

David Mamet's Oleanna

CAROL: Why do you hate me? Because you think me wrong? No. Because I have, you think, power over you. Listen to me. Listen to me, Professor (pause) It is the power that you hate. So deeply that, that any atmosphere of free discussion is impossible. It's not unlikely. It's impossible. Isn't it? Now. The thing which you find so cruel is the selfsame process of selection I, and my group, go through every day of our lives. In admittance to school. In our tests, in our class rankings Is it unfair? I can't tell you. But, if it is fair. Or even if it is unfortunate but necessary for us, then, by God, so must it be for you. (pause) You write of your responsibility to the young. Treat us with respect, and that will show you your responsibility. You write that education is just hazing. (pause) But we worked to get to this school. (pause) And some of us. (pause) Overcame prejudices. Economic, sexual, you cannot begin to imagine. And endured humiliations I pray that you and those you love never will encounter. (pause) To gain admittance here. To pursue that same dream of security you pursue. We, who, who are, at any moment, in danger of being deprived of it. By the administration. By the teachers. By you. By, say, one low grade, that keeps us out of graduate school; by one, say, one capricious or inventive answer on our parts, which, perhaps, you don't find amusing. Now you know, do you see? What it is to be subject to that power. Who do you think I am? To come here and be taken in by a smile. You little yapping fool. You think I want revenge. I don't want revenge. I WANT UNDERSTANDING.