

Love's Love

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A comedy about love and family

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## Synopsis

Josephine and her husband Aaron are telling the tale of how they met and what that meant for Larry; Josephine's parents choice for her hand in marriage. Selecting a bride-to-be can be a brutal business, and if Josephine has any say in it then it can be a blood sport, or a celebration. But no matter who goes to jail, or who is finally convicted, love's love.

## Setting

A restaurant and an office and a home. Office and home occupy same space. Minimal set.

## Music Transition

Restaurant - Young romantic.  
Office - Call waiting bland.  
Home - Unsettlingly suburban.

## Characters

Josephine Mid twenties.  
Aaron Mid twenties. Josephine's husband.  
Bernard Fifties. Executive. Josephine's father.  
Penelope Fifties or older. Josephine's mother. Genteel to the point of frightening.  
Larry Early thirties. Works for Bernard. Scientist.

RESTAURANT.

Restaurant music.

At a table for four Josephine and Aaron are seated facing the audience. Josephine and Aaron are talking to another couple seated downstage which the audience doesn't see or hear.

JOSEPHINE

(Laughing in reaction to what the invisible couple said) Oh hon, ain't that the funniest story, I mean, whoever heard..

Aaron pours beer from a pitcher for the other couple. One accepts, one refuses, he fills his own glass, but not Josephine's.

*Other guests speak.*

AARON

Us? I thought every body knew how we got hitched.

JOSEPHINE

It's old news now hon' don't forget that. We had our fifteen hours of fame just like that famous homosexual soup-can painter who was dead once said everyone's gonna get.

AARON

We did have our famous once.

JOSEPHINE

You can still see us on Sally Jessie on her youtube; we had an episode just to ourselves; not that I watch it much. Past is past.

AARON

Oh Pookie tell 'em about Larry. Geez this is funny, you guys, this'll kill ya.

JOSEPHINE

They don't want to hear that hon', you don't wanta hear that.

*Other guests speak*

JOSEPHINE

Well, if you're sure; it is kinda funny, for sure. Poor Larry...you know he worked for my dad...

Aaron pours more beer. Settles back into his chair.

Office music rises.

Bernard and Larry standing at a counter.

BERNARD

A promotion. A promotion is the topic of discussion

LARRY

(Surprised) Oh?

BERNARD

Get married.

LARRY

What?

BERNARD

The single man. Unreliable. Dangerous. Never certain what nonsense they'll get up to.

LARRY

I've worked for you seven years.

BERNARD

Ted Bundy.

LARRY

The serial killer?

BERNARD

Never married. Born single, died single.

LARRY

I'm not a serial-

BERNARD

John Wayne Gacy?

LARRY

Serial?

BERNARD

Killer. Single. A homo I suspect, not that it matters, you're not a homo.

LARRY

I am single.

BERNARD

You've grasped my point.

LARRY

If I want the promotion-

BERNARD

Get married.

Restaurant music.

Aaron and Josephine listen to other couple, eager to interrupt.

AARON

But see, the papers got it wrong, that was Larry - what he was really like. Lots of people got it wrong, specially when he got found guilty.

JOSEPHINE

He didn't wanta marry me right off.

AARON

Only after he talked to your mom; that sorta got him going.

JOSEPHINE

Oh god, my mom and her-

AARON

More tea dear?

JOSEPHINE

More tea dear?

Home music

Larry and Penelope. Penelope is stirring her tea and the tinkling of the spoon against the cup is heard.

PENELOPE

More tea dear?

LARRY

You know why I'm here?

PENELOPE

Bernard informed me that you'll be marrying our dear Josephine.

LARRY

She's only 15.

Penelope stops stirring her tea.  
Sound stops.

PENELOPE

Only 15? She was born fifteen years ago. Do you think she should be other than fifteen?

LARRY

No?

PENELOPE

Do you love my daughter?

LARRY

I haven't met her.

PENELOPE

Yet you insist on wedding her?

LARRY

I don't insist on anything. Bernard said he...for a promotion. I mean, this isn't my idea. I thought, she wants to marry?

Penelope resumes stirring her tea.  
Sound resumes.

PENELOPE

More tea dear?

LARRY

I prefer coffee.

Penelope drops her tea spoon. It clatters.

Restaurant music.

Aaron and Josephine nod in stunned silence at the couple across from them.

JOSEPHINE

(In a whisper)..coffee....

AARON

Black.

JOSEPHINE

Coffee.

AARON

No sugar.

JOSEPHINE

No milk.

Aaron empties the pitcher of beer into his own glass.

Josephine comes out of her daze in response to a question.

JOSEPHINE

Uh-uh, see, that right there, loads of the media got stuff wrong but it don't seem to matter to them. I put it all straight on Sally Jessie, but, I guess lotsa people don't know youtube, which is ok I guess, folks got a right to be ignorant.

AARON

We were already a couple you know, when Larry got into the picture.

JOSEPHINE

But old mom and dad weren't too happy with you and me together, like romantically, right hon.

AARON

We saw each other everyday cause we were, you know, doing what normal kids do.

JOSEPHINE

And cause we were working at the Bent Pretzel after school.

AARON

The one in the mall, not the one out near the airport.  
(Knowingly) They sell coffee at that one.

Josephine and Aaron nod in unison.

Office music.

BERNARD

My wife reports positively on your social interaction.

LARRY

Did she?

BERNARD

Penelope is considered by some to be a connoisseur of cake cuisine, and thus she has requested that you state your opinion on flavors of wedding cake.

LARRY

I'm quitting.

BERNARD

Chocolate, vanilla and traditional fruitcake are not options; something representative of the deep love you cradle is more appropriate: Raspberry swirl ice cream cake?

LARRY

(Handing Bernard an envelope)

My letter of resignation, effective immediately.

Bernard ignores the letter and  
stares at Larry intently.

BERNARD

Negotiation is not your strong suit.

LARRY

I've cleaned out my desk.

BERNARD

(Laughing) My god man you play it close to the chest.

LARRY

I'm leaving today.

BERNARD

Alright, I concede! You're on to my game.

Pause - Larry looks at Bernard expectantly.

BERNARD

A test. A test to see how you'd handle the unexpected.

LARRY

(Wants it to be true) Really?

BERNARD

As CEO you'll need to maintain calm decisiveness in the face of inexplicable and outlandish circumstances.

LARRY

I was starting to wonder.

BERNARD

Who in their right mind would choose Raspberry swirl ice cream cake? Chocolate, Vanilla or fruitcake are all acceptable. You're first decision as incoming CEO!

LARRY

(Exploding) What is wrong with you? You want me to marry your 15 year old daughter - whom I haven't met! My promotion depends on marrying her? You are a serious scientist! You own a multimillion dollar company - and you're acting like an...an imbecile.

BERNARD

You mean a great deal to me.

LARRY

(Frustrated) What?

BERNARD

Whatever I can do to keep you as an employee....

Bernard puts an arm on Larry's  
shoulder

BERNARD

..As a friend,

Bernard puts his other hand on  
Larry's waist.

BERNARD

...As CEO of my company...

Bernard leans in and kisses Larry  
quickly on each cheek.

BERNARD

Tell me, and I will do it.

LARRY

CEO?

BERNARD

One dawn you will awaken to face your future, your mortality,  
the infinite abyss that awaits, and you will exhale into your  
soul the need to stake a claim on your legacy; my daughter,  
my company, my future. You.

LARRY

CEO?

BERNARD

CEO.

LARRY

(Steeling himself with determination) Anything.

BERNARD

Go. Family is our society. Approach my daughter.

Bernard kisses Larry gently on the  
lips.

Restaurant music.

AARON

Right on the lips.

JOSEPHINE

(Responding to other couple.) You bet he was surprised.

AARON

Says it's European, but as long as he lets me keep my mouth closed, what're you gonna do?

Other couple speak

JOSEPHINE

(Laughing) A homo? Daddy? Momma'd spill her tea if she heard that. (To Aaron) Remind me to tell momma that. (To the other couple) You guys are a riot.

Responding to other couple.

JOSEPHINE

No, you got that right. Dead and buried in the backyard with her favorite teapot. Had a heart attack sitting in her chair and watching, can you believe this, Aaron 'n me on Sally Jessie! She was invited 'course, but said she wanted to see her little girl on TV, so stayed home.

AARON

If she'd come, she'd have died right there on Sally Jessie, live on TV.

JOSEPHINE

Bet the youtube's would have more than a crappy couple thousand views, you bet, there'd be like millions for sure.

AARON

Her momma was there when they met for the first time; Josephine and Larry.

JOSEPHINE

You were there too, now c'mon don't forget.

AARON

Pookie we're not "ellingtay atthay". It's a ecresteay, eatscretsay? Secret say? Somethin' 'tay.

Other couple speak.

AARON

Ecretstay! Thumbs over bums Josephine these fellows are smart.

Home music.

Penelope is stirring her tea with the spoon tinkling against the cup.

PENELOPE

My daughter is so very fragile.

LARRY

I promised your husband I would meet Josephine to consider it. I will be sensitive.

PENELOPE

More tea dear?

LARRY

Uhm...

PENELOPE

Tea is not a drink, but a ritual. Boiling water. Warming the pot, inside and out. Steeping for the appropriate amount of time.

LARRY

I prefer-

PENELOPE

Some teas ripen early. Others take time; do you know what all teas share in common?

LARRY

(Resigned to listen) No ma'am.

PENELOPE

The flavor differs.

LARRY

(Perplexed) Uhm...

PENELOPE

Each tea has a unique flavor that when tasted at the correct moment, will infuse the taster's life with a fullness that was otherwise missing.

LARRY

Uh huh.

PENELOPE

When you find the correct tea, the uncertainties of the world fall into place and chaos becomes calm.

LARRY

I see.

Penelope stops stirring her tea the sound stops.

PENELOPE

It's clear you don't. Understand this: the taste brings awareness that your life, until this point, has been without the fullness, the richness, the completeness that the tea brings. The flavor may only be enjoyed within an adequate context of appropriate instruments, settings and levels of desire.

LARRY

Desire?

Penelope taps the side of her spoon against the rim of the cup twice - then holds the spoon hovering above the rim in place.

PENELOPE

Desire can not be achieved with emptiness. Emptiness compels you to seek awareness. Awareness brings the fullest flavors of the tea to the fore. Tea without desire is like living a life as a man without a wife.

Penelope taps the spoon against the rim a third time to end her thought.

LARRY

Uh huh.

With the first two words Penelope hits the rim of her cup with the spoon.

PENELOPE

At. Any. Cost.

Larry watches the spoon hover above the rim of the cup and pauses expectantly. It doesn't tap.

LARRY

Thank you.

Penelope begins stirring her tea and tinkling against the side of her cup.

PENELOPE

More tea dear?

Larry offers his empty cup.

LARRY

Thank you ma'am.

Restaurant music and home music mix.

Josephine gets up, takes off her jacket revealing a shirt twisted into a halter top, revealing a décolletage and a bare midriff. She rolls up her skirt making it short. She goes to Penelope and Larry. Penelope begins stirring her tea. The sound of tinkling is heard.

JOSEPHINE

Hello mother.

PENELOPE

Tea dear?

JOSEPHINE

Not at the moment thank you mother.

PENELOPE

Josephine, this is the man of whom your father was speaking.

LARRY

Uhm...hello. I'm Larry. Nice to meet you.

JOSEPHINE

Mr. Wrines. My father's speaks very highly of you.

LARRY

That's very - Please call me Larry.

JOSEPHINE

Is that an abbreviation for Lawrence or Clarence perhaps?

LARRY

My parents used Larry as a nickname. My given name is Welsley.

JOSEPHINE

Mothers maiden name?

LARRY

Grandmothers.

PENELOPE

(Approvingly) Lineage.

JOSEPHINE

Mother is that the kettle?

PENELOPE

I suppose you're right. If you'll excuse me.

She exits. The sound of her tinkling spoon and cup continues for a few seconds.

LARRY

You're mother is an exceptional woman.

Josephine offers herself to Larry in a provocative manner.

JOSEPHINE

(Indicating her breasts)Want these?

LARRY

(Alarmed) What?

JOSEPHINE

My body. Oh god, take my body.

LARRY

Your mother's in-

Josephine leans into him and kisses  
his cheek.

JOSEPHINE

I want you. I've always wanted you.

LARRY

We've never met.

JOSEPHINE

Company picnic. Last summer. Your shorts? Those ankle socks?  
I told my parents, "That man is my future."

LARRY

This is your idea?

JOSEPHINE

I love you.

LARRY

You're fifteen.

JOSEPHINE

You're gonna take over dad's company. I want to be with you.  
He wants to retire. He trusts you. (Josephine nuzzles Larry)  
Have you done it with a lotta girls? You have right? You're  
gonna be so rich when you get that promotion you know. I'm  
not a little girl, I'm a woman you know. (Pleading) Teach me  
uncle Larry, I'll be a good girl I promise.

LARRY

Please stop. Stop!

Josephine pulls away.

JOSEPHINE

You don't want me?

LARRY

Yes. I mean no. I mean - you're a child - this is all going so fast. I don't want- You're a child!

JOSEPHINE

(Challenging) Take me into your life. Be CEO. You win Larry.

LARRY

Win?

JOSEPHINE

Life. You win at life. You get all the tea leaves. Money, job, prestige. Young hot wife. You want it? Then take it.

LARRY

Win?

JOSEPHINE

Win!

Larry pulls her close desperately and goes to kiss her on the mouth, but Josephine turns towards Aaron.

JOSEPHINE

Yeah, he was there. You were there weren't you hon?

AARON

Pookie, you know the rule...

Pulling herself away from Larry and putting on her jacket.

JOSEPHINE

Oh shit, sorry.

Restaurant music.

JOSEPHINE

Well, since I already told ya...he was there.

AARON

In the closet.

JOSEPHINE

Loves watchin' me, (Affectionately) Ya li'l perv.

AARON

(Touching her warmly) My Pookie is a hot babe.

JOSEPHINE

Aaron, not in front of folks...

AARON

Sorry babe.

Other couple speak.

JOSEPHINE

Yep, fer sure. Happened that night. Right after.

AARON

She texted me and I called the cops right away.

JOSEPHINE

Cheap hotel too, the one at the airport. With that Bent Pretzel in the lobby.

AARON

Room 420. I was laughing when I called the cops. 420, you know, I was laughing so hard they thought I was pulling their leg, but when I said underage and kidnapping, boy that got their attention right quick.

JOSEPHINE

Cops come banging in, screaming and making all kinds of noise. Larry jumps out of bed and I swear if he wasn't wearing a condom he would have peed on the rug.

AARON

You kinda felt sorry for him didn't you?

JOSEPHINE

I did. I come out of the bathroom and he's getting the handcuffs put on him and his little skinny weeny just hanging there. I kept thinking of a wiener that no one ate at the end of a barbecue, you know, all shriveled and sad looking.

AARON

Only hamburgers and steaks at barbecues now.

Other couple speaks.

JOSEPHINE

Four years and registered sex offender, but he got parole after eighteen months.

AARON

Heard he's living under the overpass near the airport and works at the Bent Pretzel. They'll hire anyone I guess.

Other couple speak.

JOSEPHINE

Daddy had to change his tune once Larry was charged with child luring and kidnapping. No one believed his story of course, I mean what fifteen year old would want to marry an old guy like Larry.

AARON

And all of a sudden it's ok for me to stay over as long as I like, even breakfast with the family in the morning.

JOSEPHINE

They didn't even care if I finished school or not.

AARON

I finished mine.

JOSEPHINE

Aaron....

AARON

Almost finished.

JOSEPHINE

Don't matter hon. Love you any way you are

AARON

Not a real typical story, but you know, love's love, right?

JOSEPHINE

So, about you guys...you really homo's? What's that like?