

HAPPY AND GAY

A ten minute play

by

Mary Steelsmith

Winner of the 2009 Eileen Heckart Drama for Seniors Competition

Copyright 2011

**Mary Steelsmith
5122 W, 9th Street
Los Angeles, CA 90036
Phone: 323-934-5652
Email: Marysteelsmith@aol.com**

HAPPY AND GAY

Mary Steelsmith
5122 W, 9th Street
Los Angeles, CA 90036
Phone: 323-934-5652
Email: Marysteelsmith@aol.com

CAST OF CHARACTERS

VERONICA - Middle age A church lady, concerned what people think. Rather plump and nervous.

BETTY - Middle age A church lady, kind of plump, enthused, highly imaginative and excitable.

SETTING:

A Christian church fellowship hall, signified by a large fish symbol or cross hanging on the wall. A large banner has been hung up reading "CONGRATULATIONS, PAT AND CHRIS!! NOW YOU'RE LEGAL!!" Beneath it is a large table, set with festive paper plates, a bowl of "pillow mints" and napkins. Several folding chairs are placed around the room, ready for guests.

SYNOPSIS:

You've seen these women before. They stay in the background, seemingly content to decorate the church fellowship hall with crepe' paper, bring the funeral service casseroles and knit baby shower booties. They've seen it all -- until today. Today, history is being made at the church as it hosts its first gay wedding. Betty worries over the proper "gay" way to hang crepe' paper streamers, while Veronica stresses about what people will say about their preacher's radical decision to use the church for these kinds of affairs. Her fears are deeper and more personal than she will admit.

HAPPY AND GAY

SETTING: A Christian church fellowship hall, signified by a large fish symbol or cross hanging on the wall.

A large banner has been hung up reading "CONGRATULATIONS, PAT AND CHRIS!! YOU'RE LEGAL!!" Beneath it is a large table, set with festive paper plates, a bowl of "pillow mints" and napkins. Several folding chairs are placed around the room, ready for guests.

Standing on two of the folding chairs are VERONICA and BETTY. They appear to be your typical midwestern church ladies, possibly plump, definitely wearing their Sunday best for the occasion.

At present, they have lengths of multicolored crepe' paper streamers stretched between them. Veronica tries to focus on what seems to be a deeply solemn task; attempting to attach her end of the crepe' streamers to the wall with bits from a roll of scotch tape. Betty won't stop talking.

BETTY

Straight or kinky?

VERONICA

What now?

BETTY

I said -- straight or kinky. The crepe' paper. Do we twist it up or what?

VERONICA

Doesn't matter.

BETTY

Yes it does.

VERONICA

We don't have time for this.

BETTY

(softer)
It's really important. *(louder)* Veronica!

VERONICA

(nearly shaken from her perch)
What! What? What's so important, Betty?

BETTY

Straight or kinky. Here. Look.

Betty hops off her chair, graceful as a cat. She holds up the crepe' streamers.

BETTY (cont'd)

See? We can twist it up all nice and pretty. Like this.

Betty weaves the streamers together.

BETTY (cont'd)

You know, like we did for the Secret Sisters gift banquet? It got lot's of compliments. Or..

Betty separates the streamers, so they hang straight and rather droopy.

BETTY (cont'd)

..Like the Dads and Grads prayer and pancake breakfast. What do you think? Hmm? Me? Personally, if I were one of THEM, like if I was, you know, like a Lesbianese? I'd like it nice and curly. Kinky. Like that kind of bunting they put on top of windows for decorations? If I were one of THEM, I'd want that.

VERONICA

You would.

BETTY

I would. Yes. I would. I think I'd want it. I'd want kinky.

VERONICA

You know what I want?

BETTY

What?

VERONICA

Right now?

BETTY

What right now?

VERONICA

Down.

Betty doesn't get it. Veronica drops her end of the crepe' streamer and supports herself against the wall.

VERONICA (cont'd)

Down. Now. I'm dizzy.

Betty quickly crosses to Veronica's chair and lends her a hand, for a less than graceful descent to the floor.

BETTY

You gotta eat something, Veronica. It isn't good for the blood sugar for you to go climbing all over chairs and skipping your lunch to get this all done. You coulda' gotten away with it maybe thirty years ago. I should know. Hey. Maybe I could sneak you a piece of the wedding cake before everybody comes tromping in.

VERONICA

(near tears)

You can't do that. They'll notice it right away. People like THEM. They always notice things.

BETTY

Oh, I know that one. They call it Gay-dar. See, that's why I'm concerned about this kinky/straight thing. I mean, what if they come in and see it all kinky and think we're making fun of them. Like they think we think they're all interior decorators or kinky in... well THAT way. You know. Or worse, if we make the streamers straight and droopy, then it's like --- "Oh, you church ladies think we ought to be straight and droopy, huh. Is that what you're saying?" Oh, I'd hate that, Veronica. I'd hate them to think I think they should... You know. And what if one of them came up and bitch-slapped me?

VERONICA

Betty! Language! Church!

BETTY

We're in the fellowship hall.

VERONICA

It's still a church. Though you wouldn't know it anymore with all this going on.

BETTY

Come on. We've been going here for what, since we've been kids? You know this place better than your living room.

VERONICA

No, I don't. I don't know this church anymore. Before all this "gaiety stuff" started up, you could count on things. You could come to church, sit in the same pew, sing a hymn and be okay. Just okay. But then these two-- they come barreling in like gang busters. And the ideas they bring. Jazzing up "Amazing Grace" with a rhumba beat.

BETTY

Oh, and they had that cool electric piano with the drumbeat thing. (sings) Amazing Grace - ce-ce-ce... how sweet, cha-cha-cha, the sound, cha-cha-cha...

VERONICA

They take a sacred hymn..

BETTY

And make it more like a "her." (laughs at her own joke again) I love it when I do that.

Betty dances her best rhumba, which mysteriously involves cha-cha-cha'ing...

BETTY (sings, (cont'd)

...That saved...ce-ce-ce.. a wretch, cha-cha-cha.. like me... Cha-Cha-Cha..Cha-Cha-Cha..

VERONICA

Betty. They're changing everything. It's perverted.

BETTY

Oh, now. They're nice. They dress well. They have lovely voices.

VERONICA

What was he thinking? What was Reverend Jerry thinking, letting THEM have a ceremony in OUR sanctuary?

BETTY

He really is forward-thinking for a preacher. Saying stuff like God is love and love is love. I love that.

VERONICA

You know, people are starting to say HE's a gay.

BETTY

Reverend Jerry isn't a gay. He's married.

A beat. Veronica stares at Betty, incredulous.

BETTY (cont'd)

What?!

VERONICA

He's trying to rub it in our faces. That's what he's doing. And those two. Pat and Chris. Exchanging vows. Kissing. Kissing right up front of sanctuary where everybody can see. Right in front of the curtains. I'm surprised they don't fling those curtains open, fill up the baptistry with water and have a hot tub party while they're at it.

BETTY

That would be different, huh. At least we'd get more use out of the thing. Oh, speaking of parties..

VERONICA

Betty. Don't you get it? Can't you see? This is dangerous. They're destroying the whole concept of marriage.

BETTY

No they're not. They're having a reception, aren't they? Now, if that's not normal, I don't know what is.

VERONICA

Right. Normal. They'll come down here and kiss again. Right in front of everybody. Like they did after their vows. No wait. During their vows.

BETTY

Yeah, I thought that was the sweetest part.

VERONICA

Sweet.

BETTY

Looking each other in the eyes. All that love.

VERONICA

You mean the part where Chris said "Pat, You're the Ashley Wilkes to my Butterfly McQueen!!"

BETTY

Yeah, okay. So. I didn't get that part. Anyway, speaking of parties. Did you know what the County Clerk had to do with the marriage licenses now that it's all kind of gay? She had to change the whole thing up. I mean, you can't exactly say husband and wife, now, can you. Like who gets to be the husband. And who has to be the wife. What do you do, have a coin toss? So you know what the County Clerk does? She ends up printing new licenses, calling people "Party A" and "Party B." I can see Jerry up there now, "B, do you take A for your lawfully wedded alphabet?" What do they do if they adopt a kid? Call it "C?"

Betty REALLY enjoys her own joke.

VERONICA

Do you ever listen to yourself, Betty?

BETTY

No. I never have time. Speaking of which, we've got to get going, here. Pretty soon, they'll be done with the picture taking and down they'll come here to the fellowship hall, expecting some fellowship and all.

BETTY (cont'd)

Oooh! Maybe instead of mushing their faces with cake they'll bitch-slap each other. You think?

VERONICA

Would you stop saying that!!

BETTY

Sorry, Veronica. But that's what they call it. It was on one of those BRAVO Channel shows. Kinda' funny if you think about it. Bitch-slapping.

Betty laughs. Veronica begins to sob.

BETTY (cont'd)

Oh no. Veronica. I won't say it any more. Oh my god, what's the matter? You going into diabetic sugar shock? You need some candy?

Betty leaps into action, hurries to the table and grabs a handful of mints from a dish and brings them to Veronica, who takes one look and breaks into big, sloppy, gulping sobs.

BETTY (cont'd)

Here. Try some of these pillow mints. They're not wrapped, but you know they're clean. Nobody's touched these mints yet. I promise. Veronica. What's the matter? Tell me what you need. What do you want me to do? What do you want me to be? Just tell me. Ah no. Looky there. Now your nose is getting all drippy.

Betty sprints to the table again, this time fetching napkins for Veronica to blow her nose in.

BETTY (cont'd)

Here. Blow.

Veronica blows her nose, a nice, loud honk. She looks down at the fancy napkin.

BETTY (cont'd)

What? You need another blow jobby?

Betty offers up another napkin. For some reason, this strikes Veronica as oddly funny. She takes a big breath, then swings from total devastation to deep, soulful giggles.

If Veronica was a bell in this church's steeple, she would be pealing with laughter right now.

BETTY (cont'd)

I don't know if you need sugar or insulin or what? You gotta tell me. I'll do whatever. Tell me.

VERONICA

Don't ask.

She finds that hilarious, too.

BETTY

Oh, you didn't piddle your panties, now, didja? You got extra undies in your purse? Maybe I got some in mine. I'll go look.

Veronica cracks up, laughing even harder. Betty doesn't appreciate it.

VERONICA

Oh, my!

BETTY

Why? What'd I say now? You think I'm funny?

VERONICA

I'm not sure I could ever explain...

BETTY

What is it with you? First you're sad, now you're happy. Crying. Laughing. What's the deal here? Hormones?

VERONICA

I.. I can't...

BETTY

Because this.. This, now. I gotta tell you. You're starting to tick me off, here, Veronica.

VERONICA

That's the last thing I want to do.

BETTY

Yeah, well the first thing, you gotta stop laughing like this, cause, they're coming downstairs any second now and they're gonna think you're laughing at them. You don't want them to think that now, do ya? You're the one who worries what people will think. You're the one who sets the rules, the rules about you and me. How we get to be friendly but not really friends when folks are looking. Because who knows? They might think.. They might think... we're..we're...

Lesbanese?
VERONICA

Betty bitch-slaps Veronica. Veronica stares at her, stunned.

BETTY
I was gonna say "happy." I was gonna say "in love."

A beat.

Veronica approaches Betty.

VERONICA
That bitch-slap thing. It smarts.

BETTY
Good.

Veronica brings her hand up as if to return the slap, then stops herself. Instead, she looks around to see if anybody is looking, then caresses Betty's face softly. Betty takes Veronica's hand and kisses it. They embrace.

VERONICA
I'm scared.

BETTY
You always were.

VERONICA
Now, even more so.

BETTY
We gotta get ready, now.

They look at each other a long moment, then each takes her end of the crepe' paper streamers. They begin to curl the paper, making it look nice and kinky.

BLACKOUT.