

# WILSON

a one act play for two actors

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## WILSON

COOPER: Fiftyish and proper, HE is dressed in a white shirt, coat and bow tie. COOPER is very much intimidated by BOADES, but desires her sexually. HE is haunted by his nemesis, "Wilson."

BOADES: Fiftyish, SHE is wrapped in a large, heavy, drab, brown sweater. SHE is wearing a long, full dress as drab and plain as the sweater. SHE is in total control.

At Rise: BOADES is standing before the red painting. She looks at the painting with disgust and contempt. COOPER enters and sees BOADES, but moves away from her. HE stands at another painting, real or imagined, and is tempted to touch it and then does so.

HE sneezes on the canvas. The two are both haunted and sexually aroused as they discuss a fellow teacher, Wilson. COOPER is very nervous and intimidated by BOADES. BOADES is in total control. COOPER holds a napkin of assorted nuts.

COOPER

(Approaching BOADES)

Miss Boades, I thought that was you.

(Slight pause)

Quite a gathering.

BOADES

Mr. Cooper.

COOPER

I think I heard you mention at school earlier this week, you planned to attend tonight.

(Slight pause)

Are you enjoying the exhibit?

BOADES

No, Mr. Cooper, I am not. This is not art. Look at this. Do you not think any fool can cover a canvas with red paint? He calls it

a dancing woman. It's pointless. There's no feeling. There's no sense of beauty. There's no craft. You could do as much, Mr. Cooper, and you are certainly no artist. The half-wit students we teach could do as much. I don't even know why I've come. Then, I expected as much.

COOPER

I'm glad at least we've run into one another.

BOADES

I was about to leave.

COOPER

Yes. Well. It was good seeing you out, Miss Boades.

BOADES

I don't mind visiting with you a moment, Mr. Cooper.

COOPER

I'm pleased for your company.

(Long pause)

A nut, Miss Boades?

BOADES

No thank you, Mr. Cooper, I've had my dinner already this evening. And if I hadn't, I don't like nuts. I would have thought you are aware of that, Mr. Cooper. I'm not able to eat nuts.

COOPER

Sorry. I wasn't thinking, Miss Boades.

(COOPER crumples the napkin with nuts and places it in his coat pocket)

BOADES

Sorry for what? That I don't like nuts? Why would you care if I can't eat nuts?

COOPER

Well ...

BOADES

(Accusingly)

I didn't see you at lunch today.

COOPER

Oh. No. I had a meeting with the school's principal, Mr. Penley.

BOADES

I certainly know who is the principal of our school, Mr. Cooper, after teaching there nearly 30 years. Would you not think so, Mr. Cooper?

COOPER

Sorry.

(Pause)

BOADES

Can I assume you've turned the names in?

COOPER

Yes. Only ...

(HE can barely say the name "Wilson",  
forcing himself to pronounce the name of his  
profound nemesis)

Wilson ... was there.

BOADES

Wilson.

COOPER

Teaching has changed.

BOADES

Well, yes. I suppose it has. Doesn't everything eventually?  
Unfortunately, not always for the good.

COOPER

Lately, I've thought about leaving. Only, I don't really know  
anything other than math.

BOADES

It's all either of us has done. Twenty-nine years I've taught  
freshman English. I suppose it might have meant something at one  
time.

COOPER

Not now.

BOADES

No. Not now. Like this garbage someone calls art. It's ugly,  
ugly art ... a vulgar display ... offensive to people

BOADES (cont'd)

like the two of us, Mr. Cooper. The morality of society has  
fallen. Of course, I am no longer shocked at the  
blatant display of crap I'm forced to see. You don't approve of  
this, do you Mr. Cooper?

COOPER

Certainly not.

BOADES

I thank the Almighty God in my classroom I can still stand for the values that one time made America God's pleasure ... some people appreciate that, Mr. Cooper. A man like Wilson can't. He's no different FROM these paintings ... crap!

COOPER

I would never have considered leaving before ... Wilson ... came to teach. He's ruined it for me.

BOADES

You needn't worry about Wilson, he won't bother us here.

COOPER

No, I suppose not.

BOADES

Only his friend, that Loman girl teaches art.

COOPER

There were words between ... Wilson ... and me this afternoon.

BOADES

I'm not surprised.

COOPER

He said I had become a trifling nuisance, a quibbling old woman. Everyone heard.

BOADES

Why do you listen to him? He only says these things to upset you.

COOPER

I had the appointment to see the principal, and ... Wilson ... was there.

BOADES

Leave the man alone. I've told you that.

COOPER

I could hardly avoid him. He sat next to me in the principal's office and there are only two chairs besides the principal's. And I certainly wasn't going to sit in Mr. Penley's lap, now was I?

BOADES

Well, excuse me, Mr. Cooper.

COOPER

I did not once look at him. I sat as if he were not in the room.

BOADES

I hope you still gave the principal the list.

COOPER

Oh yes. The names, dates and times of every student we've observed. Drugs, cheating, theft -- I had all the names.

BOADES

We've done our duty.

COOPER

Wilson threatened to destroy the list. Wilson wanted to know what proof we had.

BOADES

All anyone has to do is open his eyes and see the type of students they are ... the type of home life ... and so called parents jumping from one bedroom to another. There's no respect. None. That's all the proof anyone needs. Someone has to bring order back. It's not going to be Wilson.

COOPER

I told Mr. Penley that.

BOADES

Let him destroy the list, we've got copies.

COOPER

I threatened turning the names over to the school board. That quite took care of the matter. I have friends there, you know.