

ACT 1 / SCENE 1: Present Davis' Kitchen - Early Morning

[Lights up on center stage.]

Becca: [Yells loudly up stairs] Kids, hurry up, we're going to be late!

[Audiences hears loud footsteps in balcony as kids come running down stairs for breakfast. Mom is looking towards ceiling as Ted enters the room putting on his tie.]

Ted: Wow! Are those our kids or are we about to be eaten alive by a pack of wild animals?

Becca: It is feeding time...

Ted: And it smells great! [Hugs wife.] Good morning.

Becca: [Straightens husband's tie.] Good morning to you Mr. VP. Big day today. Are you nervous?

Ted: I've been next in line for this promotion for eight years. It's just hard to believe the day is finally here! [Sits down at table and opens paper.]

Becca: You'll do just fine [serves breakfast.]

Kai: [Enters the room wearing two colors of socks, pants with one leg tucked into a sock, and shirt on backwards.]

Ted: Morning buddy. You, uh, might want to fix your shirt.

Kai: [Looks down at his shirt.] What's wrong with my shirt?

Becca: [Whispering back.] The will of a eight year old. I've just given up.

Kensee: [Enters texting on her phone and sits down at table.] Ugh, I am never setting foot in that school again!

Ted: [Without looking up from paper.] And why's that?

Kensee: Well Mike asked Rachel if he could take her to the dance and then Rachel told Mike that I wanted him to ask me and then Mike told the entire football team that I was in love with him which of course Steven heard and then he was all upset at me because I told him that if no one asked him that I would because we've been best friends for like...well, ever...and so Steven told Rachel that which just crushed her because she's liked Steven forever and so now everyone hates me and I'd rather die than show my face in that school ever again.

[Everyone stops doing what they are doing and just stares for a few seconds.]

Ted: Wait, you're in love with Mike?

Kensee: DAD!

Ted: Who's this Mike guy?

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Kensee: [Storms off.] Oh my gosh, I'm never talking to you again. You are the worst listener.

Becca: [Calls after Kensee] I've been telling him that for years sweetie.

Kai: Not helping mom.

Ted: [Looks at Kai who has put his feet up on the table.] Son, you have two different colors of socks on. One is white and the other is red. Not even close buddy.

Kai: [Looks down at socks.] I like it. It shows my originality.

Becca: [Pushes feet off the table.] Well keep your originality off my breakfast table.

Kai: Hey Dad, are you going to get a new car today?

Ted: What makes you think that?

Kai: I heard you and mom talking about it the other day and how you'll be "rolling it in" with your new job. I was just thinking...if you're getting a new car, could get the Jetta?

Ted: Son, you're eight.

Kai: Nine in 2 months, 12 days, 8 hours and 23 minutes. I'm practically an adult.

Kensee: [Comes bolting back in the kitchen] You better not give him the Jetta. You promised me that car years ago.

Ted: Oh, hi Kensee. I thought you were never talking to me again.

Kensee: Whatever, I'm late for school. I'll be WALKING to the bus stop, AGAIN, to ride the BUS, with all the other moron sophomores that don't have their own cars. [storms out]

Ted: Ok! Say hi to the rest of the poor and horribly deprived kids!

Becca: She's sixteen and entitled. She'll apologize later.

Kai: If she doesn't, can I have the Jetta?

Ted: Go put on normal clothes buddy.

Kai: Aw man...[exits]

Ted: [Sighs] Well, while we have 4 minutes of peace, I got you a gift! [Gets wrapped gift right off scene and gives it to Becca. It's wrapped in Christmas wrapping.]

Becca: It's barely September. What is this for?

Ted: Ok. I may have hid this last year and recently discovered it didn't make it under the tree. So let's just pretend this is a "just because" gift.

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- Becca: You and your gift hiding. [Starts unwrapping.] There's probably, \$3000 of gifts hidden throughout this...aw, I love it! [pulls out a beautiful red scarf.] My favorite color. And it will keep me warm in this 90 degree chill we're having.
- Ted: I'll just crank the air down 10 degrees in the house so you can put it to immediate use.
- Becca: [Takes his hand] Thanks for thinking of me, especially on a day that should be all about you. It is a good morning and it's going to be a fantastic day, despite the strong will of a beautiful teenager and one in the making.
- Ted: [Looks at watch] I better go. I'll call you this afternoon.
- Becca: I'll be waiting for the call. Love you sweetie! [Hangs up scarf on coatrack]

PREVIEW

ACT 1 / SCENE 2: Future Davis' Living Room - Evening

Ted: [enters putting on coat] Are you sure Kai didn't say 7:30. I swear he said 7:30.

Becca: [Puts on red scarf identical to previous scene.] 6:30 Ted. 6:30PM. It's on the invitation and we talked about it twice this week.

Ted: I don't remember you mentioning it at all.

[Gets ready to head out the door but forgets his keys]

Becca: [Shakes keys] Honey, you don't remember much of anything anymore.

Ted: [Grabs keys and sits down to put them on. He pauses.] When did all this happen?

Becca: When did what happen?

Ted: Life? When did all this life happen? We're on our way to see our son's *son* graduate high school. It feels like yesterday when our little Kai could barely dress himself. 40 years have sure zoomed by.

Becca: [Sits down next to Ted and laughs gently.] Remember how he went through that phase when he refused to wear the same color socks?

Ted: Oh I hated that. Drove me insane. Or how he would hang all his track medals from his rearview mirror and they would always smack you in the head at every corner?

Becca: I would never know what to fear for more when in the car with him: my life or just my left eye.

[Both laugh a bit and then become silent.]

Becca: [Hand on shoulder] You know, we're really blessed to have such wonderful children who have made us so proud and have given us such amazing grand children.

Ted: And to have been so healthy to be able to witness it all. What a life huh?

Becca: What a life. [Pauses.] God is good.

Ted: All the time.

Becca: Come on, let's get rolling. [Helps Ted up.] We don't want to be late tonight.

Ted: I'm telling you, we have at least an hour. It starts at 7:30.

Becca: Whatever you say Einstein.

ACT 1 / SCENE 3: Past Davis' In The Park

[Ted and Becca are in the park trying to get some studying done, but just playing on their guitars.]

Ted: [Playing a few random chords, slowing putting the song together.] Let's put it together.
[Starts playing the verse and the chorus and Becca joins in on guitar.]

Becca: Nice. I think you may have something there. But we really need to finish studying here.

Ted: [Sighs] I can't read another word. My mind is completely full. I've packed more into this noggin from one full year of college than I have my entire 4 years of high school. Let's just knock out this song and call it good.

Becca: [Laughs] Finals start tomorrow, Einstein.

Ted: I hate it when you call me that.

Becca: Oh you love it. Look, we're almost done and then the summer is ours.

Ted: [Puts down guitar with Becca.] Fine. [Both pick up books and start reading for a bit, then slams book in frustration.] AH! I can't focus! All I can think about is spending the summer up at Camp Hood with you...

Becca: ...and 500 junior high students.

Ted: As far as I'm concerned, they don't exist.

Becca: Well there's the makings of Top Counselor of the Summer.

Ted: There will be just one specific camper on my mind, and she's about 5'10" and absolutely gorgeous...

Becca: [Puts down book] Uh huh...tell me more about this mystery camper.

Ted: Well [studies Becca], she has brown hair, hazel eyes, dresses amazingly well, and she's totally into me.

Becca: Of course she is.

Ted: She makes me laugh, makes me want to be a better person, makes me feel... comfortable. Like, nothing else in the world matters as long as she and I are happy together.

Becca: She sounds pretty amazing.

Ted: And her voice. Every time she speaks the world just goes silent, like all of creation is on edge to hear what will be spoken next.

Becca: [Leans forward.] All of creation huh? That's some power.

Ted: [Leans forward.] You have no idea.

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[They start to lean in to kiss and a football lands in the middle of them out of nowhere]

Stranger: [Comes running up] Sorry about that! [Gets ball and turns around to friend who's out of sight] Nice shot you dork! Go deep! [throws ball and exits]

Ted: Where were we...

Becca: [Smiles.] Summer camp.

Ted: No, after that.

Becca: It's going to be a blast and I can't wait, but you've got to study.

Ted: [Groans.]

Becca: You know you're parents won't let you go if you don't rock these finals. Here, let me quiz you.

Ted: Fine. And after I prove to you just how Einstein I am, we're finishing this song of ours and I'm taking you out to an amazing dinner at Burger King.

Becca: Oh wow. Big spender strikes again. You know, someday when your the big VP of a company, you're going to make up all these cheap dates you keep taking me on.

Ted: I accept that challenge. Now hit me with those questions, and prepare to be blown away with my mad knowledge.

[Lights fade.]

ACT 1 / SCENE 6: Past Davis - The Promise

[The scene opens around a fire pit with kids waiting with sticks. Becca is with the kids and Ted enters from off stage opening a new bag of marshmallows to roast.]

Ted: Alright, who is ready for marshmallows?

Kids: [All scream together.] US! WE ARE!

Becca: Don't poke each other's eyes out. Hook me up with one of those Einstein.

Ted: [Holds up an empty bag.] It's like they don't feed these kids at home. Hold on, I've got another bag back in the tent. [Exits]

Girl 1: [To Becca] Why do you call him Einstein all the time? He doesn't seem very smart to me. [The other girls giggle.]

Becca: [Laughs] It's just a nickname. And what makes you think he's not very smart?

Girl 2: Well, we probably shouldn't say anything, but he keeps asking us if you're talking about him during lights out. And this morning he asked if we thought you liked him.

Girl 1: It's pretty obvious. You two spend every single second staring into each other's eyes.

Becca: [Blushes.] Oh, we do not.

Girl 3: Waving across the field at each other...

Becca: Just being friendly.

Girl 2: Blowing each other kisses...

Becca: [Laughs.] Well aren't you all the observant bunch. Quiet down, here he comes.

Ted: [Looks sad and sighs.] Well Becca, I looked everywhere for more marshmallows...but I just couldn't find any.

Becca: No problem. We'll just enjoy the fire.

Ted: However, I did find this! [Pulls out a marshmallow gun and starts unloading. All the girls and boys scream and scatter into the woods off scene.]

Becca: [Comes out of cover after firestorm is done.] Very funny. Kids come on back now. Ted is done with his sneak attack.

Ted: [Approaches Becca] Who said anything about being done? [Gets down on one knee.]

Becca: [Confused.] What are you doing? [Looks around.] Kids? Come back. Ted, get up.

Ted: I knew the first moment I saw you that you were the one.

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Becca: Oh really? [laughs]

Ted: I'm serious now! [Becca straightens up, clears throat and apologizes.]

Ted: You and I, we're just a perfect match. You lift me up. You encourage me to be a better person. You challenge me to think differently, to love others, to seek God. And I want nothing more than to be with you. Forever. Together. [Pauses.] So will you marry me?

Becca: [Puts hand to chest and breathes in deep.] You're crazy.

Ted: [Confused] So...is that a yes?

Becca: And I must be crazy too because I can't say no after such a beautiful speech!

Ted: So...is *that* a yes?!

Becca: [Pulls Ted up and laughs.] YES! But look, we've got a lot to do before we set a date.

Ted: Sure. Of course.

Becca: And you're not getting away with a no-ring proposal in the middle of the woods.

Ted: [Smiles and pulls out a locket.] I thought we could look for a ring together But I do have this.

Becca: [Lights up, gasps.] I thought you got rid of this!

Ted: Just tucked it away. For the right moment.

Becca: [Opens locket and then allows Ted to help put it on.] You never cease to amaze me.

Ted: So that was a pretty decent first shot, right?

Becca: You did ok.

Boy 1: [Shouts from off stage.] Kiss her Einstein!

Becca: [Pushes Ted back slightly.] Not with an audience lover boy. You all can come out now!

[Kids appear and give Ted high fives and Becca hugs.]

Becca: Ok, help me pick up these marshmallows so we don't have bears hanging out with us tomorrow.

[Becca tosses a marshmallow at Ted and both laugh while the lights fade.]

ACT 1 / SCENE 7: Present Davis - The VP Meeting

[Ted enters the office]

Ted: Sorry I'm a few minutes late Mr. Henderson. Traffic was just...

Henderson: Ted, sit down.

Ted: Right. [Sits]

Henderson: [Pauses while trying to find the best way to talk. Sighs deep.] Look, there's no reason to draw this out. Yesterday everything hit the fan and the deal we've been working on fell through...

Ted: What do you mean fell through. I thought it was locked up...

Henderson: They got nervous at the last second. Called off delivery, backed out and signed with Hartman. The board was up all night trying to reverse the decision but it's a done deal.

Ted: So what does that mean exactly?

Henderson: [Shifts] It's means you failed Ted. You and your entire team. Months of prep and work wasted. Missed opportunities squandered on a deal that you assured everyone would take place.

Ted: Now wait a minute. Give me an opportunity to talk to them. I handed you a solid deal that was all but signed and delivered.

Henderson: It's too late Ted.

Ted: Let me get on the phone with their board and figure out what went wrong.

Henderson: It's too late, Ted.

Ted: I ate at their families tables.

Henderson: It's [slams palm on table] done. [Ted leans back and puts head in hands.] And so are you.

Ted: What? Excuse me?

Henderson: The company just lost millions on this deal. The board wants the blame to be fall swiftly and our shareholders will demand instant action. As head of the team, you're the one in their crosshairs. And a few more are right behind you. That's on you Ted.

Ted: You can't possibly...

Henderson: I signed off on it a few minutes ago. You're to pack up your office and leave immediately.

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Ted: I can't believe this. After 25 years...

Henderson: [Hold hand up, cutting him off.] I'm sorry.

Ted: [Stands up and swipes a cup of pens off desk in anger.] You're sorry?

[Henderson calmly leans back in chair and sips his coffee.]

Ted: [Leaves for door.] You're half-hearted apology is the last thing I want to hear. [Leaves.]

[Ted moves into center stage as lights fade down for a few seconds then back up on center stage which has been staged as a city park. During this transition, Ted has removed his jacket and is now carrying on his shoulder.]

Ted: [Stops and paces back and forth, talking to himself.] You're sorry? That's it? You're sorry? Unbelievable. 25 years I gave this company. I was next in line, [shouts to no one] NEXT IN LINE! [Pauses.] And you just rip it away from me, just like that? I'm going to sue for every penny. How dare they take this from me! [Turns, throws jacket across stage and shouts to distance.] WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE? [Stops] What am I going to tell Becca? The kids, they are going to be so disappointed in me...

Stranger: How about the truth?

Ted: [Spins around.] Excuse me?

Stranger: [Comes into the light.] Tell them the truth. Your family loves you beyond a job title.

Ted: [Looks around. Gets defensive.] Do I know you?

Stranger: Not as well as I know you. [Pauses] Ted.

Ted: How do you know my name?

Stranger: You're at the beginning of the biggest crossroad of your life.

Ted: What do you know about me?

Stranger: And what you do next will define your family for generations. I'm here to ... straighten your path.

Ted: You didn't answer my question.

Stranger: Which one? [No response.] Here's the deal Ted. I'll get to the point. You've got some more work to do, and that VP position has been consuming you, driving you. Clouding your vision. ... You quit letting Him in Ted.

Ted: Him?

Stranger: God misses you.

Ted: [Laughs.] Oh, alright. [Pulls out wallet.] I get it. Here's twenty bucks. Go refill the booze tank.

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Stranger: [Stares at money.] You think I'm a city park drunk.

Ted: Look, I could really care less who you are. Mind your own business. [Turns to leave.]

Stranger: Becca will leave you.

Ted: [Angry/Confused] What did you say? [Turns back around.]

Stranger: Ted, this promotion is so important to you, so consuming that you dive quickly into depression. You pull away from your wife, your kids, you miss your daughter's graduation next year, your son's driving lessons, his state basketball championships. The birth of your new baby. And you drive Becca away so far that she's left with no choice, but to leave you.

Ted: How do you know all this? [Pauses and turns around.] You sound like a crazy man. So why do I believe you? Now I sound like a crazy man. [Sits down on park bench.] So you're what? My guardian angel? Is this a dream right now? Are we gonna play a little Charles Dickens and float around time showing me Christmases past and future?

Stranger: Go home Ted. Tell your family what happened. Don't hide this. You really have two options. Allow the valley to consume you or keep climbing the mountain and wait to be picked up.

Ted: Wait...

Stranger 1: For what's next...

Ted: For how long?

Stranger 1: I don't get the timeline. And I don't ask.

Ted: Right. [Gets up and walks in other direction, thinking. As he does this, Stranger 1 exits the scene. Ted turns around.] Hey, what will... [He's alone, and sighs deep.] Perfect.

[Goes back to bench and lays down as lights dim.]

ACT 1 / SCENE 8: Future Davis - Restaurant

[Screen displays "Future: Three Months Later". It is now Christmas season and Ted decides to visit the restaurant where he broke the news to Becca about him losing his job. They are at the restaurant with Christmas decor and Christmas music playing softly in the background.]

[Becca is staring at Ted who is examining the menu.]

Ted: [Looks up.] Ok, what's with the quizzical look.

Becca: You do know where we are, right?

Ted: Of course I do.

Becca: It's just when you said we should go enjoy a Christmas dinner, this place wasn't exactly on my list of choices. [No response] So why come back here? We haven't been here in thirty years.

Ted: [Looks around.] Has it really been that long? Hasn't changed a bit has it?

Becca: Ted?

Ted: [Closes menu.] There's something I've been wanting to share with you, about the day I got fired. We sat at that booth over there. In the corner.

Becca: I remember. There was a lot of honesty shared that night.

Ted: I didn't share everything.

Becca: [Surprised, sits up straight.] Ok...

Ted: After I was let go, I went to the park...

Becca: Where we found you that night on the bench?

Ted: Yeah. But before that, I was pretty angry. Just processing everything. Trying to figure out what to do. And this guy, he came out of nowhere, and just starting laying into me, telling me to suck it up, to come clean with you and the kids, that I was at some "path of destruction" that would ruin my family. My relationships with the kids. [Pauses.] That you would eventually leave me.

Becca: Leave you? Why would I ever leave you? Who was this guy?

Ted: I don't know. But I believed him. Somehow I knew he was there to help me avoid a worse future. [Pauses] Yep, sounds just as crazy out loud as in my head.

Becca: No, it's ok. So was it a dream?

Ted: Probably. I guess. I don't know.

Becca: [Pauses and reaches across table to take Ted's hand.] Why didn't you tell me?

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Ted: Because it sounds nuts. But not a day goes by that I don't think about the path he warned me about. And I know now, you're by my side. I would have never chased a life of ministry. I probably would have torn up those pension checks and severance pay and spit in those corporate faces. Instead, I felt able to breathe, to be able to chase a life completely opposite of where I was at. And through everything I've done, and haven't done, I have had you. And together, we have had God. And I'm thankful for those constants.

Becca: [Smiles.] For I know the plans I have for you. Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope....

Becca/Ted: [together] ...and a future. [Both reach across table and hold hands.]

Becca: Thank you for telling me about that day. And I'm glad you came home to me.

Waiter: [Enters with plates of food.] Here we go. Chicken parmesan for the lady and New York Strip. Enjoy.

Ted: Thank you. This looks amazing.

[They both take a few bites and then Ted begins to choke.]

Becca: You ok honey? [Ted shakes his head and keeps choking. Becca gets up quickly.] Ted? Oh dear...PLEASE SOMEONE HELP! [Goes over to Ted and starts hitting his back.]

Stranger: [Quickly enters the scene behind Ted and Becca with the waiter and calls 911.]

Becca: HELP! HELP! TED! [Lifts Ted up and starts to perform Heimlich maneuver.] PLEASE...TED...TED...

[Lights dim.]

Becca: [As stage goes black] COME ON TED. COME ON! COME ON!

[Intermission.]