

THE PLAYWRIGHT

By

Lee Dorsey

Copyright © November 2023 Lee Dorsey and Off The Wall Play Publishers

<https://offthewallplays.com>

This script is provided for reading purposes only. Professionals and amateurs are hereby advised that it is subject to royalty. It is fully protected under the laws of the United States of America, the British Empire, including the Dominion of Canada, and all other countries of the Copyright Union.

All rights, including but not limited to professional, amateur, film, radio, and all other media (including use on the worldwide web) and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved; and any unauthorized use of the material may subject the user to any and all applicable civil and criminal penalties. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher or author, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law. Although every precaution has been taken to verify the accuracy of the information contained herein, the author and publisher assume no responsibility for any errors or omissions. No liability is assumed for damages that may result from the use of information contained within. For any information about royalties or to apply for a performance license please click the following link:

<https://offthewallplays.com/royalties-and-licensing-of-plays-sold-by-off-the-wall-plays/>

CHARACTER OUTLINE

Nina Vance..... Is a woman in her early fifties. She is attractive and cultured. This is a woman with a strong and dominant personality who owns and operates one of the oldest and most successful regional theatres in the county. She was once a very successful classical actress and is known throughout the world for her past theatrical successes.

Myra Vance..... A young, attractive woman in her early twenties. She is the daughter of Nina Vance and displays many of Nina's styles and characteristics. She is determined to follow in her mother's footsteps. Eventually, she will take her mother's place as the head of this nationally known theatre.

Milo..... Is the lackey of Nina Vance and does all the mundane tasks that she commands daily? As the play progresses, we learn how he was drafted into this unfortunate position. Milo is a man in his late forties.

Vincent..... A young, handsome man in his mid-twenties. He is a playwright that has had some success in getting several of his one-act plays produced at community theatres around the country. He has penned his first full-length play and has submitted it to Ms. Vance for consideration of a production.

Time: The present at about 2:00 P.M.

Place: The entire action of the play takes place in the lobby of a Reginal Theatre somewhere in America. The lobby is decorated with theatrical posters advertising the plays scheduled for the coming season. One large poster, up-stage center announcing in large lettering 'November production to be announced.' Large photographs from the previous seasons line the walls. In the far upstage area is located the box office. A sign in the glass announces the show times. Adjacent to the box office on a downstage wall is the entrance to the living quarters of the Vance's. The lobby is lined with padded seating and in the corners of the lobby are a wide variety of exotic plants. At the extreme upstage wall are doors leading to the auditorium. On either side of the lobby are open stairs leading to the balcony. As the curtain rises Vincent Benda is seated on the padded seating down-stage. A suitcase is stashed immediately under his bench. Vincent is dressed in a dark fashionable suit, complemented with fashionable accessories. After a while, he rises and begins to pace up and down. He stops at one of the posters and begins to study it. He glances at his watch as one of the doors of the auditorium opens and Milo Pryor enters. He is dressed in a chauffeur's uniform. He crossed down to Vincent as he speaks.

Milo

You must be Vincent Benda.

Vincent

(He stands) Yes. I received a letter from Ms. Vance a few days ago to come here today to meet with her. Is she available?

Milo

Ms. Vance is expecting you. She informed me to have you wait here until she finishes speaking on the phone.

Vincent

(After a few seconds and looking at his watch) Did she say how long she will be?

Milo

(Referring to one of the benches lining the wall of the lobby) Why don't you have a seat and relax Ms. Vance will be with you momentarily.

Vincent

Thank you. (*He sits. There is a short pause. Attempting to make conversation*) Does the limousine, parked out front, belong to you?

Milo

I drive it. It belongs to Miss Vance.

Vincent

Oh.

Milo

Why do you ask?

Vincent

As I was arriving here, a policeman was putting a ticket on it.

Milo

(*Not showing any concern*) That's nice.

Vincent

(*Observing his unconcern*) Aren't you concerned, that a policeman has just put a ticket on your, or rather, Miss Vance's car?

Milo

(*Slight pause*) No.

Vincent

(*Looking around the lobby*) It must be nice.

Milo

What?

Vincent

To be rich. Not having to worry about paying fines.

Milo

Fines? Oh, the ticket on the car? Miss Vance won't have to pay a fine.

Vincent

Really? Why not?

Milo

Because the Chief of Police is a member of the Board of Directors, here.

Vincent

I see. *(Pause)* What's she like?

Milo

Miss Vance?

Vincent

Yes.

Milo

Then you've not met her?

Vincent

No.

Milo

(Pause) Miss Vance is not easy to explain.

Vince

(Taking a short pause) Is any woman?

Milo

Yes. I think I know what you mean. But Miss Vance is not exactly any woman.

Vincent

Obviously not. She's spent more time than most, out of the kitchen.

Milo

One might say that, yes.

Vincent

How long have you known her?

Milo

A long time. (Looking around the lobby) I knew her before all of this. We used to work together.

Vincent

What kind of work did Ms. Vance do before all of this?

Milo

We were teachers. She taught eleventh grade English and taught ninth. After school, we were both moderators for the school's Thespian Society. Our school won the "ONE ACT, CITYWIDE PLAY COMPETITION" every year she directed. She always had a tremendous knack for knowing exactly what the judges were looking for. (*Pause*) This began as a community theatre, you know?

Vincent

I didn't know.

Milo

Oh, yes. Ms. Vance and I started the first community theatre in the city. We leased an old garage over on Bolton Street. We bought the first equipment out of our own pockets. We produced almost all original plays in those days. We couldn't afford the royalties that the play services were charging. (*Slight pause*) Have you ever heard of Tallahassee Willard?

Vincent

Who hasn't? He's had a new play on Broadway, every year, for the past ten years.

Milo

Ms. Vance produced his first play.

Vincent

Is that right?

Milo

Yes. We will be premiering his latest new play scheduled to open our next season. He will be our playwright in residence throughout the rehearsals. Ms. Vance will be directing.

Vincent

(After a short pause and looking at his watch) What is taking her so long?

Milo

(He crosses to the other side and sits) You're lucky that Ms. Vance had time for you today. She will be conducting the final dress rehearsal of a British Play that she imported last year. The play is scheduled to open tomorrow to a sold-out audience.

Nina

(The door that leads to the residence opens and Nina enters. She is carrying a folder thick with paper. She is in a testy mood. Vincent and Milo stand upon her entrance.) Milo! I just got off the phone with the Chief of Police. He informed me that it is difficult these days to fix all the parking violations that you have been receiving while driving the limousine. The newly elected Mayor has informed him that as of today, there will be no more ignoring the tickets. Where do you have the limousine park now?

Milo

It's in front of the theatre, Ms. Vance. I left it there after I brought you back from having your nails done this morning. I wasn't sure if you intended to go out again today, so I didn't move it into the garage.

Nina

Move it to the garage now! Don't make me have to tell you not to park it illegally in the future!

Milo

Yes, ma'am. *(He hurries out the door that leads to the residence)*

Nina

(She follows Milo leaving with her body language. Slowly turning back to Vincent, she speaks) And you must be Mr. Benda? I've read so many nice things about you. *(Looking him up and down)* The things that I read don't adequately describe you. You're a very handsome young man. *(She extends her hand)*

Vincent

(He takes step toward her and extends his hand as well) I've heard many nice things about you and your theatre. *(He takes an awkward pause as Nina looks him up and down)* I would be interested in hearing what you thought of my play.

Nina

(Ignoring her thoughts about the play) I've been following your progress since you graduated from college. I keep an eye on all the theater graduates from the Catholic University. I took the liberty of researching your complete background. You were an only child and were doted upon in your early

years by both your parents. Your father was an engineer employed by NASA, and your mother was a brain surgeon. In your sophomore year of high school, your parents were killed in an auto accident, and you were left with a considerable sum of money. Your mother's sister, cared for you until you graduated from high school. You were listed in the top ten percentile of your High School class and were accepted into your freshmen year at The Catholic University. It was there that you discovered the theatre and decided to pursue a career upon graduating. That was three years ago. Since then, you have been traveling the country peddling the one-act plays that you had penned while in college to community theatres. Recently, you finished a three-act play and sent it to me for consideration. (*She takes a brief pause*) Am I correct so far?

Vincent

I am impressed that you know so much about me. Now, about the play.

Nina

In all good time. We will get to the play after we get to know each other more thoroughly. Right now, I want you to have a tour of our theatre. As soon as Milo returns, he will act as your guide. I also want you to pick his brain about all the things that he does around this theatre and for me.

Vincent

(*After a short pause*) May I ask about your opinion of the play?

Nina

I just read the first ten pages of the script. I want you to relax and take in the atmosphere of this wonderful facility. I think once you see the entire layout, you'll want to work here.

Vincent

You mean like a 'Playwright in Residence?'

Nina

Something like that, yes. But I don't want to rush things. When you return from your tour of the theatre with Milo, I'll explain everything to you in detail.

Milo

(*Enters from the residence*) I put the limousine in the garage as directed, Ms. Vance.

Nina

Milo, I would like you to show Mr. Benda around the theatre. As you make the rounds, show him exactly what you do around here daily. When you finish there also show him the residence and explain your daily duties there as well.

Milo

Yes, Ms. Vance. (*Turning to Vincent*) Come with me, Mr. Benda. (*They exit through one of the upstage doors*)

Nina

(*She follows their exit with her eyes. Once they exit, she takes out a cell phone from her pocket and dials an automatic number*) Darling, it's your mother. I'm down in the lobby. I just met briefly with the new candidate. He is now touring the theatre with Milo. I would like you to come down to the lobby in a few minutes. Milo will be showing him around the living quarters, and I would like to formally introduce you to him down here. (*Slight pause*) Good. I'll be waiting here. Goodbye. (*She hangs up and dials another automatic number. After a moment she speaks.*) Tallahassee, this is Nina. (*pause*) Yes, I received the play yesterday. (*Pause*) The play is wonderful, darling. I stayed up half the night reading it. I can't wait to see it on the boards. (*Pause*) Yes, I'm looking forward to your being here for the next season. (*Pause*) I just wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed reading your new play. (*Pause*) Yes, I found a nice promising young man for Myra. I just hope that he can perform as well as he looks. (*Pause*) I can hardly wait to see you again as well. Yes, goodbye. (*She hangs up the phone and crosses to the bench and sits down. She opens the folder she has been carrying and begins to study Vincent's resume. Seconds later, Myra enters.*)

Myra

Good morning, mother. How did the interview with the new prospect go?

Nina

My first impression is that he will fit the bill. But my experience with first impressions is that they sometimes can disappoint in the end. I'll never forget the first time I met Milo. I was sure he would be the one. What a disappointment.

Myra

I think that Milo does an admirable job. He drives both of us just about anywhere we want to go. He cleans the theatre and the living quarters, and most of all he knows his place. He's very polite.

Nina

That isn't what I'm referring to. When I first started this theatre, Milo was very helpful. You know that I met Milo when I was teaching high school. It was different then. We were both young and we both had dreams. I wanted to work toward owning and building a professional theatre. Milo considered himself a playwright. As the years went by my dream came to fruition, but Milo just couldn't put the words together that people would pay to sit in a theatre for two hours. He just didn't have it. His other failure was not fathering you. I was never physically attracted to him, but he was there, and I needed someone to father me a girl. A girl that would someday carry on in my place. He failed in that respect.

Myra

How did he fail? I'm here!

Nina

I know that you always suspected that maybe Milo was your father since he has always been in your life. Well, he isn't, he couldn't. I sent him to a doctor friend of mine for testing. When the results came back, they showed that he was sterile. My god, the nights I tolerated his groping me and his wet kisses all over my face. It was disgusting. I was forced to take another means to an end.

Myra

Another? You mean there someone else that's my father.

Nina

It took a lot of persuasions. We had just moved into this facility, and it was our first season. I had met Tallahassee when we were still doing community theatre. He was a young, struggling playwright. I had produced a few of his one-acts and two of his three-act plays. I always knew that he was light-in-the-loafers, and I wasn't attracted to him physically. But he was a man, and he had what I needed. So, I propositioned him. The new professional theatre was scheduled to open, and he wanted me to produce his latest play. I told him that if it was successful in getting me pregnant, and the baby was a girl, I would open the next season with his new play.

Myra

I didn't think that homosexuals could make love to a woman.

Nina

Some can and some can't. Tallahassee is one that just couldn't get it going. We tried everything, every position, but nothing worked. We hit a dead end. A few days after one of our meaningless nights, I read a magazine article about in-vitro fertilization. He agreed to go see a doctor friend of mine. The doctor had Tallahassee ejaculate into a test tube. A few days later, I arrived at the same doctor, and he planted the ejaculation into me. Nine months later, you were born.

Myra

All this time, I suspected that Milo was my father, when in fact it was Tallahassee. I don't know what to say, I'm lost for words. (*Looking very pleased*) I feel very proud that Tallahassee and you are my biological parents.

Nina

It gives me a sense of relief that with your family genes, someday you'll carry on the Vance theatrical tradition and keep this theatre in the public eye.

Myra

I won't let you down, mother. (*She takes a short pause*) I'm relieved, though, that Milo isn't my biological father. I knew, from the first time I remember ever seeing him, that he was a sad loser.

Nina

Yes. I guess, deep down, I always knew it as well. When I was resigning from the high school where we both taught, the principal confided in me that she was glad that Milo was resigning as well. Otherwise, she was going to have to take the unpleasant action of dismissing him. She went on to say that she had received many parent complaints concerning his teaching.

Myra

Why have you kept him around here for so many years? He doesn't even do a good job cleaning the theatre and the residence. If it wasn't for the cleaning contractor that comes in every two weeks, our facilities would be in deplorable conditions.

Nina

Let's turn the page, honey. I must tell you that I am very impressed with our new candidate. He's handsome, he's smart and he comes from solid parents that have excellent genes. He graduated from one of the top theatre universities in the country. All in all, I believe that he will make you a good match.

Myra

When I attend college, several young men tempted me to get involved, but I practiced self-control. I knew that it was important for you to make the selection that would give me an off-spring. Is there anything that I can specifically do that will ensure that it's a girl?

Nina

Unfortunately, there isn't. Nature dictates which partner decides the sex. Since that part of the process will be left up to our new young man. His future here will depend on if he successfully delivers.

Myra

May I ask you another question mother?

Nina

Of course, darling. Always feel free to ask me anything.

Myra

Does having sex the first time hurt?

Nina

Just don't let him rush the act. Insist that he moves slow and easy the first time. It may take several attempts to put you in a family way. Based on the information I gathered about him, he was

involved with several young co-eds while attending college. I'm quite sure that he is experienced in the area of fornication.

Myra

At least one of us will know what we're doing. I'll ensure that he doesn't get rough.

Nina

I have confidence that you'll handle the situation without any difficulty.

Myra

(She takes a short pause) What does he look like mother?

Nina

He's an average-looking young man, of average height, and well built. We have never discussed your taste in men, but I think you'll like what you finally see.

Myra

Suppose he refuses to go along with your proposition?

Nina

I have the play. If he wants to get it produced at this theatre, he will do as he is directed.

Myra

When I finally meet him, and I don't like what I see, can we show him the door?

Nina

Of course, my dear, it will be your call. Although don't make a rash decision. Give it a little while to see if chemistry develops between the two of you.

Myra

I'll do as you say, mother.

(The door of the auditorium opens, and Milo and Vincent enter)

Milo

(Addressing Nina) I took him on a tour of the theatre and further discussed with him all of my duties around the theatre. I'm about to show him the residence and explain my duties there as well.

(As Milo is addressing Nina, Myra gives Vincent the once over)

Nina

That's very good, Milo. Nina will give Vincent a tour of the residence, so you can get back to your daily duties. I call you if I need anything further.

Milo

Yes, Ms. Vance. Just call me if you need anything. *(He exits back into the auditorium)*

Nina

(Turning to Vincent) Mr. Brenda, this is my daughter, Myra.

Vincent

(He moves to Myra and extends his hand) It's very nice to make your acquaintance, Ms. Vance.

Myra

(She takes his hand, and they shake) Mother tells me that you're a playwright?

Vincent

I just recently my first full-length play. I've had some brief discussions with your mother about the possibility of having it produced.

Nina

The two of you can spend some time getting acquainted later. But first, I want to discuss a few things that may affect his writing career. *(Turning toward Myra)* So dear, if you'll wait in the residence, I will come and get you in a few minutes. *(Myra exits)*
So, Mr. Brenda, what do you think of the theatre?

Vincent

It's beautiful. The very state of the art.

Nina

You know, Vincent. Do you mind if I call you Vincent?

Vincent

Not at all, Ms. Vance. I would prefer that you call me by my first name.

Nina

Good. As I previously mentioned a while ago, I would like you to become a temporary resident of our little family. During your walk around with Milo, did he point out to you all of the responsibilities he performs on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis?

Vincent

Yes, and I must admit that I didn't understand why he was detailing to me his blue-collar work. The job description of a 'Playwright in Residence' does not entail those kinds of duties.

Nina

In our initial conversation, I don't recall my telling you that you would be a 'Playwright in Residence.'

Vincent

It was mentioned in our conversation.

Nina

Yes. The words 'Playwright in Residence' was mentioned by you, but not by me. One must earn that position in a theatre as renowned as this one.

Vincent

I just assumed....

Nina

If you decide to remain here, you must never assume anything. Everything, while employed at this theatre, is earned.

Vincent

(He takes a short pause) When may I expect to you finish reading the play that I sent to you?

Nina

I'll get around to it in time, but in the interim, I have a very important task that I want you to perform.

Vincent

Will this task take very long? I have an idea for a new play and I'm anxious to get started.

Nina

You'll have time for that later. First, I want you to spend all your energy on the important task that I am about to inform you about.

Vincent

I won't disappoint you, Ms. Vance. My motto has always been "I aim to please."

Nina

I'm impressed with your enthusiasm, Vincent. Now, let's see if you are as confident that you will be as successful when I inform you of the details of the mentioned task.

Vincent

(He smiles confidently) Lay it on me, Ms. Vance.

Nina

I want you to have sex and impregnate my daughter, Myra.

Vincent

(He takes a long pause) I think, maybe, I misunderstood what you just said. *(Nina just stares at him)* You want me to have sex and impregnate your daughter?

Nina

Congratulations, Vincent, you repeated back to me the exact words I spoke to you. Of course, there is one caveat I didn't mention. The child must be a girl. If it's a boy, you'll be required to do the whole thing over again. I need a granddaughter to carry on the family tradition of running this magnificent theatre.

Vincent

But what about my play?

Nina

The deal is, Vincent, if you do a good job and produce a girl, I will reward you by producing your play. In the interim, the play will remain in the stack of plays I receive every year.

Vincent

I must confess to you, Ms. Vance, you're one-hundred and eighty degrees from all the other mothers of young women that I dated in the past. The last thing they ever wanted was for me to bed their daughter.

Nina

Vincent, this is strictly a business decision. There will always have to have a woman to carry on this renowned theatre. When I took the chance of resigning from my job with the school system and sacrificed a comfortable retirement to begin this theatre, most people that I knew at the time believed that I had lost my mind. When I moved in here this facility was nothing more than a shell. I worked here day and night to make it what it is today. Look around the country at all the successful professional regional theatres. See who is running them. It's women. Women have a market in the professional theatre market in America. You're going to play an important role in assuring that another woman will guarantee that this theatre will continue to be successful.

Vincent

(He takes a slight pause) Come to think of it, the majority of the professional regional theatres in this country are owned and operated by women.

Nina

You are observant, Vincent. That's a good quality that I hope that you can pass along in your genes. *(She takes a short pause)* Do you find my daughter, Myra, attractive?

Vincent

I didn't have much of a chance to observe her, but my first brief impression was that she's a nine and a half.

Nina

A nine and a half? What does that mean?

Vincent

It's something I learned in high school. Boys judge girls on a scale of one to ten. Ten is at the top of the scale.

Nina

So, you don't foresee any problems in doing your duty with my daughter.

Vincent

Not if she's amenable. I'm not the kind of man who would force myself on her.

Nina

She indicated to me that she was willing to do what she had to do to ensure a girl issue. I am going to leave the two of you alone for a while to get to familiarize yourselves. *(She takes her cell phone from her pocket and speed dials)* Myra, come down here, please. Vincent is ready to spend some quiet time with you. *(She hangs up)* Remember, if you want me to produce your play you will have to produce as we previously discussed.

Vincent

I understand, Ms. Vance.

(Myra enters from the living quarters)