Actually, he wasn't my uncle - he was just someone who crashed our wedding. I never met the man in my life.

TRACEY TOWNES. All these years and you never told me?

NICK TOWNES. (*matter-of-fact*) Well, I knew you needed *someone* to hate in my family, so I let you think he was a relative. It was my wedding present to you (*pause*) You're welcome. (*Tracey's cellphone rings. She answers.*)

TRACEY TOWNES. Oh, hi, Mom.

NICK TOWNES. So, the devil *is* real...

TRACEY TOWNES. My mom is not the devil!

NICK TOWNES. You sure? I don't see anyone else walking around with horns and a tail.

TRACEY TOWNES. You're a piece of work, Nick.

NICK TOWNES. Why thank you, *Tracey*.

TRACEY TOWNES. Can't you be serious for once?

NICK TOWNES. If getting a divorce from a woman I loved madly at one point in my life isn't serious enough, then I don't know what is.

TRACEY TOWNES. (*a bit shocked*) You loved me madly?

NICK TOWNES. I loved you and I was a bit mad. Perfect combination.

TRACEY TOWNES. You never told me that you loved me.

NICK TOWNES. I told you plenty of times. You just never paid attention.

TRACEY TOWNES. I would've paid attention if you would've told me like that.

NICK TOWNES. Like what?

TRACEY TOWNES. That you loved me that way - madly. That meant that there was feeling behind it. You weren't just saying it to say it, to fulfill some I love you quota. You were saying it because you actually *meant* it.

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NICK TOWNES. I *did* mean it. It's not like I throw out I love yous to every Tom, Dick and Harry... Well maybe Harry, 'cause he's my favorite bartender - but he's the only one. I saved all my I love yous for you and you only. I thought you knew that.

TRACEY TOWNES. I guess there's a lot I didn't know, a lot I don't know about you, even after all this time.

NICK TOWNES. Well, maybe you couldn't hear what I was saying because there was always someone whispering in your ear. Vicky, your mom - there was always someone else. (*Vicky reenters the apartment.*)

VICKY JAMES. I forgot my car keys.

NICK TOWNES. So this whole time you were out there trying to mentally start your car?

VICKY JAMES. No - I was actually flirting with the mailman. His name's Kevin and he's pretty hot.

NICK TOWNES. Did he get a good look at you?

TRACEY TOWNES. Nick! That's not nice!

NICK TOWNES. I'm just simply questioning his sanity and his ability to deliver mail to the proper address.

VICKY JAMES. I'm ignoring you, Nick.

NICK TOWNES. And I am exceedingly grateful...

VICKY JAMES. He asked for my number and I gave it to him!

TRACEY TOWNES. That's great!

VICKY JAMES. I might have a date this weekend! Who would've thought?

NICK TOWNES. Not I, Vicky. Not I...

VICKY JAMES. You're an afterthought, Nick.

NICK TOWNES. (*sarcastic*) Yeah, love you, too. (*Vicky exits the apartment.*)

TRACEY TOWNES. Why must you be so cruel to her?

NICK TOWNES. (*matter-of-fact*) Because it's fun.

NICK TOWNES. And how come during all our years together, she never had a single date, but now that we're about to be divorced, she's now Miss Life of the Party, Princess of the Social Set?

TRACEY TOWNES. Maybe it's just a coincidence.

NICK TOWNES. It's no coincidence and you know it! Vicky didn't want you to be happy and now that we're divorcing, she can pursue her own happiness, knowing that you'll be unhappy.

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TRACEY TOWNES. But I'm not unhappy.

NICK TOWNES. *(surprised)* You're not?

TRACEY TOWNES. I'm not exactly in a partying mood, but I am glad that this will finally be over. Aren't you? *(At that moment KEVIN THE MAILMAN enters the apartment through the front door. He's wearing his mailman uniform and has a bag of mail slung over his shoulder.)*

KEVIN. *(extending his hand)* You're Nick, right?

NICK TOWNES. Who let you in?

KEVIN. Vicky did.

NICK TOWNES. Where's our mail?

KEVIN. Don't have any - Vicky told me to go on inside; actually, her exact words were "go in and enjoy the circus". *(looking around)* Where's the circus? I was expecting llamas and tigers...

NICK TOWNES. Are you daft?

KEVIN. No - I'm Kevin. That's my first name. Kevin. *(Tracey laughs).*

NICK TOWNES. So, you find his lack of a working brain funny?

TRACEY TOWNES. I *do* have a sense of humor, Nick. I married you, didn't I?

NICK TOWNES. *(smiling)* Touché.

KEVIN. I love a woman with a sense of humor.

NICK TOWNES. Well, mailman - uh I mean Kevin - maybe you two should hook up. I'm sure you'd have her busting a gut with your dim-witted attempts at humor. She's pretty easy to please.

KEVIN. First of all, I'm not "dim-witted". I'm easygoing. Second of all, if she's so easy to please, why are you guys getting a divorce? Sounds crazy to me.

TRACEY TOWNES. Yeah, Nick, why are we getting a divorce? Tell Kevin here why we're splitting up.

NICK TOWNES. I don't owe Kevin here any explanation about our private business.

KEVIN. It's not private - Vicky told me everything.

NICK TOWNES. Did good 'ol Vicky tell you how she was a constant thorn in our sides from the time Tracey and I met?

KEVIN. She said that she was the buffer between your stubbornness and Tracey's passiveness.

TRACEY TOWNES. *(shocked)* She called me passive?

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KEVIN. Yeah, she said you didn't speak up for yourself when it mattered.
(pause) Got any tea? All this talking has got my throat a bit parched.

NICK TOWNES. Okay, vodka it is! *(to Kevin)* I don't like to drink alone.

TRACEY. It never stopped you before.

NICK TOWNES. But I didn't have a mailman to drink with. Now I do.
(Nick hands the bottle to Kevin.)

KEVIN. I'd prefer tea. Preferably decaf. *(to Tracey)* I'm trying to cut down on the caffeine.

NICK TOWNES. I hate to break it to 'ya, Kevin Formerly Known As Mailman but this is a vodka household. If it doesn't hurt your throat going down, it doesn't count.

KEVIN. If that's what 'ya got, guess I gotta take it. Beggars can't be choosers, I always say.

NICK TOWNES. And it seems like you have a lot to say, mailman.

TRACEY TOWNES. Can't you just call him by his name? His name is Kevin.

NICK TOWNES. *(teasing)* Oh, look at you sticking up for your new love.

TRACEY TOWNES. What are you talking about? I don't know him from Adam!

KEVIN. *(confused)* There's an Adam, too?

NICK TOWNES. *(teasing)* And this is the guy you've got your eye on? You two deserve each other...

KEVIN. Listen, Miss Tracey, you're a knockout and everything but my heart lies with Vicky.

TRACEY TOWNES. What? Wait a minute - how did we get to this point!

Oh, I know - it's Nick with his twisted sense of humor. *(to Nick)*

You're an ass!

NICK TOWNES. *(to Kevin)* See how she treats me? *I'm* the victim here!

KEVIN. Did you two ever try counseling? That's what my dad and his fourth wife did. Worked wonders for their relationship.

TRACEY TOWNES. *(astonished)* Fourth wife? Your dad was married four times?

KEVIN. *(matter-of-fact)* Five.

TRACEY TOWNES. How did you feel when your dad remarried? Did you resent your new stepmom or rather, stepmothers?

KEVIN. *(with childlike sincerity)* No, because my third stepmom had big

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breasts and they jiggled when she walked. *(wistful)* She was my favorite stepmom...

NICK TOWNES. *(impressed)* I think I'm beginning to like you, Kevin. More vodka?

KEVIN. You haven't poured the first shot, yet.

NICK TOWNES. Oh, yeah. Let's rectify that situation right now... *(Nick pours Kevin, aka The Mailman, a shot of vodka in a small glass.)*

NICK TOWNES. Here you go, New Friend Kevin.

KEVIN. Thanks. *(Kevin drinks the vodka and immediately coughs as it goes down his throat.)*

NICK TOWNES. That'll make you into a man.

KEVIN. I didn't know I wasn't.

NICK TOWNES. People talk... *(to Tracey)* To my soon-to-be ex-wife. Would you like a shot of vodka?

TRACEY TOWNES. Ah, what the hell - hit me... *(Tracey holds out her glass. Nick fills it with vodka.)*

NICK TOWNES. Let's make a toast - to shattered dreams and faded memories.

TRACEY TOWNES. That's your idea of a toast?

NICK TOWNES. Would you rather I lie and say something like, to new beginnings and better days ahead? Would that suffice?

TRACEY TOWNES. But I thought that's how you see your future once we sign the divorce papers.

NICK TOWNES. When did you ever hear those words exit my mouth?

TRACEY TOWNES. About an hour ago.

NICK TOWNES. *(matter-of-fact)* Oh, that was pre-vodka. Now, I'm realizing that I'm not going to be this happy-go-lucky guy... I'm actually going to be a bit devastated. *(sips from his glass)* Yeah, that's how I'd characterize it. A bit devastated.

KEVIN. Even a bit of devastation is tragic.

NICK TOWNES. I see you've stopped coughing long enough to contribute some words of wisdom. *(Kevin starts to cough again.)*

NICK TOWNES. More vodka?

Kevin. *(still coughing)* No, I'm good...

TRACEY TOWNES. Is this how you really feel, Nick or is it just the alcohol talking?

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NICK TOWNES. Being that I'm currently comprised of 98 percent alcohol, I'd say it's definitely the alcohol. But there's some human regret in there as well... I mean, you and I, we were man and wife. That's no small feat. Being a married man is something I took seriously. I may not have been serious but I took it seriously. That counts for something, right?

TRACEY TOWNES. I suppose so. In your own twisted way, you do make sense... Maybe it's the liquor talking in me.

KEVIN. Well, my liquor is telling me to take a nap...

NICK TOWNES. Don't you still have the rest of your mail route to run, New Friend Kevin?

KEVIN. That can wait. *(to Nick)* Watch my bag, will you? *(Kevin, aka The Mailman, sits down on the sofa, gets comfortable and quickly falls asleep.)*

NICK TOWNES. *(teasing)* Maybe you should help your new boyfriend out and deliver the rest of his mail.

TRACEY TOWNES. Nick –

NICK TOWNES. I'm just kiddin' you. Actually, he's not a bad guy. I just hope Vicky doesn't eat him alive.

TRACEY TOWNES. You act like she's some kind of monster.

NICK TOWNES. Monster. Vampire. Tomato, tomato...

TRACEY TOWNES. You're not concerned about his well-being. It's all about your hate for Vicky.

NICK TOWNES. You are absolutely right. And that's not the vodka talking. This is coming straight from the heart.

TRACEY TOWNES. And what a twisted heart it is.

NICK TOWNES. You once owned it.

TRACEY TOWNES. That was then, this is now.

NICK TOWNES. Do you still love me, Tracey?

TRACEY TOWNES. *(confused)* Where is this coming from?

NICK TOWNES. I just wanna know, do you still love me?

TRACEY TOWNES. Is this to salvage your ego, to make you feel good that a part of me still has feelings for you?

NICK TOWNES. Yes.

TRACEY TOWNES. Okay, then... Nick Townes, I still have feelings for you. *(Nick, his ego satiated, starts to smile.)*

TRACEY TOWNES. I have feelings of scorn sprinkled with equal parts hate and dislike towards you. And those feelings are growing stronger as we

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Speak.

NICK TOWNES. Wow, that went south real fast...

TRACEY TOWNES. (*matter-of-fact*) Well, you wanted me to be honest...

NICK TOWNES. Yeah, but I didn't think you'd hurt my feelings.

TRACEY TOWNES. I didn't think you had any left.

NICK TOWNES. And the hits just keep on coming...

TRACEY TOWNES. I'm just telling you how I feel. This is the first time I can remember that you actually wanted to know how I felt. Seems like you always just *assumed*. You never asked.

NICK TOWNES. That's good to know. Now I know what not to do in my next relationship.

TRACEY TOWNES. We haven't even signed the papers and you're already thinking about your next relationship?

NICK TOWNES. You're already dating the mailman!

TRACEY TOWNES. I am not dating Kevin!

NICK TOWNES. (*teasing*) You just love calling him by that name - Kevin, Kevin, Kevin!

TRACEY TOWNES. Stop that!

NICK TOWNES. Kevin.

TRACEY TOWNES. You really know how to piss me off.

NICK TOWNES. I know - feels good, doesn't it? I just love to get you fired up like that. Still turns me on after all these years.

TRACEY TOWNES. You act like I'm a hundred years old.

NICK TOWNES. No - Vicky's a hundred years old. You're just repressed. That's why I have to get you upset - that brings out your passion.

TRACEY TOWNES. I would be more passionate if I had a reason to.

(*Nick gets up from the sofa and moves closer to Tracey.*)

NICK TOWNES. I never gave you a reason to?

TRACEY TOWNES. Nick - the mailman's right there...

NICK TOWNES. Oh, you mean my friend Kevin? He's asleep. And that's not just any sleep - that's a vodka sleep. He'll be out for awhile. (*Nick starts to stroke Tracey's hair.*)

TRACEY TOWNES. Nick...

NICK TOWNES. You always loved it when I stroked your hair... (*Tracey is enjoying it as Nick gently strokes her hair.*)

TRACEY TOWNES. I must admit, you still have that touch.

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(Nick suddenly stops.)

NICK TOWNES. *(repulsed)* And I would always wind up touching Vicky's hair by mistake, 'cause she was always in the middle of things!

TRACEY TOWNES. Wow, you really know how to kill a mood...

NICK TOWNES. Blame your bestie, Vicky. Shoot - she even came with us on our honeymoon!

TRACEY TOWNES. She was there for emotional support.

NICK TOWNES. She was there to break us up. That's all she ever wanted to do. And you let her! All you had to do was say no and you never did. And I resent you for that.

TRACEY TOWNES. Everything is always blame Tracey! I couldn't say no to her - she's my best friend.

NICK TOWNES. It was our honeymoon, for Chrissakes! Our honeymoon! Imagine being stuck at a luxury resort with your wife and her battle axe of a best friend. Is that a recipe for romance or what?

TRACEY TOWNES. I figured it would be a good experience for her - I really thought she'd find that special someone. The island was teeming with eligible bachelors.

NICK TOWNES. She already had that special someone - you! That's the part you don't seem to get. To be totally honest with you, I don't think you ever wanted to get it - I think you depend on her just as much as she depends on you. *That's* the real love story, not you and me.

TRACEY TOWNES. I am not attracted to Vicky.

NICK TOWNES. But you're emotionally bonded. It's a bond that even my totally uplifting and satisfying lovemaking couldn't break. *(pause)* Admit it, Tracey, you love Vicky more than you love me. Just say it, I can take it. I just want the truth.

TRACEY TOWNES. Of course I love Vicky - she's my best friend.

NICK TOWNES. It's more than that and you know it.

TRACEY TOWNES. I admit, we have a special bond but it shouldn't have come between our marriage.

NICK TOWNES. But it did.

TRACEY TOWNES. That wasn't the *only* thing.

NICK TOWNES. But it was the *major* thing.

TRACEY TOWNES. And your predilection for booze and broads didn't help, either.

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NICK TOWNES. They weren't broads. They were *strippers*. They earn a living, just like us and they deserve to be called by their proper names.

TRACEY TOWNES. You're such a hypocrite.

NICK TOWNES. I prefer to think of myself as a realist. And besides, I never cheated with them. I just ogled them - good clean, innocent ogling. That's all it was. But you - you cheated emotionally. That's the difference between you and me.

TRACEY TOWNES. So, g-strings gyrating in front of your face is supposed to be the pinnacle of innocence?

NICK TOWNES. As far as I'm concerned, an unequivocal yes. I lusted with my eyes, not my heart.

TRACEY TOWNES. And that makes it okay?

NICK TOWNES. Yes, because at the end of the day - or night - sometimes early morning - I came home to you.

TRACEY TOWNES. I bet not willingly.

NICK TOWNES. You would've lost all your money, honey - I always looked forward to kissing you good night and good morning, in equal parts.

TRACEY TOWNES. But you never did that.

NICK TOWNES. I never said I did it. I said I looked forward to it.

TRACEY TOWNES. (*exasperated*) You're - I can't even think of a word to describe you!

NICK TOWNES. I believe the word you're looking for is *Amazing*.

TRACEY TOWNES. No, the word is impossible!

NICK TOWNES. Impossible's a pretty sexy word - I'll take it...

TRACEY TOWNES. You're all smart-alecky quips and fast comebacks but when it comes to baring your soul, you don't have anything to say.

You never have anything to say - you just hide behind your alleged humor and you use that as a crutch.

NICK TOWNES. "Alleged?" I actually think I'm a pretty funny guy. But of course, you wouldn't think so. You never give me credit for anything.

TRACEY TOWNES. Maybe I did - maybe you just didn't take the time to listen.

NICK TOWNES. I guess I didn't like what I heard. (*quoting a saying*)

"'Tis better to have loved and lost than to never have loved at all." I bet the guy who came up with that is hanging out at the strip club as we speak.

(*pause*) Is there any vodka left? (*The sound of a car door closing can be heard. Someone's coming up the stairs to the apartment. Nick goes and*

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looks out the window to see who it is.)

TRACEY TOWNES. Who's that?

NICK TOWNES. *(looking out the window)* It's Mr. Pearson.

TRACEY TOWNES. Guess he's coming to get the keys.

NICK TOWNES. *(with a hint of sadness)* Yeah... *(hopeful)* Wonder if he's got any vodka... *(At that moment, MR. PEARSON, the landlord/superintendent, enters the apartment. Mr. Pearson is in his early sixties and wears a tool belt everywhere he goes.)*

NICK TOWNES. Mr. Pearson! How goes it?

MR. PEARSON. Ah, my favorite tenants! So sad you're gonna be departing the premises. You were dream renters - no loud parties, paid your rent on time... I didn't even mind the threesome situation. I say live and let live...

TRACEY TOWNES. *(shocked)* Threesome! *(to Nick)* Did you hear what he said?

NICK TOWNES. *(matter-of-fact)* Well, technically, it *was* a threesome.

TRACEY TOWNES. *(exasperated)* Nick!

NICK TOWNES. *(to Mr. Pearson)* It was a threesome but it *wasn't* a threesome.

MR. PEARSON. I'm confused.

NICK TOWNES. It wasn't that kind of relationship. It may have seemed that way but trust me, it couldn't be furthest from the truth.

MR. PEARSON. But you guys were joined at the hip - it was like Three's Company on steroids. You see one, you see the other two. And the other girl, she was mighty attractive, if you asked me.

NICK TOWNES. Technically, no one asked you...

TRACEY TOWNES. She's just a close friend, Mr. Pearson, that's all.

MR. PEARSON. Well, there must be a new definition of close, 'cause I coulda swore you three were, as they say, getting it on! *(Nick visibly gags.)*

MR. PEARSON. *(concerned)* Is he okay?

NICK TOWNES. *(to Mr. Pearson)* I thought you were my friend!

MR. PEARSON. *(apologetic)* I'm sorry - guess things aren't always what they seem. *(to Tracey)* Think I might have a shot?

TRACEY TOWNES. A shot at who - Vicky?

MR. PEARSON. Yeah.

NICK TOWNES. *(to Mr. Pearson)* How good is your aim? She runs pretty fast, so...

TRACEY TOWNES. Nick, stop it!

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MR. PEARSON. Look, I've got good credit, I'm fairly good-looking. I'm a great lover –

NICK TOWNES. You're modest...

MR. PEARSON. That, too. *(Nick and Tracey exchange amused glances.)*

NICK TOWNES. Have you had your rabies shots?

TRACEY TOWNES. Nick!

NICK TOWNES. Hey, I'm just looking out for the man...

TRACEY TOWNES. *(to Mr. Pearson)* I'm sure you'd be worthy of Vicky's affections, Mr. Pearson, but she's already in a relationship.

MR. PEARSON. *(shocked)* She is?

NICK TOWNES. I know, I know, there's a first time for everything but Lady Dracula is really in a so-called "relationship".

MR. PEARSON. With who? I've never seen her with anybody else but you guys.

NICK TOWNES. *(pointing at Kevin)* She's dating him. *(Mr. Pearson looks over at Kevin, who's still asleep.)*

MR. PEARSON. Him? He's a mailman!

NICK TOWNES. But he *delivers*, if you know what I mean...

MR. PEARSON. *(getting Nick's sexual innuendo)* Ah, I get it... So he drops the mail in the slot.

NICK TOWNES. Monday thru Sunday, seven days a week. Snow days, too. He's on time, every time.

MR. PEARSON. Guess my package can't compare...

NICK TOWNES. Precisely - he keeps his customers happy, if you know what I mean.

MR. PEARSON. I know exactly what you mean. *(Tracey looks on, bemused at this surreal conversation.)*

MR. PEARSON. *(defensive)* Well, I deliver in my own way!

NICK TOWNES. I'm sure you do.

MR. PEARSON. I keep my customers happy, too.

NICK TOWNES. *(encouraging Mr. Pearson)* That's right! You go, Mr. Pearson!

MR. PEARSON. Except Ms. Snodgrass... She says I don't oil her engine enough. I mean, I oil my share of engines, believe you me -

NICK TOWNES. *(with over-the-top enthusiasm)* I believe you! *(Tracey fights the urge to burst out laughing.)*

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MR. PEARSON. She says I don't use enough lubricant... And I try, I really try! *(with sadness)* But she's never satisfied. *(Deflated, Mr. Pearson turns to leave.)*

MR. PEARSON. *(talking to himself)* Sometimes, I even use extra lubricant... *(Mr. Pearson exits the apartment. As he's leaving, Vicki reenters. Mr. Pearson stops and gives her a long, forlorn look.)*

MR. PEARSON. *(with sadness)* Women... *(Mr. Pearson exits the apartment. Vicki is confused at Mr. Pearson's statement, but quickly shrugs it off.)*

TRACEY TOWNES. Vicki! You're back!

NICK TOWNES. Yeah, you're a sight for drunk eyes.

VICKY JAMES. Screw you, Nick.

NICK TOWNES. You're right - I'm screwed. I'm about to get divorced and I'm out of vodka. Tragedies both in no particular order.

VICKY JAMES. Did you ever think your drinking might've played more than a small part in the breakup of your marriage?

NICK TOWNES. My dear Vicki - and I do mean dear in the most sarcastic way possible - whatever bouts of unadulterated drinking that may have occurred in this farce of a marital union is not because of my marriage woes. You and you alone, are the bane of my marital existence. *(stops to ponder his words)* Did I use that term right?

TRACEY TOWNES. Nick, don't bring Vicky into this. This is between you and me.

NICK TOWNES. *(astonished)* Bring her into this? She never left! She found a parking space and never bothered to move her car! She just sat and sat and sat, like a vulture waiting to feast on the remnants of our relationship. And now here she is, ready to pounce.

TRACEY TOWNES. Nick, you're being overly dramatic.

NICK TOWNES. Am I? *(to Vicky)* Am I, Vicky?

VICKY JAMES. I'm willing to admit that, yes, I may be around a lot when it comes to you and Tracey's relationship.

NICK TOWNES. "Be around a lot?" That's the understatement of the year, of the decade, of the millennium!

NICK TOWNES. I had to buy two wedding rings - one for my bride-to-be and one for her so-called best friend, the witch that already was!

TRACEY TOWNES. Look, Nick, arguing about what led to the demise of

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our marriage is not getting us anywhere.

NICK TOWNES. Well, it's getting me further out the door, so I'd say it's working.

TRACEY TOWNES. So be it. I think we should just go ahead and sign the papers and get on with the rest of our lives.

NICK TOWNES. *(to Vicki)* You would like that, wouldn't you Vicki? You came back just in time to see us put pen to paper and end it all. Like I said, the vultures are circling. Or in this case, *the* vulture.

VICKY JAMES. Actually, Nick I came to see about Kevin.

NICK TOWNES. Oh... So you *do* remember his name?

VICKY JAMES. What's that supposed to mean?

TRACEY TOWNES. *(concerned)* Vicki, how well do you know him?

VICKY JAMES. Well enough to know that I want to spend the rest of my life with him.

NICK TOWNES. I heard of loving a man in uniform but isn't this taking it a bit far? He can't even deliver the mail on time - I don't even know if he can pronounce the word mail. And now all of a sudden he's the love of your life? Give me a break!

VICKY JAMES. Why the concern, Nick? When did you all of a sudden start to care about who I see?

NICK TOWNES. I don't ever remember "seeing" you with anyone. I do, however, remember you always seeing the inside of our apartment.

TRACEY TOWNES. Vicky, maybe you need to slow things down, y'know, get to know Kevin a bit before you make any long-term plans.

NICK TOWNES. Listen to your best friend - she, unlike me, actually cares about your well-being.

VICKY JAMES. Deep down inside I know you love and care deeply about me, Nick.

NICK TOWNES. As a matter of fact, I do feel something deeply down inside my prostate area...

TRACEY TOWNES. *(laughing)* Nick, stop it!

VICKY JAMES. *(a bit hurt)* Why are you laughing? That wasn't funny! *(Kevin, aka The Mailman, wakes up.)*

KEVIN. Oh yeah, that was funny.

VICKY JAMES. *(to Kevin)* Go back to sleep!

KEVIN. Okay. *(Kevin quickly falls back asleep.)*

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NICK TOWNES. Do you really want a man who can't hold his liquor? I mean, being in a relationship with you requires excessive amounts of alcohol. Believe me, I know. *(Tracey laughs again.)*

VICKY JAMES. Tracey! Why do you keep laughing at his jokes? You're just encouraging him.

TRACEY TOWNES. At this point, I'd rather laugh than cry. *(to Nick)* Let's go on and sign these papers.

NICK TOWNES. Wait a minute - I think we need to make sure we've gotten everything off our chests before the fat lady - I mean Vicky - sings.

TRACEY TOWNES. What else do we have to say? You've mostly blamed my friendship with Vicky, my lack of a friendship with you and let's not even talk about your strip club activities... What else is there to talk about?

NICK TOWNES. My so-called "strip club activities" were not a factor in our marriage woes. I prefer to think of those outings as therapeutic massage. *(Kevin wakes up again.)*

KEVIN. *(to Nick)* That's a good word.

TRACEY TOWNES. Shut up, Kevin!

KEVIN. Okay. *(Kevin falls back asleep.)*

TRACEY TOWNES. Just sign the papers, Nick.

NICK TOWNES. Why the rush? I mean, don't you have anything to get off your ample bosom? Let me have it - I'm a big boy. I can take it.

VICKY JAMES. Oh Nick, you could never take criticism.

NICK TOWNES. *(addressing an imaginary courtroom)* Example one, your honor! This is all the evidence I need in this case of marital dissension. An interloper, a buzzard if you will, who can't keep her claws out of our relationship. Lock her up and throw away the key!

TRACEY TOWNES. You are so dramatic, Nick Townes. Always have been.

NICK TOWNES. Isn't that one of the reasons you married me?

TRACEY TOWNES. That was one of many at the time.

NICK TOWNES. We *did* have some good times, didn't we? You, me and Vicky - oh wait...

VICKY JAMES. Really, Nick? Must you always mention my name?

NICK TOWNES. It would be cruel and dismissive of me not to. Whatever charms - and I do have many - I may have used to seduce that fine woman over there were subverted by your constant meddling and overall

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unhappiness. You cast a pall on all things Nick and Tracey Townes. Just admit it.

VICKY JAMES. Okay. I admit it.

TRACEY TOWNES. Vicky, what are you saying?

VICKY JAMES. If Nick wants to blame me for the breakup of your marriage, so be it. Anything for you to sign those papers and put an end to this misery. *(Nick stands up triumphantly and points his finger in Vicky's direction.)*

NICK TOWNES. See? Like I said, a vulture. Or did I say a buzzard. Maybe you're both... Either way, you've been flying overhead for years, waiting for this moment, so you can swoop down and revel in the failure of your so-called best friend's marital union.

VICKY JAMES. Marital union? This has been a disaster from the beginning and you know it. You both know it!

NICK TOWNES. So now you're a soothsayer, too. I must say Vicky, you're a buzzard of many talents...

TRACEY TOWNES. *(to Vicky)* Why do you think so little of my marriage? You're supposed to be my best friend, my biggest supporter.

VICKY JAMES. And as your best friend, my goal is to look out for your best interests. And Nick is not one of them.

TRACEY TOWNES. *(growing angry)* Who are you to decide what's in my best interests?

NICK TOWNES. This is getting good! *(wistful)* Wish I had some vodka...

VICKY JAMES. I'm just saying, Tracey -

TRACEY TOWNES. What exactly *are* you saying, Vicky? Let it out - you've never been shy about offering your opinion on all things Tracey and Nick. Why stop now?

NICK TOWNES. You tell her, babe!

TRACEY TOWNES. Be quiet, Nick.

NICK TOWNES. Okay.

TRACEY TOWNES. *(to Vicky)* Tell me, my dearest, bestest friend in the whole world - what went wrong with my marriage?

VICKY JAMES. Well... you two may have *loved* each other, but I don't think you ever *liked* each other.

NICK TOWNES. Hey, I love Tracey - it's *you* I don't like. *(pause)* Can I replace that with loathe? Sounds like a much stronger word...

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VICKY JAMES. *(to Nick)* See? You just did it!

NICK TOWNES. *(confused)* What did I do?

VICKY JAMES. You just said "love". But you didn't say "like".

TRACEY TOWNES. She does have a point, Nick? Don't you like me? Have you ever liked me?

NICK TOWNES. Of course I like you, Tracey. If I didn't like you, how could I love you? In my world, you have to like someone before you can love them. *(to Kevin)* Am I right, Mailman? *(Kevin aka Mailman, is fast asleep.)*

NICK TOWNES. Help me out, Kevin...

VICKY JAMES. I disagree - I think you can love someone without truly liking them.

NICK TOWNES. What do you know about being in a marriage? Oh, wait...

VICKY JAMES. Keep blaming me, Nick, but this one's all on you.

NICK TOWNES. Actually, Vicky, it's on *you*. You're trying to deflect blame like you've always done when someone calls you out on your Mata Hari-like ways. Women like you are sent in to destroy relationships. You don't fool me. *(pause)* Kevin will find out soon enough...

VICKY JAMES. What's that supposed to mean?

NICK TOWNES. I wish you much happiness, Vicky. If I had some vodka left, I'd toast to you and Kevin's everlasting love.

VICKY JAMES. You're being super-sarcastic, Nick, as usual.

TRACEY TOWNES. *(to Vicky)* Excuse me for breaking up this private party, but I'd like to get back to why you think Nick and I don't like each other.

NICK TOWNES. *(with mock indignation)* Yeah, Vicky - why!

TRACEY TOWNES. Nick -

NICK TOWNES. I am zipping my lip - *(makes a zipping motion with his hands)* See?

VICKY JAMES. Well... It's just that as your best friend who's known you since we were kids - I know your likes and dislikes. You guys just didn't seem compatible. From the first date on, you two were and are like oil and water. Total mismatch.

TRACEY TOWNES. If you felt that way, why didn't you say something? Why did you let us suffer in silence if you had misgivings about our relationship?

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VICKY JAMES. I just wanted you to be happy, Trace but the signs were there. I've seen it with my parents - they were the same way, all piss and vinegar, all the time. I didn't want you to go through the same thing but since you two were hellbent on getting married, I figured I'd stick to you like glue and help you pick up the pieces when they eventually fell.

NICK TOWNES. Wait - so you're making yourself out to be some kind of hero in all of this? Unbelievable...

TRACEY TOWNES. Nick –

NICK TOWNES. No, Tracey - I'm not going to let this go! You've been much too easy on Vicky all these years. She's been using this guise of friendship to undermine our marriage and now she's making herself out to be some kind of prophet. Saint Vicky - forecaster of pain...

VICKY JAMES. I think you mean prophetess –

NICK TOWNES. *(to Vicky)* You'd better be glad I don't call you what I'm really thinking. And you've got a lot of nerve calling us incompatible!

TRACEY TOWNES. But isn't that what we are, Nick?

NICK TOWNES. Yeah, but I don't wanna hear it coming from her mouth! She's the spawn of Satan!

TRACEY TOWNES. Nick –

VICKY JAMES. It's okay, Tracey. Nick's upset and rightfully so.

NICK TOWNES. Listen to the devil, Tracey. She's actually making sense...

VICKY JAMES. I know the truth is hard to hear, but it's what I observed from the start. Love but not like. Tracey, you saw Nick as a way to get away from your overbearing parents and Nick, you loved that Tracey stuck it to her family by marrying you.

NICK TOWNES. No - this is what it comes down to, with the god of liquor as my witness - it's not possible to have a marriage with three people. I'm not really a gambler but I'm willing to bet that you never heard the saying, 'Three's a crowd', cause instead of leaving, you clung tighter and tighter until you squeezed all the life out of our relationship. Facts.

VICKY JAMES. And that's why I'm telling you this. I was there for everything and I'm just telling you what I observed.

NICK TOWNES. I guess you would know - you were like a wart that just kept growing and growing and growing... And look - now you're life-size! Amazing!

TRACEY TOWNES. Let me ask you, Vicky, do you get some kind of sick

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satisfaction from these so-called revelations? Were you just waiting for our marriage to implode?

VICKY JAMES. No, it's not like that! I just wanted to be there for my friend.

TRACEY TOWNES. So, that's all it was? Not some desire to watch me fail up close and personal?

VICKY JAMES. Why would you say that?

TRACEY TOWNES. Vick, I know you latched onto me because I was the only one who showed you love, but I also know there was some jealousy involved, too, whether you admit it or not.

NICK TOWNES. Wow, this has surely taken a turn...

VICKY JAMES. Jealous? Why would I be jealous?

TRACEY TOWNES. Well, for one, I always had the best clothes, the best jobs, the best friends...

VICKY JAMES. Your choice of boyfriends wasn't the greatest –

TRACEY TOWNES. At least I had boyfriends. Unlike you, I wasn't the perennial third wheel hoping to pick up my leftovers... Makes me wonder if you were secretly hoping I'd break up with Nick so you could date him.

(Nick groans in disgust.)

TRACEY TOWNES. Nick! *(Nick makes a zipping motion with his hands.)*

VICKY JAMES. I don't know where all this is coming from, Tracey.

TRACEY TOWNES. I'm just putting all my cards on the table. You told me how you really felt all these years about me and Nick, so now I'm telling you how I've been feeling. Simple as that.

NICK TOWNES. Boy, I could really use a drink right about now... *(to Kevin)* Wake up, Kevin! You're missing some good stuff!

VICKY JAMES. Is it, really that simple? Or are you just mad that I said out loud what you and Nick have been holding inside all this time? Maybe *that's* really the point.

TRACEY TOWNES. Maybe it is. Maybe I've known from the start that Nick and I weren't meant for each other. Maybe I - *we* - have been in denial all these years. It does suck, though, that you didn't trust our friendship enough to let me know how you really felt.

VICKY JAMES. Would it have made a difference?

TRACEY TOWNES. No. *(Nick is strangely quiet.)*

TRACEY TOWNES. *(concerned)* Nick, are you okay?

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NICK TOWNES. She's right, Tracey. Vicky's right. Everything Vicky said - it's all true. Every word, every utterance that has come out of her misshapen mouth - it's all true. Every godforsaken bit of it. It's all true.

(starts clapping) Bravo, Vicky! You've managed to get Nick Townes to admit that he's a fraud. Bravo to you.

VICKY JAMES. Nick, that wasn't my intention at all.

NICK TOWNES. But it's the end result. Isn't that all that matters? The end?

TRACEY TOWNES. *(to Nick)* So, you felt the same way, too?

NICK TOWNES. Yeah - I just figured things would get better the longer we stayed married. But instead of growing closer, we grew further apart. Tracey, I knew deep down inside that I was your get out of jail card - I knew it and I gladly accepted it. Maybe I mistook it for love - I don't know. Or maybe I knew and didn't care. What I do know is that I had someone who looked up to and depended on me. I never had that before. It felt good to be wanted.

TRACEY TOWNES. I guess we both had our own selfish reasons for getting married. Guess our love was imperfect.

NICK TOWNES. But isn't that what love is about - taking two imperfect halves and making a perfect whole?

TRACEY TOWNES. There's no such thing as perfect. I think we both missed the boat on that revelation.

NICK TOWNES. I guess... What do we do now?

TRACEY TOWNES. We sign the papers.

NICK TOWNES. *(hopeful)* I was thinking that with all these "hidden truths" coming out, maybe we might take a step back and reassess things.

TRACEY TOWNES. Can you see things being any different?

NICK TOWNES. No.

TRACEY TOWNES. Me neither.

NICK TOWNES. No... It's such a final word, isn't it?

TRACEY TOWNES. Yeah - it's almost as bad as The End.

NICK TOWNES. Or Never.

TRACEY TOWNES. Impossible.

NICK TOWNES. Incompatible - oh, wait, that's Vicky's word...

TRACEY TOWNES. I never realized there were so many words that could describe our relationship.

NICK TOWNES. "Realize" - now, that may be the most powerful word of

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all. Maybe, just maybe if we had *realized* the bitter truth from the beginning, we wouldn't be where we are now, about to sign divorce papers.

TRACEY TOWNES. But then we wouldn't have gotten married. That's something I don't regret.

NICK TOWNES. Neither do I. Even if our marriage came with your own personal handmaiden. *(to Vicky)* I'm talking about you, Vicky.

VICKY JAMES. *(sarcastic)* I never would have guessed...

NICK TOWNES. And since we're being so forthcoming, I want you to know Vicky, that every vile and heinous thing that I've ever said to you has always been straight from the heart. I meant and I will continue to mean every single word when it comes to my contempt and utter hate for you.

VICKY JAMES. *(sarcastic)* Why, thank you, Nick.

NICK TOWNES. You're very welcome.

TRACEY TOWNES. I've got an idea - instead of treating our parting of ways as a tragedy, let's turn it into a victory of sorts!

NICK TOWNES. *(legitimately curious)* And how would we do that?

TRACEY TOWNES. Let's use words to describe good things about each other. Let's end this on a totally positive note. *(to Nick)* What do you say?

NICK TOWNES. What the hell - I'll give it a shot. I'll do Vicky first. *(to Vicky)* SUCCUBUS.

TRACEY TOWNES. No, Nick - we're only going to use "nice" words.

NICK TOWNES. That's no fun...

TRACEY TOWNES. Nick –

NICK TOWNES. Oh, alright. Vicky – ATTACHMENT. *(to Tracey)* That's as nice as I can get.

VICKY JAMES. This should be about you two. This game shouldn't include me.

NICK TOWNES. Oh, *now* you want to be hands off! Great timing, Vicky. Really great timing...

TRACEY TOWNES. She's right, though. This is about us.

NICK TOWNES. Okay, then... BEAUTIFUL.

TRACEY TOWNES. STEADFAST.

NICK TOWNES. What, no HANDSOME or SEXY?

TRACEY TOWNES. Nick –

NICK TOWNES. Alright, alright... DESPERATE.

TRACEY TOWNES. SELFISH.

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NICK TOWNES. CODEPENDANT.

TRACEY TOWNES. BOISTEROUS.

NICK TOWNES. DELUSIONAL.

TRACEY TOWNES. UNADVENTUROUS.

NICK TOWNES. *(taking it personally)* I'm unadventurous?

TRACEY TOWNES. We're not supposed to take this personally, Nick.

NICK TOWNES. How can I not? You called me unadventurous!

TRACEY TOWNES. Nick -

NICK TOWNES. Okay, okay. I think I got the hang of this. Let's see - a self-involved hanger-on without a shred of self-awareness who revels in the adoration of a soul-sucking leech who calls herself your friend but who was just waiting for an accident to happen! *(pause)* Wow, that felt good...

TRACEY TOWNES. Okay, now it's my turn. An arrogant, know-it-all who hides behind quips and sarcasm rather than face problems head on and refuses to admit when he's wrong!

NICK TOWNES. *(impressed)* That *does* sound like me! I must say, Tracey, your choice of words were pretty accurate. I'd say you know me better than you might think.

TRACEY TOWNES. Well, you obviously don't know me as well as you think - I'm not any of those things you said about me.

NICK TOWNES. Maybe, maybe not. I just said those things to stick it to Vicky one more time. For old time's sake.

VICKY JAMES. *(sarcastic)* You're so thoughtful, Nick.

NICK TOWNES. *(with pride)* I try my best. *(to Tracey)* Tracey, what I really want to say is, though we may have known we were doomed from the start, we gave it the old college try. Things weren't all good but they weren't all bad, either.

NICK TOWNES. We had our good times and those are times that I'll always cherish. You and me - we rode it out 'till the very end. And I'm actually saying all of this with a sober mind and a clear head.

VICKY JAMES. We all know that's because you ran out of vodka.

NICK TOWNES. *(impressed)* Wow - Vicky really knows me, too...
(The three of them laugh.)

TRACEY TOWNES. Wow - look at us all laughing! And at the same time!

VICKY JAMES. I guess miracles *do* happen!

NICK TOWNES. *(with sadness in his voice)* Well... I guess it's that time.

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TRACEY TOWNES. *(with sadness in her voice)* I guess it's that time.

VICKY JAMES. *(to Tracey)* I'll be outside. *(Vicky tries to wake Kevin.)*

VICKY JAMES. Kevin, c'mon honey, they need some privacy. *(Kevin doesn't stir - he's sound asleep.)*

NICK TOWNES. Leave him. We need a silent witness anyway.

VICKY JAMES. *(gazing down at Kevin)* Y'know, I think he might really be "the one". What we have is pretty special. *(hopeful)* Fingers crossed! *(Vicky is about to exit the apartment.)*

NICK TOWNES. Hey, Vicky – *(Vicky turns around.)*

NICK TOWNES. I've got another word – BARNACLE.

Vicky glares at Nick and shakes her head in disgust.

NICK TOWNES. *(innocently)* I thought we were still playing...

VICKY JAMES. Goodbye, Nick. *(Vicky exits the apartment.)*

NICK TOWNES. She's no fun...

TRACEY TOWNES. *(motioning towards the divorce papers)* Well... I guess it's time.

NICK TOWNES. Should I sign first?

TRACEY TOWNES. If that's what you want.

NICK TOWNES. It's not what I want.

TRACEY TOWNES. Nick, we've gone through this...

NICK TOWNES. Well, it's *not* what I want - what I *want* is waiting for me down at the pub, preferably in a clear glass with a shot of ice and some peanuts in a bowl next to it. And fresh peanuts, not those stale ones...

TRACEY TOWNES. I must admit, a good stiff drink would sound good right about now.

NICK TOWNES. Wanna join me? It would be a final goodbye celebration, just the two of us.

TRACEY TOWNES. I can't do two good-byes.

NICK TOWNES. *(hopeful)* I'll share my peanuts with you...

TRACEY TOWNES. *(laughing)* That sounds intriguing but I'm gonna go home and unpack my things.

NICK TOWNES. I hear 'ya - I got some major unpacking to do myself.

TRACEY TOWNES. But you don't have a lot of stuff.

NICK TOWNES. Unpacking memories, Trace. Unpacking memories. *(They hold hands for a few moments.)*

NICK TOWNES. Okay, let's do this.

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TRACEY TOWNES. Let's do it. *(Tracey signs first, then Nick.)*

NICK TOWNES. So that's it. We're officially divorced.

TRACEY TOWNES. Yeah.

NICK TOWNES. Feel any different?

TRACEY TOWNES. Not really... I guess it takes time to set in.

NICK TOWNES. Yeah... Well, I guess this is goodbye. *(with sadness in his voice)* Goodbye, Tracey Townes - I mean, the *former* Tracey Townes.

TRACEY TOWNES. *(fighting back tears)* Goodbye, Nick Townes. *(They gather their belongings and head towards the front door.)*

NICK TOWNES. *(stepping aside)* You can go first.

TRACEY TOWNES. Let's leave together. For old time's sake.

NICK TOWNES. Okay. For old time's sake. *(They walk to the front door. Before exiting, they turn, look around and take in the apartment one last time.)* Goodbye apartment. It's been real. *(Nick and Tracey exit the apartment. Kevin, still asleep on the sofa, is awakened by the sound of the closing door.)*

KEVIN. *(looking around)* Where is everybody? *(looks at his watch)* It's pretty late - better call the wife and kids...

END OF ACT 1

***THE PLAY IS NOT OVER!! TO FIND OUT HOW IT ENDS—
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