

# WEN

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1 m/ 1 w

## CHARACTERS

Gwen...wife

Henry... husband

## SETTING

Think minimalist. A suggestion of their bathroom and bedroom.

\* pronounced like "when"

AT RISE:

GWEN is brushing her teeth while HENRY is rearranging the strands of his hair to cover his balding head.

HENRY

How's this?

GWEN

(Mouth full of toothpaste)

Mmmmm . . . hmmm . . . uhhmmmm . . .

HENRY

(rearranging his hair)

What about this?

GWEN

Rrrrrrkkkklllmm.

HENRY

Look Gwen, I think if it was your hair thinning I'd be responding in English. I'd be very supportive. I'd probably remind you the greatest Queen of England was also bald-- which just happened to be tonight's final Jeopardy answer, but then you weren't here.

GWEN

Did they say she was a virgin? Trust me, she wasn't.

HENRY

I don't remember. Geez, Gwen, there's toothpaste everywhere.

GWEN

I promise before we die I'll put the tops on everything-- including your coffin. That was a joke honey. I swear I'll die first and if I don't, I'll leave the top off your box so I can look at you forever.

HENRY

Look at my head -- you may not get your wish.

GWEN

What's wrong with your head? It's beautiful.

(GWEN checks her palm pilot.)

So what's there anyway? A zit? Come to bed honey and we'll talk about it.

HENRY

There's a wen, Gwen, and it's here now. But you're not. You're inside that damn computer planning the rest of our lives.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GWEN

Come over and lay down on these new sheets. I ordered them on the Internet and they smell just like a South American rainforest. And you know what that does to you --

HENRY

My life may be hanging by a thread and all you want to do is jump my bones?

GWEN

Honey, you've been going bald since we met. It's not going to change a thing except that you'll have to wear a hat in the winter and good sun block year round. But I found a gel that doesn't feel the least bit sticky. Come to bed, honey and I'll show you.

HENRY

Now?

GWEN

I'm booked the next twenty-four seven.

HENRY

Damn it Gwen, now you're even scheduling our sex life? Does that computer know it's my birthday next week? Can it tell you if I'll make full professor this spring? Does it say this thing on my head will kill me?

GWEN

Ummm . . . let's see . . . It says you get an extra kiss birthday boy. And that thing on your head is just a bump.

HENRY

It's not just a bump. I don't think. And it's fat.

GWEN

Actually, I think the term is "fatty"...not "fat." "Fat" in this context is very different. C'mon, Tarzan!

(GWEN is seductive. HENRY's not responding.)

HENRY

Well, swollen then. It's definitely a swollen kind of thing.

GWEN

Honey, it's a growth. Swollen is more like an accident. If you didn't hit your head on the new cabinet door again, then it's just a little growth.

HENRY

It feels absolutely pregnant.

GWEN

Interesting. I'd never think of calling it pregnant. Exactly how do you feel about that word?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HENRY

I don't know. It's great. I mean, what is this thing?

GWEN

So you think pregnant is a great word?

HENRY

Yes, of course, I guess so. I wish that thing on my head was pregnant; everyone wants to touch a pregnant woman's belly, even strangers stroke it. The bigger the better. If this was pregnant and I ran out into the street people would be laying their hands on it like it was the Buddha. Which is kind of a disgusting thought in itself. Since I'm just a slightly balding guy with a wen on his head, however, they'll be running from me like I was a rat during the Plague!

GWEN

That's true.

HENRY

What's true.

GWEN

Oh, honey . . . about the rat, not you! I know, I'm being an insensitive clod. I swear, for the next twenty-four hours I will only think of you and that pregnant lump on your head.

HENRY

Really?

GWEN

Really.

HENRY

Because I didn't mean you were insensitive. That's why this is so difficult. You're always incredibly tuned in and I'm the clod. I don't know, right now I need some tuning. My life needs tuning. It's a piano with broken keys, a harp with missing strings. It's, oh I don't know what it is but it's just disappointing.

GWEN

All of it?

HENRY

No. Not you.

GWEN

Are you sure? You still love my caresses, don't you?

HENRY

Absolutely.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GWEN

Everywhere?

HENRY

Everywhere.

GWEN

Like here?

HENRY

Could we get back to that later?

GWEN

You're just not turned on by me anymore, are you?

HENRY

No, Gwen. I love you. I lust for you.

GWEN

Because I understand that lately I'm all work, work, work.

HENRY

You love your job and you're good at it. That makes me \*happy. Even if it's like having three people here sometimes.

GWEN

I'm becoming what you hate most. What I hate most and that's not a big turn on.

HENRY

No, no, you're still a big turn on. It's just my hair's falling out in fistfuls and they've brought in a new professor who's been published in five languages and suddenly this wen seems to be growing . . .

GWEN

Come here . . . I'm beginning to love the way you say that word. W-E-N. W-E-N? W-E-N! Grrrrrrrrrrrrr.

HENRY

Really?

GWEN

Really.

HENRY

You don't think it's NOT a wen, do you? I mean you're a lawyer, not a doctor and a tax lawyer at that so why am I asking you if I'm dying? I should see a doctor. Maybe I could leave a message.

GWEN

That's it. Come here, right now.

(GWEN grabs HENRY and starts massaging his head)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HENRY

What are you doing?

GWEN

I'm doing what I should have done in the beginning. I'm sending my ten little fingers over that precious little head so we can settle this once and for all.

HENRY

I don't know if this will actually settle it.

GWEN

Shhhhhh. I'm your wife Henry. I've already seen you through a colonoscopy, root canals, that weird foot thing you had over the summer . . .

HENRY

Glad that cleared up.

GWEN

. . . and that ingrown hair on your butt.  
(GWEN is now walking her fingers over his scalp)  
HMMMM.

HENRY

Well?

GWEN

Uh-huh.

HENRY

Say something.

GWEN

Ahhhhh.

HENRY

Dammit Gwen, tell me what you think? I can take it.

GWEN

....it's just a wen, a harmless fatty deposit.

HENRY

I don't think so.

GWEN

Well I do think so, yes, that's it exactly. It's nothing serious. Just one of those little things that grows without any rhyme or reason. You said you didn't think it was serious.

HENRY

I lied.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GWEN

Henry, do you want a drink?

HENRY

No, I want a flat head!

GWEN

Oh honey, you really think you're going to die from this don't thing don't you?

HENRY

I know I'm going to die from something. That's reality and reality is growing increasingly heavy on my head.

GWEN

You're a scientist. A great mind. You're logical.

HENRY

I'm very average. Not a genius. And right now logic has flown out of my very mediocre mind.

GWEN

I don't agree. Henry, you were the one who taught me everything I know about life forms and how to accept their natural deaths. You helped me believe there is some magnificent design in all of this mystery.

HENRY

That's nice. But I'm not some magnificently mysterious life form, Gwen. I'm just a man who's about to turn thirty eight and wondering if this isn't the beginning of the end--MY end.

GWEN

My mother had these all over her head and you know what happened to her?

HENRY

She died.

GWEN

She lived sixty-two miserable years and was killed when a postal truck jumped the curb and buried her in catalogues and soap samples. It's crazy out there Henry. We've got to make sense of our lives in here.

HENRY

That story didn't make me feel better.

GWEN

It's the living that makes the difference. You told me that the first night I left my underwear and my heart in your in your apartment. You've changed the way I think . . . the way I live . . .the way I love. . . you've changed my life.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HENRY

Really?

GWEN

I know lately it I seem married to this the palm pilot or the computer or . . .

HENRY

Cell phone!

GWEN

You probably think I'm turning into some workaholic--or worse. But I swear I will never turn into my mother.

HENRY

I know you won't.

GWEN

You do?

HENRY

Absolutely. You'll always be you. And that's wonderful. You're wonderful. . .

GWEN

I don't feel so wonderful sometimes.

HENRY

But you are. And one day you'll wake up and look in the mirror and see the person I see -- not some demented image of your mother. On the other hand, I'll probably end up dead at forty-six like my dad.

GWEN

Your father smoked two packs of unfiltered cigarettes a day, drank like a fish. He worked himself to death three hundred and sixty-six days a year. He never exercised or took a vacation. You could never be that man.

HENRY

I like my wine. Maybe too much.

GWEN

Red wine is good for the heart.

HENRY

I take my vacation time but I still don't know how to relax.

GWEN

You're trying. You exercise regularly.

HENRY

I never exercise.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

GWEN

You go to the gym every other day, honey.

HENRY

I pack my bag, go to the gym and sit in the cafe drinking coffee. I'm clumsy with equipment, too slow for any game involving a court or ball and there's a seventy year old with more muscle tone than me. Actually I want his life. His exercise plan. The way young women and other guys half his age admire him. You can rub your head, pat your stomach and do our taxes while you whistle Ode to Joy. You're at home in the world and I'm still swimming upstream. The universe doesn't need a man like me and I certainly can't imagine why a woman like you would stay here forever.

GWEN

Besides your cute ass? You're a revolutionary, darling!

HENRY

Oh please. No one cares about flowers, especially the life cycle of Brazilian orchids.

GWEN

Bees care. Birds care. I care. You're a botanist, a researcher -- an environmental poet.

HENRY

Your father still makes jokes about people who grow flowers and I'm beginning to think he's right.

GWEN

There's another good reason but I fell in love with you. Lumps and all. You may be a failed vegetarian, balding, future father who thinks the world doesn't need one more fastidious botanist but it does need you. I need you. Maybe not the way our parents needed each other, but the way we do. In a world that seems senseless, you make sense. Sometimes during the day, when some executive so and so is analyzing data with his laser pointer all I can think about is your laser pointer. I want you to be my laser pointer forever.

HENRY

What did you call me?

GWEN

Fastidious botanist?

HENRY

No.

GWEN

Laser pointer?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HENRY

"Future father." That's it! You called me a future father. You didn't mention that before.

GWEN

I couldn't.

HENRY

Gwen! This changes everything. This a reason to exercise, to publish, to wake up and smell the flowers. When are we due?!

GWEN

I'd say in about nine months and twenty-four hours if \*you can forget about your mortality and tend to this.

(GWEN pulls the covers up over them)

HENRY

Gwen. I'm....I'm....so....so.

GWEN

Me too!

HENRY

What about my . . .

GWEN

I love ALL of you.

HENRY

Then you don't think we should call the doctor?

GWEN

Not for about a month.

HENRY

It's a war zone out there. Are you sure we should consider bringing a new life into it?

GWEN

I think we should definitely give the world one more try.

(Now eagerly moving under the covers)

And you?

HENRY

Oh, yes, I definitely think we should try.

GWEN

This?

HENRY

Yes. Ah, oh, owwww. Definitely. Yes.

GWEN

Are you sure?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

No. HENRY

No? GWEN

No, don't stop. HENRY

Oh, Henry, you're the most perfect man. Right there perfect. GWEN

What? HENRY

Stop. There. GWEN

Right there? HENRY

Right there, Henry. Now forget the damn wen and just do it like the birds and the bees. GWEN

Yes. Yes. Yes! HENRY

Do it for us! GWEN

Like the birds and bees! HENRY

Together! GWEN

Yes, yes, yes. TOGETHER

END OF PLAY