



# NICK AND NORA GO

## OFF-BROADWAY



BAMBI EVERSON

**NICK AND NORA GO OFF BROADWAY**  
Approximately 100 minutes with one intermission

**CHARACTERS**

WAITER (40s) Reformed felon. Respects Nick and Nora. Doubles as LT. CALLAHAN.  
NICK CHARLES (40s) - World famous detective. Witty and urbane. Devoted to his wife.

NORA CHARLES (40s) - A charming and witty sophisticate. Independently wealthy and madly in love with her husband.

ANYA RANEVSKAYA (20s) - Formally Nick and Nora's charge, recently out on her own to pursue her acting career. Enthusiastic, hopeful, naive.

BRIAN TALBOT (30s) Stage manager extraordinaire. Been with the company for years.

CHESTER McNEILL (40s) Director of an amateur theater company. Desperate, Arrogant. Passionate about his work.

SHELDON STUART (40's -50s) Longtime actor in the Chester's plays. Jaded.

GLORIA WRAY (40s-50s) Ex-movie queen of the Silent era. Her career has been stalled due to scandal but she is "rising like a Phoenix" or so she thinks.

LT. CALLAHAN - doubles as WAITER - Impatient, career police officer. Has had many run-ins with Nick. There is rivalry, playful competition. Lt. Callahan has been "helped" by Nick before and might harbor some resentment.

**PLACE:** A church theater in the west 50s Manhattan, and Nick and Nora's upscale NYC apartment.

**TIME:** 1938.

**SYNOPSIS:**

In this standalone sequel to *The Thin Man In the Cherry Orchard*, Anya convinces Nora to take part in an amateur theater production. As is par for the course, a murder takes place and Nick must solve the crime before opening night.

**SETS AND LIGHTING:**

Single/ Double interior set; Most of the action takes place in a theater, or the apartment of Nick and Nora.

**AUTHOR'S NOTE:** Nick and Nora (of "The Thin Man" fame) are the perfect sophisticated couple. They drink a lot but should never appear drunk (hung over, yes, but never drunk). Their banter with each other is teasing and light hearted, never angry. They speak in the quick, snappy mode of 1940s screwball comedies,

**SCENE 1**

*NICK walks into a bar.*

WAITER

So good to see you again, Mr. Charles.

NICK

Nice to see you again, Sticky. Things are looking up, I see.

WAITER

Oh, very much so. Thanks to you. Clean as a whistle. Head waiter now. And um... nobody knows about my... you know...

NICK

I'll keep it under my hat.

*NICK puts his fingers to his lips and pretends to put something in his hat.*

NICK (cont'd)

Two martinis, please. Better make it three. One for the wife.

WAITER

Certainly.

*WAITER was already prepared with 2 martinis, but quickly brings another.*

WAITER (cont'd)

Where is Mrs. Charles this evening?

NICK

Oh she'll be along. She had to take Asta to the vet.

WAITER

Oh dear, Not ill, I hope.

NICK

I'm afraid he needs the dreaded "snip." Our neighbor's poodle is in the family way. Mrs. Asta and the children are very upset. Mrs. Dumont down the street is livid. Her poodle, Miss Puff was a show dog. The damage is done, but Mrs. Dumont was quite insistent. Poor Asta. Done in by a pretty... um, face. Happens to the best of us, right, Sticky?

WAITER

No offense, Mr. Charles, but they don't call me Sticky anymore. It's Monsieur Ferdinand, now.

*NORA runs in with ASTA on a leash.*

NORA

*(to unseen management)*

Oh, don't worry. He's perfectly well behaved!

*(loud dog barking)*

Nicky! Nicky! Oh There you are.

NICK

Hey there, boy! Hello darling! Asta looks in pretty good spirits, considering. You remember old Sticky... I mean, Monsieur Ferdinand, don't you?

WAITER

It's a pleasure to see you again, Madame.

*WAITER takes her hand.*

NORA

The last time I gave you my hand, my ring went missing.

NICK

Oh, he's given all that up, my dear. He's a changed man.

NORA

Well then, happy to meet the new you.

*ASTA barks. WAITER exits.*

NICK

Oh, Asta! I know how you feel.

NORA

Oh, Nicky! You don't know! Miss Puff had her babies this morning.

NICK

Did she now?

*(to ASTA)*

And how many biscuits a month will you be paying in puppy support? I suppose you'll have to get a job, old pal.

NORA

It's wonderful! All the puppies look exactly like the dachshund across the road. Asta has been spared!

NICK

Atta boy, Asta. You are a one-woman dog, just like your old man.

NORA

And we intend to keep it that way. I need a drink. How many have you had?

NICK?

Here? Only one so far. I just got here, myself. Here you are, my darling.

*He hands her one drink.*

NORA

Well, that's not nearly enough. Ferdinand?

*WAITER returns.*

NORA (cont'd)

Another round, please. And line up three right here. I like to stay one ahead of my husband.

NICK

Well, I think we all deserve a drink. Ferdinand, a bowl of your finest water for Asta here.

*WAITER begins to leave.*

NICK (cont'd)

And two more martinis for me. What's good for the goose is a double for the gander.

*WAITER exits to get drinks. The two gaze at each other lovingly.*

NORA

So, darling, Why are we here? I mean, other than the obvious. Extra olives... mmmmm...

*NORA takes one out of his glass and eats it.*

NICK

I told you. Anya is meeting us. She said she had news. Maybe her sister and that nice fella are expecting.

NORA

Would that make me an aunt once removed, or a second cousin? Families can get so confusing.

NICK

Especially yours, my dear.

*WAITER returns with a tray full of martinis and a bowl of water and a piece of meat for ASTA. He places the drinks in front of them.*

WAITER

I took the liberty of bringing this from the kitchen. Beef tenderloin. The chef dropped it on the floor.

NICK

Well, Asta, this IS your lucky day.

*(Holding up drinks)*

To you, Mrs. Charles. And to Asta maintaining his manhood.

NORA

And you, retaining yours. I wonder if I should take up knitting again.

NICK

Just not in bed, my love. The last time I almost lost an eye.

*ANYA rushes in in a flurry.*

ANYA

Nick! Nora! It's been too long.

NORA

Oh, my darling! You look radiant. A new man?

ANYA

Oh, way better than that. I got a job!

NICK

Well, that calls for a celebration. Sit down. Ferdinand... Champagne for all!

*WAITER acknowledges and exits,*

ANYA

But I haven't told you what it is.

NORA

Doesn't matter. We are so proud of you.

*Takes a drink.*

NICK

Darn tootin'.

*Takes a drink as well.*

ANYA

I got a job... in the theater!

*WAITER returns with champagne and glasses with a flourish, pops the cork and pours during the next few lines.*

NORA

Oh, wonderful.

NICK

Oh, heavens. It's not one of those burlesque things, is it? Where you dance behind a fan? I saw one last week...

NORA

Did you?...

NICK

Helping out an old friend. Binky Barnes. Someone had walked off with the weeks payroll. It's amazing how much a woman can hide in her....

NORA

Nicky!!!

ANYA

No. Nothing like that. It's a legit play. Not Broadway. It's what they call "community theater." A big church on West 54th street. It's close to Broadway! We start rehearsals next week but the best part is...

NICK

To the best part!

*(takes another drink)*



ANYA

There's a role for you, Nora. The adoptive mother of the ingenue. ME!! Oh, it's Kismet.

NORA

We saw Kismet, didn't we, darling?

NICK

Don't date yourself, my little cabbage leaf. That was 1911.

NORA

We saw the movie, with Loretta Young. She is such a beauty.

ANYA

No, the play is called "The Regret of the Danbury Lilly." I'm Lilly!

NORA

I'm sure it will be a triumph, but I haven't acted since my debutante ball. I had to pretend I adored my date at my coming out party, when in fact HE was the one who should have been coming out!

NICK

*(to NORA)*

You are a natural, my love. Grace, glamour and brains. Everything that is missing from today's theater, present company excluded. There must be more to life than hobnobbing at cocktail parties and the occasional murder.

NORA

So YOU say.

ANYA

I guess the lead is some big deal.

NICK

Asta is hoping it's Lassie. But if it's not you or Mrs Charles, I couldn't really give a fig.

ANYA

Gloria Wray.

NICK

Gloria Wray, the old silent movie star?

ANYA

I wouldn't know. That was before my time.

NICK

Gloria Wray. Hot damn! She was something. I always wondered what happened to her.



NORA

Oh, darling. I'm surprised you don't remember. It was such a scandal!

NICK

I do love a good scandal. Not as much as you do, my dear...

ANYA

Scandal?

NORA

Way before your time, lovey. Rumor has it that she killed her third husband when she caught him in a compromising position with her director, who she was... shall we say, "putting in overtime with."

NICK

Right. They never could prove it, though.

NORA

Because YOU weren't on the case, my darling. The whole world assumed she did him in, but the coroner ruled it a heart attack. So strange. He was 36 and climbed mountains.

NICK

Among other things.

ANYA

Oh, my God!

NICK

What husband is she on now?

NORA

I think it's number six or seven. Anyway, her career came to a complete standstill about 20 years ago.

NICK

Pity. She was very good. I wish I could see more of her.

ANYA

And now you can! Much more. Oh, say you'll join the troupe, Nora! When I told the director you were my legal guardian, he nearly fell off his chair. He follows you in the society pages.

NICK

Oh, that's silly. Directors don't read. Who is this man?

ANYA

His name is Chester McNeill.

NORA

Chet?

NICK

*(overlapping)*

Chet McNeill? The pretentious blowhard who tried to steal you away from me lo those many years ago?

NORA

Lucky for you, I broke his heart.

NICK

You broke his chance for a free ride, darling. That chowderhead was only after your money.

NORA

And you weren't?

NICK

Not after our first kiss, my petunia. Your wealth was a mere garnish to your hypnotic allure and vibrant personality. Anya, do you want a steak? Mrs. Charles is picking up the tab. Asta seems to think the tenderloin is slightly underdone, but still viable.

NORA

Yes dear. Please eat. On an actor's salary, you won't get much chance. Ferdinand?

*WAITER appears.*

NORA (cont'd)

One of your finest steaks for our thespian, one the chef has managed to keep off the floor, and perhaps a baked potato and broccoli?

ANYA

Sure, if you're sure...

NICK

Asta would have it no other way.

*ASTA barks.*

ANYA

Well, thank you, Asta. I'll save you the bone.

*ANYA gives ASTA a pet.*

*(to ASTA)*

Oh, I wish there was a part for you in this play. Apparently, Mr. McNeill is highly allergic. All our costumes need to be from a pet-free home.

NORA

What a dismal existence. I couldn't imagine, could you, dear?

WAITER

Can I get you anything, Mrs. Charles?

NORA

Oh, thank you, Ferdinand. I am feeling a bit peckish. I'll take a few more olives in my next martini.

WAITER

The chef's special today is a spectacular fettuccini alfredo with salmon. Would you like to sample it?

NORA

I think not, Ferdinand, I'm watching my figure.

NICK

As am I.

NORA

After all, an actress's calling card is how they present themselves.

ANYA

Does that mean you'll do it??

NORA

Things are a bit dull around here since Nicky solved the case of the Topsy Taxidermist. Imagine stuffing your mother in law and leaving her right by the front window, just to collect her social security checks.

NICK

It wasn't all my doing, dear. Once the raccoon got into the house, it was all over.

NORA

Anyway, that was weeks ago. And Nicky's not doing any more detecting.

NICK

Yes. When Mrs. Charles tells me not to do something, I only do it a few more times. I never say never, because life does have a way of proving us wrong. However, my little lotus blossom, I wonder what your family might think about you taking up with theatricals.

NORA

Well, they've adjusted to me marrying you, darling. I don't think anything will phase them after that.

ANYA

Nora, this will be so much fun!

NORA

Chet McNeill, huh? He might still hold a grudge. I hope'll he'll have me.

NICK

Here's hoping no one will have you but me.

ANYA

And the world of theater.

NICK

Here's to the loveliest women I know, about to embark on their maiden artistic escapade. Knock 'em dead!

*The three raise their glasses as WAITER approaches with a plate for ANYA.*

**BLACKOUT**