

Characters

NANCY	Early 20s photography student: smooth, intelligent
KANE	Late 20s bio-engineer: attractive, hyper
RON	Early 20s hippy waiter: embarrassing uniform, soulful
GRADY	Mid 30s photography professor: pompous, alcoholic

All but Ron are dressed conservatively. He wears a bright bow tie on a stained white shirt and a greasy apron. Nancy wears an unobtrusive camera.

Setting

A restaurant.

Time

The Present.

(NANCY and KANE sit opposite each other at a table set for three.)

KANE

I've eaten here before. I remember now.

NANCY

Oh. How was it?

KANE

Good pasta, bad service.

NANCY

You always say that.

KANE

It's hard to screw up pasta.

NANCY

Good service on the other hand—

KANE

Is shockingly scarce. Right. *(beat)* I haven't told you how amazing you look tonight.

NANCY

Not yet.

KANE

I know it's repetitive, having me tell you again every time you change your clothes. But no matter what you wear, your wicked darting eyes just find a new way to be complemented. Being with you is like having two sentient emeralds resting on a constantly changing pillow. New colors, new fabrics, every day, that I can look into all the time.

NANCY

I don't have a new outfit every day.

KANE

The regular pillows are even better.

NANCY

I always suspected you were with me for my pillows. Ever since I caught you staring at the gas station.

KANE

What's best is that looking into your eyes, I know they're the same eyes that take those amazing, beautiful pictures.

NANCY

Oh come on! I'm hardly an amazing photographer. Not yet.

KANE

You just can't see your own work objectively.

NANCY

Neither can you.

KANE

Jesus, would you just smile demurely and say "thank you?"

NANCY

(smiling demurely) Thank you.

(He smiles back at her. She takes his picture. RON enters with two glasses of water and two menus.)

RON

There you go. Here's a menu for you, and a menu for you. All comfy? Great. Can I start you off with something? Our appetizer specials today are--

KANE

Wait!

RON

Yes?

KANE

We're waiting for someone.

RON

Uh-huh... yeah?

KANE

(sharply) We're WAITING for them.

(NANCY hides her face in embarrassment at his rudeness.)

RON

What... oh, I see, you're WAITING for them. I get what you're saying now, man.

KANE

Right.

RON

It's just that most people, that's what appetizers are for, you know, curb your hunger while you wait. But that's cool.

KANE

Thank you.

RON

So do you want something to drink, or are you waiting on that, too?

NANCY

(bursting in) Gin and tonic.

RON

Beefeater or Tanqueray's?

NANCY

Which is more expensive?

RON

The T-one.

NANCY

Then I'll have that one.

RON

Thanks. *(whispering)* They judge us on how often you take the pricier one!

NANCY

You're a master.

(RON backs away a step and stares, horrified, at NANCY. KANE interjects.)

KANE

Well thank you... *(reads name tag)* ... Ron. I'll have a bloody Mary. Whatever the well-vodka is will be fine.

RON

Uh... Stoli's better...

KANE

No.

(RON quickly leaves.)

KANE cont.

You can't taste the difference in a mixed drink.

NANCY

No, YOU can't taste the difference. I can. What was with that waiter?

KANE

My guess is that he's an idiot.

NANCY

Thanks, sunshine.

KANE

Oh God, I'm being an asshole, aren't I? I'm sorry. I'm just... tense.

NANCY

Clearly.

KANE

It's just... okay, I'll just say it: Why are we here, Nancy? I mean, why does Grady need to see us? I don't like him, why would I want to eat with him?

NANCY

He asked for both of us to be here. You came for me.

KANE

Right, right. It's just that I feel like I'm being called into the teacher's office, only the teacher used to fuck my girlfriend... did I say that aloud?

NANCY

Relax, Kane... Grady and I happened a long time ago, and it wasn't that meaningful anyway. Not the way we are.

KANE

But why did he call this meeting? Is that what this is, a meeting? A confrontation? Some kind of intervention?

NANCY

I told you, all he said was there's some tension he wants to clear up.

KANE

Isn't it bad enough that I have to see him at those awful faculty parties he invites us to?

NANCY

I've seen you two at parties... he goes out of his way to be friendly to you.

KANE

That's just it! I've never seen anyone so attentive. He smiles and laughs at my jokes and is soooooo friendly... all the while he's thinking "what a jerk!" It's nothing I can put my finger on, just something behind his eyes that shows what he really feels. The guy's a snake, just waiting in the grass for me to stumble so that he can strike!

NANCY

So avoid him and mingle more, there're some very interesting people at those parties.

KANE

And why are all your professors men? Aren't there any women who could tell you how to use a camera?

NANCY

You are manic tonight.

KANE

I'm sorry. They gave me Ritalin when I was a kid, then cut me off at sixteen. Said I was better. Hah! I'm only this way because I love you so much.

NANCY

I know that. It's sweet AND annoying all at once. Say "cheese."

(She takes his photo. RON returns with the drinks. The bloody Mary is ornate, with a huge stick of celery in it. RON stares at her as he speaks.)

RON

Here we go. T and G for the lady, and a bleeding lady named Mary for you...

(He splashes the drink as he sets it down. KANE jumps back and rises.)

KANE

Jesus!

RON

Oh, sorry, man. Here's a towel. You got some on your pants.

KANE

No, you got some on my pants. Keep the towel. I'll be back in a minute.

(KANE exits. RON stares at NANCY.)

NANCY

Can I help you with something?

RON

(very slowly) I... well... you... it's just... the SUV. Yeah. April. Yeah.

NANCY

Uh-huh...

RON

You... and I... well... you don't...

NANCY

Yes?

RON

DOG!... remem... Yeah. No. It's just... um... well...

NANCY

Yes!?

RON

Wow.

(GRADY enters.)

GRADY

Hello, Nancy.

NANCY

(still distracted by RON) Hi, Grady...

GRADY

Karl couldn't make it?

NANCY

KANE is in the bathroom.

GRADY

Kane, right, sorry. I don't know why I can't ever remember his name. It is an odd name, frankly, if one isn't planning on killing their brother.

NANCY

He spells it differently.

GRADY

(to RON) Can I have a Long Island iced tea, please. Hello? Hello, you, can I have a Long Island iced tea?

RON

What? Right. Boozy tea. Do you want them to make that with a premium blend—

GRADY

Just whatever's in the well. A Long Island's essentially an alcohol garbage heap, anyway. Tell them not to skimp on the vodka. Just because I can't taste it doesn't mean I can't taste if it's not there.

RON

All right.

*(RON softly whimpers at NANCY,
then exits.)*

GRADY

You look stunning, as always.

NANCY

Thank you. The waiter just tried to hypnotize me.

GRADY

Really? That's odd. This restaurant comes highly recommended by the dean, and if there's one thing I trust that Falstaff about, it's food.

NANCY

Why are we here, Grady? You've completely spooked my boyfriend.

GRADY

I don't want to discuss it until...Kane?... is back at the table.

NANCY

You can tell me.

GRADY

What I have to say is for both of you.

NANCY

But we're friends... you only know Kaney from parties.

GRADY

May I call him Kaney as well? The extra syllable will help me remember his name, I'm sure of it. I hate monosyllabic names. They breed simple people.

NANCY

Kaney's more of a playful nickname. Or at least a friendship thing. I don't think he'd like you calling him that.

GRADY

I'm friendly!

NANCY

Come on, Grady.

GRADY

Every time I see him, I go out of my way to be as friendly as humanly possible. It's the only time when I border on effusive. And he always has this withdrawn but intense "I don't trust you" look.

(KANE enters behind him and shoots GRADY the aforementioned look.)

And I don't want anything to come in the way of you and me, our friendship.

KANE

Hello!

GRADY

(jumps up effusively) Kaney! Good to see you! Thanks for coming. I've heard great things about this place. The food is supposed to be great.

KANE

The service is pretty questionable.

GRADY

That's absolutely true! Nancy and I both had the same experience!

NANCY

Would the two of you just sit down?

(They look at her, then attempt to be the coolest in their descent to the chairs.)

GRADY

(simultaneous) How rude of us, chattering away without you.

KANE

(simultaneous) Sorry about that, honey. Really sorry.