

Love in 4/4 Time

Gary Young





ArtAge supplies books, plays, and materials to older performers around the world. Directors and actors have come to rely on our 30+ years of experience in the field to help them find useful materials and information that makes their productions stimulating, fun, and entertaining.

ArtAge's unique program has been featured in *Wall Street Journal*, *LA Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *American Theatre*, *Time Magazine*, *Modern Maturity*, on CNN, NBC, and in many other media sources.

ArtAge is more than a catalog. We also supply information, news, and trends on our top-rated website, www.seniortheatre.com. We stay in touch with the field with our very popular e-newsletter, *Senior Theatre Online*. Our President, Bonnie Vorenberg, is asked to speak at conferences and present workshops that supplement her writing and consulting efforts. We're here to help you be successful in Senior Theatre!

We help older performers fulfill their theatrical dreams!

ArtAge Publications
Bonnie L. Vorenberg, President
PO Box 19955
Portland OR 97280
503-246-3000 or 800-858-4998
bonniev@seniortheatre.com
www.seniortheatre.com

NOTICE

Copyright: This play is fully protected under the Copyright Laws of the United States of America, Canada, and all other countries of the Universal Copyright Convention.

The laws are specific regarding the piracy of copyrighted materials. Sharing the material with other organizations or persons is prohibited. Unlawful use of a playwright's work deprives the creator of his or her rightful income.

Cast Copies: Performance cast copies are required for each actor, director, stage manager, lighting and sound crew leader.

Changes to Script: Plays must be performed as written. Any alterations, additions, or deletions to the text must be approved.

Permission to Film: You do not have permission to film, record, or distribute the play in any medium. You are also not allowed to post on electronic services such as, but not limited to, YouTube. Exceptions must be granted by written permission from the publisher.

Royalty: Royalties are due when you perform the play for any audience, paying or non-paying, professional or amateur. This includes readings, cuttings, scenes, and excerpts.

The royalty for amateur productions of this show is posted online. It is payable two weeks prior to your production. Contact us for professional rates or other questions. Royalty fees are subject to change.

Insert the following paragraph in your programs:

Performed with special permission from ArtAge Publications' Senior Theatre Resource Center at 800-858-4998, www.seniorthatre.com

Love in 4/4 Time © 2019 by Gary Young

LOVE IN 4/4 TIME

By Gary Young

CAST

CAROL: Senior, married to Ted.

TED: Senior, husband of Carol, resident of a memory care facility.

ALICE: Senior, wife of Bob, resident of a memory care facility.

BOB: Senior, married to Alice.

Place

Various.

Time

Present day.

LOVE IN 4/4 TIME

ACT 1 Scene 1

Carol and Ted's Story

Setting: Two side peninsula platforms with a center stage area. On the SR peninsula two stools. Carol sits at one. Slightly back, Ted, in, sits on stool with his back to audience. On the SL peninsula, two empty stools. The CS platform is empty. Black flats or curtains form the background.

Music: "What the World Needs Now" is playing and fades as lights come up.

At Rise: Actors are nicely dressed, west coast, but in moderation. Alice is muted color top. Ted, white button-down shirt with bolo tie.

CAROL: I found him simply by accident. I hadn't been looking for someone, having just graduated from nursing school. I took a job and went as far from home as I could possibly go. That's when I met Ted. In a grocery store, of all places. I was new in town, in a hurry...not watching where I was going, you know, "quick shopping." He just didn't see me coming...how could he? I came around the corner of an aisle and... "CRASH!" There he was. I ran right into him with the grocery cart...when I hit him...the bottle of wine he was holding...went flying...so, our relationship started out as a mess, literally. After a few choice words he just stood there and looked at me and (*Ted turns to face Alice*) in his deep authoritarian voice said:

TED: (*with humor and wit*) "Well, the least you can do—and I mean the leas'— is buy me a cup of coffee—a cup of strong coffee."

CAROL: (*beat*) I did. (*beat*) Which, led to a long conversation and a happy hour bottle of wine at a small Italian restaurant around the corner where he seemed to know everyone. Ah! A local boy, I thought. Then, without a warning of any kind he said, (*Ted turns to again face the audience.*)

TED: Hey, how would you like to meet my parents?

CAROL: ...meet your parents? What? Are you crazy?

TED: (*laughingly*) No, I'm spontaneous but not crazy. How about you—are you...

CAROL: (*with a serious tone*) No, I don't think so.

TED: Well, since neither of us thinks or believes we're crazy. I'd like you to meet my parents. What do you say? Take a little time, say a minute or so, and think it over.

CAROL: Then, Ted just sat there with this wonderful smile on his face...our wine bottle was almost empty—so, about thirty seconds later—I said, "OK!" "OK." Imagine that. I'm not a spontaneous person, not like Ted. I'm a nurse. (*beat*) We walked to his car, got in and drove off. (*Ted mimics driving*) I assumed, wrongly, that his parents lived in the town. After about fifteen minutes I asked, "Where do they live, close by?"

TED: (*with a friendly laughter*) No—they live about a hundred miles away, over on the coast. (*beat*) And, just to reassure you—I'm not crazy—just spontaneous, very spontaneous. (*beat*) Carol, do you want to go back?

CAROL: (*beat*) That was the moment I fell in love with him—and embraced his spontaneity. (*beat*) Thirty-five years ago. (*beat*) That story sustained our marriage. (*Ted stands, turns on stool with back to audience*) Now, he doesn't remember it. (*beat*) Alzheimer's has... has robbed us of his spontaneity. (*beat*) Now, he calls me "Sis." (*beat*) Ted's sister died at eleven, he was nine at the time...I used to visit Ted every day, without fail, around lunch time...now, three or four times a week...(*beat*) it is "The Long Good-Bye," to quote Nancy Reagan. (*beat*) I still long for him, miss him...need him...but when I look into his eyes, I can see his memory of me fading...I feel like I'm fading away too...his doctor said, "Ted is dying because his brain is dying. (*beat*) Eventually, Ted's brain will not remember how to breathe." (*beat*) You know, it's not death that weighs on me...it's the never-ending dying... I have two prayers: one says, "Please not today, please - let us have one more day together." The other says: "Please...let it be today, let us be through with this. Please, please, please." (*beat*) In a sense, Ted's left me behind...and who's to say that I won't "go" first? Would he miss me...would he even know that I died? Died, loving him. (*beat*) So, what now? What's next? (*Carol, shrugs her shoulders in resignation.*)

(*Ted rises from stool and wanders DS, confused and not knowing where he is going. Carol, rises, and moves toward him.*)

CAROL: Hi hon, how are you today?

TED: (*Ted speaks with a flat affect*) Fine...fine...

CAROL: What did you do today?

TED: Nothing.

CAROL: Did you watch the football game?

TED: Yes...I...think so...maybe...

CAROL: Who was playing?

TED: Two teams—are you a nurse?

CAROL: Yes...but I don't work here. I'm retired.

TED: Oh...I think...I know you, somehow. (*beat*) You're my sister, right?

CAROL: No, I'm Carol—your wife. Actually, we've been married for...for...

TED: —I like your dress, you look nice...you come here often?

CAROL: Yes, sometimes we have dinner together.

TED: They're always serving chicken. Chicken, chicken, chicken! I'd like to have something else...something else... (*out of nowhere*) A glass of wine!

CAROL: A glass of wine? My, my, you always liked a good wine.

TED: (*again flat affect*) What is your name?

CAROL: Carol. (*beat*)

TED: I think...I know you...you're my sister, right?

CAROL: No, I'm your wife—

TED: (*beat and laugh*) You're crazy, Sis. (*beat*) Would you like to go for a ride in my car... I have a car you know.

CAROL: Yes, I know. *(beat)* I'd like that, very much. Where would we go? To visit your parents?

TED: I don't know...but we could go—somewhere.

CAROL: OK. Wherever you'd like to go—I'm in.

(Lights dim slightly. Spot light appears to indicate a different realm/reality. Ted rises and moves DS, Carol remains (freeze-frame in dim light). Once in Spot, Ted looks back at Carol, then to audience.)

TED: I didn't plan on this, nobody does. How could you? Every year—about the time of my annual physical, I'd take that internet "Health Quiz." You know the one— "What's Your REAL Age?" I just wanted to get a jump on my doctor. I've known Doc for years. He's my primary physician, and friend. We almost always golf on Fridays—talk about someone who needs to pay attention to diet and exercise. One day he introduced me to a new young physician...wanted to transfer me over and retire from being my primary. Said he enjoyed being my friend, not being my doctor. *(beat)* First appointment she, that's right SHE, noted some cognitive issues but "Nothing to worry about," or so it seemed.

We all have our own death scenarios. With Alzheimer's, you start looking for a way out, an exodus *(beat)* Maybe on a ski outing I'd just disappear out of sight. *(beat)* Or, the more "serious" plans. Like the one with a gun. It'd be quick—but—messy, no matter how much plastic I laid down. But, the thought of Carol finding me...*(beat)* I'm a responsible gun owner. Keep my guns—which haven't been used in years—under lock and key. Or, is it a combination lock? I can't remember. *(beat)* That's the issue. *(beat)* My guns are safe—locked away—just like me.

(Spot begins to fade. Ted becomes confused. Carol rises, slowly moves to Ted. Ted and Carol exit with her assisting him. Lights down. Music up.)

End of ACT ONE, Scene 1.

Music up: "What the World Needs Now"

ACT ONE Scene 2

Bob and Alice's Story

Music: "What the World Needs Now" fades as lights come up on SL Peninsula

Bob sits on stool facing audience, SL. Alice sits next to Bob, slightly upstage, in very subdued light, back to audience.

Lights up on Bob as music fades

BOB: We were always a team. I worked, Alice took care of the house and Susie, our daughter. Then, it was care for my parents, her parents...we were the first wave of the Sandwich Generation. Lived in San Francisco but "home" was just up the coast. After dad died, we moved back to my home town and I ran the family business. That is until Susie, to my surprise, said she wanted to be "next in line." Actually, one day she just said to me, "Dad, why don't you retire. You deserve it—and so does Mom." Since Susie's "Velvet Coup" the business has doubled in size and volume...through all the years I worked Alice organized everything, me, our home...our community...

ALICE: *(Alice rises from her stool, turns to face the audience and looks at Bob with a questioning eye.)* You're not going to wear that tie again, are you?

BOB: I was until now.

ALICE: *(loving)* Hon, I know it's your favorite. But it's got a spot on it. At the employees meeting, when you tell them Susie is coming on board and you're cutting back, retiring, I want the focus on what you're saying and not the spot on your tie. The meeting is at eleven o'clock, right? I'll be there, don't worry. I have to be at the hospital at nine. I can drive Meals on Wheels in the afternoon. Tonight, I've got to be at the City Council, oh, I'll leave a plate of dinner for you in the fridge. All you have to do is warm it up in the microwave, OK? I'll be home a little late. Oh, and one other thing—I love you, Bob. *(Alice turns away from the audience and sits down.)*

BOB: I love you too, Alice. *(beat)* "I love you." Those were always her parting words to me. I still hear her saying them, even though she hasn't said them for...for a long time...but I still say them every time I see her, leave her...or think of her: "I love you too, Alice." *(beat)* She volunteered everywhere... served two terms on the school

board...everybody always said, "Ask Alice, she'll get it done." When I told Alice about my wanting to retire, she said:

ALICE: (*Alice remains seated, facing away then turns to face audience*) Well Bob, you go right ahead, but I'm not done yet.

BOB: "I'm not done yet." (*beat*) That was Alice. (*beat*) She was engaged to my college roommate. I was going to be their best man. Then, one night—he, Richard, woke me up, at 4AM! And said: "Bob, I can't marry Alice—I'm gay." I said "You're gay? You are GAY? You ARE going to tell Alice, right?" "Actually," he said, "I thought you'd do that for me. After all you are the best man. And... you're the one who's really in love with Alice, right?" That was a truth I was trying to avoid. But, me tell Alice? That Richard was gay? That had "Shoot the messenger" written all over it. Turned out she was about ready to break up with him—because she wondered if he might...yep...be gay...Alice and I didn't date because, after all we were "just friends"—it was natural for us to hang out together. We felt safe with each other... Alice was my best friend then... and has been ever since...after graduation I was set to start my "just-out-of-college job," she had some credits to finish up and I said: "Why don't you do that and then move in with me?"

ALICE: (*turns to face Bob*) Move in with you? Really? Are you serious? You are, aren't you? (*beat*) Bob, if you're saying, "Move in with me, old friend," the answer is no.

BOB: Alice, I love you.

ALICE: That's what I was waiting to hear.

BOB: A year later we were married. When "same sex unions" finally became legal, and Richard married Tim, I was Richard's best man and Alice his best woman. We still are...but...he visited last week... and Alice didn't know him. (*Alice turns her stool around slowly, facing up stage, her back to the audience.*)

(*beat*) I'm not sure when I started to notice the change. Like the day she got lost driving to the grocery store...leaving the gas burners on, misplacing her keys...one day, she saw her keys lying on the counter and picked them up. I said, "Oh, you found your car keys!" She just looked at them...then I realized she didn't understand what keys were for. One night, about 2AM, I woke up and she wasn't in bed. I went downstairs to look for her. All the lights were on, the front door was wide open. I found her a couple of blocks away. When I asked her "Alice, where are you going?" She said,

ALICE: Home. But I've lost my way.

BOB: She was talking about the house we owned before Susie was born. With her memory slipping, disappearing...I started losing my way too...even if she doesn't know me, I want to be with her. *(beat)* Isn't that what "Till death do you part" means? *(beat)* There are 7 stages of Alzheimer's—At Stage 6—most will have forgotten everyone, everything - because their brain is wasting away—its size and weight are decreasing. Maybe about half its normal size and the body starts shutting down simply because it isn't getting any signals from the brain. On the outside they may look familiar but inside—it's gruesome. *(beat)* *(Bob, moves to Alice and helps her, puts a bib on her and begins, in mime, to help her eat by cutting up her meat, putting food on a spoon for her, etc.)*

BOB: Did you go shopping today? Anyone go with you?

ALICE: Yes. I think his name is...is...is it Bob? Is that you? Are you a...a...a...

BOB: Shopping Assistant? I sometimes think I must be. I help keep track of your things and where they end up...did you find something today?

ALICE: Pearls!

BOB: Everyone here loves to go shopping. Other people's rooms have some interesting things. Did you have any shoppers come to your room?

ALICE: Yes...I think so, I...I...don't remember...

BOB: Bet you'll like this "Puree de Prime Rib..." Talked to Susie yesterday...she'll stop by and see you this weekend—

ALICE: Who's Susie?

BOB: Who's Susie? *(beat)* Our daughter. You remember our—

END OF FREEVIEW
You'll want to read and perform this show!