

SETTING: COFFEE BAR IN VANCOUVER'S WEST END. TABLE 1 WITH GREEN BACKGROUND TABLE 2 WITH WHITE BACKGROUND.

ZOOM STARTS : TITLE IMAGE ON HOST TWO SCREEN

HOST ONE: CAMERA ON HOST TWO CAMERA TITLE IMAGE OFF
HOST TWO CAMERA ON INTRODUCTION

CYNDIA HOLDS QUIRK-E PRESENTS

PHILIP CAMERA ON WIPES AND HUMS, THEN COVERS CAMERA WITH TOWEL, PLAYS BRENDA LEE, AND QUICKLY TURNS CAMERA OFF.

CYNDIA HOLDS 3 SIGNS

PHILIP CAMERA ON AS MUSIC FADES

SCENE 1

PHILIP STILL HUMMING

DOOR DINGLING. LOOKS RIGHT

SAM CAMERA ON. SHE HAS A BACKPACK AND BAG.

SAM

Morning Philip. (SHE drops her bag with a THUD). Oh, too much stuff.

PHILIP

Running away from home?

SAM

I wish. How's my favourite fairy? (Taking off backpack)

PHILIP

(PHILIP Laughs) Enchanted. Good to see you, Sam. You're ahead of the pack.

SAM

It's easy if you can't sleep.

PHILIP

Ah, insomnia. A blessing and a curse. (PHILIP DOES A BETTE DAVIS IMPERSONATION)
As that great philosopher Bette Davis once said, "Getting old is not for sissies".

SAM

You can say that again! (Laughs)

DOOR DINGLING.

PHILIP

Ah, here comes Jay and Byron.

BYRON AND JAY CAMERAS ON. (THEY ARE MID-CONVERSATION)

JAY

(Looks left) It was so exciting!

BYRON

(Looks right) I cried.

PHILIP

Oh goodie, sex!

SAM

(Shakes head) Hmmmm. I doubt it.

PHILIP

Good morning everyone. So, a round of the usual for our favourite writers' group? Let's see...dark roast, black for Sam, no sugar; English Breakfast for Jay with milk and honey; and a skinny mocha latte for Byron. Right? I'll bring hot water and lemon for Jules, too.

THEY ALL NOD APPROVAL

SORRY

JAY

Where is Jules?

SAM

On HandiDart, if she's lucky, or waiting for HandiDart if she's not.

BYRON

Maybe we should wait for her before we order?

DOOR DINGLING. JULES CAMERA ON. SHE HAS A CANE.

PHILIP

No need. Here she is. I'm bringing your hot water, Jules.

PHILIP GIVES HER AN AIR KISS.

JULES

(Pointing cane and waving flyers in frame) Hi everybody. I brought flyers. Next weekend is going to be big! Trans march and pipeline protest.

PHILIP CAMERA OFF. PREP COFFEE CARAFE IN LEFT HAND MOUSE ON DING

SAM

So Jay, is that what you two were so excited about?

JAY

No, we were talking about Trudeau's apology to us. He actually officially apologized to the LGBTQ2 community in a speech to the House of Commons!

BYRON

Yeah, I listened to it. It really got me when he said, "it is our collective shame that you were so mistreated".

JAY

He called it state-sponsored "oppression and rejection". And he got standing ovations for it from the House!

BYRON

Can you imagine a Prime Minister actually saying this?

SAM

That IS a big deal, isn't it!

PHILIP CAMERA ON POUR COFFEE. WAIT FOR TABLE 1 CAMERAS OFF.
DOOR DINGLING.

SCENE 2

PHILIP TURNS. DON'T RUSH SET DOWN CARAFE, PICK UP PAD. MIKE AND PAM
CAMERAS ON.

PAM

Hmm. I wonder where she is. I don't see her.

PHILIP

A gracious good morning. Table for two?

MIKE

We're expecting a third. How about the table near the door? She'll probably be here soon.

PHILIP

Very good. I'll bring some water while you wait.

PHILIP CAMERA OFF PREP TRAY WITH 3 WATER GLASSES

PAM

You know something, I really wonder why Bette wanted to meet here instead of asking us over to her place?

MIKE

It's a big city thing. People meet in coffee shops. But what do you think of this one? Did you notice that rainbow-painted crosswalk out front?

DOOR DINGLING. BETTE CAMERA ON.

PAM

Bette! (Waving her arms excitedly) Here we are!!

PAM AND BETTE BLOW KISSES. BETTE TURNS HEAD TO SIDE

BETTE

Pam! . . . and Mike. Hi!

SAM

Hi Bette.

BETTE TURNS HER HEAD TO OTHER SIDE.

BETTE

Oh, I didn't know you guys were here!

SAM

Writer's group. Every Wednesday.

PAM

Bette! This is so exciting!

MIKE TIPS HIS HAT.

BETTE

I can't believe you are actually doing it. After all these years.

MIKE

Well, we're seriously looking around for a place here, and I know Pam wants to live near you.

PAM

And now that the kids are gone . . .

BETTE

How are they?

MIKE

Our kids were well and truly launched. But now that they are trying to launch their kids . . . they're coming back to the Bank of Mom and Dad.

PAM

(Rolling her eyes) Oh Mike, stop. Our kids have kids in university now, and we're helping them out. You wouldn't believe what it costs to go to university these days!

BETTE

I would. My students are so stressed and competitive trying for the few athletic scholarships open to women.

PAM

Oh my. What happened to fun in high school?

MIKE

Real life is what happened. After the 80's, if you're lucky enough to have a good job, you still don't have much to spare. Even if your kids aren't sitting around picking their noses and smoking dope.

PAM

Thank god our kids never got into THAT. Well Katherine tried it for awhile but I think she scared herself as much as she scared us. And what about you?

BETTE

Oh, I never smoke because of my asthma. But CBD oil works wonders on my knee.

PAM

CBD oil? What's that.

BETTE

Marijuana without the high.

MIKE

What's the point?

BETTE

Right. PAUSE Can you believe . . . I've been at King George Secondary for twenty-five years now!

SORRY

PAM

It can't be that long!

BETTE

Believe me, it is! It took twenty-five years, but this year my girls basketball team is finally going to the provincial tournament.

MIKE

Congratulations. I bet your school is in a good area of the city. Solid. Family values. Parents standing around with double-doubles watching their kids practice.

BETTE

It is. It's about eight blocks from here. And you're right about the double-doubles!

PAM

Really??? Seems like an odd neighbourhood for kids from what I can see.

BETTE

Not really. It's friendly and very diverse. Kind of an international village.

PAM

Oh, is that why those people at that other table said 'Hi' when you came in?

PHILIP CAMERA ON.

HE CARRIES WATER FOR TABLE 2 ON TRAY. SETS TRAY DOWN AND HANDS OUT GLASSES (RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT). PICK UP ORDER PAD

PHILIP

Oh hi Bette. Water all around. What can I get for you and your . . . friends?

BETTE

Go ahead and order.

PAM

Mike, get me a non-fat latte. Which way are the washrooms?

PHILIP POINTS. TAKES OUT ORDER PAD AND PEN FROM BEHIND EAR.

PAM STANDS AND CAMERA OFF.

PHILIP

Okay, one non-fat latte, got it. What else can I get you?

BETTE, MIKE, CAMERAS OFF. PHILIP KEEP TAKING ORDERS ON PAD.

SCENE 3

TABLE 1

JULES, JAY, BYRON, SAM CAMERAS ON PHILIP CAMERA OFF

JULES

If you ask me, Trudeau's apology just doesn't go far enough.

JAY

Do you realize Canada's the only country in the world that's ever officially apologized to queers?

BYRON

I thought it was very moving, especially the part where he said . . . uh . . . my mind . . . now, how did he say it...?

SAM

No worries. I liked it so much I ran off copies for everybody. You can look up what he said.

SAM RUMMAGES IN HER BACKPACK. TAKE THINGS OUT SLOWLY ONE AT A TIME, MUTTERING.

JULES

So, Jay how was your holiday in Mexico?

JAY

I'm really glad I went. It's fantastic what sunshine does for MS. Ninety percent of the pain's gone when I'm in Melaque, and it's so lovely there.

BYRON

I would like to try out a Mexican vacation on my arthritis.

PHILIP CAMERA ON.

SAM DUMPS BACKPACK AND SHAKES IT.

SAM

Damn it all, hell! I know I copied the apology. Sorry!

EVERYONE AT TABLE 1
(COUNT 1) You forgot it!

SAM

Yeah, yeah I know – I was born forgetful. But things seem to be getting worse.

PHILIP

Sam, you had two bags when you arrived this morning.

SAM LOOKS DOWN SEES THE SECOND BAG AND LOOKS INSIDE.

PHILIP CAMERA OFF. PREP TRAY WITH 5 MUGS

SAM

Eureka! Here they are. I didn't forget them. I just forgot I brought two bags. I even stapled them.

JAY

That sort of thing happens to me all the time, Sam.

SAM

I know old people forget, but I do worry about it. There's a lot of Alzheimer's, in my family, including early onset . . . well, at least I don't have to worry about that.

JAY

Why not?

SAM

Too old. (All laugh)

SAM TAKES SPEECHES OUT WHILE CONVERSATION CONTINUES

BYRON

I'll be sure to put that on my list of the benefits of aging. Right up there with not being outed at work.

JAY

As a teacher, I was convinced I couldn't be out with my students. (Sigh) When I think of what being a teacher could have been . . . if only I'd been completely open . . .

BYRON

I hear you, Jay, but I think I excelled at work because of the bigotry. Besides, it made us who we are.

JAY

How could that be helpful?

BYRON

I never discussed my sexuality at work. Fear was a big motivator. I worked twice as hard as everyone else. I was on the edge a lot. I had to prove my worth, so, if they did find out, I'd be less likely to lose my job.

SAM

That's just hiding and courting a nervous breakdown!

JULES

Yeah, damn it. Why couldn't you have just been yourself! It wasn't fair.

PHILIP CAMERA ON. WITH TRAY

PHILIP

Here you go queers. Cheers.

HE HAS TRAY OF MUGS FOR TABLE 1 AND SETS THEM OUT LEFT AND RIGHT.

SAM

And here's copies of the speech. Byron, Jay, Jules, and Jules, you could give one to Riley when she gets here.

SAM HANDS PAPERS OFF TO SIDES OF FRAME. AS SHE SAYS A NAME THAT PERSON BRINGS PAPERS ON FROM SIDE OF THEIR FRAME THEY EACH PORE OVER THE SPEECH. EACH PERSON SIPS FROM THEIR OWN MUG.

BYRON

Oh, ok, here's the quote I liked from Trudeau: "To those who were left broken by the prejudiced system, for stripping you of your dignity, for robbing you of your potential, for treating you like you were dangerous, indecent, and flawed, we are sorry. And to those who took their own lives we failed you."

JULES

See, like I said, it wasn't fair! But I have to say the apology does show we've been treated badly.

JAY

You've got to admit, that's a pretty decent apology—and to all of us! I never thought I'd hear that from the government!

DOOR DINGLING.

RILEY CAMERA ON. RILEY HAS A BAG AND SETS IT IN FRONT OF HER CAMERA AND PEEKS INTO FRAME.

RILEY

Gotta pee.

PHILIP

Coffee Riley?

RILEY

Sure, Pip.

RILEY OUT OF FRAME.

JULES

Yes, I guess I've got to admit this is pretty good, because I did feel persecuted hiding in a heterosexual marriage for twenty years. It ate me up inside.

Yeah, you're right. It's a cliché, but some of us lived lives of “quiet desperation.”

PAM SCREAMS OFF CAMERA.

PHILIP LOOKS TO SIDE AND REACTS. TABLE 1 LOOKS. BETTE AND MIKE CAMERAS ON
LOOKING SAME DIRECTION. PUT DOWN TRAY. HOLD TOWEL.

SCENE 4

PAM CAMERA ON. SHE'S LOOKING LEFT AND FLUSTERED. TABLE 1 CAMERAS OFF
EXCEPT RILEY (WAIT FOR PAM AND TABLE 1)

PHILIP

Oh dear. What's the matter? Is that mouse back again?

PAM

Not a mouse. A MAN!

PHILIP LOOKS RIGHT

PHILIP

That's not a man, that's Riley.

PAM

Whoever he is, he walked in on me in the women's washroom.

PHILIP

Oh honey, she's a she. Just like you.

RILEY WALKS BACK INTO FRAME. SHE MOVES HER BAG, AND TAKES HER PLACE.

PAM

That is not like me!

RILEY

It's the low voice.

BETTE AND MIKE CAMERA ON.

RILEY CAMERA OFF. PHILIP SMILE. CAMERA OFF. QUICKLY PREP TRAY WITH 4 MUGS

BETTE

Pam! . . . Pam, that was really insulting.

PAM

What!?

BETTE

Riley's a woman. All women don't look alike.

PAM

Yeah, look at you.

BETTE

I don't have to look like a woman. I am one! And so is Riley . . . and besides, those washrooms are gender neutral.

PHILIP CAMERA ON. HE SETS OUT 3 MUGS. PUT MOUSE ON CAMERA

MIKE

Is that a Vancouver thing? (Sips from his mug). Besides, does anyone around here look normal? Look at the waiter!

PHILIP

(Waving, sarcastic) Click your heels together, honey. You're not in Kansas anymore.

ROLL EYES. QUICKLY PHILIP CAMERA OFF.

MIKE

Did he just call me honey!?

PAM

I just don't want to talk about this anymore. It's too upsetting.

MIKE

While you two are working this out, I'm going to the washroom. On second thought, I'm going out for a smoke.

PAM

Since when do you smoke?

MIKE

Since right now.

MIKE CAMERA OFF. DOOR DINGLING.

PAM AND BETTE LOOK AT EACH OTHER AND ROLL EYES.

QUICKLY PHILIP CAMERA ON. TRAY HAS 1 MUG PUT PEN BEHIND EAR

PAM, BETTE CAMERAS OFF. WAIT FOR TABLE 1 CAMERAS ON.

SCENE 5

TABLE 1

TABLE 1 CAMERAS ON

PHILIP HAS ONE MUG ON TRAY. SETS COFFEE DOWN FOR RILEY.

PHILIP

Sorry about that the washroom thing Riley. Here's your coffee. Do you need a hug?

RILEY

I'm okay . . . but thanks for the coffee (sips from her mug).

PHILIP

You guys are talking about Trudeau's apology. You are pretty excited, but how is it working for us now?

JAY

LOOKS TO LEFT Looking at THAT table, not very well!

ALL TABLE 1 TURN HEADS SAME WAY AS JAY.

JULES

(Hits the table with her fist) I told you! So much for the apology changing anything! There's just so much hate still. The apology didn't erase that. And it didn't even touch on trans issues!

BYRON

Hold on a minute. After all, you know, all the government can really do is influence the culture.

JULES

(Forcefully) Clearly, we have a long way to go!

SAM

Well, you know trans are included in the apology. T is one of the letters.

JULES

The alphabet soup!

SAM

Actually, it's an alphanumeric soup LGBTQ2 there's a two in it. That makes it alphanumeric.

RILEY

We've moved on, Sam! We're talking about how we're affected by the apology.

SAM

Oh. Right.

JAY

I liked the apology! And it was clearly directed at all of us. The fear I felt being a lesbian and a teacher! . . . What if people found out! I think I deserve an apology.

PHILIP

Yes we all did and I'm trying to stay positive, but a lot of good an apology does for all my friends who died of AIDS.

Remember the slogan, "Silence equals death"?

GROUP PAUSES AND NODS COUNT 1,2,3

SAM
And it sure did!

BYRON
How can you fight a disease if you can't even talk about it?

JULES
That's not the only thing you couldn't talk about. What about depression?! I hid in my straight marriage for years and years and was depressed and resentful that I couldn't be myself. You must have gone through that too, Sam.

SAM
Yeah. I lived in constant fear of losing my children.

PHILIP
Your children? Why? What happened Sam?

COUNT 1, 2, 3,
TABLE 1 CAMERAS OFF. PHILIP STAYS ON. SET TRAY UNDER ARM, TOWEL ON SHOULDER.

SCENE 6

TABLE 2

PAM, BETTE CAMERAS ON.
PHILIP CAMERA OFF

PAM
In your letter . . . remember that? . . . you said you wanted to talk about something important.

BETTE
Well . . . yes, but . . .

PAM

Is something wrong?

BETTE

It upset me with what happened with Riley and you, and then you said you didn't want to talk about it.

PAM

Whatever. What are we talking about?

BETTE

Something really important, and we've never talked about it, and I'm running out of time.

PAM

Why? Are you sick? Are you dying?

BETTE

No, I'm not dying. (Blurting it out) I'm a lesbian.

PAM

Oh my god, you are not!

BETTE

I am so. I would know. But I didn't get it in Prince George.

PAM

Well how do you know now?

BETTE

I fell in love with a woman. That's kind of a big clue.

PAM

Oh, my lord, this is getting so, so weird!

BETTE

Well, somehow I didn't think it would be so weird. Gay people are in the news. There are gay people in Prince George.

PAM

I doubt it! No one we've heard about, and definitely not anyone I want to know! (Pause) Having sex in the park...and all that. (Indignantly) We grew up in the church.

BETTE

My partner Alice is a Unitarian minister, and we're not having sex in the park. We're just normal like you and Mike.

PAM

I don't think so. That's not normal. I don't want to be hanging around with a bunch of lesbians.

DOOR DINGLING. MIKE CAMERA ON

MIKE

What's up?

PAM

We're having a private conversation.

MIKE

Okey dokey. I'm just going to go see if I can find a MEN'S washroom. There's gotta be one *somewhere* around here! There was a Starbuck's on the corner.

MIKE CAMERA OFF

DOOR DINGLING.

BETTE

You were hanging around with a lesbian, me, when we were in Prince George.

PAM

You sure didn't ACT like a lesbian.

BETTE

What's a lesbian act like? I wore plaid shirts and jeans and hiking boots . . .

PAM

So???? That's Prince George! All sorts of women wear jeans and boots!

BETTE

But there's more . . . I never got it, going out with guys, like you and the other girls.

PAM

Well, for heavens sake, that's what you're supposed to do!

BETTE

I figured if I did it, I'd get it.

PAM

Get what?

BETTE

Liking guys . . . but . . . I had a massive crush on Miss Cruickshank.

PAM

Who's that?

BETTE

Our gym teacher.

PAM

How can you face your family and friends? How can you pretend to be normal?

BETTE

I am normal. I just couldn't stay in Prince George where being a lesbian was seen as sinful and sick. That's why I applied for the job in Vancouver. I thought it might be different here, and it is. I'm not hiding here. Everybody knows.

PAM

Bette, you've thrown everything away. (Pam's voice softens somewhat, caring about a friend) That's so sad.

BETTE

I'm not throwing anything away. I'm in love. I'm getting married. And I'm wildly happy. We're getting married by a minister in Alice's church. It's legal now, and I want you to come.

DOOR DINGLING. MIKE CAMERA ON

PAM

My god, Bette, this is all too much to take in!

MIKE

What's too much?

BETTE

I want you to come to my wedding.

MIKE

At your age? Are you marrying a younger guy? That makes you a cougar?

BETTE

No, she's a woman, and she's my age.

MIKE

Wait a second. You're going to have to back up here. If you're marrying a woman? That's a gay wedding, and that means you're gay.

BETTE

Good one, Mike.

MIKE

Is that why we're here?

Yes, I want you to come to my wedding and I'm sorry it's taken me so long to tell you.

PAM

Mike, let's go for a walk. We have some things to talk about. We'll be back, Bette.

MIKE AND PAM CAMERAS OFF

DOOR DINGLING

PHILIP CAMERA ON. LOOK CONCERNED. LOOK OVER AT TABLE 2. LOOK BACK.

BETTE CAMERA OFF

SCENE 7

TABLE 1

TABLE 1 CAMERAS ON. TOWEL ON SHOULDER.

PHILIP

So what happened Sam.

JAY

Why did you almost lose your kids?

SAM

When I was outed as a lesbian, my lawyer told me I was likely to lose them if it went to court.

JAY

Why did she say that?

SAM

She said the courts tend to think that a woman being a lesbian is more of a disqualifier for parenting than a man who beats his wife.

RILEY

That sucks.

PHILIP

What did you do?!

SAM

Well, I knew Blake didn't want the kids; he just wanted to win. If the courts gave him custody, I might never see them again. So I took the biggest risk of my life. I called Blake up and said I was willing to let him have the kids for a two month trial—the kids were so mad at me . . .

JAY

You must have been terrified! How did it go?

SAM

He could only handle them for a week! So I got them back.

EVERYBODY LAUGHS

JULES

He was in over his head. So glad you got through that Sam. I know how hard co-parenting can be.

SAM

Tell me about it! Although I had custody, Blake still had a say in what happened to the kids. When they said the 'til death do us part' they weren't kidding.

JULES

I stayed in the small town to finish parenting as a queer woman. My old friends, the kids' teachers, people at work, now they all saw me very differently. They said, "Some of my best friends are gay," but I could tell they were uncomfortable.

PHILIP

Ah, coming out. When I came out in my small town, everyone turned on me. I had to move to Toronto.

JULES

I couldn't move for nine years because of the kids.

PHILIP

I didn't have a choice. They were warming up the tar and plucking the chickens.

JAY

So Jules, were your kids supportive?

JULES

I'm so proud of my kids. I took my daughter to her first pride parade when she was 10 and she started a gay/straight alliance in high school. They've all had great times with me at Pride.

BYRON

I don't know where I fit in with this coming out stuff. When I was 16 my Mom said, "My house, my rules," for the hundredth time! I said her rules weren't fair given that she was an alcoholic constantly judging and raging. I packed my 55 Chevy with my few belongings, including my pride and joy, my Brother typewriter. I drove off as mom hurled a package of my typing paper off the veranda.

PHILIP

How Joan Crawford.

BYRON

I knew I was different. I walked around feeling guilty all the time. I always felt like an outsider. It took a long time before I felt connected to my sexuality.

JULES

It took guts to leave home at 16, Byron.

BYRON

I didn't feel I had a choice, either. I came out gradually, one person at a time. I told myself if someone asked, they were ready for the answer. Now I realize it was internal homophobia. I dated girls, but really I was more interested in their brothers.

JULES

Well, I was a fag hag. My first marriage was to a gay guy. It didn't last long. I met another man through my gay friends, but once we were married, we fell into traditional male/female roles.

SAM

Those roles are killers.

JULES

I was attracted to all the wives!

JAY

My coming out story is a bit different. I was very closeted in a short relationship with an out lesbian. She ended the relationship, which was a healthy thing for her—and for me, as it turned out eventually—but at the time I was suicidal. A friend said to me, “You should come out. Tell everybody, particularly your parents. You can always kill yourself later if it doesn't change things!”

SAM

Talk about tough love. Did you take her advice?

JAY

Yeah, it made a peculiar sort of sense, even if it was tough, so I called my dad. He came over, and I told him. He didn't say anything at first, just went white. Then he got up and came across the room and hugged me. He said, “I love you. We'll support you.” That night my mom called and said the same thing. I was really very lucky.

RILEY

You were lucky! I came out with a woman professor at university, and I wanted to tell my mom, but I thought I should consult with the university counsellor first for advice on how to tell her. It was a big mistake. I ended up in the nut house.

JAY

What!?

RILEY

They thought I needed shock treatment and medication, so I wouldn't want to be a lesbian. It didn't work.

SAM

That's horrible!

JAY

That's awful, Riley.

RILEY

I survived. Later on, I found out a lot of women were locked up for being lesbians, including my partner who had been in the nuthouse at the same time I had. When we finally met, we kind of bonded over that.

JULES

I'm so glad you got out of that mental illness trap. And the medication! I was given medication for depression when what I needed was to leave my marriage! I got support at the Women's Resource Centre.

RILEY

I heard a rumor that there were lesbians at the women's centre. I walked in, and the first woman I saw, I thought, I bet she's a lesbian. She has a low voice. I was right.

BYRON

Isn't it strange that women were mostly locked up and medicated and men were beaten up.

PHILIP

Or killed.

JAY

It's hateful. When they take away our children, when they lock us up in mental institutions, when they send us to conversion therapy, when they beat us, when they kill us—it's hateful!

JULES

I hear you! My ex looked at me with such hatred ...

SAM

Yes, I know that look of hatred, too. When I left, I couldn't even stay at my parents'. Me and the kids had to hide out in a women's shelter.

SORRY
PHILIP

Jeez Sam. I had no idea. You in a women's shelter. Riley given shock treatment and medicated. There's much to apologize for.

BYRON

I don't know of any gay men who were medicated . . . Well, wait a minute, I guess we self-medicated, with drugs or alcohol.

PHILIP

Yeah, I sure did.

JULES

When I told my brother I had come out, he let everyone know, including my father who made fun of me at every opportunity.

SAM

The first thing my Mom said was, "Don't tell your father."

ALL

(COUNT 1) "It will kill him." (Everyone laughs)

BYRON

After I moved to Vancouver my mom said, you can't get any farther away. You're on the coast.

JULES

And coming out never stops. Now my kids are grown and I have in-laws that I have to come out to. Some of them are from different cultures that have very negative attitudes about LGBTQ2 people.

JAY

You don't have to go very far for that. I'm selling my house in Langley and I'm wondering if I should take my Pride flag down!

RILEY

Isn't that where they keep burning Pride flags?

SAM

Yes. Better take it down.

PHILIP

No. Get a bigger one.

JULES

Advertise your house in the gay media.

SAM

That'll put Langley in a flap.

JAY

Oh, very helpful! The whole idea is to sell the house and get the hell out of there, not to incite a riot!

RILEY

Sometimes you need a riot.

JULES

I'm so glad I live here in the West End where I can flaunt it.

BYRON

You know, as I get older I don't have much patience with people who don't approve of my sexuality.

TABLE 1 CAMERAS OFF.

PHILIP CAMERA STAYS ON. REMEMBER TABLE 2, ORDER PAD AND PEN READY.

SCENE 8

TABLE 2

COUNT 1

BETTE, PAM AND MIKE CAMERAS ON.

PHILIP

Can I refresh your tea Bette, or are you in enough hot water already?

BETTE

(Looks back and forth at Pam and Mike) No, I think we have everything we need. You can just leave the bill . . . I'm going to the washroom.

BETTE CAMERA OFF. PHILIP TURNS AWAY AND TOTALS THEIR CHEQUE.

MIKE

What the hell is going on here?

PAM

I don't know! I just don't understand. We've been friends for so long. Why didn't she tell me before this?!

MIKE

Did she ever come on to you?

PHILIPS TEARS THE CHEQUE FROM HIS PAD AND LEAVES IT ON THE TABLE.

PHILIP

She should be so lucky.

PHILIP CAMERA OFF. PREP COFFEE CARAFE.

PAM

Not that I know of. We slept together, but we were kids!

MIKE

You slept together?!

PAM

Oh Mike, for gods sake they were sleep overs!

MIKE

Yeah, I've heard about those sleep overs.

PAM

Where did you hear about them?

MIKE

Guys talk about those women, you know.

PAM

What are you talking about?

MIKE

You must have known something. You went through university together.

PAM

We were best friends. We went to church together, we roomed in school together, we double-dated. What would I know? She was no different than me.

MIKE

How can you be around somebody like that for so long and not be influenced? You two roomed together. You mean you didn't have any feelings for her?

PAM

What do you mean, feelings?

MIKE

Sexual feelings. Do I have to spell it out for you?

BETTE AND PHILIP CAMERAS ON, POURING FROM CARAFE.

PAM

(Exasperated) Oh, okay Mike. I confess . . . (screams) I'M A LESBIAN!

BETTE LOOKS TO SIDE. PHILIP STOP POURING LOOKS RIGHT SKEPTICALLY.

After 40 years of marriage, is this what you think?

MIKE

There's no talking to you when you're like this. I have to go . . . ah, check the meter.

PHILIP

You know, there's an app for that.

MIKE

There's no app for this.

MIKE CAMERA OFF..

DOOR DINGLING.

PHILIP CAMERA OFF.

BETTE

(Sitting) What was that about?

PAM

Oh, it's just Mike. He was ranting.

BETTE

Ranting about what?

PAM

Oh, you know, what we've been talking about. (Pause) You being a..uh..uh..lesbian.

BETTE

Why? Does he think you'll catch it from me?

PAM

Catch Lesbian? Is that even possible?

BETTE

Only if you are a lesbian. So then why would you say you're a lesbian, Pam? You're not.

PAM

Mike was saying such stupid things. I was so frustrated and embarrassed. I knew that would get him out of here.

BETTE

Well, now that he's gone, maybe we can talk more reasonably.

PAM

I'm not really sure I can Bette. (Calming down) Don't you think you've said enough?

BETTE

You don't know anything about my life or my partner. I want to continue to be friends. I want to tell you about my life now.

PAM

(Hesitantly) I don't know . . . I guess I'm interested in hearing about some of it, but I don't think all of it.

BETTE

I'm not going to tell you about what we do in bed. I don't ask you what you and Mike do. I'd like to tell you about Alice. She's great.

PAM

Okay, so tell me. How old is she? Where is she from? What does she do? What does she look like?

BETTE

She's 60. She's been a minister for 30 years. She came from Port Francis, Ontario—we're both from small towns.

DOOR DINGLING. MIKE CAMERA ON

I met her at a conference about Rainbow Refugees.

PAM

What's a Rainbow Refugee?

BETTE

Gay people whose lives are in danger in countries where they have no protection under the law. They could be put in prison or killed. We form circles of hope to bring them to

MIKE

You're bringing more of them in? The Conservative party will put a stop to that!

BETTE

Yeah and that's one of the many reasons we don't want them to get elected.

MIKE

A pinko and a lesbian. To think we let you baby sit our kids.

PHILIP CAMERA ON

PHILIP

Bette, are you sure you don't need more water? Maybe something stronger?

TABLE 2 CAMERAS OFF.

SCENE 9

TABLE 1

TABLE 1 CAMERAS ON.

PHILIP CAMERA OFF. PREP EMPTY TRAY WITH TOWEL AND GET READY FOR MUGS

JULES

None of us should have to worry about what other people think.

SAM

What bugs me, is that when people found out I was a lesbian, suddenly that's all they knew about me. They forgot I was a friend, a neighbour, I had a job and was one of the moms who drove the kids. I was a LESBIAN. That was it.

BYRON

Ignore them. There are so many more people who are accepting now, you don't have to worry about what they think.

JAY

But we do have to worry. We're dependent on a progressive government.

RILEY

I'll say! White supremacists, misogynists and homophobes . . .

JULES

I think the majority of the people are with the charter of rights and want equality... it's a beautiful thing.

SAM

We've made progress . . . 60% of people support us.

JAY

That means 40% don't! That's a lot of people. That's the group the right wing speaks to.

JULES

That's where education comes in. We have SOGI.

SAM

So gee—what's that?

JULES

It's a school curriculum against homophobia and transphobia for teaching kids about Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, S . . . O . . . G . . . I.

SAM:

No numbers? (Everyone laughs)

JAY

There's a really vocal movement against SOGI in the Fraser Valley right now.

SAM

Why? It really could have helped my kids.

JULES

They don't want their kids to think it's okay to be queer.

RILEY

Our parents didn't think that, and look how we turned out.

JULES

Back then, nobody mentioned it.

JAY

Surrey spent \$8 million out of their curriculum funds to fight having books about same-sex marriage.

JULES

But we won. I remember donating to the legal fees.

SAM

Legal fees! If I had a nickel for every legal fund I donated to for gay rights, I could retire!

RILEY

You are retired.

SAM

Oh yeah. Well, you get my point. We fought for everything, all the way to the supreme court.

PHILIP CAMERA ON. CLEARS MUGS FROM TABLE 1. JULES HANDS MUG OUT OF FRAME

JAY

Back in the 70s, I never thought we'd see gay marriage. That's another thing we won.

BYRON

And we won the battle for same-sex couples' medical coverage.

PHILIP

Yes, thank goddess. Of course it took the AIDS crisis to galvanize the community.

JAY

Absolutely. We had to raise a hell of a stink to get attention.

BYRON

I think some people were happy gays were dying. They thought we deserved it.

They said it was god's retribution. Positively medieval!

PHILIP

When my boyfriend was diagnosed in the 80s, the hospital workers wouldn't go near him without respirators and gloves, double layers of gowns and booties. His family wouldn't even go in the room. I remember he lay in his hospital bed and cried and cried. He needed a hug so bad.

BYRON

It must have been terrible for both of you, Pip. Devastating. I had a boyfriend who died, too. At St. Paul's Hospital. Thank goodness things got better here in Vancouver. The care was excellent. Care units felt like home away from home. My boyfriend's family was supportive. I was able to stay with him 24/7. I'm grateful.

JAY

Yeah, but those rights to quality care and acknowledgement of queer families came out of some pretty bitter fights.

RILEY

I had a friend with a deteriorating brain disease. She and her partner had been together for years against her parents' wishes. When Marion was no longer legally able to make decisions for herself, her parents sued for custody and won.

JULES

I remember that about Marion. She was a jeans and T-shirt dyke, and they put her in dresses like a doll.

BYRON

Even after you're dead, families can go against your wishes. I had a friend, Tim, who was fiercely dedicated to a young man with AIDS whose family had abandoned him after he came out. Tim followed his friend's wishes when he died and had him cremated. Then the parents suddenly came out of the woodwork and demanded the ashes. Tim told them their son was very clear, he wanted his ashes spread on the coast. The parents started getting loud and pushy, so Tim grabbed the urn and tossed it to his friend by the door and yelled, run!

THEY ALL LAUGH

JULES

(To Riley) What happened to your friend, Riley?

RILEY

After Marion died, Jill fought for survivor benefits from her union and won.

JULES

I remember that. She also fought the government to get the Canada Pension that went to survivors. She was in court for years, and when she finally won, wouldn't you know it, they wouldn't make the benefits retroactive.

PHILIP

I'll say it again. The government owed us that apology big time!

JAY

You're right about that!

BYRON

I was never much of an activist, but I can see my comfort level has been created by fighters. I need to start speaking out when I hear anti-queer talk.

JULES

And it wasn't just the people who went to court. There were demonstrations, and marches, and riots, letter writing campaigns, thousands of gay people speaking up.

RILEY

And then it grew into queer people and their allies.

JULES

We got trans rights when Parliament added gender identity to the Human Rights Act really recently. That was sure needed.

JAY

And even though Trudeau said this kind of oppression will never happen again, trans people are still being challenged. The right would reverse all of that in a heartbeat if they got a chance.

JULES

But on TV sitcoms they have queer characters including trans, even on commercials. I think we've made progress.

JAY

Of course we have! We just don't want to lose any of it.

RILEY

Well, for sure, but I just heard about a couple of dykes who were threatened by some guys.

SAM

Just last year my partner and I were threatened coming home from the gay pride dance.

RILEY

Oh, that was you!

SAM

Yeah and it was scary. We're never safe.

BYRON

You talk about things being bad now...my cousin didn't have the freedom we have. He killed himself in 1971.

PHILIP

Jeez Byron. You really have been through it.

BYRON

At the time it was shrouded in lies. They said he had a heart attack.

SORRY
PHILIP

There was so little acceptance back then. Shame and threats were heaped on us. But suicide still happens way too much.

SAM
Especially trans people.

JULES
Queer youth have the highest rates of suicide and homelessness.

JAY
I'll never forget a student of mine, a gay indigenous kid, who had no one to talk to about his pain. He hung himself. He was so isolated, he wasn't found for ten days! That changed the whole school culture because we made damn sure LGBTQ kids had support after that, but too late for him.

JULES
And that's why SOGI education is so important. If we don't educate kids, they are at risk for suicide and STIs.

SAM
Okay, I know what SOGI is (sexual orientation and gender identify, right?). So what the heck are STIs?

JULES
Sexually Transmitted Infection. It's what we used to call an STD.

SAM
Why did they have to change it?

RILEY:
I'll tell you later.

JAY
Now they have Gay/Straight Alliances and other groups. I wish we'd had them.

RILEY
Young people now know a lot more than we did.

BYRON

I think it's time for me to get out of my easy chair. I have to start connecting to the next generation.

RILEY

I feel totally connected to them, especially the trans kids and I'm not even trans. But when I go into a washroom, it's a battlefield. I almost got arrested in an airport because I didn't "look like a woman". Someone called security guy on me.

SAM

So they got a man to come into the women's washroom to remove you for looking like a man!?

RILEY

Yeah! I had to flip my shirt and expose my breasts to make them back off. Like I wanted to do that! Trans people go through this all the time.

JAY

Especially the kids. They're so brave, though; they speak out!

BYRON

I don't get why people freak out just because trans people want to be identified by a certain pronoun.

JULES

I wish all the freaking-out people would just shut up and listen and try to understand.

JAY

An excellent idea, Jules!

SAM

I don't want to insult people, but all this she and hers and him and his and they and theirs. It's confusing.

JAY

Yeah, I know. I was an English teacher.

JULES

Well, everyone owns their body, their gender, their sexuality. It's their choice.

JAY

And I have to respect that, grammar or not! It's their identity.

SAM

I always check with my grandkids about the pronouns their friends use, but I never remember. So I just ask how THEY are.

PHILIP PICKS UP TRAY. WIPE TABLE. PUT TOWEL ON SHOULDER.
COUNT 1, 2, 3
TABLE 1 CAMERAS OFF.

SCENE 10

TABLE 2

TABLE 2 CAMERAS ON PHILIP CAMERA OFF RIGHT AWAY

BETTE

(Pause)I was a good babysitter, Mike. I'm the same person now that I was then. Only there's something you know about me now that you didn't know then.

MIKE

Boy, I'll say!

BETTE

Your kids were safe with me. I was a good teacher. This doesn't change all the good times we had together.

MIKE

But we're Christians, and the church tells us the right way to bring up our kids. If you don't give them that foundation, what's going to happen to them?

BETTE

Morality is universal, Mike, and you can't have only one religion lay claim to that.

PAM

Well, you know Mike, we do know that Jewish family in Prince George . . . And there's lots of Chinese. They must be Buddhist. I know one. Their kids are so polite.

MIKE

It's only a matter of time before they'll see the light. This country was founded on good Christian values.

BETTE

This country was stolen from the First Nations people is more like it! What kind of Christian value is that?

MIKE

See Pam, I told you. We have to fight every inch of the way to see that our children and their children walk the Christian path.

BETTE

Your children are their own people, and they are going to do what they are going to do. You know, my parents never expected a gay kid. I was gay before I ever knew it existed. And that happens.

MIKE

I could never approve of my children in that situation. Does your mother approve?

BETTE

She's coming to the wedding.

MIKE

Is she all there?

BETTE

Absolutely. Her mind is way livelier than yours Mike and certainly more open!

PAM

Oh, Bette, it's been so long since I've seen your mother. I loved her. She was like a second mother to me.

BETTE

Well, then, come to the wedding. She'll greet you with open arms.

MIKE

(Arms folded across chest) Well, I'm not going. You won't see me there. You're already turning my wife.

BETTE

I've always assumed that Pam has a mind of her own, Mike.

PAM

Yes, I do, Mike. Bette, what should I wear to a gay wedding?

BETTE

Anything you're comfortable in.

MIKE

Pam, are you serious? Are you really going? We've got to talk about this, NOW.

PAM

Mike, I may never see Bette's mother again. I love her! And besides, Bette's my oldest friend. I want to be there.

MIKE

(Loud enough for Table 1 to hear) Maybe it's a damn good thing we found out about all this before we moved here. All these lezzies and godless weddings? I can't handle any more of this. I'm leaving. Let's go Pam (Mike gets up and starts to leave).

PAM

Mike, go ahead. I'll catch up with you . . .

MIKE CAMERA OFF. DOOR DINGLING

Bette, I'm glad we had this talk.

PAM CAMERA OFF (*Your husband is waving his arms. I think he wants you to leave*)
DOOR DINGLING. BETTE IS ALONE

SCENE 11**TABLE 2**

PHILIP CAMERA ON. HAVE TRAY AND TOWEL

PHILIP

I see your friends left. Are you doing okay?

BETTE

No, not really. It didn't go as I thought it would.

PHILIP

And they left you with the bill, to boot. Listen, their coffees are on me. It's the least I can do. (He crumples up the bill).

PHILIP CAMERA OFF. TABLE 1 CAMERAS ON. BETTE CAMERA OFF.

SAM

Can you believe what just happened over there?

BYRON

Is it ever going to end?

JULES

This why we still need the Pride movement.

JAY

Look she's packing up to leave. Why don't we ask her over.

SAM

Don't leave Bette, come over to our table.

BETTE

Oh, Thanks. I'll be right there.

PHILIP CAMERA ON

PHILIP

Let me get a chair.

JULES

Community is what keeps us going.

BETTE CAMERA ON.

SAM

So, is your friend really a lesbian?

BETTE

(Laughs half-heartedly) Hardly. More like a religious homophobe married to a rabid right-winger.

GROUP GROANS

BETTE

Yeah, I thought things might be different in Prince George these days. I mean gay people are all over the news . . .

BYRON

Well, it's probably the first time they've heard it from someone they know. You may have planted a seed.

JULES

She did say she'd call you.

BETTE

I don't know what I'll say to her now.

JAY

Do you really want them at your wedding? *She* might be ok, but him?!

SAM

If you do, stick to your guns and ask her again, but if all she wants to do is see your mum, give her your mum's number!

PHILIP

A wedding. I love weddings! Oh, it's such a Broadway ending! You'll need flowers. I know a florist.

BETTE

Alice is picking them.

PHILIP

And a gay-friendly cake-baker . . . And a caterer . . . and a women's band, and something new and something blue

SAM

There you go, Philip the wedding planner.

PHILIP

I think I'll start a business, right now!

JAY

Congratulations! You'll have a wonderful wedding whether they come or not.

SAM

I'd love to meet your wife.

BETTE

Sorry I didn't think about it sooner. I'll talk to Alice about inviting you all.

SAM

No need to be sorry.

BYRON

Is your wife a writer?

BETTE

She's a minister, so she writes sermons.

JAY

You write, too. Why don't you both join our writing group?

JULES

Ah, I hear a play coming on. Maybe that's our next project.

PHILIP SINGS: "GOING TO THE CHAPEL"

PHILIP

Because we're...

Going to the chapel and we're (all join)

Gonna get mair-air-air-ried.

Going to the chapel and we're

Gonna get mair-air-air-ried.

Gee, I really love you and we're (fading)

Gonna get mair-air-air-ried.

Going to the chapel of love.

ALL OTHER CAMERAS OFF

PLAY BETTE MIDLER

ALL CAMERAS OFF EXCEPT FOR PHILIP

PHILIP HOLDS UP PLAY SIGN (COUNT 4) SWITCHES TO PHILIP SIGN (COUNT 4)

EACH CAST MEMBER IN TURN HOLDS HER/HIS SIGN FOR A COUNT OF 4:

- SAM CAMERA ON, PHILIP CAMERA OFF. SAM HOLDS UP SIGN,
- JAY CAMERA ON, SAM CAMERA OFF. JAY HOLDS UP SIGN,
- BYRON CAMERA ON, JAY CAMERA OFF BYRON HOLDS UP SIGN
- JULES CAMERA ON, BYRON CAMERA OFF. JULES HOLDS UP SIGN,
- PAM CAMERA ON, JULES CAMERA OFF. PAM HOLDS UP SIGN,
- MIKE CAMERA ON, PAM CAMERA OFF. MIKE HOLDS UP SIGN,
- BETTE CAMERA ON, MIKE CAMERA OFF. BETTE HOLDS UP SIGN,
- RILEY CAMERA ON, BETTE CAMERA OFF. RILEY HOLDS UP SIGN.
- CYNDIA CAMERA ON, RILEY CAMERA OFF. CYNDIA HOLDS UP SIGN.
- ALL CAMERAS ON AND WAVE