

MAYBE, PROBABLY

A comedy

By Eric Henry Sanders

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Synopsis

Ten months before their baby is born, Kate isn't pregnant, and Guy isn't even sure that they should have a baby. After all, babies are expensive, and messy, and then there's the environmental impact. And look how having Lola has changed their best friends' lives. A month later they're pregnant, and *Maybe, Probably* follows the tribulations over the next nine months as Kate and Guy attempt the impossible task of controlling their current and future circumstances as parents.

Characters (Please note that diverse casting is encouraged)

Guy:	Forty-ish. Teaches math at a small private high school in Brooklyn.
Kate:	Thirty-seven. Acquisitions Editor at a mid-sized publisher.
Zoey:	Thirty-eight. Kate's friend and boss (Senior Editor).
Hugh:	Forty-ish. Guy's best friend. A former teacher at Guy's school but now a stay-at-home dad.

Place and Time

Park Slope, Brooklyn. The present.

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Scene 1

Having just arrived at Hugh and Zoey's apartment, Guy is tangled in coats by the front door. Kate has already entered the living room. Hugh slaps down some bills on a table in front of Kate.

HUGH

Fifty bucks.

KATE

What's this?

HUGH

You won.

KATE

No way! I totally forgot.

Zoey yells to Hugh from off stage.

ZOEY (O.S.)

Hugh?!

HUGH

She won by four lengths.

KATE

Is that a lot?

HUGH

Not even close.

GUY

What's going on?

HUGH

Third race at Belmont. Ten bucks to win at five to one.

KATE

He plays the ponies.

HUGH
(*To Guy.*)

You should come with me.

GUY
(*To Kate.*)

No kidding? That's great.

KATE
Isn't it?

Zoey yells again, still off stage.

ZOEY (O.S.)
Could you come here a second?!

HUGH
(*To Kate and Guy.*)
Our sitter cancelled --

KATE
(*To Guy.*)
Her name was Baby Face --

HUGH
-- What kind of prior commitments could a fourteen-year-old possibly have?

GUY
I thought we were going out?

KATE
Still is Baby Face, I mean. Third race -- isn't that lucky?

GUY
I've never been to the track.

HUGH
So can we order in?

GUY
Yeah, I guess.

HUGH
What? [*As in, "what's wrong?"*]

GUY
Just, I thought we were going to Mesa Verde.

HUGH

I don't even know what that is.

GUY

The new Mexican place on 4th.

HUGH

Are there hipsters there?

GUY

Is that a problem?

ZOEY (O.S.)
(Louder.)

HUGH!!

GUY
(To Hugh. Stating the obvious.)

I think Zoey's calling you.

HUGH
(Yelling back to Zoey.)

What?!

No reply. Sigh.

HUGH (cont'd)

One day I'll have an entire conversation uninterrupted.

Hugh exits. Pause. Guy notices the mess of the living room.

GUY

I like what they've done with the place.

KATE

You know how you said that if we ever wanted kids I would have to be the one to make the decision because you don't want a baby and couldn't imagine that changing unless I wanted one?

GUY

Like, this morning?

KATE

Yeah.

GUY

Do I remember saying that this morning? Is that your question?

It's rhetorical.

KATE

I do remember.

GUY

Well, I want one.

KATE

Because of the horse?

GUY

Her name is Baby Face.

KATE

But you decided, just like that?

GUY

It's been building for a while, but yes.

KATE

I don't know anything about babies --

GUY

What's to know?

KATE

-- Except they scare me.

GUY

I'd be afraid to drop it.

KATE

Exactly. Why don't we start with a duck?

GUY

What do you know about ducks?

KATE

Or a cat.

GUY

God, I hate cats --

KATE

Yeah, but you can drop them, no problem.

GUY

KATE
-- Plus, whatever you know about cats applies to babies.

GUY
Like what?

KATE
Like everything.

GUY
They purr?

KATE
Okay, not that.

GUY
But you feed them.

KATE
They're both soft. And they sleep all the time.

GUY
So get a kitten.

KATE
Aside from the fact that they give me hives, a kitten doesn't grow up to become a child.
Unless it's a freaky cat-child.

GUY
That'd be cool.

KATE
That would be cool.

Pause.

KATE (cont'd)
Odds are I won't even get pregnant.

GUY
Ha! --

KATE
Look it up.

GUY
-- That's your save?

KATE

A twenty-eight-year-old woman has a ninety percent chance of getting pregnant in a year, but by the time she's thirty-eight she has a twenty percent chance.

GUY

Probably because she doesn't go clubbing as much.

KATE

I hadn't thought of that.

GUY

And what twenty-eight-year-old woman are we talking about?

KATE

I'll bet it's that barista at Gorilla Coffee.

GUY

No way she's twenty-eight.

KATE

At least.

GUY

Eighteen tops.

KATE

You're getting old.

GUY

Don't think flattery is getting you anywhere.

KATE

Which is kind of my point. I'm getting older. Too. And if this is my last chance, I don't want to regret not trying.

GUY

So you want to start a family now because you won't get to later?

KATE

Yes.

GUY

Shouldn't there be a better reason? --

KATE

There is --

GUY

-- Because I can think of a million reasons not to.

KATE

Impacting the environment is not a reason.

GUY

What about climate change?

KATE

What about it?

GUY

How, in good conscience, could we bring a child into a world that isn't going to be here?

KATE

Oh, it'll be here, just as an desolate wasteland.

GUY

And you want to bring a kid into that?

KATE

Maybe ours will be the one to fix it?

GUY

Plus, in eight years there will be twenty billion people on the planet.

KATE

I'm pretty sure you just made that up.

GUY

Sixty-two percent of all statistics are made up.

KATE

Yeah, I read that.

Pause.

GUY

We've been married for twelve years.

KATE

I'm glad you remember.

GUY

And as far as I know we've been happy.

KATE

True.

GUY

And also as far as I know we've never had a baby.

KATE

Also true.

GUY

So why do you want to mess with that? Why do you want one?

KATE

Why do I want a baby?

GUY

To perpetuate the species, or what?

KATE

Nope. That's it.

GUY

I'm sensing some sarcasm.

KATE

I know why we shouldn't: so we can sleep late, so we can read, it's expensive --

GUY

And the environment.

KATE

-- But we live in Park Slope, so it's basically the law.

GUY

What about diapers?

KATE

Ask Zoey. They have new diapers that are made out of wood pulp, completely biodegradable.

GUY

Thereby depleting the rainforest.

KATE

I can pretty much guarantee they're not making diaper-filling out of Honduran rosewood.

GUY

Fair enough.

KATE

There are all those reasons on one side, and on the other side there's a baby.

Zoey enters carrying a pacifier. She senses some tension.

ZOEY

What's going on?

KATE

Nothing.

GUY

Where's Hugh?

ZOEY

We switched. He's home with Lola so I get punished -- she wants nothing to do with me.

KATE

Sorry.

ZOEY

I read her *Goodnight Moon* eight times. I'm not even kidding. Don't you think that should buy me some love?

KATE

I guess we'll try Mesa Verde another time?

ZOEY

I had to bribe some people but I've got a lead on a new sitter.

KATE

It's that hard?

ZOEY

Like finding a new sub-atomic particle. Or getting your kid into PS 321. I need a drink. Didn't Hugh get you anything?

KATE

Nothing for me, thanks.

ZOEY

Really?

GUY

Whatever you're having.

Over the next bit of dialogue, Zoey opens a bottle of wine, unsuccessfully searches for clean wine glasses, then pours their drinks into sippy cups.

ZOEY

(To Kate.)

How are you doing on the slush pile?

KATE

I'm about halfway through it.

ZOEY

Did you get to the Donohue yet?

KATE

I read his zombie one.

ZOEY

Jane Eyre and the Living Dead?

GUY

Why are all your books zombies and vampires?

KATE

(To Guy.)

Paranormal romance.

ZOEY

If you could get to *Cooking with Zombies* by Wednesday it'd be awesome.

KATE

I should probably start now.

ZOEY

Cycle of life.

KATE

You do the work, it gets eaten by other work.

Off stage Hugh calls to Zoey.

HUGH (O.S.)

Zoe? *[Rhymes with toe.]*

ZOEY
(To Hugh.)

What?!

HUGH (O.S.)

What did you do with the red binky?

ZOEY
(To Kate and Guy.)

What did he say?

GUY

Something about a binky.

ZOEY
(To Hugh.)

I'm getting it! *(She looks for the pacifier that she brought in with her. Finds it. Then says to Kate and Guy.)* Help yourself to ...

Zoe gestures half-heartedly at the kitchen counter. There's nothing to offer. She exits with the pacifier.

GUY

They paint a compelling picture.

KATE

Okay, so it's a leap of faith. But you know what? That's life.

GUY

My life. I'm responsible for mine. If I brought someone else into the world, I'd be responsible for that life.

KATE

But that's what people do. They grow up, they have children, the children go to college, and the parents wonder where the last twenty years went.

GUY

What if I never have the chance to achieve anything really important?

KATE

Like what?

GUY

Like finishing my dissertation.

KATE
You've been at it for nine years.

GUY
Math is hard.

KATE
Plus it's tough to finish something you never work on.

GUY
Yeah, there's that. But, if we have a baby I don't have the option to work on it.

KATE
There are plenty of people who keep writing and teaching math and raise a family.

Pause.

GUY
This morning it was a possibility but now you're sure?

KATE
This morning it was a probability.

GUY
You're getting all semantic on me?

KATE
I guess I am.

GUY
What changed beside the horse?

KATE
Nothing, just the horse.

GUY
Aristotle describes inductive reasoning --

KATE
-- Ugh --

GUY
-- as the idea that a general induction is made by discovering apparent uniformities which lead to generalizations --

KATE
-- If you say so --

GUY
But it can achieve only probability, never mathematical certainty.

KATE
I'm certain, even though it probably won't happen.

GUY
Clearly Aristotle never met you.

KATE
What if we stop trying not to get pregnant?

GUY
We pull the goalie?

KATE
And trying's fun, right? Then if we do get pregnant, it was meant to be.

GUY
Isn't it the same thing?

ZOEY (O.S.)
Lola?!

KATE
Completely different.

GUY
Because the odds are against us?

KATE
Right.

GUY
Okay.

KATE
Okay, you don't want to talk about it anymore, or okay, we'll try?

GUY
Now that I know how you feel, can I think about it? I mean if it's that unlikely...

KATE
So, yes?

GUY

Maybe.

KATE

Okay. Maybe.

Zoey and Hugh call to Lola, who has eluded them and is now wandering somewhere in the apartment.

HUGH (O.S.)

Bedtime!

ZOEY (O.S.)

Lola?!

Zoey reenters.

HUGH (O.S.)

Lola?! Sweetie?!

ZOEY

Have you guys seen Lola?

HUGH (O.S.)

Found her!

ZOEY

If we're not out in an hour, let's reschedule.