

UNEXPECTED LOVE
A Comedy

by Linda Lau and Rae Mansfield

Cast of Characters

ANTOINETTE:

80s, female, museum docent

GLORIA:

80s, female, murder mystery writer

Time

Present

Place

A wine bar

Setting: A wine bar.

At Rise: ANTOINETTE and GLORIA are sipping wine at a table.

ANTOINETTE

Know what the best part is about doing the night tours?

GLORIA

Are there ghosts in the museum?

ANTOINETTE

At the children's museum? Why would you think there'd be ghosts?

GLORIA

I thought you were at the history museum.

ANTOINETTE

I quit that two months ago. The new director's too stuffy and wanted us to wear blazers and go through six months of training.

GLORIA

Don't have time for that. Six months of training to do something you already know in your sleep.

ANTOINETTE

You said it. And they wanted me to commit to three years of volunteering.

GLORIA

So what's so great about night tours?

ANTOINETTE

Cocktails.

GLORIA

When did they start doing that?

ANTOINETTE

About a year ago. Once a month they open up the museum at night. You should come.

GLORIA

As long as it doesn't conflict with my salsa class.

ANTOINETTE

You can miss one night. It's a lot of fun. And you can meet a lot of interesting people there. You never know, you might find a new husband.

GLORIA

I don't think I need a new husband. Did that. Have the tee shirt. I like my new life.

ANTOINETTE

All I'm saying is if you want to meet someone, you have to put yourself out there.

GLORIA

That's why I go salsa dancing.

ANTOINETTE

You *did* meet someone! Why didn't you say anything earlier? Here I am looking like an idiot trying to butter you up!

GLORIA

No, don't feel like an idiot. I'm telling you now!

ANTOINETTE

So what's he like. Is he a gentleman?

GLORIA

We're very good dance partners and we are very happy.

ANTOINETTE

Very happy, eh?

(GLORIA smiles over her glass. They toast.)

GLORIA

We met the first night I was there. It was both our first time and we just connected. Nothing like four left feet to help you bond with someone.

ANTOINETTE

"Dancing is a vertical expression of a horizontal desire," as they say.

GLORIA

Oh jeez. Do you always have to think about sex?

ANTOINETTE

What are you talking about? I don't always talk about sex. You're saying that because *you're* thinking about sex.

GLORIA

No, I'm not! We're too old to be having this conversation.

ANTOINETTE

You're never too old for this conversation. You just need to modify it a bit to adjust to new normals. Lubrication!

GLORIA

Will you please --

ANTOINETTE

Be less goal-oriented!

GLORIA

Shhh! People are staring at us.

ANTOINETTE

Oh poo. Old people have sex!

GLORIA

I didn't say they didn't! I just don't want you broadcasting it all over the place. Daddy taught me that a decent lady keeps certain things private.

ANTOINETTE

Your dad's been dead for thirty years. I think he's moved on by now. He's probably busy bossing people up there.

GLORIA

You...you...you really know how to push my buttons.

(They both laugh.)

ANTOINETTE

Oh, I know all about pushing buttons. But seriously, have you slept with him?

GLORIA

I *told* you, I'm not talking about it! I'm changing the subject. Why are you suddenly so interested in all this dirty talk? You sound like *Our Bodies, Ourselves*.

ANTOINETTE

Because *I* met someone. And if you met someone, too, I don't feel bad about having someone new in my life.

GLORIA

You met at the museum? Is there some young kid who's convinced you that to put him on your will?

ANTOINETTE

Younger than me, but hardly a spring chicken.

GLORIA

I hope he knows that all your money is going to the animal shelter.

ANTOINETTE

Recently widowed. Has a condo, paid in full, and a *pension*.

GLORIA

Good. I'm glad to hear that. Sometimes I wonder about your judgement.

ANTOINETTE

My judgement is fine.

GLORIA

How long did it take you to kick that drifter out of your house again?

ANTOINETTE

When I caught him wearing my dead second husband's suits.

GLORIA

Seriously? *That* was the reason. Good lord!

ANTOINETTE

What? I thought he only wanted to dance around in *my* dresses. That, I was fine with.

GLORIA

I don't know what to say to that.

(pause)

So what is this kid's name?

ANTOINETTE

I didn't say.

GLORIA

Why aren't you telling me?

(pause)

Is it someone I know?

(pause)

Oh, no. Please don't tell me it's Larry. Don't let it be Larry.

ANTOINETTE

It isn't Larry! I have more taste than that old horndog. And besides, he has four girlfriends already.

GLORIA

Good. I can't stand him. He's so boring. All he wants to talk about is the weather.

ANTOINETTE

His dog is cute, though.

GLORIA

Sylvia is only dating him for the Yorkshire Terrier.

ANTOINETTE

Poor Sylvia. We should rescue her. And the Yorkie.

GLORIA

You still haven't answered my question. Who is this person?

ANTOINETTE

Leslie.

GLORIA

I don't know any Leslie's around here except for Leslie Lee.

ANTOINETTE

That's the one.

GLORIA

Huh? What do you mean?

ANTOINETTE

Leslie Lee and me.

GLORIA

The two of you? But she's a she.

(pause)

I didn't know you were so broadminded.

ANTOINETTE

What are you implying! I'm very broadminded!

GLORIA

You threw bread at a lady for wearing white shoes after Labor Day.

ANTOINETTE

They were *sandals*! I don't want to look at someone's feet.

GLORIA

You make faces when people don't know which fork to use at a formal dinner.

ANTOINETTE

It's not proper etiquette and I'm only trying to help them. I can't simply tell them they're doing it wrong. That would be rude.

GLORIA

So how did this happen? Did you wake up one day and decide you were a lesbian?

ANTOINETTE

Yes?

GLORIA

That doesn't make sense, but it's your life, I guess.

ANTOINETTE

We had a wine and cheese night after a museum wine and cheese night. And things just sort of happened.

GLORIA

Something like that needs careful consideration. You can't just go changing your sexuality at a whim. What if you change your mind?

ANTOINETTE

I change it back.

GLORIA

You have to be careful. It's not only you that's involved. You might hurt someone else in the process. Don't go breaking Leslie's heart.

ANTOINETTE

I won't. We've just started exploring our relationship. It's all very new to the both of us. Well, she's been with two other women, but that was ages ago.

GLORIA

Where do you see it going?

ANTOINETTE

Stop thinking so much about the future.

GLORIA

You need to.

ANTOINETTE

We might be dead tomorrow. And not every relationship needs to be on an escalator!

GLORIA

If you want a good ending, you need to carefully plot out each scene.

ANTOINETTE

I know you're great at writing mystery novels, but life isn't like that.

GLORIA

It is, though. I think that when I walk through my neighborhood on Christmas and can see in families' windows. They're all living out their own version of the same story, with their own strange spin on the narrative, a story that I know but I'm not part of. Or weddings. They're all just slightly different interpretations of the same old same old.

ANTOINETTE

I hope you don't say this stuff in front of your new beau. It'll be sure to drive him away.

GLORIA

Jennifer is a lot like me. She likes to make plans and follow through on them.

ANTOINETTE

Who's Jennifer? We're talking about your new lover.

GLORIA

My salsa partner.

ANTOINETTE

Your salsa partner?

GLORIA

Yes, I am also with a woman.

ANTOINETTE

Since when did *you* become a lesbian? I mean, I get why *I* did. But you're so...so...you!

GLORIA

Stuck in my ways, you mean? I was a divorcee for sixteen years. I got along fine by myself. I dated around when I felt like it, stayed home when I wanted to, wrote my novels. And then I went to a salsa class where there were twice as many women as men. This woman in a purple dress came over and touched my hand.

ANTOINETTE

And you made her wait for six months before you decided you were going to be a lesbian?

GLORIA

A year.

ANTOINETTE

Jennifer must be very special. I would've moved on already.

GLORIA

I had to think things through. It was all so confusing for me. I didn't expect to feel attracted to women all of a sudden. It was after menopause. Things changed and I felt different.

ANTOINETTE

You grew a beard and had hot flashes, you mean?

GLORIA

After that part.

ANTOINETTE

Your brain fog finally went away?

GLORIA

My doctor said it was all part of the natural process. That our hormones start processing things differently.

ANTOINETTE

Ahhhh...you got an expert opinion. That sounds more like you. So a doctor told you it was okay to be a lesbian.

(ANTOINETTE starts laughing.)

GLORIA

Don't laugh at me. Actually, fine. I don't care if you laugh at me.

(GLORIA starts laughing.)

ANTOINETTE

You overthink too much, Gloria. That's what I love about you.

GLORIA

Didn't you think there was something wrong with you at first?

ANTOINETTE

Of course not! Unexpected, Maybe. But I didn't think something was wrong.

GLORIA

How did you figure out?

ANTOINETTE

There's nothing to figure out. Just have to go with it.

GLORIA

And stop caring what anybody else thinks?

ANTOINETTE

Yes. If we can't trust our instincts by now, then I don't know what we spent the last eighty years doing.

GLORIA

I always thought I knew who I was, but now more than ever, I feel more sure of who I am. Or at least what I want.

ANTOINETTE

And that could change tomorrow. Go with what makes you happy. Happiness is a choice you make, especially at this stage in the game.

GLORIA

You sound like a motivational speaker.

ANTOINETTE

All I'm saying is, "Take what you can get!"

GLORIA

Oh, believe me, I am.

ANTOINETTE

I'll drink to that!

(They toast.)

GLORIA

I'm thinking of a destination wedding in Hawaii.

ANTOINETTE

Who needs the wedding? Just go to Hawaii!

GLORIA

I do. And so does Jennifer.

ANTOINETTE

Fine, but you better invite me and Leslie, and I am not going to wear any pastel colors if I'm going to be your bridesmaid. Ooooh! I saw this beautiful silk cap sleeve dress on Fourth Street.

GLORIA

In black, I imagine.

ANTOINETTE

Of course.

(They raise their glasses.)

ANTOINETTE

To us.

GLORIA

To the ladies.

ANTOINETTE and GLORIA

And to unexpected love.

(They drink.)

THE END