

The Proposal  
A short play  
By Cecilia Copeland La Dramaturga

[cecilia\\_copeland@yahoo.com.au](mailto:cecilia_copeland@yahoo.com.au)

SARAH      Woman in her late twenties/early thirties

WAITRESS   Woman

JOHN        Man in his late twenties

A table and two chairs onstage. SARAH sits at the table and WAITRESS bring out a bottle of champagne.

SARAH

Oh great.

WAITRESS

Should I just leave this here?

SARAH

Yeah, um can you bring the glasses too?

WAITRESS

Sure, sure, I just can't carry them on the same tray as the bottle. I've tried before but the champagne flutes are so tall, that I take on wrong step and they topple over.

SARAH

No, that's fine. Of course. I totally understand, I just... Yeah, the glasses.

WAITRESS starts to leave.

SARAH

I'm just nervous. It's my boyfriend's birthday and I-

WAITRESS

You want to make it special.

SARAH

Well... here.

She pulls out a ring box and shows the WAITRESS.

What'da think?

WAITRESS

Wow. Is that platinum?

SARAH

Yeah, it's... He works with metal. He's a sculptor so it's gotta be platinum. Otherwise, it could just get ruined, you know. It could...

WAITRESS

Nervous?

SARAH

Yeah.

WAITRESS

You gonna do the ask?

SARAH

I... yeah... In a way. I mean, when he sees it, he'll know... he said he would never wear any ring except a wedding ring. I know this. He knows I know it... I just have to give to him. It's tough though, you know. Both of us have this bad history with marriage... His dad... My dad... Not good. But if we... together... you know? I think we could...

WAITRESS

(Hands the box back.)

Yeah, why not? I'm mean you've talked about it right?

SARAH

(Puts the box away.)

Well, not really. I mean we talked about the ring thing... But... maybe it's not the right time. I'm not good at... neither is he, but you know... well, My dad died last year and he hasn't talked to his dad in like... forever. So... fuck I should've just got him a watch.

WAITRESS

You can always just buy him dinner.

SARAH

Maybe I'll see how dinner goes and then... He'll give me a sign.

WAITRESS

You don't wanna be too forward.

JOHN enters.

SARAH

Yeah... can you get the glasses?

WAITRESS

Of course. I'll be right back.

JOHN

Hi there!

SARAH

She gets up and hugs him.

Hi there.

She pulls him down to kiss him and kisses him.

Happy Birthday.

JOHN

Yeah. It's a Happy Birthday now.

SARAH

You're great.

JOHN

You're great.

SARAH

You... you wanna get... get some food?

JOHN

What?

SARAH

Dinner. Dinner's on me. Um, have a seat.

JOHN

Thanks honey.

(Sits.)

Champagne?

SARAH

I thought... Yeah. It's on me, so whatever you want. Don't worry about it. I got it. I'm taking care of everything.

JOHN

Uh.. great. Is the, uh waitress bringing glasses?

SARAH

Yeah, she'll be right back.

JOHN

Cool. You gonna sit down?

SARAH

Yeah, duh, yeah, I'm gonna sit.

(Sits.)

Sitting.

JOHN

You alright?

SARAH

I'm great. I'm fine, I mean I'm fine. You? How are you?

JOHN

I'm great. I'm... hungry.

SARAH

Perfect, cuz this place has great food I thought I would take you out cuz you like to eat, and... um...

JOHN

(His phone buzzes.)

Oh, my phone. I'll just turn it off.

JOHN pulls out the phone to turn it off and SARAH pulls out the ring box.

JOHN

Oh my god.

SARAH

(She covers the box.)

Who is it?

JOHN

It's my dad.

SARAH

Your dad?

JOHN

Yeah... I... what do I do?

SARAH

Do you wanna answer it?

JOHN

I don't know... He's such a... an asshole... but he's my dad. I...

SARAH

Don't answer. Call him tomorrow... or do whatever you want. I just want you to have a good night.

JOHN

He can always ruin a moment... Shit I can't believe he called.

SARAH

Yeah... it's up to you.

JOHN

If I don't answer it then I'm just not answering it on purpose... and he is my dad.

SARAH

Dinner can wait.

JOHN

You know, we think we can escape these roles... Father, Son, Husband, Wife, but... can we? These roles are carved out and they are clearly defined... I mean here I am... almost thirty and I'm scared of my father. I'm scared to talk to him like I'm a little kid. I'm not a kid. I'm... but then...

(He picks up the phone.)

Dad... Yeah... Thanks... I... thanks... no... I... I'm sorry to hear... Not now... You seriously gonna start that now Dad? Five years and now... On my birthday you wanna get into this?... Now is not the time. I'm not gonna do this.

(SARAH gets up and puts the ring away.)

I don't know why I answered the phone. I'm going dad. I'm having dinner with my... I'm going dad. Good Bye dad... Asshole! Fucker.

SARAH

That doesn't sound good.

JOHN

He's getting another divorce. That makes four.

SARAH

Wow.

JOHN

Yeah. It's a corrupt institution.

SARAH

Yeah...

JOHN

He calls me to preach to me about how I should live my life and the pitfalls of getting married, and meanwhile that asshole has fucked up four times.

SARAH

You aren't him though. You're great. You know that right?

JOHN

I'm not gonna make the same mistakes he made. Come back and sit down.

SARAH

I was just looking for the waitress. She's hiding.

JOHN

You know... I'm not actually that hungry. Can we just go home? I don't feel like having dinner.

SARAH

Of course. It's your birthday. We can do whatever you want. We can get carry out?

JOHN

I just...

SARAH

How about I order you a burger to go?

JOHN

Sure. I guess. I'm gonna go have a cigarette.

SARAH

I'll meet you outside. I'll just the waitress we're not staying.

JOHN

Thanks honey. I love you. I really do.

(He gets up and kisses her and exits.)

WAITRESS enters.

SARAH

Hey, um look we've gotta run, but I want to get two burgers to go... and um... um... an order of onion rings.

WAITRESS

Onion rings?

SARAH

Yeah.

WAITRESS

Right on!

WAITRESS exits.

Yeah... Thanks.

SARAH

SARAH puts the ring box on the table and exits.