

DoveTale

By Ted Swartz, Lee Eshleman and Ingrid De Sanctis

AT BARTHOLOMEW'S

Characters: Mary, Joseph, waiter, Gabriel as Arnie Puffkin (Another actor can play the role of the waiter, or Gabriel can play both water and Arnie by adding simple costume pieces such as a hat or jacket. Gabriel should play the role of Arnie because of the final line in this scene.)

Music: Music scores for this scene are included at the end of this script. The music can be downloaded at tedandlee.com/thestore

Set: Small table, two chairs

Props:

Bandage for finger, tablecloth, black apron, wine goblet, water glass, crackers in a basket, microphone, two menus, gift in bag, wooden box for Mary

Length: 9-10 minutes

(Instrumental music comes up and GABRIEL creates the new scene by bringing out the set pieces one by one: table, two chairs. JOSEPH enters and freezes into a position sitting down at the table. GABRIEL puts a menu in one hand and a goblet in the other. He claps and the music stops. He exits and JOSEPH wakes up. MARY enters from upstage. We watch her notice JOSEPH. She takes a deep breath. JOSEPH is dressed in khakis and a simple button up corduroy shirt. MARY has changed clothes and is wearing a simple blazer and brown shirt.)

MARY: I'm sorry I'm late.

JOSEPH: No problem. Oh, it's good to see you. *(They hug and he pulls out the chair for her.)* You look great.

MARY: Thanks.

(The waiter enters wearing a red beret, places menu on table. He speaks with a heavy French dialect.)

WAITER: Good evening miss, and welcome to Bartholomew's. Can I get you something to drink?

JOSEPH: Bring her a glass of your best wine.

MARY: *(MARY stops him.)* No, I'll just have some water. *(And as the waiter exits, MARY has an afterthought.)* And can you bring me some of those crackers?

(WAITER exits stage left.)

JOSEPH: How was your day?

MARY: Fine. I was a little tired this morning, but I feel okay now. *(She is trying to get his attention to talk about what has just happened to her.)* Joseph ... *(WAITER returns with water, crackers; exits right.)*

JOSEPH: No. No wedding talk yet. First... *(Brings out a gift bag and sets it in front of her.)*

MARY: *(Looking at the bag)* Oh, Joseph, it's beautiful.

JOSEPH: Look inside.

MARY: *(MARY looks inside the gift bag and pulls out a small wooden box.)* Oh, it's beautiful.

JOSEPH: Open it.

MARY: *(Reading the inscription on the inside lid)* Forever one. Oh, it really is beautiful.

JOSEPH: We learned engraving the last day. You really like it?

MARY: Yes. Yes, I love it.

JOSEPH: Those are dovetail joints there, very stable.

MARY: You're so sweet. I love surprises. *(Pause. MARY is starting to consider how she is going to broach the subject of her pregnancy.)* You like surprises too, don't you?

JOSEPH: From you. *(He points at her with a bandaged finger.)*

(She finally has his attention, but just can't bring it up, so decides to talk about something else.)

MARY: How did you do this? *(Points to his bandaged finger)*

JOSEPH: Oh man, this was a doozy. You remember Levi? He was sawing boards for the cabinet we were working on together. And he was real nervous about getting the measurements right. Well so was I. Anyway, just about the time he was bringing the saw forward he hollers, "Are you sure?" And like an idiot I pointed out the mark again. *(Holds up the finger. Clearly MARY'S mind is elsewhere.)*

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MARY: That's wonderful. Joseph, can we talk...

JOSEPH: Corner cupboards! Mary, there are nine corners in that apartment. If we put a corner cupboard in every corner, think of the space we could save.

MARY: Yea?

JOSEPH: Except maybe the back room. That'll be my work space. At least until we have kids. (*MARY starts to perk up now.*) Hey, it can still be work space. I'll just put in a real low work bench, with some small hammers and stuff—no saws though. (*Holds up his bandaged finger*) Might run in the family.

(*Singer ARNIE PUFFKIN enters from stage right with a blazer, tie and a Frank Sinatra type hat. Totally cheesy lounge singer who works the crowd.*)

ARNIE: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to Bartholomew's. Of course, I'm Arnie Puffkin. You know, it's a wonderful and special night tonight, here at Bartholomew's. My first song goes out (*Piano introduction to "Extraordinary Love" begins*) as a dedication, from this guy, Joseph, to his Mary, his bride-to-be, in just 67 days.

(*Sings the first few lines of "Extraordinary Love" then fades out and hums*)

Beside a cup of Joe
the more the merry, (Mary)
These two go hand in glove
As far as I can see;
it's an extra-or-di-nary,
story of love in love.

MARY: So ... you've been thinking about our family?

JOSEPH: I will need a couple of apprentices.

(*MARY sees an opportunity to get to the issue but she treads lightly knowing this will be hard for JOSEPH to understand.*)

MARY: Little babies popping up when you least expect them?

JOSEPH: Sure.

MARY: Joseph, you are such a beautiful man. One of the things that attracted me to you was ... ah ... I always thought of you as an

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understanding person ... well, it was the way you ... I thought to myself ... Joseph would make a good father.

JOSEPH: I always thought I could be. *(The singer fades in again for a measure, as JOSEPH and MARY get up to dance.)*

MARY: I'm feeling so good about us.

JOSEPH: Only 67 days away.

(They keep dancing. Something starts to happen to MARY in the following. Each description of marriage builds with intensity and physicality.)

MARY: You know, marriage can be difficult. There are obstacles.

JOSEPH: Forever one, Mary.

(MARY steps out of the dance and starts to use her hands to explain. She becomes more and more animated as she speaks, building to the breathing lines.)

MARY: It's going to be a lot of work, a lot of effort, and sometimes it'll feel like you are being kicked from the inside.

JOSEPH: It's you and me, Mary.

MARY: You don't always have everything you need. You don't have enough ice cream, you don't have enough pickles. You just don't have enough.

JOSEPH: But we'll have each other.

MARY: *(At the breaking point now. Using her hands, breathing hard. Giving birth to the lines.)* You push, you breathe, you push, the pain passes, things come out all right and you never know what you have. Joseph! *(Very calmly after she has just exploded)* I love you!

ARNIE: *(Singing)* Extraordinary love...

MARY: I'm pregnant!

(SINGER drops his mike on the metal chair. JOSEPH is amused—initially.)

JOSEPH: What?!

MARY: Joseph. I am going to have a baby.

SINGER: Thank you, and good night. *(Exits, embarrassed to overhear such an intimate conversation.)*

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JOSEPH: What?

MARY: I'm pregnant.

JOSEPH: *(Laughing it off)* You can't be. Is this a joke? You really had me going...

MARY: *(Trying to get him to understand. They both head back to the table.)*
No, I'm really pregnant.

JOSEPH: *(Beginning of the turn for JOSEPH to feel the hurt and betrayal.)* No, Mary, you're not telling me this. Not after, I love you forever, and I'm a beautiful man ... Mary, we're getting married in 67 days.

MARY: I know and I can't wait.

JOSEPH: You can't be pregnant. I mean, I should know, right?

MARY: Joseph.

(He's just rolling. MARY is trying to get him to understand.)

JOSEPH: I mean there has to be ... *(Waving his hands around)* If you're ... then there has to be ... and I know that we never ... *(Waving of the hands. Suddenly he stops. This is where things change. Turns to her. Speaks softly and seriously.)* I know **I** never...

MARY: Joseph. Neither have I. You need to know I've been faithful to you.

JOSEPH: Mary. If this *(Gestures to an area)* is a mamma frog, and this *(Gestures to another area)* is a ... *(This one is hard to say)* tadpole ... there has to be *(Gestures to area in between)* a ... bullfrog.

MARY: Joseph, there was no bullfrog.

JOSEPH: There had to be a bullfrog.

WAITER: *(Enters and goes upstage of the table)* Are we ready to order? *(They just look at him.)* A couple of minutes? *(Exits)*

MARY: Joseph...

JOSEPH: Mary, this isn't like winking at somebody else or laughing at his jokes. This is a lot more than that. Mary ... we said we'd wait ... We made a promise to wait...

MARY: Joseph, I have. If you'll...

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JOSEPH: *(Changing the subject)* What did you tell your folks?

MARY: *(Trying to make this sound like a great idea)* I haven't told them yet. I was hoping we could do that together.

JOSEPH: Together? You want me to stand next to a pregnant you and face your father?

MARY: He wouldn't blame you.

JOSEPH: Why not? Who else is he going to blame? Mary...

MARY: Joseph, listen to me. *(Starting with confidence that he just may understand)* There was this angel...

JOSEPH: The guy. *(Clearly he doesn't understand)*

MARY: No. It was an angel. And he came to me and ... he told me I was going to have a son ... and I was supposed to name him Jesus, and we're supposed to raise him as our own... *(Her heart breaks that JOSEPH just doesn't understand.)*

JOSEPH: *(Pause)* Mary, you have broken something precious.

(JOSEPH gets up and starts to leave. MARY tries to stop him with her voice.)

MARY: Where are you going?

JOSEPH: *(He turns around.)* I don't know.

MARY: But we have to talk about this.

(WAITER enters)

WAITER: What may I bring you?

MARY: I have completely lost my appetite.

JOSEPH: I don't think we'll be having dinner.

WAITER: Very well. I will bring you the check. For the crackers. *(WAITER clears off the table and exits. MARY tries again to engage JOSEPH in a conversation.)*

MARY: Joseph, wait. This Friday we have a luncheon with the bridesmaids and groomsmen.

JOSEPH: I won't be there.

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MARY: We're getting married in 67 days.

JOSEPH: How can there be a wedding now?

MARY: Joseph, I have my wedding dress.

(JOSEPH begins to walk away. MARY changes her tune.)

MARY: *(Firmly)* I mean, if you can't deal with my pregnancy how are you going to deal with the really tough things?

JOSEPH: That's really funny, Mary. *(Starts to leave for real now)*

MARY: Joseph, where are you going?

JOSEPH: I don't know. Out. Maybe I'll bump into an angel.

(At that moment as JOSEPH exits ARNIE enters and they bump into each other. ARNIE launches into his routine. Music comes up.)

ARNIE: Hey, it's an old favorite now, "The Bullfrog Song."
(MARY gets up and exits. ARNIE keeps on.)

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ARNIE: (*Singing "The Bullfrog Song"*)

Hey, pretty princess,
the daughter of the queen.
You got my heart a-jumpin'
like a trampoline.

I'm just a bachelor bullfrog
in the castle moat,
but I'm a candidate for loving
and I want your vote...

How 'bout it baby,
you and me,
amphibian and royalty.
How 'bout it baby,
you and me,
k-i-s-s-i-n-g.

I know what you're thinking,
It's a crazy scene.
You're a blue blood,
and I'm a green ...

But pucker up, mama,
you can never tell.
Maybe I'm a prince,
trapped under a spell.

How 'bout it, baby,
you and me.
I'm your date with destiny.
How 'bout it, baby,
you and me,
k-i-s-s-i-n-g.

(*ARNIE goes into the audience and talks with them.*)

ARNIE: Thank you. No matter who you are or where you're from, there sure are some things that hold us all together, and there's one thing that really does make the world go round. Of course, I'm talking about love. Love is the glue. You know, if life is a sandal, then love is that funny little thing that sticks down between your big toe and

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the one right next to it. (*Piano music*) I guess what I'm trying to say can best be summed up in a song.

(*Arnie starts singing second verse of "Extraordinary Love."*) A parting word for you, to all remember ...

when you're at the end of your rope
tie the knot again with your own heart strings
seal it in love's envelope.

(*Speaking*) I'm Arnie Puffkin, you've been fabulous. Good night, everybody, thank you. Good night. Goodbye.

(*ARNIE exits*)

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