

Dirty Secrets

By A.R. Taylor

CHARACTERS

BRIAN	30-something-year-old. Anxious, and has a terrible secret.
NANCY	Brian's long-time friend. She's opinionated and very successful.
DR. MONROE	Brian's therapist of 23 years. Gender irrelevant.
MAILMAN	A typical mailman.

SETTING

Brian's apartment.

TIME

Mid-afternoon. Modern day.

ACT I

(A one-bedroom apartment, it's messy and not well cared for. Brian paces around, while Dr. Monroe sits on an armchair. We interrupt them mid-conversation.)

BRIAN

And you're sure that will work?

DR. MONROE

Have I ever wronged you before?

(Dr. Monroe quickly holds up a finger to shush Brian, who looks like he is about to say something.)

DR. MONROE

Don't answer that. My point is, Brian, you need to tell her what's going on in that head of yours if you wish to continue any sort of relationship.

BRIAN

I just don't think she'll understand...

(Dr. Monroe sighs.)

DR. MONROE

And what gives you that idea?

BRIAN

It's just a gut feeling I have. I've been having a lot of those these days.

(An alarm begins to sound. Dr. Monroe pulls out a phone from their bag.)

DR. MONROE

That's our time. Will I see you next week?

(The doctor stands up, heading toward the apartment door.)

BRIAN

Yeah... yeah. Same time?

DR. MONROE

Same time.

(Dr. Monroe leaves the apartment.)

(A beat.)

(Brian swivels his head left, then right. Once he's made sure the coast is clear, he pulls the pillows off the couch. Once it's barren, Brian reaches into the couch frame and heaves out a very large bag of potting soil.)

BRIAN

That's it... come on, come on.

(Brian struggles to pull the bag out from the couch, dragging it into the middle of the stage/his living room.)

BRIAN

Oh baby, now we're talking.

(He leans into the bag, grabbing fistfuls of dirt. He stares at them like a man might gawk at porn, or a naked woman.)

(A beat.)

(Brian looks up at the audience, hands full of dirt. He looks like a perverted serial killer at this moment.)

(Another beat.)

(With a moan, Brian throws the fistfuls of dirt onto himself. He rubs the soil up and down, smiling and moaning while he does it.)

(There's a knock at the door.)

NANCY

Brian? Are you in there?

BRIAN

(Panicked.)

Shit.

NANCY

You can't ignore me forever. I'm here to talk.

(Brian begins shoveling dirt back into the bag. Nancy knocks again, angrier.)

NANCY

Brian Mullins you better open this door.

(Brian is still frantically trying to hide the dirt.
A lock opening begins to sound from offstage.)

BRIAN

One moment!

(The door swings open as Nancy enters, key in
hand. She's dressed in a smart business suit
and carries a bag filled with rolled-up papers.)

(Brian jumps onto the couch, resting his head
in one hand while the other is on his hip. He
looks nervous, but smiles.)

BRIAN

Ria! It's so... nice to see you. Um, how'd you get in?

NANCY

You left a key under your mat.

(She lifts up the key.)

BRIAN

Ah... So I did.

(We immediately get the sense Nancy knows
her way around. She heads straight for the
kitchen area, pouring herself a cup of coffee.)

NANCY

I bumped into Dr. Monroe on my way up. Did you have a session today?

BRIAN

Oh, yeah. They want me to talk to you.

(Nancy raises an eyebrow. She stirs her drink.)

NANCY

And our Brunch Tuesdays don't count?

BRIAN

No... Dr. Monroe wants me to talk about my *thing*.

NANCY

Your... *thing*?

(Nancy takes a seat on the chair where Dr. Monroe was sitting earlier.)

NANCY

...Is your shirt muddy?

BRIAN

That's not what's important right now, Nancy.

(Brian sits up, folding his hands together.)

NANCY

You look like you're about to have a confessional.

BRIAN

Please take this seriously. I've never told anyone this.

NANCY

Apart from Dr. Monroe?

(Brian nods.)

BRIAN

Apart from Dr. Monroe.

(Brian takes a deep breath.)

BRIAN

Ever since I was a little boy... I wanted to be a worm.

NANCY

What?

BRIAN

Please let me finish, Nancy.

(Brian holds two hands together at his mouth
as if he were praying for forgiveness.)

BRIAN

All my life, I wanted to be a worm. Imagine how much easier it would be, squirming and crawling in the ground. Not a job to your name and not a care in the world. Blind to the hubris of man and content to squirm around forever. The idea of being a worm... it possesses me. It calls and haunts my every waking moment until I'm nothing but a shell.

(Nancy looks increasingly confused and
disturbed.)

BRIAN

Being a worm consumes my life... it's ruined friendships—relationships, I can't think about anything else.

NANCY

Oh my God. No, wait, everything makes sense now.

(There's a knock at the door, Brian gets up to check who it is.)

NANCY

Your obsession with gardening, those monthly exotic soil subscriptions, it all makes sense!

BRIAN

Lower your voice. It's the mail.

NANCY

That's why you're always so dirty, isn't it?

(Brian holds the doorknob in his hand.)

BRIAN

Nancy. Hush.

(He opens the door. There is, in fact, a mailman on the other side. He holds a large package and a clipboard with paper for Brian to sign.)

NANCY

Because you think you're a worm!

(The mailman looks incredibly confused.)

MAILMAN

Did I walk into something?

(Brian looks horrified. He spins around, quickly opening a drawer next to his front door and grabbing a revolver.)

NANCY

Brian thinks he's a worm!

(Within seconds, Brian shoots the mailman square in the head. The mailman collapses, dead. Nancy screams.)

NANCY

You killed him?!

BRIAN

I told you to be quiet! You can't go around shouting my utmost secrets.

NANCY

You killed the mailman!

BRIAN

I killed a spy.

NANCY

A spy for who?! The worm government?!

BRIAN

Don't be ridiculous. Worms are anarchists.

(Carefully, Brian tucks the gun into his pants pocket.)

NANCY

What the fuck is going on? I'm calling the police.

(Nancy pulls her phone out.)

BRIAN

They can't contain me. I'll burrow out.

NANCY

(Crying.)

Brian, you're scaring me.

(Brian does not respond. He stares at the dead mailman on the floor. Nancy is crying and shaking as she dials 9-1-1.)

NANCY

Hello? Yes? I'm at 777 Oakton Drive, I'd like to report a murder.

(She steps out of the apartment, still talking to the officer.)

(Brian watches her go, but doesn't move to hurt her. Nancy leaves the door open behind her.)

(A beat.)

(Brian begins pulling out his hidden bag of dirt from earlier. He rips the bag, furiously, and starts throwing handfuls of dirt around his apartment. He sprinkles it everywhere and all over, until the stage is coated. Heaving, Brian stands in the middle of his apartment holding the now empty bag of soil. He glares at the audience, panting.)

(Another beat.)

(Sirens begin to sound from offstage. The lighting flickers between red and blue, as if the cop car is right outside Brian's apartment. Brian grins, and discards the empty soil bag as he raises his hands in victory, basking in his work. He giddily turns to the apartment, dropping down to his knees and rolling around in the apartment as he laughs. The dirt coats his body, and he ignores the increasingly louder sirens.)

(Curtain drops.)

THE END.