

Kate Callback #2

(He gathers up his papers and heads for the door. A moment. Transition begins—KATE makes a circle around the couch, gathering papers and her bag and putting on a jacket, which she misbuttons, and putting up her hair in a messy ponytail. Her circle continues to the front of the stage as she enters her classroom and the living room clears away.)

Scene Nine

START

(KATE enters her classroom, completely disheveled and pissed, dropping papers everywhere.)

KATE

Class has started, everyone shut up. Shut up, Mr. Stanley. Yes, you will get your papers back today. You can pick them up off the floor here at the end of class. To be honest, I am offended that I spent so much more time grading them than you clearly spent writing them.

What are we talking about today?

(She flips through her syllabus.)

Ah, back to our old friends, Confucius and Nietzsche. Two dead *men* telling the rest of us how to live our lives. There are women philosophers we'll be looking at later in the semester, but they don't get as much street cred in Intro to Ethics, because their ideas aren't as old, because women weren't allowed to have ideas until somewhat recently in history. But I don't think that keeps us from the fact that our friends Confucius and Nietzsche, and their theories on ethics, cannot be separated from gender.

Because let's be real. Traditionally, men are raised to follow a Nietzschean belief in themselves. He was a real misogynist, by the way. He once claimed that women love injustice and are incapable of friendship. Meanwhile, boys are encouraged to value independence, their own rights, disconnection from others. I offer up any superhero movie as evidence. And usually that also includes seeing other people and relationships as roadblocks to becoming all you can be. Pesky Mary Jane and Lois Lane, tearing our hero's attention from the grand things he was born to achieve! "Make something of yourself! Be true to who you are! Reach for the stars!" *Become your authentic self.* Frickin' Nietzsche.

Before I get a bunch of angry emails about what a man hater I am, let's pause. Not all men are privileged. Race, class, socioeconomics all play a part in that. But whatever class a man falls into, the idea of masculinity gets planted, and historically, he is more privileged than the women in that class. And it's even worse for women of color, or women who are trans or people who are non-binary.

Because let's talk about women.

(She pauses, acknowledging a question from a student.)

No, this is not on the syllabus. I am changing the syllabus for today, because this is my class and I'm in charge and I can talk about whatever I want to talk about.

(She looks over at another student's question.)

END