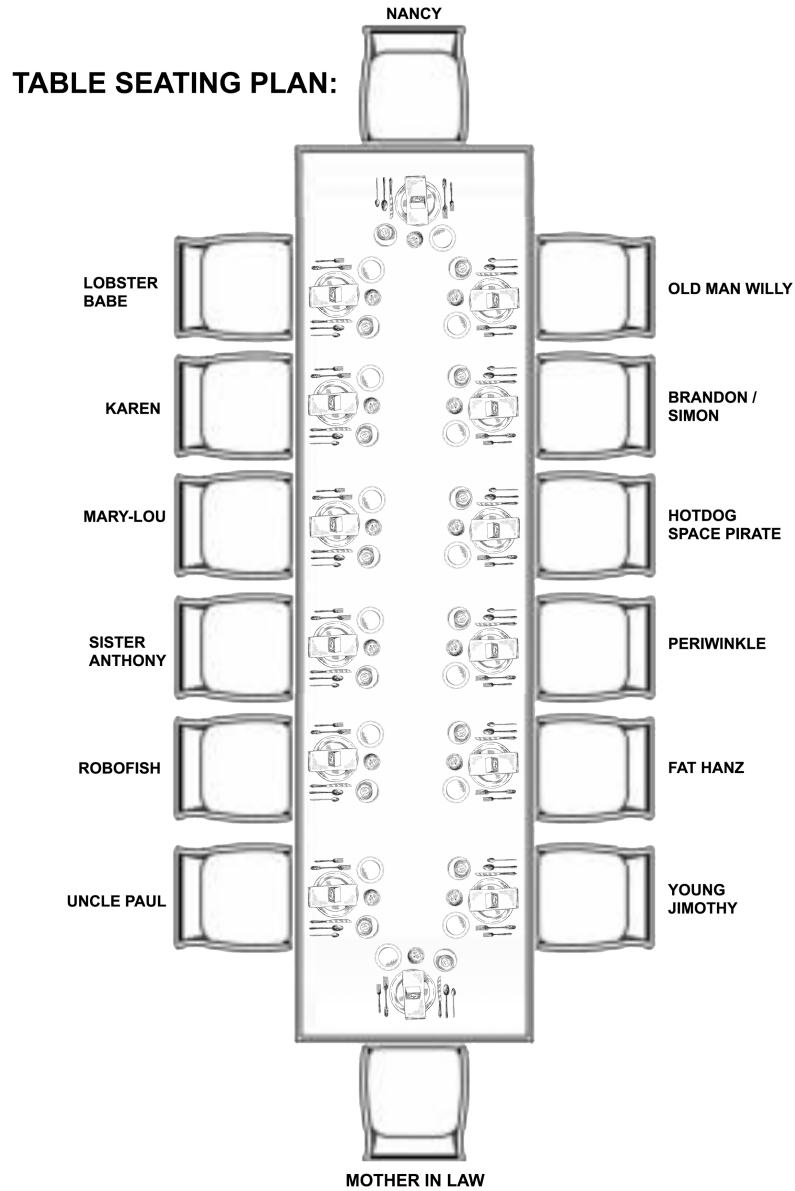


TABLE MANNERS

BY ROSANNA VERDON-ROE



'TABLE MANNERS' IS A 2D ANIMATED SHORT FILM. IT IS AN OFFBEAT MURDER-MYSTERY COMEDY SET AT A DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY DINNER PARTY.

**CHARACTERS :**

**NANCY:** Newly married to BRANDON and hostess to the dinner party. She is desperate to win her in-laws' approval.

**BRANDON:** The useless husband of NANCY, whose head explodes after eating a poisoned cake.

**MOTHER-IN-LAW:** An impatient woman who disapproves of her new daughter-in-law NANCY.

**SIMON:** A demon salesman from hell summoned by UNCLE PAUL who leads the murder investigation.

**PERIWINKLE:** The 16th Century, flamboyant Elizabethan Noble Man who loves to gossip. Cousin perhaps?

**ROBOFISH:** Part goldfish part washing machine with a robotic voice. Built by Hanz, partnered to Lobster Babe.

**KAREN:** The overbearing mother to MARY LOU with a criminal record.

**MARY LOU:** A feral beauty pageant overweight child.

**HODOG SPACE PIRATE:** A human-sized hotdog who is an intergalactic pirate. Family Friend

**OLD WILLY / FATHER IN LAW:** The crazy old Headfather of the family.

**UNCLE PAUL:** An alcoholic wizard who learned Necromancy during his gap year.

**FAT HANZ:** A high-functioning sociopath mad scientist.  
'father' of 'Robofish'

**LOBSTER BABE:** A 7ft tall Lobster in a bikini who can't speak. Partnered to Robofish

**SISTER ANTONIA:** A sex-crazed runaway nun. Jimothy's Mother.

**JIMOTHY:** A young boy who wears a paper bag over his head to hide his melon-shaped head and freakishly large eyes. Revealed to be the murderer. Sister Anthony's Son.

ACT ONE

**1 INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING**

Set in the Dining room of NANCY's house. A family of quirky characters are sat round a large dinner table. The family have finished their main course. The atmosphere is awkward.

Close up. MOTHER IN LAW stands and taps wine glass with a knife at the table.

MOTHER IN LAW:

[Said in a condescending tone.]

A toast to Brandon my daring son and his new wife ... *Natasha*.

*BRANDON looks uninterested and unless.*

NANCY:

Nancy. My name is Nancy. I hope you all enjoyed the main course!

PERIWINKLE:

The turkey was dry.

SISTER ANTONY:

My asparagus was limp.

UNCLE PAUL:

Brandy was very weak. [Hiccup]

JIMOTHY:

Thats gravy Uncle Paul.

UNCLE PAUL:

Is that so.

UNCLE PAUL looks inquisitively in the gravy pot.

MOTHER IN LAW:

It was... *sufficient*.

NANCY Nervously laughs.

NANCY: (V.O.)

Fuck fuck fuck fuck. This family dinner is going terribly. I'll never get my in-laws approval. Brandons been no help.

Close up of NANCYS face, beads of sweat on her brow.

BRANDON:

Time for pudding I think dearest.

BRANDON reads a porno magazine, disinterested in the party.

NANCY:

Of course darling, one moment everyone. Feel free to chat amongst yourselves.

Awkward Silence.

OLD MAN WILLY snores. FAT HANZ coughs. KAREN starts clipping her toenails- this irritates the person sat next to her. 'I'm making small talk dear' 'well its not quite small enough' Shot of skeleton with cobwebs sat at the table.

MARY LOU:

Apple juice!

More Awkward Silence.

Delicious looking cakes and custard on the table, shown in a tableau montage.

BRANDON pauses and looks at the cake, it tastes funny.

NANCY:

Are you alright Brandon, you looking a little p-

BRANDONS head explodes.

... peaky.

OLD MAN WILLY Wakes up from explosion startled.

OLD MAN WILLY:

Wh-wh did someone say something?

Shot of Characters round the table reacting to exploded head.

*More characters reacting to explosion. 'That's just bad manners', 'say it don't spray it', 'bless you' etc ...*

MOTHER IN LAW:

That's what happens if you add too much flour into the mix Nigella.

FAT HANZ:

Her names Nancy.

FAT HANZ pokes and plays with an eyeball on his plate.

NANCY:

My - my -my tablecloth its ruined! This has to be the worst family dinner ever.

NANCY is distressed.

PERWINKLE:

Not to worry Nancy, White wine is great for blood stains.

UNCLE PAUL:

Ooooh.

UNCLE PAUL pours a bottle of white wine onto table.

HOTDOG SPACE PIRATE:

I think you'll find its for red wine stains.

UNCLE PAUL:

Ooooh.

UNCLE PAUL pours a bottle of red wine onto table. Nancy cries, she is more distressed.

SISTER ANTONY:

Holy water works a treat-

KAREN:

Oh oh his head! Somebody call a docta!

OLD MAN WILLY:

Not to worry Brenda. Brandons just had one too many isn't that right old boy.

OLD MAN WILLY nudges BRANDONS headless corpse. It slumps, unresponsive.

PERWINKLE:

FAT HANZ! You a doctor- do something!

FAT HANZ:

His head literally exploded- nothing I can do.

UNCLE PAUL:

UNCLE PAUL dramatically stands up from the table.

On my gap year I visited the monks of Bognor Regis. They were strange folk who taught me the dark arts of Necromancy-

PERIWINKLE:

Get to the point!

UNCLE PAUL:

I can bring Brandon ... back to life!

MOTHER IN LAW:

Get on with it then.

UNCLE PAUL puts a wizard hat on and begins casting a satanic spell. His eyes roll back and dark spirits fill the room, it is menacing and insidious. Brandons body, the neck starts boiling as a new head grows from it.

Family all stare.

BRANDONS corpse has been possessed by a demon named SIMON.

SIMON:

What can I do for you today?

NANCY:

Brandon, is that you?

SIMON:

Hi there, Simon Im in sales, here's my card. Slight hiccup in your plan there bud-

Gestures towards UNCLE PAUL.

Looks like you summoned a demon instead of bringing the dearly departed back to life. To cut a long story short- Brandon aint coming back here ever. But Since you've brought me back to life- I owe you one- so how about I help you catch the killer?

KAREN:

You mean this wasn't an accident?

Dramatic dun dun dun sound. Shots of characters looking shocked.

SIMON:

When was the last time you had pudding that made your head explode?

MARY LOU:

Apple juice!

MOTHER IN LAW:

None of this would have happened if Nicole had just gone to Waitrose.

NANCY:

First off its Nancy. Secondly- your son just died and your berating me for not shopping at Waitrose?!

PERIWINKLE:

Ooh I love their Angel delight!

UNCLE PAUL Spits out drink in shock.

HOTDOG SPACE PIRATE:

Shocked expression.

Anal delight?

SISTER ANTONY:

Don't threaten me with a good time Sausage.

SISTER ANTONY flirtatiously winks at HOTDOG SPACE PIRATE, he is uncomfortable.

No incest at the table!

**ACT TWO**

SIMON:

A member set at this table has committed a most grievous crime!

What? incest?

I think he's referring to murder actually...

SIMON:

\*clears throat\* The murderer must of had access to pudding to poison it...

Nancy is the most obvious suspect.

But this is a murder mystery story, and the most obvious choice is never guilty. Otherwise that would be like- really boring.

SIMON:

The murderer knew the cake was poisoned so would have come up with an excuse in advance- excusing them from eating pudding!!!

ROBOFISH:

MARY LOU is on a diet for her upcoming beauty pageant.

Shot of MARY LOU gnawing on the flower arrangements.

KAREN:

MARY LOU! Flower arrangements are not edible!

KAREN sprays water from a bottle on MARY LOU like training a feral dog.

KAREN:

BAD MARY LOU! BAD MARY LOU!

OLD MAN WILLY:

They would have to be someone smarter than Mary Lou...

PERIWINKLE:

Like Fat Hanz! He's always whipping up potions too!

FAT HANZ:

Well jokes on you, I've been waiting for the perfect chance to use this trick up my sleeve-



FAT HANZ pulls a GET OUT OF JAIL FREE CARD from his sleeve. Slams on table.

Read it and weep bitch.

ROBOFISH:

That doesn't work in a murder mystery and it certainly doesn't give you immunity.

PERIWINKLE:

Hush now Robofish, the card has spoken.

FAT HANZ:

Karen's the one with a criminal record so she's the most likely to commit a crime.

KAREN:

Who's gunna stop me from pouring popping candy into my pussy- the government can't control me!

PERIWINKLE:

I heard the local sweet shop filed a restraining order against her.

NANCY:

So nice to have the family to dinner..

LOBSTER BABE makes hysterical Lobster noises and clacks her pincers.

PERWINKLE:

Gasp! Well you cant even pronounce quinoa the right way! Makes you wonder what else Lobster Babe has been doing wrong ... like murder!

ROBOFISH:

Quinoa. [pronounced incorrectly]

UNCLE PAUL:

Quinoa. [pronounced incorrectly]

KAREN:

Quinoa. [pronounced incorrectly]

OLD MAN WILLY:

Where's the mustard?

SIMON:

Quinoa. [pronounced incorrectly]

SISTER ANTONY:  
Quinoaaaa.

MARY LOU:  
[inaudible gooblydygook]

OLD MAN WILLY:  
Where's the mustard?

JIMOTHY:  
Canoe.

FAT HANZ:  
Canoodle.

MARY LOU:  
Apple juice.

HOTDOG SPACE PIRATE:  
Quinoa.

**CLIMAX**

OLD MAN WILLY:  
Where's the m-

MOTHER IN LAW:  
Why do you even need it? Its dessert for christ sake!

NANCY:  
He can have it however he likes!

The Family all gasp.

MOTHER IN LAW:  
Stop whipping everyone up into a frenzy Nelly!

NANCY:  
It's Nancy and you stop being such a fun sponge!

The Family all gasp.

Shot of left side of the table. [They move their head left to right like spectating a game of tennis].

ROBOFISH:  
Gasp.

OLD MAN WILLY:  
Haha.

MOTHER IN LAW:  
A fun sponge!!!

SISTER ANTONY:  
Put the kettle on a crisis is clearly imminent.

NANCY:  
You heard me!

The Family all gasp.

Shot of right side of the table. [They move their head right to left like spectating a game of tennis].

MOTHER IN LAW slams her hand on the table.

MOTHER IN LAW:  
Well Nina, maybe if you were a better hostess you wouldn't let your husband die or serve lumpy custard!

NANCY:  
That's it!

NANCY stands and stomps down the middle of the table and snatches a napkin from MOTHER IN LAW.

NANCY:  
You've lost ur napkin privileges, good luck getting creative. And the names Nancy you geriatric blob.

OLD MAN WILLY:  
Oh no worries chaps the mustard was next to me this whole time.

### **ACT THREE**

PERIWINKLE:

Maybe the murder wasn't the goal... rather to ruin Nancys dinner party!

FAT HANZ:

Oh Oh I know! Yar! Ze mother in law! She's sneaky, has a convenient gluten intolerance, aind haz motive for ruining Nancys party...

MOTHER IN LAW:

I-i-i-. Your right. I did want to ruin her dinner party, but I would never kill my son to prove a point. She doesn't belong in our perfect family!

OLD MAN WILLY:

Haha good one!

SIMON:

There is nothing perfect about any of you!

NANCY: *(ACTRESS NOTE: FEEL FREE TO AD-LIB)*

You with a superiority complex. (MOTHER IN LAW) Periwinkle the bitchy gossip yet to come out of the closet.

Robofish is part goldfish part washing machine. Karen the overbearing mother with a criminal record.

Hotdog Space Pirate... honestly Im still trying to figure out why your here.

Old Man Willy is bat shit crazy.

Uncle Paul the an alcoholic wizard.

Fat Hanz is a high functioning sociopath.

Lobster Babe... I'm not sure what your deal is to be honest.

Sister Antony is sex crazed runaway nun.

Mary Lou... need I say more?

The most normal out of all of you is Simon and he's a demon from hell!

JIMOTHY:

We are all dysfunctional, half baked characters in a second rate animation.

KAREN:

Speak for yourself, my baby girl's a star.

KAREN strokes MARY LOU.

HOTDOG SPACE PIRATE:

We aren't in the same art style for crying out loud!

LOBSTER BABE:

[touching sentiment made by a character in a foreign language]

ROBOFISH:

Lobster Babe's right! I think you owe Nancy an apology.

SIMON thinks.

SIMON:

There is only one other suspect, I know who the killer is!

SIMON dramatically points.

SIMON:

Young Jimothy!

The Family all gasp.

JIMOTHY takes the paper bag off his head. He pulls out a Funeral Care Plan leaflet 'Family Death for Dummies'.

JIMOTHY:

I read in this leaflet that death brings family together. I figured that the shared trauma of witnessing a death of a family member would not only increase a sense of solidarity among us, but boost everyone's cooperation in catching the killer. The grieving process also encourages families to come together to unite. Everything I've done is to strengthen our bonds as a family.

The Family all do a cute 'Awh'.

NANCY:

Jesus fucking christ Jimothy!

KAREN:

Well at least his heart was in the right place.

NANCY:

You're praising an 8 year old who has just committed a serious felony?

FAT HANZ:  
Yeah and it was awesome!

FAT HANZ and JIMOTHY high five.

SIMON:  
Woah you guys are pretty hard core.

FAT HANZ:  
Let's be honest, we all had it in for Brandon.

ROBOFISH:  
He was a total arse.

Family all nodding in agreement.

PERIWINKLE:  
We're better off without him, methinks.

Family all cheer.

NANCY:  
How did you figure out it was young Jimothy?

SIMON:  
He was wearing a paperbag over his head. Pretty sus if you ask me.

UNCLE PAUL:  
This has been the best AA meeting ever!

SISTER ANTONY:  
Killer pudding too Nancy!

MOTHER IN LAW:  
Well then. Spot of coffee would go down a treat, wouldn't you agree Nancy?

OLD MAN WILLY:  
Can't wait for the funeral!

**THE END.**