

NO ON 9: QUEER FAMILY VALUES

A Play In Two Acts

by

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

SERENA: Early to mid-20s waitress; feminine in her looks, dress, body language. Partners with Annie, daughter of Taylor.

ANNIE: Early to mid-20s, boyish build and style; office worker.

TAYLOR: Mother of Serena; partners with Nadine ('Dine). Mid to late 40s, corporate executive.

'DINE: Name pronounced Dean, short for Nadine. Middle aged butch; an angry clown; office worker.

DARLA: Any age; a loving, liberal-minded therapist with a social conscience and a working-class upbringing.

TIME

Act One: Early fall, 1992.

Act One: Later that year.

PLACE

Portland, Oregon; USA

NO ON 9

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

AT RISE: We see an apartment filled with cardboard moving cartons, some open with packing paper spilling out, some empty and flattened, some on their sides. Crumpled paper abounds. A few pieces of low rent living-room furniture are placed about the room, including a boom box, television set, one chair, and a couch piled with clothes. Also present: a molded plastic extra-large pet kennel. SERENA is emptying a carton, moving in and out of the room.

SOUND: Radio is playing current/modern music; a cat is meowing from the kennel.

SERENA

Gilda, sweetie, it's gonna be okay, honest. Here we are in a brand new place, well -- to us anyway, and we have a fresh start. You get to get out of that crate in a little while and we'll have all our familiar stuff, your food, your bowl, everything! And I know you aren't gonna pee on everything, are you sweetie? I know. He was a mean old landlord who didn't understand you. But see? We've moved and we all get to start over.

SOUND: CAT meows

Gilda Radner, please, please stop meowing. I want to let you out, but I can't until I get your catbox ready and some of this stuff put away! Shhhh, shhhh.

Enter ANNIE (from outdoors). SHE crosses the room, abruptly shuts off the music.

SERENA

Hi, honey! You're home. And you're all wet!

ANNIE

It's nothing. (Removes jacket) I just had to walk home. Got another one of those? (Exits briefly to kitchen and opens a pop) Hey, I saw your mom today.

SERENA

So what? You see her everyday.

ANNIE

She said you should call her.

SERENA

Mothers. Did you tell her the phone's not hooked up? Why didn't she give you bus money?

ANNIE

Oh, I didn't ask her. She was ranting about Measure 9, and I thought you might have tip money when I got home.

SERENA

I would have except that Marcus stole it again.

ANNIE

What an asshole.

SERENA

Yes. If it weren't for things like that, I'd really like my job. I like having tips. It's like "free money."

ANNIE

I never really like waiting on customers. I'm really lucky your mom got me the job I have now.

SERENA

She may have got you in the door, but you're the one who does the work and earns the promotions!

ANNIE

I still feel lucky.

SERENA

Gilda Radner doesn't feel so lucky. She hates being in the kennel.

ANNIE

I don't see why they made us move. We cleaned it up.

SERENA

I want to unpack. So why don't you sit down and hold her while I look for the litter?

ANNIE

Like there's a place to sit. I think I'd better help you.

SERENA

Okay. Maybe you can help me figure out where to put all this stuff.

ANNIE

Well, I did the packing.

SERENA

(Laughing) No kidding. Look at this: towels mixed in with the plates.

ANNIE

Keeps them from breaking.

SERENA

And your underpants.

ANNIE

How did that happen? (THEY laugh) I'm sorry Serena, I guess I didn't pack so good.

SERENA

It's okay; maybe a little frustrating.

ANNIE

What's the matter honey? Moving got you down? It'll be okay, we'll get settled in here in no time, and then we can do something fun.

SERENA

I never want to move again!

ANNIE

Except to our farm?

SERENA

Yeah, someday we'll get us our farm, and have a bunch of kids, and animals, and we'll be the happiest family in the Willamette [pronounced Will AM ette] Valley.

ANNIE

Willamette Valley? I thought we were going to live at the coast.

SERENA

Whatever. It's a long time off no matter how you look at it. What's that new button??

ANNIE

The OCA. Stands for the Oregon Citizens Alliance. The ballot measure people.

SERENA

Nobody takes that seriously.

ANNIE

Your mom does. She was wearing one of these buttons at work. Only hers was bright orange.

SERENA

I don't know why she has to do stuff like that. Everybody already knows she's gay.

ANNIE

Not everybody.

SERENA

What else could they think? She brings Nadine to the company picnics, has her picture on her desk, and they've lived together for about a hundred years.

ANNIE

Still.

SERENA

What? Are you worried everybody knows we're gay?

ANNIE

Nobody knows I'm gay.

SERENA

I'm hardly your first lover and we've been together almost three years. Portland's not that big a city.

ANNIE

People at work don't know.

SERENA

You hang around with my mom, you live with her queer daughter, and they can't figure it out?

ANNIE

They still ask me when I'm gonna get a boyfriend.

SERENA

Oh, sweetie. You think because you haven't told your parents...

ANNIE

What do you mean?

SERENA

That walk, those clothes, that scrumptious haircut.

ANNIE

I've always looked like this!

SERENA

Like I said.

ANNIE

I'm a jock!

SERENA

You haven't played a sport since I've known you. But you're my jock, and that's all that matters, right sweetie?

ANNIE

I don't know. Maybe I'd better get involved in basketball or soccer or something. There are some women's teams I could join.

SERENA

Whatever you want, my sweet.

ANNIE

I'm taking Gilda out of her crate. I think she wants to use the box. (Picks up kennel, exits through kitchen.)

SERENA

Yup. One of us had better leave before we get too close to our issues.

ANNIE

(From offstage) Where'd we put the cat box?

SERENA

In the back room. The litter is wherever you packed it. (SHE returns to the task of unpacking.)

LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE TWO

The only cartons left in the room now are empty. Packing paper still is scattered. Couch is completely covered with clothes. Framed pictures are stacked in one corner. A rug is on the floor. A telephone is in the seat of the lone chair.

SOUND: Radio is playing.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

This is KPOR 93.9 FM. Temperature is 63 degrees and cloudy. It's 8:01PM and time for the news. Fred Meyer, Incorporated won its injunction today to allow the store to ban the Oregon Citizens Alliance from gathering signatures on its premises. Lon Mabon of the OCA vows to continue to fight, as he says Fred Meyer is unconstitutionally denying his group the right to free speech. Fred Meyer spokeswoman Lisa Robbins said today that all groups will be banned from collecting signatures on Fred Meyer property, regardless of the cause.

And now, a word from our sponsor....

ANNIE and SERENA enter from outdoors. ANNIE crosses the room and shuts off the radio.

SERENA

Sweetie, I'm pooped. If it's okay with you, I'm going to bed.

ANNIE

I don't think I can sleep.

SERENA

Oh Annie, we're doing everything we can. We've looked for Gilda everywhere in the house, now we've covered the whole neighborhood. She's probably just scared and hiding somewhere.

ANNIE

It's been 10 days!

SOUND: phone rings

You answer it.

SERENA

I'm on my way to bed.

ANNIE

I don't feel up to talking to anybody. Anyway, it's never for me.

SERENA

It's always for you! I'll prove it. (Answers phone) Hello, this is Annie's residence...

ANNIE

Serena!

SERENA

Oh. Hi, Mom. (Mouths "Sorry Annie")

Exit ANNIE

Nothing Oh, well, we just got in. We were out looking for Gilda Not yet, and it's been 10 days Yeah, we called them. . . uh huhNobody's seen her around here . . or the old apartment either. . . . No, we can't afford the Oregonian Mom, that's too expensive . . . it's free when you find one, otherwise those ads are outrageous yeah, we got pictures of her that's a good idea, I'll tell Annie No, I'm okay, just tired I guess Look, Mom, I've got to go. I got stuff to do yet and I got to be at the restaurant at five in the morning . . . okayI love you too . . . Bye. (Hangs up. Starts undressing, dropping clothes as she heads to bedroom.)
Annie? Annie? Mom said we ought to put up flyers. (From offstage) Annie, sweetheart? Are you crying? Come on sweetie, don't cry it's going to be okay.

LIGHTS OUT.