

Jerome's Wedding

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Rated: G

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Summary: Lois and Clark are married and have two sons, Jerome and Todd, the latter of whom is severely affected by autism. This story recounts Jerome's wedding as seen through Todd's eyes. This is the fourth story in the author's next-gen series. The first three stories, in chronological plot order, are "The Diagnosis," "The Not-So-Great-Escape," and "Echolalia."

Author's Note: This is the fourth — and, I am guessing, the final — story in my next-gen series. The first three stories, in chronological plot order, are "The Diagnosis," "The Not-So-Great-Escape," and "Echolalia." You don't need to have read those stories to understand this one, but it would help. Lois and Clark are married and have two sons, Jerome and Todd, the latter of whom is severely affected by autism. This story recounts Jerome's wedding as seen through Todd's eyes.

I wish to say at the outset that writing this story was a challenge to me, and the writing style won't be easy to read. I based Todd's 'voice' on the self-descriptions I have read of people with autism who are capable of describing their own thought processes, as well as on what is known regarding which parts of speech are harder to master. For example, I did not use any pronouns or question words, and I used as few function words as I could get away with while retaining coherence. Finally, I made everything as concrete and visual as possible, since Temple Grandin has stated that she thinks in pictures rather than in words, and that she has to translate into English whenever she speaks or writes. Her informal research has indicated that many other people on the spectrum are also visual thinkers.

I hope no one takes offense at the story. I was not trying to make fun of Todd or of others with cognitive disabilities; rather, this story is my best effort at depicting how I imagine Todd (and, for that matter, my own son) might think.

Disclaimer: Neither Lois nor Clark belong to me; they are the property of DC Comics and Warner Brothers. Jerome, Todd, and Jenny are my characters; please ask permission if you wish to use them in a story. This story is not for profit; the only thing I hope to gain by writing and posting it is some feedback. (Hint, hint. ;))

My thanks to my friends and beta readers Margot (who is not even an L&C fan) and Female Hawk, for going above and beyond the call of duty in order to provide constructive feedback for this unusual piece. Their suggestions have helped make the story more intelligible despite the unusual voice used in it, and have helped to make Todd's thoughts and actions more realistic. My thanks, too, to my intrepid General Editor, Iolanthe, for tackling a story that breaks all the rules.

Silly day.

Todd, Jerome, Dad wear silly clothes. Jerome say, 'Monkey suit.' Jerome silly. Clothes not monkey suit. Monkeys small; clothes big. Clothes have no tail hole. Clothes have vests. Vests have five pretty buttons. Shiny. Clothes have silly belts — big, cloth belts.

Many people see Todd, Jerome, Dad, pastor. Music start.

People turn. Music loud. Ear plugs good.

Todd see Jenny. Jenny wear silly clothes. Pretty dress. Shiny circles. Dress too long; dress back touch floor, drag. White cloth hide Jenny face. Jenny play peekaboo?

Jenny walk silly. Step. Stop. Step. Stop. Step. Stop.

Jenny have pretty flowers. Big flowers.

Pastor talk, talk, talk. Jerome, Jenny talk. Pastor talk, talk, talk. Todd see Mom. Mom sit. Mom cry. Mom sad? Todd go-to Mom. Todd hug Mom. Mom say Mom OK. Say Todd go-to Jerome, stand. Todd go-to Jerome. Todd stand. Pastor talk, talk, talk.

Jerome want ring. Todd give Jerome ring. Jerome give Jenny ring. Jerome not want ring now? Jerome, Jenny kiss.

More music. Jerome, Jenny, Dad, Todd, Mom, people leave room.

Dad say, "Todd, Jenny bah bah bah bah new sister. Jenny bah bah family."

Mom smile, cry. Mom happy? Mom sad?

Jerome, Jenny hug. Todd hug Jerome, Jenny.

Dad, Jerome, Jenny, people smile.

Silly day. Good day.

THE END