

Olivia and Odette

John Bandler

A young server in a coffee shop comforts a young woman in trouble.



Olivia and Odette by [John Bandler](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](#).

Copyright © 2020, 2023 John Bandler
All rights reserved by the author



Published by Bandler Corporation www.bandler.com

Olivia and Odette

A one-act play

By John Bandler

Contact:
John Bandler
Dundas, ON, Canada
905 628 9671
john@bandler.com

OLIVIA AND ODETTE

By John Bandler

PLOT SUMMARY

A young server in a coffee shop comforts a young woman in trouble.

CHARACTERS

OLIVIA, a young woman

ODETTE, a young woman

SETTING

A coffee shop

SCENE: A COFFEE SHOP

ODETTE sits slumped at a table, quietly sobbing. OLIVIA approaches, CUP in hand.

OLIVIA

Hi there. What's up?

Napkin to her face, ODETTE looks up.

OLIVIA

I've been watching you from behind the counter. OK if I join you?

ODETTE wipes her face with her NAPKIN.

ODETTE

Sure! Of course.

OLIVIA puts her CUP on the table and sinks into the chair.

OLIVIA

Life sucks, right?

ODETTE

Oh, it's just... "Things."

OLIVIA

(takes a sip)

It's always "things." Been there, done that. Don't I know it

ODETTE

(using her NAPKIN)

I'm just a bit worried.

OLIVIA

Money problems?

ODETTE

I wish.

OLIVIA

Jeez. Don't ever wish for a money problem. I know. I got plenty. Mother problem then? Mothers can be so infuriating.

ODETTE

(smiling)

Mom's head is in the right place. I think. Sometimes, anyway.

OLIVIA

OLIVIA

Sometimes. Better than never. So, we're, like, crossing things off our list. OK. You're worried about fairness with your live-in, like who takes out the garbage.

ODETTE

Not quite.

OLIVIA

OK. Putting money, mothers, and garbage aside, it's your new boyfriend, then, the man of your dreams.

ODETTE

Really, I'm all right.

OLIVIA

(rises slowly)

Awesome. Sorry to jump in like this. Like another coffee?

ODETTE smiles, waves OLIVIA to sit back down. OLIVIA sits down.

ODETTE

This is where we first met.

OLIVIA

Blind date?

ODETTE

No. This was our second meeting. We met in a car repair shop last week. Sort of, by accident.

OLIVIA

Jeez, I hope it was nothing serious.

ODETTE

It wasn't. No. Nothing serious.

OLIVIA

Well, then, a repair shop is as good a place as any, I guess, to meet by accident!

ODETTE

My car broke down right outside his shop. Luckily.

OLIVIA

Luck? There's no such thing as luck. It's predestined. It's karma.

ODETTE throws OLIVIA a skeptical look.

ODETTE

He towed my dead car into one of their bays and jacked it up on the hoist. And we started talking.

OLIVIA

(gestures grandly)

I see it all so perfectly. Instant romance. Oil dripping from the engine above you, or was it transmission fluid? No matter, a romantic, greasy moment under the hoist.

ODETTE

He asked me what I did. I told him I was in business. I'm not sure why I said that.

OLIVIA

What?

ODETTE

Business. In business. Maybe I just wanted to impress him.

OLIVIA

Nothing wrong with that. So, you're in business...

ODETTE

In... in a manner of speaking.

OLIVIA

How so?

ODETTE

I'm a grad student in Business School.

OLIVIA

That's it! You drive a fancy car. He sniffed money.

ODETTE

He misunderstood. I'm not literally in business.

OLIVIA

You're in business, but not in business. I don't follow.

ODETTE

Don't you see? He got the impression that I ran a business. A startup. He was so excited. He asked me out.

OLIVIA

So you came here.

ODETTE

Exactly. He said he wants to start his own dealership. Exotic cars.

OLIVIA

You tried to impress him. He tried to impress you.

ODETTE

He is such a sweet guy. I couldn't bear to tell him I have absolutely no idea how to start a business!

OLIVIA

You're confusing me!

(gesturing quotes with her fingers)

You're in "business" but know nothing about "business."

ODETTE

I majored in math. And I just started grad work. Financial modeling. All theory, software and math. Like, big bank investments, hedge funds, and the like. And I hardly know anything about those yet. It's all about making predictions ahead of every other investor.

OLIVIA

Stocks. Bonds. Like sorting out the winners from the losers? Right? Like, bank meltdowns?

ODETTE

Something like that.

OLIVIA

They're all preordained, you know. Karma.

ODETTE becomes animated.

ODETTE

Oh no. It's all about mathematical modeling. It's all quite advanced.

OLIVIA

Personally, I'd rather trust a psychic. But, hey, that's me. OK. So you hit it off with this guy in the repair shop, you liked him, you didn't want to make him feel bad. That's good. I've a hunch he'd not be too turned on by your math.

ODETTE

What do I know about startups, let alone cars? Once I realized I wasn't up front, I couldn't backtrack. I didn't see any harm in it then. He was just so excited. I kind of got stuck with it? You know. Have you ever done the same thing?

OLIVIA

(laughing)

Shading the truth? Don't go there, gal. I lie all the time. Karma either digs me out or buries me deeper. Do you like him?

ODETTE

Oh yes.

OLIVIA

So just level with him. You're a math student and have no idea how to start a business.

ODETTE

Too late. He won't talk to me any more.

(off OLIVIA's look)

That's right. I told him I'd be at tonight's reception for new students. Anyway, he gate-crashes it.

And I'm with another student, a real snooty type I can't seem to get away from, right there in a red bow tie when everybody else is in jeans. Someone bumps into me, I spill my drink all over, go to the bathroom. When I get back, he was gone.

OLIVIA

Who?

ODETTE

My friend. From the repair shop. Now he won't even answer my texts.

OLIVIA

There's something missing here.

ODETTE

There was an argument.

OLIVIA

A fight?

ODETTE

Good God, no.

OLIVIA

Great. Listen, I never met a guy who doesn't crave validation. Guys need to be validated first, liked second. You're bright, in Business School to boot. Your startup friend may simply feel out of his depth. Or maybe your mister red-bow-tie annoyed him and he left so there wouldn't be any trouble for you.

ODETTE

I hadn't thought of that.

OLIVIA

Or maybe something else. It'll blow over.

(rises to her feet)

Coffee?

ODETTE

Tea would be wonderful, thank you. Anything herbal.

OLIVIA

Coming up. My name's Olivia. Friends call me Liv. What's your name?

ODETTE

Odette.

OLIVIA

Odette. What's your sign, Odette?

ODETTE

Sign?

OLIVIA

Like Scorpio, Cancer, you know.

ODETTE

Oh. Libra, I think.

OLIVIA

Well Libra-I-think-Odette, are we feeling any better?

ODETTE

Much. Thanks.

OLIVIA

Libras, they say, make great leaders, friends and peacemakers. So just keep your eye on what you were put on our earth to do, let a little time trickle by, and everything will turn out just fine. It always does. Trust me. I'm psychic.

END

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Beth Bandler, Diane Brokenshire, Stephanie Christiaens, Olivia Fasullo, Ruth Flynn, Rachel Ho, Elizabeth Indianos, Jaclyn Scobie, Daniel Tajik, Megan Vierhout

December 11, 2020