



Greg Elsass

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North of Pelican Rapids

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*For the Perrets
and especially the Lorkovics*

North of Pelican Rapids

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North of Pelican Rapids was performed by the Resident Theatre Company at Fullerton College in Fullerton, CA on June 21, 1999. Directed by Christine Martin.

RONALD: Jesse Patch

NANCY: Megan Arias

AARON: Dennis Dunnigan

JOHN: Kyle Chittenden

SANDY: Monique Danielle Retty

North of Pelican Rapids

Winner of the East Repertory Theatre's
Annual Playwriting Competition

FARCE. When Aaron arrives to pick up his prom date, he gets to meet her “parents” for the first time. While his girlfriend is getting ready upstairs, Ronald and Nancy engage Aaron in some small talk over a few glasses of Mountain Dew. But as the parents begin guzzling Mountain Dew, they begin to act crazy—really crazy! Ronald begins smoking Nicorette patches, Nancy brandishes a cap gun, and the two end up in a WWF wrestling match in the middle of the living room floor. And to top off all the madness, Aaron’s prom date appears dressed as Wonder Woman!

Performance Time: Approximately 30 minutes.

NOTE: For a full evening of Minnesota madness, combine this play with another one-act from Greg Elsasser’s *Pelican Rapids Trilogy*, a collection of plays that features delightfully wacky characters from Minnesota: *Shoe Booties* (30 mins), *The Baby Who Came to Dinner* (30 mins).

Characters

(3 m, 2 f)

RONALD: 40s, loves to drink Mountain Dew.

NANCY: 40s, Ronald's wife; loves to drink Mountain Dew as much as her husband; wears her "best" housedress.

AARON: 17, tall and awkward; wears a rumpled tux with an upside down rose pinned on the lapel.

JOHN: 13, Ronald and Nancy's unsuspecting "son."

SANDY: 17, Ronald and Nancy's captive "daughter" and Aaron's prom date; wears a Wonder Woman costume.

Setting

Present. Saturday evening, Moorhead, MN. The dining/living room of the Fonseca household.

Set

The living room is modern and practical. There is a stiff looking couch down center with a matching chair to its right. A small glass coffee table sits in front of the couch with a hand of cards fanned out, as if we caught players in the middle of a game. There is also a rather plain-looking dining room table with four chairs around it placed at left CS with several unlit candles on it. A picture of Bill and Hillary is hung on the wall. To the left is a kitchen entrance. The front door is on the right. A staircase leading to the second floor runs along the back wall. A 4-paned window marked with colorful drapes runs along downstage right.

Props

<i>Psychology Today</i> magazine	Cap gun
Bottle of Mountain Dew	Electrical tape
Metallic tape	Rope
Lighter	Glass of milk
Bag or backpack	Cookies

Sound Effects

Doorbell
Gunshot
Loud thud or crash

“Two little monkeys
jumping on the bed!
One fell off
and broke his head!”

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(AT RISE: The dining/living room of the Fonseca household in Moorhead, Minnesota. Nancy is anxiously peering out the window while simultaneously biting her nails. She is wearing what is probably her best housedress, and she subconsciously smoothes out the imaginary wrinkles. Ronald is relaxing on the couch, reading "Psychology Today." Within moments, Nancy pulls back from the window and allows the drapes to fall back into place.)

NANCY: It's so warm out tonight, Ronald! It couldn't have been a more perfect night for this.

RONALD: Weatherman said it might be seventy-eight tomorrow. Maybe eighty.

NANCY: Eighty degrees? Eighty degrees in Northern Minnesota in May? Unheard of! *(She goes back to looking out the window.)* This really is a special occasion, I mean, isn't it, Ronald? Someone is definitely smiling down upon...he's here, Ronald! He's here! *(She drops the drapes down again.)*

RONALD: *(Glances down at his watch, yet still reads his magazine.)* And look, it's 6:45. Just like he said.

(Nancy looks through the window once again.)

NANCY: I can't see what he's wearing yet...

RONALD: What's he driving?

NANCY: Something blue...or black...I don't know. It's dark out.

RONALD: *(Disgusted.)* Probably something foreign.

NANCY: Oh my...he looks so adult! And he's so tall! Sandy never did say how tall he was. Why, he could be a basketball player! Why is he so tall, Ronald?

RONALD: He's a senior, Nancy. He probably *is* a basketball player.

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NANCY: *(Teary-eyed.)* He's so beautiful. *(Doorbell rings.)*
Okay, I'm opening! *(She heads toward the door and stops.)*
Ronald?

RONALD: Nancy, what?

NANCY: I love you.

(Ronald motions to the door.)

RONALD: *(Big grin.)* I love you too, Pookie, now open the door!

NANCY: Well, here goes! *(Hand on the doorknob.)*

RONALD: No, Nancy, wait! Wait for one second.

NANCY: What? *(Pause.)* What?

RONALD: Remember...not one word tonight about you-know-who. Understand?

NANCY: *(Knows what he means.)* I don't know what you mean.

RONALD: Yes, you do. Please. Leave it out. Follow?

NANCY: *(Troubled.)* Okay.

RONALD: *(Chipper again.)* Now, open that darn door before he breaks it down!

(With a huge smile, she opens the door. Aaron stands before them in the doorway. He is tall and awkward and wears a ruffled tux with an upside down rose pinned on the lapel. In his hand is what appears to have been a bunch of flowers before they were somehow stepped on by an elephant. His eyes are wide and frantic.)

NANCY: *(Unaffected by his appearance.)* Why hello, Aaron!
Please, you come right in.

(He enters.)

AARON: I'm sorry. I am really very sorry.

RONALD: Sorry? Sorry for what? You haven't even gotten my daughter home late yet! There's still plenty of time to be sorry!

NANCY: Why, no! No reason at all!

AARON: I'm usually never so late. Never in my life have I been this late!

NANCY: Late? You're not late. *(She looks at an imaginary watch and then at her husband.)* Ronald, didn't you say it was 6:45?

RONALD: Yes, I did. And it is now 6:48.

AARON: I was supposed to be here at 5:45! Sandy and I had 6:30 reservations!

NANCY: Oh, no!

AARON: Oh, yes! But I had this—and please don't think I'm making this up—flat tire!

RONALD: Ah, in theory it's your dad's fault, Billy. American cars never have flats, and that's a guaranteed fact.

AARON: Aaron. And I can't believe I didn't see this coming. I thought the tire looked a little flat when I left Pelican. I should have had my dad help me change it before I left.

(Pause.)

NANCY: Well, Sandy didn't say a word to us about 5:45, but she's upstairs still getting ready. She's not even ready yet herself.

RONALD: Why don't you sit down for a minute and catch your breath.

NANCY: Maybe you'd like a drink?

AARON: *(Panicked.)* Oh, I'd like to, but you see—

RONALD: But you heard Nancy. Sandy's not quite ready yet, so what's the rush?

AARON: *(To Nancy.)* Maybe you could check on her? It's just that, as it is, we'll have to skip our dinner reservations so we can make it to the dance on time.

NANCY: So you're a few minutes late to the dance. No one arrives on time.

RONALD: But your impatience is understandable. Nancy, run upstairs and check on Sandy. See if she's about ready. I'm going to get this boy something to drink.

NANCY: *(Cheerfully.)* All right! *(She exits.)*

RONALD: Now, what'll you have?

AARON: Well, all right. Maybe one...

(Ronald heads off toward the kitchen.)

RONALD: I suppose hard liquor is out of the question; we want you sober enough to dance now, don't we?

AARON: *(Half-laugh.)* Yeah, I guess.

RONALD: Then it'll just have to be a beer, I suppose. Have a seat there, buddy!

(Ronald exits into the kitchen. Aaron just stands there, shocked.)

AARON: *(To himself.)* Is he kidding? *(He walks over and carefully sits down on the sofa. Moments later, he creeps to the bottom of the staircase and whispers up.)* Sandy?

(No response. He moves back to the couch and fixes his rose. Ronald enters from the kitchen carrying a tray with two glasses of ice and a bottle of Mountain Dew.)

RONALD: Drinks all around!

(Ronald pours Aaron a drink.)

AARON: Thank you.

(Ronald pours his own drink.)

RONALD: There we are. Why don't we have a seat and get to know each other better. *(They sit.)* Have you known my daughter long?

AARON: Ever since the ninth grade. I mean, I knew of her, but I really didn't know her until this month.

(Ronald isn't listening. He takes a drink, slowly at first.)

RONALD: *(To his drink.)* Nice to see you again. *(To Aaron.)* So, you didn't know her until...when?

AARON: This month.

RONALD: After all those years? What made the two of you start talking?

AARON: We were partners on a biology assignment.

(Ronald takes a big long drink. The caffeine has begun to take an immediate effect. Ronald's eyes dart everywhere.)

RONALD: *(Raising his voice.)* And what are you studying in school?

AARON: Just general stuff. The stuff they make you take.

RONALD: *(Unloosens his tie.)* Yes, but you're a senior. What will you be focusing on then?

(Aaron watches Ronald finish off his Mountain Dew and pour another.)

AARON: I'm planning on being a marine biologist.

(Ronald finishes another long drink.)

RONALD: Ah...the study of the sea.

(Nancy enters.)

NANCY: Okay, she's coming along. I just had to help her with— *(Sees Ronald with a drink to his lips. She uncharacteristically screams.)* Ronald!

(Upon this extreme outburst, Ronald and Aaron jump up. Aaron grabs his heart. Ronald's glass almost falls to the floor.)

RONALD: What?!

NANCY: What do you think you're doing? You know exactly "what!"

AARON: Maybe I should...?

NANCY: *(To Ronald.)* I thought you'd give him a beer or something from the wet bar!

RONALD: Darling, we're out of beer...everything, as a matter of fact. This was all that we had!

NANCY: The doctor, Ronald. The doctor.

RONALD: *(To Aaron.)* You'll have to pardon Nancy, son. She's a little overly concerned with matters of my health.

AARON: Are you...are you sick or something?

NANCY: Yes! Very sick!

RONALD: *(Admonishing.)* Nancy! *(To Aaron.)* As a matter of fact, my doctor gave me an unclean bill of health the last visit, and unfortunately, I've had to make some changes in my lifestyle. Nancy is here to guarantee I follow this new way of living.

NANCY: And that includes pop, Ronald! *(To Aaron.)* Caffeine is the masked killer.

AARON: Yes. *(Confused.)* Sorry?

NANCY: The masked killer! Everybody is so concerned with alcohol these days! We have MADD and SADD and AAA...what everybody should be paying more attention to is caffeine! Nobody expects it to be a slow killer, but it is!

(Ronald approaches Nancy.)

RONALD: Nancy, darling, you are completely overreacting.

A couple small sips of pop is not going to kill anybody.

Anybody! The doctor said if I was careful—

NANCY: The doctor said that you weren't to have any—

RONALD: The doctor isn't here, and I've had a few drinks,
and I'm fine!

NANCY: A few? You've had a few? *(To Aaron.)* How many
has he had?

AARON: You know, I'm not really...

NANCY: *(Raises her voice.)* How many has he had?

AARON: Two...I think.

NANCY: You've had two, Ronald? Well, that's just
wonderful. Perfect.

(Ronald holds her gently, but she tries to resist.)

RONALD: Darling, please. It's one time. One! And I've only
had two, and I promise...no more! *(Before she can respond, he*

downs his drink.) See, baby, all gone.

NANCY: It just worries me, that's all.

RONALD: I know it does, and I'm sorry. But you have to
understand, this is a special occasion. It's not like it's
everyday that our Samantha goes to the prom.

AARON: *(Immediately.)* Sandy.

(Pause.)

RONALD: What? I'm sorry, what was that?

NANCY: *(Quickly.)* Darling, you referred to our Sandy as
Samantha...again.

RONALD: I did? Oh, yes, I did.

NANCY: *(To Aaron.)* Samantha is Sandy's birth name.

RONALD: *(To Aaron.)* It was on her birth certificate.

AARON: Oh. *(Pause.)* Why?

NANCY: Well, because Sandy is short for Samantha.

AARON: It is? I thought "Sammy" would be short for Samantha.

NANCY: You're right. Yes, you are correct! But John couldn't say "Sandy" when he was little. He could only say... "Samantha."

AARON: Who?

(Ronald's speech is quicker now, and his body visibly shakes.)

RONALD: Uh, we just started calling her "Sandy" from then on.

AARON: *(Confused.)* Oh. Okay. Maybe I should go up there. She won't want to be late anymore than I—

NANCY: You know what? I think I'll have a cold beverage myself. I think you're correct, Ronald...this is a special occasion. Pour me one, would you, dear?

RONALD: *(Carefully.)* Now, Nancy, the doctor...

NANCY: The doctor advised you that you shouldn't have caffeine. He never said anything to me.

RONALD: Yet caffeine isn't healthy for any of us. You're going to be a doctor, son, won't you be advising people of the dangers of caffeine?

AARON: A marine biologist. I'm going to be a marine biologist, not a doctor.

NANCY: *(Sincerely.)* How wonderful! *(She goes to the bottle.)* At any rate, I think I'll have a drink. *(Notices Aaron's glass.)* Are you—?

AARON: No, go ahead. I'm not thirsty anyway.

RONALD: Nancy...

(Nancy takes a drink from Aaron's glass.)

NANCY: Now you be quiet over there. Just because you have to give up a few pleasures in life—

RONALD: A few pleasures? I've had to give up more than a few pleasures, my darling.

(Nancy sips gently and then downs the drink.)

NANCY: Oh, Ronald, you're always trying to stifle me.

(Ronald walks over and pours another drink.)

RONALD: Stifle? If I was trying to stifle you, Nancy, sweetheart, I'd put a sock in your mouth. *(He makes a kissing sound toward her general direction.)*

NANCY: You know, you remind me of the artist in that one movie...what was the name of it? *(To Aaron.)* You know?

AARON: What...what movie? Who was in it?

NANCY: We saw it, Ronald, remember? The one man, he was an artist or something, and he loved this girl. One day, he cut off her feet and put them in a box. *(The drink is gone.)*

RONALD: No, no, no, no, no...

(Nancy experiences the same reaction to the caffeine as Ronald, but she stutters as well.)

NANCY: Yes, yes, yes, yes, *yes!* He kept her feet in a box, but the girl still loved him until one day she hobbled into the room and caught him doing the "This Little Piggy" game.

RONALD: He didn't do anything like that! He cut off her legs and arms and kept her locked in a box...

NANCY: Oh...that's right. Then she became an artist, and she drew those horrible pictures with her teeth.

RONALD: No, that wasn't—

NANCY: What was the name of the girl in the box? Who played her part? She had big masculine legs.

RONALD: Before he cut them off.

(Nancy takes another drink.)

NANCY: Even after! I remember because he used those legs to beat someone over the head right at the end.

RONALD: Bette Davis. 'Twas Bette Davis.

AARON: No, it was—

NANCY: (*Spittle flies as she laughs.*) Bette Davis? Davis?

RONALD: (*Off somewhere.*) She didn't need arms or legs to be elegant.

NANCY: (*The caffeine has taken her over as well.*) Bette Davis had big eyes, not legs!

RONALD: (*To Aaron.*) Tell me something...since you're going to be an orthopedic surgeon, can someone live very long after their limbs have been removed?

AARON: I'm studying marine biology.

NANCY: (*To Ronald.*) Don't you ever listen?

RONALD: (*Surprised.*) Marine biology, huh? (*Thinks.*) Sharks, whales, and fish. (*Thinks again.*) Won't have to worry about arms and legs, that's for sure.

NANCY: (*Pretty much "gone" now.*) You're talking nonsense. It's nonsense *all over again!*

RONALD: Nonsense? I'm speaking nonsense, my little wildebeest?

NANCY: Yes, kumquat, you. You are talking nonsense. (*He begins to chuckle. Soon, the chuckling turns into hard laughter. During this, she reaches over and pours another drink.*) What is so amusing, lover?

RONALD: I'm talking nonsense. Oh, Nancy, my darling, you know what they say, "One who lives in a glass house..."

NANCY: "...shouldn't walk around naked"...that's what they say! (*She bursts into laughter. Aaron is so uncomfortable he cannot speak. Nancy gently punches his shoulder so that he might join in her laughter. He smiles weakly. To Ronald.*) Oh, hey, baby, remember this? "Three little monkeys jumping on the bed, one fell off and broke his head! Momma called the doctor and the doctor said, 'No more monkeys jumping on the bed.'"

(*Ronald has another drink.*)

RONALD: Oh, please.

(Nancy joins him in a drink.)

NANCY: Oh come on! You thought it was hilarious when I recited it at Ben's circumcision last week!

RONALD: That was then...

(Nancy goes to him and grabs his cheek.)

NANCY: *(Baby talk.)* Well, someone is certainly in a mood tonight...whassa matta, baby? Does little Ronnie need another... *(She rips off his shirt in one swift move. There are little silver patches all over his chest and arms.)* ...Nicorette patch?

AARON: *(Horried.)* What are those?

NANCY: The doctor made him quit smoking, too. He's alotta fun, isn't he?

[End of Freeview]