

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*)