Larry's "Gonna Die" Parrtayye

by Matt Rowan

When we started plans for the party, none of us wanted Larry to die, most of all Larry himself.

Actually, when we first started plans for the party, Larry wasn't dying.

He started dying later, after we'd hired a caterer and purchased festive party hats and festive party balloons that read “Sorry You're Dying, Larry, But You'll Sure Be Sorely Missed!” and other things that betokened his impending mortality and our fondness for him.

We thought it'd be great, something to laugh at, Larry surrounded by all his best friends, sat next to a coffin-shaped cake, asked to blow out and bury candles six inches beneath the seven-inch layer of frosting. A clown that was dressed like the grim reaper, variegated neon colors covering his scythe, blade and all. Bawdy burlesque lady skeletons with sexy skull makeup. Don't forget the banner reading “PARRTAYYE” spelled with too many “r”s and “y”s and a word-modifying “a” and “e” -- this done so you knew the fun we were having.

“I'm not having fun anymore!” Larry shouted.

“Why!? Because *we* are? Because *we* are!” We all hollered back.

“No, it's because I'm going to die!” Larry was scarcely hiding his tears, which if we had noticed, we would have felt deeply moved by the sight of them. We weren't inhuman, of course. We loved Larry!

“Well, DUH!!!” We hollered back, dancing to R.E.M. and then that “Hungry Like the Wolf” song. Followed by nothing but early ‘00s alt pop rock. We're talking “Remind Me” by Nickelback and that band, Default. It wasn't ironic. We loved without shame! We danced to whatever qualified as a song without shame!

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“But I don't want that!” Larry said, not so much crying as swallowing all of his emotion in one giant act of repression. If we had noticed, this would've been tough to watch.

“Maybe you won't die, then! At least for many years? No sooner than any of us!” We hollered back, drinking our delicious lime soda pops while burping enthusiastically, as a result of the carbonation and general merriment. We swung our hips with abandon, and the most wicked of us sashayed lasciviously to the killer jams. All in the name of a good time.

“No, I will *and* soon, because my dad is trying to kill me!”

We'd forgot about the dad's manic “reverse patricide” -- apparently the dad's term for killing his progeny. We would have called it what it is, prolicide, if we were the dad, but we weren't about to bother telling the dad that. Not with him all armed with savage weapons and as demented as he'd gotten.

“He's been trying to kill me ever since the day we went to that hedge maze and we couldn't get out and he'd said that was the plan all along. He said he'd wanted to be trapped in there forever with me, like a real family, since we hadn't felt like a real family ever since mom died. Since mom's brakes went out and she crashed into that stuffed animal factory and caused the big stuffing-machine explosion of 1993, eight dead, seventeen painfully stuffed but otherwise alive.”

Larry took a huge breath and concluded, trembling, “But I found the way out of that maze! Accidentally, but my dad was still angry. He said he'd make me pay for finding the way out!”

“We don't think the dad would do you any harm. He loves you?” We said this mostly just because we wanted to keep the parrtayye going unabated and end the bad vibes.

“Not anymore! He expressly stated, ‘I do not love you now that you've led us out of the hedge maze'. Then he drove us both to Arby's but he didn't buy me curly fries like always, one big way he used to show his love and caring.”

“Still, though. We like to think the dad is a good guy?” What we didn't like to think was how Larry was ruining the parrtayye and all

the good vibes. And who could sashay to the jams anymore, too? Sadly, it was too tough to really get a good sashay on.

Just then the dad kicked open the door and entered the parrtayye. Said something about 1.) being visited by three ghosts, all of whom almost to consensus agreed he should not kill his one and only son and also, as an aside, should learn to cherish and keep Christmas in his own way, and improve his relationships both familial and fraternal 2.) he said he had brought Larry a present. The dad was wearing a conical black parrtayye hat and he'd hefted over his shoulder Larry's present. He held a green pennant that read: “Maybe I won't hack you till you're dead with an axe, Larry, but open this present first.” The dad's present was wrapped tightly, and visibly an axe.

Larry's dead mom burst through the floorboards, looking like a hybridized stuffed bear and a rotted out Larry's mom.

She told Larry, calmly but sternly, to honor the dad's wishes.