

Final Project

a short play by
Peter M. Floyd

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

TINA, Female, aged 18-21

PROFESSOR DELANEY, Female, aged 35-55

THE FINAL PROJECT, Male, any age

SCENE: A college classroom

The scene is classroom in a small northeastern college. As the lights come up, TINA is pacing back and forth, holding a large remote control in her hands. To one side stands the FINAL PROJECT, a man dressed in ordinary street clothes, standing rigidly, with no expression on his face. TINA pauses to study the PROJECT critically, and then resumes pacing.

The remote that TINA holds should be larger than a TV or stereo remote. Ideally, it should be the sort of remote used for remote control toy cars or aircraft: large enough to require two hands to hold, and with an antenna sticking out. It should have a large number of buttons and dials, etc.

After a moment, PROFESSOR DELANEY enters.

DELANEY

Hi, sorry I'm late. Caught up in a damn faculty meeting.

TINA

That's all right, Professor.

DELANEY

Well, I expect my students to be prompt when I meet them, so it's only fair for me to be on time myself. So, Tina-- It's Tina, right?

TINA

Yes.

DELANEY

So, Tina, what do you have to show me?

TINA

Well, actually, Professor Delaney, before we get started, I just wanted to say I really enjoy the class. "Form and Function" is one of the best things I've ever taken here.

DELANEY

Really? Well, I'm pleased to hear that.

TINA

I feel like I've learned a lot.

DELANEY

Well, thank you, Tina. I'm glad to get positive feedback from my students. Especially when some of my colleagues are openly contemptuous of my approach.

TINA

Really?

DELANEY

Oh, yes, it's considered heresy to approach the analysis of poetry using the methods of engineering. People say it's mechanical, they say it's soulless...

TINA

But it's like you say in class, right? A poem is a medium for conveying a thought, or a feeling, or a sensation to the reader, and like an engineer, the poet must find the most efficient words to do this.

DELANEY

Well, I would say the most "apt" words, not "efficient" -- that really does sound mechanical -- but I see you've basically got the idea. Every work of literature, from a four-line poem to *Remembrance of Things Past* can be seen as a vehicle for expressing what the writer is trying to convey. And just as there's a right way and a wrong way to, say, drive a car, there is a right way and a wrong way to present the author's expression. But I'm sorry, I'm just repeating what I keep saying in class, and now it's you that should be presenting. I'm curious to see what you chose to do for your final project.

TINA

Well, here it is. *(She points to the FINAL PROJECT. DELANEY walks over to inspect it.)*

DELANEY

Interesting.

TINA

I'm afraid it didn't quite end up looking as I expected...
It's kind of funny-looking.

DELANEY

Well, the question is not, "Is it beautiful?" but rather,
"Does its form correspond to its functionality?"

TINA

Um, right.

DELANEY

May I see it work?

TINA

Sure! Here.

*TINA points the remote at the PROJECT and adjusts
a control. Instantly, the PROJECT's mouth widens
into an unnatural grin. TINA taps another
control, and the PROJECT begins to speak, in an
artificial sing-song voice.*

PROJECT

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red:
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;

DELANEY

No.

PROJECT

If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.

DELANEY

No this isn't right at all.

*TINA touches another control, and the PROJECT's
smile ceases.*

TINA

It's not okay?

FOR FULL SCRIPT, CONTACT PMFLOYD01@GMAIL.COM