

Hush

by

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Cast of Characters

LUCIANA:

30's

CLAUDIA:

30's

Place
Office

Time
Morning

2.

Setting: The play takes place inside Luciana's office. Luciana is a high powered studio executive. Her office is big and spares no expense at paintings, sculpture or liquor.

At Rise: The play opens to Luciana sitting behind her desk and Claudia sitting in a guest chair. Both women are dressed in suits.

LUCIANA: You've never visited my studio before?

CLAUDIA: No, never.

LUCIANA: Have time for a tour?

CLAUDIA: I'd love to but -

LUCIANA: I'll have Andres give you a tour after our talk. He'd love to show you around the place.

CLAUDIA: That's not really necessary.

LUCIANA: I know it's not necessary. It's nice. I like being nice.

CLAUDIA: ...Okay, okay, alright.

LUCIANA: What's your poison again?

Luciana makes her way over to the liquor bar.

CLAUDIA: Oh, I don't drink anymore.

LUCIANA: You don't drink? A woman of your kind is pretty lethal if she doesn't drink.

CLAUDIA: *(Chuckles lightly.)* Well, I can't. I found out, it isn't good for me, my allergies.

LUCIANA: You're kidding me?

CLAUDIA: Not really. Nearly died twice.

LUCIANA: Keeping count? Ha, ha, ha.

CLAUDIA: *(Smiles to be polite.)*

LUCIANA: Only fooling. Well, that's serious. Allergies to alcohol. Blame it on your genes Claudia.

CLAUDIA: Afraid so.

LUCIANA: It's all we can ever do. *(Beat.)* Don't know what I'd do if I couldn't have a drink to calm the nerves every once and again...

CLAUDIA: I like to think I don't know what I'm missing out on. Perhaps that's a good thing.

LUCIANA: It's not.

CLAUDIA: Huh?

LUCIANA: Drinking. You're missing out.

CLAUDIA: Yes, I guess I -

LUCIANA: You are. Some of my best moments have been from when I was boozing. You must live a pretty mundane existence these days then, huh?

CLAUDIA: I like to think I keep things interesting.

LUCIANA: How so?

CLAUDIA: How?

LUCIANA: Yes, how so? What do you do, to keep it, interesting?

CLAUDIA: I like to go hiking these days, with my boyfriend, travel -

LUCIANA: Travel. Where?

CLAUDIA: Oh, uh, well we've been covering Europe but are planning to visit Asia at some point....we're thinking of Japan this summer -

LUCIANA: Japan, huh? Not bad, not bad. Never been nor do I care to. Too long of a flight in my opinion, too much fuss takes the fun out of it all. But Europe is nice. Ever been to London?

CLAUDIA: England?

LUCIANA: London - right.

CLAUDIA: Yes, we've traveled there, I also studied there for one year.

LUCIANA: You did?

CLAUDIA: Yes, it was -

LUCIANA: You studied..the plastic surgery there?

CLAUDIA: No, I was studying medicine but it wasn't until the following year that I found a passion for reconstructive surgery.

LUCIANA: Nice. Cigar? Let me guess, you'll tighten up if you have a puff. Ha, ha, ha!

CLAUDIA: *(Laughs, embarrassed.)* No, I could. I'd just rather not.

LUCIANA: Of course. Hikers don't smoke, do they? *(Smiles.)* You do good work by the way.

CLAUDIA: Thank you.

LUCIANA: Don't know how you do it. I don't have the stomach for it. Slicing people open like that, that's not easy to do, is it? I give you credit.

CLAUDIA: You have to look at it with clear intentions. Straight, clean and dry. That's my motto.

LUCIANA: Oh yeah?

CLAUDIA: Well -

LUCIANA: How do you get used to all the blood?

CLAUDIA: You get used to it.

LUCIANA: Really? Doesn't phase you?

CLAUDIA: I manage.

LUCIANA: Marvelous. I could never.

Beat.

Maybe I should get around to..why I asked you to come here, which by the way, I greatly appreciate.

CLAUDIA: Of course. My pleasure.

LUCIANA: Don't know if you know this but I've had a major hand in growing your practice.

CLAUDIA: Sorry..?

LUCIANA: A major hand in growing your practice.

CLAUDIA: (*Confused.*) Right. I wasn't aware of that.

LUCIANA: Precisely why I'm bringing it to your attention. You didn't think your celebrity clientele popped up out of thin air, did you? Ha, ha.

CLAUDIA: Well, I like to believe that I've built a reputation Ms. Lima, one that I've worked hard at building.

LUCIANA: No one's disputing that. But your high end clients, not the ones who come in for a nostril fix..the expensive ones, the ones who get the bills paid, those are from me.

CLAUDIA: How?

LUCIANA: They're on my roster. Each and every one of them.

CLAUDIA: Perhaps they've already been my clients? A lot of my past clients followed me to my new practice.

LUCIANA: There's a long list of names we can go through together and most of them, I have referred to you.

CLAUDIA: Well...

LUCIANA: I've made you quite a rich woman. But for good reason, like I said, you do good work which speaks for itself. You provide a specific service that does wonders, you deserve your worth, in skill, I give you that.

CLAUDIA: (*Chuckles anxiously.*) You're making me feel like I owe you something.

LUCIANA: Your intuition is correct.

CLAUDIA: Pardon?

LUCIANA: You do owe me.

CLAUDIA: (*Taken aback.*) What do you think I owe you, Ms. Lima?

LUCIANA: A favor.

CLAUDIA: What favor?

LUCIANA: I believe we've built a mutual trust. You haven't disappointed me yet. You keep things hush, you're good at that.

CLAUDIA: I represent the privacy of my clients.

LUCIANA: Yes. Well, this is an extremely personal, private matter. For me. Is it true that Miss. Coleridge is scheduled to go under your knife this Thursday the fourteenth?

CLAUDIA: I can't disclose that information to you I'm afraid.

LUCIANA: I have reason to believe this, is it true or not?

CLAUDIA: Ms. Lima, I really can't, it goes against my policy. I can get sued and lose my entire practice.

LUCIANA: That's a yes?

CLAUDIA: Maybe I'm not making myself clear -

LUCIANA: Maybe I'm not making myself clear *TO YOU*. I don't want to have to get a certain way with you. I just want a nice, calm, normal conversation. We're just two women having a nice chat about a few things. Right? There's no need to get emotional or bent out of shape. We're just talking...like old friends do.

CLAUDIA: I wouldn't necessarily call us *friends*.

LUCIANA: We have a history, don't we? A good one, a noble one, wouldn't you think?

CLAUDIA: Perhaps.

LUCIANA: Noble, isn't it?

CLAUDIA: What exactly are you getting at?

LUCIANA: I can continue to do things for you, Claudia. If you do something for me. Accordingly, we should be friends. Good friends.

CLAUDIA: - Not sure I like the sound of where this is going.

CLAUDIA begins to stand.

LUCIANA: Wait a moment. Don't get yourself so worked up. You're not understanding me. I'm trying to talk to you in plain terms which can be a little off putting. You're getting me wrong, no matter how soft of a voice I use, or how careful I am being when I speak. Any kind of impertinence that you might be sensing, is unintentional on my behalf. I mean no disrespect to you, whatsoever.

CLAUDIA: That's fine. I appreciate your, humility.

LUCIANA: I would hope you wouldn't expect anything less from me. The reason why I am asking you about Miss. Coleridge is because she is a woman who has done some terrible things.

CLAUDIA: Miss. Coleridge?

LUCIANA: Horrendous...things.

CLAUDIA: I'm sure it's none of my business, really.

LUCIANA: If you only knew the sort of woman she is, it would make the hair on the back of your neck stand up.

CLAUDIA: It is none of my business..nor do I feel comfortable in discussing the characteristics of my patients.

LUCIANA: Miss. Coleridge did something pretty horrible with one of my clients, that she should have never of done...that client of mine, that I beloved, is no longer around anymore, are you on the same page as me?

CLAUDIA: Please, I'm not, it isn't my place - I don't wish to hear anymore.

LUCIANA: Claudia, Miss. Coleridge can't work in this town anymore.

CLAUDIA: What do you -

LUCIANA: Listen to me. This fast approaching fourteenth is an important day.

CLAUDIA: How so?

LUCIANA: Because that is the day that Miss. Coleridge is scheduled for facial reconstructive surgery in your clinic, by your hand.

CLAUDIA: Even if that were true, Ms. Lima -

LUCIANA: Ten million.

CLAUDIA: What?!

LUCIANA: I'm offering you ten million dollars.

CLAUDIA: To do what?

LUCIANA: To perform the facial surgery that Miss. Coleridge is going to see you for.

CLAUDIA: To perform the...? Why the ten million?

LUCIANA: Claudia, we are not blind, we all know that some plastic procedures don't always make the cut, right? Some people go in and come out slightly less than what they were before. Correct?

CLAUDIA: It has happened but never by my -

LUCIANA: It has happened. It is true. It happens much more frequently than this marvelous industry will ever care to admit.

CLAUDIA: I need to leave.

LUCIANA: Ten million, Claudia.

CLAUDIA: (*Violently.*) It will never happen!

LUCIANA: Fifteen.

CLAUDIA: This will, I can - I can not believe you are even asking me, to - I will NEVER do such a thing! How could you even have the audacity, to, to -

LUCIANA: Twenty.

CLAUDIA: I have to GO! Where did you put my jacket? (*Discovers her handbag is missing.*) Where's my bag?

LUCIANA: Twenty million and you get to keep your practice.

CLAUDIA: (*Exasperated.*) What did you just say to me?

LUCIANA: I won't make it easy on you, Claudia. Everything you've ever worked your life for, I will make sure it ends. All of it. Today. You stand no chance against me. I am asking you nicely, for a favor. I am doing it in the most sincere manner. I am asking you until there is no space left for me to ask you anymore.

What I want you to do to Miss. Coleridge is subtle, subtle enough to where she will undergo the knife...repeatedly... until it's too late, until she has gone much too far, until she cannot be saved and all that will remain is a woman who constantly looks in the mirror and slowly recognizes the destruction she once caused to my own client and to all the others she's damaged.

All for the price of twenty million dollars. Now, you will do this for me, that has been decided, as the time is closing in on us, you will do it and you will live a long and prosperous life. A life that provides you protection, the kind you've never thought possible and you will be happy Claudia.

If Miss. Coleridge were to ever come after you, she will be silenced. I can assure you. We've known each other long enough to have built the kind of trust that a situation like this calls for, wouldn't you agree?

LIGHTS OUT.

END OF PLAY