

THOMAS
Whatever's comfortable.

VANDA
No, tell me.

THOMAS
Why don't you stand there.
(She does.)
Further left. No! Further *left*.

VANDA
Oh, *stage* left.

THOMAS
Is there any other kind?

VANDA
Sorry.

SIDE 3-- START

THOMAS
Do you want to read the scene over?

VANDA
Nah, let's wing it. How far should we go?

THOMAS
Just to the bottom of page three.

VANDA
That's all? Then you'll kick me out, right?

THOMAS
Let's find our way through this first.

VANDA
In other words, yes. Oh, hey, last thing. These words on page like zero, here? This quotation?

THOMAS
The epigraph.

VANDA
Yeah. "*And the Lord hath smitten him and delivered him into a woman's hands.*" What is that?

THOMAS

It's quoted a couple of times in the novel. It's from the Book of Judith.

VANDA

Is that the Bible?

THOMAS

Yes, the book of Judith is from the Apocrypha of the Bible.

VANDA

Sorry. Not my area. Anyway, it's pretty sexist, isn't it? "*The Lord hath smitten him and delivered him into a woman's hands*"...?

THOMAS

I'm only quoting Sacher-Masoch's book.

VANDA

Yeah, but you included it here on page zero like it's the whole point. Never mind, never mind. None of my business. I'm just an *actrice*. Kinda bright in here. You mind if I change the lights? I hate fluorescents.

(A roll of thunder.)

THOMAS

No. Please. Make yourself at home...

(VANDA turns off the fluorescents, goes to the fuse box and adjusts the lights.)

I didn't realize there was a whole system up there.

VANDA

There. More dramatic. Oh, hey, last thing. It's eighteen-whatever, do you think Vanda has one of those phony transatlantic accents? Never mind. I'll just try something.

(She shakes herself out for a second, doing vocal exercises.)

KAAA! KA-KA! KA-KA! INK. SPOT. INK! SPOT! Okay, I'm ready. Turn around. Go on, turn around. You're reading and having your coffee, you don't see me.

(THOMAS turns his back to her.)

Okay. Morning in Transylvania. Morning in Transylvania.

THOMAS

Whenever you're ready.

VANDA

Knock knock knock.

THOMAS/KUSHEMSKI

Come in.

VANDA/DUNAYEV

(a perfect, polished accent)

Herr Doctor Severin von Kushemski?

(THOMAS turns and "sees her.")

I am Vanda von Dunayev. I'm staying in the room above yours. I'm sorry to disturb you. I found this book in the birch grove last night.

(Holds out her script.)

A copy of Faust, with your bookplate inside. It was sitting at the fountain by that statue of Venus.

THOMAS/KUSHEMSKI

Thank you, I was just asking the maid about that.

VANDA

I would have sent it by Maid, but I also found this rather provocative bookmark inside...

(Takes a "card" from the "book.")

Is it a Raphael?

THOMAS/KUSHEMSKI

It's a Titian. "Venus With Mirror." A favorite painting of mine.

VANDA

Yes, your Venus is as well-thumbed as your Faust. Is she faithful?

THOMAS/KUSHEMSKI

I'm sorry?

VANDA/DUNAYEV

To the original.

THOMAS/KUSHEMSKI

To my mind, that woman is Venus. It's a faithful copy of the painting, if that's what you mean.

VANDA/DUNAYEV

I can certainly understand your fascination. The plush red velvet. The dark fur outlining her naked body. The bracelets cuffing her wrists. Her golden breasts. The picture's ravishing. But is Venus covering herself with the fur – or is she opening the fur to reveal her glories?

THOMAS/KUSHEMSKI

We'll never know. Both, I suppose. Well, thank you for returning it.

VANDA/DUNAYEV

I also couldn't help noticing this intriguing poem scrawled on the back. "To Venus In Fur." Did you write this poem?

SIDE 3- STOP