

A FUTURE PERFECT

BY KEN URBAN



DRAMATISTS
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A FUTURE PERFECT
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A FUTURE PERFECT received its world premiere at SpeakEasy Stage Company (Paul Daigneault, Producing Artistic Director) in Boston, Massachusetts, on January 9, 2015. It was directed by M. Bevin O'Gara, the set designer was Cristina Todesco, the lighting designer was Jen Rock, the costume designer was Elizabeth Polito, the sound designer was Nathan Leigh, and the stage manager was Adele Nadine Traub. The cast was as follows:

CLAIRE	Marianna Bassham
MAX	Brian Hastert
ALEX	Nael Nacer
ELENA	Chelsea Diehl
ANNABELLE	Uatchet Jin Juch

The play was developed at Playwrights Horizons in New York City and the Huntington Theater in Boston.

Ken would like to thank all of the directors, actors, and designers who worked on this play, especially Bevin O'Gara, Stephen Brackett, and Marsha Mason. Special thanks to Zach Durant-Emmons and Willis Emmons for their support of the SpeakEasy production.

CHARACTERS

CLAIRe

MAX

ALEX

ELENA

ANNABELLE

Claire is married to Max.

Elena is married to Alex.

Claire, Max and Alex are in their late 30s.

Elena is a few years younger (early 30s).

Annabelle is eleven years old.

The cast should reflect the racial/ethnic diversity of its setting.

SETTING

The living room/dining room of Claire and Max's condo, a restored brownstone in Park Slope, Brooklyn.

TIME

Fall 2011. President Obama's First Term.

SCENE LIST

This list is to aid the production team and should not be printed in any program for the audience.

1. Friday night. September 2011.
2. Next morning. Saturday.
3. Wednesday evening.
4. Saturday afternoon. Over a week has passed since Scene 1.
5. Weekday. Monday night.
6. Thursday night.
7. Next morning. Friday. Two weeks have passed since Scene 1.
8. Thursday night. Three weeks later. October 2011. A month has passed since Scene 1.
9. Friday night. A month later. November 2011. Two months have passed since Scene 1.

TEXT NOTES

All punctuation and spacing is intentional and gives a sense of the line's delivery.

/ indicates that the following lines begin to overlap at that point.

* indicates that a later line overlaps at that point, and that line is preceded by an additional *.

SONG CREDIT

“Never Alone”

Lyrics: Ken Urban, Music: Ken Urban, Mike RobbGrieco

A FUTURE PERFECT

One

The living room and dining room of a beautiful but hardly spacious brownstone in Brooklyn's Park Slope. Friday night. September 2011. Take-out food containers, Crate and Barrel plates and glasses, bottles of wine. Max and Alex serve Thai food on the dining table. Claire and Elena sit on the couch, looking at portfolios. Their conversations overlap.

MAX. That enough?

CLAIRE. I think: that's it / right?

ALEX. Yeah yeah perfect.

CLAIRE. I lost the client. That's what I thought. I'm gonna lose this / client.

ALEX. Hey, tickets go on sale on Monday.

MAX. Nice. You gonna score some for us?

ALEX. I'm on it. Not gonna miss this show.

ELENA. He didn't tell you that's what he wanted. How can he be angry?

CLAIRE. Doesn't matter. Guy's an ass. He made a mistake * and he's going take it out on me. I'm screwed.

ELENA. But Charles is going to take your side. He's won't sell you out.

ALEX. *Who would've thought they'd ever play together again?

MAX. Makes me feel old. Bands from the '90s playing reunion shows.

CLAIRE. Oh, um, Charles doesn't work with us anymore.

ELENA. What happened?

CLAIRE. When I got promoted. When they promoted me—

ELENA. No.

CLAIRE. Yeah. I got promoted and Charles got downsized.

ALEX. That expanded 2-CD reissue of the first record leaked.

MAX. Pre-ordered the vinyl. Gonna pick it up next week.

ALEX. This kid in the office, he showed me this blog. Everything Takes A Leak. Or something. Basically / every great record from the '90s you can download in every format. MP3s * even FLAC.

ELENA. Double ouch.

CLAIRE. I know. I felt like crap. But what can I do?

ELENA. Our office let Marla go.

CLAIRE. Tom's assistant?

ELENA. Yeah, I'm picking up the slack. It's a crazy time.

CLAIRE. Show them you can do it, you'll be rewarded.

ELENA. You think?

CLAIRE. Yes.

ELENA. Good to know.

MAX. *No wonder we're down to one record store in the hood. Kids don't buy music anymore, they download everything. You used to have to hunt down music.

ALEX. Now you wanna hear some obscure B-side, two minutes and boom, there it is.

CLAIRE. Do you guys need any help?

MAX. No thanks, hon.

We sound like / old men.

CLAIRE. Anyway, the Bennett campaign. I pull an all-nighter on Thursday and gave him exactly what he wanted. I had this moment, and then, it all clicked.

MAX. Hon, that enough?

CLAIRE. Perfect, thanks.

And he shows up next morning, fully ready to bitch me out, and there it is. A perfect campaign. Just what the client wanted. Nearly swallows his tongue. All he can muster is, Good work, Claire. I was like, Good? It's great!

ALEX. This about the office?

MAX. Always about the office.

CLAIRE. Poor guy. Always listening to me.

MAX. The underemployed are grateful that one of us is gainfully employed.

CLAIRE. Sorry. Enough work chat. I'm being a crappy host.

ELENA. Don't be sorry. I brought it up. I'm picking her brain. You have a ton more experience in this industry.

CLAIRE. You're at a good firm. They like you if they're talking promotion.

ELENA. Maybe. But they all rave about you.

CLAIRE. They tried to poach me. Last year.

Max shoots Claire a look.

I'm getting the look.

MAX. Enough shop talk.

CLAIRE. Fine.

ELENA. This is really good.

MAX. Best Pad Thai in the Hood.

CLAIRE. (*Mouth full.*) After dinner...

MAX. Chew, babe.

CLAIRE. Sorry. What do you guys wanna play after dinner? You know the board games we have. Maybe old-school it with some charades.

MAX. Poker?

ELENA. You guys always clean me out when we play poker.

Pause.

ALEX. You guys hear anything from Dan recently?

MAX. He posted something on my Facebook wall.

ELENA. Which one is he?

CLAIRE. Dan was our year. He, ah, where is he now? Massachusetts?

ALEX. Boston, yup.

MAX. Is it time for Cornell Update?

CLAIRE. Ugh. No. You'll bore Elena to tears. She doesn't wanna hear geriatrics wax nostalgic.

ELENA. Not at all. I like hearing about your friends from school.

CLAIRE. Where'd you go again?

ELENA. Hunter.

Pause.

CLAIRE. That's a good school.

MAX. The Cornell Update is brief. Divorce.

CLAIRE. Saw that coming.

ALEX. Really? Dan, and what's her name?

MAX. Chuck.

ELENA. His wife's name is Chuck?

CLAIRE. Women's basketball.

MAX. Don't listen to Claire.

CLAIRE. What? Am I wrong? She was a women's basketball player.

(*Manly voice.*) "Hey, I'm Caitlin. The team calls me Chuck."

ALEX. I had no idea.

CLAIRE. C'mon.

ALEX. They have kids?

MAX. Nah.

CLAIRE. Oh, honey, Elena needs some wine.

MAX. Let me get you some.

Alex changes the subject.

ALEX. Claire, you see those protestors out in the park? That's by your office, right?

CLAIRE. You read about it online, but when you see it, it's so different than what you expect.

ELENA. This is to protest the banks?

CLAIRE. Ten years ago, lower Manhattan was a graveyard. Now these people have made a whole little world in that park. And it's not just kids, but people our age, older even. Veterans. I stopped and listened to a woman give a speech.

MAX. Your bosses would not approve.

ELENA. I was trying to get into Manhattan last weekend and it was crazy. People had to walk over the bridge.

CLAIRE. She talked about education, the environment, the future of this country.

ALEX. It's kind of cool, right?

CLAIRE. Everything she said, I agreed with. I mean, all of us do. But we don't camp in a park. Make signs. Get arrested. We just don't.

MAX. People will care for a few more weeks then it will all fall apart.

CLAIRE. Maybe, I don't know. It was, inspiring.

Pause.

Babe, Elena still didn't get her wine. There's a glass / over there—

ELENA. Max, do you have, like, seltzer?

ALEX. You know what? I'll take some seltzer too, I guess.

MAX. I don't think we have. Ah. We don't have any seltzer. We got juice.

ELENA. Water's great.

CLAIRE. Wait.

Are you pregnant?

Pause.

You're pregnant.

Pause.

ALEX. I guess we can start telling people.

Elena is not thrilled.

ELENA. Alex.

ALEX. What?

MAX. Buddy, you're gonna be a dad.

ELENA. It's early still. Very early.

ALEX. Yeah, but, c'mon Elena.

MAX. Elena, that's amazing.

ELENA. Yeah. I'm gonna be a mom.

MAX. Congrats. I mean, guys, wow, congrats.

Pause.

CLAIRE. What about work?

ELENA. What d'you mean?

MAX. Juice. You want, ah, you want that / juice?

CLAIRE. I mean, you just got your foot in the door. And the chance for promotion. I mean. I don't know if the time is right for you to—

MAX. Hey, Claire.

CLAIRE. No, Max, I'm just pointing out, promotion first, then—

MAX. Claire.

ALEX. We were gonna tell you. You were gonna be one of the first ones we told. But we're not outta the first trimester just yet so...

I mean, we didn't know if it was gonna take.

ELENA. Don't make it sound so clinical, Alex.

MAX. Oh. You guys did, ah, what's it called—?

ELENA. We tried for a year and so—

ALEX. Apparently my sperm weren't exactly ready to finish / the race.

A FUTURE PERFECT

by Ken Urban

2M, 2W, 1 girl

Claire and Max find their values put to the test when best friends Alex and Elena announce they are having a baby. Claire is climbing the corporate ladder in advertising, while her husband Max is a puppeteer for PBS. With friends entering into parenthood, they ask: What happened to the indie-rock kids that hated everything their parents believed in?

[A FUTURE PERFECT] isn't just about aging rock musicians. It's about aging in general. Can you grow older without selling out? Hang onto your dreams with no money? And what about having kids?... a prescient look at the present."

—The Boston Globe

A FUTURE PERFECT asks smart questions... Urban specializes in such telling, potent slips of the tongue; in his hands, a mere wrong word is like a wrecking ball. ... Urban offers us no easy bromides—rather, he ruefully delineates the kinds of interrelated economic, social, and political stresses that make modern life so fraught with opportunity and challenge."

—TheARTery.com

"... Beguiling... a wickedly funny comedy."

—WGBH, Boston Public Radio

A FUTURE PERFECT is marked by strong writing and three-dimensional, flawed characters... a coming of age story for the new millennium."

—TalkinBroadway.com

Also by Ken Urban

THE AWAKE
THE HAPPY SAD
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and others

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