

DIRECTOR

Go!

She exits.

All the actors sit around, behaving like actors.

*The contrast between the fake world of their costumes
and the real modern world: phones, Doritos,
sitting, waiting, knitting . . .*

She enters.

SHE

How was that?

DIRECTOR

Thirty-two seconds.

SHE

Great!

DIRECTOR

Take ten.

*She sits in her gorgeous green dress on the lip of the stage and opens
a water bottle.*

They might share a cigarette. If they do, He says:

HE

Do you mind if I smoke?

SHE

No.

HE

Is your husband coming to see the dress?

SHE

God, no. I told him to stay away until opening.

START

STAGE KISS

HE

And will you kiss me less passionately in front of him?

SHE

I don't know yet.

HE

What does he do, anyway, your husband?

SHE

Mergers and acquisitions.

HE

Ah.

SHE

My mother told me never to marry an actor. She said never marry a man who looks in the mirror more than you do.

HE

Your mother never liked me.

SHE

Mmm—

HE

But I don't look in the mirror.

SHE

No, you didn't.

HE

I wanted to be ugly. A writer. Make something lasting.

SHE

Were you ever unambivalent—about anything?

HE

You.

SHE

For a time.

HE

For a time.

SHE

Favorite last line from a play:

HE/SHE

I fell in love with James Tyrone and was so happy for a time . . .

A pause.

HE

Are you happy?

SHE

We're happy. My husband, I mean. And me. We're happy.

HE

Good. Good for you.

SHE

My daughter is gorgeous. My daughter is the love of my life.

HE

I'm so happy for you.

SHE

We don't fight. My husband. And I. He's comforting. He comforts me.

HE

Like a hot cup of tea? With exactly the right amount of milk?

SHE

No, more like a person. Who exhibits restraint and compassion.

STAGE KISS

HE

Like tea. Remember that time in Düsseldorf when we were on tour and I said let's have sex I want you. And you said but I have water on to boil for tea. I knew then that we were finished.

SHE

That's not how it went. I made the tea anyway and then we did it and then I warmed up the tea in the microwave and I drank it after we did it.

HE

Whatever.

SHE

I like tea.

HE

I know.

SHE

It wasn't about you.

HE

Right.

SHE

This play is kind of awful, don't you think?

HE

Oh, I don't know . . . I like your costumes.

SHE

Do you.

HE

Yes, this greenish one is especially fetching. With the little thing done up just here . . .

He touches her shoulder.

SHE

Why, thank you. Johnny Lowell.

HE

Ada Fountain, my darling, how *can* we have been apart for so long?

SHE

(As Ada) I do not know.

(As herself) I don't know.

He moves in to kiss her.

She looks around and moves away.

SHE

Stop!

I love my husband.

HE

You always found repression so interesting. I don't find repression interesting. I really, really want you.

SHE

How's your schoolteacher?

HE

Optimistic.

SHE

I missed you.

HE

A lot?

SHE

A lot.

STAGE KISS

HE

It's torture kissing you on stage, in front of all these idiots. I want to fling you on a bed, press you against a door—Oh, God, you're killing me.

END

SHE

Why do you think people enjoy watching other people kiss on stage, anyway?

HE

They don't enjoy it. They tolerate it.

SHE

What do you mean?

HE

They tolerate it because it signifies resolution which people like to see on stage but they don't really like to see the act of kissing on stage, only the idea of kissing on stage. That's why actors have to be good looking because it's about an idea, an idea of beauty completing itself. You don't like to see people do more than kiss on stage, it's repulsive.

SHE

But why do we want to see people have sex in the movies.

Throughout the following he might touch her knee.

HE

That's because you can be alone in your own mind when you watch a movie and it's like masturbation but you can't be alone when you watch a play because there's always someone next to you. That's why it's uncomfortable to watch people have sex on stage but pleasant to watch them have sex in the movies. And that's why porn stars don't have to be as good looking as actors because we're not watching the *idea* of sex but sex itself which can be ugly. And that's why the theater is superior to film, because it's less like masturbation.