

Scrambled

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Lights come up on a small, efficiency apartment. MAX (a man in his early twenties wearing a business suit) sits at a small kitchen table while CHLOE (a woman in her early twenties wearing a waitress uniform) hovers over a tiny stove. Stage right, a large picture hangs on a single flat representing one of the apartment's walls. A stand-alone upstage door leads to the bathroom.

There is a long uncomfortable pause as CHLOE bangs around pots and pans.

MAX
...I just don't see what the big deal is.

CHLOE
(Over her shoulder) It's *not* a big deal. Who said it was a big deal? Did I say it was a big deal? I don't remember saying it was any kind of "deal" at all.

MAX
OK, fine -- then why are you so mad?

CHLOE
(Banging pots and pans louder) I'm *not* mad, Max. I'm making breakfast. See? This is me -- making breakfast. Not being "mad." Making breakfast.

MAX
Well, it sounds like you're making it with a sledgehammer.

CHLOE
(Turning) So now you don't like the way I make breakfast? Well, why don't you just go over to Stephanie Vaughan's place and let *her* make you a nice quiet breakfast then?

MAX
(Sighing) See -- I knew you were mad.

CHLOE
I'm not mad! This is the way I would make breakfast if I was mad!

CHLOE slams her pots and pans around.

CHLOE
And this is the way I make breakfast when I make it *(Turns her back)*...loudly ...for assholes...

A loud banging sound is heard beneath the floor.

The picture falls off the wall.

MRS. BELL

(Offstage) You kids keep it down up there -- I'm trying to watch my shows.

CHLOE

(Shouting at the floor) Sorry, Mrs. Bell!

MAX

(Re-hanging the picture) Chloe, can we please, *please* talk about it?

CHLOE

What for? It's obvious you wouldn't understand how the whole thing makes me feel. Especially when all you think I am is a stupid, loud, angry breakfast-maker. So how do you want your eggs?

MAX

It was just a box of tampons.

CHLOE

Fine. *Fine!* Just a box of tampons -- that's all. That fixes everything so now you can go ahead and tell me how you want your eggs.

MAX

(Sighs) Over-easy.

CHLOE

(Banging around a pan) That's just *great!* I was making them scrambled!

MAX

(Quickly) Scrambled's fine.

CHLOE

(Dumping the pan in the trash) No, no -- I'll make them the way you want. I don't mind. After all, you need to keep up your strength while you're off closing business deals and buying other women boxes of tampons.

MAX

Chloe...

CHLOE

(Slamming the pan back down on the stove) How do you want your eggs?

Banging from the floor.

The pictures falls off again.

MRS. BELL

(*Off-stage*) I can't hear *The Price is Right!*

CHLOE

(*Shouting to the floor*) Sorry, Mrs. Bell!

MAX

(*Re-hanging the picture*) Look, Steph...Ms. Vaughan just called and asked me to do her a little favor, that's all. The two of us were scheduled for an eight-thirty meeting with *Pheiffer and Son* -- she just ran out of it...them...whatever...that morning and didn't want to leave her apartment.

CHLOE

Two and a half months -- we're married two and a half months and here I catch you buying other women tampons!

MAX

Catch me? You didn't "catch" me -- I was the one who told you about it.

CHLOE

That's even worse! What kind of husband doesn't even *try* not to get caught? What kind of husband doesn't have the decency to sneak around behind his wife's back? What kind of husband comes home and tells his poor, loving, trusting breakfast-making wife the truth about something like that?

MAX

Chloe, listen, it was no big deal. It...it wasn't even a very big box -- I swear.

CHLOE

Don't tell me it's not a big deal! I may not know anything about making breakfast but I know a lot about tampons and the people who ask other people to buy them for them -- especially when those people know perfectly well that other people are married to people who slave away in kitchens making them breakfast that other people don't even appreciate!

Beat.

MAX

No speakie de English.

CHLOE

Just forget it, funny-man! How do you want your eggs?

MAX
(*Resigned*) Over-easy.

CHLOE
(*Banging the pan in the trash*) Well, that just figures! I was making them scrambled!

MAX
Scrambled's fine.

Banging from the floor.

The picture falls off the wall.

MRS. BELL
(*Off-stage*) You two are spoiling Bob Barker for me -- that man's too *fine* not to hear!

MAX re-hangs the picture. His cell phone rings.

CHLOE
Who's that? Did Stephanie suddenly run out of shampoo...or toothpaste...or douche...?

MAX
(*Looking at the display*) Not even close -- it's my mother.

CHLOE
Tell her I said 'hello' -- and that her feminine-hygiene-delivery-boy son is a big jerk.

MAX
(*Walking downstage*) Hey, Mom...no -- nothing special...she's fine...nothing's wrong...well, she's just mad at me...no -- I didn't leave the seat up...no, Mom -- it's no big deal...

CHLOE
Why don't you ask *her* if it's a big deal, Captain Stay-Fresh!

MAX
(*Covering the phone and stepping further away from Chloe*) ...yeah -- I know...I don't want to... Mom...Mom...I'm not going into it...okay, okay...Look, I just bought a box of tampons for this woman I work with and now Chloe's going off on... (*Holds phone away from ear*)...Mom...(Holds phone away from ear)...Mom -- I'm pretty sure that qualifies as "Child Abuse" in this state...I don't know...the blue box...uh, regular -- no extra-absorbent...

CHLOE
(*Shaking a spatula at MAX*) Extra-absorbent? *Extra-absorbent?!*

MAX

(Quickly closing his phone) Mom, I gotta go -- she's got a spatula.

CHLOE

You see, Max! Your mother knows what it's like having a man sneaking around with another woman's monthly unmentionables!

Banging from the floor.

The picture falls off the wall.

MRS. BELL

Bob Barker's spinning the Big Wheel!

MAX

(Hanging the picture back up) Listen, I wasn't "sneaking around." It was broad daylight and I walked right into that new pharmacy on Challie Avenue and said "I'll take a box of your finest, most extra-absorbent tampons, my good man. And feel free to call for a price-check so everybody in the store knows what I'm doing in case they want to call my wife Chloe and fill her in."

CHLOE

I bet you did. I bet you did it just like that! Well, fine -- Here's a "price check" for you, Max -- I don't care! How do you want your eggs?

MAX

(Sitting down wearily) Over...easy.

CHLOE

(Dumping the pan in the trash) Of course -- scrambled's not good enough for you.

MAX

(Hiding his face in his arms) Scrambled's fine.

CHLOE

(Fighting with the toaster) I bet Stephanie Vaughan would make you eggs over-easy. She's probably an expert at eggs -- especially the easy part. I bet she's easily the easiest woman at making everything easier when it comes to being easy. *(Trying to get the bread to stay down in the toaster)* And I bet *she* has a toaster that actually works.

MAX

Here let me do it. You've got to push the lever down just right.

CHLOE

(Fighting with the toaster) I know that. I've been pushing it down for two and a half months, Max. I've been pushing this lever down every morning to make *your* toast. Two and a half months of thankless lever-pushing -- all for you.

MAX

(Reaching for the toaster) Look, you have to jiggle it near the bottom. Here -- let me do it.

CHLOE

You keep your hands off my toaster! Why don't you just go and push Stephanie Vaughan's lever? Why don't you just go and jiggle *her* near the bottom? I bet her bottom jiggles plenty when you push her lever.

CHLOE slams the toast down and, this time, it stays.

MAX

Chloe, listen, *nothing* happened. She called -- I brought over the box -- we had a cup of coffee -- I left. That's it. That's all. End of story.

Pause.

CHLOE

(Slowly) You went inside?

MAX

What...?

CHLOE

You went inside her apartment?

MAX

Well...yeah...I guess I...

CHLOE

You went inside her apartment and had coffee? *With tampons?!*

Banging from the floor.

The picture falls off the wall.

MRS. BELL

(Off-stage) The Showcase Showdown is on!

MAX

(Holding the picture up for protection) Well, what else was I supposed to do? Stand out on the sidewalk and pitch it in through her window? Cram it through an air vent? Beam it down with Captain Kirk and the away-team?

CHLOE

(Crying) Well, let me tell you something, Maximilian Eric Brock. You and Stephanie Vaughan and Captain Kirk can all “beam down,” squeeze through an air vent, and go pitch yourselves through her window together! *(Running to the upstage door)* And from now on you can cook your own breakfast, push your own lever, and drink all the coffee and tampons you want!

CHLOE slams the door.

MAX sighs, re-hangs the picture, and goes upstage to the door.

MAX

(Knocking on the door) Chloe! Chloe, open this door!

The door opens a crack and a ring flies out and hits MAX on the head.

MAX

(Picking up the ring) Chloe, that ring was a gift from my great-aunt Mary-Carol! Now you open this door right now!

The door opens a crack and a tampon flies out and hits MAX on the head.

MAX

Ow! That hurt! You could have put my eye out with that thing! Men aren't supposed to touch that stuff -- there's no telling what it could do! You want me to get “toxic shock” syndrome or something?

MAX tries the door and finds it locked. He kneels down and looks through the keyhole.

MAX

Come on, baby -- please stop crying. You know I can't stand seeing you cry. Chloe, no, don't turn your back on me... don't you do that to my toothbrush! Chloe, don't you give me that finger!

MAX sighs, defeated, and sits on the floor with his back to the door.

MAX

All right!...*(quietly)* all right. I screwed up. I admit it. I should have told her to call somebody else -- *anybody* else -- or get her *own* damn box of tampons. But nothing

happened, Chloe -- and you want to know why? Because I love *you*. I've always loved you -- from the first time you waited on my table at the diner. I fell in love with everything -- the way you spilled orange juice on my suit. The way your thumb always ended up in my hashbrowns. The way you held my hand when you were making change. And I always loved the way you made my eggs -- no matter which way I ordered them -- no matter which way you made them.

MAX doesn't see CHLOE open the door behind him.

And *that's* what I should have just told Stephanie Vaughan when she called -- that I was too busy...too caught up in traffic... too crazy about the girl I married.

CHLOE

Do you really love the way I make scrambled eggs?

MAX

(Standing up and slipping the ring back onto her finger) Baby, I love every scrambled thing about you.

MAX kisses CHLOE.

CHLOE

(Still hugging him) I love you too -- and I need you to pick something up from the pharmacy for me.

MAX

Anything you want, baby. Blue box -- pink box -- economy-size -- extra-absorbent. You just name it, and I'm your man.

CHLOE

A home pregnancy kit.

MAX freezes.

The toaster pops.

The picture falls off the wall.

MRS. BELL

(Loud and trailing off) Dammmmmn!

BLACKOUT