

ALWAYS A BRIDESMAID

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PLAY SERVICE
INC.

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SPECIAL NOTE ON LOGO

The logo for ALWAYS A BRIDESMAID, available for download at www.dramatists.com, is required for use in all playbills, posters and other promotional materials.

*This play is dedicated to our Twink, our Nita, our Beth ...
our friend, Kerry Shannon.*

AUTHORS' NOTES

The name “Kari” should be pronounced “CAR-ee.”

The costumes in this play are an integral part of the comedy. Therefore great care and specificity should be taken in selecting and/or constructing each of them.

We suggest the pace of the play — and scene transitions — be brisk and lively.

We suggest thematic up-tempo music concerning love, weddings, romance, etc., be played pre- and post-show, at intermission and especially during scene transitions.

All of the characters portrayed in *ALWAYS A BRIDESMAID* are fictional creations and any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

ALWAYS A BRIDESMAID received its world premiere at Grapevine's Runway Theatre in Grapevine, Texas, on April 5, 2013. It was directed by Kenny Green; the assistant director/stage manager was Russell Sebastian; the set design was by Ellen Mizener; the sound design was by Jeff Mizener; the costume coordination was by Misty Baptiste; the property coordination was by Traci Clements; and the original Jones Hope Wooten show logo was designed by Joe Connor. The cast was as follows:

KARI AMES-BISSETTE Kelly Kennedy
LIBBY RUTH AMES Patsy Hester Daussat
SEDALIA ELLICOTT Sue Ellen Love
MONETTE GENTRY Dana Harrison
CHARLIE COLLINS Dena Dunn
DEEDRA WINGATE Connie Lane

CHARACTERS

(in order of appearance)

KARI AMES-BISSETTE, late 20s, a kind-hearted,
spirited Southern charmer

LIBBY RUTH AMES, late 40s, hopeless romantic, sweet
country woman, plain-spoken and guileless

SEDALIA ELLICOTT, 60s, a gregarious, energetic
Virginia hostess and life-force

MONETTE GENTRY, late 40s, kinda flashy, kinda
trashy, Southern-to-the-bone flirt

CHARLIE COLLINS, late 40s, tree-hugging,
Birkenstock-wearing, acerbic Southern free spirit

DEEDRA WINGATE, late 40s, headstrong with a dry
wit, no-nonsense Northern transplant

PLACE

An upstairs sitting room at historic Laurelton Oaks,
Laurelton, Virginia, twenty miles northwest of Richmond

TIME

The play takes place over a period of seven years.

ACT ONE

Scene 1: A Spring afternoon

Scene 2: A Summer afternoon, two years later

ACT TWO

Scene 1: A Fall evening, four years later

Scene 2: A Winter afternoon, one year later

ALWAYS A BRIDESMAID

ACT ONE

Scene 1

A light comes up downstage right on Kari Ames-Bissette, late 20s, dressed in a beautiful bridal gown. Facing the audience, she taps a spoon against her champagne flute, stops and excitedly addresses “the guests at her wedding.”

KARI. (*Lively, upbeat.*) Hello! Can you hear me? I'd hate for y'all to *miss* my first official moment as a Mrs. (*Giggles.*) ... On behalf of myself and Todd, my *husband* — *dang*, I like the sound of *that* (*Sighs happily.*) ... I want to thank all of you for being here on this wonderful day. We've all come together in this beautiful setting to celebrate *love*. And speaking of which, I want to thank my Aunt Viola who was so sweet to reduce the restraining order against Uncle Huell to thirty feet so he could also be in this room with us today. That was just so generous of — (*Her attention caught, stern.*) Uncle Huell, get back! You hug that wall! We are not going to have a repeat of that ugly mess you made of Easter Sunday! (*Beat.*) That's better. (*Then, to the “guests,” sweetly.*) Now, wasn't the ceremony just precious?! And that little Brandon is a trouper — four years old and his very first time to be a ring-bearer. Shoot, under that kind of pressure, I would've thrown up, too. But he's fine now and the photographer promised to delete all those pictures. And Todd and I absolutely insist on picking up the dry cleaning bill for everyone who was seated at the end of row four. Oh, and those doves! They were awesome! The image of them being released and soaring into the sky the moment Todd and I kissed will always stay

with me ... even though it might have ended better if someone had remembered today *is* the first day of hunting season. (*Louder.*) And I've been assured our ears will stop ringing from the gunfire before the first dance. (*Sips champagne.*) I'm not much of a drinker, but I *do* like *this!* (*Laughs.*) Now, I have some people to thank — Daddy, of course, for his love and generosity and my mom and her best friends, my godmothers, for teaching me everything they know about how to survive “The Big Day.” Actually, at one of *their* weddings, six, maybe seven years ago right here at Laurelton Oaks, I learned lesson number one: expect the unexpected. There's an old saying: “If you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans.” Well, I found out *that* day if you really want to make him double over and howl, tell him your *wedding* plans! (*Laughs, sips. Cross fade, lights down on Kari as they come up center stage on an elegantly appointed upstairs sitting room at Laurelton Oaks, a stately Virginia home that's been converted into an upscale events venue. It's a spring afternoon. Upstage right is a door to a dressing room. Upstage left is a door to another dressing room. Downstage right an upholstered stool sits in front of a small dressing table that is littered with makeup. Against the upstage center wall is a decorative chest on which a lamp, an opened bottle of champagne and flutes have been placed. Several shopping bags are on the floor nearby. A painting hangs above the chest. Downstage center is a small sofa that has a large purse on it. A pretty upholstered chair sits on either side of the sofa. On the downstage left wall is the door to the hallway, further downstage left is an occasional table that holds a small floral arrangement, a chair next to it. Libby Ruth Ames, late 40s, in a rather dowdy, floor-length coral-colored dress and matching jacket, stands at an ironing board, presses the bottom of her own skirt and sings a lively, off-key country rendition of “Oh, Promise Me.” She sways in time as she irons the skirt and rhythmically squirts it with a spray bottle as she sings.*

LIBBY RUTH. (*Sings, passionately.*) OH, PROMISE ME THAT SOME DAY YOU AND I (*Squirt, squirt, squirt.*) WILL TAKE OUR LOVE TOGETHER TO SOME SKY (*Squirt, squirt, squirt. Sedalia Ellicott, 60s, in a dramatic caftan and ropes of pearls, charges into the room, stops as Libby Ruth belts the final, off-key note, big finish.*) OH, PROMISE ME, OH, PROOOOMISE ME!!! (*Sedalia winces.*)

SEDALIA. Libby Ruth, not to squat on your enthusiasm, darlin', but I've got a reception hall *full* of delicate crystal. You hit any more jackhammer notes like that, and our guests will be sippin' champagne out of Dixie cups.

LIBBY RUTH. (*Laughs, resumes ironing.*) I'm sorry. Preston always tells me I sound like a herd of cats fightin' over a bagpipe but I get carried away. That's just me, hopeless romantic! Look, I know this wedding came out of the blue, how can I ever thank you for squeezing Monette in this afternoon?

SEDALIA. Well, other than swearin' not to sing anymore, absolutely nothing. Here at Laurelton Oaks, we're flexible. It comes from decades of experience hosting elegant celebrations for a refined clientele— (*Monette Gentry, 40s, enters from the upstage right dressing room in a deeply revealing white lace slip, several rollers in her hair, grabs her purse from the sofa, rummages through it.*)

MONETTE. I am gonna find those blasted tweezers even if I have to tear up the joint and cold cock everyone in the room to do it! (*Storms out upstage right dressing room door.*)

LIBBY RUTH. (*To Sedalia.*) Which is why we appreciate you makin' an exception for *us*. (*Monette screams offstage, then rushes back into the room.*)

MONETTE. I just caught sight of my butt in that full-length mirror! (*Whirls around, sticks out her rear.*) Look at it! (*Slaps it.*) You could show IMAX movies on this thing! (*Groans, hurries out upstage right dressing room door.*)

LIBBY RUTH. A *really big* exception. (*Then, low.*) Listen, Sedalia, truth is, Monette's marrying a younger man and she's feeling a little pressured. She told me she's only got half an hour to lose fifteen pounds! And to that end, I may need your help squeezing her into that third pair of Spanx.

SEDALIA. You know, there *is* one thing I find curious: in all my years doing this, I've found that most of my ... shall we say, *mature* brides — particularly those who've made that long walk *before* — tend to go for simple wedding ceremonies, with maybe just one attendant, if any. I was surprised your friend chose to have *three*.

LIBBY RUTH. Yes, I'm sure it does seem a little odd. But see, we were all best friends as kids and we made a promise that we'd be in each others' weddings, no matter what. And we did that. But about ten years ago when Monette married the second time, she asked us to stand up for her *again* and we did ... *again*. And this time, well ... I think she's startin' to look on this as a kind of tradition.

SEDALIA. I see. That's nice ... a little weird, but ... nice.

LIBBY RUTH. Yeah ... we think so, too. (*From offstage, Monette*

yelps, frustrated.) Monette's a little intense today, but she always is right before she vows to love some guy forever.

SEDALIA. Don't worry, Libby Ruth, I've seen it all: nervous brides, nauseous brides, blushing brides, belligerent brides and brides having contractions three minutes apart. I can handle intensity. (*Unseen, Monette enters from the upstage right dressing room door with a mirror and tweezers, works on her eyebrows.*) And should this tradition continue, you might want to pass this info along to your friend: here at the Oaks we offer a customer loyalty discount in the event the need arises for any ... *future nuptials*.

MONETTE. (*Snaps to attention.*) What are you insinuating, Ms. Ellicott? That just because I've struck out with two previous husbands, I might not be able to hang onto Number Three? What have you said to her, Libby Ruth? 'Cause I'm here to tell you, marrying right out of high school can't be held against me. It was six of the best weeks of my life until Trey violated his parole. And of course my marriage to Vince bit the dust when I found out he'd been putting on my dresses and hitting the clubs every time I went out of town on business. Why I wasn't suspicious when he bought me so many *oversized* lace panties is beyond me. But the past is the past and that trash is burned! This is *today* and come hell or high water, I am marrying Gavin Reed. This guy's *the one!*

SEDALIA. (*Unruffled.*) I'm only saying repeat clients get *twenty percent* off any subsequent weddings. (*Offers a business card.*)

MONETTE. Wow, that *is* a nice discount. (*Tucks the card into her décolletage.*) Better safe than sorry. (*Hurriedly exits upstage right dressing room door.*)

SEDALIA. Now, I don't want Monette to feel like she's getting the bum's rush, but we need to keep the ball rolling this afternoon. (*Crosses upstage, fills a champagne flute.*) I've got a great big event starting at six. Effie Gudger's turning one hundred and if that old bird's still suckin' wind after I've served up the birthday puddin', I'm calling the whole wing-ding a success.

LIBBY RUTH. Oh, we'll be ready; we're only missing one bridesmaid. And Monette understands, she's a businesswoman, too. Did you know that she owns the biggest country music club in the entire state of Virginia?

SEDALIA. A successful businesswoman. Hmm. I may have underestimated her.

MONETTE. (*Calls offstage.*) Libby Ruth, do you think this jack-

et's so low cut it's going to show my Harley tattoo?

SEDALIA. On second thought, I believe I nailed it.

LIBBY RUTH. (*Re: champagne flute.*) You always think of the nicest touches. Maybe I'll take that champagne to Monette now.

SEDALIA. Monette? Darlin', how do you think I get through all these joyful occasions? (*Gulps it.*) The bride's on her own. (*Exits downstage left hallway door.*)

LIBBY RUTH. (*Dreamy.*) I love weddings, everybody so happy, and feelin' good! (*Just then, Charlie Collins, 40s, dressed in an oddly-put-together, pink-ish pants outfit and Birkenstock sandals, her hair a mess, steps out of the upstage left door, drapes herself against the frame, has a terrible cold.*)

CHARLIE. Is it time to drag what's left of me down the aisle? (*Sneezes.*)

LIBBY RUTH. Charlie, your cold is worse! (*Low.*) We can't let Monette know you're sick 'til we *have* to. She's already got herself wound so tight today she's liable to stroke out. She'll never forgive us if she has to honeymoon in the E.R.

CHARLIE. Like it's not hard enough for us single gals to witness these lovey-dovey, bless-ed nuptials without wanting to run screaming into the hills. Nooo, I have to go and get the crud on top of it so I can enjoy it *even more*. And why is this such a rush job, anyway?

LIBBY RUTH. That's just Monette. When it comes to men, she throws herself headlong at the one she wants. (*Low.*) If you ask me, I think she's scared if she doesn't grab him, she'll lose him forever and for Monette, that would be tragic. (*Studies Charlie.*) Kind of like your hair. Oh, for heaven's sake, sit down here and let me take a shot at that mess. I can't stand to see you lookin' so pitiful. (*Charlie plops into the chair stage left of the sofa. Libby Ruth works on her hair.*)

CHARLIE. You know, there are three constants in my life — taxes I can barely pay, recurring bladder infections and being a bridesmaid in a Monette Gentry wedding. She goes through husbands like Sherman through Georgia and I can't even get *one* sucker down the aisle.

LIBBY RUTH. But what happened to that last guy you were dating? He didn't seem to mind that you spend your life diggin' in the dirt or that you've got the fashion sense of a color-blind prison guard or even that every food this side of melba toast makes you extra gassy. I thought he was really into you.

CHARLIE. What he was *really* into was identity theft. Once I dis-

ALWAYS A BRIDESMAID

by Jessie Jones, Nicholas Hope, Jamie Wooten

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In this hilarious comedic romp, four friends have sworn to keep the promise they made on the night of their Senior Prom: to be in each other's weddings ... no matter what. More than thirty years later, these Southern friends-for-life are still making "the long walk" for each other, determined to honor that vow. Libby Ruth, the hopeful romantic with the perfect marriage, believes — in spite of all evidence to the contrary — that her friends can find the very same happiness. Headstrong Deedra's "rock-solid" union hangs by a thread when she discovers her husband of many years not only has a wandering eye, but the hands to match. Monette, flashy, high-spirited and self-involved, continues to test her friends' love and patience with all-too-frequent trips down the aisle. And salt-of-the-earth, tree-hugging Charlie discovers — the hard way — that marital bliss is not the end of her rainbow and panics in outrageous style when the opportunity presents itself. Hop on this marriage-go-round for a laugh-out-loud journey with these beleaguered bridesmaids as they navigate the choppy waters of love and matrimony. Libby Ruth, Deedra, Monette and Charlie are committed to the notion that careers, waistlines and even marriages may disappear, but real friendships last a lifetime. Forsaking all others, in sickness and in health, they repeatedly struggle to stage the perfect wedding in spite of fistfights at the altar, runaway brides and the mistaken, and unfortunate, release of a flock of white doves on the first day of hunting season. ALWAYS A BRIDESMAID is the rollicking tale of four loyal and determined women who definitively answer the question, "Just how far are you willing to go to keep a promise to a friend?" If you've ever elbowed a stranger out of the way to catch a bride's bouquet, seriously questioned the mental stability of the duo saying "I do" or been forced to wear the world's ugliest bridesmaid dress, this deliriously funny JONES HOPE WOOTEN COMEDY is definitely for you ... and your dearly beloved!

Also by Jones, Hope, Wooten

THE DIXIE SWIM CLUB

MAMA WON'T FLY

THE RED VELVET CAKE WAR

REX'S EXES

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ISBN 978-0-8222-2912-4



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