

Two PARTS on a stage in tableaux. After a moment, PART 1 emits a deep sigh. PART 2 turns and looks briefly at PART 1 before returning to their original pose. Soon after, PART 1 elicits another deep sigh.

PART 2

(Again, looking back at PART 1.)

Is something wrong?

(Beat. PART 1 shrugs off the question dismissively.)

PART 2

I asked you a question.

PART 1

I know.

PART 2

Well? What's the matter?

PART 1

You wouldn't understand. Don't worry about it.

(Beat.)

PART 2

All right, first of all you have but the most rudimentary knowledge of who I am – *me* – so to assume that I wouldn't understand is presumptuous to say the least, and more than a little condescending. And secondly, I *have* to worry about it because I'm alone out here with you and a show's about to begin, so if there is a problem I freely and openly admit to harbouring a desire to see it resolved as quickly as possible. Okay?

(Beat.)

PART 1

Whatever.

PART 2

(Enraged.)

What? How dare you – *dare you!* – *you*, as thoughtfully transcribed literature, utter that mindless catchall phrase that is the embodiment of total, unmitigated verbal and mental atrophy.

PART 1

It's not my fault.

(Beat.)

I'm a victim of circumstance.

PART 2

What circumstance? What's your problem? Stop whinging and just out with it.

(Beat.)

PART 1

I'm... I don't have... I lack motivation.

(Beat.)

PART 2

That's it?

PART 1

Yes.

PART 2

So what's the big deal? I don't have it either. Most people don't. We just have to force ourselves. Force ourselves to go on.

PART 1

I can't. There's nothing there.

PART 2

I know it feels that way sometimes, but you just have to buck up and press on.

PART 1

Oh yes, it's all right for you, isn't it?

PART 2

What do you mean?

PART 1

Because you're... fleshed out.

PART 2

No I'm not.

PART 1

Compared to me you are. You're multi-dimensional. I'm just a cipher. A convenient device thrown in by the writer to expound upon a certain point of view.

PART 2

But you're relevant. You have relevancy. You're integral to the story.

PART 1

Only in a narrative sense. I don't really belong.

PART 2

Don't be so self-pitying.

PART 1

I'm not, I'm just being honest.

PART 2

Look, a major and completely unexpected plot point hinges upon your sudden appearance in the proceedings. Without you the play wouldn't be turned on its head at the end of act one, leaving the audience breathless and gasping in anticipation – on a good night, at least.

PART 1

That's very kind of you and I know you mean well, but I'm not so underwritten as to be painfully aware of the fact that I'm just a tool. And I can accept that – I can. But not happily.

PART 2

I think you're being a bit hard on yourself, don't you?

PART 1

(Defensively.)

*I'm* not being hard on myself. It was all I was given.

PART 2

Then make the most of it.

PART 1

Oh, right! Say's you. It's all right for you – it's all downhill for you. You get to reveal a multitude of levels and depths as you continue your ninety-minute journey from point A to point B. Your character's arc gradually draws the audience in and endears you to them in ways that initially they would never have dreamt possible, leaving

PART 1 (Cont'd.)

them satisfied and intrigued. Much to their astonishment, this person that they found themselves initially repulsed by turns out to be a complex, and all too human representation of someone that they can empathise and identify with. As they walk out of the main door into the night air they feel buoyed from a sense of having spent an evening and some hard-earned money in a rewarding and enlightening manner...with you.

PART 2

What's wrong with that?

PART 1

Nothing at all. But it wasn't my journey they were taking, it was yours. I was just a plot point.

PART 2

A vital one.

PART 1

In your story.

PART 2

In *the* story.

PART 1

In *your* story. I am a catalyst – nothing more. I have no depth. I have no raison d'être. I have no inner life.

(Beat.)

And I damned well want one and I don't care who knows it!

PART 2

I think you've already started to give yourself one, don't you, the way you're carrying on?

(Beat.)

PART 1

Perhaps. Perhaps it's a start.

(Beat.)

But I shouldn't have to fight for it, and that's my point.

PART 2

Why not? Anything in this life worth a damn is worth fighting for.