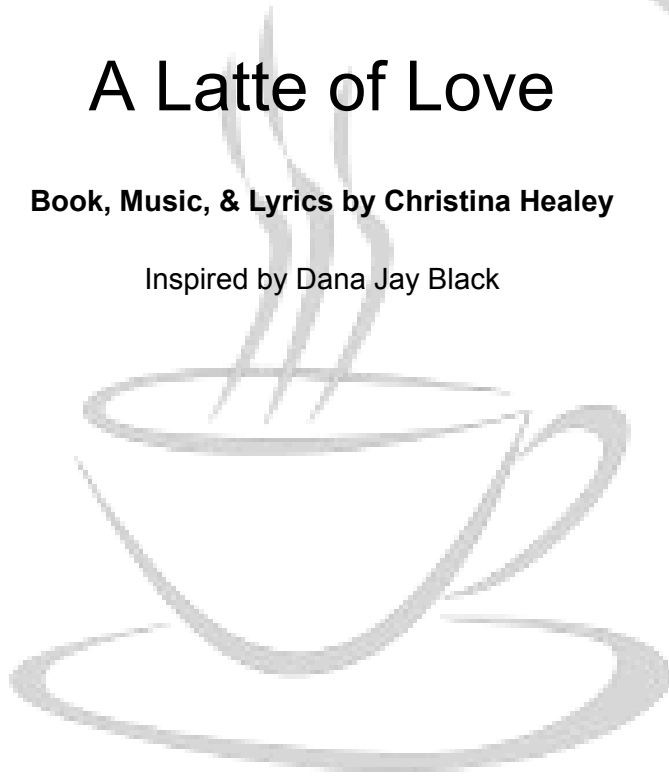


# A Latte of Love

**Book, Music, & Lyrics by Christina Healey**

Inspired by Dana Jay Black



### **Characters (in order of appearance)**

Michael- Male. He/him. 16-17. An antisocial high school student working at the Rise & Grind. Unrushed and unbothered. A loner.

Penny- Female. She/her. Late 20s. A young woman making her way through the world with her music. A bit naive, a bit cautious, a bit brave, a bit hopeful.

Fatima- Female. She/her. Mid-30s. A young widow and the owner of the Rise & Grind Coffee Shop. In over her head.

Ezra- Male. He/him. 30s. The new man in town with a secret past.

Amina- Female. She/her. Late 20s. Penny's childhood best friend. A serial dater with little luck in love.

Victor- Male. He/him. 60s+. An older gentleman. The neighborhood's own 'Mr. Rogers'.

The Board Game Club- Any Gender. All pronouns. 16-17. Caleb, Emily, Marcus, and Didi. Four high school students.

Jude- Non-Binary. They/them. Late 20s-Early 30s. A heartbroken business professional. All business, most of the time.

Abigail- Female. She/her. 30s. Ezra's ex-wife. Sexy and alluring with a devilish undercurrent.

The townspeople- Any Gender. Any age. Customers in the shop.

### **Setting**

A city-suburb in the United States. Act I is set in the drab Rise & Grind Coffee Shop. The space is well loved, and much in need of some TLC. Act II is set in the newly refurbished Rise & Grind Coffee Shop. The time is current.

### **Note**

A “/” indicates an overlap in dialogue. A “-” indicates a cutoff.

Music can be found at the end of the play.

The year of Ezra's tattoo (Act 1) should be approximately 7-8 years pre-production.

## A LATTE OF LOVE

## Act I

Scene V

Thursday evening. The BOARD GAME CLUB is deep in a game of "Guess Who?" at one table. PENNY and EZRA take up a table near the sofa. MICHAEL works the counter. Lights rise to find PENNY and EZRA bellied over in laughter.

PENNY

Playing a piece from her book:

AND I SWEAR  
I AIN'T NEVER GONNA KISS THAT BOY AGAIN  
I AIN'T NEVER GONNA GO BACK DOWN THOSE STAIRS  
BECAUSE EVERY TIME I LOOK AT THAT WASHING MACHINE  
ALL I EVER THINK ABOUT IS A BROKEN DREAM  
CAUSE I AIN'T NEVER GONNA KISS THAT STUPID BOY AGAIN

EZRA

"I ain't"? Since when did you adopt a Southern accent?

PENNY

I never said it was a good song!

EZRA

Well clearly not. Who broke your heart by the washing machine?

PENNY

Joshua.

EZRA

Jerk. Give me this. (*he takes PENNY's songbook*). Oh, this is a Penny Classic. I can tell. Follow me on this:

*I WORKED TOO DAMN HARD FOR THESE BULLSHIT EXCUSES.*

PENNY

Oh no, not this one.

*PENNY strums along.*

EZRA

*AND I WORKED TOO DAMN HARD FOR YOU NOT TO BELIEVE IN ME.  
AND I WANTED TO LOVE YOU FOREVER I THOUGHT WE WERE ENDGAME.  
BUT YOU'RE JUST A LOSER. A LOSER WITH NO NAME.*

Wow. Young Penny had a mouth on her.

PENNY

Of all the things you could've picked.

EZRA

I think I'm starting to learn a lot about Penny from these songs.

PENNY

Oh yeah? Like what?

DIDI

Another win for Emily.

MARCUS

You're up, Caleb.

*CALEB sits opposite EMILY. They start the next game.*

DIDI

Since Emily won the last game, she gets to ask the first question.

EMILY

Alright- does this person look like they could receive a Presidential Medal of Honor in their lifetime?

MARCUS

Here she goes again.

CALEB

What? You can't tell that by looking at someone.

EMILY

Sure you can. You can tell a lot about a person by their look.

CALEB

How am I supposed to answer that?

*DIDI peeks her head over at CALEB's board. She answers for him.*

DIDI

Yeah, they definitely fit that mold.

EMILY

Excellent. Thank you.

*She flips down a few characters on her board. The game continues.*

EZRA

Like...Penny feels things very intensely.

PENNY

Well, yeah, when you pick a song like *that* I would say that's true.

EZRA

But it's still true now. Though I think your language may have changed over the years. And Penny loves with every fiber of her being. Like in this one. (*he turns the open book back to PENNY*) Sing me this.

PENNY

Oh. You know, I actually used to love this one.

*I'M RUNNIN' ON HOME TO YOU  
I'M RUNNIN' ON HOME TO YOU  
I'M RUNNING BACK TO THE PLACE MY HEART BEATS TRUE  
YOU'LL SEE, I'M RUN, RUN, RUNNIN' HOME TO YOU*

EZRA

Who's the lucky guy?

PENNY

There isn't anyone. Not anymore.

EZRA

I'm sorry. But I agree with you, this piece actually has potential. Have you thought about going back to it?

PENNY

Not really. Too painful.

EZRA

Ah, I see. A true romantic: Devoted to the craft yet panged by the knowledge that what used to be can never be.

PENNY

Oh please. It's in the past. It's not that deep.

EZRA

Nothing wrong with being a romantic, Penny.

PENNY

You? I doubt it.

EZRA

Oh no? Well then, how do you see me?

CALEB

Does this person wear glasses?

EMILY

Nope.

CALEB

Alright, that knocks out these ones.

EMILY

Does your person have an air of sincerity about them, or would you say they're all surface but no substance?

CALEB

Okay, I seriously don't understand how these questions help you at all.

EMILY

Well, which is it?

PENNY

You are...bold. Daring. A little adventurous-

EZRA

-Adventurous? I don't know what gave you the idea that I'm adventurous.

PENNY

Could be the fact that you just...showed up. Things like that don't happen in our town.

EZRA

They happen in every town. You were just paying attention this time.

PENNY

I wonder why that is.

EZRA

Well, it couldn't possibly be my stunning looks or charming personality, now could it?

PENNY

Hm...nope. Couldn't possibly be that.

*A laugh between them. EZRA flips through the book.*

EZRA

Tell me about this one.

*He turns the book back to PENNY.*

PENNY

Oh. It's not really finished. Actually, I've barely started it.

EZRA

Well, where are you going with it?

PENNY

I don't know yet. It's about dreams. And chasing those dreams. Except I've never really done that part.

EZRA

Why is that?

PENNY

I don't know. It's scary. The song felt dishonest. That's why I stopped writing it.

EZRA

Why not give yourself the chance just this once?

PENNY

What if I fail?

EZRA

What if you soar?

EMILY

Would you classify your person as a teacher, a lover, or a villain?

CALEB

First of all, that's not a "yes" or "no" question.

EMILY

You're right. Is your person greatly influential?

CALEB

Uh....maybe?

EMILY

That's not a "yes" or "no" answer.

MARCUS

I don't understand women.

EZRA

You have to be willing to take the risk if you want to reap the reward. May I? (*EZRA takes the guitar*). You don't need to keep dreaming. You already have a dream. What you need is a P.M.A.

PENNY

A what?

EZRA

A P.M.A.

*A PMA IS A VIEW ON LIFE  
IT GUIDES YOUR DAY TO DAY  
YOUR PMA TELLS YOUR STORY*

PENNY

What does that even mean?

EZRA

Just listen.

EZRA

*YOUR POSITIVE MENTAL ATTITUDE  
I PICKED IT UP IN COLLEGE.  
IT CAN GET YOU WHERE YOU WANT TO GO.*

PENNY

Ah.  
That explains it.

EZRA

So, where do you wanna go?

PENNY

I don't know. Anywhere. Everywhere.

EZRA

*IT'LL CHANGE HOW YOU LOOK AT PEOPLE  
AND THE WAY YOU THINK OF THINGS  
YOU'LL SEE IT'S GONNA CHANGE YOUR WORLD  
AND THE JOY IT'S GONNA BRING*

*BECAUSE ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE  
WHEN YOU'VE GOT A PMA  
AND WITH PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE THAT YOU  
CAN REACH YOUR DREAMS SOME DAY*

*P IS FOR THE PERSON YOU WERE ALWAYS MEANT TO BE  
M IS FOR THE MISSION LYING AHEAD  
A IS YOUR AMBITION AND THE THINGS YOU CAN ACHIEVE  
WHEN YOU GOT A LITTLE PMA  
IT'LL SHOW YOU THE WAY*

PENNY

You're telling me the key to success is a smile?

EZRA

No. A PMA is more than just a smile. A PMA is a way of life.

*IT'S LIKE A LITTLE SECRET WEAPON  
OR AN ACE KEPT UP YOUR SLEEVE*

ADD PENNY

*IT'S LIKE A TRUMP CARD OR A CHECKMATE  
IN THIS GAME*

BECAUSE IT CAN CHANGE YOUR FUTURE  
IT CAN CHANGE YOU EVERY DAY  
AND WHEN YOU'VE GOT A LITTLE PMA  
HAPPINESS IS ON ITS WAY

PENNY

BECAUSE P IS FOR YOUR PASSION, AND THE HEART YOU HAVE IN YOU.

EZRA

M IS YOUR MAGNIFICENCE AND GRACE.

ADD PENNY

A IS YOUR ADVENTURE AND THE STORIES THAT COME TRUE  
WHEN YOU USE A LITTLE PMA

EZRA

LIKE THE ONE THAT LIVES IN YOU

PENNY & EZRA (ADD Asus2)

BECAUSE P IS FOR POTENTIAL. IT'S WHAT I SEE IN YOU.  
M'S FOR MAKING MOVES AND MAKIN' PLANS  
A'S ANOTHER CHANCE TO SEE ALL THAT LOVE CAN DO.

EZRA

WHEN YOU USE A LITTLE PMA  
YOU'LL SEE ALL YOUR DREAMS  
COME TRUE

PENNY

WHEN I USE A LITTLE PMA  
I'LL SEE ALL MY DREAMS  
COME TRUE

*Dialogue continuing over vamp.*

EMILY

Is this the type of person that you meet once in a lifetime?

CALEB

Can't you say that about everyone?

EMILY

I mean, are they the "life changing, caught-you-out-of-the-blue, best thing that's ever happened to you" kind of once in a lifetime?

MARCUS

Like a soulmate?

CALEB

Oh good grief, Em.

*DIDI peeks over again.*

DIDI

Honestly, yeah.

EMILY

Hm. Interesting. Thank you.

EZRA

*BECAUSE P STANDS FOR PENNY, AND ALL THAT SHE CAN DO  
M IS FOR THE MAGIC THAT YOU HOLD  
A IS FOR ASTONISHING*

PENNY

You see all that in me?

EZRA

*IT'S PENNY'S LITTLE PMA*

PENNY

*IT'S MY LITTLE PMA*

ADD EZRA

*IT'S PENNY'S LITTLE PMA*

EZRA

*IT'LL SHOW YOU THE WAY*

PENNY

*IT'LL SHOW ME THE WAY.  
I'M GONNA REACH MY DREAMS SOME DAY.*

EZRA

*CAN I SHOW YOU THE WAY?*

PENNY

*GO ON, SHOW ME THE WAY.*

EMILY

Is your person Anita?

MARCUS

DUDE!

DIDI

Seriously, how do you do that?

CALEB

Yes. It's Anita.

EMILY

Do you want to guess who my person is?

CALEB

Um...Joey?

EMILY

Richard. Joey wears glasses.

*The kids start packing up the game.*

PENNY

I think I'll add "cheesy" to the list of ways I'd describe Ezra.

EZRA

That's a funny way to say "romantic", but if that suits you. Sounds like they're wrapping up for the night. We should get going, too.

PENNY

Do you always burst into song after work, or was this a special case?

EZRA

Did I mention I minored in music?

PENNY

Well, maybe next time we can actually have a look at my song.

EZRA

Right. The song. *(he quickly glances at the notebook and makes one small correction)*. There. I dropped the "g" in the word "changing". It'll fit the rhythm better.

PENNY

Revolutionary.

EZRA

Same time next week?

PENNY

See ya then.

*Lights fade as everyone EXITS the cafe.*

**END SAMPLE**