

Excerpt from *Man Covets Bird*, written by Finegan Kruckemeyer. Not to be presented without official licensing. To enquire, please go to: finegankruckemeyer.com

Scene One: The bit where the play begins

The man stands and delivers.

MAN: We are looking, you and I, at a baby being rocked to sleep for the very first time in his life. But he cannot sleep – he has been born only ten minutes ago. Why in the world would he be tired yet?

It is later. He is a boy now, and this boy is being taught words in a schoolhouse by a stern teacher. They are arguing. She says that every word that ever existed sits in this dictionary. But he is sure there are more words than that. ‘There are not’, she roars. ‘What about *hahhhhhhh*, then?’ he offers. And he tells her about the word you say to ice, that makes it melt. And she walks away from him, shaking her head.

The boy has become a teenager. And everything he does right now, is sensible. And so everybody thinks, that he is growing into ‘a very sensible young man’. But what he hasn’t told anyone, is that he is just getting ready to be as unsensible as possible.

The young man is a nearly-man. This is exactly what it says. He looks like a man, and sounds like a man. People see him as a man. But he does not feel like a man. Because he has not had man experiences. And for different people these are different things. Buying a house is a man experience, as is becoming a father, or winning a fight, or loving someone more than you love yourself. But for him, the experience he needs, is... what? He is not sure.

The nearly-man sits with his parents at the dinner table, and wonders how to become a grown-up. He clears his throat and says: ‘Mama, Papa, tonight I...’ And he finds in this moment that the dictionary really isn’t finished yet. Because there truly is no word for what he wants to ask, to these two people who look at him with their loving eyes.

‘Tonight I... Tonight I love you’, he says. ‘Hahhhhhhh’, they say together. And it melts any ice that was ever in danger of forming between them.

‘Goodnight’, he says, and kisses them both on each cheek, and goes to sleep. And even though everything is the same as every other night – he sleeps on the right-hand side, he has two sips of water before switching off the light, he switches off the light – what the nearly-man does not know, is that he will wake a completely different person.