

= Tom 's Divorce =

" Tom 's Divorce " is the 11th episode of the second season of American comedy television series Parks and Recreation , and the seventeenth overall episode of the series . It originally aired on NBC in the United States on December 3 , 2009 . In the episode , Tom gets a divorce and Leslie tries to cheer him up , unaware it was a green card marriage . Meanwhile , Andy challenges Mark to a game of pool with the hopes of winning back Ann 's affections .

The episode was written by Harris Wittels and was directed by Troy Miller . Although officially entitled " Tom 's Divorce " , it has also been referred to in some media reports as " The Fourth Floor " in reference to the pre @-@ credits sequence in which Leslie visits the horrifying and grotesque fourth floor of the Pawnee Hall , a scene that was praised by television reviews .

According to Nielsen Media Research , " Tom 's Divorce " was seen by 4 @.@ 83 million viewers , an increase over the previous episode , " Hunting Trip " . The episode received generally positive reviews , particularly for the development of Tom 's character , although commentators voiced less praise for the subplot involving Ann , Mark and Andy .

= = Plot = =

Ron (Nick Offerman) sends Leslie (Amy Poehler) to run an errand at the DMV in Pawnee Hall 's fourth floor , a dark and unsettling place that includes probation offices and divorce filings . A reluctant and frightened Leslie navigates past reprobates and blood stains on the floor and spots Tom (Aziz Ansari) leaving the divorce office with his wife Wendy (Jama Williamson) . Unaware that their relationship was a green card marriage to prevent Wendy from being deported back to Canada , Leslie later tries to comfort Tom , who insists he is fine . Nevertheless , Leslie persists in her efforts to cheer him up , in part by ordering a singing horse telegram to cheer him up . Ron , who knows about Tom 's fake marriage , suggests Tom act sad so Leslie can feel like she cheered him up . When Leslie sets up a social event to cheer him up , Tom suggests a strip club , but Leslie follows Jerry 's (Jim O 'Heir) suggestion they go to the dinosaur @-@ themed restaurant , Jurassic Fork .

The parks employees eat several dinosaur @-@ themed entrees , served by a depressed waiter (Evan O 'Brien) , they enjoy " Tyranna @-@ Ceasar Salads " and " Surf and Turfasaurus " . Tom seems so cheery that Leslie begins to suspect he is faking being sad . Ron pulls Tom aside and asks whether he could ask Wendy on a date once the divorce is finalized . Tom consents , but is visibly disappointed . Determined to cheer him up , Leslie agrees to compromise her morals and take Tom to his favorite strip club , the Glitter Factory . Leslie is horrified by the club and tries to encourage the strippers to change their lives . Ron is also uninterested in the strippers , but happily consumes the free breakfast buffet .

Tom remains depressed even after Leslie hires a stripper (Cheryl Texiera) to give him a lap dance and " grind the sorrow out of him " . A drunken Tom tells Leslie that Ron plans to ask out Wendy , prompting an angry reaction from her . When Tom passes out at the bar , they take him to Wendy 's house , and Leslie is shocked to find she is on a date with another man (James Ball) . She storms out after expressing her disgust with Wendy and Ron . The next morning at work , Tom confesses to Leslie that it was a green card marriage , and that he only recently realized he really likes Wendy .

Meanwhile , Andy (Chris Pratt) continues his efforts to break up the relationship between his ex @-@ girlfriend Ann (Rashida Jones) and her new boyfriend Mark (Paul Schneider) . Andy challenges Mark to a game of pool with the hopes of hustling him , but Mark turns out to be an excellent player and wins multiple games . Mark and Andy make one final wager : if Andy wins , he gets Ann , but if Mark wins he has to leave them alone . Mark dominates the game but loses when he scratches on the 8 ball . Initially delighted , Andy becomes confused when Ann leaves with Mark anyway . The next day , he tells Mark and Ann he will no longer be bothering them , and says a final goodbye to Ann .

= = Production and cultural references = =

" Tom 's Divorce " was written by Harris Wittels and directed by Troy Miller . Although officially titled " Tom 's Divorce " , it was referred to in some media reports by the name " The Fourth Floor " . Aziz Ansari said " Tom 's Divorce " was his favorite episode of the series so far . He said , " It was really fun because there was some serious acting for me to do , compared to my usual dick jokes . "

" Tom 's Divorce " included several references to previous Parks and Recreation episodes . Tom and Wendy 's green card marriage was first identified in the episode " Practice Date " . During the final scenes of the episode " Greg Pikitis " , Tom expresses sadness when Wendy mentions that the couple will eventually get a divorce , which set the scene for this film . Television reviewer Alan Sepinwall , television columnist with The Star @-@ Ledger , said this allowed the show to humanize and further develop Tom 's character . In certain shots in " Tom 's Divorce " , it appears the back of Ron 's head is missing patches of hair . This is a reference to the previous episode , " Hunting Trip " , in which he is accidentally shot in the back of the head while hunting . The episode also features scenes with Ron describing his admiration for strong women and his immense enjoyment of the strip club 's complimentary breakfast . Both of these refers to the elements of Ron 's character that were conveyed in the episode " Ron and Tammy " , which involves Ron 's romantic life and includes dialogue about his love of breakfast foods . Ron also identifies tennis player Steffi Graf and basketball player Sheryl Swoopes as ideal romantic partners . He previously declared Steffi Graf a " perfect ten " on his attractiveness scale in " Practice Date " .

The notion in " Tom 's Divorce " that the fourth floor refers to tetraphobia , the superstitious fear of the number four . Jokes about this have been featured in such pop culture works as the 1999 film Being John Malkovich and the NBC comedy series 30 Rock . The song " Unskinny Bop " , a 1990 single by the band Poison , plays during one of the strip club scene . Leslie said Tom hides his emotions behind " a very thick layer of Axe body spray " , a reference to the real @-@ life male grooming product . The Parks department employees eat at a restaurant called Jurassic Fork , a reference to the Steven Spielberg dinosaur adventure film Jurassic Park , which was adapted from a novel of the same name by Michael Crichton . During one scene , Tom refers to Ron as " Rondoleezza Rice " , a reference to former United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice . At the strip club , Leslie mistakenly refers to a stripper named Sierra by the name Seabiscuit , a champion thoroughbred racehorse . Reflecting on his marriage , Tom said , " At least we lasted longer than Avril Lavigne and that guy from Sum 41 " , a reference to the pop singer 's short @-@ lived marriage to Sum 41 guitarist Deryck Whibley . Tom says one of the strippers also works at Quiznos , a sandwich fast @-@ food franchise ; Tom says of her : " She 's really nice to me here , but really mean to me at Quiznos . " Andy said he has a T @-@ shirt that is " literally priceless " because he was wearing it when he tackled American singer Eddie Vedder . When Ron was commenting on how well Tom was pretending to be sad about his divorce , he tells Tom , " Take it down a notch . You 've already won your Oscar , DiCaprio , " which is a reference to the Academy Awards and the actor Leonardo DiCaprio .

= = Reception = =

On its original American broadcast on December 3 , 2009 , " Tom 's Divorce " was seen by 4 @. @ 83 million households , according to Nielsen Media Research . This amounted to a five percent ratings increase over the previous week 's episode , " Hunting Trip " . " Tom 's Divorce " drew a 2 @. @ 1 rating / 6 share among viewers aged between 18 and 49 . The episode received generally positive reviews , particularly for the development of Tom 's character and the " fourth floor " pre @-@ credits sequence , although commentators voiced less praise for the subplot involving Ann , Mark and Andy . Steve Heisler of The A.V. Club said the episode addressed two of the show 's more downbeat stories (Tom 's divorce and Andy 's failed attempts to woo Ann) but " managed to do so by keeping its plucky , upbeat sense of humor intact " . Heisler praised the growth of Tom 's character and the fourth floor joke , which he said " started with yet another delicious chapter in behind @-@ the @-@ scenes Pawnee lore " .

Time magazine television critic James Poniewozik said Ansari did " an excellent job " at showing a

new side to Tom , and complimented the staging of the fourth floor sequence . Alan Sepinwall of The Star @-@ Ledger said " Tom 's Divorce " was " by design , more melancholy " than previous Parks and Recreation episodes , but served to develop Tom 's character and proved Aziz Ansari " could tone it down and play a quieter , sadder Tom for once " . Sepinwall said the Mark , Ann and Andy subplot was not as funny as in previous episodes . Entertainment Weekly writer Sandra Gonzalez said she had been awaiting a storyline centering on Tom , and said the episode " makes us love the show more " . However , she said Andy 's continued obsession with Ann was growing tiresome and expressed hope his character should go in a new direction . Matt Fowler of IGN said the episode further added to the strong character development that has been consistent throughout the show 's second season . Fowler also enjoyed the frightening portrayal of the fourth floor , which he said helps establish Pawnee as " a place where both the engrossingly real and the entertainingly surreal can co @-@ exist " . GQ writer Dan Fierman praised the episode , particularly Ron 's character and the singing telegram " divorce horse " .

= = DVD release = =

" Tom 's Divorce " , along with the other 23 second season episodes of Parks and Recreation , was released on a four @-@ disc DVD set in the United States on November 30 , 2010 . The DVD included deleted scenes for each episode .