

ROSAMOND

He has been working so diligently on this new Hamlet.

SARAH

(a shade of irritation finally)

It is not a new Hamlet.

ROSAMOND

What is it?

SARAH

It is an "interpreted" Hamlet.

ROSAMOND

Hamlet but not Hamlet.

SARAH

Every production of every play is itself and not itself.

ROSAMOND

Is it?

SARAH

Every actor is different and so every interpretation of that character is different. My Hamlet is not Coquelin's Hamlet. My Medea is not Duse's. Thank God. And then, every night of every production is different.

ROSAMOND

But Edmond's Hamlet is not his Hamlet. It is Shakespeare's Hamlet. It will always be Shakespeare's Hamlet.

SARAH

Edmond's Hamlet will be our Hamlet.

ROSAMOND

It will not be spoken of that way. It will only be your Hamlet. Edmond's contribution to your success will be eclipsed. By you.

SARAH

Edmond cannot be eclipsed.

ROSAMOND

Edmond should not be eclipsed. But he can be. There is a difference.

SARAH

I understand your reservations--no, I don't understand them; people have been rewriting Shakespeare's plays since he wrote them in the first place so in fact I don't know what all the FUSS is about me doing it.

ROSAMOND

You aren't doing it; Edmond is doing it.

SARAH

Because he's the writer! And as you've pointed out he's the best playwright in Paris right now so of course he is the one who should help me craft this and he's being paid; I am paying him.

ROSAMOND

You haven't paid him yet.

SARAH

(frustrated)

Writers don't get paid until the audience shows up, I didn't make up the rules! Why are you here, madam? Excuse me for being blunt but as I said I have an early rehearsal tomorrow and can you just tell me, please, what you have to say to me? What is it you want to know?

*They consider each other.*

ROSAMOND

Edmond has a play.

SARAH

All playwrights do.

ROSAMOND

It is magnificent.

SARAH

All of his work is.

ROSAMOND

(a laugh)

That is not true of Edmond's work any more than it is true of your own.

SARAH

I beg your pardon.

ROSAMOND

And it is about you.

*This gives Sarah pause.*

ROSAMOND

It gives me no pleasure to admit it. He thinks of nothing but you. He writes of nothing but you. And it is beautiful, it is his masterpiece. It will outlive all of us. And he has stopped writing it.

SARAH

Writers are unpredictable. The mood strikes them, it flees. And then it returns.

ROSAMOND

That is not what is happening to him. He is distracted by the task you set him. He spends his nights and days now, trying to give you what you want. A bastardized version of Hamlet.

SARAH

"Bastardized." What is wrong with a little rewrite?

ROSAMOND  
Hamlet is killing him.

SARAH  
Hamlet is killing me.

ROSAMOND  
You are unkillable.

*This is said a little too sharply. Sarah turns at that. Rosamond takes a script out of her bag. She puts it on the table.*