

Romance Reconfigured

Pamela Loyd





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ROMANCE RECONFIGURED

by

Pamela Loyd

A romantic comedy that works well both on zoom or as a live stage play.

15 minutes

Two lovers are separated in their own homes by the lockdown of the COVID pandemic. Weekly Zoom dates are arranged but are get boring. How do these lovers find a way to “reconfigure,” or spice up, their Zoom dates to keep the passion alive?

CAST

STEPHAN (accent on second syllable, Ste-PHAN): Man, nicely dressed for a fancy dinner date, suit and tie, or a smoking jacket. A cloth handkerchief in pocket.

MIMSY: Woman, nicely dressed for a fancy dinner date, in a pretty dress or nice buttoned blouse (something washable).

Both characters need to wear outfits, and exhibit behaviors and ways of speaking, that convey that they are refined, elegant people, who use good manners and follow social conventions, perhaps even similar to characters in 19th century romantic novels, and that they would never do anything unmannerly, out-of-line, or unexpected.

PLACE

Dining tables of Mimsy and Stephan, each in their own home.

TIME

An evening during the pandemic.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Mild profanity may be replaced with other terms if preferred for your audience.

If performed on zoom, each will have a table and chair set for a fancy dinner in the actor's own homes.

If performed on stage, two such tables will be on opposite sides of the stage, set at an angle towards the audience, with the idea that they are in their own homes and having a zoom date. It is recommended, that computers (real or fake) not be used on stage since they will distract and block the view of the actors. Perhaps a thin frame could suggest a computer screen. The audience will quickly accept the belief that the characters are using computers for their zoom date. Also, the director may make small modifications, if needed, for logistics and better blocking.

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SETTING: Two tables are set with tablecloths, nice dishes, and cloth napkins. They each have a glass of water, a wine glass, and a bottle of wine or wine substitute. Off to the side, they each have a cooked but cooled microwave dinner (in it's cooking tray) of fettuccini alfredo (or something similar and non-staining). If done on Zoom, their microwave dinner is set off to the side just out of camera range but within easy reach.

AT RISE: STEPHAN and MIMSY are sitting at their own tables. They smile at each other.

STEPHAN: Here we are again, my dear Mimsy. Another romantic zoom date.

MIMSY: A wonderful dinner to be served by *(does finger quotes)* "my butler, Jeeves," while we pretend we are actually together.

STEPHAN: We are always together in spirit, my dear. And may I say you look breathtakingly lovely tonight.

MIMSY: Oh thank you, Stephan. You know just how to make my heart flutter.

STEPHAN: I have looked forward to seeing you all week with such heart-racing anticipation.

MIMSY: As have I, my love. Coupled with such sorrow that I cannot be with you in person, feel your minty breath in my ear as you nibble on my lower lobe. Oh! It almost brings me to weeping.

STEPHAN: Oh Mimsy, Mimsy, Mimsy my sweet. Don't cry my dear Mimsy. Here, let me wipe your sweet sad eyes . . . on my computer screen of course, but that's the best I can do for now . . . with my old-fashioned lace handkerchief which shows me to be a dashing romantic figure.

STEPHAN gets up, bends towards his "computer" in front of him, puts cloth handkerchief to her "face" on his screen, wipes her eyes tenderly as MIMSY puts her face forward for her eyes to be wiped.

STEPHAN: There you are, my dear. Do you feel better now? *(sits)*

MIMSY: *(fans herself as though she is about to swoon)* I could use some smelling salts, but I think I'll be O.K. You always take such good care of me, Stephan.

STEPHAN: You know this damned Covid virus will not last forever. We *will* be together again. And in the meantime we keep our love alive with our romantic zoom dates.

MIMSY: Yes, of course we do, Stephan.

STEPHAN: So, my dear Mimsy, may I pour you some wine? *(holds up wine bottle, and toward her)*

MIMSY: Thank you, Stephan. *(pours wine into her own glass)* And may I return the favor and pour some wine for you? *(holds up a wine bottle, reaches towards him)*

STEPHAN: Absolutely, my love. *(pours wine into his own glass, then raises his glass)* I'd like to make a toast to the most wonderful woman in the world--gorgeous, elegant, intelligent, and cultured--my dearest Mimsy.

MIMSY: And to you Stephan, the most gallant gentleman I've ever known.

Both smile lovingly at each other, take a sip of their wine.

MIMSY: Well, shall we eat? The butler will bring out the extravagant meal I prepared especially for you, my dear. (*rings a bell*) Jeeves. Oh Jeeves. You may serve us now. (*she pushes her plate to the right out of camera range*) Jeeves is serving it up, now .

MIMSY keeps looking to the right, her right arm seems to be moving, the camera moves to her right (she turns computer screen subtly with left hand) to show that she is spooning the contents of a microwave dinner onto her plate. She suddenly sees that she's been caught on camera and returns computer screen / camera back to original spot.

MIMSY: Oops! Oh dear, did my camera catch me doing that? You're not supposed to see that. Jeeves is very shy, you know. (*pulls plate with food back in front of her*)

STEPHAN: (*holds hands over his eyes*) I'm not watching. I don't see anything.

MIMSY: Oh look. Jeeves has prepared my favorite, fettuccini Alfredo. Fettuccini for Lovers.

STEPHAN: And now Jeeves is going to serve me. (*he reaches to the right, pulls over a microwave dinner, dumps it noisily on his plate*) Ah! Smells delicious. Thank you Jeeves.

They begin to eat.

MIMSY: So, Stephan, as usual, let's start with normal, dull, but polite conversation. (*beat*) So, how has your week been?

STEPHAN: It's been quite. quite. quite. Like all the other weeks. Trapped in my house, staying in my pajamas all day, then watching all the news shows until I'm thoroughly disheartened. Counted the number of laundry detergent commercials. Clipped my toenails. (*MIMSY yawns*) Have I successfully bored you, my dear?

MIMSY: Quite successfully. But not to be outdone in the boring department, today I read all the "M" pages in the dictionary. I spun around in my desk chair until I fell off. I made, and un-made, my bed forty times.

STEPHAN: That is boring.

MIMSY: Yes, well . . . So, perhaps it's time we move to the more "interesting" part of our date.

STEPHAN: Please do .

MIMSY *unbuttons several buttons on her blouse* .

STEPHAN: Mmmm. That *is* more interesting.

MIMSY: The women do this (*indicates her opened blouse*) a lot in the old movies I've been watching ten hours a day. Apparently women were more sultry in those days. But those old movies are so romantic they just make me miss you more.

STEPHAN: I know, my dear. (*with campy passion*) Sometimes I miss you more than I miss going to the dentist.

END OF FREEVIEW

You'll want to read and perform this show!