

# COLD FEET & HOT COFFEE

by Lewis Routh

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

Monica, mother of Betty and Ben, a wedding planner

Julius [aka "Julie"] father of Betty and Ben, an artist who is also a liquor store owner

Betty, their soon-to-be wedded daughter

Ben, their gay son

Taylor Cummings, Betty's fiancée

**Synopsis:** The parents of the bride fret over the upcoming wedding. Is her fiancée gay? Their son is and there are signs the fiancée may be, too.

Scene: a lovely, antique dining table and four chairs, perhaps a beautiful, dark, brocade drape over a "dead-hung" window. The lighting is "localized" on the table; those who stand outside this light are in shadows. It is late at night. Monica enters, she is wearing a robe over her nightgown, slippers, and she carries a partial cup of coffee and a photo album. Monica sits at the table and opens the photo album, slowly traversing the memories the photos bring, stopping occasionally to pick up the mug and sip. Some of the photos make her smile, others make her stop to consider where and when they were taken, still others make her chuckle – all bring a little tear to her eye.

**Julie**

*(Julie enters, wearing pajamas and slippers. Julie stops in the doorway looking at Monica.)*

You couldn't sleep either?

**Monica**

Who could?

**Julie**

Betty. I looked. She's dead-to-the-world.

**Monica**

Nothing ever fazes her. Calm as a cucumber. Always has been. Did you check on Ben, too?

**Julie**

*(A dark cloud passes over his face.)*

Yes. He was naked-as-a-jay-bird and snoring like a freight-train.

*(He sits, moodily.)*

**Monica**

Snoring? Ben never snored.

**Julie**

Well, he's snoring now. Even with the pillow over his face I could hear him!

**Monica**

He was out pretty late with Taylor.

**Julie**

*(Startled, looks at her.)*

What do you mean by that?

**Monica**

Nothing. I heard them come in after the bachelor party. It was late. Somebody's in the den on the sofa bed with the covers pulled over his head. Did they wake you?

**Julie**

No. I couldn't sleep either.

*(Sees her mug of coffee.)*

Is there coffee?

*(Monica looks at him for a beat, then rises and exits to get him coffee. Julie is visibly worried. He drags the photo album over and begins to scan the pages. His reactions are not the same as Monica's – he finds pictures that make him frown, some that force a grunt of displeasure, and others that are so repugnant he quickly turns the page in disgust. Monica enters with a tray holding the coffee carafe, the cream and sugar, a teaspoon, two cloth napkins, two saucers, a plate of sweet-cakes, and a mug.)*

**Monica**

*(Monica sets the tray on the dining table and begins to unload it onto the table, setting the mug in front of Julie, pouring coffee into it and into her own.)*

I was looking at our photo album. A lot of memories in there.

**Julie**

So I see. God, was I ever that young?

*(Julie wants his coffee black; and Monica begins to spoon some sugar into her own mug.)*

I don't want sugar, I take it black.

**Monica**

This is for me, Julie. You don't mind if I have cream and sugar, do you?

*(She continues to sugar and cream her coffee as he paws through the photo album.)*

After twenty-two years of marriage, you should know that I remember you take your coffee black.

**Julie**

I don't know what you know.

*(Points at a picture.)*

Our first date. I brought you flowers.

**Monica**

And you gave them to my mother. She thought that was so sweet.

**Julie**

*(A dark cloud passes over his face.)*

And then I screwed everything up with your dad.

**Monica**

You didn't screw-it-up, Julie. They still laugh about that and tell that story. You handed Mom the flowers and turned to Dad and said, "I'm sorry, I didn't bring you anything, Sir."

**Julie**

He scared me. Hell, he still scares me. He looks at me like I'm some kind of worm.

**Monica**

*(Looks at him for a beat, then sits. Idly begins to stir her coffee.)*

I should have known from our first date, what kind of husband you'd be. You took me to dinner, and after dinner, we ordered coffee and the waitress says, "Cream and sugar?" And you say, "No." Then I have to loudly embarrass myself in that fine-dining restaurant by shouting, "I take cream and sugar."

**Julie**

How was I supposed to know how you take your coffee? It was our FIRST DATE for "cripe's sake." And it wasn't "fine dining," it was the all-night *Pancake Palace*.

**Monica**

*(Sees a particular photo in the open album.)*

I don't remember taking that picture.

**Julie**

You didn't. Some stranger at the park took it.

**Monica**

It's a nice picture of you and Ben. You both look so happy. He was what; eight then? "Devoted Father; Loving Son," that should be the name of it.

**Julie**

It was a pretty good day. I tried to teach him to throw a ball and catch it in a glove. I was the only one who enjoyed it though.

**Monica**

Oh, that's not true. Look how happy he is!

**Julie**

No, it's true. He cried 'cause I threw the ball to him and it hit his arm. He always cried. Cried all the time; a big sissy-boy. The most unhappy kid I ever knew.

**Monica**

But you could always get him to stop.

**Julie**

By drawing... that's true. The day this picture was taken, he was crying and I drew in the sand... What was that I drew? Oh, yeah...a bird... with its wings outstretched... flying... and Ben stopped crying.

*(He breaks his own reverie, pushes the book aside.)*

That's a stupid thing to remember.

**Monica**

*(After a moment of studying him.)*

Julie?

**Julie**

What?

**Monica**

Can I ask you something?

**Julie**

If I say, "No," will you still ask me?

**Monica**

Of course.

**Julie**

So why do you bother to ask?

**Monica**

It's the polite thing to do.

**Julie**

And if I say, "No," the polite thing to do would be to not ask it.

**Monica**

The polite thing would be for you to say, "Yes, my darling, ask away."

**Julie**

"Yes, my darling Monica, ask away."

**Monica**

It's kind of nice having the kids back, isn't it?

**Julie**

I was just getting used to the peace and quiet.

**Monica**

Well, it's only till after the wedding. This is the nicest wedding I've ever planned.

*(Julie groans and pulls the photo album back in front of himself, absent-mindedly turning pages and scowling at the photos.)*

It's kind-a nice that Taylor wants Ben to be his best man.

**Julie**

That's "nice?" What's NICE about that? Who wants a fairy for a best man?

**Monica**

Julius Orville Greene, I am absolutely shocked at you! We do not use the "F-word" in this house.

**Julie**

*(Matter-of-factly.)*

Monica, "Fairy" isn't the "F-word." "Fuck" is the "F-word."

**Monica**

That is no way to talk about your only son. I think it's sweet that Taylor wants Ben to be his best man.

**Julie**

That's the word for it, "Sweet."

*(He pushes the photo album in front of her and points at a picture.)*

Is that us? I know that's ME; but is that YOU?

**Monica**

*(Looks at photo.)*

Yes, that's you and me at our wedding reception.

*(Points at two others on the same page.)*

And that one -- and that one, too.

*(She looks at Julie who is still scowling.)*

That was back when you knew how to smile and be happy.

**Julie**

I don't remember you ever being that fat. It doesn't even look like you.

**Monica**

I was pregnant.

**Julie**

*(Studies the photo for authentication.)*

You were?

**Monica**

You know I was, Julie! You're just trying to get a rise out of me!

**Julie**

*(He looks at her in mock surprise.)*

You were that pregnant at our wedding?

**Monica**

*(Sarcastic.)*

No, just at the reception. It must have happened during the ceremony. "I now pronounce you man and wife. You may now impregnate the bride."

**Julie**

*(Studying the photo some more.)*

It doesn't even look like you. God, you were big.

**Monica**

Twins.

**Julie**

What?

**Monica**

I was pregnant with twins.

**Julie**

Betty and Ben were big babies, too. No wonder you were so fat.

**Monica**

You know, you do that all the time.

**Julie**

Do what?

**Monica**

Pretend you don't know anything about me. It's very annoying. It's...

*(She searches for the word.)*

It's exasperating!

**Julie**

*(Closes the photo album and snatches up his coffee.)*

I know more about you than you know. In fact, I know things about you that no one else knows!

**Monica**

Then tell me something you – and only you – knows about me.

*(He thinks about this a moment, then lifts his coffee for a drink. Monica warns him quickly.)*

Careful it's hot.

**Julie**

*(Takes a drink. It's very hot and burns his tongue.)*  
Damn! Why do you make it so hot?

**Monica**

I don't make it hot, Julie; the *Mr. Coffee* makes it hot.

**Julie**

Well, why didn't you warn me?

**Monica**

I did.

**Julie**

Well, next time warn me sooner.

**Monica**

I warn you every morning. For twenty-two years, it's the same thing! You get up. You sit down next to me and ask me, "Is there coffee?" or "Did you make coffee?," knowing full well that I always make coffee, and I dutifully get up and get the coffee for you – I even pour you a cup – and then I say, "Careful, it's hot." But you – as usual -- ignore me and pick up the cup and drink it anyway; then you say – in that exasperating way, "Why didn't you tell me it was hot?"

**Julie**

*(He snickers under his breath.)*  
That's not a cup, it's a mug.

**Monica**

There's a word for you, Julius Orville Greene, you are "exasperating."

**Julie**

Ah-ha! There is something that only I know about you, Monica.

**Monica**

What?

**Julie**

I know that you're studying the dictionary to improve your vocabulary. And how many times have you used your word-of-the-day or a variant of it?

**Monica**

*(Proudly holding up four fingers.)*  
Four times.

**Julie**

Four times! Monica Greene has used today's word FOUR TIMES – and today's word is "exasperate!"

**Monica**

Keep your voice down, you'll wake the kids. And a lot you know! That was yesterday's word.

**Julie**

What's the word of the day?

**Monica**

“Exasperator – a noun, meaning to make very angry or annoy greatly.”

**Julie**

Do you mean ME, Monica? Am I an exasperator? Do I greatly annoy you? Am I making you very angry?

**Monica**

*(A beat as she studies him. Then, sweetly, she chimes; almost musically.)*

No. Thank you.

**Julie**

What the hell are you talking about? “No thank you?” No thank you for what?

**Monica**

I’m not going to argue with you this morning, Julie. This is the glorious morning our daughter, Betty, marries Taylor Cummings with our gay son, Ben as his best man. And you – and your “blankety-blank” ways are not going to spoil it for me.

**Julie**

*(He snickers under his breath again.)*

It’s not morning; it’s the middle of the night.

**Monica**

Are you being disagreeable on purpose or are you just “spoiling for a fight?”

**Julie**

It’s just the “blankety-blank” exasperating ways of an exasperator!

*(She laughs musically. It’s now his turn to study her for a beat.)*

You know, Monica, for twenty-two years I’ve never gotten tired of hearing you laugh. It’s the first thing I noticed about you and I said to myself, “Now there’s a laugh that I could hear every day for the rest of my life and never get tired of it.

**Monica**

*(She laughs, and then kisses his cheek.)*

Sometimes, you can be the sweetest things... sometimes... but not as often as I would like.

**Julie**

And you’re awfully chipper for someone who is facing the most momentous day of her life tomorrow.

**Monica**

It’s not MY momentous occasion; it’s Betty’s.

**Julie**

It may be your daughter’s wedding; but you planned it and you know how you get... worried over every detail.

**Monica**

I’m a wedding planner, Julie. I get paid to worry. Don’t you worry? She’s your daughter, too!

**Julie**

Don’t I know.

**Monica**

You'd think you'd be glad she's getting married.

**Julie**

*(Unenthusiastic.)*

I'm thrilled.

**Monica**

We're not losing a daughter, you're gaining a studio.

**Julie**

I already have a studio. I got my studio when Ben moved out.

**Monica**

Yes, but now you can tear down that wall and have yourself a bigger studio.

**Julie**

You can come up with the craziest notions sometimes.

**Monica**

It's not MY crazy notion! It's your crazy notion! You said yourself, "Maybe, after the wedding, we could tear down this wall and enlarge my studio."

**Julie**

I was just talking.

**Monica**

"Just talking!" You said the same thing when Ben left home and the next day you were clearing out his stuff and re-painting. You had your easel in there first thing, going, "Oh, great light! Great light!"

**Julie**

That was different.

**Monica**

How is it different?

**Julie**

I knew Ben wouldn't be coming back.

**Monica**

*(This stops her for a moment, as she allows his comment to sink in.)*

So, you think Betty will be coming back?

**Julie**

*(Wanting to change the subject, he reaches for a sweet-cake.)*

Aren't these little cakes for the wedding?

**Monica**

Yes, I had the caterer deliver them yesterday; because he's NEVER on time; but they won't miss four, and don't change the subject! You think Betty's coming back home?

**Julie**

Well... frankly, yes.

*(He takes a bite of the cake.)*

**Monica**

*(Sliding a saucer in front of him.)*

Eat over the plate.

*(He laughs and crumbs go everywhere.)*

Watch what you're doing! What's so dad-burn funny?

**Julie**

That's not a plate, it's a saucer.

**Monica**

In two seconds it's going to be the dad-burn thing I brain you with! And don't change the subject!

*(Julie pops the remainder of the cake into his mouth, stuffing his face.)*

Why do you think Betty's marriage won't last?

*(Julie gestures that his mouth is full and he can't speak.)*

Oh, you are the most exasperating man!

*(Julie holds up five fingers for the fifth time she's used "exasperate" in a sentence. Monica rises and begins to clean up the crumbs, wiping the table with a cloth napkin, moving the crumbs to the edge of the table where she gently sweeps them into her hand and dumps them from her hand onto his saucer. Julie uses his fingers to retrieve these crumbs and pops them into his mouth one by one.)*

Take as much time as you want, Julie; but you're going to answer my question. Why do you think Betty's marriage is not going to last?

**Julie**

*(Chews and swallows the last bits of cake, picks up his mug, blows on the coffee, sips it and sips it again before finally answering.)*

Taylor.

**Monica**

Taylor?

**Julie**

Yes, Taylor.

**Monica**

Her fiancée?

**Julie**

No, the Vietnamese tailor at the dry cleaners! Of course Taylor, her fiancée!

**Monica**

*(Ponders this for a moment.)*

What's wrong with Taylor?

**Julie**

*(Stares at her for a long moment.)*

Are you blind?

**Monica**

Taylor is a stunningly handsome young man! I've never seen a more handsome man than Taylor.

**Julie**

Except for Ben.

**Monica**

Well, of course, Ben is handsome. What mother wouldn't think her son is a handsome young man? But Taylor is, too!

**Julie**

Yes, Taylor is just as handsome as Ben.

**Monica**

So? What do you mean?

**Julie**

They're practically twins.

**Monica**

They ARE twins, Betty and Ben ARE twins.

**Julie**

Not Betty and Ben; Taylor and Ben.

**Monica**

What are you babbling about? They're not twins, they're friends.

**Julie**

Best friends!

**Monica**

So?

**Julie**

*(Pointedly.)*

So-o-o-o-o-o?

**Monica**

*(It takes some mind-probing; but the dawn finally breaks for her. Alarmed!)*

No!

**Julie**

Yes!

**Monica**

It can't.... you don't mean?

**Julie**

Absolutely!

**Monica**

How do you know?

**Julie**

I looked.

**Monica**

*(Shocked.)*

You saw him... doing it with Ben?

**Julie**

*(Appalled.)*

No! Where'd you get that idea?

**Monica**

Well, what do you mean you saw?

**Julie**

I didn't say "I saw," I said "I looked."

**Monica**

*(Frustrated.)*

Well, when you looked, did you see something?

**Julie**

Yes.

**Monica**

Well, what did you see when you looked?

**Julie**

Fingernails.

**Monica**

*(Is at first appalled; then she doesn't understand what fingernails have to do with it.)*

Fingernails?

**Julie**

Yes, Taylor's fingernails.

**Monica**

*(Not wanting to know, because it must be revolting.)*

Something was under his nails?

**Julie**

No! They were "manicured."

**Monica**

What's that got to do with it?

**Julie**

Have I ever gotten a manicure?

**Monica**

No; but that's cause you bite your nails down to the quick, there's nothing to trim! And what's a manicure got to do with it anyway? Lot's of men get manicures.

**Julie**

With polish?

**Monica**

Polish?

**Julie**

Clear polish. Taylor's fingernails have clear polish on them.

**Monica**

So what?

**Julie**

Doesn't that say anything to you?

**Monica**

It says he is clean enough to marry our daughter.

**Julie**

AND...

*(The icing on the cake.)*

... he knew our son Ben before he knew our daughter Betty.

**Monica**

*(Is at first appalled; then she doesn't understand what knowing Ben before Betty has to do with it.)*

What does that mean?

**Julie**

*(Sweetly, but emphatically emphasizing each word.)*

Ben – is -- a gay.

**Monica**

Are we going to have this discussion again? I told you it's not the parents' fault that a child becomes a homosexual. If you'd have attended that psychologist's meeting... or at least read the pamphlets.

**Julie**

I'm not talking about our son, I'm talking about our future son-in-law.

**Monica**

*(It takes her a moment; but the dawn finally arrives.)*

No! Taylor? Oh, our poor Betty.

*(Is at first appalled; then she doesn't understand why he thinks Taylor is gay.)*

Wait a minute! Just because he gets a manicure and just because he knows our gay son, that doesn't mean he's gay, too!

**Julie**

Oh, there's other signs.

**Monica**

For instance?

**Julie**

Canoe.

**Monica**

*(Is at first appalled; then she doesn't understand what a canoe has to do with it.)*

What does a canoe have to do with it?

**Julie**

Not "a canoe." THE *Canoe!* The cologne! *Canoe!*

**Monica**

*(Is at first appalled; then she doesn't understand what the cologne, Canoe has to do with it.)*  
What does Canoe have to do with it?

**Julie**

It's what all gay men use!

**Monica**

Oh, you're making that up!

**Julie**

No, it's true! Ben uses it! Hell, Ben BATHES in it!

**Monica**

They advertise on television to every body!

*(She becomes a TV spokesperson.)*

"Canoe by Dana... the spicy, lavender, amber fragrance. For men."

**Julie**

*(Pointedly.)*

"Spicy? Lavender? Amber?"

**Monica**

*(Is at first appalled; then she doesn't understand what "spicy, lavender, amber" has to do with it.)*

So what?

**Julie**

Lavender?

**Monica**

Just 'cause a handsome young man gets a manicure and wears Canoe by Dana -- with a spicy, lavender, amber fragrance -- and just because he knows Ben, does NOT mean he's gay.

**Julie**

Lavender is THEIR color! Everybody knows that!

**Monica**

The rainbow is their color!

**Julie**

No, remember FIRST it was pink -- the pink triangle, the pink this, the pink that -- THEN it was rainbows -- the rainbow flag, the rainbow bumper-sticker, the rainbow everything -- and NOW it's lavender!

**Monica**

Taylor is not gay!

**Julie**

He was Ben's friend before he met Betty.

**Monica**

So? Ben can have straight friends!

**Julie**

Name one.

**Monica**

*(It takes her a moment but she brightens when she remembers a straight friend of Ben's.)*  
Alice!

**Julie**

Alice is a "fag-hag!" Name a straight male friend!

**Monica**

"Fag-hag" is a terrible thing to call a person.

**Julie**

That's what Ben calls her!

**Monica**

Well, I don't like it no matter whose face it falls out of.

**Julie**

Well, straight female friends don't count. Name a straight MALE friend of Ben's.

**Monica**

*(She thinks for several moments, then is appalled at the idea.)*  
Does Betty know?

**Julie**

Monica, Betty's our daughter and I love her to death; but she's not the brightest torch at the luau.

**Monica**

You have to tell her!

**Julie**

I can't tell her Taylor's gay!

**Monica**

Well, you don't expect ME to tell her. I didn't even know until right now!  
*(There is a stand-off, as they both ponder what to do and who's going to tell Betty about Taylor. The dawn breaks over Monica's head first. The idea has arrived.)*  
I know what we'll do.

**Julie**

What?

**Monica**

Nothing.

**Julie**

What do you mean, "Nothing?"

**Monica**

I can't make it any clearer than that, Julie. "Nothing," means "nothing!"

**Julie**

We have to do something?

**Monica**

Why?

**Julie**

Our daughter's about to marry a gay man and you want to do nothing about it?

**Monica**

Exactly. Besides she LIKES gay men.

**Julie**

How do you know?

**Monica**

She loves Ben.

**Julie**

Ben's her brother.

**Monica**

So?

**Julie**

So? What do you mean "So?"

**Monica**

I mean "so!" As in "So what?"

**Julie**

A brother and husband are two entirely different things. Betty loves Ben – he's her brother...

**Monica**

And he's gay.

**Julie**

And Betty's in love with Taylor...

**Monica**

*(Is at first appalled; then she finds a new resolve.)*

Maybe Taylor won't act on his... "desires" while he's married to Betty. You know I read in that pamphlet that many gay men get married and repress their desires for same sex encounters. Some of them are even successful!

**Julie**

He's not a faucet! He can't turn his knob and be straight and then turn his knob and be gay!

**Monica**

You know everything about it; do you?

**Julie**

I know enough to know you can't be gay and then be straight. Or if you like your vice versa the other way around!

**Monica**

What about Tom?

**Julie**

Tom? Who's Tom?

**Monica**

Tom! Ben's Tom.

**Julie**

Oh, that guy Ben brought home for Thanksgiving? Boy could he eat!

**Monica**

I know, the first Thanksgiving we've ever had with no leftovers.

**Julie**

What about Tom?

**Monica**

Remember, I asked Ben about Tom and he said Tom was... you know... with a woman now... Ben said Tom was "bi."

**Julie**

Bisexual.

**Monica**

I ordered the pamphlet right away! "Bi's" can go either way. Male, female, they don't care. They're probably very popular.

**Julie**

Oh, lord. it's hard having a gay son and having to learn all those terms! "Bi" or "Bisexual," "tranny" or "transgender," "lip-stick lesbian" or "plain old lesbian," "gay" is okay but not "fag, sissy, fairy, or homo." It was a lot easier when they were all just "perverts."

**Monica**

"Perverts" isn't a nice word.

**Julie**

And what's Tom got to do with the price of pansies?

**Monica**

Maybe Taylor is like Tom. Maybe Taylor is a bisexual – and right now his knob is turned to women instead of men.

**Julie**

I don't think he's a bi.

**Monica**

He could be.

**Julie**

He doesn't eat like a bi. He eats like a gay.

**Monica**

*(She has to mull this over for a moment.)*

He does eat more like Ben than Tom; doesn't he?

**Julie**

Absolutely.

**Monica**

Well, at least they'll have leftovers. Maybe he's not really gay. He could be like you!

**Julie**

What do you mean by that?

**Monica**

Well, my folks thought you were gay.

**Julie**

Oh, they did not!

**Monica**

They did so.

**Julie**

What the hell would make them think that?

**Monica**

Your name was Julie. You should have seen my father's face when I told him I was in love with a man named Julie!

**Julie**

*(This is a sore-subject, one for which Julie was teased as a child and ridiculed as an adult.)*  
My name is JULIUS; especially if your parents are in the room.

**Monica**

And you were an artist.

**Julie**

So?

**Monica**

My Dad said, "All artists are sissies."

**Julie**

I hope you set them straight.

**Monica**

After they saw your paintings, Dad said, "All GOOD artists are sissies."

**Julie**

Did you tell them I also own a liquor store?

**Monica**

Yeah, they thought you might be an alcoholic, too.

**Julie**

*(Stunned.)*

Your parents thought I was an alcoholic queer?

**Monica**

Don't say "queer," Julie, it's impolite.

**Julie**

*(Saccharine sweet.)*

I'm sorry, Monica.

*(Exploding.)*

Your parents thought I was an alcoholic gay?

**Monica**

No. Mother thought you were an alcoholic and Daddy thought you were gay.

**Julie**

That explains why they've never spent the night in the guest room.

**Monica**

But they like you now. And they don't think it any more.

**Julie**

What made them change their minds?

**Monica**

I got knocked-up.

**Julie**

Well I think Betty needs to know about Taylor before THAT never happens! You'll have to tell her.

**Monica**

Why me?

**Julie**

The mother always has a "heart-to-heart" with her daughter before she gets married.

**Monica**

My mother didn't.

**Julie**

Considering how pregnant you were, she probably figured there was nothing left to tell you.

**Monica**

And I HAD that talk with Betty – years ago.

**Julie**

Years ago?

**Monica**

Yes, years ago. I wanted to make certain she didn't make the same mistake I did.

**Julie**

*(Stares at Monica for several beats. He is wounded by her and is now trying to align his pride.)*

You think marrying me was a mistake?

**Monica**

No! I think getting knocked-up with twins and having to have a wedding dress with an elastic band sewed in it was a mistake! Do you know how hard it was for me to convince everyone at the wedding that “white” meant “joy” and not “purity.”

**Julie**

All I remember is spending our honeymoon in the maternity ward.

**Monica**

You sound disappointed.

**Julie**

Well, I was... kind of. That wasn't the honeymoon I'd always dreamed of!

**Monica**

That wasn't the honeymoon, Julie. That was the birth of our twins. The honeymoon was MONTHS before the wedding in the backseat of your parent's *Pontiac Le Mans*!

**Julie**

*(A smile beams as he remembers.)*

That was a great car, wasn't it?

*(Monica begins to smack his shoulder, calling him “a shit,” repeatedly. Loudly as he draws away.)*

What the hell is the matter with you!

**Monica**

*(Loudly, grabbing her mug as if to throw it at him.)*

What's the matter?!? You are a shit!!! That's what the matter is!

**Julie**

God damn it! Quit slapping me! That hurts!

**Monica**

It's supposed to hurt, you shit! I ought to break this G.D. “MUG” over your head!

**Betty**

*(Enters, sleepily, wearing a chiffon robe with marabou-feather cuffs over her skimpy nightgown.)*

What's all the yelling?

**Monica**

*(Sweetly, softly.)*

Oh, hey, Baby. What yelling?

**Betty**

You and Dad. You were yelling.

**Monica**

We weren't yelling. Were we, Julie?

**Julie**

No, we were... just having coffee.

*(He sits in front of his mug and sips it.)*

**Monica**

Now, you just go back to bed, Baby. You don't want puffy eyes tomorrow.

**Ben**

*(Enters sleepily, in his boxer shorts.)*

What's all the yelling?

**Julie**

Put a robe on; you're practically naked.

**Ben**

I didn't bring a robe with me.

**Betty**

*(Removes her chiffon robe with marabou-feather cuffs and gives it to Ben.)*

Here, cover yourself.

**Ben**

I don't think so. I may be gay; but I have principles! I have dignity! I have morals!

**Betty**

And you only wear my clothes when I'm not home.

**Ben**

Exactly! Give me that Hollywood Harlot thing! What the heck is going on?

**Betty**

*(Putting her robe on Ben.)*

It's Mom and Dad; they're fighting again and pretending they're not. Oh, you look lovely. Grab us a couple of cups, Ben. I'll save you a front row seat.

*(To Monica and Julie.)*

What round are you in?

**Ben**

*(As he exits for two coffee mugs.)*

Gee, it's good to be home again, wearing my sisters clothes.

**Julie**

Betty, your mother has something she wants to tell you.

**Monica**

No, I don't.

**Julie**

Yes you do.

**Betty**

We already had that talk, Daddy, years ago.

**Monica**

*(To Julie.)*

See? I told you so.

**Julie**

Your mother wants to tell you something about Taylor.

**Monica**

Julie!

**Betty**

What about Taylor?

**Monica**

*(Trapped.)*

Well, it was your father that looked.

**Betty**

Looked? Looked at what?

**Monica**

Well, he looked and then he saw.

**Betty**

What did he see?

**Monica**

*(This brings a sudden sob from Monica.)*

The manicure.

*(Monica begins to sob loudly.)*

**Ben**

*(Enters with two mugs, sees his mother crying and sets the mugs down on the table and hugs Monica, giving his father dirty looks.)*

What's the matter, Mom?

*(The breath-taking sobs make it impossible to speak. Ben hugs her harder, making her cry all the more, so he asks Betty.)*

What happened?

**Betty**

*(Pouring herself a cup of coffee.)*

I don't know Taylor got a manicure and Mom went bonkers. You know how she gets before a wedding.

*(Imitating her mother.)*

"The fondue is curdled! Boo-hoo! Boo-hoo!"

**Monica**

*(Through her tears.)*

It's not JUST the manicure... he's... he's not even bisexual!

*(Monica wails the word "bi" and sobs some more.)*

**Ben**

*(To Julie.)*

What is she talking about?

**Julie**

She's upset because... because she thinks Taylor's a gay.

*(Ben and Betty exchange looks and burst out laughing. Monica's tears soften.)*

**Betty**

Taylor's not gay!

**Ben**

Where'd you get that idea?

**Julie**

*(Wagging his fingers.)*

Well, he...

**Betty**

He gets his nails done?

**Julie**

Yeah! With polish!

*(Ben and Betty exchange another look and burst out laughing.)*

And he wears that lavender aftershave.

**Monica**

*(Though her tears have abated, she croaks out,)*

Canoe by Dana!

*(Ben and Betty exchange yet another look and burst out laughing.)*

It's not funny! It's tragic!

**Julie**

And he knew Ben before he knew you!

*(Again Ben and Betty exchange looks and laugh aloud.)*

**Monica**

And Ben doesn't have any straight friends, except Alice.

**Julie**

And she doesn't count because she's a "fag-hag."

*(Again Ben and Betty exchange looks and laugh.)*

This isn't funny, kids, this is serious!

**Monica**

We thought he might be bisexual.

*(Another crying jag begins as the tragic realization is exposed when she blurts out,)*

But... you'll have LEFTOVERS.

**Ben and Betty**

*(Exchange looks and then, together they say,)*

What?

**Julie**

Never mind! Betty, your mother and I just want you to be happy, and we're afraid you'll only find misery if you marry a gay.

**Betty**

Taylor's not gay.

**Julie**

Ben. Tell her. Tell her about Taylor.

**Ben**

*(Faking a serious disclosure.)*

Betty, I know for a fact that Taylor is... not gay.

**Julie**

How do you know?

**Monica**

Are you sure?

**Ben**

Sure, I'm sure. He's as straight as Dad is.

**Monica**

Well my folks thought your father was gay!

**Julie**

Monica!

*(Ben and Betty exchange looks and burst out laughing again.)*

**Ben**

*(Looks at his father, and seriously says,)*

Dad, admit it. You're gay; aren't you!

*(Ben and Betty laugh.)*

**Julie**

I am NOT a gay!

**Monica**

It's 'cause his name was Julie and he was an artist.

*(Ben and Betty laugh hard at this.)*

And they thought he was an alcoholic, too, 'cause he owned a liquor store.

*(This sends Ben and Betty into gales of laughter.)*

**Julie**

I was an Eagle Scout; god damn it!

*(Ben and Betty exchange glances and burst out laughing again.)*

Damn it! Stop that laughing! This is serious! This is not about ME! I am not gay!

**Ben**

Neither is Taylor.

**Monica**

How do you know?

**Ben**

I made a pass at him.

*(The air is sucked out of the room.)*

**Betty**

*(Now it's her turn to be mad. The parents are appalled.)*

You made a pass at Taylor? When?

**Julie**

*(Accusatory.)*

Last night after the bachelor party!

**Betty & Monica**

*(Shocked; horrified.)*

What? How could you?

**Ben**

Don't get your nightie in a twist, Sis! Nothing happened last night! I made a pass at him a long time ago. Before you ever met him. I thought he was gay 'cause I'd never met a straight guy that gets a monthly manicure.

**Julie**

See?

**Ben**

But he said, "No." Oh, he was very polite about it -- and you know what made me like him all the more? He said, "I hope this doesn't queer our friendship." Isn't that funny, "queer our friendship."

*(Ben is the only one laughing.)*

**Betty**

You made a pass at Taylor? You slut!

**Ben**

Nothing happened.

**Betty**

What did you do?

**Ben**

Nothing.

**Betty**

You made a pass! That's not nothing! What kind of pass did you make?

**Ben**

I don't remember.

**Betty**

Yes, you do! You just don't want to tell me. What did you do?

**Ben**

I just leaned in and tried to kiss him.

**Betty**

On the mouth?

**Ben**

Yes; but he turned his face!

**Betty**

You tried to kiss my fiancée on the mouth?

**Ben**

He wasn't your fiancée when I tried to kiss him, he was my boyfriend!

**Monica, Julie, and Betty**

*(The air is sucked out of the room. Together, they are all shocked.)*

Your boyfriend!

**Ben**

I meant... he was my friend... and a boy. We'd gone to a couple of movies together and we went out to dinner this one time and...

**Betty**

You DATED my fiancée?

**Ben**

It wasn't like a date! Well, I thought it was; but that's where I got confused, he didn't think of it as a date. It was just two guys who were out... together...

**Betty**

I can't believe you dated my fiancée.

**Ben**

Stop saying that. It wasn't a date.

**Julie**

It was entrapment, that's what it was. You got him drunk first; didn't you? Ben, you've disappointed me greatly.

**Monica**

Where did you go to dinner?

**Betty**

What does that matter?

**Monica**

If it was *The Pancake Palace*, it matters a LOT!

**Ben**

Some pizza place.

**Julie**

Did Julie eat pizza with his fingers or with a fork?

**Ben**

I don't remember... with a fork, I guess.

**Julie**

He's a gay!

**Ben**

Taylor is NOT gay!

*(To Betty.)*

Betty, he's a great guy. Taylor's straight. Very straight. And nothing ever happened between us.

**Julie**

*(Accusatory.)*

What about last night after the bachelor party?

**Ben**

What about it? We both came back here and went to bed.

**Julie**

TOGETHER!

**Ben**

No, in our own beds!

**Julie**

Ben, I looked in your room and I saw Taylor's clothes on the floor, all around the bed. And it was pretty evident by those sheets that there was more than SLEEPING going on in there!

*(Betty, Monica and Ben exchange glances and burst out laughing.)*

What the hell is so funny?

**Monica**

*(Smacking Julie lightly.)*

You nut-ball! Is that what this was all about? Taylor's clothes SHOULD be on the floor in Ben's room...

**Betty**

All around the bed!

**Monica**

Taylor slept in Ben's room and Ben is on the couch in the guest room.

**Betty**

And those sheets did see action last night – I snuck in and we played, "Drunken Pirate and Saucy Wench!"

**Ben**

Which one were you?

**Betty**

The same one you'd have been, Sweetie!

**Ben**

That's the advantage of being gay – we can be versatile!

**Julie**

*(To Ben)*

So, that wasn't you laying naked across the bed and snoring?

**Ben**

No, that was Taylor.

*(To Betty.)*

Taylor snores?

**Betty**

Like a freight train. Dad... Taylor is fine. He's all man. I'll admit he's a little "quirky." He gets a manicure... AND a pedicure; but he's all man.

*(To Ben.)*  
And he's mine, so keep your hands off of him!

**Ben**  
Selfish wench!

**Betty**  
Mom, is there coffee?

**Monica**  
*(Jumping up and pouring the coffee for Betty and Ben.)*  
You sound just like your father.

**Betty**  
*(Looking in the photo album.)*  
Awww, Benjie. Look at you and Daddy in the park.

**Ben**  
*(Still standing, he looks at the picture Betty is pointing to.)*  
Hey, Dad, remember this day? You drew a picture of a bird... in the sand...

**Julie**  
Yeah, 'Cause you were crying.

**Betty**  
*(Smacking Ben.)*  
You big sissy!

**Julie**  
Don't call him that... it's not very nice.

**Ben**  
And you told me that bird was flying away with all my troubles and would plant them on some far away island.  
*(He smiles at the memory of it.)*  
That was a great day; wasn't it?  
*(Taylor, wearing only his pants enters, rubbing his eyes sleepily.)*

**Monica**  
Good morning, Mr. Taylor Cummings! You may now kiss the bride!  
*(Taylor grabs Ben – who is wearing Betty's robe -- and starts to plant a big kiss on him -- as the lights fade we see all of their shocked faces.)*

**NOTE: The play could end at Ben's line: "That was a great day; wasn't it?" (The lights fade as they enjoy a cup of coffee.)**