



## CAROL

“You say that higher education is a joke. And treat it as such, you treat it as such.”

From *Oleanna*

By David Mamet [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David\\_Mamet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Mamet)

Gender: Female/Feminine Presenting

Style: Contemporary Dramatic

Age Range: 20's-30's

**Link to Buy script:** [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

### **Play Synopsis**

*Oleanna* is David Mamet's study of power and gender in academia. Carol, a student who is struggling in John's class, comes to his office for help. John, a forty-something professor trying to make tenure, offers her an A in the class on the condition that she will visit him diligently and let him teach her everything he knows about the subject. Yet, while Carol is in John's office, he constantly interrupts her, either by lecturing her or talking on the phone. John's interaction with her is inappropriate -- he puts his arm around her at one point -- and condescending. Carol feels more and more powerless as their meetings continue, and she eventually accuses him of battery and rape. The audience never sees any physical violence or overt sexual harassment occur between the professor and his student, and we are left to wonder “Did a crime really take place? Is this charge Carol's only way of regaining power over John? Is the truth even relevant after such an accusation?” John knows that this incident will, at the very least, kill any chance he has at making tenure -- it may ruin his livelihood entirely, and even deprive him of his freedom. Even if he's innocent, will Carol's accusations drive John to commit the very acts of violence of which she accuses him?

### **At this moment**

Carol has returned to John's office. We learn that she has filed a complaint with the university's tenure committee accusing John of sexually harassing her, by putting his hand on her shoulder during their previous meeting, making sexist remarks in class, and teaching pornographic material. Because of her complaint, John's tenure and the accompanying raise are now in jeopardy. Stunned by Carol's accusations, John tries to resolve the matter privately with her, and tells her that getting tenure and being able to buy a better home for his family is very important to him. He argues that a few questionable comments shouldn't ruin his whole career.

### **Monologue(Act II)**

You say that higher education is a joke. And treat it as such, you treat it as such. And confess to a taste to play the Patriarch in your class. To grant this. To deny that. To embrace your students. And you think it's charming to “question” in yourself this taste to mock and destroy. But you should question it. Professor. And you pick those things which you feel advance you: publication, tenure, and the steps to get them you call “harmless rituals.” And you perform those steps. Although you say it is

hypocrisy. But to the aspirations of your students. Of hardworking students, who come here, who slave to come here – you have no idea what it cost me to come to this school – you mock us. You call education “hazing” and from your so-protected, so-elitist seat you hold our confusion as a joke, and hopes and efforts with it. Then you sit there and say “what have I done?” And ask me to understand that you have aspirations too. But I tell you. I tell you. That you are vile. And that you are exploitative. And if you possess one ounce of that inner honesty you describe in your book, you can look in yourself and see those things that I see. And you can find revulsion equal to my own. Good Day.

### **Helpful Links**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LMeRoYdViX4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kwQEuCETL1U>