

Happy and Birthday

A short play
by Sondra Williams

Characters

Matt It's his birthday

Cameron Matt's best friend

Kenzie Matt's new girlfriend

Caroline Matt's old girlfriend

Setting

Evening, Matt's apartment

**Video Games* by Lana Del Ray

***Happy Birthday* by Tom Chapin

Matt's apartment.

*Someone tries to open the door.
It's locked. A jingle. Caroline
enters.*

CAROLINE

Knock, knock?

*Caroline exits to the bedroom.
Cameron bursts in and rushes
room to room.*

CAMERON

Matt. Matt! Matt?! Damnit. *(brings out phone and dials)*. Pick up pick up pick up. . . shit. . . Hey, it's just me. . . this is really cowardly, doing it on the phone. I've tried to say it to your face. I've thought about it a million times. . . I'm not asking for anything, I'm not trying to screw anything up. I just, you make me happy. And I think that I make you happy too and I want us to spend our time making each other happy. God, that sounded so corny. I can't help it. It just happens. Words fall out of my mouth and I can't stop them, they're overflowing like a broken dam, I love you. In all the ways. In every way. . . Now I'm going to go get your birthday present and have dinner with you and your girlfriend. So take care and I'll talk to you later. Bye. *(looks at his phone)* Hah, nope, nope, no, horrible idea, nope. *(presses a button, exhales)* Well, that was close.

*Cameron exits. A moment.
Caroline reenters.*

CAROLINE

Oh-kaaay.

Caroline sits on the couch.

*Matt almost skips into his
apartment, humming and goes
straight to his room.*

*Matt continues humming while
changing his clothes. He reenters
with a nice outfit and beelines
for the kitchen.*

Caroline clears her throat.

MATT

Caroline?? Oh my God.

Matt embraces Caroline. She pushes him away.

CAROLINE

Hey.

MATT

I was worried about you.

CAROLINE

You weren't that worried.

MATT

Did you see how many times I called? Then I called your mom. Then I called your sister. I talked to your sister.

CAROLINE

How did you survive?

MATT

She talked about toenail fungus. For twenty minutes. I wanted to see if you were still alive.

CAROLINE

Still breathing.

MATT

What made you, why are you?

CAROLINE

Back? I think you know.

MATT

If I knew, I wouldn't have asked you the question.

CAROLINE

I was taking a walk in the neighborhood and thought, I should stop in and see Matt. He hasn't caused me enough agony. Let's give it a whirl.

MATT

Caroline.

CAROLINE

The picture, Matt. I'm here for the picture.

MATT

Which one?

CAROLINE

Uh, that huge one right there, can't really miss it. Cause it's huge.

MATT

I thought you didn't want it.

CAROLINE

Of course I want it. I bought it.

MATT

We bought it.

CAROLINE

Against your will. I wanted it, but what was I going to do? Carry it out with my four suitcases and the backpack?

MATT

You took the backpack?

CAROLINE

I had no way to take the picture with me.

MATT

I've been looking for that.

CAROLINE

My thought was, that you were going to have it delivered to me.

MATT

I wanted to go hiking last week with— I wanted to go hiking.

CAROLINE

What?

Matt goes into the kitchen and pieces together an appetizer.

MATT

I guess I can have the picture shipped to you.

Who do you want to hike with?
CAROLINE

I'll cover the shipping charge.
MATT

You're dressed up.
CAROLINE

Yes, for a party.
MATT

OH, a party.
CAROLINE

Yes.
MATT

A party. Who's invited?
CAROLINE

You know, some people like to go hiking.
MATT

I'm sure they do.
CAROLINE

I know.
MATT

And some people don't.
CAROLINE

Caroline.
MATT

It's not a crime to be clean, Matt. I'm not animal.
CAROLINE

No, you're certainly not an animal.
MATT

Why was the door locked?
CAROLINE

MATT

I can't have you—

CAROLINE

You never liked locking the door.

MATT

I won't be ready.

CAROLINE

For your party. Your precious—hikers—party.

MATT

Caroline.

CAROLINE

And will the party have that someone there? That someone you want to hike with so so badly?

Matt stops with the food.

MATT

Yes, they will be here. The person I would like to hike with. I will get you the picture, Caroline, if it means that much to you, but I would appreciate it if you wouldn't dig into me right now. So you can go, do whatever you need to do, I'll take care of the picture, but I can't be late for my own birthday party!

CAROLINE

. . . happy birthday.

MATT

Thank you. You kept the key.

CAROLINE

Left it on just incase. *(pause)* It's not just the picture. There's other stuff, too.

MATT

What kind of stuff?

CAROLINE

Just stuff, okay?

MATT

Okay. You left a lot of those bird figurines.

CAROLINE

I know. I'm glad you didn't throw them away.

MATT

Throw away your birds? Nope, you'd be so angry.

CAROLINE

Thank you. For keeping them. And I wouldn't be angry, I'd be sad. I love those stupid birds.

MATT

I know you took off on a sour note, but I'm happy you're not dead in a ditch.

CAROLINE

I took off?

MATT

Yes.

CAROLINE

I left?

MATT

You broke up with me. You left me.

CAROLINE

No, you—

MATT

I have been here the entire time!

CAROLINE

You left me first. I'm not talking about last month, it was way before we. . . I'm not here to pour out another can of worms.

MATT

Listen, they'll be here—

CAROLINE

I know, I know. I saw someone's stuff in the bedroom. I shouldn't be here.

MATT

But I don't have the feta. How could I forget the feta?

CAROLINE

Couldn't resist the urge to cook, could you.

MATT

I moved a lot of our stuff to the basement storage. Take whatever you need.

CAROLINE

You sure?

MATT

Yep. You can't have the knife block though—

CAROLINE

—Of course.

MATT

But take whatever you've been missing.

Matt gathers keys, wallet.

CAROLINE

And the key?

MATT

You can drop it off whenever.

CAROLINE

Got it. This is weird.

MATT

Hey, I have to go and you have to go, but if you wanted to, maybe sometime we could—

CAROLINE

You have to leave, don't you? Then go. Get your feta. Fashionably late only counts for so long.

MATT

Take care.

CAROLINE

Go, seriously.

Matt exits.

Caroline sits on the couch and looks around. She takes her keys out of her purse and fidgets with one key then exits, locking the door behind her.

Kenzie enters, unlocking the door while juggling groceries. She makes eye contact with Cameron, who is standing outside by the door with a present.

Kenzie smiles at him then shuts the door in his face.

Kenzie sets the groceries down and thinks. Then she races to open the door.

KENZIE

Oh my God—gosh, I’m sorry, are you?

CAMERON

Cameron?

KENZIE

What?

CAMERON

Hi I’m Cameron, are you?

KENZIE

Matthew’s friend!

CAMERON

Yes.

KENZIE,

Oh come in! I’m sorry I slammed the door in your face. I thought you were just a guy hanging out in the hall.

CAMERON

Do people normally do that?

KENZIE

Please, sit, sit down anywhere. Or stand. Whichever. Do you want a drink or something? (*unloading groceries*) I'm sorry I was late. I'm horrible at grocery shopping. And cooking. I mean, I'm sure it'll be fine, what I'm making. It's simple enough. I think.

Cameron nods.

Kenzie pulls out pots, dishes, items she won't need and a huge, ridiculous bottle of water. She drinks from this often.

KENZIE

I'm sorry, but I think I know you?

CAMERON

Oh, um, yeah, maybe?

KENZIE

Is it Kevin?

CAMERON

Cameron.

KENZIE

Cameron! OH! I didn't even, wow. You were so small before.

CAMERON

What?

KENZIE

I knew I had seen you around, you know? You're Eeyore!

CAMERON

What?

KENZIE

Eeyore. The donkey from Winnie-the-Pooh? You kinda drag your feet and walk around with this—this cloud of gloom above you.

CAMERON

Cloud of gloom?

KENZIE

But everybody loves Eeyore.

CAMERON

No they don't. And how do you know I drag my feet? I don't drag my feet.

KENZIE

Because I've seen you around. I mean, when I saw you, I didn't know you were you. I thought you were someone else. In my head, I called you Eeyore. But now I know that you were you. And now I can just call you Cameron.

CAMERON

Great. *(pause)* So, you know me, but I don't know you.

KENZIE

No, you know me. We went to the same elementary school.

CAMERON

Jackson?

KENZIE

Yep.

CAMERON

I guess I don't recognize you. But then again, I moved away when I was seven, so.

KENZIE

Well, people change between kindergarten and college. I had glasses. Really big ones. I'm as blind as a bat, bats are blind right?, and my mom would crimp my hair every morning and put a big bow on top. Are you sure you're not thirsty? I had all sorts of bows. And I was tall, I was the tallest girl in our grade. "Miss Susan, Miss Susan, John's eating crayons again."

Cameron cocks his head, slouches, and looks up.

CAMERON

Oh, you're that McKenzie?

KENZIE

Yep! Except I'm just Kenzie now.

CAMERON

You dropped the Mc?

KENZIE

Names are really important. They say a lot about a person. I want to be taken seriously. And you don't get taken seriously when your name sounds like it belongs on the dollar menu.

CAMERON

I'll have a McKenzie with no mayo.

KENZIE

Exactly. Again, so sorry I was late. But I guess Matthew is late, too.

CAMERON

Yup. True to form, he's late. Matt's always late. Even to his own apartment.

KENZIE

Isn't that the worst? When people are late? But you're like, I like you so much I can't be mad at you? So you give them the eye, you know, the eye? I get so angry and then I see Matthew and I can't be mad anymore.

CAMERON

I tried the 15-minute-rule with Matt. I want him to be somewhere at 2, I tell him to be there at 1:45. But I think he figured it out.

KENZIE

Did you call him Matt?

CAMERON

Did you call him Matthew?

Pause.

CAMERON

Matthew, I mean, that's what his Aunt Gerda calls him.

KENZIE

Names are important and Matt, that's just something you wipe your feet on, right? Like a doormat? Or a laundry mat?

CAMERON

Or a bathmat?

KENZIE

Do you like quiche?

CAMERON

Are you making quiche?

KENZIE

I found these little quiches in the frozen section. I think he'll like them. They look pretty fancy, huh?

CAMERON

Does that have spinach?

KENZIE

Oh! Do you not like spinach?

CAMERON

Oh, I like spinach. I just know that some people don't like spinach.

KENZIE

I like spinach.

CAMERON

It's just that some people don't.

KENZIE

Well, sometimes people don't like things, then they try it later and realize they do like it.

CAMERON

Sometimes people pretend to like things, when they actually don't, just to be polite.

KENZIE

I don't think that most people would do that.

CAMERON

But I think some people would.

A pause.

KENZIE

Do you rinse your vegetables?

CAMERON

Of course I rinse my vegetables.

KENZIE

I mean, what if they come in those bags that says they're triple washed. Are they really triple washed? I'm sure they would wash it better once than I could washing it three times. Three times. That's a lot of washing.

CAMERON

If it says triple washed, then I guess no, I don't wash it again.

KENZIE

And you take that for granted right? That your lettuce will be clean because the bag says so.

CAMERON

I haven't had any problems. Besides Matt usually likes the organic stuff anyway.

KENZIE

Oh that's right. Shit. Shoot shoot shoot. Um. (*rips open a bag of lettuce and dumps it in a bowl*) It looks organic, right?

CAMERON

Sure. If you buy lettuce that's organic, then you really need to triple wash it.

KENZIE

I know! I've definitely seen some creepy crawlies in there and I can't stand it. I mean, what did a few pesticides ever do?

CAMERON

I hate bugs.

KENZIE

No, no, I hate bugs more. If I see one in the apartment, I have to spray Windex to stun them, then smash them with a shoe.

CAMERON

Nope, can't do the shoe thing. You hear them crunch.

KENZIE

That's why I scream. I scream when I smack them.

CAMERON

I vacuum them up. No fuss, no muss.

KENZIE

Can't they crawl out?

CAMERON

No, then I just keep on vacuuming. A rock or something is bound to hit them in the head and give them a concussion. A spider with a concussion can't stay alive in a vacuum bag for very long.

I hope not.

KENZIE

A knock. Matt enters with feta.

Right on time! Hey you!

MATT

Matt gives Cameron his feta while he embraces Kenzie. Cameron looks at the feta and back at the hugging.

Kenzie takes the feta from Cameron and puts it in the kitchen.

Cameron. Get over here.

MATT

Matt, what are you doing?

CAMERON

Hugging you.

MATT

Cameron blocks him.

Who died?

CAMERON

No one died.

MATT

No no, we don't hug. I don't hug. You don't hug.

CAMERON

That was before I learned about the science behind hugs.

MATT

Science behind hugs?

CAMERON

Hugs are scientifically good for you.

MATT

CAMERON

That sounds a little froofy to me.

MATT

No, it's true! Hugging creates happiness by lifting your sur-at-onin levels.

CAMERON

What?

KENZIE

And hugs boost your oxytocin levels, which can heal feelings of anger, isolation, and loneliness.

CAMERON

I don't. . .

KENZIE

What do you say, Eeyore?

MATT

Come on, man. One hug. For my birthday.

Cameron hugs as Matt squeezes him.

CAMERON

Happy birthday. So, I feel like I haven't seen you in forever.

MATT

I know. I think my carpal tunnel from *Battlefront* is starting to heal.

CAMERON

We should fix that. And it's like you barely text anymore.

MATT

Kenzie has this theory about cell phones. We try to turn them off when we're sharing meals.

CAMERON

Oh. So when did you start locking doors?

MATT

(loudly)

Apparently, you're safer when they're locked. *(quieter)* So I've been told. I try to remember for her.

CAMERON

And Kenzie's borrowing your key?

MATT

Nope. Hey, did anything ever happen with that girl?

CAMERON

Who? What?

MATT

Jamie. That girl you work with. I could tell she was into you.

CAMERON

Oh, yeah. Um. I don't see it going anywhere.

MATT

(to Kenzie)

There is this girl at the station who is seriously into my man Cam.

CAMERON

There isn't a lot of competition, I guess.

MATT

Just ask her out. She won't bite.

KENZIE

Jamie? From 103.7? That's like dating a celebrity.

CAMERON

No, not really.

MATT

Crawl out of your shell for once. It won't be that bad. And if it is that bad, you can text me and I'll call and say your grandma died. Deal?

CAMERON

I'll think about it.

MATT

Now something smells divine in here.

KENZIE

That's food, that I'm making. For you.

MATT

Look at you, trying to cook.

KENZIE

You always take such good care of me.

MATT

You're easy to take care of.

KENZIE

It's easy to be taken care of by you.

CAMERON

They're frozen quiches!

MATT

What?

CAMERON

I didn't know I was supposed to bring food.

KENZIE

Oh no, it's okay. I didn't tell Matthew to tell you to bring food. It's okay.

CAMERON

So, uh, how did you guys meet?

MATT
(laughing)

Well, we—

KENZIE
(laughing)

Oh, no—

MATT

I was done with class—

KENZIE

It was raining—

MATT

Pouring. And she ran into me with her bike.

KENZIE

No, no, he ran into me with his bike.

Anyway, our bikes collided

MATT

We couldn't see because of the rain

KENZIE

I cut open my knee

MATT

And I sliced my forearm

KENZIE

We went into this coffee shop that I had never been into before

MATT

Because it was the closest thing

KENZIE

It was full of these hipsters,

MATT

We clearly did not fit in

KENZIE

They scowled at us over their espresso macchiatos as they worked on their screenplays

MATT

They were so cold,

KENZIE

And the clouds were black that day

MATT

but Matthew was so warm

KENZIE

And Kenzie just radiated light. I tried to buy her a cup of coffee. But I left my wallet at home.

MATT

So I had to pay.

KENZIE

I didn't want her to. So we had to make another coffee date. So I could pay her back.

MATT

KENZIE

And that was just that. Now we both have little scars to remind each other of how we first met.

Matt and Kenzie smile at each other.

CAMERON

I once elbowed Matt in the nuts during a basketball game.

*A moment.
Oven goes off.*

KENZIE

(drinks water)

Did you know that me and Cameron went to the same elementary school? Isn't that funny?

Kenzie puts the quiches in the oven.

MATT

Little baby nerd Cameron.

CAMERON

You don't know. You weren't there.

KENZIE

(drinks water)

Oh he was. I was very popular. Because of the bows.

MATT

Do you need any help?

KENZIE

No, no, I'm fine.

MATT

I know that cooking isn't your strongest—

KENZIE

I can cook.

MATT

Yes. Yes you can.

CAMERON

Hey, I almost forgot. (*pulls a seashell out of his pocket*) Look.

MATT

A seashell?

CAMERON

No, remember that time that you, me and Caro– you and me and people went to the ocean. And you found that shell.

MATT

Oh. Yeah.

CAMERON

I know it's not the exact same one, but it has really similar markings. Look. I saw it on the sidewalk, here in town. I have no idea how it traveled so far. But there it was. And now we both have a funny little shell.

MATT

Man. . . Kenzie, I gotta show you this weird little shell.

KENZIE

I love weird little shells.

CAMERON

Where did you put yours?

MATT

Oh, I don't know. It probably got thrown away. By some people.

CAMERON

Oh.

MATT

We can put the seashell right here. It can help supervise dinner.

KENZIE

I don't need help cooking.

MATT

I know. I didn't say you did. I'm just saying– is everything okay?

KENZIE

I don't think I put the quiches in the oven far enough. I think they're too close to the door.

MATT

Let me see. Nah, I think they're fine.

KENZIE

No, it doesn't look like the quiches on the box— in the cookbook.

Kenzie opens the oven.

MATT

Here, let me get you an oven mitt.

KENZIE

I don't need one, see, I'll just push them a little to the back. Oh no. That's too far.

MATT

Here, let me.

KENZIE

No, I'll get a spoon.

MATT

We don't need a spoon— AH!

CAMERON

Are you okay?

KENZIE

Oh no.

MATT

(holding his finger)

Yup. The oven just got too friendly with my finger.

KENZIE

I have burn gel in my drawer.

MATT

Okay.

KENZIE

I can get it.

MATT

Nope. I'm on it.

Matt exits.

CAMERON

You have a drawer here?

KENZIE

I don't really ever use ovens. I like microwaves. I borrowed the burn gel from work.

CAMERON

Is it really borrowing?

KENZIE

The ocean, huh? That sounds nice. I haven't been to the ocean with Matthew yet. But that sounds really nice.

CAMERON

Maybe one day you guys will go.

KENZIE

Yeah. *(drinks water)* So, you guys play sports together, right?

CAMERON

Uh, I wouldn't say a lot. I wouldn't really consider myself a sportsy guy. I'm better with a console than a football.

KENZIE

Oh. I thought you guys had a thing.

Kenzie swings her arm forward like she's badly throwing a Frisbee.

CAMERON

A thing? What kind of thing?

KENZIE

The thing you guys do together?

CAMERON

We don't do things outside what normal things that guys would do.

KENZIE

God-gosh, what's it called? With the saucer?

CAMERON

OH. Frisbee golf?

KENZIE

Frisbee golf. Yes. That's it. I knew that.

Matt enters.

KENZIE

How is it?

MATT

We'll have to amputate it.

KENZIE

What?

MATT

It's fine. A little burn never hurt anyone.

Matt kisses Kenzie on the forehead.

CAMERON

That's not true. Burning usually hurts everyone it touches. It's basically a guarantee.

MATT

Cam, I've been hurt, it's true, but one day I'm gonna heal, and when I'm ready, I'll use another oven without fear of being burnt.

CAMERON

Are we doing metaphors now?

MATT

Yup. This man has a way with words.

CAMERON

No, I don't.

MATT

He does. He's frickin' Shakespeare.

KENZIE

Say something!

CAMERON

No, it doesn't work like that.

MATT

You haven't shown me your work in the longest time.

CAMERON

It's not any good.

MATT

You know it is. That'd be a pretty neat birthday present. Not hinting or anything.

CAMERON

I'm glad that you're not hinting because I'm not showing what you're not hinting.

MATT

Did that even make sense?

CAMERON

It's a maybe. It's maybe a present. We'll see.

KENZIE

Jeebus I gotta go!

Kenzie exits to the bathroom.

MATT

That girl and her water. . . You okay?

CAMERON

Yeah. Why?

MATT

You seem off?

CAMERON

Oh. Um. I don't know.

MATT

Maybe it's just me.

CAMERON

No, I'm just tired.

MATT

Yeah?

CAMERON

I just hadn't seen you in awhile and. This is the first time meeting her. . . I just. I want everything to go right.

MATT

Hey no need to worry. Kenzie likes everyone. You're being hard on yourself.

CAMERON

I know, I know I do that.

MATT

You are your harshest critic.

CAMERON

And he's a bastard. I just. It's the feeling of wanting someone to like you so badly it starts eating you from the inside out.

MATT

Cameron. Who is that?

CAMERON

Um. Matt, I, um.

MATT

That's your critic talking. Tell him to shut up. Let me get you a beer so we can calm your nerves.

CAMERON

That's definitely what I wanted right now. A beer.

Kenzie enters.

KENZIE

That feels a million times better. Did you know you're supposed to drink half of your body weight in water everyday?

MATT

Where did you hear that?

KENZIE

Somewhere online. I feel better, I do. But I think I'm spending a fortune on toilet paper. I'm sorry, was that weird? Was that TMI? Too much information? About the toilet paper?

CAMERON

Nope, that was the perfect amount of information.

KENZIE

Matthew.

MATT

Yeah?

KENZIE

Matthew. There is a spider.

MATT

Then kill it.

KENZIE

(to Cameron)

I'm so sorry to have this problem in front of guests. *(to Matt)* You kill it.

MATT

Me? Why me kill it?

KENZIE

Come here! Look! It's on the floor. You're the guy!

MATT

Whoa, I hate spiders just as much as you. What makes my gender a good instrument for death?

KENZIE

Matthew it's gonna moooooove!

MATT

Then you better hurry up!

KENZIE

Matthew!

MATT

You're closer!

KENZIE

You're taller!

MATT

What?!

You kill it!

KENZIE

You kill it!

MATT

Cameron gets up and smashes it with his foot. He taps the dead spider into the trashcan and goes back to the living area.

That was amazing.

MATT

Thank you so much Cameron!

KENZIE

Kenzie downs water. Both turned away, Cameron does a weird shuddery dance of disgust. A scuffle by the door.

Did you?

CAMERON

Matt hands Cameron the beer.

Probably just the floors creaking.

MATT

A thud.

Floors don't do that.

CAMERON

Kenzie looks at Matt then goes to the door. She opens it. Caroline is kneeling on the ground.

Oh hi, I just dropped my keys—

CAROLINE

Caroline?

MATT

Oh. Hi Matt.

CAROLINE

You're Caroline?

KENZIE

You're her.

CAROLINE

Did you forget how doors work?

MATT

Would you like to come in?

KENZIE

Caroline stands up and walks inside.

I was trying to return the key. There, it's returned. Hooray.

CAROLINE

You're tall. You're all so tall.

KENZIE

Okay, was there something else?

MATT

Oh um.

CAROLINE

Caroline looks around. Cameron pretends to get on his phone. Kenzie pretends to chop things.

You said I could take anything and I couldn't find the juicer.

CAROLINE

You crawled on the ground for the juicer?

MATT

It's a Breville.

CAROLINE

You can have the juicer. Fine. But I want the watch back.

MATT

CAROLINE

Which watch?

MATT

You know the one.

CAROLINE

It was for us.

MATT

From my grandpa.

CAROLINE

Fine. Deal.

MATT

Anything else?

CAROLINE

Nope. I'm good. Thank you.

MATT

Great. It's in the bottom kitchen cupboard.

CAROLINE

You know, I'll get it later. Thank you everyone. Have a goodnight.

Caroline exits.

MATT

Sorry, guys, that was a little—

A knock.

Matt opens the door. Caroline reenters.

CAROLINE

Nope, there's more stuff.

MATT

I think this could wait—

CAROLINE

And it's not the juicer or the watch or the knife block.

MATT

Okay.

CAROLINE

I was going through our stuff and yes, I was being nosy, but I was looking for all my old bank statements, bills, everything that was just attached to me, that was just mine. I was going through the filing cabinet, all the folders, there was one folder that I had, that we had. There were paper flowers in it. You knew I hated real flowers because they die and I would have to throw them out, but you would always make me a little bouquet of paper flowers so they could last forever. And I kept leafing through the folder, and there were anniversary cards, and pictures of us on the beach and I— What are you going to do with them? I don't want them. And you're obviously in a new relationship very quickly with someone you're playing house with, and that's just fine, I don't want you to want them either. But that kind stuff, what do you do with it? What do you do with the leftovers?

Kenzie cuts herself with the knife and screams.

KENZIE

Oh there's blood. There's blood.

Matt rushes to Kenzie and wraps a towel around her finger.

MATT

Keep pressure on it. I'll be right —.

Matt leads Kenzie to the bathroom.

CAROLINE

Hey Cam.

CAMERON

Hi Caroline.

CAROLINE

How's it going?

CAMERON

Oh doing all right. How about you?

CAROLINE

Good, good.

CAMERON

Still interning at that ad agency?

CAROLINE

Oh, cut the shit, Cam. Life sucks, okay? Life just sucks. The past three nights, I've had wine and nachos for dinner. Wine and nachos.

CAMERON

Oh.

CAROLINE

Not even good nachos. Just cheese and chips.

CAMERON

I'm sorry.

CAROLINE

I always liked you.

CAMERON

I thought you hated me.

CAROLINE

Oh God, no. No. You're sweet. And dweeby. And I like the way you do the Radio Shack thing.

CAMERON

No, I work at the radio station—

CAROLINE

You're a good friend. If it seemed like I hated you it was because I was threatened by you.

CAMERON

Threatened?

CAROLINE

No, not physically. I always had this weird suspicion that you were secretly in love with Matt. And it was my worst fear that when he "had a headache" he was secretly loving you back. But now I just know I'm crazy. I'm crazy!

CAMERON

Crazy. Do you want him back?

CAROLINE

No way. I love Matt, but no way. He really likes that little pixie. You know what's the worst part about all of this?

CAMERON

Kenzie?

CAROLINE

No. I mean, she's not the best, but she's not the worst. The worst part is. You know, when you break up with someone, you understand you're going to lose your boyfriend, your girlfriend, your significant other. But it's not until you have a hellish day, or that guy you hate finally gets fired or you have a hangover or a hangnail and you get home and. The only one left who really gets you is your Netflix account and you realize you've lost your best friend too. That's the worst.

Matt and Kenzie reenter.

KENZIE

I am so sorry. But look, I'm fine! Matt made this bandage and I kept my hand elevated and I only fainted once.

MATT

Not because it was deep, but because of the blood.

KENZIE

It was pretty deep.

MATT

It was deepish.

Matt shakes his head.

CAROLINE

I'm seeing someone too.

MATT

Really?

KENZIE

That's great.

CAROLINE

I didn't tell you because I was worried about hurting you. Imagine. I was worried about me hurting you. You're just fine.

CAMERON

How long have—

CAROLINE

I don't know. I don't know if it's forever. I'm not counting on it. But. . . he looks at me like. . . I'm magic. And that's a start. You deserve someone good, Cam.

CAMERON

Oh, I'm just waiting for the right one.

CAROLINE

Don't wait too long.

MATT

Caroline, I'm really ha—

CAROLINE

I'm going to leave like a normal person now.

Caroline retrieves a box from the kitchen.

MATT

I was going to get rid of everything in the folder. I kept waiting for the right moment. But throwing your face in the garbage seemed cold.

CAROLINE

I give you permission to toss me in the trash.

MATT

And vice versa. Thank you.

CAROLINE

Happy Birthday, Matt.

Caroline can't open the door with any hands.

KENZIE

I'll help!

CAROLINE

Okay then. Goodnight!

Kenzie exits with Caroline.

MATT

That was weird.

CAMERON

I think we should talk.

MATT

We are talking. . . ?

CAMERON

I don't think Kenzie is right for you.

MATT

What? No, you just have to get to know her.

CAMERON

I don't need to. I know you. I know what would be good for you.

MATT

Is this because I hugged you?

CAMERON

Matt, I don't know how to put words together for this.

MATT

She's not as flighty as she seems. Give her a chance.

CAMERON

I can't.

MATT

Cam, come on, where's your heart?

CAMERON

My. . . ? Where's my heart? My heart. I wish I could turn my heart off.

MATT

What are you talking about?

A long pause.

CAMERON

I have your present. Well, part 1 of 2.

MATT

You didn't have to.

CAMERON

It's dumb. You don't have to keep it if you don't want to.

Matt opens up a gift – it's a framed picture.

MATT

Oh no, this is from last year! Your eyes are barely open.

CAMERON

It's the best one I could find. It was right after karaoke.

MATT

You said we were gonna sing Queen.

CAMERON

I know, I know!

MATT

Lana Del Rey is not Queen.

CAMERON

The names were so close on the screen.

MATT

“Go play a video game.”

Mediocre singing ensues.
Cameron knows the words way better than Matt.*

CAMERON

(singing)

“It's you, it's you, it's all for you”

MATT

“Something–something all the time”

CAMERON

“Heaven is a place on earth with you”

MATT

“Something about you liking bad girls and honey”

CAMERON

“Is that true?”

CAMERON

“Only worth living if somebody
is loving you
Baby, now you do”

MATT

(mumbly)

“La da de da a body
who’s loving you
Na na do”

Matt and Cameron laugh.

MATT

I don’t know how you remembered that.

CAMERON

I don’t know it’s so weird I haven’t listened to that song at all. Matt?

Kenzie enters.

KENZIE

Okay. She is, wow. That was so inspiring, what Caroline did. She just busted up in here and said things, and didn’t care what anyone else thought. I’d like to do that, I’d like to talk about paper flowers, and magic, and bills and beaches and folders with the garbage. I think I have my own garbage!

CAMERON

What’s that burning smell?

KENZIE

The quiches!

MATT

Hey, you need to rest your hand.

Matt opens the oven and takes out the burnt quiches. He tries to salvage some.

KENZIE

(to Cameron)

I think I, you know.

CAMERON

I know what?

KENZIE

I think I, you know, L him.

CAMERON

L him?

KENZIE

Like him. But a different word. A stronger, scarier word.

CAMERON

Love. Isn't that really fast?

KENZIE

Yeah. I think I love him. Oh my God. I love him. . .

CAMERON

Like, ridiculously fast?

KENZIE

Studies say that even two strangers can fall in love by talking intimately and maintaining eye contact.

CAMERON

(under his breath)

Oh good God.

KENZIE

But I don't know if I can say it. He hasn't said it yet, so. You're supposed to wait for the guy to say it first, right? And it's pretty terrifying. I think that must be the scariest thing in the entire world.

CAMERON

Saying I love you.

KENZIE

Saying I love you for the first time. Because, because

CAMERON

What if they don't say it back.

KENZIE

What if he doesn't say it back?

CAMERON

I think. . . he does.

MATT

Come around and eat what's edible.

Kenzie pulls out candles and a lighter from a drawer. She puts a candle in the mangled quiche and lights it.

CAMERON

(singing)

Hap/—?

KENZIE

*(singing**, slow and sincere)*

“Happy birthday, happy birthday we love you
Happy birthday and may all your dreams come true
When you blow out the candles
One light stays aglow
It's the love light in your eyes
Where e'er you go”
Make a wish!

*Matt takes a slight moment, then blows out his candle.
Kenzie and Cameron applaud.*

MATT

Kenzie, this is the most beautiful birthday I have ever had.

KENZIE

Should we go out to eat instead?

MATT

You tried to make us a beautiful meal.

KENZIE

That's a yes. Did your wish come true?

MATT

Can't say.

Kenzie grabs her purse.

MATT

Look, I am shutting off my cell phone.

KENZIE

Oooh. Look, I'll do it too.

MATT

Hey someone left me a birthday voicemail.

CAMERON

I- what??

MATT

There better not be anymore singing.

CAMERON

No, no, shit, I deleted it, I swear I deleted it, you don't want to, it's stupid, just erase it, it's nothing, really, just nothing please just-

*Matt puts the phone on speaker
and plays the voicemail from
earlier.*

CAMERON

(voicemail playing)

"Hey, it's just me. . . this is really cowardly, doing it on the phone. I've tried to say it to your face. I've thought about it a million times. . . I'm not asking for anything, I'm not trying to screw anything up. I just, you make me happy. And I think that I make you happy too and I want us to spend our time making each other happy. God, that sounded so corny. I can't help it. It just happens. Words fall out of my mouth and I can't stop them, they're overflowing like a broken dam, I love you. In all the ways. In every way. . . Now I'm going to go get your birthday present and have dinner with you and your girlfriend. So take care and I'll talk to you later. Bye."

Pause.

MATT

Cameron. . . ?

CAMERON

Just forget it.

MATT

I don't know what.

CAMERON

It was a joke, I was joking. I was. . . I was out on a date. I asked Jamie out. I went out with her today for lunch and it was fine, we talked, we ate. And at the end, for

some unknown reason, we kissed. It was bland. And I kept thinking about you. I wanted it all to be with you.

MATT

Cam, I don't. . . you know I love you, man. You know I do.

CAMERON

Please don't say that.

MATT

It's true!

CAMERON

But it's not the same.

KENZIE

I'm gonna. . .

Kenzie exits.

CAMERON

You don't. It's not the same.

MATT

I don't want to hurt you.

CAMERON

I'm not stupid. I know that love has many shades. When you tell someone you love them in red and they say they love you back in brown, you might as well not say it.

MATT

You've seen me through all this crazy shit. You've been right here for me. I don't know what I would've done without you. And I'd rather say it in brown than not say it all. I do love you.

CAMERON

But it's not enough. I'm not enough. I can't even fight for you. I care about your stupid happiness too much to even fight for you. What is wrong with me?

MATT

Nothing's wrong with you.

CAMERON

I should go.

MATT

There is no one I would rather spend my birthday with. Come on, let's go get dinner.

CAMERON

I can't. She's— I can't.

Kenzie enters.

KENZIE

Matthew, I am so sorry, but my mom just called. With an emergency.

MATT

Is everything okay?

KENZIE

Not a super bad one. Just one where she needs my, uh, presence. I'm really sorry. I'll talk to you later?

MATT

What? Oh, OH. Okay.

Matt and Kenzie quickly hug.

MATT

(quietly)

Thank you.

Kenzie exits.

CAMERON

Well, great, this is just great.

MATT

What?

CAMERON

I was going to go home and be alone and feel sorry for myself. But I can't now. I can't leave you alone on your birthday because as much as it feels like there's an anvil in my stomach, I would still rather hang out with you.

MATT

I want to hang out with you, too. . . Listen, we can have the ultimate grown man birthday. I got *Battlefront*, a coupon for takeout pizza, Angry Orchard and a couch that is all out of whack, I sit on one cushion, all the other cushions feel left out, so I need your help to fix my cushion dilemma. What do you say?

CAMERON

I say. . . good luck. You'll need it. Because I'm not going easy on you this time.

MATT

Going easy on me? No, no, I was going easy on you.

CAMERON

That is what I was letting you think.

MATT

We'll see. Hold on, let me fix this mess, then we can go get us some pizza.

Matt throws away the quiche, puts food in the fridge, etc.

Cameron looks at Matt. He takes out a piece of paper from his pocket, the poem, and looks at it.

MATT

All right, you ready?

Cameron scrunches up the paper and puts it back in his pocket.

CAMERON

Ready.

Matt and Cameron exit.

End of play