

VANDA/DUNAYEV

*Severin, don't you see? Don't you understand you'll never be safe in the hands of a woman? Of any woman?* – Now this part is so sexist it makes me, like, *scream*.

THOMAS

It's not sexist. What's sexist about it?

VANDA

"You'll never be safe in the hands of a woman"?

THOMAS

That *is* from the book.

VANDA

I don't care what it's from. It's sexist. The whole thing's really kinda trite, when you think about it.

THOMAS

What's trite?

VANDA

He gets spanked one day and bingo, he's into whips and chains?

THOMAS

Apparently it happened to Sacher-Masoch.

VANDA

Did it happen to you?

THOMAS

*No.*

VANDA

So how do you know?

THOMAS

To me, this is a play about two people who are joined irreparably. They're handcuffed at the heart.

VANDA

Yeah, joined by his kink.

THOMAS

No. By their passion.

VANDA

*His* passion.

THOMAS

You're denying *her* passion. That's sexist, too. She's as passionate as he is, and this play is about how these two passions collide.

VANDA

What age are you living in? He brings her into this, and *she's* the one who gets to look bad, she's the villain.

THOMAS

There are no villains in this piece. It's a plea for people to understand that. This is a chemical reaction. Two people meet and ignite each other. It's not making some general statement about men *or* women.

VANDA

Sex, class, gender, pal.

THOMAS

It's about a woman who recognizes something in herself – possibly – and about a man who until he meets her is forced to hide his true self away.

VANDA

Yeah. This *prig*.

THOMAS

Why are you putting him down like this?

VANDA

She's this very nice, this *innocent* person who comes wandering in.

THOMAS

You don't understand, you don't understand.

VANDA

She *says*, "You've corrupted me."

THOMAS

*Is she innocent? Or was this desire for domination always there? Maybe Kushemski just brings it out of her.*

VANDA

Yeah, maybe she's just a woman. This is like some old Victorian Teutonic tract against *Das Female*. He forces her into a power play and then he blames *her*.

THOMAS

That's not it all, that's not what this play is about at all.

VANDA

And *the play* blames her.

THOMAS

It doesn't blame her.

VANDA

You don't *see* that?

THOMAS

How does it blame her?

VANDA

It's blaming her on every page, in every line! What happens at the end? She humiliates him one last time, she gets Count what's-his-name to slap him around, she leaves Kushemski there with his dick in his hand, and she gets blamed like it was all her fault! Like he didn't want it in the first place! Like he wasn't asking for it! I think old Kushemski's hot for the Count, that's what I think.

THOMAS

How can you be so stupid? Really? How can you be so good at playing her, and be so fucking stupid about her? And about everything else in this play. You fucking idiot. You fucking idiot *woman*. Yes. Idiot *woman*. Idiot *actress*.

(Pause.)

VANDA

I think you owe me an apology, buster.