

the beginning of

INVISIBLE WOMAN (from **COUPLES**)

a short play by Rich Orloff

Place: A stylish bar.

Time: Early one evening.

Characters: A MAN and A WOMAN

A WOMAN waits at the bar. She's nicely dressed, in a way that shows she has taste. She's the type of woman who wants to look attractive but isn't comfortable looking sexy. She sips a club soda and looks around. She's waiting for someone. A MAN enters and sees her.

MAN

Hey, honey!

He approaches. He wears a handsome suit, and he takes pride in how well he carries himself. He's glad to see the woman.

WOMAN

Hi!

They kiss.

MAN

Sorry I'm late.

WOMAN

That's okay.

MAN

I was walking out the door when Armitage said, "I need you to look over these figures *now*", and I said, "How about first thing in the morning?", and he said Erickson wanted them faxed to Japan in an hour, and I said what's the rush, and he said Erickson's in one of his moods, and well you know, Erickson, the rise and fall of the yen and his cock are closely related. I tried to get out of there as fast as I could.

WOMAN

It's no big deal.

MAN

It's just, Erickson, I mean, I just hate it when people think they're the center of the universe, I really do; where's the bartender?

WOMAN

It sounds like a rough day.

MAN

Adventures nonstop, beginning to end. So how are you? How was your day?

WOMAN

The usual.

MAN

Anything interesting happen?

WOMAN

No.

MAN

Any stories?

WOMAN

No.

MAN

What was the least uninteresting moment?

WOMAN

It was just a day.

MAN

I like what you've done with your hair.

WOMAN

Thanks. I hoped you would.

MAN

We don't see each other enough.

WOMAN

(who agrees, but has trouble with compliments)

Well, I know how busy you are.

MAN

Yeah, well, they don't pay me to be nine-to-five.

WOMAN

I understand.

MAN

So what's been filling your head lately?

WOMAN

Nothing really.

MAN

I'm sure there's more of an answer than that.

WOMAN

Well, I've been with me every minute,
and I assure you there isn't.

MAN

C'mon. I want to know. You've got
my undivided attention. Bartender!

The man turns to hail the bartender.

The lights shift and focus deeper on the woman.

WOMAN

*You want to know how I am?
Well, that makes two of us.
You want to know the thoughts in my head?
Well, so do I.
At least, part of me does.
And part of me doesn't.
And the part of me that doesn't, rules.
Mostly I keep busy, so I won't have
time to listen to myself.
I keep busy, because I'm afraid
if I take time, there may be
nothing to listen to.
And every now and then,
when I do hear something,
I get scared.
What does that thought mean?
What am I supposed to do with it?
Where should I put it?
When it goes away, I breathe easier;
And I try to get busy again.
Other people, I look at them, and
They seem so filled with
thoughts and feelings.
How do they make room for them all?*

(cont'd)

WOMAN (cont'd)

*How can they get any work done?
If I felt and thought as much as
most people, I don't think I'd have
the energy for anything else.
Sometimes I think feeling and thinking
is a fad, and one day it'll pass.
Somewhere,
Somewhere inside me,
I know I must have that which others have;
And if I forced myself,
I could feel all that's inside.
I'm sure if I forced myself,
If I really forced myself,
And I got over the urge to scream,
I could tell you a great deal.
But what if I couldn't stop?
And what if I stayed that way,
Thinking and feeling all over the place,
Every waking moment?
And telling you all about it;
Getting so that I wanted to;
And that I needed someone to listen?
No, that doesn't sound the least bit attractive.
And if I told you everything I thought
And everything I felt
And everything I desired,
And when I finished,
If, but for a split second,
You looked at me in silence,
I'd feel so alone
That the terror would collapse my heart.*