

A Bit of Snuff

by Tami Canaday

Characters:

Manuel - male, twenties - thirties, charismatic

Mindy Sue - female, twenties, pretty, never looks at the audience

Scene to open: In a concrete room, MINDY SUE is sitting on the ground tied up with rope. One of her breasts is exposed. She has a hood over her head. A video camera, facing her, is mounted above her in the corner. A red light indicates when the camera is on. A green light indicates when the camera is off. (The lighting, whether it's red or green, softly covers the whole stage) The camera is off. A minute or two passes.

MANUEL, wearing a black cape without a shirt underneath but with a side sheath holding a knife, enters barely glancing at MINDY SUE. He stands front and center. The video camera turns on.

MANUEL

Paul V. does it work? (*glances behind*) She's in my sight line. Feels like I should take a half a step over. (*steps over*) All right, let's start. (*rehearsing*) Behind me is a girl. A real girl. (*stops and looks at audience*) No, too obvious, isn't it? I don't need to mention that there's a girl behind me. Just one look, right? (*glances over shoulder*) And anybody can see what's behind me. (*again to audience*) Plus, she's in everyone's sight line. Anybody not see her? (*a beat*) So ... for tonight, right now, let's begin again. (*looks at camera*) Paul V., the visual is compelling enough without having to mention where the girl is . . . hmmm . . . shouldn't call her girl. No, I just can't. Too un PC. (*thinks*) Unfortunately, one can't use real names on camera. And, I'll need an alias. The cheetah? (*chuckles*) No. Been done. (*looks at audience. Thinks*) Hmmmm. Yes, yes, I'll call myself . . . Hawk, and she can be . . . mouse? No. (*thinks*) . . . Plaything. Yes, Plaything for Hawk. (*chuckles. Looks at camera*) All right, Paul V., let's begin.

(*MINDY SUE starts struggling. MANUEL looks at MINDY SUE*)

MANUEL *(cont)*

Stop wiggling. You should be frozen in position. We're about to start the project.

(MINDY SUE continues to struggle)

MANUEL *(cont)*

(to camera)

Paul V., give me a minute or two.

(Camera goes off)

MANUEL *(cont)*

(to audience)

I'm very sorry. She's giving the whole air of her victim hood a certain pluck. And, we all hate plucky victims, don't we? With their earnest braying of gratefulness? Especially after they've escaped? Yeah, yeah, you all know what I'm saying.

(MANUEL watches MINDY SUE for a moment or two. He walks over to her)

MANUEL *(cont)*

What are you doing? Stop it. Paul V. and I want to start videotaping.

(MINDY SUE struggles violently. MANUEL watches her for a moments. Suddenly, he grabs her to force her to stop. She continues to struggle. MANUEL rips off her head bag. She has red tape across her mouth)

MANUEL *(cont)*

What are you doing/supposed to be still. I don't want to have to arrange you all over again.

(MINDY SUE struggles to speak)

MANUEL *(cont)*

What?

(MANUEL kneels next to MINDY and gently removes the tape. MINDY gasps for breath)

(continued)