

## DANCE ME TO THE END OF LOVE

a 10-minute play by Ken Kaye

**Peter**, 30, single

**Catherine**, 50, business casual

**Margery**, 40, a minister in sweatshirt and jeans

**Allie**, 30, Peter's date

*Scene: Pleasant day. Two empty tables (not close to each other) on the patio of a suburban coffee shop. Peter comes out carrying a "Grande" and a book, looks at his watch, takes a seat at one of the tables, facing the audience.*

### PETER

I was early, like I said, but I had this book in the car, that Allie had given me? A Leonard Cohen love song – very romantic. So I thought ... well, you know, be reading it while I wait for her. I hadn't been dating her long enough to know if she'd keep me waiting.

*He reads silently as Catherine and Margery emerge with coffees and take the other table. Catherine sits parallel to Peter, Margery across from her and more visible to him.*

The words don't make a whole lot of sense – stuff like "Dance me to your beauty with a burning violin" – but it's obviously about love. Which is weird, because she gave it to me after only our second date.

I'd broken up with someone not long ago, and I'm thinking how I never got anything like this from her. Nothing that came right out and said "I love you passionately," which is what I figure the burning violin means. I can't say I'm crazy about Leonard Cohen. But I am definitely sort of interested in Allie. So I'm thinking about these words "Dance me to the end of love."

Then I get distracted by this conversation two women are having at the next table. The one dressed like a gym teacher could have been just a friend, but I guessed right away she was a clergy person. Earnest.

### MARGERY

Have you thought about what sort of thing you want to say to each other?

### PETER

I wasn't eavesdropping; they were practically on top of me.

### CATHERINE

I tried to write something after we talked on the phone the other day. *(unfolds a piece of lined paper and smoothed it on the table)* All I

came up with is “In the presence of our children and our dearest friends I renew the vows I made to you twenty-five years ago.”

**MARGERY**

(*when Catherine doesn't continue*) Well, I think that's fine ... unless you wanted to say something about your faith? Did you want to say “in the presence of God” as well?

**CATHERINE**

Should we say that? Before, or after children and friends?

**MARGERY**

(*hesitates before weighing in*) It's really up to you, Catherine.

**CATHERINE**

Do we have to make long declarations? We didn't say anything the first time, as far as I remember, except ‘I do.’

I mean ... are you going to lead us through it? A phrase at a time?

**MARGERY**

I can do that if you want me to.

**PETER**

So right then I happen to see this line in the book in front of me: “Dance me to the wedding now, dance me on and on.”

Of course Allie couldn't have meant *our* wedding, it was just a poem, but ... what *did* she mean?

**MARGERY**

Or do you want to just read your vows?

**CATHERINE**

I guess, I don't know, I ... how do other ...

**PETER**

I couldn't not listen, frankly – she was pathetic.

**MARGERY**

I tell you what. Why don't you tell me what else you plan to include in the ceremony, and maybe that'll help you decide about the details.

**CATHERINE**

What should we include?

**MARGERY**

Well – maybe a reading of some kind?

**CATHERINE**

You mean like from the Bible?

**MARGERY**

Doesn't have to be. Could be a poem that's special to the two of you?  
Or you could each choose something to read to one another?

**CATHERINE**

Good luck! Robert's the sort of man who has his secretary choose his Hallmark cards.

Oh, gosh, I don't know. What kind of readings do people have?

**MARGERY**

All kinds of things. It's more flexible than a wedding. I mean, this is just kind of, you know, just very personal, between you and Robert in the presence of your friends.

**CATHERINE**

Personal.

**PETER**

She pondered that. Like she didn't know what the word meant.

**MARGERY**

Very much so. Personal and spiritual. That's why I asked if you want to say something about renewing your vows before God? ... Or, I could say that. Your reading can be something that expresses what you feel about your marriage.

**CATHERINE**

What I feel about my marriage. Do you have any examples?

**PETER**

*(reading)* "Dance me through the curtain that our kisses have outworn,  
Raise a tent of shelter now that every thread is torn, ..."

I have no idea what that means.

**MARGERY**

*(hesitates; makes a note on her pad)* I'll email you some ideas, but really I bet you and Robert could come up with better ones. Oh! You know what one couple did last summer? This was in their home, too; in their garden. Each of their children chose a poem that meant something to them, about their parents' commitment to each other and to the family.

**PETER**

That sounded risky to me—what if your kids didn't think your marriage was so hot? What if they chose that poem by Edgar Allen Poe about the crow, "Never more!" Or that Lynyrd Skynyrd song "Freebird"?

Wonder what I'd choose, if my parents renewed their vows and we each had to do a reading. Probably something corny like "When I'm 64." They'd love that, actually.

**MARGERY**

Were you thinking of having any music?

**CATHERINE**

How long is this supposed to be, anyway?

**MARGERY**

I would suggest eight minutes.

**CATHERINE**

Eight minutes. That's with the music, and readings, and all?

**MARGERY**

Yeah. A wedding is normally about twelve minutes, but that would feel pretty long, I think, for this kind of thing.

**CATHERINE**

Are people going to be standing through the whole thing? I hadn't thought of bringing in chairs for everyone.

**MARGERY**

Standing is fine. They won't mind standing for six or eight minutes. In fact, I think that makes it more intimate.

**PETER** *looks at his watch and into the café,  
wondering where his date is.*

**CATHERINE**

Intimate. ... So ... six or eight minutes would be, what, a three minute piano piece and then a two minute reading by Sarah and two by Robbie, then repeat our vow and get your blessing and then everybody goes home?

**MARGERY**

*(laughs as though Catherine were joking; then exchanges a look with Peter while Catherine is making a note)* Do they go home, or ... are you planning to serve anything? Coffee and cake or something like that?

**CATHERINE**

What do you suggest? Just coffee and cake or should we offer drinks? Not champagne, I don't think. Or do you? Do they usually serve champagne at these things?

**MARGERY**

What do you and Robert envision?

**CATHERINE**

I doubt if he had in mind dinner. The whole thing was his idea, and then ... he's just leaving it to me, as usual!

Dinner? My God, no. No, no. No, this is what? Four o'clock? Cake, cookies, punch – what about two punches, one with champagne and one without? Or do you think we should have a bar, give them gin and tonics or whatever ...

Just a minute: could we go back to the music question? Sarah plays piano – my daughter? I could ask her if she wants to play, that is if she's got something appropriate, maybe her Ravel piece. Or should it relate in some way to marriage? Oh, gosh. I don't have a clue what ...

**PETER**

Clueless was the word, all right; totally indecisive.

**CATHERINE**

But then if she plays, and also reads something, that would be two things for Sarah. Maybe the music should be her thing, and the reading Robbie's?

**MARGERY**

That would be fine. Or – do you think he would mind her also reading?

**PETER**

No way would Robbie give a shit. Really – give me a break. But Catherine agonized about that for awhile, and if she had her friend Claire read something, what about their friend Joanne, or should it be a man and a woman, and then she started asking what she should wear, which you could see was not the minister's strong suit.

**MARGERY**

It gets complicated, doesn't it?

**CATHERINE**

(*murmurs*) Complicated.

**MARGERY**

(*looks at her watch*) Isn't Robert joining us?

**CATHERINE**

I mentioned I was going to get together with you. He didn't seem to feel a need to join us.

**MARGERY**

Oh. So, then ... have you and he even talked about what you want to do?

**CATHERINE**

He said all he had meant was why didn't we do "something", he didn't care what. (*sighs*) Ohhhhhhh

**MARGERY**

Really.

**CATHERINE**

Yeah, um, yeah, our friends the Donohues did it – in their home, too, but see they're Catholic, their priest actually did a whole service and the guests, those who were Catholic I suppose, went up and took Communion, so I don't know how much would fit our ...

**MARGERY**

Did Robert have something similar in mind? Without the Eucharist, of course?

**CATHERINE**

Who the hell knows? He always does this to me!

**PETER**

Why don't you just get a fucking divorce? (*they don't hear him*)

**CATHERINE**

(*looking at the time*) I have to go, can we ...

**MARGERY**

So he wants you to know what he wants, without talking about it.

*They leave, passing Allie at the door.*

**ALLIE**

Sorry, I thought you'd be inside.

**PETER**

(*snaps*) Why did you give me this?

What's this about a wedding? Don't you think it's a little premature? What the hell is this burning violin supposed to mean?

**ALLIE**

*(startled)* Gee. Sorry. It's only a poem.

**PETER**

*(to audience)* So I told her all about Catherine and the minister.

*(to Allie)* Trying to renew her commitment to ... eternal misery.

**ALLIE**

*(laughs, entertained)*

**PETER**

It wasn't even funny! Scary.

**ALLIE**

*(mock-serious)* Maybe we shouldn't even date, then, huh? Look where it could lead!

**PETER**

*(to audience)* She was laughing at me – and of course she was right. Whatever happens, we couldn't wind up like that.

Could we?

**End of Play**