

THE WHITE PAGES  
Jonathan Dorf

## List of Characters

ROBERT, bookish thirtysomething insurance adjuster

NANCY, same age, and far too nice to be true

TOTO, college age and not the sharpest tack in the box

THE OTHER CUSTOMERS, played by the same actress

MOLLY, the First Customer

POLLY, the Second Customer

DOLLY, the Third Customer

To increase the cast size, the Customers may be played by different actresses.

## Notes on the Set

While it's important to create the idea of the bookstore, the set may be as surreal or as suggested as necessary, given the budget or limitations of the production.

## SCENE 1

(The Book Traders Book Store. A sign advertises, "Used Books Bought and Traded." A slightly smaller sign invites, "Browsers Welcome." An even smaller sign, virtually invisible to the audience, says, among other things, "No Refunds." TOTO, college age and the quintessential empty young man, endlessly stacks books on one end of a counter, then restacks them on the other side. Lining the store walls are locked glass bookcases. NANCY, late thirties, the store owner and Toto's aunt, stands behind the counter—by the cash register. ROBERT, Nancy's age, a customer and the kind of guy who looks like an avid reader without being nerdy about it, tentatively reaches out to make sure the books are really glassed-in.)

**NANCY**

Would you like a piece of fruit?

**ROBERT**

What?

**NANCY**

A piece of fruit. With your book.

**ROBERT**

Do people usually—

**NANCY**

Yes. Yes they do.

**ROBERT**

Oh. OK.

**NANCY**

Be right back.

(Nancy exits. Enter THE FIRST CUSTOMER carrying three books. Robert reads the spines to see what she has.)

**FIRST CUSTOMER**

(a friendly smile for Robert)

*Dubliners*. Joyce? I found it both a vivid and unflinching portrait of dear, dirty Dublin at the turn of the century and a moral history of a nation and a people whose golden age has passed.

**ROBERT**

Ah yes. "The Dead."

**FIRST CUSTOMER**

The dead what?

**ROBERT**

"The Dead?" The last story— isn't it? I remember all that beautiful imagery with the snow blanketing the living and the dead.

**FIRST CUSTOMER**

(no idea what he's talking about)

Oh. Yes. It was a vivid and unflinching portrait.

(Nancy returns with a small basket containing an apple, an orange, a peach and a pear. The First Customer browses the locked bookcases.)

**NANCY**

There we are. Which would you like?

(Robert points at the orange.)

There you are.

**ROBERT**

I bet normally the fruit basket's ready and waiting.

**NANCY**

Oh—I just hadn't put it out yet.

**ROBERT**

You were probably shocked when I walked in.

**NANCY**

Why would I—

**ROBERT**

Oh. I thought . . . I work at the insurance company on the corner. Golden Eagle? I thought maybe you knew I worked there and figured an insurance guy wouldn't read books. I'm an insurance adjuster. We're not exactly known for being bookish.

**NANCY**

What sort of insurance . . . ?

**ROBERT**

Homeowner's et al. Fire mostly.

**NANCY**

Oh.

**ROBERT**

Childhood habit—I liked to fix things for the neighbors, so now I clean up their accidents. Sort of.

(beat)

Is that glass fireproof?

**NANCY**

I don't know.

**ROBERT**

Last thing you probably need is more insurance. Don't worry. I'm an adjuster, not a salesman.

(checks his watch)

An adjuster who's about to be late for work.

(Nancy smiles and opens one of the locked cabinets and pulls out a book.)

**NANCY**

And here's your book. Receipt's stuck inside.

**ROBERT**

Thank you.

(Robert starts to exit, scanning the bookcases for a moment before he goes. The First Customer approaches Nancy.)

**NANCY**

Molly, I didn't even see you come in.

**FIRST CUSTOMER**

(hands Nancy the three books she brought)

*Dubliners* was absolutely stunning. It was both a vivid and unflinching portrait of dear, dirty Dublin at the turn of the century and a moral history of a nation and a people whose golden age has passed.

**NANCY**

What can I get for you today?

(Robert, now at the door, opens the book to take out the receipt and stops short.)

**FIRST CUSTOMER**

Surprise me. If you have something with a blue cover, that would be wonderful. We're having a dinner party tonight, and I think the tablecloth is going to be blue.

**NANCY**

Let me see what I have in the back.

(Exit Nancy. Robert approaches Toto, who continues to sort books back and forth.)

**ROBERT**

I think there's been a mistake. This book—

**TOTO**

Looks like a nice one.

**ROBERT**

It has nothing in it.

**TOTO**

What?

(Robert hands it to him. Toto fans the pages.)

What are you talking about? There's zillions of pages.

**ROBERT**

They're blank.

**TOTO**

Really.

**ROBERT**

Look.

(Toto examines the pages very slowly. Robert looks to the First Customer for support. She smiles vapidly and turns away, occupying herself with her fingernails.)

**TOTO**

There's different shades of white. That's cool.

**ROBERT**

What!

**TOTO**

Look—that's kind of creamy white, and that part over there—in the corner—is . . . white white.

**ROBERT**

Where's the writing?

**TOTO**

Right here.

(points to the front and back covers)

Thomas Hardy's *Return of the Native* is a masterpiece of tragic passion, a tale that perfectly epitomizes the author's own unique and melancholy genius. It's the forerunner of the twentieth century psychological novel—OK?

**ROBERT**

Inside. Where's the writing inside?

(beat)

**TOTO**

Aunt Nancy!

(to Robert)

Aunt Nancy's coming.

(Enter Nancy carrying three books.)

**NANCY**

(to the First Customer)

I have a blue, a white and a black. They should match fine.

**FIRST CUSTOMER**

You're a lifesaver. Take care now. Bye, Toto.

**TOTO**

(almost drooling)

Bye.

(The First Customer exits.)

**NANCY**

(to Robert)

Can I help you?

**ROBERT**

This book is blank.

**NANCY**

Yes?

(Nancy checks the covers as Toto did.)

**ROBERT**

You really should check the books more carefully before you resell them.

**NANCY**

Would you like another piece of fruit?

Like what you see? Hit the back button and follow the instructions to order a perusal copy of the full script!