

## THE ART OF ACTING 4: TWO ACTORS DIALOGUE

"I've also been meaning to tell you this ... (and this is not meant as an ass-kissing thing) but your class has been possibly the best acting class I've ever taken (even in the few times I came). As a theatre actress I was always trained (as you know) to play to the back of the house and make BIG, bold choices, etc. But then I always got the note to make it real, not caricature (spelling?), and just let go ... as you noticed in class. But nobody ever showed me how to do it. When you just sat me down with Jose for that one-on-one exercise where we just talked to each other, it was the first time the light bulb went off and I got what people have been trying to tell me all along. I obviously still have a lot of work to do, but at least now I have a base to start from. So my point is ... thanks. I talked to my theatre director from SFA and raved about you so that he'll spread the word."

*Sara*

"Your letter uplifted me and made my heart *dance*, and I forwarded it to a lot of friends and workshop members. Remember, I told you from the start that I felt you were a bold, beautiful, sensual actress; you are vivid, compelling, truly *alive* in every scene; you have *presence*. Much of the work you were doing in Class Act was perfect for commercials and television, and I mean that as praise; you need to work in those mediums if you can. But I do think that we who come from the theatre have a temptation to rush to the character before we put ourselves in it, to assume the outward shows - ways of speech, movements, mannerisms - before the role is *ensouled*. If we're not careful, we will actually keep the being on the page who awaits communion with us *apart* from us. I love your ability to transform, and it speaks poetically of your powers of observation, mimicry, sympathy and imagination. We're lost without imagination; I always say we should take our own experience and *imagine it onward*. I just want you to make sure that the *soul* of the character is Sara; the lifeblood is *your* emotion and experience. I think what you're beginning to feel is that beautiful way of *being* in a scene, without any calculation or contrivance or sense of separation from yourself. It's wonderful when it happens! One of your most demanding and rewarding characters will always be the divine Sara, and I can tell you that when you are "keeping it simple," as my beloved teacher, Adam Roarke, used to say, you are rich, mysterious, *interesting to watch*.

I was worried that I was confusing you sometimes or giving the impression that I didn't love you and your work - I do! I was so emphatic and intense with you because your talent inspired and roused me and because this has always been my challenge as an actor - to *be*, truly *be*, in the imaginary circumstances of the story. Bonnie is always quoting me in the sessions: "don't act - *be*!" And the other night I cried out: "Make it personal, and take it personally!"

Keep writing me with news and call me sometime and I'll be hoping to see you whenever you're back for holidays."

*Daniel*