

# Oh, Nancy!

A one-act play by Dawson Moore

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# Oh, Nancy!

## CHARACTERS

Nancy	Early 20s, photography student: smooth and intelligent.
Kane	Late 20s, bio-engineer: hyper but attractive.
Ron	Early 20s, hippie waiter: stoned and soulful.
Grady	Mid 30s, photography professor: a pompous alcoholic.

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

## SETTING

A restaurant with a table and four chairs.

## TIME

The present.

*(NANCY, carrying a camera, enters with KANE. She sits, and he promptly sits next to her.)*

KANE

I hate it when they don't have a hostess.

NANCY

We're off to a bad start.

KANE

It's just so lazy... 'please seat yourself.' Next they're going to say I should take my own order.

NANCY

They're villains.

KANE

I've eaten here before. I remember now.

NANCY

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.

*(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—

Wait! KANE

Yes? RON

We're waiting for someone. KANE

Uh-huh... yeah? RON

*(sharply)* KANE  
We're WAITING for them.

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?

*(bursting in)* NANCY  
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.)*

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? 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 out loud?

NANCY

Relax, Kane... Grady and I had a fling a long time ago; 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 sooo 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 picture. 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! Remember... 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, 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. 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)*

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.

NANCY

Not a big deal, I was just getting a crick in my neck.

*(RON enters with the Long Island iced tea. GRADY starts sucking it up.)*

RON

Okay, here you go.

*(to KANE)*

So this the guy you're waiting for?

NANCY

Yes.

RON

So you're ready to order?

KANE

Excuse me, I haven't had a chance to look at the menu.

RON

You need another bloody Mary?

*(RON reaches toward KANE and spills the rest of the drink all over him.)*

God! KANE

Oh shit. RON

I've got a hanky. GRADY

I don't need your hanky... Thank you anyway. KANE

Not your night. NANCY

Nancy... come here for a second. KANE

*(He crosses away from the table.)*

Excuse me. NANCY

*(She follows him.)*

Well, I'm finished with this, I'll have another. Make it a double this time GRADY

You're already finished? Jesus. All right. RON

*(RON leaves as KANE pulls NANCY to him. She pulls away. They whisper.)*

What, not willing to let your other boyfriend see me touching you?! KANE

No, you're all wet. NANCY

That fucking waiter. KANE

NANCY

It's not the bloody Mary that's making you all wet.

KANE

Nancy, sometimes you are very cold to me.

NANCY

Just when I'm trying to cool you off. You need to calm down and get a grip, stop antagonizing the poor waiter...

*(leaning in to him)*

...and stop being a nervous dork. Can you do that?

KANE

I'm not antagonizing the... did you say "poor?" How can you say poor? That clumsy idiot keeps spilling things on me! Probably stoned, fucking slacker.

NANCY

You always have trouble with waiters.

KANE

What?

NANCY

Sometimes you're rude to them, sometimes they just sense that you're going to be and are preemptively rude with you. Whatever it is, you've got bad waiter karma. Now get a grip.

KANE

I... yes, yes of course I can. I... I need to...

NANCY

Go to the bathroom and get straightened up, and when you get back to the table, I'll give you a big kiss in front of Grady. Deal?

*(KANE nods and pulls toward her. She pushes him away and nods toward the restroom. He walks off dejectedly, glancing nastily at GRADY.)*

GRADY

Is he all right? Is there a drug problem I should know about?

NANCY

*(sotto)*

Ritalin!

What? GRADY

No, it's nothing, forget it. I told you... he's just spooked. NANCY

I try to be nice to him. GRADY

You lay it on pretty thick. NANCY

Exactly. I do my best. He's just very defensive. What does he do for a living again? I always forget. GRADY

He's a bio-engineer. NANCY

That's why I can never remember, I have no idea what that means. GRADY

He works for the government, you're not supposed to understand what he does. NANCY

*(RON returns carrying another bloody Mary and an unbelievably huge Long Island. GRADY immediately goes to work on it.)*

Here you go. Please tell that guy that I'm really sorry. RON

I will. NANCY

RON  
*(to GRADY)*  
Hey... you've got a call at the hostess station.

I do? GRADY

RON  
Yah, they said it was for some guy that looks like you. Said it was urgent. Maybe... your mom's in the hospital.

My mother's dead. GRADY

Dad. RON

Dead. GRADY

Aunt? RON

Oh... dear. Nancy, please, excuse me. GRADY

Go ahead and take it. NANCY

It's line one. RON

*(GRADY exits. RON stares at NANCY.)*

So... How've you been, Nancy? RON

Fine, thanks... NANCY

*(reading his name tag)*  
Ron. Do we know each other, Ron?

Oh yes. RON

I'm sorry, I'm not remembering from where. NANCY

I'll never forget you. RON

*(laughing)*  
Whoa... was I still conscious? NANCY

RON  
I look different, and it was a long time ago. Ron Williams...

NANCY

That's not ringing any bells...

RON

Your father's S.U.V., a crisp April night...

NANCY

Bells still aren't ringing.

RON

Your DOG was in the back, and he was very upset.

NANCY

Ron Williams! Oh my God. Well... how have you been, I guess.

RON

That night shaped my life.

NANCY

You're kidding.

RON

No. It taught me to persevere. It was all a big metaphor, man. No matter how life grinds you with its stick shift, or how cramped you feel, or how scared you are of the big MASTIFF snarling in your ear, keep on persevering. Keep on trucking. Even if the woman who takes your virginity never speaks to you again and tells everyone at school you've got a small dick. Keep on trucking and things will be okay.

NANCY

Oh. Well.

*(beat)*

I'm glad I could help?

*(GRADY reenters, angry.)*

GRADY

There's not even a phone at that desk.

RON

Oh. Sorry.

GRADY

*(polishing off his drink)*

Get me another one of these!

*(GRADY removes the straw from his Long Island and guzzles the rest of it. He shoves the glass at RON, who bursts into tears and runs headlong into KANE, of course spilling the remnants all over him. NANCY takes a picture.)*

KANE

You did that on purpose!

*(RON runs off. KANE yells after him.)*

You're paying my dry cleaning!

*(returning to the table)*

Well, I'm not leaving, it's not like I'll be getting dry at this point.

GRADY

The service here is absolutely dreadful!

KANE

Fine, I'll just have a wet dinner.

*(KANE goes to kiss NANCY. Their teeth smash together painfully.)*

NANCY

Damn it, would you calm down!?

KANE

Your teeth hit mine, too!

GRADY

Oh dear, I feel really bad about this, like I'm the irritant. Please, Kaney, sit down.

NANCY

His name is Kane, and mind your own business, Grady.

GRADY

Please. I'm really sorry.

KANE

*(sits)*

What are you apologizing for?

GRADY

I was just hoping we could have a civil meal together, that's all... so tell me... what does a bio-engineer do, exactly?



KANE

I splice monkeys with human beings to create a race of slaves, is that what you think?

NANCY

Kane!

KANE

No! I extract cat DNA to make a serum to prevent people from snoring! Really, it's very boring and no one appreciates the work we do.

NANCY

Oh stop it, your work is very important, Kane.

GRADY

I certainly think so... wait, cat DNA... you're pulling my leg! Ha, very funny. Look, I wanted us to come here to clear up the past, to bring full disclosure of the truth, so that we can all arrive at a tension-free present.

KANE

I know the two of you dated.

GRADY

We didn't. She never let it go that far. I was never introduced to her friends. No, we were just quietly having sex. Well, not quietly... I digress. Because then she chose you. Someone younger, more exciting, with a cuter nose and ass. And left me fairly, well, devastated. I was crushed. Because in my whole life, no one ever knew me so completely, so suddenly. I felt understood and appreciated. And to have that sort of soul mate energy cast aside for a younger, let's face it, shallower man, was the ultimate rejection.

KANE

Hey, I'm not shallow!

GRADY

Fine. I don't know you, perhaps you're deeper than you appear.

KANE

You arrogant fuck! You're so fucking arrogant!

*(to NANCY)*

You see that, right, you see how arrogant he is?!

NANCY

Guys—

GRADY

What do you want from me? God made you beautiful, and you want to whine about how no one appreciates that you're deep, too? Cry me a river!

NANCY

Grady, you don't even know Kane. You can't be bothered to learn his name, so I think you can keep the remedial psych analysis to yourself.

GRADY

I'm sorry. You're right, Nancy. And I have to tell you, none of what I'm about to say reflects negatively on my admiration of you. You're a great girl, and have a promising career in photography.

NANCY

Thanks, but—

GRADY

Charming and beautiful women do well in this world.

KANE

Jesus Christ, Nancy, what the hell is this? He wants to win you back, this is sick.

GRADY

I'm making more trouble, and I swear to you, I'm here to put your mind at ease... Conan?

KANE

Damn it!

GRADY

Kaney, I mean.

KANE

My name is Kane. Like sugar cane. Like "I walk with a cane now that I'm ninety." Like "I can give or take a good caning."

NANCY

What?

KANE

Something I saw on a prostitute's business card in London.

NANCY

Oh!

KANE

No, I mean, I wasn't dialing it or anything, they're in every phone booth over there!

GRADY

BUT! Please, let me finish. Set your mind at ease: I have no designs on Nancy. Not only no designs, but also no desire. I don't trust her, and where there's no trust, there's no love.

NANCY

Hang on a minute... YOU don't trust ME?

GRADY

No. No I don't. The way you abandoned me and hurt me... the callousness of your actions... I could never give myself to you. I respect you, still love you, but you can't have me.

*(to KANE)*

Does that put your mind at rest?

*(NANCY leans back in her seat.  
RON enters.)*

RON

All right, is everybody ready to order?

KANE & GRADY

No!

*(She takes their picture. The men all  
look at her. GRADY looks away first.)*

GRADY

Hey, where's my drink?

RON

The bartender said you had to slow down and stop throwing things or he was gonna kick you ought of here.

GRADY

Throwing things?!

KANE

Look, we're not ready to order yet. Give us a couple of minutes.

*(to NANCY)*

But this is great, Nancy. Great. I'll finally be able to put aside my jealousy. Grady, I hate to say it, but thank you. I appreciate your taking the time to put my fears to rest.

GRADY  
You're welcome.

NANCY  
Grady.

GRADY  
Yes, Nancy?

NANCY  
I have to thank you, too. Because coming here tonight, this has clarified so much for me. All this time I've been with Kane's there's been something missing. That's something was you.

GRADY & KANE  
What?

NANCY  
I just hope I'm not too late. That it's not too late for us.

KANE  
Oh, Nancy!

GRADY  
Shut up, gene splicer! Yes, of course, of course we can make things work, of course.

*(She turns sharply to KANE.)*

NANCY  
So don't get too comfy with your new pal, Kane. Just because he's telling you he gives up doesn't mean he means it, or that he respects you.

GRADY  
Yeah! I never said I respected you!

KANE  
*(to GRADY)*  
You... you... drunken MONSTER!

*(RON, who has been standing and watching, pulls out a slips of paper from his wallet.)*

RON  
I have this poem I wrote for you, Nancy.

KANE & GRADY

What?

NANCY

Please tell me you're kidding, Ron.

RON

No, I wrote it for you. It's called "Oh, Nancy!"

*(He begins reading, spinning the journal to read poetry written in a circle. Soon the other two are talking underneath him, trying to get NANCY's attention.)*

My love for you has become  
A Giant Joke  
A real laughier.  
The Dog Is Gone.

GRADY

Got time for bad poetry...

KANE

What... what is this? This is about you?

NANCY

You're jealous of Ron the waiter, too?

RON

How could I have ever become  
So Dramatic?  
So Unraveled.  
The Dog Is Gone

GRADY

Time for poetry, no time to bring me a drink!

RON

*(to GRADY)*

You're cut off, buddy.

KANE

You screwed the waiter, Nancy? Oh, Nancy!

RON

*(continues the poem)*

No more terror, no more tears  
Just Giddy Pain  
And Wryish Grins  
The Dog Is Gone, The Dog Is Gone.

GRADY

You're no Chaucer! No, sir, no Chaucer... Chaucer you're not!

KANE

Just when I'd begun to trust you—

NANCY

Don't you even tell me about your feelings right now, Kane, I'm warning you!

RON

Because I can no longer tell  
If I'm the Joke  
Or We're the Joke  
All I know is that it's about a Dog

KANE

*(to RON)*

Shut up! I'm going to kill you!

*(KANE begins chasing the still-reading  
RON around the table.)*

GRADY

That's it, Conan, get that fucking waiter!

KANE

Aaarggghh!!!

*(KANE dives on GRADY and they  
tumble to the floor. RON drops to his  
knees in front of NANCY.)*

NANCY

GET AWAY FROM ME, RON!

RON

And it's fucking funny  
And it makes me laugh...  
The Dog... That Dog...  
THAT FUCKING DOG!

RON cont.

*(beat)*

You two can't fight in here. Manager'll eight-six you.

NANCY

SHUT UP!!! ALL OF YOU SHUT UP!!!

*(NANCY sits, very still. The men collect themselves and look on sheepishly, all three sitting around the table.)*

KANE

Nancy?

NANCY

You're all maniacs... just stop speaking.

RON

But...

NANCY

Do yourself the favor, Ron. Every word you say just digs you in deeper, makes you more and more pathetic. Save yourself the embarrassment.

GRADY

Now, Nancy—

NANCY

And you stop talking AND drinking, you're a complete mess and we haven't even gotten an appetizer.

RON

Oh, hey, I can—

NANCY

Like you're going to just wait on us now. SHUT UP, Ron.

*(surveying them)*

Look at all of you... how could I not have seen you for what you really are?

KANE

But I love you!

GRADY

No, it's me, it's been me all along!

RON

I've loved you the longest!

NANCY

Like there's a longevity clause on my heart. Men are so fucking imperialistic. I'm shocked you don't actually pee on women to mark them. Except you, of course, Grady.

GRADY

I... she's making that up.

NANCY

Sure I am. It's okay. Kane can't have me on top or it's instant soft-serve.

KANE

You grind your pelvic bones into me!

NANCY

*(to RON)*

And I bet you can't even have sex without a dog nearby. Can you!?

RON

*(ashamed)*

I sometimes play the "Cujo" soundtrack while I jerk off.

KANE

You have to chose one of us!

NANCY

You are so wrong about that.

GRADY

But, Nancy!

*(She stands. As she slams each of the men, they crumble into rejected heaps on and around the table.)*

NANCY

No! I don't want any of you.

*(to GRADY)*

You're too pompous...

*(to KANE)*

You're too needy AND jealous...

*(to RON)*

And you're way too pathetic to even consider, Ron. You're all nice enough, but you all should move back in with mom and tell her to raise you right this time. Grady... you won't be seeing me in class again: I'm dropping out of school. You know why? Because I know how to take a picture.



*(She focuses her camera on the three of them. They're all miserable and destroyed, staring at the camera.)*

NANCY cont.

Now nobody smile.

*(She snaps their picture. The men all remain very still.)*

Just so I'll know... which one of you is picking up the tab?

*(A strobe light comes up, creating a slow motion effect. RON stands and proudly raises the check. The other two tackle him to the ground and a melee ensues. NANCY smiles and shakes her head. RON's arm shoots out of the pile with the check in hand. She grabs the bill for herself and leaves. They watch her go... End of Play.)*