



DENVER CENTER FOR THE
PERFORMING ARTS
Theatre Company

INSIDE OUT

A STUDY GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS



ZOEY'S PERFECT WEDDING

ZOEY'S PERFECT WEDDING SYNOPSIS

Zoey has dreamed of a storybook wedding, but when the day comes, her expectations go horribly awry. Among the many of the day's disasters include an incompetent wedding planner, a DJ who ditches Zoey's playlist for his own favorite tunes, a college roommate who takes to drink and who bears old grudges, and a charming, rowdy gay friend who is attracted to anything in pants. As the liquor flows like water, Zoey's wedding turns into one hilarious mishap after another. At the reception, friendships begin, deepen or come apart, and the fantasy of a traditional, decorous wedding is turned horribly upside down in this wickedly exuberant farce.



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ZOEY'S PERFECT WEDDING

By **Matthew Lopez**

Directed by **Mike Donahue**

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SPACE THEATRE

THE PLAYWRIGHT — MATTHEW LOPEZ

Matthew Lopez is the author of *The Whipping Man*, one of the most widely produced new American plays of the last several years. The play premiered at Luna Stage in Montclair, NJ and debuted in New York at the Manhattan Theatre Club under the direction of Doug Hughes, starring Andre Braugher. The sold-out production extended four times, ultimately running 101 performances off-Broadway and garnering Obie and Lucille Lortel Awards. Matthew was awarded the John Gassner New Play Award from the New York Outer Critics Circle for the play. Since then, the play has received over 40 productions worldwide. His play *Somewhere* has been produced at the Old Globe, Theatreworks in Palo Alto and, most recently, at the Hartford Stage

Company, where his play *Reverberation* received its premiere in 2015. His play, *The Legend of Georgia McBride*, premiered four years ago at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts, and has been produced Off-Broadway and regionally. His play *The Sentinels* premiered in London at the Headlong Theatre Company in 2011. Matthew currently holds new play commissions from Roundabout Theatre Company, Manhattan Theatre Club, Hartford Stage and South Coast Rep. Matthew was a staff writer on HBO's *The Newsroom* and is currently adapting Javier Marasi's trilogy *Your Face Tomorrow* for the screen.

<http://matthewlopez.com/bio/html>

THE WEDDING PLANNER

A wedding planner should be a gifted organizer, diplomat, time management guru, psychologist and style consultant. His or her services should include recommending, hiring and dealing with vendors, and, most important, setting up a budget. He or she consults on the design of invitations, the menu for the reception, makes music recommendations and creates a wedding day schedule.¹

The ideal wedding planner can read the bride's mind about whom to invite, will send out save-the-date messages, arrange the rehearsal dinner, book hotel rooms and transportation for out-of-town guests, and mediate conflicts that may arise between the bride and anyone else.²

A wedding planner is strongly recommended if one has a demanding job, has high expectations for their wedding, plans a destination wedding or really just prefers professional help. A bride should not hire a wedding planner when one can deal with vendors personally, can keep things on schedule, and can't afford the additional cost.

1. Weiss, p. 43.

2. Lee, p. 126.

Lee, Jamie. *Weddiculous*. New York: Harper Collins, 2016.

Weiss, Mindy. *The Wedding Book*. New York: Workman Publishing, 2016.

BRIDAL DRESSES

"ZOEY: My dress! My dress! My perfect dream come true dress!"

Zoey's Perfect Wedding

On average, the cost of a wedding dress is about \$1500, according to the Bridal Association of America. On the low end, a wedding dress can cost \$200 or less for an off-the-rack evening dress at a department store or chain bridal retailer. In the mid-range, the bride can expect to pay \$500 to \$1000 for an off-the-rack custom-made dress with some basic beading or lace detail. At the high end, the price can climb up to from \$3000 to \$6000 — or more! — for a custom-made silk designer dress with elaborate embellishments of lace, beading or other

extras, from an upscale wedding boutique.

And there are always additional costs. Alterations can cost \$20 for a simple nip or tuck; more intensive alterations may cost \$200 or more. Wedding dresses can be easily taken in, but it's almost impossible to let them out. Bridal dresses run a size or two smaller than average clothes.

Shop early, since custom bridal dresses must be ordered two to five months before the big day.

Wedding dresses require special undergarments such as hoops, crinoline petticoats or body-slimming garments. There is also the expense of hat, veil, shoes and make-up.

<http://weddingcosthelper.com/wedding-dresshtml>

WEDDING COSTS

Zoey's perfect wedding would cost at least \$200,000, but she soon realizes she can't spend a penny over \$20,000, and even that will be pushing it. Parents may offer to chip in, but the bride and groom may have to bear most of the expense. Wedding costs can mount up to dizzying heights, but it's still possible to have a perfectly lovely wedding at a reasonable cost.

The first thing the couple should do is to decide on their budget, and what bride and groom are each responsible for. Traditionally, the groom pays for: accommodations for his attendants and family, the bride's engagement and wedding rings; the bride's bouquet, corsages for the mothers and other family members; boutonnieres for groomsmen, honeymoon and subsequent transportation, marriage license, rehearsal dinner and transportation and lodging for groom's parents and assorted family.¹

The bride's portion is a little steeper. She (or her parents) should pay for transportation and accommodations for bridesmaids and assorted visiting family, gifts to the bridal attendants, her gown and accessories, the church or synagogue fee, flowers for the ceremony and reception, the cost

of the reception, groom's ring, invitations, music at the ceremony and reception, photography or videography, and the wedding planner.²

To keep costs from escalating, there are many possible compromises to consider. Hire a DJ instead of a band? Serve KFC instead of a five-course meal? Get married in town instead of a glamorous destination?

There are many other ways to cut costs. First, trim the guest list. Choose a lovely setting for the wedding and reception so one doesn't have to spend money on decorations. Start the wedding earlier in the day. Heavy hors d'oeuvres are less expensive than a dinner. Limit the alcohol to wine, beer, a signature cocktail and champagne. Change the day from Sunday to Saturday or even a weekday, because vendors charge less on those days. Skip favors and write a lovely note instead.³

1. Weiss, p. 25.

2. Ibid, p. 26.

3. Ibid, p. 27.

Weiss, Mindy. *The Wedding Book*. New York: Workman's Publishing, 2016.

MARRYING OUTSIDE THE FAITH

"ZOEY: This is the wedding I was supposed to have with Atticus Fichstein of Fifth and 84th, not Patrick McAllister of Texarkana, Arkansas. I don't adjust my dreams to fit my blessings."
Zoey's Perfect Wedding

In her book, *Till Faith Do Us Part: How Interfaith Marriage is Transforming America*, Naomi Schaefer Riley writes that the interfaith marriage rate in the United States is 40%.¹ The book is full of fascinating statistics, but at its heart, it is a cautionary thesis: "interfaith couples don't know what they're getting into. They tend to marry without thinking

through the practical implications of their religious differences."²

Riley advises that in a marriage, matters of faith are tricky, and that the implications only sneak up on people at significant times, such as the death of a loved one, birth of a child, raising children, and holidays. All of these events can bring on a forgotten sense of religious identity or conflict in the marriage.

1. Riley, p. 7.

2. Riley, p. 13.

Riley, Naomi Schaefer. *Till Faith Do Us Part: How Interfaith Marriage is Transforming America*. New York: Oxford Press, 2003.

BROOKLYN

Brooklyn is the most populated borough of New York City with a census-estimated population of more than two and a half million residents in 2016. It borders the borough of Queens at the southwestern end of Long Island and has several bridge connections to the nearby boroughs of Staten Island and Manhattan.

It has a land area of 71 square miles and a water area of 26 square miles. Today, if New York City disappeared, Brooklyn would rank as the third most populous city in the United States, behind Los Angeles and Chicago.

Brooklyn was an independent, incorporated city (and previously an authorized village and town within the provisions of the New York State Constitution) until January 1, 1898, when, after a long political campaign and public relations battle during the 1890s, Brooklyn was consolidated with the other

cities, boroughs and counties to form the modern City of New York. The borough continues, however, to maintain a distinct culture. Many Brooklyn neighborhoods are ethnic enclaves. Brooklyn's official motto, displayed on the Borough seal and flag, is Eendracht Maeckt Maght which translated from early Dutch means "Strength through Unity."

In the first decades of the 21st century, Brooklyn has experienced a renaissance, with gentrification, dramatic house price increases and a resulting decrease in housing affordability. Since 2010, Brooklyn has evolved into a thriving hub of entrepreneurship, high technology startup firms, and postmodern art and design.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn>

BRIDEZILLAS

"Bridezillas" is an American reality television series that aired on WET and debuted on June 1, 2004. It chronicled the lives of women engaged to be married, and planning their weddings, viewing their busy schedules in an over-dramatized and sometimes humorous fashion. The word "bridezilla" is a portmanteau combining the word 'bride' with the fictional beast "Godzilla" to indicate a difficult bride, contrasted with the usual vision of a demure, dewy-eyed deb.

A typical episode intercut the stories of two brides-to-be, splitting screen time between both brides. The stories began as the bride and groom were introduced, who described how they first met and fell in love. The bride then explained what she had envisioned for her wedding. The remainder of the story showed the events leading up to the wedding, centering primarily on the bride's

interactions with members of her family, the groom's family, members of the wedding party and even the wedding's various service providers (such as the wedding planner, caterers, etc.) The situations were generally negative and inflammatory, exposing the featured bride to be as uncontrollable, bullying, and emotional, using whatever means necessary to get what she wants. The story would finish with footage of the wedding, the reception and a final interview with the newlyweds.

The first season featured young, white, wealthy residents of New York. In subsequent seasons, the show included a more diverse range of subjects, more middle class couples from such states as California, Texas and Wisconsin.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/bridezillas>

GLOSSARY

Styx — one of the most successful “arena rock” groups of all time. Born on the South Side of Chicago, they offer a mix of driving rock ‘n’ roll rhythms with classical influenced melodic themes.

Fugees — an American hip hop group who rose to fame in the early 1990s. Their repertoire includes elements of hip hop, soul and Caribbean music.

Good Charlotte — an American rock band formed in 1996, their genre is pop punk and alternative rock.

Cheech & Chong — Grammy Award-winning comedy duo who were popular in the 1970s and 1980s with their routines about hippies, free love, drugs and counterculture movements.

Dixie Chicks — An American country music band which has also crossed over into other genres, including pop and alternative country. As of 2015, they have won 13 Grammy Awards.

Quiet Riot — an American heavy metal band. In 1983, they released their breakthrough album “Metal Health.”

Rainer Maria Rilke — a Bohemian-Austrian poet and novelist.

Mr. Roboto — a song written by Denis De Young of the band Styx. The song’s chorus features the line “Domo Arigato, Mr. Roboto” which became a catchphrase.

String theory — often called the “theory of everything”, it includes such unusual concepts as superstrings, branes and extra dimensions. Scientists hope string theory will unlock one of the biggest mysteries of the universe, namely how gravity and quantum physics fit together.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/>

STUDY QUESTIONS

Pre-Production Questions

1. How do our relationships and marriage evolve as we mature? What factors contribute to strengthening or weakening this bond?
2. How would you describe your “perfect” wedding? What aspects would be the most important to you? Would these align with your partner’s views?

Post-Production Questions

1. How do the technical elements of set design, costuming, lighting, and sound help tell the story? Which are the most effective and why?
2. Describe the relationship between Rachel and Charlie. What choices were made that influenced their relationship?
3. How do the assumptions we make about the strength or weakness of other people’s relationships get us into trouble?
4. Describe the toast that Rachel gives at Zoey’s wedding reception. What is the reaction from the other characters?
5. How does Sammy react to relationship advice that Rachel gives to him?
6. What are the parallels between Missy and Rachel?
7. What do you think happens to the characters one year from the end of the play?

PERSPECTIVES

Make your experience unforgettable when you join us for one of these insightful, educational events:

Creative Team Perspectives

Jan 19 | 6:00pm | The Jones

Get an exclusive insider's perspective before the show when you join us for a free, professionally-moderated discussion with the creative team.

Cast Perspectives

Jan 27 | 1:30pm

Join a fun and engaging discussion with the actors after the matinee.

Perspectives: Theatre & Theology

Jan 30 | 6:30pm

Join Pastor Dan Bollman of the Rocky Mountain Evangelical Lutheran Synod after the performance to examine each show through a theological lens.

Perspectives: Higher Education Advisory Council

Feb 3 | 1:30pm

Participate in a topical discussion led by members of our academic community after the matinee.

Theatre Thursday

Feb 22 | 7:30pm | Helen Bonfils Lobby

Theatre Thursdays are a new, fun way to make your night at the theatre even more memorable. Enjoy festive pre-show parties including a cocktail and live music. Even better? It's all included with your show ticket, for a special price with promo code THURSDAY.

Colorado New Play Summit

Feb 17 - 18 & 23 - 25

Zoey's Perfect Wedding is a part of the 13th Annual Colorado New Play Summit, a two-weekend celebration and showcase of new plays and playwrights. To learn more about the Summit's four new play readings, three world premieres, Playwrights' Slam and other events, visit denvercenter.org/summit. Reading tickets start at just \$10 and discounted all-inclusive packages are available.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The Denver Public Library recommends: Read!

Worst-case scenario survival handbook: Weddings by Joshua Piven

Life doesn't come with a handbook but weddings do! Weddings seem to be designed for accidents, what with the combination of loved ones, excitement, traditions, alcohol, and tons of pressure. However, the worst-case scenario team provides solutions to the most likely nightmares so that everyone can survive. Whether it be raising money for the wedding, cleaning a stained wedding gown, stopping a disastrous toast, or responding to marriage fiascos like forgetting an anniversary, this handbook covers it all. No one should say "I do" without this indispensable self-help guide to getting hitched without a hitch.

Watch!

Bridesmaids (2011)

Director Paul Feig and producer Judd Apatow team up for this modern day cult classic starring Kristen Wiig as Annie, a romantically unattached failed bakery owner who is afraid of losing her best friend when Lillian (Maya Rudolph) announces that she's engaged. Attempting to be the perfect maid of honor, Annie gets lost her own personal pity party and sabotages her friendship with Lillian as she stumbles through the bizarre and expensive rituals associated with being the bride's go-to girl. Throw in a hilarious bridal party full of crazy characters played by Melissa McCarthy, Rose Byrne, and Ellie Kemper, and you have the perfect gal-pal, coming-of-age comedy about one of life's most important milestones.

Listen!

Now That's What I Call Tailgate Anthems

Music has a way of marking occasions and evoking memories of times gone by. We all have that one song that can bring feelings back into focus, like we never left the dance and are still swaying cheek-to-cheek with our first love. *Now That's What I Call Tailgate Anthems* is not that album; it is full of songs that are not that song. Unless you too, hired an inappropriate DJ for your wedding, or fell in love at a sporting event parking lot, or just love pumping it up. This compilation contains 18 tracks of pure Don't Stop Believing, with a side of Rock & Roll All Night, and a healthy dose of Get The Party Started. Play it at your next social disaster, be it party, or wedding, or wake and make some memories worth reliving.

Download!

The Commitment: Love, Sex, Marriage, and My Family by Dan Savage (Audio eBook)

The Commitment is the story of your average gay couple struggling with whether or not they should get married and why. This is the real-life account of Dan Savage (the nationally syndicated author of the sex advice column, "Savage Love"), and his partner Terry, and their seven year-old son and how they navigated this question. Savage turns his sharp wit toward marriage itself, both the heterosexual institution, and the struggle for gay marriage equality, and what's really at stake. Rather than a snarky take-down of tradition (although there is plenty of this, but warranted and good-natured), Savage makes an argument for the importance of creating and nurturing family, no matter how you define it.



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