

DANCING AT THE STUMP - A ONE ACT PLAY BY MARK RAMQUIST

KAREN O'GRADY, 18, High School Senior
TIFFANIE KNOWLES, 18, Karen's classmate, Prom Queen
LINCOLN "LINK" JONES, 18, Tiffanie's letterman boyfriend
CUSTOMER, 22, handsome dude, matinee idol with longish hair
GAL, 20s, contemporary buddy to Customer, could be his girlfriend
BOB O'GRADY, 50s, Irish owner/manager of O'Grady's Stump, favorite uncle

O'Grady's Stump is one of those small-town coffee shops with class and character and old-shoe charm -- the kind you might see in movies and never expect to find this far off the beaten track. Newcomers often gape at the high-quality antique knickknacks, books, movie cameras, projectors, and posters - many of Bartlett Knowles, the local kid turned Hollywood hunk. The local radio station wafts big band classics and "city jazz" around the place.

KAREN is the barrista, bus-boy, and banter-meister here everyday after high school so her uncle, BOB O'GRADY can take the afternoon off for errands, civic work, doctor's visits, and the occasional round of golf. She appears to be happy and fits in well, and other than a stiff leg with a noticeable limp, you couldn't tell she's the only survivor of a tragic car wreck that made her an orphan and necessitated a move to a new home with her Aunt and Uncle here in rural America.

TIFFANIE is a facade of self important fluff, and rides a popularity bubble of good looks, important family, and her brother's success. She and LINK are just leaving.

KAREN

So how'd ya like the special Prom Queen Cappuccino, Tiffy?

TIFFANIE

Uh, it was, like, so snarky - prom snarky, really, but the school colors in the foamy stuff was a little weird.

LINK

Yeah. How'd you do the red and blue?

KAREN

It's a Stump secret. But..

(conspiratorially to Tiffanie)

..heard your brother invented it when he worked here - something about wanting to impress the prom queen when he was just a sophomore.

TIFFANIE

I remember that. It didn't work.. stupid girl, turning down BJ.

LINK

Yeah. Prom queens can be such losers.

Tiffanie whacks his shoulder with the back of her hand.

LINK (CONT'D)
Uh.., sometimes.

KAREN
(trying to navigate away from the battle)
Well, it's been a winner for us ever since.

TIFFANIE
(to Karen, but still glaring at Link)
Yeah, uh, right. Listen, Karen, uh, about the prom tonight, I heard you, uh, like still don't have a date, but if you wanna come anyway--

LINK
Hey, I could still set you up with Garffy. Huuh? Heh-he-he...

TIFFANIE
(slugs Link; it's disgusting even to her)
--uh, be sure and, you know, come up and get in line, and I'll get my brother to, like give you an autograph on his headshot. Cool, huh?

KAREN
Sure, cool; and I'll give him my autograph on a coupon for a free latte here at the Stump.

TIFFANIE
Oh, well, like he couldn't afford it - duh! Besides, he doesn't have time to come here anymore, 'cuz jeez... now that he lives in Santa Monica and goes on location in, like, you know, London and Prague and---

LINK
Yeah, even over in Europe and stuff.

TIFFANIE
I mean him and his manager are only stopping through town tonight 'cuz I'm Prom Queen and, so like why would he-- I mean like he's pretty important and famous now, so you'd, uh, like he won't have time to come over here, because--

BOB O'GRADY
(coming from the back office on his way out the front)
Hey, Tiffy! You're me favority Prom Queen! At least for this year - ha! And listen, you be tellin' that matinee idol brother of yours that me Stump is always worth a visit, and me niece even more so!

Tiffanie jolts in snobbish horror, Karen in embarrassment at the impossibility of meeting such a heartthrob.

BOB O'GRADY (CONT'D)
And now I'm off, Karen me dearie. Running inta the city to get me beans shipment. Any thing you need me to be gettin' you fer the prom? 'Cuz I can get back early if you want.