

= Galentine 's Day =

" Galentine 's Day " is the 16th episode of the second season of the American comedy television series Parks and Recreation , and the 22nd overall episode of the series . It originally aired on NBC in the United States on February 11 , 2010 . In the episode , Leslie and her boyfriend Justin seek to reunite Leslie 's mother , Marlene , with her teenage flame . Meanwhile , April 's feelings for Andy continue to bloom , while Ann appears to be growing apart from Mark .

The episode was written by series co @-@ creator Michael Schur and directed by Ken Kwapis . " Galentine 's Day " featured a guest appearance by John Larroquette as Frank Beckerson , the long @-@ lost love of Marlene Griggs @-@ Knope , who was played by Pamela Reed . It also featured the last in a string of guest performances by Justin Theroux as Leslie 's love interest , Justin Anderson .

According to Nielsen Media Research , " Galentine 's Day " was seen by 4 @.@ 98 million household viewers , which marked a continued recent improvement in ratings for the series . It tied a record set with the previous episode , " Sweetums " , for the season 's highest rating among viewers aged between 18 and 49 . The episode received generally positive reviews .

= = Plot summary = =

Leslie (Amy Poehler) throws her annual " Galentine 's Day " party for her female friends , celebrated the day before Valentine 's Day . She asks her mother , Marlene (Pamela Reed) , to tell the story about how she fell in love with a lifeguard that saved her from drowning in 1968 , but the two had to break it off over objections from Marlene 's parents . Leslie later tells the story to Justin (Justin Theroux) , who is amazed by the tale and wants to unite the two . He successfully tracks down Marlene 's old flame , Frank Beckerson (John Larroquette) , and convinces Leslie to go with him to Illinois and reunite the two on Valentine 's Day at the Senior Center Valentine 's Dance , which the parks department oversees .

Leslie and Justin meet Frank , a strange and depressed man that has constant panic attacks . Leslie begins to have doubts about bringing him to her mother and tries to call it off , but Justin insists that they should " let this unfold " . At the dance , where Andy 's (Chris Pratt) band Mouse Rat is playing , Frank meets up with Marlene , who is repulsed by Frank 's past , current unemployment and overall failure at life . She turns down his offer at a second chance at love , prompting him to storm onto the stage and denounce her over the microphone . Leslie apologizes to her mother for bringing Frank . She is later upset with Justin , but has trouble pinpointing the reasons for her dissatisfaction . Ron (Nick Offerman) explains that Justin is a " tourist , " meaning that he takes " vacations in people 's lives " and only cares about telling interesting stories to impress other people , which makes him selfish . Two older women then recognize Ron as jazz saxophonist Duke Silver , but he denies it . Leslie later breaks up with Justin , which Tom (Aziz Ansari) takes especially hard , reacting as if his parents were getting divorced .

Before the senior dance , Tom invites his ex @-@ wife Wendy (Jama Williamson) to his office to finally disclose his romantic feelings for her , but she rejects him . Not satisfied with the outcome , he attempts to blackmail her into a date using an alimony lawsuit as leverage . Tom and Wendy are later shown hugging and presumably making amends , although their conversation remains inaudible . Meanwhile , April 's (Aubrey Plaza) boyfriend Derek (Blake Lee) and his boyfriend Ben (Josh Duvendeck) mock the senior citizens , causing April to question why their interactions must constantly be " cloaked in like 15 layers of irony " . They accuse her of " lameness " , which they attribute to spending time with Andy , and provide her with several ultimatums . She breaks up with them in response . Ann (Rashida Jones) and Mark (Paul Schneider) , at the same time , celebrate their first Valentine 's Day together . In an interview with the camera crew , Ann describes the relationship as " good " , but her tone of voice and body language around Mark contradict her statements . She later becomes jealous when Andy dedicates a song to April , even going so far as to question April about the possibility of a budding relationship between April and Andy , to which April responds impatiently .

= = Production = =

" Galentine 's Day " was written by series co @-@ creator Michael Schur and directed by Ken Kwapis . The episode featured a guest appearance by John Larroquette as Frank Beckerson , the long @-@ lost love of Leslie 's mother , Marlene Knope . When Parks and Recreation co @-@ creator Greg Daniels announced the casting in January 2010 , he described Larroquette 's character as " He 's the one who got away . " " Galentine 's Day " also included an appearance by Pamela Reed , who has played Marlene Knope in several episodes , and the last of a string of slated guest appearances by Justin Theroux as Justin Anderson , a love interest for Leslie . The episode marked the return of Andy 's band , " Mouse Rat " , which was previously featured in the first season finale " Rock Show " . His bandmates are played by Mark Rivers (drums) , Andrew Burlinson (guitar) and Alan Yang (bass) , the latter of whom serves as a screenwriter for Parks and Recreation .

= = Cultural references = =

At the dance , a senior citizen approaches Ron Swanson and asks for an autograph from Duke Silver . This is a reference to the previous second season episode , " Practice Date " , which establishes Ron 's secret identity as a jazz musician . Leslie referred to her Galentine 's Day breakfast tradition as " Lilith Fair minus the angst and plus frittatas " , a reference to the concert tour and traveling music festival . She also said the love story between Marlene and Frank makes the 2004 romance film *The Notebook* look like the 2008 horror film *Saw V* . Mark gets Ann a necklace similar to the Heart of the Ocean , the fictional jewelry given to Kate Winslet 's character in the 1997 romantic drama film , *Titanic* . During one scene in " Galentine 's Day " , Leslie does a voice impersonation of U.S. President John F. Kennedy . When Tom mistakes the impression for that of the Arnold Schwarzenegger character Terminator , he prompts Leslie to do that impression as well .

Among the songs performed by Mouse Rat in " Galentine 's Day " were " The Way You Look Tonight " , originally performed by Fred Astaire in the 1936 film , *Swing Time* . Andy 's bandmate suggests he sings the " Let 's Call the Whole Thing Off " more like jazz musician and trumpeter Louis Armstrong , who Andy admits he has never heard of . Andy and his band also performs " I Only Have Eyes for You " and " I 've Got You Under My Skin " . Leslie said reuniting Marlene and Frank would be like reuniting Romeo and Juliet , the protagonists of the William Shakespeare play of the same name , or reuniting actress Jennifer Aniston and actor Brad Pitt . She also warns to the camera for Aniston to " stay away from John Mayer " , the musician who previously dated Aniston . In the days prior to the original broadcast of " Galentine 's Day " , Mayer publicly apologized for a number of explicit sexual and racial comments he had made in the past months , which prompted news outlets to praise Parks and Recreation for the timeliness of their Mayer joke . Ironically , in May 2011 , Jennifer Aniston started dating Justin Theroux , who guest starred in the episode , and they later married . Frank made a reference to a recurring gag from *Arrested Development* when , after being rejected , he announced to Marlene , " take one last look ... because you 'll never see this body again . "

= = Reception = =

In its original American NBC broadcast on February 11 , 2010 , " Galentine 's Day " was seen by 4 @.@ 98 million households , according to Nielsen Media Research . This marked a continued recent improvement in ratings for the series . " Galentine 's Day " was seen by more viewers than the previous week 's episode " Sweetums " , which drew 4 @.@ 87 million viewers and was an itself an increase from previous episodes . " Galentine 's Day " drew an overall 3 @.@ 1 rating / 5 share , and a 2 @.@ 3 rating / 6 share among viewers between 18 and 49 , the latter of which tied with " Sweetums " as the highest of its age group for the series . The subsequent episode , " Woman of the Year " , would also tie the two episodes for a series @-@ high rating in that 18 to 49 age group .

" Galentine 's Day " received generally positive reviews . Entertainment Weekly writer Sandra

Gonzalez said , " The show managed to cram more character development into 22 minutes than I thought possible . Almost every couple had a major milestone of sorts last night . " Gonzalez complimented the acting of Aziz Ansari during his moments with Wendy , and praised the " touching moment " between Ron and Leslie when she realized she had to break up with Justin . Steve Kandell of New York magazine appreciated that Leslie was correct about Frank , and that Justin was the ignorant one . Kandell said the senior dance served as a " poignant backdrop " for the episode 's romantic subplots , but said the most intriguing show 's relationship is between Leslie and Ron . Alan Sepinwall , television columnist with The Star @-@ Ledger , said the episode was funny , but focused more attention on advancing various romantic subplots . Sepinwall said the scenes about Ann and Mark were " a nice reaction to the general blandness of that relationship " , but found it " frustrating " that the episode left the reason for Wendy and Tom 's resolution unclear in " Galentine 's Day " .

Steve Heisler of The A.V. Club praised the episode for displaying some of Leslie 's stronger and more competent aspects , which he said makes audiences " much more willing to put up with her many , many eccentricities " . Heisler said he thought the Leslie and Justin relationship ended appropriately and praised Ansari 's performance , but added he was a little " taken aback " by how rudely Tom treated Wendy . Matt Fowler of IGN said the episode had many funny moments and good character development , but he said some of the romantic relationships risked skewing the balance between " the sweet and the absurd " , and that some of the character moments " played out a bit too jarringly real for a show like this " . Kona Gallagher of TV Squad said she would like to see Leslie get a boyfriend who last longer than three episodes , unlike Justin Theroux and Louis C.K. , who played Leslie 's love interest Dave Sanderson earlier in the season . Gallagher praised Andy 's band and the befuddlement with which Andy reacted to the senior citizen audience . Mike Murphy of The Press Democrat said the episode was funny , and he particularly praised the " hilariously whacked @-@ out " performance of John Laroquette . Several commentators praised the joke about Andy 's new rock song " Sex Hair " , about how one can tell whether someone had sex because their hair is matted .

= = DVD release = =

" Galentine 's Day " , 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 .