

PRIMITIVE RITUALS

A ONE ACT PLAY

PRIMITIVE RITUALS by Dave Goossen

PRIMITIVE RITUALS, by David Goossen, directed by David Goossen, produced by David Goossen and Jill Wyness was presented by Bread and Water Productions at the Vancouver International Fringe Festival, September 1991.

Paul.....Derrick Stone
SHERRI.....Barb Petropoulous
TOM.....Bill Melathopoulous
ERICA.....Beverly Bardall
COLE.....Bryce Edwards
STANTON.....Clive Fitzpatrick
GABRIEL.....Sean Karl

STAGE MANAGER.....Mark Dawson
PROPS/SOUND EFFECTS.....Joe Bouchier

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SEGMENT ONE

The stage is set up as a utility area for waiters. USL is a door to the banquet hall. USR is a door to the kitchen. A table and chairs are DSL. Along the back wall is a counter covered in restaurant equipment, cups, saucers, coffee pots, etc.

Empty stage. Tom, early 30's, casual kind of guy, enters from the kitchen. He sighs and sits down. Erica, a beautiful, intelligent girl in her early 20's, follows him in.

ERICA And then what, Tom?

TOM Well, the father of the bride turns to get his wallet out of his jacket, which is on the back of his chair.

ERICA And?

TOM And the father of the groom is caught in the act of stealing his wallet!

ERICA What happened?

TOM Apparently there was about three thousand bucks in the wallet so they did what honourable gentlemen do on occasions like that. They beat the shit out of each other. On the dance floor.

Erica bursts out laughing.

ERICA Wonder what's gonna happen to that marriage.

Sherri, an opinionated Greek girl in her mid twenties, enters from the banquet.

SHERRI Hey, they got all the blood stains out of the carpet.

Erica bursts out laughing again.

ERICA How were the tips last night?

SHERRI Great. They drank like pigs.

TOM Fish. They drank like fish.

SHERRI What's wrong with pigs?

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magazine and a contract sheet.

PAUL (checking his watch) Haven't you guys clocked in?

ERICA Depends what we're working.

PAUL Three guesses.

SHERRI Not another damn reception....

Paul nods.

ERICA Why us?

PAUL (looking at his watch) Where's Cole?

ERICA Is he working with me? Oh man... All he does is stare at me. It's creepy.

SHERRI Well, if you wore a slightly looser skirt, that might help..

TOM Oh, you don't have to do that...

PAUL No...

ERICA You think this is tight?

Erica spins around. The skirt is tight.

PAUL Tight's one word...

TOM Wide belt's another...

Erica throws Tom a look that could kill.

SHERRI You shouldn't be looking at her skirt in the first place. You're happily married.

TOM I'm fully aware of that.

SHERRI Just checking.

Stanton enters from the kitchen. He is perfectly dressed and ready to work. Everyone stops talking when he comes in.

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STANTON (cont) Ah.

Stanton looks around. No one says anything. He takes a tray and exits. Everyone gives him the finger at the same time. Obviously a tradition.

ERICA Could you talk to Cole, Paul? He's staring so much it's starting to freak me out.

PAUL He's only sixteen, Erica... He can't help it.

SHERRI Yeah, he's totally controlled by his hormones.

TOM His raging hormones!

PAUL Pulsing, throbbing....

ERICA Ok, ok...enough.

TOM What? That's it?

ERICA Yes, that's it.

Tom and Paul look at each other and sigh. Erica turns away.

TOM What's the magazine?

PAUL Time. It's all about the 20 something generation.

ERICA What's it say about us?

PAUL They're having a tough time figuring us out. Says we're indifferent and undefinable.

SHERRI So? Who cares?

PAUL And marriage. We hate marriage. Unlike the baby boomers, who we hate too.

Everyone looks at Tom.

TOM What? Have I just been nominated to defend my....uh...generation?

ALL Sure.

ERICA Why not.

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ERICA (rising to the occasion) What kind of a crack was that?!?!

PAUL (before they can get started) Let's not start, ok...

Sherri has, in the meantime found a pile of wedding napkins on the counter and is looking at them.

SHERRI What the hell are these for?

She holds up the napkins. Tom takes one.

TOM (reading) Peggy and Eric bless you for your love, and for sharing this blessed day with them, to start their glorious life together.

Everyone cringes as Tom reads it in a most caring manner.

TOM (cont) They've signed them. Personally. In felt pen. See?

He holds up a couple. He puts them down and looks at his hand.

TOM (cont) They've stained my hand.

SHERRI Bet this never happens at one of Liz Taylor's weddings.

ERICA Did'ja file a couple of these?

PAUL I'm not head waiter for nothing..

He picks up a huge box full of different wedding napkins.

ERICA What are we gonna do with a couple hundred different wedding napkins?

SHERRI I was thinking, we could make a lifesize paper mache wedding couple out of them and light it on fire during a reception. Sort of our view on the present hopeless state of marriage.

TOM God, you're negative.

SHERRI Got a better idea?

Tom shrugs.

ERICA We could randomly put the napkins out at some reception. Then sit back and watch the mass hysteria as everyone tries to figure out if they're at the right wedding.

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ERICA Ok....deal.

They hand back the box and Paul kicks it under the table.

TOM All they brought were the napkins?

PAUL Oh no...there's more. Gather round children.. They've brought their own candles.

Paul pulls a couple out of a box.

PAUL (cont) Voila!

TOM What the hell colour is that?

PAUL (looking at them) Uh...mud...ish..

ERICA It's taupe.

PAUL/TOM Taupe.

ERICA Taupe. Nice colour for a wedding. Especially if you're planning a dual suicide right after the reception.

SHERRI That's sick. Entertaining, but sick.

ERICA Let's hope the bridesmaid's dresses aren't the same colour.

The girls gag.

TOM (holding up a candle) Taupe?

SHERRI Anything else?

Tom puts down the candles and picks up the contract.

PAUL (nodding) Matches.

TOM But it says here that it's a non-smoking function.

PAUL (grinning) I know.

SHERRI Yet they had a couple hundred taupe matches printed?!

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commemorative lumps of glazed bread that look like glazed shit but are supposed to be doves...and you will die when you see the cake...

TOM Is it...

PAUL (nodding) Taupe. And it needs a power plug.

ERICA An electric wedding cake?!?!

PAUL Complete with fountains and a tiny little mirror ball.

SHERRI I want to go home.

Erica is looking the box of wedding stuff.

ERICA Hey! There's candies!

SHERRI Oooh!

Sherri joins Erica at the box. They struggle with the candies, trying to open them. Tom continues to read the 20 something article. The girls continue to struggle with the candies. During this, Paul is talking thru the function with them, even though they aren't really listening to him.

PAUL Ok, dinner is going at seven. Sharp. Really sharp. Whether they're ready or not. That's what the mother of the bride wants. First we pour the wine, Chateau Trot, then they go through the buffet, that'll be cool.

Stanton enters with a full tray of glasses. bored, efficient. He heads through to the kitchen.

PAUL (cont) Stanton, you might want to hear this. It's the timing for this evening.

STANTON I know it already. I talked it through with management.

He exits to the kitchen. Pause.

PAUL Well.. Ok. Uh... Buffet. After they're done stuffing their faces, they do the first round of toasts, they cut the cake, trying not to electrocute themselves, photographs, then we remove the cake, the kitchen slaughters it, and we serve it. It's a host bar, get the barf buckets ready. Dancing at nine, bar closes at one then they puke in the parking lot and drive across the city at two, somehow avoiding all the police roadblocks.

Erica and Sherri finally get their candies open and eat them. They both spit them out. Tom ponders his coffee. No one was listening to Paul.

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PAUL I don't know...something Greek, I think.

SHERRI No. The Greek are civilized.

ERICA They're disgusting.

SHERRI Oh, I feel sick.

ERICA I need a glass of water.

She exits to the kitchen, gagging. Cole enters from the kitchen at the same moment. He's perfectly dressed, ready for work.

COLE Hi Erica.

ERICA (rushing past him) Blech...

COLE Nice skirt.

She continues into the kitchen, Cole turns and watches her go, hormones racing. He turns around to find everyone looking at him.

COLE Hi. Another wedding?

They nod.

COLE (cont) Can I go look?

PAUL Clear some glasses while you're out there.

COLE Thanks!

He grabs a tray and rushes out into the reception. Tom and Sherri look at Paul as he watches Cole leave.

PAUL Hey, it's only his fifth wedding... He'll get tired of them...

SHERRI Yeah, give him a couple hundred more..

TOM Ah, he's young. I still like going to receptions.. just not working them, every day of the week.
That's starting to loose it's zing...

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SHERRI (sad) Yeah.

TOM Who was committed?

PAUL Kevin. He worked all fifteen. A new record. Then he cracked. They found him screaming 'toasts to the bride' in a 7-11 at two in the morning.

SHERRI He was wearing nothing but white gloves and black bow tie.

TOM Shit....

Cole comes in, with a half full tray of glasses.

COLE There's a band wanting to set up.

PAUL No there isn't.

COLE Well, they say they're here for this wedding. The drummer's the groom's cousin, Raoul.

PAUL (grabbing the contract) But it says here, DJ and canned music.

Cole shrugs. Erica enters with a glass of water.

PAUL (cont) Why does this always happen to me?

SHERRI That's why you're sub junior management.

Stanton enters from function.

STANTON Mrs. Levinson has changed the canned music to the band.

COLE See?

STANTON She said she phoned earlier.

PAUL Well, no one told me. How big's the band?

COLE Including horn section?

Paul nods.

COLE Twelve, maybe?

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PAUL Sherri?

SHERRI Yeah, right.

PAUL Stanton. Get them set up where the DJ usually goes.

STANTON I believe that area of the function room is equipped with insufficient AC requirements.

Everyone turns to stare at him.

PAUL How do you know that?

STANTON Didn't you get a copy of the electricity requirements when you started?

PAUL Go get them set up.

STANTON Fine.

Stanton turns and exits.

PAUL My brain's starting to hurt. Could somebody go and clear? Just a bit?

Erica and Tom sigh and exit to the function. Cole stares after Erica.

PAUL Cole.

COLE Just a sec.

PAUL Cole! I know that Erica's a really pretty girl. But try not to stare at her so much, ok?

COLE Me?!? I don't stare at her.

Paul is too tired to bother with discussing it any further.

PAUL Fine. Just don't, ok?

SHERRI She gets really uptight about it, Cole.

COLE Well, I'm gonna go clear.

Paul nods and Cole exits. Paul turns to Sherri.

PAUL What next?

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TOM What a stuck up, middle class, plastic faced, Master Card clutching bag.

PAUL Met the bride?

TOM Mother of.

PAUL What's the problem?

SHERRI Now.

TOM They want Jack Daniels.

SHERRI Bourbon?

TOM Uh huh.

PAUL It's hosted at the bar.

TOM (shaking his head) Na. They want it. Served.

SHERRI We don't serve drinks.

TOM Served with dinner. Instead of the wine.

PAUL Oh God.

Stanton enters from the function with a tray of glasses.

STANTON The band is well on their way to being set up and I've cleared the balcony fully.

PAUL Terrific.

STANTON The band's a Caribbean Salsa outfit.

PAUL Terrific.

SHERRI Hey, isn't that tray getting heavy, Stant?

STANTON No.

And with that, Stanton exits to the kitchen. Cole enters just after him.

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PAUL What did she do, line you all up out there?

Erica passes over the bag to Paul.

PAUL (looking in the bag) Hmm...wonder what these are?

TOM,ERICA, SHERRI (in dread) Gloves.

Paul just smiles.

ERICA So that's why she said it was supposed to be a formal dinner.

TOM Since when is a feed your face buffet a formal dinner?

SHERRI I really want to go home.

Paul hands them out. Stanton enters from the kitchen. Everyone puts them on.

PAUL Stanton. White gloves. Here.

STANTON I have my own, thank you.

He pulls out a pair of gloves and puts them on and exits to the function.

ERICA (talking like Minnie Mouse) Hey Mickey?

TOM (same voice) Yeah, Minnie?

ERICA Let's get Pluto and go over to Walt's house and get shitfaced!

TOM Oh boy, sounds like fun! Ha, ha!

PAUL I know..I know...you don't have to tell me how stupid they look...

Cole takes one of his gloves off, puts on Paul's sunglasses, spins around and grabs his crotch.

COLE (singing) Cause I'm bad, I'm bad, you know it, I'm bad....

He stops and looks at everyone staring at him.

COLE Michael Jackson...

PAUL Let's get clearing

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They look at him for a second.

ERICA Here's the patient, doctor.

She hands her a tray.

SHERRI All right, scaple.

Sherri puts her hand out. Erica slaps a spoon into in.

ERICA Scaple.

Sherri digs around on the tray.

SHERRI This doesn't look good. More light. Mop.

Tom lights a match. Erica wipes Sherri's brow with a table cloth.

SHERRI (cont) Suction.

Everyone looks around.

SHERRI (cont) Suction! Or I'm going to loose him!

COLE Damn it, Sherri, I'm a waiter not a mechanic!

They all stop and look at Cole. He shrugs.

COLE Star Trek.

SHERRI You call this a hospital? Suction!

Paul takes Erica's glass of ice water and slurps the straw in the ice and the bottom.

SHERRI

Thank you.

Sherri flicks a hunk of food off the tray.

SHERRI Cured. Another perfect operation.

She flicks the food into the garbage as everyone claps silently. She takes the tray and walks out into

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PAUL No kidding...they've gotta be the worst. I could of sworn they were banned under the Geneva Convention...

Tom's too bored to get into the banter.

TOM Got a smoke?

PAUL I thought you quit....

TOM Me? Househusband and Banquet waiter d'extrordinaire? You kidding?

Paul fishes out two smokes and gives one to Tom. Stanton enters from banquet, passes by Tom pausing only long enough to light Tom's cigarette and then exits to kitchen. No one reacts.

PAUL Just put the JD into a carafe and pour it into their wine glasses. Then it's cultured.

TOM Why me? I don't want to go near them. I've got a wife and kids.

PAUL You're the best we've got, man. You survived the wedding between that Mormon girl and the Lebanese guy. Remember? Knife fights in the hallway? These guys can't be that bad....

TOM Why not? The mother of the bride asked me to score her some valium. That's not a good sign.

Paul gets up and butts out his smoke.

PAUL Come on, Tom. We'll go take a look and get the JD. I'm sure they're just a nice couple who don't like wine, that's all..

TOM I doubt it...

They exit to the reception. Tom is gone for a second and then is back, shaking his head and lighting up the rest of his cigarette. Furiously.

TOM (cont) Uh uh, no way, forget it...

Paul comes back in with a bottle of Jack Daniels and a carafe.

PAUL I don't think they're all bikers...

TOM (sarcastic) No, the rest are Amish farmers...

PAUL Tom, it's a wedding. You like weddings. Nothing's going to happen to you. You've got free booze. You're going to be their best friend

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Tom, sighs, realizing he's right.

TOM Cole?

PAUL He's not allowed to serve booze for another two years...

TOM (grasping at straws) Stanton?

PAUL (look of disbelief) Stanton? No. He can't pour bourbon. He'd abort. He stays with the parents. He's good at sucking up to them. He lives for it.

TOM No fair...I didn't ask to be good at this...

Paul hands him the carafe.

PAUL (saluting) Go. Be professional.

TOM You're Godfather to my kids. It's a legally binding responsibility. You signed the form. Remember that.

PAUL You'll be fine...

Tom looks at him and then leaves. A rousing cheer erupts as soon as he enters the reception. The sound of a large tray of glasses crashing to the floor comes out of the kitchen.

PAUL (cont) I could just leave...right now...No one would know...I'd just be gone...I wonder if Denny's is hiring.....

He shakes his head, looks to the function, to the kitchen, sighs and enters the kitchen.

FADE TO BLACK
END OF SEGMENT ONE

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SEGMENT TWO

The sounds of dinner being eaten. A lot of people chewing and drinking and talking. Paul is sitting back, drinking a cup of coffee. Sherri is clearing a tray of wine glasses. Cole enters from the function.

COLE The bride and groom sure look happy.

SHERRI That's the Jack Daniels.

PAUL No. Every couple's like that. They're always off in another world. No concept of what's going on.

SHERRI You'd think they'd be freaking out if they actually sat down and thought about what they're doing....

PAUL Yeah, just the two of them, no parents...

COLE What difference would that make?

SHERRI Imagine Cole, having to marry someone you've never lived with, probably only slept with a couple time in the back of your parents station wagon, and now, without knowing if they steal the covers, replace the toilet paper when they finish the roll..

PAUL (stabbing at the air with a table knife) ...keep an axe under the bed....

SHERRI ...eat ice cream and brownies at two in the morning when they can't sleep or any of that, and all the love that you think you've got for each other is gonna keep you together for the rest of your lives.

Cole looks at the two of them.

COLE Screw that.

Paul nods in agreement.

SHERRI That's what happened to me. Except instead of love, we had a healthy fetus.

COLE Oh gross...

SHERRI You were one once, don't cringe.

COLE Yeah... but you don't have to say it

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Cole and Paul react to that.

SHERRI (cont) And because of our parents, we had to get married. We didn't have a choice, or any say in it....We made it thru three years, before it got too much for both of us. He wasn't ready to be a father. I was already to be a mother, so here I am. But we shouldn't have had to get married.

COLE So why do you work weddings every night?

SHERRI Therapy.

COLE Wow...

PAUL Your turn, Cole.

COLE My turn for what? Clearing?

PAUL NO. Intimate personal sexual experience relating. It's a tradition around here. We've all done it.

SHERRI Yeah and in vivid detail.

PAUL Right. Vivid.

COLE Shit... Well, I've only had..three... you know's. And none of them were really vivid. Sorry.

PAUL What? That's it?

SHERRI Really?

COLE Hey, it's the Nineties. You can't screw around anymore. You'll die. Didn't you guys have AIDS classes in high school?

Paul and Sherri look at each other.

PAUL We didn't have AIDS when we were in high school.

Erica leans in from the function.

ERICA The bride and groom are trying to do that 'Wrap hands wine drinking thing'..

She waits, looking at her watch. A couple of glasses crash in the function. She puts out her hand and Paul passes the broom over to her. She exits.

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PAUL You didn't have to snap at him.

SHERRI I hate that phrase... 'The happiest day of your life'.

How can you continue to take this world seriously if the happiest day of your whole life happens when you're only twenty years old? Are the rest of them shit after that?

PAUL Well...I think what they mean is... more like...uh...well...

Paul doesn't know. Cole enters from the function.

COLE The buffets fine. They just need more potatoes.

PAUL Ok, I'll tell chef.

Paul exits to kitchen.

SHERRI Cole, sorry about that.

COLE Hey, it's cool.

SHERRI I just don't like that phrase.. I mean, has anyone ever told you that high school is the greatest time of your life?

COLE (thinking) Ever since I walked through the front doors.

SHERRI But it isn't, is it?

COLE I don't know... I don't have anything to compare it to.

SHERRI It isn't. That much I know for sure.

Erica and Tom enter from the function with trays of dirty plates.

SHERRI (cont) I think the best year of your life, is the year before you go into elementary school. You've got a brain, and you know how to use it, you're starting to see adults for the fools that they are. I still remember that.

TOM No, the best year, is the first year of marriage. When you're still discovering things about each other and the routine of the..marriage...hasn't set in yet.

ERICA Oh come on...it's gotta be grade seven. Being the top of the elementary school. Finding out about boys...before being shot down to the bottom of the pile in grade eight.

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SHERRI What?

COLE I had to go to school. I was in preschool for two and a half years before I went to kindergarden.

ERICA You're kidding. Why?

COLE I don't know. Everybody did. All our parents worked, so we were in this preschool/daycare thing all day long.

ERICA Wow...

COLE (liking being the center of attention) You know, I had entrance exams.

TOM What?!

COLE Yeah. I had to take exams to get in. I was three years old and I was taking aptitude tests to see if I was smart enough to get into this elite preschool that my parents wanted me in.

So, I put the round block in the round hole consistently. I went to the bathroom by myself. I could velcro my shoes shut. And I got in.

ERICA That's no way to spend a childhood.

It's supposed to be fun.. a learning experience without grades... what you had....

Stanton enters from the function.

ERICA (cont) ...that's sick.

STANTON What?

ERICA Sociology. Complete waste of time.

Stanton is shocked. It's obvious he's taking Sociology.

TOM Absolutely. Anyone taking Sociology should be put out of their misery.

Stanton exits, still shocked beyond words. Tom and Erica smile at each other.

COLE That wasn't very nice.

Sherri shrugs

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COLE My mom's a corporate lawyer.

TOM I'm sorry to hear that.

COLE (not bragging) And my dad's a neurosurgeon.

Paul enters from the kitchen.

PAUL Ok, let's get these people cleared.

Everyone groans and gets up. Tom collapses to the ground.

TOM I think I just broke my leg.

PAUL Then you can do coffee.

Erica and Sherri laugh and grab trays.

TOM I did coffee last night.

PAUL Then you must be pretty good at it, huh?

TOM (getting up) It's all because I'm happily married, I know it. You're all jealous.

He exits. With a coffee pot.

PAUL Cole, you continue clearing. Erica, hit them with wine. Don't ask, just pour.

ERICA You got it.

PAUL Sherri, Sherri, Sherri.

SHERRI What?

PAUL Stick with the buffet, and watch the desserts, they've already chewed their way through half of it waiting in line for the buffet, the pigs.

SHERRI What about Stanton?

PAUL He'll continue to suck up to the Mother of the Bride.

Everyone exits and Paul sits down and relaxes. He pulls out a smoke and lights it. Tom enters after a moment and sets the coffee pot down.

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TOM I sent them to the bar. Let them deal with it.

PAUL Go on...kill a few...

Paul tosses Tom a mime grenade. Tom pulls the mime pin out with his teeth and lobs the grenade out into the function. He braces for the explosion, wipes some mime gore off his arm.

TOM There, much better.

He turns back to the coffee machine.

TOM (cont) Hey, how's Anne? I never get to see her since you two started going out.

PAUL Yeah, yeah... Well, you know the deal. We both decided that it wouldn't be smart to work at the same place. Too messy. It makes for too much time spent together. And I lost the coin toss.

TOM You tossed a coin?

I thought it was some sort of rational sit down discussion of the pros and cons of work regarding the two of you.

PAUL We tried that, but we always ended up in bed and couldn't remember afterwards who agreed to what, so finally, we tossed a coin. And I lost, or won, whatever.

He shrugs. Tom reaches over for Paul's smoke.

TOM God...ain't it a drag these kill?

PAUL Yeah...

They relax and pass the smoke back and forth. Erica and Sherri enter with a couple of full trays.

ERICA Oh, no, don't move. We're fine, no problem.

SHERRI We'll just take these straight into the kitchen, ok?

ERICA Don't strain yourselves.

SHERRI Excuse us, please.

They exit to the kitchen.

PAUL Anne asked me about marriage last night

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TOM Well?

PAUL Well what?

TOM What about marriage did you talk about?

PAUL Everything, nothing... I don't know...

TOM (laughing) You're getting tense just thinking about it.

PAUL She just asked me what I thought about marriage.

TOM Well?

PAUL I don't know what I think about it. My parents divorced when I was ten, and each of them has remarried, and my mom's present one is falling to pieces... Anne's about the same.

What are we supposed to think about marriage?

TOM I don't know.

Stanton enters.

TOM (cont) You gotta have faith.

STANTON Faith stems from man's desire to control and label his surroundings in more mentally rational terms thereby creating a sense of control over the uncontrollable.

TOM Thanks for that insight, you dink.

STANTON I just though you should know exactly what you are talking about before you use it in the wrong context.

TOM I know what I'm talking about, Stant. I took sociology too.

STANTON Oh really. How many years?

TOM One.

STANTON Ah.

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TOM Yeah.

PAUL And they still love each other?

TOM Yeah. I guess so. Maybe that's why Kate and me are still doing so well. Her parents are still together too. We don't know anything else.

You know, I didn't know anyone who's parents were divorced until grade ten.

PAUL I know...I was the someone that everyone knew. My parents were the first.

Sherri and Erica enter from the kitchen.

SHERRI Hey Erica...

ERICA Yeah?

SHERRI It's a good thing that we're not living in some middle eastern or african male oriented society where the women do all the work, raise the kids...

ERICA Tend the fields, make the food....

SHERRI Yeah, but have less rights than goats, while the man just sit around all day, talking and smoking...

ERICA Yeah, I thank God every night before I go to sleep for that.

SHERRI Me too.

And, with that, they exit to the function.

PAUL (like nothing's been said) I mean, just think of the wedding if Anne and me got married. Not that I'm even thinking about that. We've got eight parents. Eight. And it's not like they're all best friends after their divorces...there's still some bitterness...where would we seat them?

They ponder this. Cole enters with a couple empty wine bottles.

COLE Where do I put these?

PAUL In the kitchen.

Cole heads for the exit to the kitchen

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PAUL We were just wondering.

COLE Oh... Uh, it's easier to to say how many aren't divorced.

PAUL Ok.

COLE Two.

TOM That's it?!

COLE Yeah. Even my parents were married before they met.

Cole exits to the kitchen.

PAUL And we're supposed to want to get married?!?!
Forget it!

Sherri enters with a tray of glasses.

SHERRI These people are the fastest drinkers I've ever seen! I'll be amazed if anyone even remembers that there's been a wedding. Especially the bride and groom.

What are you talking about now?

TOM Don't ask.

PAUL Divorce.

SHERRI Don't get me started.

TOM We won't.

SHERRI The present divorce statistics...

PAUL Too late.

Tom laughs.

SHERRI You should listen to this, it's important. They should give this out to every couple stupid enough to fall in love and get married.

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TOM What about tips?

PAUL They're all put onto my paycheque.

TOM Oh, that's right, so they're already...

SHERRI Would you listen to me!

PAUL/TOM Sorry...

TOM ..ma'am.

SHERRI What's the point of getting married? It's not done for love anymore...

TOM Occasionally it is.

PAUL Yeah, I guess...

SHERRI Not often enough.

TOM Boy, you've really got it out for matrimony...
Maybe we should just rewrite the ceremony for you.

PAUL Yeah! Good idea!

SHERRI That's just what I need from you two.

TOM Let's see, uh, how about...

Tom folds his hands like a priest.

TOM (cont) Sherri, do you take this man,

PAUL And his dental plan, with full coverage,

TOM To be his lawfully wedded tax deduction,

PAUL To have and to hold,

TOM For now and the for the next progressive fiscal statement periods?

PAUL Just say 'I do' and your marriage certificate and some two for one dining and vacation attraction

PRIMITIVE RITUALS by Dave Goossen

TOM Why?

Stanton enters from the function.

STANTON Evelyn would like to know who did the decorations.

PAUL Who's Evelyn?

STANTON The mother of the bride.

TOM You know her first name?

STANTON She's quite a nice lady, actually. But under a lot of stress.

PAUL I don't know who did the decorations. I don't know anything anymore.

SHERRI Aw. Poor baby.

STANTON Well?

PAUL The bridesmaids did them, I think.

STANTON Thank you.

He turns and exits to function. Erica enters from function.

ERICA The bar's completely out of Jack Daniels.

PAUL Check with receiving. Maybe there's a keg downstairs somewhere.

ERICA Me?

PAUL Oh, come on.

Paul and Erica exit to the kitchen. Tom and Sherri are left.

TOM Hey, how's Erin?

SHERRI Fine. She wants to be a dancer now.

TOM Ballet? Jenny took ballet.

SHERRI No. Paula Abdul. How's Ryan?

PRIMITIVE RITUALS by Dave Goossen

TOM Uh huh.

Gabriel drops a glass with a crash and Tom and Sherri spin around.

TOM Hey!

GABRIEL It's just Coke! Really! God! Why don't you trust me?! I said it's just Coke and that's all it is!

He drinks down the other two drinks, destroying the evidence.

TOM What are you doing back here?

GABRIEL (to Sherri) Yo, word up, fly g.

Sherri doesn't know what to say to that.

TOM I said, what are you doing back here?

GABRIEL I'm the emcee.

SHERRI Oh God....

Paul enters from kitchen.

GABRIEL Who's the suit?

TOM Paul.

GABRIEL Yo, Pauly.

PAUL Uh, yo. Who's this?

GABRIEL I'm the emcee!

Paul looks at Sherri and Tom, they shrug. Paul grabs the contract.

PAUL What's your name?

GABRIEL Gabriel.

PAUL Nope. The MC is Claudio Martinez.

GABRIEL Nope. The MC is me. Claudio got a johnny rash

PRIMITIVE RITUALS by Dave Goossen

PAUL Gotcha.

GABRIEL So, Auntie Valium got me to do it. Check with her if you want. Don't mean nuthin' to me.

PAUL Why bother? Well, here's what Mrs. Levinson and I have arranged for the rest of the function. Directly after dinner, you will announce that we are coming around...

GABRIEL (not listening) I'm gonna bust some slammin def dope stupid lyrics instead of my toast to the bride! Dig this!

He starts into a killer rap song. Everyone just stares in agony.

GABRIEL (cont) (singing)
So you went and tied the knot,
and you think your life is set,
But enjoy your wife tonight
because that all you're gonna get.
You always got played, cause ya always
when she says "I'm on the pill"
Don't let it start to scare ya
when she starts to get all fat,
She always will amaze ya,
when she's givin' up the cat.

I wrote that myself. Whatcha think?

SHERRI Uh..well...

TOM Have you translated that for the bride and groom?

GABRIEL No way man! It's a surprise!

SHERRI No shit.

TOM What about your aunt?

GABRIEL She ain't down with that...she's always
dissin' me.

PRIMITIVE RITUALS by Dave Goossen

TOM Hey Stanton. Have you met the emcee yet?

STANTON No. I haven't had the pleasure. Where is he?

PAUL Right below you.

Stanton looks down at Gabriel.

GABRIEL Yo. Word up.

Stanton stares at him. He doesn't acknowledge the greeting. Everyone is starting to laugh.

GABRIEL(cont) I said...word up.

He makes a fist of solidarity and raises it. Stanton doesn't comprehend any of this. He turns and exits into the function.

GABRIEL (cont) Who's the cyclops?

Everyone breaks up laughing.

PAUL Ok...let's get back to work. And good luck with the...song thing... I'm sure they'll love it.

GABRIEL Yeah, I'm on a hype tip.

TOM Exactly.

Gabriel heads for the function. Erica enters from function with a tray and Gabriel spins and lusts after instantly.

GABRIEL Yo, sell that skirt, mama!

ERICA (turning) What?

GABRIEL Sell that skirt! You know... Hey, I'm just gamin'!! It's cool.

Erica stares at him for a moment, looking him up and down. He's starting to sweat a bit. Girls aren't supposed to do this.

ERICA 'Sell this skirt'?

GABRIEL Yeah!

PRIMITIVE RITUALS by Dave Goossen

PAUL (interrupting) Erica! This is Gabriel, the emcee.

ERICA (turning to Paul) You've gotta be joking...

GABRIEL That's me!

ERICA (turning back to Gabriel) The emcee, huh? You think that means you can 'game' my onion?

GABRIEL Uh...Hey, I wasn't gonna peel it.

ERICA Stop it. Grow up. I'm not here to indulge your little wet prepubescent fantasies.

TOM Yeah. She's here to indulge ours.

ERICA Oh shut up, Tom.

She turns and storms into the kitchen.

SHERRI Brilliant.

PAUL I'll go get her. Go clear, ok?

He's mad as he heads off to the kitchen to get Erica.

PAUL Erica!

TOM It was a joke..

SHERRI (exiting to the function) Some joke, Tom.

GABRIEL Must be her time of the month.

TOM Shut up...you little shit.

GABRIEL Hey, you can't step to me! I'm the emcee!

TOM Why not? Whatcha gonna do? Peel my onion?

GABRIEL Onion is a cute ass, man.

Tom shakes his head in exasperation and exits to the function.

GABRIEL (cont) What a bunch of sucka's

PRIMITIVE RITUALS by Dave Goossen

PRIMITIVE RITUALS by Dave Goossen
SECTION THREE

The sounds of a major party. Lots of drunk people. Salsa band. Gabriel is busy drinking half drinks off the tray. He is barely able to stand. Paul enter from the function and sees him.

PAUL Hey!!

Gabriel spins around, knocking over a couple glasses in the process.

GABRIEL It wasn't me! I was just putting....a glass...there! Empty!

He picks one up.

GABRIEL(cont) See?

He puts it down on the tray, knocking a couple more over.

PAUL (tired) I'm tired of looking at you anymore. Go home.

GABRIEL I don't have to. I'm the emcee.

PAUL Your aunt fired you...remember? Right after you sang your song.

GABRIEL Everyone's always dissin' me...

Stanton enter from the kitchen.

GABRIEL (cont) Hey Cyclops!

He bursts out laughing.

GABRIEL (cont) Cyclops is here! Aaargh! Everybody
run for your lives!

And with that, Gabriel runs out into the function, giggling madly to himself. Paul and Stanton stare after him and then at each other.

STANTON The bar closes at one, correct?

PAUL Yeah....

STANTON Last dance is at one fifteen?

PRIMITIVE RITUALS by Dave Goossen

He starts to exit to function. Erica enters and passes him.

ERICA Hey Cyclops.

STANTON Excuse me?

ERICA Paul....The mother of the bride would like us to sing a song for the bride and groom.

PAUL Why doesn't she tell me these things?

ERICA I guess sub junior management isn't what it's cracked up to be.

STANTON That's odd, Evelyn never mentioned it to me.

ERICA It's got to have the word love in it.

Sherri enters from the function.

STANTON I don't sing.

SHERRI (sarcastic) Now that's a surprise, Stanton...

ERICA Sherri and I have the perfect song!

STANTON I said, I don't sing.

PAUL It's not one of her obscure Greek songs of death and beheading, is it?

SHERRI No. And that one was about birth and behaving, you dink.

PAUL Sorry, my Greek is a little rusty right now...

SHERRI Like your English...

PAUL Oh yeah...

Sherri starts swearing at Paul in Greek.

ERICA Stop it...I don't want to end up in the middle of a ethnic riot.

PAUL Ok...what's the song?

PRIMITIVE RITUALS by Dave Goossen

PAUL We've been asked to sing a song by the mother of the bride.

TOM She's still concious?

ERICA Yeah, and she wants us to sing for her darling baby.

STANTON (still being ignored) Excuse me, I said I don't sing!

TOM Ok, I'm in. What song?

Erica and Sherri look at each other, grinning.

ERICA 'Whole Lotta Love'!!

SHERRI By Led Zep!

PAUL No. Uh uh.... Forget it....

ERICA Oh, why not? It's a sensitive, emotional ballad. Well, it has the word love in it...

TOM (singing) Way, way down inside...

I'm gonna give you my love...

SHERRI-ERICA (singing the bass beat) Da na, da na, da

TOM I'm gonna give every inch of my love

SHERRI-ERICA Da na, da na, da

TOM I'm gonna give you every inch of my love

SHERRI-ERICA Da na, da na, da

TOM (getting into it) Woman!

PAUL Ok, ok. Tom wants to be Robert Plant... Fine...wonderful... But I don't think the mother of the bride had a song like that in mind...

TOM How about 'Love Stinks' by the J. Geils Band?

ERICA Or 'Anarchy in the UK' by the Sex Pistols. I'm sure love is mentionedat least once...

Colo enters

PRIMITIVE RITUALS by Dave Goossen

PAUL (sarcastically) Not that one again, Stant....

There's too much to do right now than to stand around singing to a bunch of drunk...drunks...

TOMOh, like they're going to get more sober in the next hour?

COLE (excited) Excues me, do we get to sing?

PAUL Yes. We've been requested to sing a NICE song for the bride and groom.

COLE Out there?!?!

PAUL Yes. Out there.

COLE Like a Karaoke bar?! Excellent! What song?

SHERRI Mr. sub junior management hasn't decided yet.

ERICA But it has to have the word 'love' in it.

TOMAnd it has to be old enough that I know the words.

PAUL Come on, let's get clearing. If you come up with an acceptable song, let me know.

Everyone sighs, braces themselves, and grabs trays and heads for the function.

COLE 'Wild Thing'!!

Everyone stops and looks back at him.

PAUL 'Wild Thing'?

ERICA Yeah!

PAUL This might not be the right group for that....

The sounds of the party increase for a moment.

PAUL (cont) ...on the other hand....

COLE All right.

PAUL Clear the room first. I'll try find the Mother of Bride.

PRIMITIVE RITUALS by Dave Goossen

Cole exits in disgust, Gabriel sees Erica and Tom, and stumbles out, trying to remain upright. Tom and Erica sortof clean up.

TOM Erica...sorry about the crack about... well, you know...your skirt...

ERICA Yeah.

TOM Really...it was a dumb thing to say...

ERICA Ok. Apology accepted.

They continue to clean up.

TOM Did you get your phone message?

ERICA Which one?

TOM Michael called, during dinner.

ERICA Yeah, I got that one.

TOM Everything ok?

ERICA (slightly sarcastic) Great, wonderful....

Tom just looks at her, she's not telling it all.

ERICA (cont) (seeing Tom waiting) He's got a wedding to go to...one of his high school friends... and he wants me to go with him.

TOM Great.

ERICA (sarcastic) Yeah, great.

TOM You haven't been seeing him very long, have you?

ERICA 'Seeing him'?

TOM Courting?

ERICA Tom, we've been sleeping together for three months.

PRIMITIVE RITUALS by Dave Goossen

TOM You need to switch shifts or something?

ERICA You don't understand.

TOM What's to understand?

ERICA Have you ever been taken somewhere just as an ornament? A walking corsage?

TOM I don't have the right clothes.

Is that why Michael invited you?

ERICA Well...no...I think he's up to something.

TOM How do you figure that?

ERICA Ok. Inviting me to this wedding is Michael's way of saying 'Let's get serious'.

TOM It is?!?

ERICA Yes. He wants commitment.

TOM Are you sure about that?

ERICA Yes! Why else would he invite me?

TOM Well, a reception is a great place to pop the question....

ERICA Exactly!

TOM Or you could be paranoid, Erica. It's just a wedding. And a reception. You go, listen to a couple of people say 'I do', then get pissed and fed for free.

And that's all.

ERICA Nope. He's going to ask me something serious... I know it. He's going to ask me to move in with him. That's it.

She nods to herself.

TOM What?!?

ERICA He is. He's been hinting about it ...saving money... buying a microwave together.

Why do I need a microwave for? I never eat at home as it is... Oh...why can't he be content to leave things as they are? Shit

PRIMITIVE RITUALS by Dave Goossen

ERICA No, what I was talking about was....

TOM It's a wedding, Erica. Right?

ERICA Yeah..

TOM Just another engagement on your busy social calendar. You'll have to fit it in between skiing Mount Everest and croquet with the crown heads of Europe.

Before Erica can answer, Paul and Sherri enter from the function.

SHERRI What a farce... God help us if those two have kids.. Ah, the joys of inbreeding and weddings.

PAUL Where's the legal system when you need it?

TOM Hey, what exactly have you all got against weddings?

SHERRI You want a list?

TOM Every night I listen to you bitch about marriage and brides and grooms and cakes and napkins...and everything else about weddings....doesn't anyone have anything positive to say about the institution of marriage?

Everyone looks at him.

TOM (cont) Well? What, now no one has anything to say?

Stanton enters from the function.

TOM (cont) Oh wait! Perhaps the great sociologist has something to add to this presently one-sided conversation.
Stanton! What are your thoughts, from a strictly personal point of view, of wedding's and marriage in general?

STANTON (thinking for a brief moment) A flawed concept a best.

Tom shakes his head, exasperated. The rest laugh, vindicated.

TOM God.. maybe you should all just mellow out a bit...realize that you might really like the person that you're with right now... flaws and all. So accept them for what they are. They'll accept you for what you are and that you enjoy each other's

PRIMITIVE RITUALS by Dave Goossen

SHERRI Why don't you quit being so smug just because you're already married and lucked out and found someone who can cope with you. God knows how.

Cole enters with a tray and stops to listen.

ERICA I hate to agree with Stanton.... but he's right.
Marriage is a flawed concept.

SHERRI Everything about it is so...stupid. Dumb.

TOM Oh it is, is it?

PAUL Except for caring for each other. That's a nice idea, but reality usually gets in the way of that.

TOM Oh really?

ERICA How can you really, fully care for someone, when you can rationally expect to be going through some ugly divorce proceeding with them within five years?
Why open up to someone just to have them take everything and go?

COLE Exactly.

SHERRI See? Everything about marriage...from the groom on his knee asking for the daughter's hand,
to the honeymoon at Naigara Falls, is really silly when you look at it rationally, unemotionally.

Tom is at a loss for words.

ERICA It's like the whole wedding ceremony. What does it mean?

TOM What do you mean, what does it mean? It's tradition.

PAUL No it isn't.

TOM Well, it was for me. And for Kate. It was a statement of our commitment to each other.

SHERRI It's a total farce. That's what it is. How can you expect two people to spend the rest of their lives together because someone in clerical garb stands up in a church and quotes the Bible? Why not Kurt Vonnegut? I think he's got a lot better things to say than the Bible.

TOM How about we ignore Vonnegut until tomorrow night and you get on with telling me what's so stupid about marriage

PRIMITIVE RITUALS by Dave Goossen

SHERRI Oh come on, Tom....

TOM Like what?

SHERRI Ok, first. The asking of the woman's hand,
in marriage, from her father. Doesn't she have any say in this? Huh?

TOM Well....

SHERRI Second, the white dress. Purity, chastity, all that shit. It's fine for the groom to get laid before
marriage, but certainly not the bride.

TOM Oh no it isn't!

SHERRI But it's tradition, Tom. The stag, the hookers...the whole game... Then, three. Getting
married in the eyes of God.

PAUL Oh oh.

Paul and Erica smile at each other.

SHERRI If God is supposed to be everywhere...
then why is it necessary to get married in a church?
If two people decide that they want to spend the rest of their lives together, why bother with all the
stress and strain of a wedding? Well?

TOM It's a test.

ERICA To see who can piss off more of their family first?

TOM But you're gonna get problems with anything.

SHERRI But there's nothing like wedding problems.

PAUL Do you sit Aunt Martha beside Uncle Matt? What happens if you sit the reformed alcoholics with
the pisstanks? You've got to admit, we've seen most of
the classic nightmares right out there.

TOM All you've got to do is plan carefully and...

SHERRI (interrupting him) Back to the cermeony.

PRIMITIVE RITUALS by Dave Goossen

He lets himself be dragged off to DSC. They turn around and Paul has taken up position as the priest.

SHERRI (cont) Ok, I'm in white. Minus the bow tie.

They start to walk, wedding-like, towards Paul.

ERICA Wait a sec....you've got to be given away. Tradition and all.

SHERRI Oh right. Wouldn't want the bride to have free will, would we? Cole, you can give me away.

COLE I'm not old enough.

PAUL Wing it, my son.

Cole goes over to Sherri and takes her arm. Tom goes up to in front of Paul. Erica watches and hums the wedding march. Sherri and Cole start to walk.

SHERRI Now, I've got the veil, to cover my face, God help us all if someone sees my face before we're officially wed. What else?

COLE Something old, something new?

ERICA Something borrowed, something blue!

SHERRI Right. Something old...for tradition. Something new...for continuation. Something borrowed has got to be gold, to guarante wealth...Something blue...uh...

PAUL ..because blue is symbolic of heaven and of true love.

SHERRI Thank you pastor.

PAUL Reverend.

COLE (getting into it) If you saw a flock of white birds, that's good luck...but black birds are bad.

They all look at him.

COLE (cont) I heard it at a reception last week.

PAUL Seeing wolves, spiders and toads are good luck...

PRIMITIVE RITUALS by Dave Goossen

PAUL Yeah, but snow's good luck.

SHERRI Tradition's taking a beating, huh, Tom?

TOM Let's just get on with this.

SHERRI Ok. We get to the altar. Cole, you give me away.

Cole gives Sherri over to Tom.

SHERRI (cont) More proof of equality of the sexes. Dad, now you go off and check out just how many oxen and goats you got in trade for me.

COLE Right on!

ERICA But, if she's a prime example of womanhood...i.e. a virgin.. There could be some gold coins in her dowery.

COLE The virgin bonus!

TOM Hey, none of this happens anymore...

ERICA Didn't you work that East Indian wedding last month? Huh?

TOM Yeah...I think so.

ERICA That was arranged. She had never met him.

Until the week before the wedding. The parents here and in India put the whole thing together back in
1975. She was seven.

Tom thinks about that.

SHERRI Ok, Cole, Dad, you've got your loot. I'm with my hubby-to-be.

TOM Wifey-to-be.

SHERRI So here we are.

PAUL About time, too.

SHERRI Time for Pope Paul to start scaring us to death

PRIMITIVE RITUALS by Dave Goossen

TOM That's bullshit.

ERICA It's true. They're just now trying to stop it. It's because, if your husband dies, you can't go back to your family. You stay the property of his family. Like it or not. You become a third rate person in their home. May as well die...

TOM But this is Canada, that isn't done here.

ERICA But we're talking about tradition and marriage. That's a marriage tradition.

PAUL You're getting off track. I've got to get you two married then I've got a funeral at three...then off to the golf course for a quick nine...let's pick up the pace here... Do you take her?

TOM Yeah, sure.

PAUL You take him?

SHERRI Don't have much choice do I?

TOM Always the negative...

PAUL Shut up. By the power vested in me, by the general manager of the Regent Room, and by the offshore investment syndicate that made our jobs possible...I now pronounce you....man and wife.

ERICA Man and legally bound chattel.

PAUL Has anyone checked the head table lately?

ERICA It's been ten minutes...their Jack Daniel's must be gone by now...

She exits to function.

PAUL You may now kiss the bride.

TOM Do I have to?

SHERRI Shut up and pucker, baby. You bought me, I'm yours.

She grabs him around the neck. Tom tries to fend her off. Stanton enters from the function. He stops and watches.

PAUL The start of a wonderful life together

PRIMITIVE RITUALS by Dave Goossen

STANTON It is better to be cynical, and fully aware of the world around you than to be trapped in an alternate reality of your own creation with no concept of the real world.

TOM You don't particularly like living do you?
Optimism is not a crime...

Before anyone has a chance to answer to that, Erica enters, excited.

ERICA The mother of the bride just passed out!

PAUL Oh God....

SHERRI Oh good.

COLE (to Paul) What do we do?

Everyone looks at Paul. He thinks.

PAUL She's ok?

ERICA I guess so...

PAUL Well...if she's out cold.. we could sing what ever we damn well please to the Bride and Groom.....

Everyone starts to grin. Except Stanton.

PAUL (cont) And, unfortunately, poor Evelyn couldn't stop us...

ALL Aw....

COLE (singing the guitar chords to Wild Thing)
Da na, dana, da na, dana..

ALL Da na, dana, da na, dana,

They all start moving towards the function singing together. Stanton stays still.

STANTON I don't sing.

PRIMITIVE RITUALS by Dave Goossen

ALL (o/s) (singing) Wild thing!
You make my heart sing!
You make everything, groovy!
Wild thing! I think I love you!
But I want to know for sure!

Cheers from the function.

END OF SEGMENT THREE

PRIMITIVE RITUALS by Dave Goossen

SEGMENT FOUR

Silence. All the staff, except Paul, are lounging around on stage, bowties hanging loose, shirts unbuttoned, sleeves rolled up. Everyone has a bottle of beer. Everyone looks worn out and tired.

SHERRI That was hell...

ERICA They were disgusting...

Tom is reading through the Time magazine article on the twenty something generation.

COLE They were pretty lame...

TOM It says here that you don't want to have marriages like your parents. Why not?

COLE Our parents didn't have marriages... They had legally binding contracts. With premarital agreements and predetermined escape clauses.

Sherri smiles at Cole, he's read her mind.

TOM (a bit overwhelmed by that) Shit....I'm glad I was born in the fifties...I couldn't handle all this cynicism...

SHERRI What cynicism? It's the way things are. You can't escape it.

ERICA

Yeah, you just gotta live with it.

Everyone shrugs in agreement. Tom doesn't know what to think. This is completely different to his outlook on life. The sound of a door slamming and locking. Paul enters from the function with a couple of file folders in his hands and dragging the unconscious Gabriel.

PAUL What should we do with this?

TOM No point in recycling...

SHERRI Compost?

ERICA Landfill.

Paul drops Gabriel onto the floor, takes off his tie and Cole hands him a beer.

PRIMITIVE RITUALS by Dave Goossen

SHERRI They really were, Paul.. One of the worst.

PAUL Rough guess is they drank over four grand worth of booze....

ERICA Wow!

PAUL Yeah...it should look pretty good on our cheques.

STANTON Approximately one hundred and eight dollars each. Including a precentage for the kitchen and the bartenders.

TOM (sarcasticly) Thanks oh so much, Stant.

STANTON It was simple really, I just took the gross amount and divided by the number of...

SHERRI (interrupting) What are we setting up for?

Paul picks up another file folder and looks inside. He rolls his eyes.

PAUL Three guesses.

ALL A wedding.

PAUL Bingo.

Groans of disgust.

PAUL Ok, ok... Two hundred and ten guests, head table of thirteen, I don't know who didn't get the date...round tables of ten for everyone else, it's full service and they're having..

He looks at the contract. Everyone is looking even more depressed and are not listening to Paul.

SHERRI We're going to be here for hours...

PAUL ...cream of fennel soup, mimosa salad,
prime rib..

Louder groans.

ERICA I want to go home.

PAUL Don't we all. ..black currant sorbet, tea and coffee, it's a host bar, and yes, folks, there's host
liqueurs after dinner

PRIMITIVE RITUALS by Dave Goossen

SHERRI One per table.

COLE Oh funny, really funny.

Sherri and Cole exit bugging each other.

PAUL Tom, you want to start getting the tables out?

TOM No.

PAUL Good. Stanton, you can help.

STANTON Fine.

He exits briskly. Tom and Paul look after him with disgust.

TOM Wow...I hate working with the cyclops...

He's like some sort of banquet droid....

PAUL Yeah..

They ponder Stanton for a moment or two.

TOM I didn't really do a good job against Sherri tonight, did I?

PAUL No. She kicked your butt.

TOM (laughing) Yeah...she always does....but I was close... I still don't understand you guys. There's what? 6 years between us and it's a serious a generational gap. Why?

He waves the Time Magazine and shrugs.

PAUL What have I just been nominated to defend my generation?

TOM Sure, why not?

PAUL I think you picked the wrong guy.

TOM Ah, do your best, Paul.

PAUL Well, you read the article. We're nothing...We're the great undefinable...

Sherri and Erica enter from kitchen and stop to listen

PRIMITIVE RITUALS by Dave Goossen

TOM You all feel like that?

ERICA Uh huh. You just gotta love us, huh?

SHERRI Messed up and proud of it.

Tom just looks at them. Stanton leans back in and stares impatiently at Tom, who's supposed to be helping him get tables. Tom nods at him and Stanton leaves.

TOM I really want to go home. Now. I have children...A loving wife... A lifestyle you don't want...

PAUL (laughing) Come on, the sooner we start..

ALL ...the sooner we go home.

TOM Just to come back and do it again tomorrow night...

Tom shakes his head and they all wearily exit to the function room. Fade to black.

THE END