

FRAMED a play by Y York, January 2007

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May, 23

Jake, 28

Nick, 40

Joanie, 44

In and around an American city, the present

Note: You never see a painting.

1. Joanie and Nick's living room.

(She reads a magazine. He enters.)

Love you. Don't wait up.	NICK
...What is that?	JOANIE
What?	NICK
That shirt?	JOANIE
You don't like it?	NICK
I don't recognize it.	JOANIE
Yeah, it's new.	NICK
It's very orange.	JOANIE
It's bright.	NICK
That it is.	JOANIE
Peppy.	NICK
...Preppy?	JOANIE
Peppy. It makes me look peppy.	NICK
Did the salesman say that?	JOANIE
No salesman. I picked it out myself. It looks peppy. Good for the winter time. Not so depressing.	NICK
Where are you going that you require all that pep?	JOANIE
I'm gonna go meet the guys. You want to go?	NICK
Oh, please.	JOANIE

Come on, let's go. They like to see you.

NICK

Why?

JOANIE

I show up with my wife, they like that. Boss and his wife out on the town stop to say hello to the employees — buy them a round or two. Shows respect; puts us on the same level.

NICK

Perhaps I do not wish to be on the same level.

JOANIE

It's good for morale.

NICK

I wouldn't know what to wear.

JOANIE

I could pick something out.

NICK

I don't have anything peppy enough.

JOANIE

You don't have to be peppy. Just I have to be peppy.

NICK

What am I supposed to be doing while you're off entertaining your guys?

JOANIE

I just invited you.

NICK

You didn't invite me before. Before you were just leaving. "Don't wait up honey. Love you."

JOANIE

Gee, I thought I just invited you along. Huh.

NICK

No, really, Nick — how did you imagine me spending my evening?

JOANIE

I imagined you spending your evening wrapped up with your magazine.

NICK

I hate this magazine —

JOANIE

You always say that —

NICK

— an entire issue devoted to what isn't in a painting — who cares what isn't in a painting?

JOANIE

I will cancel your subscription.

NICK

You will not cancel my subscription.

JOANIE

NICK
You get in a bad mood every time.

JOANIE
I am not in a bad mood. I don't think you should spring it on me when you're going out with the guys is the only mood I'm in.

NICK
Forgive me, Joanie. Three hundred channels I thought you could find something to do.

JOANIE
I can find something to do...I thought we could do it together.

(Brief pause.)

NICK
You did?

JOANIE
I did.

NICK
You didn't say anything. You looked like you were curled up for the duration.

JOANIE
I was passing the time until you came down to join me. For a little visit. Here on the sofa. I didn't expect you to come down peppy.

NICK
...What did you have in mind?

JOANIE
Take off that shirt and I'll show you.

2. May and Jake in their bedroom.

JAKE
Don't wear that.

MAY
It's nice.

JAKE
If you're my mother it's nice.

MAY
I like beige.

JAKE
You are not my mother.

MAY
It's elegant.

JAKE
Put on the red shiny one.

I'll be cold. MAY

So we'll take a taxi. Where is it? JAKE

In the wash. MAY

You haven't worn it — JAKE

How do you know? MAY

I remember when you wear it, it looks good on you. JAKE

Why are you so nervous, Jake? MAY

I'm not nervous. I want you to wear the red shirt is all I am. JAKE

I can't find it...I'll wear the black. MAY

What black? JAKE

Low cut. Peeking... (gestures to her nipples) ...you know. MAY

Yeah, okay. JAKE

(putting it on) But if I slip out you shouldn't be surprised. MAY

Sit up straight it'll be fine. JAKE

I think it's too revealing — you think it's too revealing? MAY

That's why guys look. JAKE

Who, Jake? Who is going to be looking? MAY

Never mind. Just be friendly, May. JAKE

Where are we going?
MAY

The Lotus.
JAKE

Jake! Why are we going there?! They don't even have food.
MAY

Oh, jeez, May — (sigh) I talked to some guys. They said Nick goes there. Okay?
JAKE

...Oh.
MAY

What “oh.?”
JAKE

I thought that was over.
MAY

Nothing's over.
JAKE

Did you get to talk to him yet?
MAY

No, I didn't get to talk to him yet, that's why we're going to The Lotus!
JAKE

Jeez, I'm sorry —
MAY

No, okay. Let's just go, okay?
JAKE

I didn't mean —
MAY

Okay, May. It's fine. We're going to go to The Lotus and have a good time. We will be smiling, happy, and convivial.
JAKE

Con what?
MAY

He likes happy people! With convivialityness.
JAKE

You're doing good at the garage, you got that raise.
MAY

They don't appreciate me; I make them a fortune —
JAKE

I don't want you to be a laundry guy; they scare me —
MAY

I'm not going to be a laundry guy. JAKE

Those guys open the machines — it's like Vegas, the quarters spilling out. MAY

I'm not going to be a laundry guy. JAKE

That's what Nick does. The laundries. MAY

You think a guy drives a new car every year from laundry quarters? JAKE

Maybe you could fix the machines — they're always broken. MAY

I will not be fixing washing machines when I go to work for Nick da Silva. JAKE

What will you be fixing? MAY

I won't be fixing anything. JAKE

You like fixing things. MAY

Come on, May. I'm a grease monkey. How attractive is that? JAKE

I could go back to the store. They said I could come back any time. MAY

You don't have to work. JAKE

I like to work. MAY

I'm making enough my wife can have her leisure. JAKE

I don't like my leisure. MAY

Get your hair done. JAKE

You don't like my hair? MAY

I love your hair. It's something to do. It's leisurely. It fills an afternoon. JAKE

I'm just suggesting...if I went back to the store, you wouldn't have to ask Nick — we'd have enough money. MAY

JAKE
It's not the money, okay? Nick has a lot of class.

MAY
...Then why does he go to The Lotus?

JAKE
Oh, jeez, May, I don't know. Maybe he likes to socialize with his employees after work. (Pointedly)
The convivial ones!

3. Joanie's art studio.

(She is painting. Nick enters with flowers.)

NICK
Whoa. What is that?

JOANIE
Shut up.

NICK
Okaaaay. Bad time for a little visit, I guess...I'll just leave these right here.

JOANIE
What? (Sees flowers.) Oh, damn it. I'm sorry. Shit.

(She stops painting to give him a kiss.)

JOANIE
I love you. You are not offended.

(She returns to slapping paint on her canvas. He watches.)

NICK
I don't get it.

JOANIE
"Your work isn't passionate enough, it isn't violent enough, it's too literal and flat, it doesn't reflect—." The fucking fuckness of the fuck.

NICK
What? ...What happened?

JOANIE
He sent back my paintings.

NICK
Who sent back what paintings?

JOANIE
Ted! Ted! You met him — the guy with the gallery — at the benefit at the Hilton —

NICK
Which Hilton?

JOANIE
I don't know which — where you bought the bottle of champagne for a thousand dollars.

NICK

Oh, yeah. I thought one of them cheapskate CEOs would outbid me.

JOANIE

He was at our table, you said, “Oh, you should see my wife’s paintings.” He said to send him something so I did.

NICK

He sent them back?

JOANIE

“Dear Joan, thank you so much for sharing your paintings with me. FYI: Artists usually send transparencies or their web address.” ...I’m a complete laughing stock.

NICK

Which ones did you send?

JOANIE

The ones of the harbor.

NICK

I love those. They remind me of the pictures I grew up with. Full of adventure. Makes me think about a world beyond our shores. The big ones, right?

JOANIE

The huge ones! Huge! I sent them overnight mail to his gallery.

NICK

You should put a gold frame on them.

JOANIE

Nick!

NICK

To make them look more important.

JOANIE

To make them look like they came out of your mother’s house.

NICK

What’s wrong with that?

JOANIE

Nobody uses frames. Particularly gold frames. The painting must become one with the wall.

NICK

(tries to make a joke) Then what if you move, you supposed to take the wall with you?

JOANIE

God...can you imagine the laugh they had? “Look at this, boys, the boob sent her paintings instead of slides.”

NICK

Nobody calls you a boob.

JOANIE

I’m such a fool — I’m a fool —

You want I should talk to him? NICK

...Don't you dare, don't you dare, Nick. JOANIE

Talk — I said talk. NICK

You do not need to resort — to resort to that. JOANIE

I'm talking about talking, that's all I'm talking about...Now if I'd said "tear him a new asshole..." (She smiles in spite of herself.) But did I say that? I did not. NICK

...What do you think? What do you really think? JOANIE

...Sure is red. NICK

For the passion. And the violence. It represents our passionate violent world. JOANIE

What are you calling it? NICK

Landscape. JOANIE

...Oh yeah, I can see that. The trees, the meadow, the sunset — sure. Landscape. NICK

(a smile) It's an abstraction, Nick. JOANIE

Silly me. All this time I thought it was a tree. NICK

...How do you tear a new asshole for someone who is a complete asshole already? JOANIE

I would improvise. (A hug) I wish you wouldn't get so upset. What does he know? NICK

A lot, Nick. He knows a lot. He has a gallery. JOANIE

He's one guy. People like your pictures — people buy them — NICK

Not recently. JOANIE

Last week. NICK

JOANIE

The week before last. I want him to like what I do. I want him to put me in his gallery. I want a show.

NICK

You have a show.

JOANIE

A bunch of artists at a high school is not a show. It's a joke.

NICK

No, it's an honor. You should put in the harbor ones.

JOANIE

Nick! What if Ted comes? I can't put in paintings he already rejected. This one. I'm going to show this one.

NICK

Oh. Okay. Yeah, it's good. I particularly like the trees-

JOANIE

This is going to stop being funny very soon.

NICK

Did you invite him to the opening?

JOANIE

I mailed him an invitation.

NICK

Then we'll hear what "Ted" has to say about Landscape at the opening.

JOANIE

Right, he's got no where better to go on a Friday night than an art show at a high school.

NICK

When you're in the show, there is no where better to go. ...Let's go home.

JOANIE

I'm working.

NICK

Just for a little while.

JOANIE

No.

NICK

I got you flowers. Come on. A little visit. It'll be good. Help you relax. You can come back after.

JOANIE

Oh, why not? At least that's something I know I'm good at.

NICK

Hey, hey. You are good at many many things. Many.