

BEGINNING

David Eldridge

LAURA:

*(Silence.)*

No more in the gym at seven. No more foreign films on my own and a meal deal for one. No more reading every book on the Booker shortlist and making smug recommendations to Tuesday Book Club. No more just 'Auntie Laura'. None of it.

*(Silence.)*

What's wrong with that?

*(Silence.)*

What's wrong with wanting to have a family and be married and be normal though?

*(Silence.)*

My friends are all so jealous of my independence. My career. My courage embracing being on my own. My travelling. My dates, my lovers, my embarrassing nights out

*(She screams.)*

But it's so, so, so ... You know?

*(Silence.)*

I want a people carrier. I want a big house in Essex. I want kids. I want a family. I want a husband. I want to work from nine till five Monday to Thursday and then have the day on a Friday to be with my son or my daughter. I want to be married. And I want a normal husband I can rely on. And I still want a fucking white dress. And I want to put all the pictures on Facebook. Every last single one, though. I want pictures of you kissing me on the steps of the church. Of you dancing with me to Bros. Of you carrying me up to our room when I'm totalled at the end of the night. I want pictures of me with your mum and your nan. Who both love me. I want pictures of us with our baby. I want pictures of me making cupcakes with him. Or her. Or him. Or her. I want the place on the Amalfi coast. I want to be a size fourteen. I want us to go to the opera and you to wear black tie. Just because we've never done anything like it before and maybe we'll never do it again because we hate it. But we'll laugh. We'll laugh ourselves sick with laughing. We'll turn fifty and start looking the same. Me with short hair. And us in matching body warmers. And we'll cruise. We'll go on a cruise just like my mum and dad did. Before they died

*(Silence.)*

But we won't die young like them. We'll be like the couple I saw at Heathrow.

*(Silence.)*

Eighty, maybe ninety. Him in a jacket and trousers. And her in a long elegant violet dress. Holding hands. Holding hands and never letting go.

*(Silence.)*