

# Emily Chadick Weiss

## Women, Where Are We Going

I have a playwright friend who is a mother, works a part time job and manages to have her plays produced internationally. I told her it seems like she has it all figured out. She said, "I feel like I'm not doing enough in any of those things."

In one of the most vulnerable moments of *The Heidi Chronicles*, the heroine, Heidi Holland, delivers a speech about feeling stranded at a "Women, Where are We Going" Luncheon. And though the title of the luncheon is perhaps Wendy Wasserstein spoofing these types of self-evaluating women's events, it also happens to be the central question of the play.

Scoop Rosenbaum, who is the hard-to-get yet omnipresent love of Heidi's life, won't marry her and tells her at his own wedding to a "blandish" woman (as Heidi calls her), that "On a scale from one to ten, if you aim for six and get six, every-



thing will work out nicely. But if you aim for ten in all things and get six, you're going to be very disappointed...Interesting, exemplary, even sexy, but basically unhappy. The ones who open doors usually are." Scoop defends his choice to marry a six vs. a ten, a woman who will simply be there for him instead of challenging him like Heidi would. Heidi questions her ten throughout the play. On the career front, despite being an established art historian who brings women's art to the male-dominated scene, Heidi never seems to receive much happiness from this feat. Instead she wonders how she can be more fulfilled, by either finding a man and having a family or by constantly changing location to reinvent herself. Though she adopts a baby in the final scene, achieving one of her goals of being a mother, she's still not triumphant, but she is content. And she can go forward knowing she gave herself what she needed independent of what any man was willing to give her.

When I told my mother I was writing about Wendy Wasserstein, her immediate reaction was to mourn how young Wasserstein was when she died. My mother said, "You can't have it all." Though Wendy Wasserstein was a Tony Winner (first solo Tony win for a woman without a man by her side), a Pulitzer Prize winner, and a mother, her life was cut short by sickness (she died at age 55 of lymphoma.) Her life has inspired me and I imagine many others to aim for the ten no matter who the shmuck is who tries to get in our way, a Scoop Rosenbaum who makes us question our own value, or the unavoidable bout of bad luck. *The Heidi Chronicles* should continue to receive Broadway revivals and international productions so the next generation of women that attend the "Women, Where are We Going" Luncheon can see that we have gone somewhere instead of spending our lives standing in place and beating ourselves up.

---

EMILY CHADICK WEISS is a member of Youngblood and is an EST/Alfred P. Sloan Grant recipient. Her work has been performed with the Araca Group, *The Lark*, *New Georges*, *Naked Angels* and she is a winner of Young Playwrights Inc. National Playwriting Contest. Her play, *The Last Party*, is published by Applause Theatre & Cinema Books.