

[11.02] A Man, a Plan, and a Gal: Julia

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NB: Peri Gilpin does not appear in this episode. Presumably this was due to scheduling conflicts with her play. Other than Jane Leeves's maternity leave, this is the only time one of the five regulars has ever missed an episode. The episode originally aired immediately after [[11.01](#)] "No Sex, Please, We're Skittish"

N.B.B.: The title of this episode was derived from an old palindrome (a word or phrase that is the same whether spelled backwards or forwards): "A Man, A Plan, a Canal: Panama!" which was in vogue during the early 20th Century, when that canal was being built.

Transcript {Kelly Dean Hansen}

Skyline: Lights come on in various buildings.

ACT I

[Scene 1 - Cafe Nervosa
Daphne and Niles are standing in front of the counter holding hands.]

Daphne: It's official. Dr. Lee says we're pregnant.

[They chuckle warmly and embrace.]

Niles: I'm so excited!

[He kneels and speaks to Daphne's tummy.]

Niles: Hello in there! It's your pater.

Daphne: Oh, stop it. [She sits.] So, how do you want to make the announcement?

Niles: Uh, well, Frasier's on his way over. We could...

Daphne: [interrupting] No! He's a blabbermouth. Let's have him and your dad over for dinner tonight, and we can tell them at the

same time.

Niles: If you already had a plan, why did you ask me how I wanted to do it?

Daphne: Well, because if you'd have had the same idea, then I could have agreed with it, which would have given you the illusion of control. [*After a beat.*] The waiting room had "Cosmo."

Niles: Ohh. All right. Ah! - I have just the quotation for the beginning of the announcement. It's from Robert Burns: "Beneath the shelter of an aged tree, Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin', stacher through [*gradually taking on a gaelic accent and goofy facial expression*] To meet their dad, wi' filchterin' noise and glee." [*Off Daphne's bemused reaction.*] Moving, eh?

Daphne: [*rising*] Yes, but not just because of the poem, I'm late for a hair appointment.

Niles: All right.

[*They kiss. As Daphne leaves, Frasier approaches.*]

Frasier: Hi, you two!

Daphne: Hello.

Frasier: Hi, Daph, good to see you. [*Daphne exits.*] Hello, Niles. Uh, my usual, please. Well, I've ruined another relationship. I suppose you'll want to hear the whole sorry tale. [*They sit.*]

Niles: Uh, no thank you.

Frasier: Last night, Julia came over and, as usual, I made a mess of things... Did you say no?

Niles: I said, "No, thank you."

Frasier: But I wish to unburden myself.

Niles: And I wish to remain in my good mood. Therefore, I demur.

Frasier: You demur?

Niles: I demur. Besides, I'm sure I've heard it all before.

Frasier: But this time was different...

Both: I really thought she could have been the one!

Frasier: [*wounded*] Well. Silly me. To think that I could count on my only brother for shoulder on which to lean.

Niles: What you need isn't a shoulder, it's a swift boot to break you out of this pattern.

Frasier: What pattern?

Niles: Your pattern of ruining things before they've even begun.

Frasier: And when have I done that?

Niles: Hmm, let me see: Faye [*S6*], Cassandra [*S6*], Chelsea [*S10*], Claire [*S8-9*], Lana [*S7-9*], Abby [*S8*], Mia [*S7*], Marie [*S6*]...

[*N.B. To review these past relationships, refer to the comprehensive list at the head of [\[9.02\]](#) "Don Juan In Hell [II]" - an episode which, by the way, was focused on Frasier trying to break out of this pattern.*]

Frasier: Oh, all right! I knew I had a pattern, I just didn't think you'd remember the names.

Niles: The minute you develop feelings for someone, you get scared and find some way to sabotage things.

Frasier: I'd like to strike you, of course, but you speak the truth. I'll tell you what, I will never find a happy relationship un-unless I can break out of this maddening cycle.

Niles: All right, all right. The next time you find yourself doing it again, fixating, say on some tiny fault in the woman, recognize what that is: you're feeling vulnerable. But don't give in to the fear. Commit to commitment.

Frasier: [*a bit annoyed*] Commit to commitment. It's a bit glib, but nonetheless inspiring. Thank you, Niles. I'm going to call Julia, and I will not take "no" for an answer. I may have walked in here the old fault-finding, flaw-fleeing Frasier, but I leave a man committed to commitment.

Niles: [*smiling*] You said "Flasier."

Frasier: I did not.

Niles: Yes, you did.

Frasier: I most certainly did not.

Niles: I heard you say "Flasier."

Frasier: I've been saying my own name for the last forty-some odd years.

Niles: I know, but your tongue...

[*As they continue to argue the point, we fade out.*]

[*Scene 2 - Frasier's apartment*

Frasier enters, carrying a package.]

Frasier: Oh, hi Dad.

Martin: Before you say anything, if you know the score to the Mariners game, don't tell me, I'm taping it to watch later.

Frasier: Dad, the odds of my knowing the score to the Mariners game are about the same as you knowing the score to Pacific Overtures. Did, uh, Julia call?

Martin: No, sorry.

Frasier: Oh, damn. Well, at least this little delivery will cheer me up. My new Frette hand towels have arrived. Ha, ha! [*opening the package and examining the towels*] Direct from Italy, I give you the *spugna con frangia*, with the tulle lace insert, huh?

Martin: Sounds fancy, am I allowed to dry my hands on them?

Frasier: Well, you may miss the luxurious feel of your trouser fronts, but yes.

Martin: You know, if you're really down about this Julia thing, you can come with me and Eddie to the circus. We're really going to the V-E-T, but if I say that, he won't get in the car.

Frasier: Thanks anyway, Dad. I'll just see you at Niles and Daphne's for dinner, all right. Maybe I'll take in a movie.

Martin: Oh, what are you going to go see?

Frasier: Well, there's this new Russian film in town about a Crimean War vet.

[*At this, Eddie runs out the door and down the hall.*]

Martin: No, Eddie! Would it have killed you to say Crimean War circus?

[*Martin chases after Eddie.*]

Frasier: I'm so sorry, Dad, I...

[*The elevator dings, and Julia exits.*]

Frasier: Julia! You got my message! Oh.

[*He embraces her, but she doesn't return it.*]

Julia: What message? I actually came because I think I dropped an earring here last night.

Frasier: Oh. I'm sorry. Well, please, please come in. [*They enter the apartment.*] So, what did it look like?

Julia: Oh, it was just a small diamond stud. [*She begins to look on the couch.*]

Frasier: Right, okay, yeah, you check there, and I'll...

Julia: So, uh, what was this message?

Frasier: [*searching on his knees near Martin's chair*] Um, oh, I just said that I found you bright, and uh, beautiful and engaging, and then... there was a sonnet: "Fair love's ship ne'er sailed o'er unstorm'd seas. The fickle stars, her compass, bright and cruel..." [*pausing*] It's pretty sappy stuff, huh?

Julia: No, it's sweet. Especially the end.

Frasier: So you did hear it?

[*They rise and approach each other.*]

Julia: Yes, but Frasier, I'm not looking for just some office romance. I don't see the point in getting involved unless it's heading somewhere.

Frasier: That's exactly where I am in my life too. After you walked out last night, I realized how badly I want to be in a real relationship, how ready I am to...well, for want of a better phrase, uh, to commit to commitment.

Julia: You're not just saying this to get in my pants, are you?

Frasier: No. And if I did...get in your pants, well...I'd want to stay there forever. I-I said that much more elegantly in the sonnet.

Julia: You know, I just remembered where I may have lost my earring.

Frasier: Really, where?

Julia: In your bedroom. Do you care to help me look?

Frasier: In my bed...well, we were never in my bedroom, I don't...

[*Julia gives him a strongly hinting glance and smile.*]

Frasier: Oh. I see.

[*They hold hands and walk back. Fade out.*]

END OF ACT I

ACT II

THE BASTIE BOYS

[*Scene 3 - Frasier's apartment*

Daphne, Niles, and Martin enter, Daphne with a bag, Niles with a pan.]

Daphne: Let's hope Frasier's oven is more reliable than ours. [*She heads for the kitchen.*]

Martin: Well, it serves you right for getting such a fancy one.

Niles: Oh, it's just temperamental. My Gaggenau is German-engineered. It probably needs more power than my building's old wiring can give it.

Martin: Leave it to the Germans. Even their appliances crave power.

[*Cut to the kitchen. Niles and Daphne. Martin enters.*]

Daphne: So, when do you want to make the big announcement?

Niles: I think a toast before dinner.

Daphne: Let's hope Frasier checks his messages after the movie. Or he'll be headed over to our place.

Niles: Yes, well I'm sure he will. It's just as well not to have him here while we're cooking. I can't stand his backseat basting.

[*Cut to Frasier's bedroom. Frasier and Julia after sex in bed.*]

Julia: I was just dreaming about us. We were in a boat, floating down the Arno River.

Frasier: Have you ever been to fair Firenze?

Julia: Oh, it's maybe my favorite city.

Frasier: Mine, too. Oh, I knew we'd be a good couple.

Julia: [*laughing*] Have you ever gone there for Christmas?

Frasier: No. I've always wanted to.

Julia: Me too.

Frasier: Well, then let's go!

Julia: Do you mean it?

Frasier: Sounds perfect! [*They kiss.*] I'll tell you what. Let's toast this decision with a glass of Chianti.

Julia: Ooh, that sounds good.

Frasier: Oh, shoot.

Julia: What?

Frasier: I just remembered I'm supposed to have dinner at my brother and his wife's house tonight. I'm just going to call and cancel.

[*Cut to the kitchen. Niles's cell phone rings.*]

Niles: [*answering*] Hello?

Frasier: [*v.o.*] Niles, it's-it's Frasier. Listen, [*cut to the bedroom*] I just got out of the movie, and it was so cold in the theater that I think I've...[*feigning a hoarse voice. Julia laughs.*] I think I've come down with a little something, and uh, I just...I just... I'm afraid I'm begging out tonight, all right?

Niles: [*v.o.*] Oh, I hardly think a little dinner will make you worse. [*Cut to the kitchen*] And besides, we've had a change of plans.

[*Cut to the bedroom. Frasier rises, covering himself with a blanket.*]

Frasier: Niles, for God's sakes, I just want to go home and get into bed.

[*He begins to exit the bedroom. Julia follows, covering herself with a sheet. Cut back to kitchen/living room.*]

Niles: But, Daphne and I have put in a lot of effort into making a very nice dinner.

Frasier: [*moving into the living room*] I can't help it if I'm sick. What if I catch pneumonia?

[*Niles has now moved into the living room, and sees Frasier, followed by Julia. Frasier, compromised, hangs up his phone.*]

Niles: If that's what you wear to the movies, it's your own damn fault.

Frasier: What the hell are you doing here?

Niles: My oven's on the fritz. We left you a message hours ago.

Frasier: Oh, I'm sorry, Niles, uh, you remember Julia, of course.

[*Niles makes an affirmative, uncomfortable gesture.*]

Julia: Well, if he didn't before, he certainly will now. Excuse me.

[*She exits to the bedroom.*]

Niles: You lied to me!

Frasier: Oh, I'm sorry. Would you have rather I told you that I was *in flagrante delicto*?

Niles: No, but you're still not excused from dinner.

Frasier: Julia and I would be delighted to attend.

Niles: Er, we weren't planning on including Julia...

Frasier: Well, what do you want me to do, give her fifty bucks and tell her to beat it? [*He exits.*]

[*Scene 4 - Frasier's apartment*

Time fade. Julia, now dressed, is on the couch, speaking to Martin.]

Julia: Ten years! I-if I still needed a cane after that long, I'd dump my physical therapist and find one who knows what they're doing.

Daphne: [*entering from the kitchen, setting the table. Coldly.*] Hello.

Martin: Well, actually, this is her. She's also my daughter-in-law.

Daphne, this is Julia.

Julia: Sorry about that. [*laughs*]

Daphne: That's all right. And just so you know, he wouldn't need the cane so much if he'd stretch more.

Julia: I'd have thought that part of your job was making sure he stretched.

Daphne: Yes, but, I can't be here day and night.

Julia: I'm sorry, for some reason I thought you lived here.

Daphne: [*forcing a smile*] Well, I don't.

[*Daphne exits to kitchen. Frasier enters from the bedroom.*]

Frasier: How about some Mozart to make things festive, huh?

[*He turns on the music.*]

Julia: Well, I'm not sure I'd call that festive.

Frasier: Well, then you'd be wrong, as it is from the Salzburg Music Festival.

Julia: How about something a little more contemporary.

Frasier: Oh, all right. I believe I have Michael Nyman's *The Contemporary Trumpet*.

Julia: What are you, a hundred? [*Throughout the scene, she continues to smile and laugh through her insensitive comments and barbs.*]

Frasier: All right, nothing then, my little wasp. [*He chuckles, still in a good mood. Niles enters with drinks.*] Oh, thank you, Niles. Thank you very much.

Niles: You're welcome [*to Julia*] and there you go.

Julia: [*taking Martin's beer*] Oh, perfect, thank you.

Niles: [*awkwardly*] Oh, uh, [*turning to Martin in his chair*] there you are.

Martin: [*sotto voce*] She took my...

Niles: [*also*] Just take it.

Martin: She took my...

Niles: I don't care. Just take it, take it.

[*Martin takes a glass of champagne, grudgingly. He glares in Julia's direction.*]

Frasier: [*still cheerful*] She, uh, shoots from the hip, this one.

Niles: Yes.

Frasier: You should hear what she says about my show.

Julia: I just have to remind Mr. Pompous here that what we do on the radio is entertainment.

Frasier: Well...

Niles: Yes, Frasier and I have had many a chat about the difference between what he does and genuine psychiatry.

Julia: Yeah, big difference. I mean, at least his advice is free, not like those quacks who charge 200 bucks an hour to whine about their childhoods. I mean, what a racket that is!

Niles: [*after a beat*] Frasier, may I see you in the kitchen?

[*They both proceed there.*]

Niles: Frasier, what are you doing in the kitchen?

Frasier: You just asked to see me.

Niles: Oh, so you haven't gone deaf.

Frasier: Why would I have gone deaf?

Niles: Because that's the only good reason you sat there silently while our profession was assaulted like a drag queen at a tractor pull!

Frasier: Niles, Niles, don't be so sensitive. That is one of the qualities I admire most about Julia--her bracing frankness. Now listen, listen, it is partially because of your advice that I have chosen to commit myself to this woman, so please at least give her a chance.

Niles: You're right. If you're happy, I'm happy. Help me serve.

Frasier: Right, right, okay.

[*They enter the dining area.*]

Frasier: Dinner is served, everyone, if you'd come and take a seat. Here we are. Daph, I'll let you sit here. Julia, have a seat there, and I'll sit right next to you.

Niles: [*after Martin assists him*] Thanks, Dad. [*He remains standing.*] And before we begin, I would like to share some words of Robert Burns which have recently become quite meaningful to me: [*starting the "accent" a little earlier this time*] "Beneath the shelter of an aged tree..."

[*He is interrupted by a cell phone.*]

Julia: Whoops, that's me. [*taking the call and remaining at the table*] Hello? Hey, what's up? No, no, I can talk. Well, what kind of crap is that? Nail their asses to the wall! [*covering the mouthpiece*] Is that chicken?

Daphne: No, partridge.

Niles: Yes, in a champagne and orange sauce.

Julia: [*into the phone*] 'Cause he's a pissy little bitch, that's why. [*covering again*] I'm sorry, I don't eat birds, they live in their own feces.

Martin: [*stabbing a piece of partridge*] More for me!

Julia: I'll just get some cereal. [*to the phone*] Well, let him sue, I'm starting to think you've got a little pair of panties on under that suit. [*She goes to the kitchen during the last speech.*]

Frasier: [*after a beat*] You know, she really does work too hard.

Niles: Back to what I was saying: "Beneath the shelter of an aged tree..."

Julia: [*from the kitchen*] Okay, I give up, where do you keep your cereal?

Daphne: Please, Julia, sit, we'll find you something. [*She rises.*]

Julia: Oh, are you sure?

Niles: [*refusing to give up, faster now*] "Beneath the shelter of an aged..."

Daphne: Niles.

[*He follows her into the kitchen.*]

Daphne: Let's not do this tonight, not with her here. I want it to be perfect.

Niles: You're right, we'll just...we'll just pick a better moment.

[*Julia enters. Daphne does not see, as she is checking the cupboard.*]

Daphne: I'll still be pregnant tomorrow. [*She hands Niles a box of Cap'n Crunch.*]

Niles: [*also not seeing Julia*] Exactly.

Julia: [*exiting, followed by Niles*] Well, congratulations, Niles, Frasier didn't tell me that Daphne was pregnant.

Niles: [*mortified*] What?

Martin: She is?

Julia: Oh, no, don't tell me she's just paunchy.

Niles: [*indignant*] She's not paunchy, she's pregnant.

Daphne: [*entering with milk*] Niles!!

[*He jumps, spilling cereal everywhere.*]

Daphne: How could you do that?

Julia: I'm sorry, it's my fault. I heard you in the kitchen. I didn't realize it was a big deal.

Frasier: Well, what does it matter how we came to know this glorious news? Niles, that's wonderful! [*The brothers embrace over the table.*]

Julia: Two words: C-section. My sister's about your size, and when she had her kid it blew out the whole region.

[Niles and Daphne stand mystified at Julia's apparently ignorant rudeness.]

Martin: Can I have cereal too?

[Niles hands him the box.]

[Scene 5 - Frasier's apartment]

Time fade. Julia is sitting in Martin's chair, Frasier behind her on a bench, and the other three on the couch. They are eating dessert.]

Julia: So, the more pregnant she gets, the more the husband hits on me, and by the way, she was a model. [Her phone rings again.] Whoops. That's me. Hey, how you doing? No, i'm just...meeting my boyfriend's family.

[She exits to the kitchen. Martin quickly claims his chair.]

Frasier: [now clearly struggling somewhat] Isn't this fun? I'm having a good time.

Daphne: She certainly takes a lot of calls at dinnertime.

Frasier: You know, that's exactly the kind of...flaw that the old Frasier would have...seized upon as a pretext to end the relationship, but I-I know now that...that impulse to run is-is really an indication that my feelings for her are just deepening, and um...[Niles and Daphne stare at him with pained, disbelieving faces] gone are the days when I would have said something like...[exhaling deeply, and clearly meaning it] "How rude!" or "She's horrible. I've made a ghastly, ghastly mistake." [He puts on his forced smile again.]

Julia: [calling from the kitchen] Hey, Marty, you're a Mariners fan. They won in the tenth on a grand slam.

[Martin glares at Frasier.]

Frasier: Who's ready to play that game of pictionary we talked about? I know I am. Let me just get that. [running back to get the game equipment] Dad, I'll tell you what, I know how much you like to keep time, so you'll be the timer, and then it'll be me and Julia against Niles and Daphne. How about that? [He sets up an easel with poster paper.]

Julia: [re-entering] Oh, that sounds good to me!

Frasier: Daphne, what do you say you draw first?

Daphne: Ooh, all right. [seeing the clue] Oh, boy.

Martin: Ready...set, go.

[Daphne draws a simple circle.]

Niles: The Ring of the Nibelungen.

Daphne: Right!

Julia: Damn!

Frasier: Wow! Well, congratulations, you two. Great.

Julia: All right, enough of that, get your head in the game, we're starting from behind.

Frasier: Right, right, okay, here we go. [taking a clue] Yeah, right. Okay, Dad.

Martin: Go.

[Frasier draws a circle with a stem.]

Julia: [shouting guesses quickly] A ball. A balloon. Oh, an apple! A bomb. The circle. Oh, the circle of life.

[Frasier adds a sombrero and a mustache to the "apple".]

Julia: Uh, I don't know.

[*Frasier points to the hat.*]

Julia: Yeah, I'm looking at it. Well, maybe if you point to it harder, I'll get it. Give me something to work with, dummy!

[*Frasier draws a huge circular arrow pointing to the hat.*]

Julia: Oh, a hat! The Cat in the Hat! Uh, Abraham Lincoln!

Martin: Time!

Julia: [*leaping out of her seat and screeching*] Oh, "From Here to Eternity," I got that in!

Frasier: No, that's, that's not it.

Julia: What the hell is it?

Frasier: It's a cherry with a mustache and, uh, wearing a sombrero. It's "Cherry Garcia."

Julia: Oh, my God, that is the worst drawing I've ever seen. [*She's right about that.*] I mean, even these cheaters [*indicating Niles and Daphne*] wouldn't have gotten that one.

Daphne: Cheaters?

Julia: I saw you guys mouthing at each other. And I think Father Time here cut us off a little early, too. Here, give me that pen, I'll show you how it's done. Sit down. Oh, my God, I mean, this painting is just...

[*She has been very rapidly eating small pieces of candy during the game. She now chokes on one as she stands next to the easel. It looks serious. Frasier has gone to get the clue bag, now looking somewhat exasperated but maintaining his patience, and doesn't see Julia choking. Martin, Niles, and Daphne silently and uncomfortably look at each other as she grabs at her throat, and do nothing. Frasier turns around and sees.*]

Frasier: Oh, dear God!

[*She manages to cough it up and recover. Frasier comes to her.*]

Frasier: Are you all right?

Julia: Yes, I just, I think I need to splash a little cold water on my face.

Frasier: Right, right, here, let me just, uh, walk you to the powder room.

Julia: I'm sorry.

Frasier: No, that's okay, you just take as long as you need.

[*She goes into the powder room and Frasier closes the door.*]

Frasier: [*to the three in a low voice, with outrage*] Shame on you! That woman couldn't breathe, and the three of you just sat there!

Martin: You didn't exactly jump in yourself.

Frasier: That's because I mistook her choking for a sarcastic comment on my Pictionary play! You, on the other hand, were content to let the woman I love die before your eyes, THAT'S RIGHT, I SAID I LOVE HER!!

Niles: Oh, knock it off, Frasier, you don't love her. You're just trying to talk yourself into honoring your ill-advised commitment.

Frasier: How dare you presume to know the workings of my heart? You can't understand the kind of feelings Julia and I have for one another. You might as well ask me to describe the essence of music or the, the color of starlight!

[*Julia exits the bathroom with one of Frasier's new and cherished Italian towels.*]

Julia: Nice towels, Frasier, you'd think a couple of old ladies lived here.

[He has managed to tolerate everything she has said and done to this point, but THAT crossed the line.]

Frasier: Get out.

Julia: Excuse me?

Frasier: I said get out!

Julia: I'm sorry, have you just lost your mind?

Frasier: No, that happened earlier when we slept together!

Julia: Are you breaking up with me?

Frasier: You're damn right I am!

Julia: I want my purse!

Frasier: And I, *my hand towel!!*

[They exchange. Julia begins to exit.]

Julia: I can't believe this. You're actually kicking me out?

Frasier: Do you want me to draw you a picture?!

Julia: We'd be here all night!

Frasier: Get out!

[She does, closing the door behind her. Time fade.]

AFTER THE BILE IS OVER

[Scene 6 - Frasier's apartment

Later in the evening. Frasier is proposing a toast.]

Frasier: With this bottle, I would like to both commemorate and apologize for this evening. Daphne, Niles, this should have been your evening, and I selfishly monopolized every moment of it.

Niles: Frasier...

Frasier: Not yet, Niles. *[He pours.]* Anyway, I handled things badly, both with Julia and with you, and I just hope that you can forgive me.

Daphne: Of course we will.

Martin: Oh, look on the bright side. You could have let her choke to death, but you didn't.

Frasier: Well, then, to life, both the old and the new.

[They clink glasses.]

Frasier: Ah, Niles, I'm so proud of you.

Niles: Thank you.

[Frasier sits on the couch. Niles joins him.]

Martin: I'm excited for you, Daphne. Takes me back to when I had my kids. So, what are you hoping for, boy or girl?

Daphne: Oh, I don't know. Be kind of nice to have a boy.

[Frasier is showing off his towel to Niles.]

Frasier: Niles, just look at the edging on this.

Niles: Have you ever? Have you ever? And look, this is all hand-stitched.

Frasier: Mm-hmm.

Daphne: *[philosophically]* Or a girl. Either way.

[They drink. It should be noted that Daphne's glass contains orange juice. Fade out.]

END OF ACT II

Credits:

Martin has made himself a sundae, and offers some to Frasier, who declines and exits. Martin sits with his sundae, and promptly spills the ice cream on his shirt. He reaches for Frasier's hand towel, which is nearby. Frasier rushes back and snatches the towel in the nick of time. Martin shrugs and starts to lick the ice cream off his shirt.

Guest Appearances

Special Guest Star

FELICITY HUFFMAN as Julia Wilcox

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