

PUNK SCIENCE

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A Play in One Act

by

D.M. Vine

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## Cast of Characters

Nina: A 35 year old woman with a complicated background.

Cheyenne: A female scientist working for a chemical research company.

## Scene

A small old apartment building in a mid-sized city.

## Time

Early afternoon.

ACT 1Scene 1

SETTING: We are in the hallway of an apartment building. The floor is black and white checkered linoleum, gritty and peeling. There is a fairy poster hanging in between two red doors. The air carries a faded hint of classical music muffled behind one of the doors.

AT RISE: NINA jiggles the handle of the door on the right. She starts walking away from the door to the audience, then walks back to the door to keep knocking, then pacing, then knocking again. NINA is pacing back and forth in in the hallway and cursing underneath her breath.

NINA

Fuck! Fuck! Fuck my life right now! I have an appointment and I can't get inside my own apartment!

(The door on the left opens and CHEYENNE steps out into the hallway. CHEYENNE taps NINA on the shoulder.)

CHEYENNE

Excuse me, do you need some help?

NINA

I locked my keys in my apartment.

CHEYENNE

Did you call the landlord?

(NINA pulls her cell from her coat pocket to check the screen.)

NINA

Yes. I also sent him a text but he's not answering... Ugh! What am I going to do?

CHEYENNE

Well, I have a lock pick set in my apartment. Hold on, let me go get it.

(CHEYENNE goes back into her apartment and comes out a few seconds later, holding the lock pick set along with an iPod dock which is playing Mozart. CHEYENNE sets the iPod dock down and kneels in front of the door on the right, getting to work on picking the lock.)

CHEYENNE

Do you like classical music?

NINA

I don't care what you play. It's your iPod.

CHEYENNE

Even if its country?

NINA

Anything but country, please. I hate that hick town bullshit.

(CHEYENNE turns her iPod to country music.)

NINA

Dude, what the hell? Haven't I been through enough today?

CHEYENNE

Hey, I'm just trying to lighten the mood with a little music.

NINA

Can you please change it back? Better yet, maybe play something more modern like, I don't know, some dubstep or something? Something mindless so I don't have to think about my shithole of a life for two seconds.

CHEYENNE

Oh, it can't truly be that bad? Can it?

NINA

You wouldn't even begin to know.

CHEYENNE

Try me.

NINA

You'll just judge me.

(Cheyenne puts down the lock pick for a moment and turns around to look at Nina.)

CHEYENNE

Well, now, isn't that statement in itself a tad bit judgmental? Assuming that I will judge you right off the bat...that hurts my feelings.

NINA

Most people judge me. You wouldn't get it. What do you do for a living, anyways?

CHEYENNE

I'm a chemist.

NINA

Whoa, hold up. You're a scientist?

CHEYENNE

Yes, ma'am.

NINA

Don't call me ma'am. It makes me feel old. I'm only 35.

CHEYENNE

Sorry, ma'am.

(CHEYENNE takes a magazine out of her purse and thumbs through until she reaches a page somewhere in the middle. She points to full page ad.)

CHEYENNE

This woman is one of my favorite models. She's 35 as well.

(NINA smiles and kicks the floor.)

NINA

Yeah, and look at what she's advertising and her role in the ad. She's surrounded by two toddlers, holding a package of diapers. She's probably never even had kids and she's already playing the mom. That's the life of a model -- or really any woman in the entertainment or advertising industry -- post-30-years-old. Wife and mother. Yup.

CHEYENNE

What do you have against motherhood?

NINA

Nothing. It's just not appealing to me and I'm tired of society trying to dictate the trajectory of women's lives based on some archaic model for this unattainable image of a nuclear family.

CHEYENNE

I grew up in a nuclear family.

NINA

Good for you. Most people in the world haven't.

(A few moments of awkward silence.)

CHEYENNE

So what do you do for a living?

I'm a grad student.

NINA

CHEYENNE

Oh, wow. What for?

NINA

Creative Writing.

CHEYENNE

You're right. I am judging you.

NINA

Thanks. I wish I could say I gave a flying fuck but I'm pretty used to it at this point.

CHEYENNE

Do they pay you to go to grad school?

NINA

No. I have to pay out of pocket. 45K a year.

CHEYENNE

Ouch. I got paid to go.

NINA

That's because the neocons in charge of these educational institutions think the arts don't matter. It's all about hard science and business. Creative types are fucked.

CHEYENNE

If you know that, then why didn't you go for business or science?

(NINA sighs and begins to pace across the floor.)

NINA

Because my mind doesn't work that way. Because when I wake up, I dream of living an adventure. I'd go crazy if I was stuck in some lab or some cubicle all day, regurgitating facts, trying to analyze things, and schmoozing up to some coke fiend MBA guy for a promotion. No thanks. I'll take my ramen noodles over that shit any day of the week.

(CHEYENNE covers her mouth with her hand in an attempt to hold back a chuckle.)

CHEYENNE

You're wearing a Dolce & Gabbana dress and carrying a Louis Vuitton bag. I doubt you eat ramen noodles that often.

NINA

I did at one point.

CHEYENNE

So, if you pay out of pocket at a rate of 45K a year and you can still afford a car, rent, and designer clothing, you must be pushing 75K or higher for yearly income. Parents?

NINA

Deadbeat parents. I put myself through school.

CHEYENNE

What was your undergrad in?

NINA

English.

CHEYENNE

You don't teach, that's for sure. Hmm, curious.

NINA

What the fuck is that supposed to mean? Are you calling me stupid?

(CHEYENNE shakes her head.)

CHEYENNE

Geez, I'm not half as good as I thought I would be at this. Never had an opportunity to use this set before. Mind if I take a break for a moment?

(CHEYENNE sits down in front of the door and pulls a pack of cigarettes from her purse.)

NINA

Um, I have an appointment to get to.

CHEYENNE

Yes, about that. We never quite finished our conversation, did we?

(CHEYENNE pulls a flask from her purse and takes a swig. CHEYENNE holds it up as an offer for NINA. NINA shakes her head.)

NINA

I'd rather not. I'm in a rush, actually.

CHEYENNE

You can't reschedule?

NINA

Well, I could but the clie--I mean--dentist would be pretty upset. It might cause a few problems.

CHEYENNE

For your teeth or your pocketbook, honey?

NINA

Why are you being so affectionate?

CHEYENNE

I can't help it. I'm an affectionate woman.

(CHEYENNE starts rubbing Nina's back. Nina pulls away.)

NINA

What do you want?

CHEYENNE

To be your friend.

NINA

What, that's it? Don't you have any friends of your own?

CHEYENNE

I work 16 hour days. The only social interaction I get besides work is talking to my 20 pound Persian cat.

NINA

Geez.

(CHEYENNE thumbs through her purse for a lighter and fires up her cigarette.)

CHEYENNE

Would you like a smoke, dear?

NINA

No, thank you. I'm trying to quit.

CHEYENNE

I tried a few times. I made it to seven days before a coworker pissed me off so badly that I knew the smoke break would be the only thing to save me from going batshit.

NINA

What happened?

CHEYENNE

She stole my promotion.

NINA

That sucks. I'm glad I don't have to worry about that.

CHEYENNE

I bet you don't. So, what do you do then? No parents, no steady job, lots of money. Inheritance?

NINA

You could say that.

CHEYENNE

I doubt it, though. You have a working class aura about you.

NINA

Aren't you supposed to be a scientist? I thought you guys don't believe in all that metaphysical stuff.

CHEYENNE

You know what I mean. You weren't born with a silver spoon. I can see it by the way you conduct yourself; your small-town Midwestern dialect, the stains on your purse, the smudges in your makeup.

NINA

You know, if I wanted to be analyzed I'd have gone to a shrink.

CHEYENNE

I apologize. Sometimes, my nature gets the better of me.

NINA

Do you really want to know?

CHEYENNE

I have an idea.

NINA

Look, since I probably missed my appointment, pay me \$300 and we can do whatever you want.

CHEYENNE

That's it?

NINA

Wow, most people bitch about that rate. You must have money to spend.

CHEYENNE

I really don't. But I know how to appreciate a pretty lady like yourself.

NINA

Thanks. You know, I'm bi but it's not often I get chicks for clients. I'd prefer dealing with women anyways. We know how to be a bit more respectful. Well, you kind of pissed me off a bit with the analysis thing, but I'll look passed it for the time being.

CHEYENNE

Do you take credit cards?

NINA

Yeah.

CHEYENNE

Very good.

(NINA pulls out her smart phone and card reader to swipe CHEYENNE'S card.)

NINA

Authorized. You want me to email you the receipt?

CHEYENNE

That isn't necessary. Come with me.

(CHEYENNE pulls Nina by the wrist to the other side of the hallway.)

NINA

Lay down.

CHEYENNE

Shouldn't we go into my apartment first?

(NINA gently pushes CHEYENNE onto the floor and grabs zip ties from her purse to tie her down. CHEYENNE squirms.)

NINA

Stop it.

(CHEYENNE gasps.)

CHEYENNE

What are you doing?

(NINA grabs a Taser from her bag and hovers above CHEYENNE.)

NINA

Tell me where Rejuvenate is.

Cheyenne bites her lip.

CHEYENNE

What are you talking about?

NINA

Don't you play dumb with me! Tell me or I'll taze the shit out of you.

(CHEYENNE is shaking, balling her fists, and squirming desperately to get out of the restraints.)

CHEYENNE

Please. I'll lose my job.

NINA

Final warning.

(CHEYENNE sighs.)

CHEYENNE

Ok! Ok! It's in a safe behind the fairy poster.

(NINA rips the poster off of the wall and throws it onto the floor.)

NINA

Combination?

CHEYENNE

500598.

(NINA pulls out a vial of clear liquid and holds it in front of her face, examining it.)

NINA

Thanks, hun.

(NINA puts the vial in her bra and starts to walk away.)

CHEYENNE

Wait!

NINA

I can't untie you.

CHEYENNE

I know that. Can you just tell me why?

NINA

Why what?

CHEYENNE

Why do you need Rejuvenate? We didn't even finish the trials.

NINA

You should keep a better eye on your coworkers. Ashley sold me your information. You're the only one with access to such potent anti-aging juice.

CHEYENNE

You're only 35.

NINA

Pfft. "Only 35" doesn't apply to women like me. I'm sorry that I have to do this to you.

(CHEYENNE shakes her head, a tear forming in the pit of her eye falls down her cheek and lands on the cold lab table.)

CHEYENNE

I'll miss you.

(NINA kisses CHEYENNE'S forehead.)

NINA

I'll miss you too.

(NINA holds the vial above her head with her mouth open and drinks the Rejuvenate. Then she walks away, clutching her stomach while staggering.)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF ACT)