

Coming In.

Set:

5pm on a Sunday. Janet and Malcolm's dining room, dated but pristine. The dining room table is very nicely laid out with lots of sandwiches, cakes, French Fancies etc. A teapot with cozy. Present day.

Cast:

Janet – 50's, calm and content.

Malcolm – Late 50's, set in his ways.

Tom – 20's, their son.

Lesley – 20's, Tom's partner.

Malcolm: Is all this really that necessary?

Janet: Of course it is, we want to make a nice impression.

Malcolm: But all these cakes must have cost a fortune and there's far too many!

Janet: There can never be too much, just imagine if there wasn't enough. That would not do at all!

Malcolm: But forty-eight French Fancies, really?

Janet: They were on offer. Bog-off.

Malcolm: Pardon me?

Janet: Buy one, get one free!

Malcolm: Oh, I see, I think.

Janet: I don't see why you're so concerned, if there's any left you can have them for your tea tomorrow.

Malcolm: But I don't even like French Fancies, or British ones to that point.

Janet: Pardon me?

Malcolm: I've never liked them, the sponge is always too dry and I hate the gooey bit on the top.

Janet: But I've been buying them for you for years!

Malcolm: And I've hated them for years!

Janet: Twenty-seven years of marriage and you've never bothered to inform me of your dislike to French Fancies.

Malcolm: I never found the right time.

Janet: Until now.

Malcolm: Yes, until now.

Janet: Why now of all days? (*Malcolm shrugs his shoulders.*) Well we can discuss it later, Tom is due any minute. You will be polite won't you?

Malcolm: Of course.

Janet: To his new partner I mean.

Malcolm: Why does everyone have to use the word partner all the time now? In our day it was boyfriend, girlfriend, husband, wife etc.

Janet: Just modern times old man!

Malcolm: Yes, I will be on my best behavior, old lady.

Janet: And less of your cheek!

Malcolm: What's his latest one's name then?

Janet: It's *Lesley*, I've told you enough times!

Malcolm: I forget, there's been so many, isn't time he settled down with one?

Janet: Oh leave him alone, it's up to Tom to find his own way, I'm sure he will when he's ready.

Malcolm: I didn't think much of his last one, Morgan wasn't it?

Janet: You only didn't like him because he's bla....(*the doorbell rings and cuts her off.*)

Malcolm: That'll be the door.

Janet: No way, Sherlock! Promise to behave yourself!

Malcolm: Scouts honour!

(Janet exits the stage to answer the door, while she is gone Malcolm takes out a hip flask hidden somewhere, looks around and takes a quick swig. Off stage we hear greetings amongst the three, "Nice to meet you, let me take your coat etc")

(Janet returns followed by Tom and closely behind is Lesley, she is early 20's, in heels, jeans and a crop top.)

Tom: Hi Dad!

Malcolm: Hi Son, how's it hanging?

Tom: We don't say that any more Dad.

Janet: Malcolm, this is Lesley. Lesley this is Malcolm.

Malcolm: Oh, I was expecting a Lesley.

Lesley: (*slightly confused.*) Yes, that's me.

Malcolm: I mean a man Lesley.

Lesley: Oh I see, don't worry I get that all the time.

Malcolm: How do you mean.

Lesley: Lesley, can be male or female. When I'm introduced as Doctor Lesley Forster people automatically expect a man!

Malcolm: Yes I suppose so.

Janet: You're a doctor?

Lesley: Yes Mrs Dawson.

Janet: Oh just Janet, no need to be formal!

Lesley: Janet, I've just recently qualified. I'm in paediatrics.

Janet: Oh you clever poppet!

Lesley: (*aside to Tom*) Poppet?

Tom: (*whispers*) Don't worry. Any chance of a drink?

Janet: Oh yes, we've got a nice pot of tea on the go!

Tom: I was thinking of something stronger.

Janet: Of course, I'll make you a coffee!

Tom: Erm.....

Janet: Black, no sugar because you are....

Tom and Janet: (*together*) sweet enough as it is! (*they both leave towards the kitchen.*)

Malcolm: Tom has his coffee like his men.

Lesley: How do you mean Malcolm?

Malcolm: Well, you know.....

Lesley: No. (*she sees he is uneasy.*) It's OK, I know about Tom and his past, we have no secrets.

Malcolm: Janet and I have no secrets, if I try to hold a secret she can tell and sure enough she beats it out of me!

Lesley: Oh bless, is that your secret to a long marriage?

Malcolm: Oh, one of many. 'What's mine is hers and what's hers is hers' is a good one. And 'Never go to bed on an argument, stay up and fight!'

Lesley: Haha! Bless!

Malcolm: Will you have a cup of tea?

Lesley: No thank you Malcolm, water is just fine.

Malcolm: I don't blame you, it's been stewing for half an hour!

Lesley: *(laughing)* Yuk!

Malcolm: *(pouring a glass of water for Lesley from a carafe on the table.)* There you go my dear.

Lesley: Thank you Malcolm.

(Tom and Janet return.)

Janet: Do take a seat!

Lesley: *(goes to sit.)*

Janet: Not there. That's where I sit.

Lesley: Sorry, *(pulls out another chair and sits.)* It's so nice to meet you both!

Janet: And you Lesley, thanks for coming. Would you like a sandwich? We have cucumber sandwiches, jam sandwiches, sandwiches with sandwich spread because Malcolm loves sandwich spread in his sandwiches, ham sandwiches and cheese and tomato sandwiches. Oh and scrambled egg sandwiches for Tom! Help yourself love, don't be polite!

Lesley: Thank you, it all looks so delicious!

(they all collect sandwiches and put them on plates. Janet pours the tea for Malcolm, who pulls a face at Lesley.)

Janet: So how did you two meet?

Lesley: We met at a LGBTQ rally in Brighton, about a month ago I think.

Malcolm: Oh I used to have one of them.

Lesley: Pardon me?

Malcolm: Yes, 1969 model, British racing green, proper chrome bumpers.

Tom: No Dad, that was your MG BGT. This is very different!

Lesley: Hahaha!

Malcolm: I even took it on a rally to Brighton, from London, Crystal Palace if memory serves me correctly, 1984.

Tom: No Dad. *(aside to Lesley)* I'm sorry about this.

Lesley: It's fine, he's sweet!

Tom: He's anything but. Dad, it's not a car, we met at a rally in Brighton, a bit like a Pride rally.

Malcolm: Oh I see. What happened to Morgan?

Tom: Dad, not now.

Lesley: It's OK honestly.

Tom: Morgan and I split up, we had our differences shall we say, he moved out.

Malcolm: Ah, that's a shame.

Janet: Malcolm.

Tom: It's alright Mum. I'm fully aware Dad didn't like him.

Janet: *(to Lesley)* Have another sandwich my dear.

Lesley: I'll try a sandwich spread sandwich, haven't had that stuff in years!

Janet: Help yourself dear. *(loud)* Malcolm!

Malcolm: *(startled)* What?

Janet: You didn't pour Lesley a cup of tea!

Malcolm: My God woman, I thought the house was on fire!

Lesley: Haha, it's OK Janet, I'll stick to water. I'm trying to detox.

(pause, they eat.)

Malcolm: So no more Morgan. Who is it now then?

Janet: Malcolm, honestly?

Tom: Dad, he's long gone. I'm with Lesley now.

Malcolm: But Lesley is a lady.

Tom: Yes Dad! Lesley is my partner!

Malcolm: *(looks to Janet, he mouths "partner" she shakes her head)* Business partner?

Tom: No dad, partner, girlfriend if you prefer.

Malcolm: Oh I see. I think. But you're, you know.....surely.

Tom: Gay?

Malcolm: Yes.

(pause, awkward silence.)

Tom: The thing is Dad, Mum....

Janet: Yes Tom?

Lesley: *(to Tom)* It's alright, I'm here for you.

Malcolm: Tom?

Janet: Tom?

Lesley: Tom, go on.

Tom: The thing is Mum, Dad.....I'm not gay.

(long silence.)

Malcolm: What do you mean, not gay? You've always been gay.

Tom: No I haven't, not really.

Janet: That's alright Tom, we understand.

Malcolm: Do we?

Janet: Yes!

Tom: Look Mum and Dad, this isn't easy for me! Morgan leaving me, yes he left me even though I didn't want him to, well it made me think. I finally realized I've been barking up the wrong tree.

Janet: Oh don't worry Tom, I've known all along.

Tom: Eh?

Janet: Of course, a mother knows these things!

Malcolm: Not gay. *(pauses)* are you quite sure?

Tom: A hundred percent Dad. And Lesley has helped me so much since we met, she's been an absolute Godsend.

Malcolm: I'm not sure what I think about this.

Lesley: With respect Malcolm, it's irrelevant what you think, Tom isn't gay, he never really has been.

Janet: Lesley is right Malcolm, you have to accept it.

Malcolm: Are *you* Lesley?

Tom: Dad!

Lesley: Am I what?

Malcolm: Are you gay, I mean are you a les.....

Lesley: I'm a Les yes, as in Lesley. Actually I'm bi.

Malcolm: By what?

Janet: I'm sorry about this Lesley.

Lesley: It's fine Janet, don't worry. I'm bi-sexual Malcolm.

Malcolm: Well you can't have both!

Lesley: Why ever not?

Malcolm: Because it's not right. Can't you decide one way or another?

Lesley: It's not that simple Malcolm.

Malcolm: I'm sure it is.

Lesley: Believe me Malcolm it isn't. Many people struggle with their identity.

Malcolm: Well not in my day they didn't.

Lesley: Malcolm, people have struggled with their sexual identity forever, it's only now that society allows us to discuss it!

Malcolm: Well I think it's strange.

Lesley: Well it's not to me Malcolm, I'm bi-sexual, I like cock *and* pussy!

Janet: Oh my word!

Tom: *(puts his head in his hands)*

Lesley: I'm sorry Janet, that just came out. Malcolm, I like boys and girls. But since meeting Tom even *my* feelings have changed.

Tom: Really?

Lesley: *(smiling, holds Toms hand on the table)* Yes.

Malcolm: So you're telling me Tom isn't gay?

Janet: *(raising her voice)* Oh for heavens sake Malcolm, your son is straight! Deal with it!

Malcolm: *(stands up, walks away from the table a few steps, pauses, then returns, picks up the French Fancies, offering them to Lesley.)* Would you like a French Fancy or ten? We have enough to feed the whole of France!

Lesley: Yes please, I love them, haven't had them since I was a child, we would have them at my nans!

Malcolm: I can't stand the bloody things myself, have as many as you like!

Janet: Well thank you for telling us Tom.

Lesley: Yes well done. He's been stewing on it for over a week!

Janet: Oh you silly boy, you know you can talk to us about anything.

Tom: Yes sorry Mum, but I knew Dad would be a harder nut to crack.

(pause, they all continue to eat)

Janet: You know what this means now?

Malcolm: No? What?

Janet: Grandchildren!

Tom: Mum!

Lesley: Hahaha!

Malcolm: French Fancy anyone?

The End.