

THE ASSOCIATE

RICHARD:

Curator of Surio's exhibit. In his 30s, casual and very comfortably dressed, very earthy. HE has been aware for some time his wife, CATHERINE, has become infatuated by a younger colleague at work

CATHERINE:

RICHARD's wife. SHE is attractive and dressed extremely smart. SHE has become very much attracted to a younger colleague.

THE ASSOCIATE

SETTING: A gallery opening before an imaginary large red painting.

AT RISE: RICHARD, curator of the exhibit, addresses the audience. His mind is elsewhere.

RICHARD

Hi. I'm indeed grateful to bring the work of Bernard Surio to our gallery, the first stop in an eight-city tour. I'm Richard Stewart.

(Slight pause)

Mr. Surio, who is Spanish by birth, has lived in New York for many years.

(Pause)

I first saw his work in a Vienna gallery about two years ago at the insistence of Carl Hammond. I thought it very exceptional; and of course I was quite taken aback that his work was unfamiliar to me. Though I'm sure you're aware that until recently the works of monochrome artists have received far more acclaim in Europe ... that is changing.

(Pause)

Mr. Surio's work is sometimes grouped with the so-called "Radical Painting." I don't know that Surio would agree. Monochrome work has been said to delineate the least information and yet offers the most sensation of painting and is anything but sameness. Though our eyes might perceive a million shades of red ... each different ... language does not allow us to differentiate ... we call it red.

(Pause)

To call it red is an inadequate assumption, as poor an observation as to think of the people about us as monotonous and without their passions and desires and sins. If a stranger passes us along the street, can see beyond their somber expression.

(CATHERINE enters)

RICHARD (cont'd)

Perhaps you'll find tonight amusing. Some patron will stand here ... a glass of wine in one hand ... the other hand in his pants pocket jingling change. And he'll look at the paintings. Of course he doesn't see them ... he hasn't really seen the first painting all evening. He's merely posing ... momentarily poised. He hesitates in an acceptable length of time ... before going on from frame to frame to frame. He feels inadequate because he doesn't understand and that angers him. But it doesn't matter, years ago he learned he simply needs to look interestingly appreciative ... and comment agreeably what's expected ... imitate an understanding.

(Pause)

But finally ... when he's confident he's made a sufficient appearance ... and he's become annoyed, angered his money goes to support this, a red painting ... he whispers quietly but sternly to his wife he wants to leave. He wants the comfort and the familiarity of his home ... safe, isolated, insular, same.

(Pause)

"It's all red," he thinks, "Nothing more. How can that be art?"

(Pause)

He can't see beyond the obvious ... the singleness of color ... the sameness ... the bland blurring of the countless faces rushing past us each day ... we don't look ... we don't bother. Our lives are so full ... with our own joys and sorrows ... passions and problems ... there's so little time for anything else. We pose, momentarily poised in life.

(Pause)

The painting in itself is nothing ... it only lets us begin to understand something of ourselves if we want to look. We see people, like these paintings, and want to think of them without the eloquence of passion ... without meaning.

(RICHARD and CATHERINE address the audience)

CATHERINE

I asked Richard earlier today if anything had changed. We haven't had time to talk about last night.

RICHARD

I'm trying to be understanding ...

CATHERINE

It was months ago ... we had gone out for dinner with friends and I invited a new colleague of mine from work ... I wanted Richard

to meet him.

RICHARD

They were friends from the start. She began talking about him ... she'd bring home little stories of something he did or said ... was she thinking if she weren't married. They were together a lot ... maybe it was completely innocent ... I didn't know.

CATHERINE

I was attracted to this man.

RICHARD

Catherine and I've always had that kind of relationship, we try to talk about things.

CATHERINE

I didn't want to think of it as anything more than a good friendship.

RICHARD

I understand being married doesn't mean I can be everything to her ... be her total world.

CATHERINE

I have a wonderful life. My life, mine and Richard's, our life together is about anything but him.

RICHARD

He begins calling the house ... he comes by to pick her up for work or she picks him up.

(Then)

He met a girl he liked and he comes to our house asking about the kind of wine and flowers and cologne ... suit or no suit ... what restaurant ... the two go back and forth. He likes a short skirt and the next day Catherine wears a short skirt to work ... they're out for drinks that night and he knows the wine she likes ... the cologne to wear. You can see what I was thinking.