

I LOVE LEZZIE
by
Allison Fradkin

Contact:
Allison Fradkin
allisonfradkin@aol.com

“I Love Lezzie”

SYNOPSIS

Inspired by a story on NPR from May 17, 2020, “Home But Not Safe: Some LGBTQ Young People Face Rejection from Families in Lockdown” ([npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/05/17/856090474/home-but-not-safe-some-lgbtq-young-people-face-rejection-from-families-in-lockdo](https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/05/17/856090474/home-but-not-safe-some-lgbtq-young-people-face-rejection-from-families-in-lockdo)), “I Love Lezzie” acts as an antidote, featuring a family that vibrantly and valiantly validates their daughter’s identity when she comes out to them as a lesbian. In fact, they are so delighted by this revelation, they can’t even wait until after isolation to have a celebration.

CHARACTERS

Missy, 18

Esther, her mother

Chester, her father

While the trio is reminiscent of a 1950s sitcom-style nuclear family, the cast itself need not be comparably colorless—or even monochromatic.

SETTING

Living room.

TIME

An afternoon in a present that’s stuck in the past.

At rise, ESTHER is in the foreground. Seated at the screen, she is the gracious host of a Zoom meeting. In the background is her husband CHESTER, happily humming the theme music of *I Love Lucy* while hanging a handmade sign that reads *I Love Lezzie* and resembles the sitcom’s signature heart.

CHESTER

How’s it hanging, honeybunch?

ESTHER

(swivels to study the sign)

It isn’t straight, Chester.

CHESTER

Should it be straight, Esther? We don’t want to hurt Missy’s feelings.

ESTHER

Missy will understand. She knows very well that the only thing about her that has to be straight is her posture. And that sign. Ooh! You’d better shake a leg.

CHESTER

Which one?

ESTHER

Now, Chester, this is no time to get hokey.

(Chester approaches Esther with affectionate intent)

Or pokey.

(singing all but the last two words to the tune of “Be Kind to Your Web-Footed Friends”)

Be kind to your web-cameraed friends, for a guest may be saying “Oh, brother.”

CHESTER

There are participants present? Already? Egads!

(scurries back to the sign)

ESTHER

(to the guests)

I’d say you beat me to the punch, but that first glass is going to our first-class guest of honor.

CHESTER

(having successfully straightened the sign)

Ta-da!

ESTHER

Brava! It’s perfect! Just like our little lezzie.

(studying the screen)

It would appear that everyone is now here and/or queer.

(As Esther stands and steps away from the screen, Chester pulls up a footstool and sits.)

ESTHER

Make like a member of a maligned minority and rise up, dear.

CHESTER

Oh. All righty.

(joins Esther in the center of the room/frame)

Welcome, all, to The Dykeutante Ball! Friends and fam, we are gathered here today because, after eighteen years, our darling daughter finally laid her lesbianism on us. Such news, as you know, is cause for immediate celebration.

ESTHER

A few of you look a tad querulous about the short notice. But, as you’ll fondly recall, Chester and I covered our cabooses in that department: When you received the birth announcement notifying you of the arrival of our little princess, it was accompanied by a Save the Date card anticipating the coming out of our little lezzie.

CHESTER

So you had to save more than one date. So you had to save them all.

ESTHER

So we thank you for coming out and logging in as if you had a choice or a voice in the matter—you’re all superbly sequestered and magnificently muted. Now, for those isolationists who don’t know me, I’m Esther. I am the mother of the lesbian.

CHESTER

(waving wackily, until Esther takes hold of his hand)

And I’m Chester. I am the father of the lesbian. In the words of my platonic friend Dorothy: “There’s no place like home.” And there’s no sexual orientation like homosexual. That’s why we put the “home” in “homosexuality” and you in our home—from a distance, like that Bette Midler song of the same name.

ESTHER

We’re so glad you could join us in our home...o’ sexuality.

CHESTER

Yesterday, when Missy told us she was a lesbian, why, the wife and I were just thrilled to pieces. Imagine, our daughter, a dyke!

ESTHER

Like any parent, we were beside ourselves with pride. All the wishes and hopes and dreams we had for our child were finally within reach.

CHESTER

Me, giving her away at her commitment ceremony, then her civil union ceremony, and finally—praise the goddamn Lord!—her wedding ceremony.

ESTHER

Me, helping the happy couple set up house.

CHESTER

And who could forget their two-point-five kids, all fathered the old-fashioned way.

ESTHER and CHESTER

Artificial insemination.

CHESTER

Missy’s future just keeps looking gayer and gayer, doesn’t it?

ESTHER

And so does Missy herself. Or she would be, if she were in virtual view of all of you.

(stepping off-screen and calling out)

Missy! Missy, darling, everyone’s waiting for you!

CHESTER

(in reference and deference to I Love Lucy)

Speeeeed it up a little!

ESTHER

(calling out)

Missy? Missy, honey, are you almost ready? Missy, sweetheart, you sound unresponsive. Are you dead? Answer me, Missy. Are you dead? Missy? Missy, dearest, if you’re dead, your father and I are going to kill you.

CHESTER

(to the guests)

She’s such a kidder.

(crossing to Esther)

Lighten up, buttercup. You know very well you can’t knock off a lesbian. You won’t get into Heaven.

ESTHER

Oh, fiddle-faddle. I’d better go and check on her.

(pops back onscreen)

Excuse me, everyone. I’ll be back in a jiffy.

(exits)

CHESTER

(to the guests)

So sorry to keep you all waiting. Missy is usually very punctual. Well, it looks like it’s just you and me. Huh. There’s a lot of yous and only one of me. Oh boy. I guess I’ll tell a few jokes to try and keep everyone in good spirits. Um...Uh...Well...Oh! I’ve got one. And I do mean one.

(pauses profoundly)

What is a lesbian’s favorite episode of I Love Lucy? “Gaycation from Marriage”! Lucy and Ethel take a hiatus from their husbands and move in with each other. Then one night, they get all gussied up and pay a visit to their spouses, and Lucy says she hopes Ricky and Fred have as gay an evening as she and Ethel are planning on having. And how about that episode where the gals are quarreling with the guys and Lucy asks Ethel if she wishes there were something else to marry besides men, and Ethel answers “F yes!” or something a little more appropriate for the time period? They really were pioneer women, those two, what with all the accidental advocating they did for marriage equality. Tough activists to follow, for sure, but I’m confident that our lesbian is up for the challenge. Speaking of challenges, this gay-at-home order is tough for teens. What kid wants to be a social distance warrior when she can be a social justice warrior? Luckily, though not surprisingly, our teen’s been an angel. A quaran-teen angel. Why, just look at these brownies she made in a pan...

(starts toward screen with tray of brownies)

...demic.

(chows down on one, chewing cheerfully until realization hits)

This is like one of those insincere Wish You Were Here Postcards, isn’t it? Greetings from *Chew-la Vista!*

(Esther enters)

You’re back! Oh, how I missed my missus. Everything peachy-keen?

ESTHER

Right now I’d settle for hunky-dory.

CHESTER

Uh-oh and oh no. What’s the matter?

ESTHER

(to the guests)

Please enjoy the soothing sounds of silence for a moment.

(crosses to the screen, where she unsuccessfully deactivates her audio, then guides Chester upstage so that they’re in the corner of the frame)

We have a sartorial situation on our hands. You know that outfit Missy picked out at American Girl Who Likes Girls Place? Turns out she’s having second thoughts about it.

CHESTER

Don’t fret, fruit cup.

ESTHER

But she’s going to be graded—up, down, or de—depending on her presentation. All I want is for her to be nifty shades of gay. Is that selfish of me?

CHESTER

Only if it’s selfish of me to want one of those shades to be gold-star yellow.

MISSY

(from off-screen)

That’s my *Q* [cue]—like the letter—to enter!

(MISSY enters, dressed in an ensemble that puts the “out” in “outfit.”)

CHESTER

There she is. Better late than straight.

MISSY

(to the guests)

Hi, everyone! Are you having a gay old time?

ESTHER

Wait, wait. I did a mic drop.

MISSY

Huh?

ESTHER

I deactivated our microphone.

MISSY

(peering at the screen)

Consider your being muted officially refuted. They’ve been following along the whole time.

ESTHER

(to the guests)

Who are you, the snoop troupe? Someone should have unmuted themselves and apprised me of my acoustical boo-boo. *[Should someone actually do this, Esther should, during her “private” conversation with Chester, shush them with gusto.]*

CHESTER

Uh, zooming right along...how’s about a speech, princess? An acceptance speech.

(to the guests)

What do you say, everybody? Let’s hear it!

(briefly unmutes the guests, letting them vocalize their encouragement)

You heard ’em, Missy. Let’s hear it.

MISSY

Dad, please. Public speaking makes me feel queer.

ESTHER

Watch your language, lesbo. To use that word in such an ungodly fashion, in front of all our... Good heavens! Missy, you didn't make your grand entrance. Be kind and rewind, won't you? We have to announce you properly.

MISSY

But Mom—

ESTHER

Go on now, go on.

MISSY

Mom—

ESTHER

Missy, go on. I shouldn't have to tell you twice.

MISSY

Mother...

ESTHER

(to the guests)

Yikes! Ooh, that rhymes with you-know-what. And when *this* you-know-what uses my full name, I'm in trouble. Try to understand, Missy—it simply isn't enough to come out at this party.

CHESTER

You must pop out at this party.

MISSY

All right, all right, I'm going.
(exits)

CHESTER

(to the guests)

And now, ladies and gentlemen and various and sundry combinations thereof, we are proud to present...The Dykeutante!

(Chester puts on a song: “The Rainbow Connection” by Kermit the Frog or something comparably corny. Missy re-enters and performs even cornier choreography.)

CHESTER

Sweetheart, that was spectacular! Wowiee!

ESTHER

Oh, Missy, you're the most sensational Sapphic spawn a parent could ever ask for.

MISSY

And you're the most sensational parents a spawned Sapphic could ever ask for. I love you.

ESTHER

The second three best words we've ever heard.

CHESTER

You know what the first three best words we've ever heard are, Missy? Say 'em, honey. Say 'em like you're saying 'em for the first time. On three, you'll say the three. Okay, princess? One, two, three!

MISSY

I'm—

CHESTER

Freeze! Since we have company, let's *be* a company! Let's reenact it out, huh? How's that sound? Yeah? Good? All right! Dyke drama in the house!

MISSY

(attempting to exit)

I'm out.

ESTHER

(preventing her exit)

How right and wrong you are.

(Chester proceeds to block the scene like a director.)

CHESTER

Okay, let's take it from where you tell us you have some *seriously super news* to share. You remember, princess: “Mommypie, Daddykins...”

MISSY

...I have some seriously super news to share: I'm a lesbian.

CHESTER

You're a lesbian? Hallelujah! Work it, God!

ESTHER

Hear, hear! Missy, we have been praying like hell since your life began at conception that heterosexuality is not hereditary. And on this glorious morn, we discover it is not. God is good. He rocks my knee socks.

CHESTER

Esther, do you remember the routine we've been practicing in anticipation of this revelation?

ESTHER

Goodness gracious, Chester, in all the excitement, I nearly forgot!

(procures two sets of pom-poms)

I’ve got to hand it to you, honey—

CHESTER

Please do!

ESTHER

(hands Chester one set of pom-poms)

—last year, when I was getting pissy because Missy still hadn’t come out to us, and you said:

“Make like George Michael and have faith,” you were dead on!

MISSY

So I’m not dead meat?

ESTHER

As if! Are you ready?

CHESTER

Let’s get this show off the roadkill!

ESTHER and CHESTER

You’re gay, you say? / That’s friggin’ cool! / Hope they teach same-sex ed in school! / Our house of worship’s gay-affirming. / Now our home is gay-confirming! / And even though you like the ladies / That don’t mean you’ll head to Hades! / Gooooo gay!

MISSY

(to the guests)

As you can see, folks, my folks are some happy, peppy, alarmingly accepting people.

CHESTER

We’ve got some splainin’ to do, haven’t we? Better that than having some complainin’ to do.

Right, Missy? See, the bloom isn’t off *all* the heteros.

ESTHER

Just because one’s family *is* nuclear, doesn’t mean they’ll *go* nuclear at the news that there’s a lavender menace in their midst. Besides, what’s not to accept? We don’t have to worry about you knocking boots and getting knocked up.

CHESTER

I don’t have to worry about sharing you with another fellow. I have the privilege of being the only man in my little girl’s life. And that’s an honor I’m going to crow about loud and queer. Speaking of which, Miss Missy, why on earth did you keep quiet about your queerness for so long? I mean, you must have figured it out after we did.

MISSY

Daddy, don't you know? We teenagers are famously fickle. Besides that, we're unsure of ourselves, we say things we don't mean, we learn by example. Your relationship is a lot like show business: Everything about it is appealing. Really appealing. You showed me that you don't have to be gay in order to be happy. So I started to wonder if I would be happy being gay.

CHESTER

Oh dear, I... Oh my, I... This is all our fault, Esther. Missy, we are so truly sorry. Clearly, your mother and I gave you the wrong idea about the right kind of relationship.

ESTHER

We did! Day in, day out: one man, one woman. That's all you ever saw. How could we have been so irresponsible? Come, let us take you under our wing—our Left wing, that is.

(Esther and Chester embrace Missy exclusively with their left arms.)

CHESTER

Can you ever forgive us for setting too good of an example?

MISSY

Perhaps, Daddykins. But you and Mommypie may have to wait a maximum of five minutes.

ESTHER

Take me to the WC—the water closet being the only acceptable kind—and call me relieved!

CHESTER

(singing)

For she's a jolly good lesbo, for she's a jolly good lesbo, for she's a jolly good lesbo—

MISSY

—which nobody can deny should *not* be sung at my gaybut [rhymes with debut].

CHESTER

Perhaps you'd prefer something a little more family-friendly? I got you.

(singing, to the tune of the I Love Lucy theme music)

I love lezzie and she loves me...

ESTHER

(singing)

...Queer as happy as two can be...

MISSY

(singing)

...And life is heaven, you see...

CHESTER

(singing)

...’Cause I love lezzie...

ESTHER

(singing)

...Yes, I love lezzie...

CHESTER and ESTHER

(singing)

And lezzie loves me!

ESTHER

(crosses to the screen, where she successfully unmutes the guests)

All together now!

(Esther and Chester lead the guests in an “I Love Lezzie” sing-along.)

CHESTER

Are you enjoying yourself, Missy?

MISSY

Yes, thank you—for this and for, well, everything. Lesbianism is God’s gift to me, and pride in it is my gift from you.

ESTHER

Oh, Missy, I...

(scowls at her)

Look, kid, you can be as gay as the Good Lord made you, but for Christ’s sake—and mine—stand up straight.

(Missy obeys)

Oh, Missy, honey, you’re home.

(Chester and Esther lay their heads on Missy’s shoulders and close their eyes with contented sighs; after a moment, Esther opens her eyes and eyeballs the guests)

I know you’re all home too. But must you distance disrespectfully? This is a private moment.

(then, swiftly and sweetly)

Missy, precious, please issue valedictions to these voyeurs.

MISSY

Later, lezzies! Bye, bis! Toodles, trans folx! Adiós, asexuals! We’re parting ways, gays! All good things must come to an end, enbies*—

(Improvising impatience, Esther abruptly deactivates everything. End.)

**shorthand for people who identify as non-binary*