

# Morning News

a romantic comedy

By Karen X. Tulchinsky

**My MAIN scene is the opening scene of a feature length screenplay.**

**Feature log line:** *A boyish lesbian's relationship with her long-term, newly pregnant girlfriend is threatened, when she agrees to be her sister's bridesmaid and ostentatious wedding plans begin to take precedence over everything else.*

## Synopsis

Mel (Melanie) Katz(30), an attractive, boyish lesbian is a struggling, singer/songwriter who reluctantly works in a chain electronics store, while trying to make it as a musician. She lives with her lover, Lyla Yamazaki(32), a beautiful, Japanese Canadian, elementary school teacher, who's just found out she's pregnant. No one else in the family knows that the sperm donor is Mel's older brother Jacob, who's been in mourning for the past two years, after his fiancee died in a freak yoga accident, one week before the wedding.

Thrilled with the news of their pregnancy, Mel and Lyla want nothing more than to celebrate in private, when Mel's younger sister, Barbie Katz(26), an obnoxious yet loveable, Jewish American Princess interrupts their intimate Sunday morning to announce her engagement to Kevin, a handsome yet callous, corporate lawyer.

***In the feature screenplay:*** Over dinner at Phil and Gloria Katz's (Mel's new-age, vegetarian, feminist, environmentalist, hippie parents') house, Barbie asks Mel to be a bridesmaid at her wedding. Lyla knows that for Mel to be a bridesmaid and be forced to wear a puffy, pastel, frilly, feminine dress and high heels, while marching down the wedding aisle on the arm of a man, clutching a floral bouquet, would be an affront to her entire identity, and begs her to decline. But Mel, who cannot say "no" to her baby sister Barbie, agrees.

Phil and Gloria are "cool" with Mel and Lyla's relationship, though they unconsciously support their heterosexual kids' (Jacob and Barbie) relationships more vigorously and with more concrete, practical support and encouragement, (i.e. leaping in to organize an elaborate wedding when Barbie announces her engagement or letting 33-year-old Jacob move back home, while grieving the untimely death of his fiancé).

Lyla can't complain too loudly about Mel's parents' heterosexism though, since *her* mother, a widowed Japanese immigrant, not only wishes that Mel was Japanese, but even more so, wishes Mel was a man. Dinner at Mrs. Yamazaki's

house is silent torture for Mel, who always talks too much and too loudly, and says all the wrong things, while clumsily mistaking gomaе, (Japanese salad) for gai lan (Chinese greens) and displaying atrocious chopstick technique.

As Barbie's wedding takes all precedence in the Katz family, Mel's relationship with Lyla is threatened. Furious with how much energy Barbie's wedding is taking from their lives when they have a baby on the way, (news of which Mel is holding back from her family "until the right time") Lyla packs a bag and goes to stay on her best friend, Molly's living room sofa. No matter how hard Mel begs, Lyla will not come home.

Without Lyla, Mel's life has no meaning. She decides the only way to get Lyla back is to propose. And for that, she needs a ring. And for a ring she needs money. A record contract would pay enough to buy a decent ring. She withdraws from her role as Barbie's bridesmaid, quits the job she hates at the chain store and tries to get her CD into the hands of a record producer she has access to—his personal assistant is Mel's best friend Frankie's exes, ex. When the record producer snubs her, Mel camps out on the sidewalk outside the record studio office tower, where she vows to remain, strumming and singing, until the producer listens to her music— or the media takes notice. Whichever comes first.

Mel continues her "strum-in". Passersby love her music, and her guitar case begins to fill up with quarters and loonies. And the local press is taking an interest. But—the record producer continues to snub her.

It is Mel's great Aunt Ann, a cigar smoking, whiskey drinking, poker playing, 75-year-old, still full of piss and vinegar, who finds a way to barge into the record producer's office with Mel in tow, all of which is broadcast on live TV News. When the producer finally hears Mel perform, he knows a star when he sees one, and instantly offers her a lucrative recording contract, effective immediately.

With a ring in hand, Mel rushes to Molly's house and sings a proposal to Lyla out on the street. Touched and still in love with Mel, Lyla accepts. They rush straight to Mel's parents house to announce their engagement *and* their pregnancy, only to discover Barbie in tears. Kevin broke off the engagement once he realized he was marrying into an anti-capitalist family, who voted *against* Stephen Harper, protested against the Vietnam war, the war in Iraq, the war in Afghanistan *and* the war on drugs, and that Phil was once arrested after chaining himself to an old growth tree that was in danger of being clear cut to make way for a new Super Save on Superfluous Stuff Store. Kevin's got nothing against commie, queer, pinko, hippie-fags, but he loves the Super Store.

All of Barbie's extensive wedding preparations will go to waste. Or will they?

Why waste pre-ordered, gold embroidered, white silk aisle runners and personally engraved, individualized, porcelain place card holders when there's a perfectly good couple just waiting to be married?

When Mel and Lyla say "I do," and everyone shouts "Mazel Tov," while clinking their glasses of organic, pesticide-free, fair trade, merlot and chowing down on Barbie's previously prepared Portobello mushroom quesadillas and sun dried, oven baked, asparagus hearts, with artichoke sherry flambé and ancho chili, sesame cilantro vinaigrette, it is the beginning of healing for Katz family.