

## THOMAS 1

VANDA. (*Stripping off her leather skirt, revealing black panties and garters.*)

**Start** I brought some costume stuff.

THOMAS. No—Vanda...

VANDA. It'll just take me a sec, I swear. I found this great dress. Real period shit.

THOMAS. No. Really. Don't bother...

VANDA. What. You mean don't read?

THOMAS. I mean don't read.

VANDA. Yeah, but. Long as I'm here, I might as well like give it a go, right?

THOMAS. There's nobody to give it a go with. The reader's gone home.

VANDA. I'll read with you. It's always an honor to read with the actual author.

THOMAS. Adapter.

VANDA. Getting the play straight from the horse's mouth is always so cool. Come on, what've you got to lose? I'm already—

THOMAS. Stop. *Stop.* To tell you the truth, Miss, um...

VANDA. Vanda.

THOMAS. We're looking for somebody a little different.

VANDA. Yeah? What are you looking for?

THOMAS. Well, somebody with a little more, how should I put this...

VANDA. Somebody who's not *me*. I'm too young. I'm too old. I'm too big, I'm too small. My résumé's not long enough. Okay.

*(She bows her head and starts to cry.)*

Okay. God, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. It's been like really stressful today. Anyway, how do *you* know who I am or what I can do? Fuck... Fuck...!

THOMAS. We're going to be scheduling more auditions sometime soon...

VANDA. Yeah, but I'm here. Right? Couldn't you try me out, save yourself the time tomorrow or whatever? And save me the time getting here from the middle of nowhere?

THOMAS. Look, Vanda, it's been a very long day. I'm exhausted. I'm

kind of frazzled myself, to tell you the truth. I also just auditioned a living panoply of outcasts for this part, including one girl who had steel teeth. You don't *want* to audition for me now.

VANDA. (*Putting on her skirt again.*)

Okay. Yeah. Okay.

THOMAS. This time of day I always unravel a little anyway.

VANDA. (*Putting on her shirt again.*)

Okay.

THOMAS. I also have someone waiting for me for dinner.

VANDA. (*Putting on her raincoat.*)

No. Sure. I understand.

THOMAS. This'll be a lot better when I'm fresh. Thank you very much anyway for coming in. Congratulations on the outfit. Very striking. And we'll see you again.

(*Vanda heads for the door with her stuff, but stops short.*)

VANDA. Yeah, I don't think so. Thank you for saying so, though. You seem like a really nice person. It's just—the business, you know? The goddamn fucking *business*. Plus I had to put out ten bucks at Screaming Mimi's on the fucking dress.

(*She takes a long, white fancy dress out of her big bag.*)

I mean, isn't that real 18-whatever?

THOMAS. It is very 1870-whatever.

VANDA. Isn't that *her*? Like, total Vanda? I figured she'd wear one of those long-ass dresses because everybody hated their body back then.

THOMAS. Actually, that's a common misconception about the nineteenth century.

VANDA. Well, can't I just show it to you, how I look? Please, God, please, pretty please

(*Thomas's cellphone rings.*)

THOMAS. Excuse me.

VANDA. Great!

(*She quickly strips down again, to get into the dress.*)

THOMAS. No—wait—Vanda—

(*Into phone.*) Hi, honey. Yeah, I lost you, must be the storm.

(To Vanda, waving to her to stop.) No! No!

(Vanda keeps on dressing.)

(Into cellphone.) No, somebody just walked in. Mm-hm. No, I doubt it. Listen, I'll be heading out in a couple of minutes. I'll pick something up on the way. No, I got the book. I love you, too. Ciao.

VANDA. Could you do me up back there?

(Thomas does her dress up.)

Oh, wow. Reading with *Thomas Novachek*...

THOMAS. I'm not an actor, so you're not doing yourself any favors. This part needs a real actor.

VANDA. Come on. You're perfect. You *are* Kowalski.

THOMAS. Kushemski.

VANDA. Kushemski. You're *him*.

THOMAS. Not quite.

VANDA. (As Thomas finishes.)

Thank you, kind sir. So where do we start? I'm up for it, whatever.

THOMAS. Why don't we try the first scene. You have the sides?

VANDA. (Digging in the big bag and taking out a ragged script.)

Yeah. It got kinda destroyed on the way.

THOMAS. That's the whole script. How did you get that?

VANDA. I dunno. It's what my agent sent me.

THOMAS. How did your agent get it?

VANDA. Wasn't I supposed to get this? What, is it like top secret or something?

THOMAS. Doesn't matter. Have you read it? **STOP**

VANDA. I kinda flipped through it quick on the train. So what can you tell me? This is like based on something, right? Besides the Lou Reed song? "Venus in Furs"?

THOMAS. This is based on an old German novel called *Venus in Fur*—singular—by Leopold von Sacher-Masoch.

VANDA. I bet you read German. I bet you read it in German.

THOMAS. I did, actually. Anyway, the book was a huge scandal in 1870.