

Impact  
(a stageplay)

by  
Peg Tittle

[ptittle7@gmail.com](mailto:ptittle7@gmail.com)  
705-384-7692

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## CHARACTERS

WOMAN - a victim of sexual assault

FIRST MAN - one of the two men involved in the assault

SECOND MAN - the other one of the two men involved in the assault

MALE GUARD

FEMALE GUARD

Note: When one character speaks to audience or to her/himself, the other characters freeze.

## SET

The entire play takes place in a cell-like room in a prison. There is one table. On one side, there are two chairs, with shackles set into the table in front of each chair. This is where the two men will sit. On the other side, there is one chair. This is where the woman will sit.

The door to the room is at the back; it has a half-window so the guards can be seen to their waist where their gun is worn.

## TIME

In a slightly near future when the court process is slightly different, allowing this post-trial but pre-sentence confrontation.

## ACT 1

### SCENE 1

A woman in her mid-twenties, wearing a simple blouse, skirt, and heels, waits in a room. A room that looks much like a cell, with its concrete floor, its concrete walls. She sits at a bare table. In an uncomfortable chair. She pulls a folder from the bag resting on the floor beside her and lays it onto the table in front of her.

Two young men, both in their early twenties, both in prison garb are brought in by the two guards (MALE GUARD, FEMALE GUARD) who sit them in the two chairs opposite her, then cuff their hands to the heavy rings set into the table. The guards leave. The men stare across the table at the woman.

FIRST MAN: Who are you?

WOMAN: (disconcerted, then with disbelief) Who am I?

FIRST MAN: Yeah. Are you our new lawyer? Figures. (He snorts with disgust.)

The woman looks at the second man. He too doesn't recognize her.

WOMAN: Do we really all look the same to you?

WOMAN: (to audience; MEN freeze) Is it that simple? That horrible?

WOMAN: I'm the waitress at Bud's Bar.

FIRST MAN: Oh yeah. You *do* look a little familiar.

WOMAN: I'm the woman you assaulted. Sexually.

FIRST MAN: (casually) No.

WOMAN: What do you mean 'No'?

FIRST MAN: (shakes his head) Don't know what you're talking about. (He looks over at the second man.) Do *you* know what she's talking about?

The second one shakes his head, grinning slightly. He'd like to cross his arms on his chest, but the shackles prevent it. Instead, he leans back as far as possible and spreads his legs far apart.

WOMAN: That night, after closing— (It starts as a reminder, but ends as an insistence.)

FIRST MAN: That was you? Okay, yeah ... (He smiles. As if remembering a rather pleasant day at the beach.) But you *wanted* it. (He turns to his buddy for confirmation. Because it isn't really a question.) Didn't she? (He turns back to the woman.) You remembered it wrong. As we said in court.

WOMAN: (with vehemence) I didn't remember it wrong! It was raining. You offered me a ride.

FIRST MAN: (smugly) And you said 'Yes.'

FIRST MAN: (to audience; second man and woman freeze) She is *so* naïve.

WOMAN: To the ride! Not to sex!

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) Do they really think that consent to one means consent to the other? That when a woman accepts a ride—or an invitation to a party, or a drink, or dinner ... Perhaps. After all, men define—everything. (She sighs.)

FIRST MAN: As *I* recall, you said 'Yes, *please*'. (He grins.)

WOMAN: (she reminds him) And yet, here we are.

FIRST MAN: (looking away) Not for long, bitch.

WOMAN: (ignoring that) Did you hear me say 'Yes' *to the sex*?

FIRST MAN: Didn't hear you say 'No.' (He snickers.)

WOMAN: But I did. Say 'No.' Several times. Loudly. Clearly.

FIRST MAN: (cheerfully, definitively) Didn't hear you.

WOMAN: (ignoring that as well) Besides which, it's not like the default is consent. You don't assume 'Yes' unless otherwise indicated. You assume 'No' unless otherwise indicated.

FIRST MAN: Well, maybe we can just agree to disagree about that. (He smiles. It's such a patronizing smile.)

WOMAN: Do you figure you have the right to just walk into someone's house without an invitation? Rummage through their closets and drawers, handle their books, touch their mementos— (She shudders. One could always get new clothes, but the rest—would be permanently soiled.)

He doesn't respond. It was a stupid question. That was break and enter.

WOMAN: You think the rules are 'It's okay unless the person says it's not'?

He snorts.

WOMAN: Then what makes you think you have the right to come into my *body* without an invitation?

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) I knew they'd refuse to accept the analogy. A woman's body isn't a house. It's *public* property. It was part of why contraception and abortion are ... issues.

WOMAN: (continuing to audience) Of course, I don't accept the analogy either. My body isn't my house. It's—me. (she lifts her hands helplessly) And ... now ... I can't just—move.

FIRST MAN: So, what, we have to *ask* now? (He stares at her in disbelief.)

(She stares at *him* in disbelief.)

WOMAN: Yes!

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) Why is that so ... objectionable? (after a moment) Ah. To ask for permission is a sign of weakness.

WOMAN: (reconsidering) Then again, no. Because if you have to ask whether a woman wants you, she probably doesn't. If she wants you, she'll move *toward* you, rather than away from you. For starters. Right?

WOMAN: (getting to walk around the room a bit, speaking to audience; the men freeze) Seriously, how clueless are these guys? (Suddenly, she stops, then turns slowly to face audience) Could it be that neither one has ever made love? Or even made *like*? Has never engaged in simple, mutual pleasuring?

So they honestly *don't* know. They genuinely think this was the way it's supposed to be. Because it's all they've ever seen. In the porn they no doubt watch. It's all they've ever heard about. From their bragging buddies.

(as an aside) Which begs the question, why is rape something to brag about?

(resuming main thread) Even if they've gone to prostitutes— Most are raped while on the job. They're four hundred times more likely, than everyone, to die on the job. (She gives the audience a moment to digest that.)

(resuming the main thread again) What these guys need is a few sessions with a sex therapist.

Because absent love, or even friendship, genuine friendship—thank you social media for conflating acquaintanceship and friendship—that might lead to affectionate sexual interaction ...

And the sex/gender divide is so great now—walk into any toy store—it’s nearly impossible to cross over and just *talk* to someone on the other side. Surely a prerequisite. What would young men and women they talk about? All they know about the other, all they’ve been told, by television, by advertisementsc...

Worse, all they know about the other’s sexuality, informed not even by porn, but by the ubiquitous pop music saturating their lives, pumping them full of sexualized energy—it’s a far cry from the Pointer Sisters singing about a slow hand ...

‘Course even back then, did *men* listen to the Pointer Sisters? They laughed at Barry White.

SECOND MAN: We didn’t mean to hurt you. We just meant to have a little fun.

Jarred out of her thoughts, the WOMAN turns to him. She considers what he’s said, then returns to the table. She opens the folder and spreads the eight-by-tens onto the table in front of them. Like tarot cards.

WOMAN: Does that look like fun? For me?

The first man glances at the photographs, then looks up at her. He shrugs.

The second one’s eyes widen before he looks away.

WOMAN: This is how you have fun?

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) ‘Course what people, almost always men, mean when they say ‘We were just having fun’ is ‘We don’t want to be held responsible for what we did’ or ‘We didn’t think it through.’

FIRST MAN: (shrugging) Sorry. Is that what you want to hear? Is this one of those victims’ rights things? Are you here to tell us what bad boys we are?

He laughs and grins at his buddy. Who grins back.

WOMAN: No, I’m here to ask why. Why did you rape me?

FIRST MAN: Because we can.

The second man giggles. Sort of.

WOMAN: (standing up in anger) This is all just a big joke to you, is it?

The MALE GUARD happens to pass by the door, so she signals to him. She needs a break.

## SCENE 2

The MALE GUARD escorts the WOMAN back into the room.

SECOND MAN: (a little too eagerly, before she's even seated) We thought you were okay with it. We thought you wanted it. It wasn't rape. It was just—sex.

She selects one of the photographs from the folder, then stands to lean across the table and shove it into his face.

WOMAN: You thought I wanted—this? Why in god's name would you think *anyone* would want this?

SECOND MAN: Okay, maybe we, maybe *he* (nodding to the FIRST MAN) got a little carried away, but—

FIRST MAN smirks.

WOMAN: (still standing) Why would you think I wanted *any* of it? Why would you think I want some guy I don't even know to stick his penis into me?

SECOND MAN: But you *know* us! We're regulars!

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) Well, that was true. It was partly why I'd accepted the ride. They *were* regulars. And they seemed like nice guys. In fact, I think they're students at the university. (She grimaces.) None of which, now, seems to vouch for their character, their morality.

WOMAN: That's not—that's not *knowing* you. And even if I *did* know you, that doesn't mean I want to have sex with you.

SECOND MAN: (with genuine confusion) But you're always smiling at us.

WOMAN: It's my *job*!

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) It's every woman's job. To smile at men. To appease them. To make them feel good. But then — Damned if you do ...

WOMAN: (continuing to audience with this new thought) No wonder men don't like it when women *don't* smile.

WOMAN: (to the second man) I was just being *friendly*! When a woman is friendly toward you, that doesn't mean she wants to have sex with you!

WOMAN: (standing to pace; to audience; the men freeze) Are they so blind to nuance, to subtlety, to the whole *spectrum* of social engagement?



Perhaps. The world is certainly going in that direction, society is devolving, moving backwards, from complexity to simplicity. Texting prevents full expression. Emoticons are essentially pictograms.

Men in particular seem insensitive to ... communication. Words. Body language.

It would make things so much easier if we were open and clear, if we didn't have such a taboo about *talking* about *sex*. Though, oddly enough, words like fuck and cunt seem to come pretty easily to most people. Most men. So why isn't 'Do you want to have sex?' just as not-awkward?

Perhaps these two are just especially inept, misinterpreting social signals, failing to appreciate the multiple possibilities.

Or maybe there are no multiple possibilities for men. Men consider kissing to be foreplay. Everything but penetration is foreplay, something inevitably *leading to* penetration. Because sex is *defined as* penetration, as penis-in-vagina. Women, on the other hand, might define a kiss, and many other things, things other than penetration, as the desirable end point in and of itself.

(this time more to herself) Or maybe—maybe *I'm* the one who doesn't know the language. (The thought startles her.) Maybe *I'm* the inept one. Maybe accepting one kind of invitation *does* mean accepting another. Now.

(to the audience again) No, maybe men and women just use different languages. And there isn't a word for 'no' in their language. Not that can be spoken by a woman.

SECOND MAN: (trying to explain) You didn't scream.

WOMAN: I'm not a screamer. I use my words. And I did say 'No.'

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) And actually, I did scream. When the first one—

FIRST MAN: 'No means yes, yes means anal.' (He laughs.) Didn't you get the memo? Came from Yale even.

WOMAN: So you *did* hear me. Say 'No.' I also said 'STOP!' and 'GET OFF ME!' Tell me, what part of 'STOP' and 'GET OFF ME!' didn't you understand?

SECOND MAN: We thought you were just—

WOMAN: Did I *look* like I was just— What, bluffing? Kidding?

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) Then again, how could they know? They didn't look at me. Not really.

FIRST MAN: You didn't fight back.

WOMAN: I did so! I tried to push you off me. I tried to get out from under you.

He shrugs.

WOMAN: And anyway, why should I *have* to fight back? Victims of other kinds of assault don't have to prove they resisted or that they didn't consent.

FIRST MAN: Well yeah. Because no one in their right mind would consent to be beaten up. (He laughs.)

She stares at him. Waiting. In vain.

SECOND MAN: We didn't think you meant it.

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) Right. Men never take women seriously. Why should this be any different? What we say, what we do—none of it *means* anything. Certainly not anything important.

WOMAN: Didn't you realize I suddenly went still?

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) I'd hoped that would minimize the injuries. If I stopped moving. Stopped struggling.

FIRST MAN: Yeah, we just figured you were frigid or something.

She considers that.

WOMAN: Okay, and what does that mean? Doesn't it mean a woman doesn't enjoy sexual intercourse?

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) Or that you're not doing it right.

WOMAN: (to the men) So ... wouldn't that make you stop?

FIRST MAN shrugs.

WOMAN: (standing to pace; to audience; the men freeze) Right. Whether or not a woman enjoys sex is irrelevant. We have vaginas, they're meant to have penises shoved in them, and especially if they've had penises shoved in them before, well, what's the big deal. Though they haven't mentioned that yet.

And if the woman *hasn't* had a penis shoved in her vagina before, then, what, they're doing her a favour? Helping her out? Breaking her in? (She couldn't wrap her head around the logic. Because there was none. Or there was. And it was just so—)

SECOND MAN: (trying again) Look, we thought you liked it.

FIRST MAN: (taking over) Most women do. You pretend you don't, but deep down you do.

WOMAN: (turning slowly to face the men) Most women like *rape*?

FIRST MAN: (nodding) I know for a fact that you like it when we hold you down, when we use force.

FIRST MAN: (to audience; the other two freeze) There. Let her deal with *that*.

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) I doubt he knows *anything* for a fact. It 's just the way some people, mostly men, talk. It makes them appear knowledgeable. Presenting opinion as fact is how people, typically men, achieve and maintain their status as authorities, experts, fonts of wisdom ... 'I know for a fact' just means 'I'm guessing it's true.' Or 'I hope it's true.'

FIRST MAN: It's a turn-on. Admit it.

WOMAN: And you know this because—?

FIRST MAN: (rolling his eyes) It's common knowledge, isn't it.

WOMAN: (returning to the table) I want to be sure I understand you. You think most women like *this*?

She presents the photographs again. He refuses to look.

WOMAN: (angrily) Oh no, you don't get to turn away. LOOK!

She stands up, reaches over, grabs his hair, and forces him to look.

WOMAN: LOOK AT WHAT YOU DID TO ME!

He tries to pull away. Can't really.

The MALE GUARD appears at the door. He glances inside, then, concluding that he is not needed, goes away.

She lets go. Can't stand touching him.

WOMAN: You did this to me! (She points to the photographs, one at a time.) And this! And this! Can you honestly tell me you thought I'd *like* it? Would *you* like it?

He doesn't answer.

WOMAN: Then why do you think I'd like it?

She sits back down. Suddenly exhausted.

FIRST MAN: (insisting) You women like this sort of thing!

WOMAN: 'You women'? You've done this to other women? And they liked it? How did you know? When they struggled, you thought that meant they were having fun? When they begged you to stop? When they cried? When they screamed, you thought that meant they were enjoying it? And then when they just lay there, limp, hoping to get out of it alive, you thought they were having a good time?

No response.

WOMAN: Yes, many women moan during sex and cry out when they have an orgasm. Can you honestly not tell the difference between those moans and cries and *my* moans and cries?

And that's when she knows for sure. She looks at the audience pointedly, then turns back to the men.

WOMAN: You've never had sex. Real sex. Good sex. Sex with a woman who wanted it. Neither one of you. You don't *know* what happens when a woman has an orgasm.

The FIRST MAN snorts.

WOMAN: (anticipating) A woman who's not acting in a porn film. You know they're acting, right?

The looks on their faces register.

WOMAN: You thought porn was real? They're actors! Following a script! The director *tells* the woman to pretend she likes it. *Pretend*. Understand? It's *make-believe*.

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) (confirming her earlier hunch) All of their knowledge about sex is based on porn. Men's fantasies. And why do men fantasize about raping, about hurting and humiliating, women?

WOMAN: (continuing, to the men) Even prostitutes are acting. They're saying and doing whatever they think will make them the most money. Many of them are acting for their lives. If they don't keep their customers satisfied, their employer, their pimp, will punish them. Hurt them. Horribly. In fact, many of them are actual prisoners. They've been kidnapped. Specifically to be bought and sold. Ever hear of sex trafficking? Prostitution rings? They've been told what to wear, what to say, what to do. It's all an act.

FIRST MAN: (grinning knowingly) Oh, I'm pretty sure they're enjoying it.

She just stares at him. And her whole body sighs into her chair.

WOMAN: Then you're easy to fool. (She sighs.)

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) Maybe because apart from all that, prostitution institutionalizes the idea that men have a right — at least an economic right — to women's bodies. As Brownmiller pointed out. The idea that sex is a service, just one of many, that women simply — provide.

*More* than an economic right, according to the so-called 'incels' who are so enraged at being denied that right, they go on a killing spree.

I doubt they watch any erotica. I doubt they even *know* about erotica. Because the erotica industry can't compete with the porn industry. Hell, not even the NFL can compete with the porn industry. And why is that?

So the closest they can come would be to watch some of the steamier scenes in— chick flicks. So never gonna happen.

WOMAN: (to the men) You've never even *seen* consensual sex, have you. You've never seen two people make love. A man and a woman, caressing each other, lingering with their hands on each other's body, slowly undressing each other, kissing, touching, stroking, each of them getting hotter, each of them getting more excited, until eventually, it might take half an hour, but that's okay because it feels so good, the woman eventually comes, usually because the man has been tickling her clitoris in a crazy-making way, and then the man enters her, and moves in and out, sometimes slowly, sometimes quickly, and sometimes she comes again in the time it takes for him to come, and then they lay together, lazily, tangled up in each other, languidly, with such ...

Both men are just staring at her. The SECOND MAN has his mouth slightly open.

WOMAN: (mostly to herself) And you'll probably never *have* consensual sex. You'll probably never make love.

WOMAN: (to the audience; the men freeze) You know, the first one is rather good-looking, by contemporary standards. (puzzled) Surely he doesn't have to rape. (sighing when she understands) But as one of the beautiful people, he would have received, throughout his life, better jobs, better pay, more credit, more attention ... And those to whom much is given expect that much, and more. That is, he feels entitled. To whatever he wants.

And it's quite possible he doesn't *want* real sex. He doesn't *want* a real relationship with a woman; his relationships with men are more important. *Men* are more important.

SECOND MAN: (in a small voice, responding to what she'd last said to them) What makes you say that?

WOMAN: Well, because I can't imagine any— You're not— What's there about you to love?

ACT 2

SCENE 1

A week later, she is back in the room, back in the prison. She sits at the table, her bag on the floor beside her. The two men are again brought in by the two GUARDS and shackled to the table.

As soon as the SECOND MAN is seated, he speaks.

SECOND MAN: What I don't get is if you're not looking for it, why do you all go around looking like Miley Cyrus?

FIRST MAN: Yeah, with your short skirts and your fuck-me shoes.

WOMAN: Well, I can't speak for other women, but *I* was wearing a skirt because it's my uniform. And—

FIRST MAN: And now?

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) He's right. Look at me. (She raises her foot.) Not exactly 'fuck-me' heels, but— Wearing a skirt or a dress, and heels, a bit of make-up, a bit of jewelry—it's just normal, isn't it. It's just convention. It's expected.

She gets up and walks around the room as she thinks this through, so she speaks partly to audience and partly to herself.

WOMAN: (continuing) And why is showing your legs expected? Of women?

Well, I dress this way to look nice.

Right, but what does 'look nice' mean? Don't I look okay just as I am?

Yes, but ... I want to be attractive.

Okay, but what does wearing skirts as opposed to pants have to do with looking attractive? 'Looking attractive' can only mean 'looking *sexually* attractive.' Because the difference is showing your legs. And legs are, have become, sexualized.

And, if it's a tight skirt, a sheath skirt, the difference is restricting your movement.

And *that* has become sexualized?

And heels make your legs appear more ... shapely. Longer, essentially. Because ... why are long legs more sexually attractive? Ah. (She stops in her tracks.) Long legs accentuate the eye's journey to the apex, the prize, the point of entry.

(She stares at the audience, with a sigh.) Valian is right: sexualizing our appearance has become normalized. It has become just as much a uniform— It's expected. Almost required. Even feminists are wearing make-up now. Well, so-called feminists.

Even so. (She resumes moving around the room, again speaking partly to the audience and partly to herself.) Dressing to be sexually attractive doesn't mean I want to attract—yes, it does. It means exactly that. Attract. Bring to.

Well, maybe for a look. But not necessarily for intercourse. Certainly not for violence.

And I certainly don't want to attract *all* men.

But how can I be selective? With my appearance. It's impossible.

So I *am* attracting all men. Then rejecting most of them.

Which is such an inefficient way to—to what? Find a mate? Why am I doing that with appearance anyway? Don't I want a mate to be someone who likes me for what, for who, I *am*?

Well, yes, if we're talking about a long-term partner. But if we're talking about just a hook-up, just a one-night stand ... Then why am I making myself sexually attractive *as a matter of routine*. (gesturing to herself) Here. Now. Wouldn't I do it just when I went to parties or whatever?

(She glances at the men sitting at the table.) They're right. It is, at least, part of the big picture. The cultural norm is that women should look a certain way, a way that emphasizes their sexuality, a way that turns men on a bit, a way that makes men think they're available to them. When I conform to that norm, I am, to some small extent, complicit. I don't tease, but yes, I try to be attractive. I try *to attract*.

Then again, if I intend to turn down most of the men I attract—because no, I don't want to have sex with most men—*isn't* that teasing?

She is in the back corner of the room now.

FIRST MAN: (turning to her) Well?

WOMAN: I'm thinking. You should try it some time.

He rolls his eyes.

WOMAN: (resuming her thinking things through, resuming moving around the room; the men freeze again) But the make-up, that's just to make you look younger, generally speaking. To get rid of the wrinkles and the other imperfections that developed as one ages.



(She stops.) Imperfections. It's a little disturbing, isn't it, that evidence of age is considered an imperfection. That youth is considered ... preferable.

But it's just true: younger bodies *are* more physically attractive. And therefore more sexually appealing. Wait, does that *necessarily* follow?

(A few moments later.) And does it *have* to cross into endorsing pedophilia?

Because women also shaved their legs.

Yes, but just to make them smoother.

And their armpits.

Yes, but again—

And now their— (she gestures a little uncomfortably to her crotch).

The result *is* a prepubescent look. (She sighs.)

Yes, but it also just makes things ... more accessible. (She sighs again.)

You know, I get tired of it sometimes. The shaving, the plucking, the make-up, the hair ... It takes so much time and energy—

(She stops in her tracks again, somewhere behind the men again.) Is that part of it? Women are supposed to spend a lot of time and energy attracting men? Pleasing men?

What for? Seriously. Because what have they done for us lately? (She glances at the men.)

And the damn things— (She reaches down to slip off her shoes.)

(And that's when *that* occurs to her—) Oh. Women are also supposed to be willing to endure pain if it pleases men.

(She faces the audience.) There's more research on male sexual pleasure than there is on female sexual pain. Five times more. One in three women feel pain during vaginal penetration; two in three, during anal penetration. They just don't tell their partners. Women often ignore or downplay their own distress so as not to upset others, typically men. All this, why? Because, as Loofbourow put it, "we live in a culture that sees female pain as normal" (she pauses before adding the rest) "—and male pleasure as a right."

FIRST MAN: (aggrieved) You all go around looking like hos, then cry rape when we treat you like one.

WOMAN: What? Prostitutes don't want to be raped. (Adding) Quite apart from you can't tell the difference between prostitutes and women who've just made themselves sexually attractive?

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) Maybe not. It is, after all, just a matter of degree.

I picked up a guy in a bar one night. I began the conversation, I made the suggestion. He thought I was a prostitute. Apparently the only women who can initiate a sexual encounter are prostitutes. Denied that active role, no wonder consent is so troublesome. Maybe for a long time 'no' *did* mean 'yes'. Because 'yes' meant 'I'm a prostitute.'

(Then another thought occurs to her.) And if the screaming and struggling is *also* just a matter of degree, expressions of protest too similar to expressions of acquiescence—no, I don't believe ...

Besides, what about 'Stop!' and 'Get off me!'

(Another new thought.) And the difference isn't just a matter of degree in appearance. Prostitutes expect payment in cash, then and there. Other women expect ... (she slumps against the wall) to have their way paid. For the night. For the rest of their lives. (She sighs.)

No wonder they have such contempt for us.

(pushing off and resuming her pacing) Then again, not all women.

And then again, men often *demand* such dependence. They often insist on paying our way. Their masculinity depends on it.

Or does their subsequent use of our bodies depend on it?

At the same time, they seem to resent our dependence.

And yet, they often become enraged when we become, or are, *independent*. When we leave them or don't need them in the first place.

She raises her hands in defeat. Can't figure the logic.

FIRST MAN: (with disgust) All women are hos.

She turns to him slowly.

WOMAN: (turning to audience; the men freeze) Yes. *That's* it. It isn't a case of mistaken identity. Because even when women are completely covered up, head to toe, in burkas, men hurt them. Because even women over fifty, over sixty, over seventy, are raped.

No surprise then. When all women are hos—and when prostitutes—

(She sighs.) They demand sexiness, and then, when we comply, they insult, call us sluts. Hos.

'Course, they also do that when we *don't* comply.

WOMAN: (to the men, backing up to an earlier point to make a different point) Even if my appearance *did* indicate that I wanted sex, that doesn't mean I'm going to go through with it. I may want to eat a whole carton of ice cream. Doesn't mean I'm going to. And if you offered me a whole carton of ice cream, I'd say 'No thanks.'

The men don't seem to follow.

WOMAN: There's a difference. Between what you want and what you do. Unless you're a two-year-old.

FIRST MAN: (to himself; the other two freeze) Bitch.

WOMAN: But you didn't *offer* me anything. You just assumed. You made the decision for me. As if you know best. What I want and what I don't want. Which wants I'll satisfy and which ones I won't. Who the hell do you think you are? (glaring at them) You don't know shit! About me!

They both stare at her.

WOMAN: Or is it that you think women in general are unable to decide, unable to speak, for themselves? We're not stupid. And we're not children.

WOMAN: (aside to audience, so the men freeze) Despite what so many movies, certainly the ones these guys watch, say.

(adding) And not just movies. In the real world, how many positions of power, of responsibility, are occupied by women? Somewhere between 20 and 30 per cent. And it's the *other* 70 to 80 percent that gets media coverage. When women *get* media coverage. When they're *granted* media cover. So no one sees, no one knows about, even that meager 20 to 30 percent.

WOMAN: (turning back to the men) On the contrary, I can—and did—speak for myself. You ignored me.

WOMAN: (mostly to herself; the men freeze) No surprise there.

(Yet another new thought.) Maybe we've been looking at the wrong thing. *For* the wrong thing. We should be looking not for the presence of consent, but for the presence of *coercion*. MacKinnon once said, in *Are Women Human?*, that coercion has been hidden. Behind consent. (nodding to herself)

Still ...

WOMAN: Even if a woman *does* ask for it— Suppose she's drunk or for some other reason isn't acting in her own best interests— Are you obliged to do it? Might you not have a moral obligation to refuse? Take the higher road?

SECOND MAN: Okay, look, maybe we made a mistake.

WOMAN: (with disbelief) *A mistake?*

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) No. Despite the porn, despite the ambiguities, I can't quite believe they really thought that what they did was sex. Can you?

I think maybe they prefer rape. To sex.

Is that because that's the way they're built, biologically, or because that's the way they've been made, socially? Studies suggest that exposure to porn eventually makes power, dominance, even violence, the only way to sexual arousal, satisfaction. But maybe they're wired that way from the get-go. Maybe sex, regular sex, for men, was all about power and dominance. That could explain why so many of them were uncomfortable with her on top. Rape was also about power and dominance. Therefore.

And maybe they know porn's fake. And maybe they don't care. Grisham's *The Appeal* had opened her eyes on this matter. She'd realized that for most men, power matters. And she'd come to realize that truth didn't matter. She'd also realized that money was important, because it could buy things. But she hadn't put it all together the way Grisham had. Money can also buy friends. Not *real* friends, but that doesn't matter. What matters is what those 'friends' say and do. Whether it's sincere or not, whether it's motivated by genuine affection or personal gain, doesn't matter. So the women are acting? They're just *pretending* to like it? Doesn't matter. What matters is that men have so much power over them, they can make them *say* they like it. *That's* the turn-on. The power.

FIRST MAN: Yeah. It was a mistake. Get over it.

WOMAN: Get over it? *Get over it?*

She starts to bring out the photographs again.

SECOND MAN: You shouldn't've gotten into the car then.

WOMAN: Oh it's *my* fault? *My* fault you raped me?

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) Of course it is. Women are expected to take full responsibility for—what men do to them. Which requires limiting their choices with regard to—everything.

FIRST MAN: We were a little drunk, okay?

WOMAN: So?

He doesn't elaborate.

WOMAN: You think that *absolves* you? You think getting drunk releases you from responsibility? For whatever you do *while* drunk? Wouldn't that be convenient.

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) At least *I* hadn't been drunk or drugged. Though sometimes I wish I had been.

I remember a video I saw once, showing a young man in close-up whispering to the viewer about what he was going to do to the woman in the background, who was passed out drunk on the couch. He then went to the woman and gently put a pillow under her head and just as gently covered her with a blanket. What shocked me was that I was shocked. It was just a simple act of kindness. But—

FIRST MAN: (grinning) Works for me.

She gets up. She has to get out of there. Should that be possible.

ACT 3

SCENE 1

Again, the MEN are already in the room when the WOMAN arrives, escorted by the FEMALE GUARD. This time she's wearing a sweatshirt, loose cotton pants, and track shoes. She still carries her bag, and sets it onto the floor as she takes her seat.

FIRST MAN: (sneering) What, you've turned into a dyke?

WOMAN: (puzzled) Why do you say that?

FIRST MAN: Your clothes.

She stares out at the audience pointedly, then turns to the man.

WOMAN: You think that any woman who doesn't wear a skirt and heels is a *lesbian*? Why would you think that?

He doesn't respond.

WOMAN: You also think that any woman who *does* wear skirt and heels wants to have sex with every man, yeah?

No answer.

WOMAN: So, by your thinking, it's conceptually impossible to rape a straight woman.

They are silent.

WOMAN: What if I *was* a lesbian? Would what you did to me be rape *then*?

FIRST MAN: (laughing) No, it would be teaching you a lesson.

WOMAN: (ignoring the laughter) What lesson?

No response.

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) He can't say. Of course he can't. It's called 'corrective rape' in some countries. And it is, absurdly, intended to convert the woman to heterosexuality. (an aside) And they say men are the logical ones.

WOMAN: (turning back to the men) That I'm *supposed* to be available to all men? (She stares at them.) Why would you think *that*?

Neither one responds.

WOMAN: (flatly) I think you're lying. You didn't think I was okay with it, you didn't think I wanted it, you didn't think I liked it. You heard me say 'No.' You didn't think I was joking, you knew I meant it. You didn't just make a mistake. You knew full well you were raping me. So. Why?

She looks pointedly at one and then the other.

The second one shrugs.

WOMAN: That's not an answer! (shouting) Why did you do it?

He refuses to answer.

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) Answering a woman's question is emasculating. It's acceding to her request. Paying attention to what she wants. It's beneath them. Even so ...

WOMAN: (turning back to the men) Why did you rape me?

WOMAN: (turning back to audience; the men freeze) Do you think they themselves have they been victims of violence? That's the theory. A theory. What goes around comes around. Violence is a learned behavior.

But no, what are the odds—that both of them have been victims of violence, that both of them have been, specifically, sexually assaulted.

Besides, *I've* now been assaulted, sexually, but I have no inclination to go and assault, sexually assault, someone else. None whatsoever.

FIRST MAN: (shrugging) It's not like you're married or anything. (He looks pointedly at her hand.)

WOMAN: (after the moment it takes to connect the dots) What, once I'm married, that would mean I'm off-limits? Because then I belong to another man? Whereas until then— I'm not a piece of property!

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) But that is, after all, how it began. 'To have and to hold' is a legal phrase that refers to property ownership. Not physical affection. And until 1983—*1983!*—husbands could legally rape their wives. Because, after all, they owned them.

And the ring? Remnant of the shackle.

The name change? Indicative of the transfer of ownership from father to husband, from one male to another.

How a man feels when his wife has sex with another man? Not sadness, for the loss of love. No. Rage. At the theft.

She takes a moment.

WOMAN: (to the men) Do you know what a false dichotomy is?

No response.

WOMAN: You're assuming that I'm available either to only one man or to all men. There is a third option. And a fourth.

They stare at her. Incomprehension on their faces.

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) (snorts) See the looks on their faces? That I might be completely unavailable had not occurred to them. Until they thought I might be a dyke.

(sighing) Nor, apparently, has it occurred to them that I might be available only to those—those men—I choose.

FIRST MAN: It's just physical. Instinct. Basic needs and all that.

WOMAN: First, no, it's not a need.

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) Despite what his Psych 101 text would have said. Because it was probably written by a man. Who either wanted to believe that sex was a need or who mistook what was true of the whole for what was true of the parts. On a *species* level, yes, sexual intercourse is needed, for survival. *Of the species*. But on an individual level?

WOMAN: (to the FIRST MAN) You won't die if you don't have sex. Oxygen, water, food, and a certain temperature range are needs. Everything else is a want.

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) But saying you *need* something makes it so much harder for others to refuse to give it to you. Because needs are, well, things one *needs*—they're *required*. Needs take priority to wants.

(adding) But they aren't, therefore, entitlements.

WOMAN: (to the FIRST MAN) And even if it *was* a need, even if you *did* have to ejaculate in order to survive, there's nothing saying you have to do so inside a woman. Is there?

Neither one responds.

WOMAN: So why not just jerk off when the desire overwhelms you?

The FIRST MAN snorts.



WOMAN: What does that mean? Seriously, I don't understand your response. What's snort-worthy of masturbation? Real men don't masturbate? Is there something insulting about doing it yourself? Wouldn't it be the other way around? Wouldn't there be something insulting about needing a woman to do it? Because real men *don't* need women. Isn't that right?

He looks at her. Then looks away. He hadn't considered it that way.

WOMAN: So I guess it's not about sex. The need for sex. Because I'm sure there are, or could be, sexual aids, moist, warm, tight somethings, that would feel as good, probably even better. So ... what *is* it about?

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) God, it's like having a conversation with molasses. Are they truly that ... oblivious?

Perhaps. I read that when young women in a university classroom described what they did to avoid rape—you know, be aware of your surroundings at all times, choose carefully when and where you go alone—the young men in the class "gaped in astonishment".

WOMAN: (turning back to the men, to explain) It's about the need for dominance. So-called need. Because you don't need dominance either. You won't die if you're not in power over someone. Will you?

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) If anything, sex is a *social* need. For men. A socially *constructed* need. *Real* men have sex, real men *want* sex, *lots* of sex. Their identity *as men* depends—*depends*—on having sex. And if they have to use force, all the better. And—

WOMAN: (turning back to the men) You *want* dominance. You *want* to have power over. At least, over women. But why?

Because that's what *real* men— You have to keep saying 'I'm better than you, I'm one-up on you, I'm higher in the hierarchy than you.' Because ... why? If you don't keep saying it, what, you'll forget?

She laughs.

The FIRST MAN's hands curl into fists. She sees that.

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) See that? (She nods to his fists.) Atwood famously said men are afraid women will laugh at them. Whereas women are —

FIRST MAN: (interrupting) No, because if we don't keep saying it, *you'll* forget!

WOMAN: Ah. That's why you didn't just assault me, why you didn't just beat me up. That's why you did it *sexually*. You wanted to send a message to me, to women as a group. You wanted to express your feelings toward women as a group.

FIRST MAN: I don't have *feelings* toward women as a group.

She snorts.

WOMAN: Okay, so you raped me to put me in my place. To remind me that I'm subordinate to you.

He nods.

WOMAN: And what makes you think *that*?

He snorts again. It passes for 'I don't know.'

WOMAN: The fact that I'm a waitress? Because I'm also a student.

The second one's eyes widen.

WOMAN: What, waitresses can't go to university? University students can't be waitresses?

She turns back to the first one.

WOMAN: But that's irrelevant, isn't it. Even if I were a *professor*, you'd think I was subordinate to you. That I'm *female* trumps whatever else I might be. And *why* again are females subordinate to, inferior to, males?

Neither one responds.

In disgust, she gets up, grabs her bag, and heads to the door.

SCENE 2

The FEMALE GUARD escorts her back into the room.

WOMAN: How would you feel if *you* were raped?

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) New approach. Apparently empathy isn't one of their strong suits. No surprise, really. We don't encourage our little boys to feel. Let alone to think about what others feel. In fact, we *discourage* it. Big boys don't cry. And, so, the tears of others are irrelevant.

FIRST MAN: It's different.

WOMAN: Agreed. But—

FIRST MAN: Women are— You're used to it.

She stares at him. Not what she'd had in mind regarding the difference.

WOMAN: I assure you, I am not used to this.

She spread the photographs in front of them again.

WOMAN: And even if I were—even if I *were* hurt this badly on a regular basis, how does that make it okay?

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) (with frustration) They seem to have no understanding of ethics. No idea about how to determine right and wrong. And it would take years to—

Not my job. Not my responsibility.

So whose responsibility is it? Why are so many men apparently so ethically-challenged? Because being concerned about right and wrong makes you a wuss, a boy scout, a sissy. (directly facing audience) How, when—*why* did ethics become a sign of weakness, childishness, effeminacy?

FIRST MAN: Well, you *should* be used to it. It's all you're good for.

WOMAN: *That's all we're good for?*

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) I think a few lessons in women's history are in order. No doubt it would be the first time they'd hear that *a woman* discovered pulsars. That a woman invented kevlar.

But no, it's not *my* job to educate them! Women get suckered into that far too often. We are not responsible for them! It's not our duty to make them better people!

And that's not why I'm here. I'm here merely to—understand. Them.

Besides, it's not that he thinks that's all we're good for because he's unaware of women's achievements. He doesn't consider women capable of achievements.

When he looks at a woman, all he sees is a sexual ... thing. A cunt.

When he'd first come into the room, he hadn't recognized me, remember? This isn't personal. Just the opposite. It's impersonal. That is to say, he doesn't even consider women to be persons. I was just in the wrong place at the wrong time. Any pers—any female, any *cunt*, would have done.

WOMAN: (to the men) I'm a person. Just like you. Well, not just like you. Not anything like you, actually. What I mean is I'm not just— Women are not females. We are human beings who happen to be female. Consider it an adjective, not a noun.

Their faces are blank.

WOMAN: (trying again) We're not women, ladies, girls, chicks, birds, cows, bitches, whores, cunts. We're people. Just—people.

Still blank.

WOMAN: Okay, let's try this. Tell me about some of the women in your life.

SECOND MAN: What do you mean?

WOMAN: I mean *tell* me about them. What are their likes, their dislikes? What are their dreams, their aspirations? What do they think about?

Silence.

She sighs. Sinks back heavily into her chair.

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) Perhaps I shouldn't be so surprised. My own father didn't seem to distinguish—there was Mike, my brother, and then there were 'the girls', me and my sister. We were undifferentiated. In his mind.

WOMAN: (to the men; slightly amazed) We really *aren't* people to you. None of us. We're just ... we really are just walking cunts. The only thing about us that registers with you is our sex. We have breasts. We must have a vagina. So we can be fucked. End of story.

FIRST MAN: (laughing) What more *is* there?

WOMAN: Well, (she knows as soon as she starts that this is a mistake) I'm actually a *grad* student at the university. I just waitress on the weekends because I don't make enough as a teaching assistant to pay for rent, tuition, my bus pass—

FIRST MAN: In what, women's studies shit?

WOMAN: (levelly) No, in music. But I'm curious as to why you consider women's studies to be shit. Oh wait. Because everything to do with women is shit. Because... Help me out here. Oh wait. You can't.

She glares at him. At his inability, his refusal, to think.

FIRST MAN: (to himself; the other two freeze) Cunt.

FIRST MAN: (to the woman) All right, you've had your fun. (turning to face the door) Guard!

FIRST MAN: (turning back to the woman) Play time's over.

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) Right. 'Play time.' (furious) Not only does it trivialize what I'm doing—he's younger than me! It's unfucking believable how men can do that!

And of course, they've been doing that to me all my life. You too, probably. (She looks out at the women in the audience.) They've been infantilizing us all our lives.

No guard appears at the door. She smiles.

WOMAN: (to the men; truly a little amazed) You are utterly and absolutely ... unaware. You have no idea why you think the way you do, why you act the way you do! You've avoided introspection all your life. You have no self-knowledge whatsoever. You're just a robot without awareness, without consciousness. If you only had a brain.

She leans back in her chair, crosses her arms, and stares at him.

FIRST MAN: (screaming, because no fucking way he was going to put up with this) GUARD!

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) Yeah, no fucking way he's going to put up with this. And yet, he wouldn't be able to say why. He's angry, yeah. But he has no idea why. So much sexism ... So much of it unconscious ...

(an afterthought) And even if he *did* know, even if he *could* say, he wouldn't. Because explaining something to a woman is considered a favour. Not an obligation. Let alone a duty.

Though of course he wouldn't be able to provide that explanation either.

(returning to the afterthought) They don't *intentionally* keep us out of the loop. They don't intentionally hoard the power that knowledge provides. They don't *intentionally* take the lion's share of ... everything.

Nor, apparently, do they *intentionally* rape us.

### SCENE 3

She is already back in the room.

SECOND MAN: (trying to appease) Look, you're making too much of this. (helpfully) You're overthinking it.

WOMAN: (to herself; the men freeze) Hm. I'm overthinking it. (to audience) Would he have said that if I hadn't told them I was a student? How quickly they can turn the other's advantage into a disadvantage. Damned if you do.

But no, actually, I hear that a lot. Usually from men. Men who don't know anything about me. Because any thinking at all would expose their ... lack of thought.

Or their psychopathology. That is, their masculinity.

SECOND MAN: (exasperation in his voice) It's just what guys do! Happens every day.

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) Well, he's right about that.

FIRST MAN: Yeah, it's no big deal. Everybody does it.

WOMAN: Everybody does *not* do it. Besides, so what? At best, that's an explanation, not a justification. Do you know the difference?

No response.

WOMAN: An explanation is simply that: it's something that explains why or how something else happens. A *justification* is a line of reasoning that explains why the something is *okay*. Typically, *morally* okay. So unless you're saying that you did it *because* other people do it ... *Are* you saying that? Do you do what you do because other people do it? (she looks at one and then the other) Do other people run your lives?"

The FIRST MAN turns his gaze to the ceiling. Maybe she'd get the hint.

WOMAN: Regardless, it's an inadequate response. Because many men have *not* raped a woman.

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze, FIRST MAN still gazing at the ceiling) But one in five have. Of college-aged men, one in *three* say they would if they thought they could get away with it. And okay, that's not even close to half, let alone most. But if you interact with, say, only a dozen young men during the course of a day, you can infer that four of them would rape you if they could get away with it. Every day, four of the men you talk to would like to hurt you.

And one in three is enough to make it normal. So these two, they aren't sick, they aren't broken, they haven't been abused.

(stares intently at the audience) *Or they're all of the above, and that's the norm.* For men. To be sick, broken, abused. God knows, we raise them to be less than full human beings.

And because of that, it's the norm for women as well. To be sick, broken, abused. To consider themselves to have fulfilled their potential if they're attractive. Sexually attractive.

FIRST MAN: But you put up with it. *I wouldn't.*

She looks at him.

WOMAN: How would we *not* put up with it? What would *you* do?

FIRST MAN: Carry.

She thinks about that.

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) You know, he's right. He's absolutely right. If packs of wolves were roaming the street and thousands, *tens* of thousands, of men were attacked every year, they'd organize an extermination campaign. They'd shoot every wolf on sight. Whether or not it, individually, had shown signs of violent behaviour.

WOMAN: (to the FIRST MAN) But how would you prove that you shot in self-defence?

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) Because it's more like living in an occupied country.

He shrugs.

WOMAN: So your 'not putting up with it' wouldn't work, would it.

She stares at him.

WOMAN: (to the audience; the men freeze) Because people in occupied countries don't get a trial. Let alone a fair trial.

WOMAN: (to the FIRST MAN) I think if you carried a gun, if you shot someone who grabbed you, his buddies would just kill you. Probably with your own gun. Just to make a point.

Silence.

WOMAN: So I ask again. How would you not put up with it?



WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) Because I'd really like to know.

ACT 4

SCENE 1

A week later, only the SECOND MAN is in the room. He seems a little less inflated without his buddy beside him.

The WOMAN enters, her bag slung over her shoulder, escorted by the MALE GUARD.

WOMAN: So. (She sets her bag onto the floor beside her chair, sits, and looks at him.) You really believe women are just cunts? You really think we exist simply for you to fuck?

He shrugs.

She waits.

SECOND MAN: (a little apologetically) We thought you'd be easy points. We saw your boyfriend or whoever come out of your apartment in the morning sometimes—

WOMAN: What? You live in my apartment building?

He nods.

She processes that then moves on.

WOMAN: And you thought what, if she's having sex with one man, she'll want to have sex with *every* man? Why would you think that?

WOMAN: (to herself mostly; second man freezes) Oh wait, I know. Because *men* want to have sex with every *woman*. Duh.

WOMAN: (directly to audience) The ability to distinguish one's own desires from those other people might have is considered a milestone in social development. Typically achieved in childhood.

She turns back to the man.

WOMAN: And—easy points?

She gets up and starts moving around, restlessly.

WOMAN: (to audience; second man freezes) Must they turn *everything* into a competition? Sports, dance, cooking, travel ... even love, apparently. *The Bachelor* and its many spin-offs.

Which means that every wife is a trophy wife. (She looks out at the wives in the audience.)

At minimum, a badge of respectability. An unmarried man, a bachelor, is considered immature, unsettled, unreliable. A bachelor would never become president. Of anything. All the men in upper management have wives. They have to.

Still. Everything?

WOMAN: (returning to her chair, understanding a moment later when she looks at him) Oh, I get it. Making everything a competition maximizes your chances of winning. *Something*. And you must win. Otherwise you're a loser.

WOMAN: (turning to audience; second man freezes) And there's nothing worse for a man to be. Well, except a girl.

She looks at him, searching his eyes for some ... some glimmer of ...

WOMAN: Don't you see you're a loser already, if you buy into this shit?

SECOND MAN: (muttering to himself, looking away from her; woman freezes) I'm a loser even if I don't buy into this shit. Don't *you* see *that*?

WOMAN: Can't you just *enjoy* ... anything?

He just sits there. Miserably.

Then the rest of it falls into place for her.

WOMAN: So I'm a—*a game piece* to you?

Again, he looks away. She gets up and starts pacing, thinking ...

WOMAN: (to herself; second man freezes) Yes. That's exactly what I am. A piece. In their games. It's what all women are. Men compete with each other using women. Getting laid, having a girlfriend, getting married, having kids. All of it uses women's bodies for points. We are, as Henstra put it in *The Red Word*, currency.

(directly to audience) I remember watching an episode of Anita Sarkeesian's *Feminist Frequency* that included clips from popular video games. *Sleeping Dogs*, *Dishonored*, *Saints Row*, *Red Dead Redemption*, *Hitman*, *Assassin's Creed*, *Far Cry*, *Watch Dog*, *Grand Theft Auto* ... It was such an eye-opener. What I saw was sick. Truly sick.

In *Watch Dog*, a man beats up a woman who has had the nerve to leave him. Administering first aid, calling paramedics, or even stopping to see if she's okay are not among the options available to the player. Apparently whether she lives or dies doesn't

matter. The player *can* intervene, but if he intervenes too soon, the assault stops, and he gets no points. Better to wait until the woman is murdered and the man runs away, so the player can hunt him down for a fight. The woman is just a means to the player's end of ... winning a fight. She's just a game piece. Literally.

Bizarrely, the scene is repeated over and over. Talk about indoctrination.

And when the player wins, he gets a reward, often a 'cash' reward. Talk about reinforcement. The route to addiction.

In another game, when a female character—and every single one of them has huge breasts, a tiny waist, and a huge ass—when the female character cries out for help and screams in pain, the male character says things like “Quiet, bitch, shut the fuck up!” and “You worthless whore, you're fucking pathetic!” In one case, the man says “Stinkin' whore, I'm going to cut you a new hole. You think I'm a joke?” (an aside) Had she laughed at the size of his penis? Oh well, then.

“Go on, then,” the man says, “laugh, bitch, laugh!” And he jabs a knife into her body again and again. “Damn it all,” he adds when he's done, in an aggrieved voice, as if someone had just knocked over his bottle of beer. (again an aside) Because what, she'd gone and died, and now he'd have no one, nothing, to fuck anymore?

She stops her pacing close to the audience and stands, confronting them.

Who writes these things? (She searches the audience, as if waiting for someone to raise his hand.)

Men. Ordinary men.

She lets that sink in, then resumes pacing.

In every case, as Sarkeesian notes, the woman's battered body is just swept away. Showing that women are not only commodified (she counts off 'one' on her fingers), as both motivator and reward; not only merely instrumental (point two); and violable (point three); but also—disposable (point four).

Her body is literally taken behind a curtain. Where we can't see it. Her. Them. So many women are brutalized, to death, in video games.

She returns to her chair, leans over the table, and faces him.

WOMAN: (quietly) You can't just do what you did. You can't just turn off the game, finish your beer, then go to bed. You certainly don't get a cash reward for it.

He looks away.

She too turns away, to face audience again.

WOMAN: (to audience; second man freezes) Porn is too mild a term for what I saw. Misogyny, too mild a term. The games are essentially animated snuff films. *Interactive* animated snuff films.

At the very least, they portray hate crimes with no pretensions to artistic or documentary value.

(angrily, searching the audience for someone with an answer) *Why are they even legal?*

Replace all the women with black-skinned people and make all the men white, and there's *no way* they would be allowed.

Let alone replace all the women with men, and all the men with women— Though I can't imagine women— Actually, I can. Now.

WOMAN: (returns to her chair, but just before she sits down) Perhaps most horrible is that they were called *games*.

WOMAN: (to the SECOND MAN) Life isn't a video game. It's not even like tv. Well, tv made in Hollywood. Since that's probably the only tv you watch.

WOMAN: (turning in her chair to face audience again; second man freezes) The problem used to be that almost every female character was young and pretty and existed for the man. She helped him. She made him feel important. She made him feel competent. She fell in love with him. She saved him from himself.

Now, almost every female character is—sexualized. *Pornified*. I can't even watch *So You Think You Can Dance* anymore. And those women aren't even *characters* per se.

WOMAN: (turning back to the SECOND MAN, explaining) The women you see on tv, they're acting. They're playing a part someone wrote for them, saying what the writer tells them to say, doing what the director tells them to do. You get that, right?

WOMAN: (to audience; second man freezes) Studies show that a lot of people can't tell the difference. Actors who play doctors are regularly approached on the street for medical advice. And *Grey's Anatomy* and the like don't even engage our Neanderthal hindbrain like video games and porn did. So can we blame viewers for their mistaken belief?

Yes! Because studies also show that exposure to tv influences real-life attitudes and opinions, including those toward and about women. And no one forces people to expose themselves to tv. No one forces young men to spend hours playing those video games, to become addicted to the violence, to increase their threshold to violence, to become desensitized to violence toward women.

SECOND MAN: Miley Cyrus **[replace with current equivalent]** isn't an actress.

WOMAN: Sure she is. She's a performer. She's *performing* a role for fame and fortune. (conceding) Though, she might be like that in real life too.

WOMAN: (to audience; second man freezes) Most celebrities aren't very educated. They certainly don't spend much time reading and thinking about things. No surprise, as Hanakai Wren said on *Feminist Current*, that their idea of liberation is twerking in public.

WOMAN: (turning back to SECOND MAN) We're not like that. Real women. We're not supporting characters in your life. We don't exist only in relationship to you. We have an independent existence.

She sees the look on his face.

WOMAN: And you have no idea what I'm talking about. Okay, here's the simplified version: we do not exist for you. Let me repeat that. Women do not exist for men.

WOMAN: (to audience; second man freezes) I wish Canada and the States would require Hollywood to issue Bechdel ratings, as Sweden did long ago. I'm pretty sure that at the moment, almost every movie would fail the test. Which is to say that in almost every movie, there isn't even a single conversation between two named women that isn't about a man. It's an incredibly low bar. The movie doesn't even have to have a major female character. Let alone one who's a feminist. It just has to have one conversation, it doesn't even have to be a *long* conversation, that's between two women, who have names, that isn't about a man.

The few movies that *do* pass the bar are probably considered chick flicks. Which is to say they won't be seen by, won't have any influence on, any men.

WOMAN: (turns back to SECOND MAN, sighing deeply) Yes, almost all of the women in movies and games are hot. Yes, almost all of the women in movies and games pay attention to the men. Yes, almost all of the women in movies and games want it bad. But, the women in movies and games *do not represent REAL women!* I'll repeat that: real women *aren't like that*.

WOMAN: (to herself; second man freezes) Well, not all of us. But many are. (She sighs.) Far too many are. And since sexuality is central to the subordination of women, the increasing sexualization of women is— Of concern. To understate.

She stands and addresses audience.

WOMAN: (to audience; second man freezes) Well, women are no more immune to media influence than men. Why should we expect them to be?

(answering her own question) Because they get such a bad deal when they buy it. They just don't know it. At first.

So why aren't women turning into feminists in droves, once they're treated like shit, or left with a child to raise, or turn forty?

(again, answering her own question) Maybe they are. Maybe they are, but won't admit it, perhaps don't even recognize it.

Though men get a pretty bad deal too. It's just not as apparent. At first. Or ever. I know too many men who carry the macho burden on their backs well into old age. It's pathetic, really. Again, so little introspection, so little self-awareness...

SCENE 2

SECOND MAN: I can do whatever I want! You're telling me I can't watch tv or play video games—but I can do whatever I want!

WOMAN: (to audience; second man freezes) (rolling her eyes at his words and his tone) Overcompensation for a domineering father? No, a domineering mother. Though in our society, *any* supervision of a male by a female is considered domineering. No matter the age difference. And the fact that it's a mother's *responsibility* to dominate, to provide supervision.

WOMAN: (to SECOND MAN) You can go around hurting people? Stealing stuff, blowing up buildings—

SECOND MAN: That's not what I meant—

WOMAN: What did you mean then?

He can't say. Of course he can't. So he just stares at her.

She waits for a few more moments, then tries another approach.

WOMAN: This—none of this is *real* to you, is it. You're so used to posturing—you can't turn it off. In fact, I'll bet you've lost your real self, you've been posturing for so long. Who are you? (She really looks at him.) What kind of person are you? What kind of life do you want?

SECOND MAN: What do you mean?

WOMAN: Take away all your friends. Imagine for a moment, it's just you. Imagine you hang out with no one but yourself. Do you like yourself? Is the person you are the person you want to be?

SECOND MAN: (muttering to himself; woman freezes) I don't know. (as if to say, 'How should I know?' not truly lamenting the fact that he doesn't know)

WOMAN: What would your ideal life be like? Looking back, when you're fifty, what would you like to see?

WOMAN: (to audience; second man freezes) I once asked my boyfriend that very same question, and he responded with a litany of possibilities. It had been a purely intellectual response. He didn't *know* what he wanted.

Why was it so difficult for men? To know what they want. Because that would involve an assessment of their feelings? Which, apparently, are off limits? Not just to others but even to themselves? Real men don't feel. Neither pain *nor* pleasure.



Then again (she reconsiders), it wasn't that he didn't *know* what he wanted, it was that *he* didn't know what he wanted. Men don't have a sense of self. That's why they can't analyze themselves. They don't have selves to analyze.

It would explain why they're so able to hurt others, to hurt other *sel/ves*. How could they assume in the other what they themselves don't have? Not just the capacity to feel, but a sense of self, a person with interests and aspirations ...

WOMAN: (pressing) Don't you care? Who you are?

SECOND MAN: Do I look like I care?

WOMAN: (sighing) No. You don't.

WOMAN: (to herself; second man freezes) Without pain or pleasure, there's nothing to care about.

WOMAN: You look like you don't care about anything. In fact, you look like you *scorn* everything. And *everyone*. You look like you hold everything, and everyone, in *contempt*. Why is that?

No answer.

WOMAN: (to SECOND MAN) Do you think it makes you superior, better than other people, when you look down on them?

Still no answer.

WOMAN: It doesn't. It just makes you a fool. Because in most cases, there's no basis for such complete scorn, such complete contempt. Everyone has something praiseworthy about them. Well (she corrects herself), almost everyone.

He looked at her. A little hurt. Oh dear.

WOMAN: And you look like you think that makes you a man. Not caring. About anything. I'll grant that's what society tells you. All the ads, all the pictures of men with no affect, their expressionless faces, their blank eyes— They all look dead inside. You want to be like that?

SECOND MAN: What do you mean?

She sighs. Again with the 'What do you mean?' She ignores it. Carries on.

WOMAN: I mean you don't have to buy all the shit they feed you. About being a man.

WOMAN: (to audience; second man freezes) Clearly, among the books he has *not* read are those by Stoltenberg and Jensen and— Wait, just two? Is that all there are?

WOMAN: (to SECOND MAN) You don't have to accept the limitations imposed upon you.

SECOND MAN: What do you mean?

WOMAN: (shouting with exasperation) I mean you could think for yourself for one goddamned minute!

She stands up and walks around the room for a minute.

Then she sits down and tries again.

WOMAN: *Why* don't you want to care? If you care, you can get hurt, I'll grant you that. But when you don't care, about women—and that seems to be integral to being a man—as you've so clearly demonstrated—you shut yourself off from half the human race. From so many people with whom you could have fun, adventure, friendship ...

There is a flicker—

WOMAN: And I'll grant you that many, perhaps most, of the women your age are just as bad. They too have been sexualized since birth. All the girls who fuss over how they look every minute of the day? Idiots. The ones who love to 'go shopping'? Airheads. The ones who want babies because that'll make them feel important? Suckers. The ones I hear guys refer to as 'high maintenance'—as if they're cars—that's what all the little princesses turn into.

He's listening.

WOMAN: There are other girls out there. Not many, but some.

SECOND MAN: (to himself; woman freezes) Yeah right. (He doesn't believe her. Or doesn't believe those other girls would ever— And he was right.)

So he shrugs. Doesn't care.

WOMAN: Okay then my question to you is 'Why are you still alive?' Why haven't you killed yourself out of sheer boredom? Are you a coward?

He looks away.

WOMAN: Are you just too lazy? Yeah, that's more likely. That's why you don't think. For yourself.

He starts to get angry.

WOMAN: And maybe you're a coward too, afraid of what you'll find. Afraid you'll figure out that you're responsible, for this, that you've done something wrong, something terribly wrong, that you owe someone—

She breaks off. They're way past apology.

She looks, really looks, at him. Forces him to look at her.

WOMAN: Don't you see? They've won. You've *already* killed yourself. They didn't have to do it, you did it yourself. You've become a hollow man, a shell, a zombie.

WOMAN: (to audience with this new thought; second man freezes) Is that why zombie movies are so popular? Do they strike a chord of ... recognition? God help us, validation?

SECOND MAN: (blurting out) I did it because I did it, okay?!

WOMAN: No! (She slams her hand on the table.) I want to know *why* you did it.

SECOND MAN: What do you mean?

WOMAN: (again, with exasperation) I mean exactly what I said! What word don't you understand? 'Why' means—

SECOND MAN: (angrily) I know what you mean!

He slouches in his chair.

WOMAN: Then why did you ask me what I meant?

She gets up and walks around the room again. After a minute or two, she returns to the table.

WOMAN: So, have you figured it out?

SECOND MAN: What do you mean?

WOMAN: Will you just stop that?! You didn't even *think* about what I said. You didn't even *try* to figure what I meant. Not that it takes much effort. I was pretty clear.

He just ... stares at her.

WOMAN: (sitting down) You say that a lot. 'What do you mean?' At first, I thought you were doing it to buy time. To think of an answer to the question. But then you don't think. You don't answer the question. So now I'm thinking you do it to deflect the question. To throw it back on me. So you don't *have* to answer it. So you don't *have* to think.

Keeps staring at her.

WOMAN: And it's become habit, reflex. Not to think. Tell me, when was the last time you thought?

SECOND MAN: What do you mean?

She groans.

WOMAN: For the love of god— *Can* you think?

The thought suddenly occurs to her: maybe he couldn't.

WOMAN: Wait— Are you mentally deficient?

He just glares at her.

WOMAN: I don't mean that as an insult. It's just, I'm beginning to wonder if you might be a bit retarded, since you're so unable to think. Have you been tested? Perhaps I'm asking too much of you. To develop insight into your own actions, your own motives.

SECOND MAN: (shouting) I'm not fucking retarded!

WOMAN: (to herself; second man freezes) No, of course not. He attends university.

WOMAN: Then why are you so— Do you think that if you just drift through life, without thinking about anything, if you just let yourself be knocked about like a pinball, you won't be held accountable? (She holds his gaze.) Well, guess what.

After a moment, she gets up and walks toward the door.

### SCENE 3

As soon as she is escorted back into the room, by the MALE GUARD, the SECOND MAN speaks.

SECOND MAN: It wasn't personal.

WOMAN: (to audience; second man freezes) Well, he's right about that. Because neither one of them saw me, considered me, as a person. I was just a means to their ends.

And, or, because they're incapable of *being* personal. Because they've denied, haven't developed, any of the stuff that would make *them* persons. At the very least, individuality.

SECOND MAN: (almost whispering) I didn't mean to.

WOMAN: Didn't mean to what?

SECOND MAN: Didn't mean to rape you.

He looks at the door nervously.

WOMAN: What did you mean to do, then?

SECOND MAN: I didn't mean to hurt you.

WOMAN: Question still stands. What did you *mean* to do, then?

SECOND MAN: (wailing) I don't know!

WOMAN: How can you not know what you meant to do? Are you not conscious? Do you have no intent?

SECOND MAN: I don't know, okay? I don't know what to say! (begging) Just tell me what to say!

WOMAN: (to audience; second man freezes) As if words, too, are merely instrumental. And not expressive of some ... truth.

WOMAN: If you truly don't know what you meant to do, don't you think it's about time you figure it out? I'm not asking you why you went to a hockey game!

She spreads out the photographs again.

WOMAN: Look at the blood! Look at the bruises! What was your *intent*? What was your *reason*?

WOMAN: (to herself; second man freezes) Something as consequential as this cannot be done so ... casually, so thoughtlessly. It just can't.

SECOND MAN: Isn't that ... normal? It's just rough—

WOMAN: (screaming, as she stands up) NO! Read some books, why don't you, talk to—

WOMAN: (to audience; second man freezes) He wouldn't have a girlfriend. And it wasn't the sort of thing he'd talk about with his mother or his sister. And when he and his friends talked about it, it would be exaggeration, fabrication. Or worse, not.

WOMAN: You had to force me. Your buddy had to hold me down, smack me a few times. Don't you think if it were normal sex, I would have been ... co-operating?

He turns away.

WOMAN: So I ask again. What exactly were you *meaning* to do (her words forced him to turn back) when you rammed your penis into me, into my body, into my vagina— Oh my god. You cringed when I said the word 'vagina'. Are you uncomfortable with the word?

She stares at him.

WOMAN: How can you be uncomfortable with the word when that's what you rammed your penis into again and again? What did you think you were ramming your penis into? Some warm and fuzzy place that totally had nothing to do with *me*?

He turns away again.

WOMAN: You rammed your penis *into my vagina*. Say it. Vagina. Va-gi-na. (screaming) SAY IT!

SECOND MAN: (in a small voice) Vagina.

WOMAN: Say 'I rammed my penis into your vagina. Again and again.' SAY IT!

She is still on her feet, leaning across the table.

SECOND MAN: I rammed my penis into your vagina again and again and *I'm sorry*, okay!?! (He says it with anger. Not with remorse. Because she had won.)

She starts pacing the room, trying to vent her rage.

SECOND MAN: (whining) But he kept *pushing* me. Said I was a loser, called me a girly girl, told me I had to grow up and be a man.

She stops and turns to him.

WOMAN: And you just ... accepted his definition of 'a man'?

He raises his shackled hands helplessly.

WOMAN: And ... you decided that doing that— (she returns to the table and points to the photographs) was the lesser of two evils? You figured that for you to be called a loser, and a girly girl, was worse than for me to be beaten, and raped?

She lets that sink in.

Then screams at him.

WOMAN: How fucking fragile *are* you?

He looks at her. Seemingly just now processing that implication of his decision.

SECOND MAN: I'm sorry. (said without the anger)

WOMAN: Not good enough. (She sits down.) Not by a long shot.

SECOND MAN: And I feel just awful about it. Now that I know.

He lifts sad puppy-dog eyes to her.

WOMAN: Oh please. You expect me to comfort you?

WOMAN: (to audience; second man freezes) Un-fucking-believable. He's managed to make it all about him. How *do* they manage to keep putting themselves in the center of the universe?

WOMAN: (to SECOND MAN) I don't want an apology!

She stands up again as she screams.

WOMAN: I want remediation! I want you to spend the rest of your life stopping other men from doing what you did! I want you to stand up to your friends, I want you to make new friends and stand up to them, I want you to speak in schools and universities, I want you to lobby for sentencing commensurate with the crime, I want you to raise the money required to test the DNA in the hundreds of thousands of rape evidence kits that are currently just sitting in labs across the country— I want you to make amends. (She sits down.) For the rest of your life.

ACT 5

SCENE 1

The following week. The WOMAN sits at the table, waiting, her bag on the floor beside her. Only the FIRST MAN is brought into the room, by the FEMALE GUARD.

WOMAN: (flatly) You're the one who sodomized me. Said you didn't want 'sloppy seconds'. Like I'm what, fast food?

FIRST MAN: Guess you haven't heard of that place in Germany. The King George. Serves 1.2 million per day. (He grins, then sings the McDonald's five-note jingle) Ba da ba ba ba.

She—

FIRST MAN: Know what's on the menu? (he taunts) 'All-you-can-fuck.' For the low, low price of \$135.

She sees that he isn't kidding, sees that it's true, and THROWS UP.

FIRST MAN: (yelling as her vomit spills onto the table, towards his shackled hands) Shit, why'd you do that, get that shit away from me! GUARD!! (he screams at the door)

WOMAN: (to herself, when she's 'recovered'; FIRST MAN freezes) A million men a day. (then to audience) Serviced by how many women, I wonder.

She gags a bit.

WOMAN: (to audience; first man still frozen) There's probably a kiddies' menu you can ask about.

She THROWS UP again.

FIRST MAN: (he screams again at the door) FUCK!! GUARD!! GET IN HERE!!

No guard comes running.

She gets a tissue from her bag, wipes her mouth, walks unsteadily to the door, knocks, then just ... leaves. Fresh air. Where was their fresh air?



## SCENE 2

When she returns, escorted by the MALE GUARD, the table has been cleaned. The SECOND MAN is still sitting there. Seething. Wordlessly, she sits down, then carefully sets the photographs, one by one, in front of him. He looks away.

WOMAN: You can't look? Is it too personal, a close-up of my rectum? But you forced your penis into it. It wasn't too personal then.

FIRST MAN: Whatever. (He shrugs with an exaggerated indifference.)

WOMAN: You find this *boring*? I'm sorry, is my pain too insignificant to hold your attention? Are the consequences of your action ... tiresome?

WOMAN: (to audience; first man freezes) Of course he's bored. If you don't care about anything, you're not interested in anything.

WOMAN: (turning back to man) Why did you do it? Why did you force your penis into my rectum? Why did you hurt me in such a way?

He shrugs again.

WOMAN: You don't know? Don't you think you *should* know? We're not talking about why you ... went to a movie. Why—

FIRST MAN: What do you want me to say, that I'm sorry? Okay, yeah. I'm sorry. Okay?

WOMAN: No. *Not* okay.

WOMAN: (muttering to herself; first man freezes) Not by a long shot.

She waits.

WOMAN: (she finally prompts) Try again. Why—

FIRST MAN: I don't know, okay!?! (to himself; WOMAN freezes) When will the bitch just let it go and leave me the fuck alone?

WOMAN: Did you feel pressured to do it? And you were unable to resist that pressure?

WOMAN: (to audience; first man freezes) Certainly, he'd felt pressured. From birth. To show contempt for women. To be called a girl, and therefore, to *be* a girl, is an insult.

And, apparently, he's been unable to resist that, that lifetime of pressure.

But showing contempt is one thing.

WOMAN: (turning back to first man) Or maybe you just enjoy hurting people. Maybe you just enjoy hurting women. Why?

FIRST MAN: (shouting) I said I don't know! I don't *have* a reason, okay?

WOMAN: So, what, you just walk around doing things for no reason? You have no conscious control over what you do? So ... you might walk naked down the street singing showtunes? Buy an automatic and take out a classroom full of kids? Who knows? (She shrugs her shoulders with exaggerated helplessness.) Apparently not you!

He glares at her.

WOMAN: And if that's the case, you really should be locked up. For life. A prerequisite for being able to move freely among other people should certainly be the ability to control one's actions, don't you think? At the very least, to act according to some minimum level of rationality. I mean, we can usually predict when a bear, for example, is going to attack someone. They have *reasons*: hunger, fear, defence of their young, self-preservation. But you're telling me you have *no* reasons. For anything.

He leans back, tries to cross his arms on his chest before he realizes he can't.

WOMAN: I think you're just *pretending* not to have a reason, a motive, because you think that then you can't be blamed, you can't be held responsible. Do you really think that if you go through life denying agency, just going along for the ride— You're the fucking car! Take the wheel, god damn it!

She gets up, changes her mind, sits back down.

WOMAN: Don't you think you *should* know? Why you do the things you do?

She keeps looking at him.

WOMAN: And if you don't know, don't you think you should *figure it out*?

She leans back. Waits.

WOMAN: So? Are you thinking? Are you trying to figure it out?

FIRST MAN: (huffing) No. Why should I?

WOMAN: 'Why should I?' (She repeats his question with mock thoughtfulness.) Because consciousness separates humans from the other animals. Humor me. Prove you're at least one step up from ... a maggot."

He makes his face blank.

WOMAN: It's not innate knowledge I'm after, and it looks like you haven't thought about it. So think about it. Figure it out. Now. I'll wait.

She crosses her arms.

After a moment, she decides she'd better remind him what he was supposed to be figuring out.

WOMAN: Figure out why you hurt women.

He's still stone-faced. Clearly not thinking. About why he did what he did.

WOMAN: (to audience; first man freezes) Why is there such a resistance to self-knowledge? I've seen it in every man I've ever known. My father, my brother, my boyfriends. It's as if they considered it a badge of honor *not* to be self-aware. Real men don't reflect.

She gets up again.

WOMAN: I'm taking another break. See if you can figure it out by the time I get back.

### SCENE 3

The MALE GUARD escorts her back into the room.

WOMAN: So, have you figured it out?

FIRST MAN: What do you think?

WOMAN: I think not. It's too hard. Thinking. It takes a strong person to think. And it takes an independent person to think for himself. I suspect you're neither. You're weak and, despite appearances, a follower. You follow the expectations of your buddies, and you follow the examples you see in movies, online games, porn. So, (cheerily) I'll help.

FIRST MAN: (bursting out in anger) Oh fuck you!

WOMAN: (to audience, grinning; first man freezes) I knew that would make him angry. To need help is bad enough. To need a woman's help is an insult. Pure and simple. Merely by offering my help, I insulted him. (adding, after a moment) No wonder. The world.

WOMAN: Maybe someone hurt you and you want to hurt back. But you overgeneralize when you hurt me. I wasn't the one who hurt you. Do you understand?

Silence.

WOMAN: Maybe a woman hurt you. But if you hurt all women in return, again, still, you're overgeneralizing. It's like when a child is told that the family dog is a 'dog' and then it points to everything with four legs and fur, saying 'dog'. That's overgeneralizing.

FIRST MAN: I'm not a child!

WOMAN: Well, you're acting like one.

He glowers at her.

WOMAN: Your buddy mentioned getting points. Is that why you did it?

WOMAN: (to audience; first man freezes) Maybe there's extra points for anal sex. Because the additional pain caused is proof of additional power. Over the other.

Or maybe— Sjoo and Mor suggest, in *Female Erasure*, that frontal, face-to-face, sex implies the personalization of sex; it would follow that anal sex implies the depersonalization of sex, the subordination, the degradation, of women *via* their depersonalization.

WOMAN: (turning back to the man) Was it some sort of hazing? Did you feel *obliged* to do it? Did someone *make* you do it?

WOMAN: (to the audience; first man freezes) God help us, there's now a crime called "compelled rape" in many countries.

FIRST MAN: (snorting) No.

WOMAN: No, of course not, no one makes you do anything. Because you think for yourself so well.

FIRST MAN: Bitch.

WOMAN: Oh, did that hurt? Was what I said a little humiliating? So ... is that wrong?

He just ... fumes.

WOMAN: Look, I'm not one of those women who define themselves by their sexuality. In fact, I don't even identify myself as a woman. My sex is about as important to me as my eye colour. But apparently it's all that matters to the rest of the world. We're identified as girls or boys from day one. Pink and blue. Ms. and Mr. And apparently it's important to you. I'd go so far as to say it's *all* that's important to you. You see me *only* as a woman. A female. A sexual thing. A cunt. But even that ... Well, it's nothing new, really. I've been dealing with that all my life. But after you pounded at me, ripping me a little bit more each time, you came on my face. Why did you do *that*? It was humiliating. You humiliated me.

FIRST MAN: (sarcastically) Right.

WOMAN: Are you implying that it's *not* humiliating? Being ejaculated onto? It's like being urinated on! That's not humiliating?

FIRST MAN: It's just what— It's part of— (He looks around as if he is so very put upon, having to explain this.)

WOMAN: Be nice if you could finish a sentence. Or two.

FIRST MAN: (shouted in frustration) It's what's done!

WOMAN: Where? To who? And, again, *why*? How many times do I have to ask?

FIRST MAN: (shouting) I DON'T KNOW, okay!?

WOMAN: (shouting back) "NO! It's NOT okay! Figure it out!

She glares at him.

WOMAN: Figure out why you tore me apart! Why you contaminated the rest of my life! Every day of the rest of my life! I have flashbacks. I have fear. I have anger. Surely I'm entitled to know *why*!

He stares at her. A little surprised.

WOMAN: (to audience; first man freezes) He's surprised. Seriously?

I can't leave my apartment anymore without thinking it could happen again. Who knows when a couple *other* guys might overwhelm me, hold me down, and *use* me. Like I'm some *thing* to be *used*. Then dribbled on.

Brownmiller said it, over forty years ago: "[Rape] is nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear."

Though maybe the incident—the *incident*—that's how people refer to it—just ripped off my rose-coloured glasses. After all, one in three. I shouldn't have felt comfortable leaving my apartment in the first place. I should have been afraid and angry all along.

As should be all women. And girls. Females.

Oh god, they've weaponized sex. They've turned what could have been, what should have been ...

SCENE 4

She is back in the room.

WOMAN: When you said 'It's what's done,' did you mean it's what's done in porn? And you did it because the women in porn acted like they liked it? So you thought *I'd* like it?

He nods. Just once.

WOMAN: Then I've got a nice piece of property in Florida to sell to you.

It takes him a moment.

FIRST MAN: (to himself; woman freezes) Bitch.

WOMAN: How would you feel if *you* were sodomized? (Been here before too, but.)

He shrugs. Doesn't seem to be trying to imagine it. Or perhaps can't.

WOMAN: (persisting) How would you feel if someone held you down, ripped your pants off, and shoved ... something ... up your ass. Pushed it in, then pulled it out, pushed it in again, then pulled it out, in and out, in and out.

He squirms. Just a bit.

WOMAN: You'd scream, you'd squeal like a pig, but you'd *like* it—right?

He squirms. Just a bit more.

WOMAN: (after a long moment) I don't believe you. Not for a second. I don't believe you thought *I'd* like it. Any of it. I don't know anyone who *would*. Would *you* like it if some guy shot his come all over your face? No, don't tell me (she anticipates), it's different. Women are *supposed* to like being humiliated.

She looks at him evenly.

WOMAN: You are so fucked up.

He stands suddenly and towers toward her.

FIRST MAN: YOU DESERVED IT, BITCH!

The MALE GUARD appears at the window. He glances inside then moves on.

WOMAN: (unperturbed) Okay, finally we have a *reason*. It even involves *justice*. Very good. Now. What did I do to deserve it?

He remains standing. The vein in his temple stands out.

WOMAN: (calmly) I think you're overgeneralizing again. Though, honestly, I'm not sure the woman you're confusing me with would have deserved it either.

FIRST MAN: Look, I don't need this shit!

He sits down in a huff, needlessly clattering the shackles as he does so.

WOMAN: It's not a question of what you need.

WOMAN: (to audience; first man freezes) Why do men always frame things that way? Oh, wait.

FIRST MAN: I don't want to argue with you, okay?

WOMAN: (to audience; first man freezes) What he means is he doesn't want to discover that his opinion on the matter is indefensible. Of course, he doesn't know that's what he means.

WOMAN: Why—

FIRST MAN: (glowering at her as he interrupts) As I said before, bitch, I was drunk.

WOMAN: Yeah, but why did being drunk make you sodomize me? Instead of, say, dance the Macarena with me? You must have *wanted* to do sodomize me. And being drunk just ...

FIRST MAN: Yeah, that's it. I *wanted* to do it.

WOMAN: (prompting him, in a patronizing manner) And you wanted to do it because ...

No response.

WOMAN: I think you did it because you truly do hold women, all women, in contempt. So you like humiliating them. Furthermore, humiliating someone puts them beneath you. So that makes you one-up.

WOMAN: (to audience; first man freezes) Men would rather die than be a loser, and beating up women means they aren't a loser.

Wait—how does beating up women mean you're *not* a loser?

WOMAN: (turning back to the first man) But quite apart from the mistakes in logic—just because you hold someone in contempt, it doesn't follow that you should humiliate them, and humiliating someone doesn't make them beneath you, it just indicates that you *think* they're beneath you—why do you hold *women* in such contempt? Why do you like humiliating *them*?



Silence.

WOMAN: Okay, one question at a time. What did I ever do to you to make you feel such contempt toward me?

He doesn't answer.

So she does.

WOMAN: Nothing. It's what I *am* that upsets you. So I ask, why is it you feel such contempt for *women*? What is it about us that upsets you so much?

FIRST MAN: You don't upset me.

WOMAN: Clearly we do. Or you wouldn't have such strong feelings about us.

FIRST MAN: (laughing with derision) I don't have strong feelings about you.

WOMAN: Sure you do. You *despise* us. Why?

He's silent.

WOMAN: (screaming in frustration) I want to know *why!* Why do you watch porn? Why do you play those video games? Why do you refuse to vote for female political candidates? Why do you sabotage women who work in traditionally male professions? Why do you boo when a woman gets the prize for the highest grades?

He stares at her.

FIRST MAN: (to himself; woman freezes) What the fuck are you talking about?

WOMAN: (continuing) Why do you enjoy pretending to kill? Why do you enjoy *actually* killing, hunting down then shooting animals?

Silence.

WOMAN: You don't know. Of course you don't. My god, can anyone be so clueless about themselves?

WOMAN: (to audience) Do *you* know why men feel such contempt for women? Why they spit on them, piss on them, ejaculate on them?

I'm thinking it's just part of the definition of being a man. Contempt for women. Misogyny. And most males have to be, just *have to be*, men. Just as most females have to be women. For what else could they be?

To be a person, to identify oneself not by the accidental attributes one was born with, whether sex or skin color or nationality, but by the attributes one chose, the attributes one developed, well, that's a lot of work.

FIRST MAN: You're a fucking bitch! You're nothing but a cunt, you know that?

WOMAN: (to audience; first man freezes) And there it is. Prick the skin of any man and the misogyny bursts out. Exactly like pus.

WOMAN: (to first man) Yeah, see, that's what I thought. You have complete and utter disdain for women. You hate us. And, or so, you see nothing wrong with hurting us, humiliating us. In fact, I think you enjoyed hurting me. I think maybe you were excited by my screams of pain. You certainly enjoyed coming on my face. So my question is, no surprise, *why?*

Again, silence.

She gets up and paces.

WOMAN: (to herself; first man freezes) This is hopeless. I might never be able to understand why he did what he did. Not because he doesn't know why, but because there is no why. Maybe when you get all the way down, there is no reason.

This is why people become religious. To believe that everything happens *for a reason*. The alternative is ... unbearable. It takes such ... courage. To face the fact that so much pain is ... pointless. Acknowledging, intellectually, that the universe is irrational is one thing; seeing, feeling such irrationality up close and personal is quite another.

She's back at her chair.

WOMAN: Well, you keep trying to figure it out. I'll be back next week.

She picks up her bag and walks toward the door.

FIRST MAN: You know what your problem is?

WOMAN: Yeah. (She turns.) You. And every man like you.

ACT SIX

SCENE 1

The following week, both of the men are in the room again when THE WOMAN is escorted into the room by the FEMALE GUARD. She takes her seat, setting her bag onto the floor beside her.

WOMAN: So have either of you figured it out? Why you did what you did?

FIRST MAN: (tiredly) We just did it, we didn't have a reason, okay? Give it up, already!

SECOND MAN: (following suit) Yeah.

She looks at the second one for a moment.

WOMAN: (summarizing) We've established that you think women are solely sexual things available for your use. And that that somehow gives you the right to hurt and humiliate them. Have you figured out yet why you think that?

Silence.

WOMAN: No? Then perhaps you should *stop* thinking that, yeah? I mean if you don't have a good reason for your beliefs, your opinions—

FIRST MAN: (with disdain) We don't *need* reasons for our beliefs.

WOMAN: Okay, but then you have no right to act on the basis of those beliefs, do you?

A minute passes.

WOMAN: Well?

FIRST MAN: (with such belligerence) Well what?

WOMAN: People who can't explain, can't justify, their beliefs shouldn't be allowed to act on those beliefs. I mean, I shouldn't be allowed to just go around and do stuff at random for no reason at all. Should I?

FIRST MAN: Wouldn't bother me none.

Quick as a snake, she stands up and smacks his nose. Breaks it, in fact.

He screams. And pulls at his shackles. In vain.

The FEMALE GUARD appears at the door, her hand ready at her sidearm. She assesses the situation and decides that no intervention, no assistance, is needed at the moment.

SECOND MAN: (looking to THE WOMAN with alarm) What the fuck? Why did you do that?

WOMAN: Oh *now* you want reasons.

FIRST MAN: (screaming) YOU FUCKING BITCH!!

His face is red with rage. And a bit of blood. If his hands weren't cuffed to the table, he would've lunged at her.

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) The way he said that made it sound like "Not fair!" Did you notice?

WOMAN: (turning back to FIRST MAN) What, I'm not entitled to retaliate? How do you figure that?

She pauses for a moment. Then gets it.

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) Ah. When you're entitled to everything, without consequence, retaliation for exercising such entitlement violates that entitlement. So it isn't fair.

How does one develop that attitude, that belief? I mean, I can't even *imagine* feeling, let alone thinking, that I'm entitled to everything, to anything I want. Without consequence.

And since, when, men feel entitled to women, *defence* against sexual assault wouldn't be fair either. It would be getting in the way, interfering with his entitlement.

Wow.

She smacks his nose again. His already broken nose.

He screams again.

SECOND MAN: (protesting) What the hell are you doing?!

WOMAN: (ignoring the second man; speaking to the first man) Oh come on, quit your crying. You wanted that. You *liked* that. Men enjoy this sort of thing.

FIRST MAN recovers somewhat and looks at her levelly. It's almost the first eye contact he's made.

FIRST MAN: (quietly) When I get out of here, bitch, I'm going to kill you.

WOMAN: (unfazed) Hm. Why? Oops. Another question you can't answer. Well, the same question, actually.

FIRST MAN: I'M GOING TO KILL YOU BECAUSE I HATE YOU!!

WOMAN: Okay, now we're getting somewhere again. Why do you hate me? Follow-up, why do you want to kill people you hate? And, one more follow-up, on what basis do you think it's morally acceptable to kill people you hate? (politely) Can you remember those three questions? (patronizingly) Maybe you should write them down. Because that's your assignment for next time. Figuring out the answers to why do you hate me, why do you want to kill people you hate, and on what basis is that morally acceptable. Got it?

He's seething. Absolutely seething.

WOMAN: Is that a yes?

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) I'll come back next week, ask him if he's figured it out, and again, he'll say no. (She sighs.) Well, he wouldn't actually say no, he'd just glare at me. Refusing to admit that he doesn't know.

She turns back to him.

He glares at her.

WOMAN: (to the FIRST MAN) You don't know very much, do you. I don't think you know anything. I must've asked a dozen questions, but (she counts them off on her fingers), you don't know why you hurt me. You don't know why you humiliated me. You don't know why you hate me. You don't know why you hate women. You don't know why you're so contemptuous of women. You don't know why you enjoy hurting women. Why have you been unable to answer even *one* of these questions?

His face darkens.

WOMAN: (brightly) I know! (including the SECOND MAN in her gaze) It's because you're *men*! Denial, excuse, deflection. That's your complete response repertoire. Even among yourselves. When a buddy accuses you of something, what do you do? You deny it! And if that doesn't work, you make excuses! Why can't you guys just take responsibility for your actions?

Silence.

WOMAN: It seems to me that men will do *anything* to avoid facing the truth. To avoid *figuring out* the truth. Even when it concerns you. Perhaps *especially* when it concerns you.

Silence.

WOMAN: Why are men so afraid of introspection?

SECOND MAN: We're not afraid—

WOMAN: Of *anything*, no. Got that. And yet you avoid it at all costs.

She gets up and heads toward the door.

Part way there, she stops, turns to the audience.

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) To be fair, a lot of women aren't terribly self-aware either. But generally speaking, they're not the ones sexually assaulting people.

## SCENE 2

THE WOMAN returns after a break, escorted by the FEMALE GUARD, and takes her seat again.

FIRST MAN's nose is bandaged.

WOMAN: If you can't explain your actions, I'll have to do it for you.

She sighs. Then turns to the audience.

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) That's why Sweden, Norway, and other countries are so advanced compared to Canada and the States. They teach their kids how to think. They have philosophy in elementary school. So kids learn early on to establish reasons for their opinions, their actions. They aren't as dependent on emotion. They aren't as vulnerable to profit-motivated media, aren't as easily suckered in by the messages to do this, be that.

WOMAN: (turning back to the men) I think that you meant to do exactly what you did. Partly because you're both morons and you don't think for yourselves, but instead do whatever our culture, or your subculture, tells you to do. Which includes pretty much anything that shows contempt for women. Because your status, as males—and that's the only thing your status depends on, your sex, because god knows there's nothing about you as individuals that would give you any sort of status, you've been too lazy to develop any remotely impressive abilities or attributes—your status as males depends on putting us down. Coming onto my face turned me into ... a toilet.

SECOND MAN: (glancing nervously at his buddy with a grin) You're crazy, you know that, right?

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) And there it is. The ultimate dismissal. 'You're crazy.' It's such a quick and thorough way to de-legitimize someone, to de-authorize them, to ensure that what they say isn't taken seriously.

She turns back to the men.

WOMAN: Right. Well, until you come up with a better explanation, you'll have to accept mine. Unlike you, I *have* thought about these things.

FIRST MAN: (dismissively) Yeah, well, everyone's entitled to their own opinion.

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) In other words, 'Yeah, well, I don't know how to determine whose opinion is better, whose opinion is more supported by evidence and argument.'

Or 'I don't want to determine whose opinion is better—because it's probably not mine.'

She resumes her explanation.

WOMAN: And partly you did what you did because you genuinely hate women. One, because, according to you, women are weaker than you. They're losers. And since you hate losing, you hate losers.

Never mind that you *want* them to be weaker than you. Because then you're stronger. You want women to be beneath you because then you're on top. But then you hate them for *being* beneath you. Go figure.

And you hate women because two, you're sexually attracted to us and that makes you And partly you did what you did because you genuinely hate women. You're sexually attracted to us and that makes you feel like a puppet on a string. And since it's *especially* emasculating to be ... controlled, as you see it, *by a woman*, you're *especially* angry about it. So you need to punish us. You need to punish women. Viciously. And sexually.

No response.

WOMAN: (continuing) But that's irrational too. Because most of us? We're not baiting you. I certainly wasn't. Again, you're buying into the view of women that Hollywood and gaming shoves down your throat.

No response.

WOMAN: We are not evil demon seductresses, we're not sexy temptresses. Most of us are just trying to hang onto our jobs, pay rent ... So you don't need to get back at us. You don't need to conquer us. We're not controlling you. Your own body's doing that. So if you hate anyone, hate yourself. Blame *your* body, not mine.

No response.

WOMAN: And if you don't want to be driven by your body, then why don't you do something about it?

FIRST MAN: What, you want to castrate us all?

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) Right. (She sighs.) Of all the things I've said. Because of course that was really the only thing men fear. As if their testicles were The Most Important Things In The World. And not just part of an involuntary delivery system of a non-conscious and therefore supremely stupid gene that was hell-bent on replication.

She gets up in disgust to take another break.



### SCENE 3

She is back in the room with the men.

WOMAN: (to the SECOND MAN) What happened to you? Last time we met ... It's like when two or more of you are together, you turn into the borg, become part of a hive mind.

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) It makes sense. Lack of introspection means low self-consciousness, which means weak sense of self, which means subject to the herd mentality. No wonder gangs, tribes, teams, and nations are so important to them.

The second man has not responded.

WOMAN: Why are you afraid of him? What's he got over you?

SECOND MAN: I'm not afraid of him. (He looks over at his buddy nervously.)

WOMAN: Sure you are. Because the last time I was here, you seemed to ... understand. A bit. You even apologized, remember?

FIRST MAN: You apologized? (He turns to the SECOND MAN, laughing.) Dude, have *you* been pussywhipped. (said with such scorn)

SECOND MAN: I didn't apologize.

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) Is he even aware that he's lying? Is the herd mentality completely derailing the rational part of his brain? It would explain why men who wouldn't, when alone, hit someone, find themselves bashing someone's head into a brick wall when they were part of a mob.

And two is enough to be a herd? Scarey thought, that. Points to legislative revision of the freedom of association. For men, at least.

FIRST MAN: (to the second man) Be a man! Have some initiative! Ya gotta step up and *take* what you want!

WOMAN: Whether or not you deserve it? Whether or not it's yours? If you don't deserve it, that's not fair. And if it's not yours, that's theft. You stole access to my body.

He snorts.

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) Right. Fair doesn't concern him. Fair is for wusses.

FIRST MAN: (casually) You know, speaking of initiative, we've already made a nice chunk of change from the video.

He leans back. A smug look on his face.

The blood rushes from THE WOMAN's head and she feels a wave of dizzy nausea.

FIRST MAN: (nodding an answer to her unspoken question) Uploaded it to HotSex dot Com.

WOMAN: (her thoughts, audible; the men freeze) My humiliation is online for everyone to see? My pain, and my humiliation, is ... entertainment?

FIRST MAN: We get half every time someone clicks on it.

WOMAN: (her thoughts, audible; the men freeze) They used my body for money. Of course they did.

WOMAN: (to the men; she tries to speak their language) Don't you think I should get a cut?

FIRST MAN: Why? *We're* the ones who recorded it. *We're* the ones set up the account and uploaded it.

WOMAN: But—

FIRST MAN: You just lay there. Didn't even give either one of us a blowjob.

She— She just—needs a moment. She needs—

WOMAN: (a whisper) Did you at least blur my face? (She has to know.)

FIRST MAN: Hell no! What happens on your face are some of the best parts! (He grins broadly.)

ACT SEVEN

SCENE 1

The FEMALE GUARD escorts the WOMAN into the room the following week. She is looking a little oddly at the woman, but it's not clear whether she is looking at the woman's swollen belly or her bag. Or both.

Both men are in the room when she arrives and see the swell at her belly.

FIRST MAN: (snickering) You got knocked up?

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) Knocked up. (She sighs.) Must they turn *everything* into violence?

And did you notice the snicker? Men shouldn't be allowed to impregnate anyone until they can treat pregnancy with respect, dignity, and appropriate emotion. To borrow Sarkeesian's words.

She takes her seat at the table, setting her heavy bag beside her on the floor.

WOMAN: Yes. (She stares at him.) You were there. Your buddy 'knocked me up'. Don't you remember? Have you suffered a brain injury?

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) It's the epitome of male privilege: sex without consequences.

WOMAN: (turning back to the men) You *do* know how babies are made, don't you?

She looks at one and then the other.

The first one smirks. The second one just stares at her, a little discomfort creeping onto his face.

Then, since neither one had actually said 'Yes' ...

WOMAN: There are sperm in your ejaculate—your cum, your jizz—and when you put it in a woman's vagina, it makes its way into her Fallopian tubes. If there's an egg there—

SECOND MAN: (angrily) We *know* about ... the birds and the bees!

WOMAN: Then why were you surprised when I walked in, pregnant?

Silence.

WOMAN: Did you think that when it's rape, the woman suddenly develops voluntary control over fertilization or implantation? Or that her body somehow erects a barrier? Spontaneously produces a spermicide?

WOMAN: (an aside to audience; the men freeze) Wouldn't that be nice.

WOMAN: Did you think the odds were against it? Rape results in 32,000 pregnancies per year.

WOMAN: (turning quickly to audience; the men freeze) And quite apart from rape — Do not for a second blame women for irresponsible contraception use. Have you heard of 'stealthing'? It's when men take off their condom part way through, without the woman knowing, consenting.

A practice so prevalent it has a name. It has online communities of men talking about how to get away with it.

'Women have no right to make sexual decisions about their bodies,' it so much as says. 'What you want is utterly irrelevant.'

WOMAN: (turning back to the men) You don't know why you're surprised? Well, take a moment and figure it out. You really should understand why you feel the emotions you do. I'll wait.

A minute passes.

WOMAN: Have you figured it out yet? (She looks to the SECOND MAN.) Why you're surprised that you made me pregnant?

The FIRST MAN is amused to see his buddy on the hot spot.

WOMAN: Have you had a vasectomy? That would explain your surprise. Or maybe you have a very low sperm count. Is that the case?

He is silent.

WOMAN: *Have* you had a vasectomy?

He makes a sound.

WOMAN: What does that mean? Please, use your words. I don't understand grunts. Have you had a vasectomy?

SECOND MAN: (shouting angrily) NO!

WOMAN: Okay, there's no need to get angry! Why does the question make you angry?

Silence again.

WOMAN: (an explanatory aside to audience; the men freeze) Men pride themselves on their reproductive ability. God knows why, because once they reproduce, they don't pride themselves on their caretaking ability. It's evolutionary psychology gone mutant. Because surely taking care of one's spawn increases the chance that one's genes will survive as much as engaging in the sexual intercourse that produced said spawn. Irrational to the core, men are.

WOMAN: (turning back to the men) You don't know? You don't know very much, do you? *Now* you don't know how sex works, you don't know why you're surprised, you don't know why you're angry ...

SECOND MAN: I know how sex works!

WOMAN: Then why are you surprised!

SECOND MAN: Because we were just fooling around—

WOMAN: (turning to the audience with amazement on her face; the men freeze) What? They consider what they did to me to be just *fooling around*? They consider creating a new human being to be just *fooling around*?

(shakes her head) No, of course not. What people mean when they say they were just fooling around is that they shouldn't be held responsible for their actions.

She rummages in her bag, then sets a piece of paper on top of the table and pushes it across to the SECOND MAN.

SECOND MAN: What's this? (He glances down at it.)

WOMAN: An invoice for my incubation services to date.

He reads it, then looked up at her as if she was insane.

SECOND MAN: I'm not paying this!

WOMAN: Of course you are. Wait—did you expect me to provide my services for *free*? To *you*? Why in god's name would you think that? (She acts truly perplexed.)

No response.

WOMAN: If you had no intention of paying for a pregnancy, why did you make one happen?

SECOND MAN: I *didn't* make one happen!

WOMAN: There are sperm in your ejaculate (she starts the explanation again), and when you put it in a woman's vagina—

SECOND MAN: Just shut up! Just shut the fuck up!

FIRST MAN: It's extra points.

WOMAN: What?

She turns her attention back to him.

FIRST MAN: (a little gleefully) It's extra points if you do it without a condom.

WOMAN: (to audience) Even this, they turn into competition. No surprise.

WOMAN: (turning to the first man) Why? Because then you'd be *really* screwing me? Fucking up *the rest of my life* with a kid I can't afford, a kid I don't want?"

WOMAN: (to audience, suddenly wide-eyed; the men freeze) I just realized why 'Fuck you' is an insult. To fuck someone, to make someone pregnant, is to destroy them. Their hopes, their dreams, their aspirations. Their autonomy.

She turns back to the second one.

WOMAN: What did I ever do to you? Why do you hate me so much you want to ... derail my life? And how sick do you have to be to do that by using, making, a new human being?

SECOND MAN: I—

WOMAN: Oh, wait. (She beats him to it.) You don't know.

SECOND MAN: (a slight challenge in his voice) I guess I thought you'd do something.

WOMAN: You *guess* you thought *I'd* do something. Why should *I* be the one to do something? I was forced into this, remember? By you! So doesn't that make it *your* responsibility?

SECOND MAN: I just figured you'd do something.

WOMAN: Could you be more specific?

He glares at her.

WOMAN: What now? You don't *want* to be more specific? Why don't you want to be more specific? You know, for someone who's so cavalier about having sex, you're astonishingly incapable of talking about it.

SECOND MAN: (nearly shouting) I thought you'd take care of it!

WOMAN: 'Take care of it.'

WOMAN: (turning to audience; the men freeze) Meaning *not* take care of it.

SECOND MAN: Yeah, I thought you'd get rid of it.

WOMAN: 'Get rid of it.' Like it's a piece of garbage? An old couch?

She stares at him.

WOMAN: So you thought you'd rape me, make me pregnant, and then I'd get an abortion. Okay, did you have any particular clinic in mind? Do you know how much they charge? Do you know how long their waiting list is?

SECOND MAN: I thought you were on something.

WOMAN: 'On something.' You mean contraception? And risk cancer, stroke, and heart disease? Just so a man can have sex with me without a condom? Not likely. Why would you think that?

No answer.

WOMAN: Don't you think you should've asked? To be sure? I mean, this is pretty ... substantial. You've created a new human being. That's a lot to be responsible for. Oh wait, you're not responsible for it. You're not responsible for anything.

She waits a moment.

FIRST MAN: (reaching a point of impatience with the conversation, saying all that needs to be said) It's your body.

She looks at him, calmly.

WOMAN: THEN KEEP YOUR FUCKING HANDS OFF IT!

She waits a moment (hopefully for audience applause).

WOMAN: (turning back to the second man) By the time I realized I was pregnant, it was too late. When I missed my period—

They both look away.

WOMAN: Oh, *I'm* supposed to be comfortable with *your* bodily fluids, but you're uncomfortable with mine? GROW UP! (resuming) When I missed my period, I thought it was because of the trauma.

The first one snorts.

WOMAN: What, you don't think I was traumatized? Having one man hold me down while the other rapes me? Being sodomized? Being punched—

FIRST MAN: We didn't punch you.

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) *That's* where they draw the line? Right. Because rape isn't assault. It's just sex.

WOMAN: (turning back to the men) You slammed part of your body into mine, over and over and over. Isn't that punching?

She turns to the audience as if seeking agreement.

WOMAN: You also slapped my face, hit my jaw a couple times.

FIRST MAN: Yeah, to shut you up.

WOMAN: Oh, did my screaming annoy you?

FIRST MAN: (grinning) Yeah. You were all hysterical.

She takes a breath. And another.

WOMAN: (quietly) You have *no* comprehension of what it is you've done. For that alone, you should be locked up. You're like a two-year-old in an adult male body. Both of you.

Silence.

WOMAN: (screaming) You were *tearing my rectum!* Do you know what that feels like? Have you ever had your rectum torn?

Silence.

WOMAN: And you (she turns to the SECOND MAN), you were *tearing my vagina!* And quite possibly making me pregnant!

Silence.

WOMAN: And (she looks back and forth), both of you were possibly giving me herpes, venereal warts, AIDS, gonorrhea, syphilis, god knows what—

FIRST MAN: We don't have any of that shit.

WOMAN: And I knew that how?

They stare at her.



WOMAN: When was the last time you were tested? For any of that shit?

No response.

WOMAN: Because surprise. You *do* have some of that shit.

She gives them a minute.

WOMAN: Good thing, then, that I'm *not* pregnant.

She reaches under her sweatshirt and removes a pillow.

WOMAN: I would've started showing months ago. Morons.

She gets up, knocks on the door, and when the FEMALE GUARD opens it, she leaves the room.

## SCENE 2

The returns, escorted by the FEMALE GUARD.

FIRST MAN: You wanna talk consequences? Because of you, we're both going to have criminal records!

WOMAN: Because of *me*? How do you figure that?

FIRST MAN: You reported us.

WOMAN: Because you committed a crime! *You* committed a *crime*. *That's* why you're going to have a criminal record!

He looks away.

WOMAN: Why is your well-being more important than mine? Why is your future more important than mine?

FIRST MAN: What's done is done. This doesn't affect your future.

WOMAN: The hell it doesn't!

FIRST MAN: You said yourself you're not pregnant!

WOMAN: That's not the only— Do you have any idea how long it'll take before I can have sex without flashbacks to the pain and humiliation?

He stares at her. She sees that what she'd said hadn't really registered.

WOMAN: You honestly don't think that what you did was wrong, do you?

Silence.

WOMAN: Even a six-year-old would think otherwise. (shouting) So what *the hell* is wrong with you?

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) His acceptance of masculinity is impenetrable. Despite its pathological core.

(sighing, as she gets up to walk around already) I was a fool to expect any change. Not in just a few weeks. They don't have the disposition. They don't have the skills. The last time they thought about right and wrong was before puberty. Before testosterone flooded their bodies and shoved their brains off-line. Because from that point on, everything men do and say is focused on competition: one-upmanship, saving face. Winning precludes any attention to truth and good and right.

And it's best done with violence.

And women.

WOMAN: (turning back to the men) What you did was sexual torture.

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) (apologetically) I know it was a mild version of what's being done this very minute to god knows how many of the 4.5 million victims of sex trafficking. My ordeal lasted under an hour. And when it was over, I was let go.

WOMAN: (turning back to the men) It was a hate crime.

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) Ninety-eight percent of those victims are female. That's the reason they're victims. Worldwide, if you're female, and between 15 and 44, you're more likely to be injured or killed by a man, than by disease, war, and traffic accidents. Combined.

SECOND MAN: She's right. (He turns to his buddy.) We *did* hurt her. We *did* do something wrong.

WOMAN: (to the second man) Oh *now* you want to try to convince your buddy it was wrong. Too late.

Still, he looks at her, begging for ...

WOMAN: What, you want me to thank you? Congratulate you, maybe? Oh my, aren't we a special little snowflake.

Then his expression registers.

WOMAN: You want *forgiveness*!?

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) Unbelievable.

WOMAN: (turning back to the second man) Why should I forgive you? Because that's what women do? They forgive the men who hurt them? Well, fuck that.

Silence.

WOMAN: Though I'm not sure I blame you.

Relief floods his face. It would be temporary.

WOMAN: If I had that much testosterone coursing through my body, maybe I wouldn't think of anything but sex either. If the sexual urge is so great you call it a need, how do you men get anything done? With that constant undercurrent, that constant undertow ...

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) Though many studies show that men who rape do *not* have higher than normal levels of testosterone. I'm aware of that.

WOMAN: (turning back to the men) And if I could just go and get me some, maybe I would. Maybe I wouldn't be able to resist the ever-present temptation. Especially if I fed it by watching porn.

And then it occurs to her.

WOMAN: Maybe the question isn't why you did this. Maybe the question is why you don't do it more often.

The FIRST MAN grins.

WOMAN: Then again, I do blame you. Because even with that insistence relentlessly drumming in your brain, all you have to do is spend most of your day jerking off. Intercourse isn't necessary. That's meeting a different ... So yeah, changed my mind. I do blame you. For the rape. For the sodomy. And for not getting yourself fixed.

FIRST MAN: (turning to his buddy) See? She does want to castrate us.

WOMAN: Have you ever heard of a burdizzo? It's a clamp that essentially breaks the blood vessels leading to the testicles. Without blood, the testicles don't develop. So once you hit puberty, you wouldn't get that ... testosterone tsunami. The animals it's used on are calm, good-tempered, easy to get along with. They don't fight each other. And they still grow up to be big, beautiful, and healthy.

FIRST MAN: We're not animals.

WOMAN: I beg to differ.

FIRST MAN smirks, then looks away.

WOMAN: Even so, we have evidence that it would work the same way in humans. We've had cases in which the pituitary gland doesn't produce testosterone. Those men report feeling no urge to be violent. When they start receiving testosterone injections, they do. Consider testosterone gels, patches, caps. Don't they all increase aggression? I could be wrong, of course. But then, this isn't exactly my responsibility, is it. Fixing you. It's *your* responsibility. So *you* do the research. *You* figure it out.

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) Right. Like that's gonna happen.

WOMAN: 'Course, the problem isn't *solely* physical. But even there ... The two of you don't appear to have been smart enough or critical enough or strong enough to have resisted the socialization you've been exposed to all your life. The millions of messages that say women are inferior, they exist for your use, etc., etc., etc. The porn and 'games' that sexualize domination.

SECOND MAN: We're not stupid.

WOMAN: You're still voluntarily exposing yourselves to such messages. You're like a kid who's been fed nothing but junk food all his life and so, then, finds himself at eighteen grossly overweight. As an adult, he finally understands why. But keeps on eating junk food. The analogy falls apart a bit, because I don't think you do understand why you are the way you are. Because, let's face it, you've demonstrated a complete resistance or inability to be introspective.

Silence.

WOMAN: (she gets up and walks around the room) Ideally, of course, we'd prohibit those messages. We'd change the socialization. In case nurture *can* trump nature. It seems able to do so, for a number of men. Though of course we don't know if those men have a less interfering nature. Less testosterone, for example.

She sees the FEMALE GUARD at the door as she passes by.

WOMAN: But addressing socialization would require massive regulation. Of the toy industry, of every media stream ... Regulation that would prohibit linking violence with fun, linking violence with excitement ...

No response.

WOMAN: And, well, what do we do with the parents hell bent on teaching their little boys to 'grow a pair', to 'be a man'? We could, of course, just prohibit them from reproducing. Reproducing their genes, reproducing their lies. To impressionable children. Who are never taught the skills needed to critically evaluate those lies.

She sighs deeply. Because right. Like any of that would *ever* happen.

WOMAN: In the meantime— (she's back in front of them) No, even if you stopped eating junk food, right now, completely ... Developmental psychologists tell us there are critical windows, during which certain changes can occur, but in your case, those windows closed long ago. It's too late for you two.

FIRST MAN: You can't teach a dog new tricks. (He agrees, rather happily.)

WOMAN: Oh this wouldn't be a new trick. (She leans onto the table.) It'd be a whole new way of seeing. Me. Yourself. It would require nothing short of ... a whole new ... theory of everything. And, to be blunt (she sighs again), you're not up to it.

FIRST MAN: (to himself; the other two freeze) Bitch. I am *so* going to—

WOMAN: All of which is to say, I don't think the remedy lies in addressing the psychosocial or cognitive part of the problem.

She sits back down.

They wait.

WOMAN: Which leaves us with all that testosterone. Ten times what I've got. So no wonder.

FIRST MAN: (nodding) We can't help ourselves. (He actually grins.)

WOMAN: Then you shouldn't be allowed the freedoms you have. Freedom of movement. Freedom of association. You shouldn't be allowed to hold any position of power.

No response.

WOMAN: Furthermore, if it *is* the testosterone that's making you so aggressive toward women, so contemptuous of women, then you should put yourselves on testosterone inhibitors. Or estrogen supplements. To compensate.

The FIRST MAN snorts. The SECOND MAN looks a little confused, a little terrified.

WOMAN: Because clearly you've got more testosterone coursing through your body than you can handle, more than you have the strength to resist. It's screaming at you all day and all night to FUCK! FUCK! FUCK! FUCK! FUCK! FUCK! and so you do.

The FIRST MAN grins. The SECOND MAN looks a little distressed.

WOMAN: 'Course, that wouldn't explain rape. Unless the testosterone is also saying HURT! HURT! HURT! HURT!

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) Is it? I wonder ...

WOMAN: (turning back to the men) Or unless you're sick in the head. Normal, yes, but also sick. You like to hurt others. You get off on causing others pain.

The SECOND MAN glances at the FIRST MAN.

WOMAN: Either way, it's obvious that your body is controlling you. Instead of vice versa.

Silence.

WOMAN: Of course, introspection is prerequisite for self-control, and you refuse to engage in introspection. It's like you don't *want* to know anything about yourself. Don't want to face the ugliness, I suppose. But even if you *had* the self-knowledge—which you should have now, at least a little bit—I'm not convinced you're strong enough ... It seems you've also got the pull of the herd to resist. Or maybe you're just that weak-willed.

The FIRST MAN opens his mouth—

WOMAN: (she hastens to add) It's not just you. Put bluntly, men in general aren't as strong as they like to think. Nor are they in control as much as they like to think.

The FIRST MAN glances away.

FIRST MAN: (to audience; the other two freeze) She is so full of shit.

WOMAN: (summarizing) So, you can't have it both ways. Either you *can* control your sexual and/or aggressive desires—and I note that the 'and/or' might be wrong, because maybe they're one in the same, for men—in which case you *are* responsible for your actions, because you could have chosen otherwise. In which case you should stay here, in prison, for the rest of your life, because we don't want you out in the world choosing to rape and sodomize other women.

No response.

WOMAN: Or you *can't* control yourself, in which case you *aren't* responsible for your actions. In which case we should take over. Control you. Either by keeping you here, again, for the rest of your life, or by one of the other methods I've mentioned.

The FIRST MAN snorts.

WOMAN: 'Course, in the second case, perhaps the honorable thing to do would be to recognize that you're not in control and kill yourself. Hope you get a do-over with a body that doesn't force you to hurt other people.

She waits. No response.

WOMAN: So. Which is it? What's it gonna be?

They stare at her.

WOMAN: Well, okay, I guess that's the answer. If you can't even make *this* choice, I guess you *aren't* in the driver's seat.

She stands up.

WOMAN: Okay then. I know what my recommendation is going to be.

She heads toward the door.

SECOND MAN: Wait— (then, in a small voice) What—

WOMAN: I'm going to recommend to the court that you be put on testosterone inhibitors.

FIRST MAN: BITCH!! (He strains at his cuffs.)

WOMAN: Woh. (She pauses at the door.) It's just a recommendation.

FIRST MAN: FUCK YOU!

WOMAN: (ignores his rage) Based on my analysis. Do you have a better analysis? Of the problem? The solution? You haven't even figured out yet why you did what you did!

No response.

She gets up, goes to the door, but before she can even knock, the FEMALE GUARD opens the door. Her hand is on her sidearm. She stays in the open doorway, hand at her side. Not frozen, just there ... in case ...

WOMAN: You know (she turns back, looking at the FIRST MAN), it's interesting that my having just this little bit of influence over you—control, if you will—has you so enraged. You can hold me down, render me unable to move, inflict injuries with long-lasting side-effects, and you (she looks at the SECOND MAN) can force your sperm into me, make me endure nine months of pregnancy then labour then motherhood, or an abortion, or at the very least the morning-after pill, but (she looks back to the FIRST MAN) I can't even *make a recommendation* about your future? How do you figure that?

No response.

WOMAN: And if this is how angry you get when a woman has even *that* little bit of power over you, well, that just *justifies* my recommendation, doesn't it.

She turns to the door again, but then realizes she's forgotten her pillow and her bag. She returns to the table.

FIRST MAN: What's that smell? (He wrinkles his nose.)

WOMAN: Oh. The consequences of your actions. *One* of the consequences of your actions. You tore my rectum, remember? So I'm on stool softeners. That way, bowel movements don't hurt as much. But it's kind of like having diarrhea. (She grimaces.) And, until my sphincter regains its elasticity, well, sometimes I just ... leak. Smells like that's what's happened. I need to change my underwear.

She reaches into her bag, pulls out a clean pair of underwear, then bends over and started to change her underwear.

They both bellow objections and turn away.

WOMAN: No need to turn away. You've seen all this before. Besides, have the courage to face what you did.



She stands up then, a slight grin on her face, and flings her heavily soiled underwear at the FIRST MAN. It lands on his head and hangs down onto his face.

He screams. So much so, you'd think she'd flung acid at him.

But since his hands are shackled, he can't do anything. He can't even wipe his face.

FIRST MAN: FUCKING BITCH!!

His face is red with rage. He shakes his head, trying to dislodge the soiled underwear. But that just makes it worse.

FIRST MAN: YOU BITCH, YOU FUCKIN' CUNT, I'M GOING TO KILL YOU!!

WOMAN: Yeah. Heard you the first time. And the second. And the third. And the—

WOMAN: (to audience; the men freeze) So maybe next time, another time, it might *be* acid. (emphasis on 'be' to indicate that she's thought of that)

She reaches down toward her bag.

BLACK-OUT

A single gunshot is heard.

WOMAN: Or not.

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