

Excerpt, **CLAUDIA** by David Foley

Scene 7

TOBY and HAYLEY walking to the subway.

TOBY: —and it's always people like that—I mean, she doesn't have the slightest *idea* of what it really means to write a play—why you write them. You're trying to capture something indefinable or—or—*elusive*— something true about the human I-don't-know— and to get that onstage—which is *hard*—which is really hard—and then to have someone like her come along—who has no talent—who has no *idea*—and they set up this dictatorship of what a play's supposed to be—because that's the only play they know how to write. I mean, I hate to use the term politically correct because it's so— But it's politically *something*— I mean, we have to be able to figure out what the *lesson* is, and the lesson has to be *edifying*, and it has to be a lesson we *approve* of— It's all such fucking—

HAYLEY: Bullshit. Yeah, I know. I wanted to kick her teeth in. I wonder where Claudia found her.

TOBY: Who knows? Maybe she followed her from Carroll Hartley.

HAYLEY: And that dress. I don't understand why women like that can't figure out what they look good in and buy it. It's like they take pride in—

He stops.

TOBY: I thought of that, too.

HAYLEY: What?

TOBY: I mean, I know what you're saying. If this is what Claudia's clients are like, then maybe she—

HAYLEY: God! Toby! I didn't say that.

TOBY: But it's true, right? It makes you think.

HAYLEY: Now you're being paranoid. She probably wrote one good play and now Claudia's stuck with her.

TOBY: *Her?* I can't believe she ever—

HAYLEY: Oh, it wasn't that bad, was it? I mean, it was kind of a drag, but it wasn't completely talent-free.

TOBY: It was pretty damn close!

HAYLEY: Toby, calm down. I feel like I'm seeing a whole new side of you.

TOBY: A new side?

HAYLEY: I mean, you're usually so mellow and unassuming, and—

TOBY: If you think I'm mellow, I'm not.

HAYLEY: I just mean—

TOBY: If you think I'm mellow, you don't know me.

Pause.

HAYLEY: OK. So. Surprise surprise.

Pause.

Look, Toby. All I said is it's a side I haven't seen. People have sides.

TOBY: No. What you said is that you've got some illusion about who I am, and it's totally not based in reality, so maybe whatever it is we're doing—

HAYLEY: “Whatever”?

TOBY: —is based on an illusion. Maybe you have no idea who I really am.

Pause.

HAYLEY: Maybe. Maybe you're such a diabolical master of disguise that until this moment I never knew you. Or maybe this is just one of those uncomfortable moments when we start seeing the less attractive elements of the other person's personality and we start figuring out whether we can deal with it. And I just want to be clear. I can deal with pissed-off-because-some-loser-bitch-dissed-your-play. It's cute, actually. It's vulnerable. But I'm not so keen on the mind-fuck. And we just officially entered mind-fuck territory. I've been with mind-fuck guys before and it's no fun. So if you don't mind, I'm gonna take that one home and sleep on it. I'll call you.

She goes.