

PAUL NORA NICHOLE DWAIN

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Jim Holt

NICHOLE. Shut up. It's like this every year. No one gives a crap about Christmas anymore. It's my favorite time of year.

DWAIN. Me too.

NICHOLE. Really? Why?

DWAIN. Turkey. Turkey and dressing.

NICHOLE. Exactly! And green bean casserole, and cranberry sauce with pumpkin pie for desert.

DWAIN. Now you're talkin'.

NICHOLE. What are we having?

NORA. Pot roast and new potatoes, salad, chocolate mousse.

NICHOLE. Isn't that special?

DWAIN. Sounds good to me.

PAUL. Are we through toasting, now?

NICHOLE. No. (*Lifting her glass.*) During this season of joyous giving may our selfless and joyous celebration of hope and faith in our fellow man, no matter how wretched or downtrodden, fill our souls with boundless munificence and joyous magnanimity.

(PAUL begins to raise his glass.)

START → NICHOLE. And may the joyous spirit of sharing and generosity infuse our daily lives with a sincere and profoundly joyous bounty of cheerful and joyous love for all mankind.

PAUL. I'll drink to that, joyously.

(*He tosses back one glass of wine and pours another.*)

NICHOLE. To the men I've loved, to the men I've kissed. My regret to the men I've missed.

PAUL. You can count them on one hand.

NICHOLE. Shut up. What's your story, Dwain?

DWAIN. My story?

NICHOLE. Yeah. What do you do? Or what did you do before you stopped doing what you did?

DWAIN. What do you mean?

NICHOLE. Well, Nora works with three non-profits, Paul writes books and book reviews and teaches American Lit, and I make the world's best cupcakes.

DWAIN. Oh. Well, I volunteer at the food bank.

NICHOLE. That's good.

DWAIN. And I work the sound board sometimes for this band.

NORA. That's nice.

DWAIN. I fix bikes for people.

PAUL. Super.

(There is a pause.)

DWAIN. I have a book.

PAUL. Is it a Harry Potter book?

NORA. Paul.

NICHOLE. Shut up. What kind of book?

DWAIN. Just some writin' I do. About my life.

NICHOLE. A memoir. Those are big these days. Are you gonna have it published? Maybe Paul can review it.

DWAIN. It ain't like that. It's just writings about what happens to me.

NORA. Like a journal. You write in it every day?

DWAIN. Just about. Unless there ain't nothin' to say. You know what I mean?

PAUL. Yep.

NORA. Paul's writing a book too. It can be very difficult.

NICHOLE. I bet Paul would like to read your book. Maybe he can give you some pointers.

DWAIN. Oh, it ain't that kinda book. It's just me sorta talkin' to myself.

NORA. That's good. A reflective journal.

DWAIN. I don't think anybody'd want to read it.

NICHOLE. Why not? They read Sarah Palin.

NORA. Do you have it with you?

DWAIN. It's in my pack.

NICHOLE. Go get it. I'm sure Paul would like to look it over. He might even give you a review.

PAUL. I don't think we need to...

NICHOLE. Run get it Dwain, before he changes his mind.

DWAIN. Well...

NORA. Go ahead, Dwain. Paul might not read it but I will. If you don't mind.

DWAIN. I don't mind, if you want to. Uh, can I take this off.

(NICHOLE pushes him into the hall.)

NICHOLE. No! When you get back I'm gonna tie some mistletoe in your hair with a bright red ribbon. He is the sweetest thing.

PAUL. Wanna take him home with you?

NICHOLE. (Waves wine glass.) A little more of this and I just might.

NORA. Now, don't be making fun of him.

PAUL. I'm not the one making him wear the gay elf costume.

NICHOLE. He's adorable, so totally innocent and unaffected.

PAUL. Don't you mean challenged?

NORA. That is absolutely not necessary.

NICHOLE. Why did you marry him?

NORA. Because he used to have feelings. Or at least he pretended.

PAUL. I'm sorry, but I'm not the one leading this guy on.

NICHOLE. What the hell does that mean?

PAUL. He can't possibly understand what an exhibit you're making of him, or what an exhibition you're making of yourself.

NICHOLE. Oh, really?

PAUL. How is this going to do him any good? He gets off the stage for a night and then what? He writes a page or two in his "reflective journal." "The nice people gave me a meal and then screwed with my head." You know, most of those people are out there because they want to be, and when I watch the two of you I begin to understand why.

NICHOLE. Right, well I guess it's better to just be an asshole.

PAUL. At least it's more honest.

END



(DWAIN enters carrying a large, nasty-looking, spiral-bound notebook that is duct-taped together in places and has obvious exposure to all of the elements. He hands it to PAUL who holds it by the corners like a bedpan.)

DWAIN. Sorry it took so long. It was at the bottom of my pack.

PAUL. We'll just put it over here for the moment.

(He turns to place it on the coffee table, reacting to the smell of must, grime, God knows what else.)