

Red Wine on Ice
By Brooke Gabriel

Larry Young – 43 year-old lawyer. Loud.

Christine – 22, slow to warm up, anxious. His personal assistant.

(Lights turn on to reveal Larry sitting at his desk in his office. It's a 4:45 p.m. on a Friday. He's flipping through papers on his desk.)

LARRY: Christine!

CHRISTINE: *(Offstage)* Yes Mr. Young?

LARRY: Could you come in here please?

CHRISTINE: Right away, sir.

Enter Christine.

LARRY: Did you ever get ahold of my wife?

CHRISTINE: No, sir.

LARRY: Honey, what's it going to take for me to get you to loosen up and call me Larry? Seriously, do I have to put a gun to your head or something?

CHRISTINE: No, Larry.

LARRY: You look cute today.

CHRISTINE: Thank-you.

LARRY: Really, you do something with your hair?

CHRISTINE: Nothing different than usual.

LARRY: You look good.

CHRISTINE: Thank-you.

(A pause in the conversation. Christine continues to stand in front of the desk. Larry looks at her.)

LARRY: You done with your work for the day?

CHRISTINE: I just have to take care of that one case file and then...

LARRY: (*Cutting her off*) That can wait. Wanna drink?

CHRISTINE: What?

LARRY: Do. You. Want. A. drink?

CHRISTINE: Like, right now?

LARRY: Yeah, right now. You're a vodka drinker, right?

(*Larry opens up the mini fridge behind his desk and pulls out a bottle of vodka.*)

CHRISTINE: I hate vodka, actually.

LARRY: You **hate** it?

CHRISTINE: With a passion.

LARRY: You know, I only allow my kids to hate war and hate itself.

CHRISTINE: Well, I hate vodka.

(*Larry pauses, unsure how to respond.*)

CHRISTINE: But I love whiskey.

LARRY: All right! I can work with that. (*Reaching into his fridge.*) You like Jack?

CHRISTINE: I'm just not sure if I should. I mean, my boyfriend's sober, and he has a show tonight. I just don't want to do anything that might stress him out.

LARRY: One drink with me will 'stress him out'?

CHRISTINE: He says he can smell it.

LARRY: You're really gonna make me drink alone?

CHRISTINE: You're really pressuring a 22-year-old girl to drink with you?

LARRY: Quit breaking my balls, kid. I just thought it might be nice for us to sit down, loosen up, maybe get to know each other a little bit.

(*Christine raises her eyebrows.*)

LARRY: Quit dreaming, kid. You know I'm a happily married man.

CHRISTINE: No no no - I wasn't thinking about *that*, it's just... (*Pauses*) I really could use a drink...

LARRY: Then have one!

(*Larry grabs a glass from on top of his mini fridge and pulls a bucket of ice out of the fridge.*)

LARRY: Do you mind if I touch?

CHRISTINE: Excuse me?

(*Larry gestures to the ice cubes.*)

CHRISTINE: Oh, no. Not at all.

(*Larry puts a handful of ice cubes in a glass and pours whiskey over them. He hands the glass to Christine. She starts to raise it to her lips.*)

LARRY: Hold your horses, do you not know the drinking etiquette of my office?

CHRISTINE: I'm sorry?

LARRY: Wait until we cheers.

CHRISTINE: Right. Of course.

LARRY: (*Fixing his own drink of red wine over ice.*) They not cover social decency in Bra-burning 101?

CHRISTINE: Afraid not. Drinking etiquette isn't included in Oberlin's Women's Studies program. At least it wasn't when I went there.

LARRY: Typical feminists. (*Raising his glass*) Here's to you.

CHRISTINE: Make sure you make eye contact. Otherwise you have bad sex.
(*Larry meets her gaze. They clink glasses.*)

CHRISTINE: Cheers.

(*They drink.*)

LARRY: Bad sex, huh?

CHRISTINE: It's just an old superstition, but I figure, why risk it, you know?

LARRY: Never been a problem with me. Just ask Dana.

CHRISTINE: Larry...

LARRY: I know, I know, sorry.

CHRISTINE: It's fine. I just don't need to keep hearing about your "amazing" sex life.

LARRY: You sound skeptical.

CHRISTINE: Well...

LARRY: What? You think I'm too old for good sex?

CHRISTINE: This is *so* inappropriate.

LARRY: Come on, Women's Studies, level with me: we're both adults here, what're you trying to say?

CHRISTINE: It's just that...in *my* experience, men who talk a big game don't really have what it takes to, uh, *back it up*, if you know what I'm saying.

LARRY: Is that right?

(Christine shrugs.)

LARRY: Too bad you're catching me 20 years too late, otherwise...

CHRISTINE: *(Cutting him off)* **LARRY.**

LARRY: Sorry, sorry.

CHRISTINE: It's okay.

(They pause, sipping their drinks)

LARRY: So your boyfriend's sober?

CHRISTINE: 5 months.

LARRY: What's that like?

CHRISTINE: It's great. Everything's settled down, we aren't fighting so much, it's great. I think that the move's done him some good, too.

LARRY: What about you? You like New York?

CHRISTINE: Mhm. It's a lot better than I thought it'd be.

LARRY: So what's that mean, 'he can smell it on you'?

CHRISTINE: I think he just likes the support.

LARRY: Gotta be tough though.

CHRISTINE: Everyone's life's tough some way or another.

LARRY: True, but c'mon, you're what, 21?

CHRISTINE: 22.

LARRY: Close enough. At your age, you should be *out*, know what I mean? Staying up all night making bad decisions, waking up in some guys' apartment and not remembering how you got there, getting the Chinese character for "Freedom" tattooed on your ankle, going through a *lesbian* phase...

CHRISTINE: Larry...

LARRY: You know what I mean, just really living it up before you've got stuff like kids or a mortgage weighing you down.

CHRISTINE: Your family's weighing you down?

LARRY: That's beside the point. We're talking about you here.

CHRISTINE: Are we?

LARRY: Real cute, kid. You've seen my planner - you know how much time I set aside for the fam.

CHRISTINE: Doesn't mean you like it.

LARRY: Is this about what I said about my daughter's play? Just because I don't enjoy watching a bunch of 7-year-olds skip around in leotards doesn't mean I don't love my kid, uncoordinated and tone-deaf as she may be.

(Christine shrugs.)

LARRY: What?

CHRISTINE: Just that I also know how much time you spend “chatting” with all of the receptionists on this floor.

LARRY: You jealous?

(Christine doesn't respond.)

LARRY: Oh come on, I'm a goddamn human being.

CHRISTINE: I didn't say anything.

LARRY: I'm married, but I'm not dead.

CHRISTINE: Whatever, I'm no relationship expert. Do your thing.

LARRY: *Sighs* Whatever. So where does Twelve-step work again? Starbucks?

CHRISTINE: It's a small, privately owned coffee shop.

(Larry chuckles.)

CHRISTINE: He's also really starting to make headway with his band. They've got some really important gigs coming up and he's thinking about releasing a solo album next year...

LARRY: So he's some sad hipster chick's wet dream.

CHRISTINE: Larry...

LARRY: Seriously, honey, I've seen your résumé, your Facebook page...

CHRISTINE: We're not friends on Facebook.

LARRY: This was before I hired you. I had to make sure you were cute.

CHRISTINE: **Larry.**

LARRY: My point is – 3.9 from Oberlin...

CHRISTINE: 3.85

LARRY: Excuse me, 3.85 from Oberlin, a scandal-free Internet persona, you're one of the good ones. Why waste your time on this schmuck?

CHRISTINE: He's not some schmuck, Larry. I love him.

LARRY: You're way too young for the "I word." God, what does that even mean for someone your age? You like all the same T.V. shows or something?

CHRISTINE: I don't have to explain this to you.

LARRY: Can you?

CHRISTINE: Sure – love is the way that guys like you feel about mini-skirt weather.

LARRY: Tight pants ain't love, kid. Trust me, I oughta know.

CHRISTINE: That what is, Larry? Please, enlighten me.

Larry hands him his family's Christmas card.

CHRISTINE: Tacky Christmas cards? That's what love is?

LARRY: Hell yeah.

CHRISTINE: Aren't you Jewish?

LARRY: Yup. And I got up at 6 a.m. for that shit. On a Saturday.

CHRISTINE: That's just depressing.

LARRY: *Laughs* Yeah?

CHRISTINE: Yeah.

LARRY: Fuckin' young people. Some things never change.

(Larry refills his drink. He takes Christine's glass without asking.)

LARRY: Mind if I touch?

(Christine shakes her head. Larry puts another handful of ice in her glass, adds more whiskey, and puts it in front of her. They clink glasses, making sure to make eye contact.)

CHRISTINE: You ice red wine?

LARRY: I do. I like it softer.

CHRISTINE: I'm not judging you.

LARRY: What, you think I'm a pussy or something?

CHRISTINE: You know I don't like that word.

LARRY: What word, pussy?

CHRISTINE: Not when you use it like that.

LARRY: I'm sorry, riot girl, let me assure you that I respect you and your fabulous physique in a completely fair, unbiased way.

CHRISTINE: That's not what I'm worried about.

LARRY: Come on. You know I'm trying.

CHRISTINE: (*Checking her phone*) Fair enough.

LARRY: You got somewhere to be?

CHRISTINE: No, sorry - I just wanted to send Dan a text to let him know I might be a little late to the show.

LARRY: Don't let me keep you.

CHRISTINE: No no no - that's not what I meant. He just gets worried.

(*Christine types out and sends her text and takes a long sip of her drink.*)

LARRY: So did you always dream of some day becoming a lawyer's secretary?

CHRISTINE: Personal assistant.

LARRY: You always dreamt of being a lawyer's personal assistant?

CHRISTINE: No, but the job market isn't so great, and it's more important for me to be close to Dan right now.

LARRY: Why?

CHRISTINE: We've already gone over this, Larry.

LARRY: Right, you *love* him. But if this punk wasn't pulling you around on a leash, where would you be right now?

CHRISTINE: I'd still be here. You know you'd be lost without me.

LARRY: Come on, where would you be if you weren't here?

CHRISTINE: Sad and alone.

(Christine smiles, trying to make a joke. Larry doesn't respond.)

CHRISTINE: I don't know, Larry. Probably grad school. But it's so expensive; only the top 5 or so get funding. And I'd have to move again.... It's just too much work.

LARRY: I could never do grad school. *(Pulls out a pack of cigarettes.)* Do you mind?

CHRISTINE: Do what you want. It's your office.

LARRY: *(Lighting up.)* I mean, law school's one thing, but grad school... sounds like a nightmare.

CHRISTINE: I like school.

LARRY: What would you go for, anyways? More lady shit?

CHRISTINE: Probably public health.

LARRY: Really?

CHRISTINE: Yeah, like maybe focusing on stuff like women's issues, reproductive health, things like that.

LARRY: So more lady shit?

CHRISTINE: Yes, Larry, more lady shit.

LARRY: Well that's cool. I like ladies, I want them to be healthy.

CHRISTINE: I'm sure you do.

LARRY: *(Checking his watch)* Well kid, this has been fun but I've gotta get going. I don't want to keep the Mrs. waiting. *(Downs the rest of his drink.)*

(Christine looks at her mostly-full glass.)

LARRY: Please, take your time with that.

CHRISTINE: Aren't you leaving?

LARRY: *(Standing up and gathering his things)* You've got keys, just lock up when you're done. *(Putting on his coat)* And don't forget to pick up my dry-cleaning tomorrow morning.

CHRISTINE: Right.

LARRY: Good chat, kid. Have fun at the show.

(Larry gives Christine a pat on the shoulder, puts his coat on, and leaves. Christine continues to sip her drink, and then picks up her phone. She dials a number and puts the phone to her ear.)

CHRISTINE: Hey babe. *(Pauses to hear Dan's response)* I know, I'm sorry, I got held up at work, Larry's being a real pain in the ass again. *(Pauses)* Oh you know, just the usual stuff, 'You look sexy,' 'Why don't you try girls out for a while,' *(Pauses)* No, I don't think it's sexual harassment, I just think he's the product of a different generation. So listen – I'm really, really sorry, but I've got a lot of paper work to do here and I don't think I'm going to be able to make it to your show tonight. *(Pauses)* No, it's like, a really big deal, it's for one of his major cases. *(Pauses)* Babe, I'm sorry, but there's just not much I can do. *(Pauses)* That isn't true! I missed the last show because I had the flu, and the one before that was when my sister was in town. I would have been at both of them if I could! *(Pauses)* I'll be at the next one, okay? I promise. *(Pauses)* Okay, babe. Good luck, tonight. *(Pauses)* I love you too. *(Hangs up.)*

(Christine downs the rest of her drink and starts to clean up. Larry returns, Christine doesn't see him at first. Christine turns around, and is startled when she sees Larry.)

LARRY: I forgot my keys.

CHRISTINE: Oh.

LARRY: *(Picking keys up off his desk.)* So I'm a pain in your ass?

CHRISTINE: No, not at all, it's just...

LARRY: Christine, relax. I get it.

CHRISTINE: *(Starting to cry)* It's just...

LARRY: I know.

CHRISTINE: Hard.

LARRY: I know.

Larry walks over to Christine and gives her a hug.

LARRY: *(Still holding her)* You're fired.

Lights out.