

**OLD LOVE
NEW LOVE**

BY LAURA BRIENZA



**DRAMATISTS
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OLD LOVE NEW LOVE
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For my grandparents

The world premiere of OLD LOVE NEW LOVE was produced by Luna Stage in West Orange, New Jersey, on April 7, 2016. It was directed by Nancy Robillard with the following cast:

GLORIA Kim Zimmer
MICHELLE Claire McClanahan
DANNY Alfred Gingold
MATT Christopher Halladay
MIA Ava Eisenson
COLIN Thomas Molyneaux
LANE Jane Mandel

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Infinite thanks to Cheryl Katz and Luna Stage for their commitment to developing and producing this play.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Colin and his family members use song lyrics as a mantra to calm Colin down. In the original production, we used “Every little thing’s gonna be alright” from Bob Marley’s song “Three Little Birds.” If you use other song lyrics, be consistent throughout the play.

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CHARACTERS

GLORIA, 65,
a tough cookie and straight talker with a big heart
and not much of a filter

COLIN, 75,
Gloria's husband, mid-stage Alzheimer's patient,
a man of music and humor

MICHELLE, 35,
Gloria and Colin's daughter, an art historian and
cancer survivor who has always kept her cool

MATT, 40,
Michelle's husband, a devoted father and a smart,
driven man tortured by his unfulfilled dreams

DANNY, 70,
a kind man unbroken by a life of abundant heartbreak

LANE, 65,
Danny's wife, mid-stage Alzheimer's patient,
a highly intelligent surgeon who's lucid enough to know and
hate what's happened to her

MIA, 32,
a patient nurse with immense perspective and a penchant
for problem-solving

PLACE

A smallish town in a smallish city.

Michelle's house.

We see a living room and a kitchen.

Both contain doors that exit to the outside world.

The living room includes a stairway to the second floor, a decorated Christmas tree, and an impressive collection of vases, bowls, and mugs. The kitchen includes a stairway to the basement.

Twin Rivers Assisted Living Facility, with a Special Care Unit for Alzheimer's patients.

TIME

The present. January.

OLD LOVE NEW LOVE

Scene 1

Afternoon. Michelle's living room. "Matt Callahan for Mayor" posters and campaign materials clutter the space. Gloria huffs in. Michelle follows. Gloria takes off her coat and throws it. Her purse follows suit.

MICHELLE. Mom.

Gloria picks up the coat, crumples it into a ball, and hurls it across the room.

Mom.

GLORIA. What?

MICHELLE. Do you want to talk about this?

GLORIA. What is there to talk about.

MICHELLE. How you're feeling.

GLORIA. I think it's pretty obvious how I'm feeling.

MICHELLE. Can I make you some tea?

GLORA. Some tea?

MICHELLE. Yes.

GLORA. You think some tea will help?

MICHELLE. Maybe.

GLORIA. You know I still cry myself to sleep because I feel so God damn guilty I put him there? I struggled with it, you know, I really struggled. I talked to a priest. I haven't been to church in forty years and I actually talked to a fucking priest.

MICHELLE. You're taking this too personally.

GLORIA. He's my husband. You suggest I take it impersonally?

MICHELLE. You have to.

GLORIA. I should have never put him there. I agonized about it. Waited and waited and put it off and put it off while I sat up at night wondering was I doing the right thing, would he be better off, was my guilt less important than his well-being... And now he's got himself a...girlfriend.

MICHELLE. It's not like that.

GLORIA. Is this how this all ends? After forty years, is this how this ends?

MICHELLE. I know it's weird. But it happens.

GLORIA. I should bring him home.

MICHELLE. He's better off there.

GLORIA. With her?

MICHELLE. With round-the-clock care.

GLORIA. It's pathetic. I can't take care of my own husband.

MICHELLE. Mom, please. It's not pathetic. He just needed more than we could handle. There were too many Post-it notes to see the furniture anymore. You can't go back to that. And he's only going to get worse.

GLORIA. He's growing old with someone else.

MICHELLE. Oh, stop. He's already a geezer. He grew old with you.

GLORIA. This isn't how things are supposed to end for us.

MICHELLE. Is there any way you can be happy that he's got someone there who he enjoys spending his time with?

GLORIA. No.

MICHELLE. Maybe we can find you a boyfriend.

GLORIA. I don't want a boyfriend, Michelle. I want my husband.

MICHELLE. I know. But Dad's a potato.

GLORIA. He's a potato holding hands with a carrot.

MICHELLE. I know.

GLORIA. Holding her hand.

MICHELLE. I know.

GLORIA. You don't.

MICHELLE. He doesn't remember my name, either, Mom. He's—he's a potato but at least he's got a carrot, you know?

GLORIA. I hate carrots.

MICHELLE. Me, too.

GLORIA. They're ugly.

MICHELLE. They taste gross.

GLORIA. I'm a fucking pineapple and he's spoon-feeding chocolate pudding to a carrot.

MICHELLE. There's nothing fair about this, Mom. I think the sooner you accept that—

GLORIA. I am tired of accepting! I accepted this disease. I accepted he was going to die. I accepted that he'd die before me. I've assumed that since we met. You don't marry someone a decade older and assume you'll be together at the end. I didn't care. I thought I'd be the one with a boyfriend at eighty-five after Daddy was in the ground. We joked about it. He'd point out second husbands for me. I accepted he'd go before me. I accepted every fucking stage of this thing. I'm tired. I'm tired. I'm not going to lose him to someone else. I'm too tired for that.

MICHELLE. We don't really have a choice.

Scene 2

The next evening. Michelle and Matt clean up the mountains of campaign clutter in the living room.

MICHELLE. Are you sure you don't want to save any of these?

MATT. Yes.

MICHELLE. You might want them someday.

MATT. I don't need any reminders.

MICHELLE. Maybe I'll just keep one. Frame it.

OLD LOVE NEW LOVE

by Laura Brienza

3M, 4W

A mother and daughter navigate the choppy waters of infidelity under very different circumstances: Gloria's husband Colin has fallen for another Alzheimer's patient at the facility where he resides. Michelle's husband, Matt, has strayed after losing a local election and wrestling with his unfulfilled ambitions. A play about what we can't remember and what we can forgive, *OLD LOVE NEW LOVE* explores what happens when old love faces new challenges.

"Poignant moments punctuate OLD LOVE NEW LOVE...The frustration that Lane, a former surgeon, expresses about her eroding senses is piercing, thanks to some sharp writing."
—**The New York Times**

"It would have been very easy for Brienza to succumb to cloying sentimentality—or, worse, cloying cuteness. But she gets the tone just right. There is a sweetness to this play, and lots of humorous moments, but Brienza never goes over the top, keeping the tone dry and clear-eyed enough to make her story grounded in reality and, ultimately, quite moving."
—**NJArts.net**

"A must-see for every person who might even think of falling in love."
—**QonStage.com**

"A mind is a terrible thing to lose. Feeling it go, a reality for many people with Alzheimer's disease, who try to stave it off with Post-It notes, must be like living inside a pit of dread. [OLD LOVE NEW LOVE] dramatizes that beautifully."
—**The Montclair Times**

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