***The Nerd* – Plot Summary and Character Descriptions**

Now an aspiring young architect in Terre Haute, Indiana, Willum Cubbert has often told his friends about the debt he owes to Rick Steadman, a fellow ex-GI whom he has never met but who saved his life after he was seriously wounded in Vietnam. He has written to Rick to say that, as long as he is alive, "you will have somebody on Earth who will do anything for you"—so Willum is delighted when Rick shows up unexpectedly at his apartment on the night of his thirty-fourth birthday party. But his delight soon fades as it becomes apparent that Rick is a hopeless "nerd"—a bumbling oaf with no social sense, little intelligence and less tact. And Rick stays on and on, his continued presence among Willum and his friends leading to one uproarious incident after another, until the normally placid Willum finds himself contemplating violence—a dire development which, happily, is staved off by the surprising "twist" ending of the play

* **Willum Cubbert**: Willum is an architect, currently designing a hotel for Mr. Waldgrave, and a pushover. He's kind and intelligent, but Tansy says he "could use a little gumption." He lacks the backbone to stand up for himself. He rents two rooms in his house to Tansy and Axel.
* **Tansy McGinnis**: A smart woman who is as attracted to Willum as he is to her, but who has been offered her dream job as a television weather forecaster in Washington, D.C., and feels guilty for leaving Willum behind. Idealistic, perky, and just as kind as Willum.
* **Axel Hammond**: Willum's best friend. He's a pretentious, often-inebriated drama critic, always ready with a sarcastic comment.
* **Rick Steadman**: The titular "nerd." He's oblivious to insult and lacks manners or sensitivity. He tells Willum that he works as an inspector at a chalk factory in Wisconsin.
* **Warnock Waldgrave**: A boisterous, slightly dim businessman, owner of eight hotels, with no creativity and no tact. He never smiles.
* **Clelia Waldgrave**: Mr. Waldgrave's high-strung, put-upon wife. She holds back all of her emotions, and only releases her stress when she can break "something small."
* **Thor Waldgrave**: The Waldgraves' terror of a son. "Poster child for planned parenthood," as Axel calls him. Spends most of the play hiding in a closet or bedroom.