

(VALERIE goes back to her sorting. She picks up a new stack.)

Start —

VALERIE. White. White. White. White. White. White. Other. White. *(beat)* Do you keep track of the race of the person surveying?

BRIAN. Why.

VALERIE. Obviously this stack belongs to a White person.

BRIAN. Valerie, why are you fucking with me today?

VALERIE. I read your study.

BRIAN. You too?

VALERIE. It scared me...can I tell you why?

BRIAN. Yeah, sure, I'm happy for you to have an opinion about that which you know nothing. It's great that you feel empowered to weigh in on this work I've been doing for decades because your skin is brown. I get it all the time. Do you know Blacks at the med school coalesced with Blacks in Af-Am and Anthropology to petition me to stop my work?

VALERIE. Why?

BRIAN. Because, "The mingling of science and race could prove damaging." You're here now because when my department got push-back, I lost my funding and they pulled my research assistants. They're shaming me into leaving.

VALERIE. You think it's hard studying Black? Try being Black.

BRIAN. Of course I get that. I'm just tired of having to say, "I get that," all the time.

(BRIAN looks at VALERIE, turns silently, and goes back to his computer, slightly defeated, highly frustrated. VALERIE stares. Finally she begins picking up the cards, stacking them neatly in a box. After too long of this, BRIAN crosses to VALERIE, sits next to her:)

BRIAN. Listen Val, I'm just a White guy who wanted to know what it meant, in my brain, to be a White guy.

I just wanted to compare what your crazy public-minister people are always screaming about with what's happening in my head...and when I started to look, into the heads of people who look like me, even I was shocked...so then I wanted to know what people who looked like you saw...when they see the things that I see. And that we see two different worlds, is blowin' my mind. And I'm wrong to want to explore that? It's $E=mc^2$. It's Darwin, and Galileo, and Newton, and Copernicus... And what do I get? Shut down by someone like you? What the hell do Black anthropologists and economists know about science? What do you know about science? Life is so hard for you why? You're beautiful? You clean houses 'cause you think it's cute and it pisses off your mother? And you're gonna criticize me for trying to make tangible that which your people are accused of making up?

VALERIE. It's more complicated.

BRIAN. I'm sure it is.

VALERIE. It's complicated.

(VALERIE reaches out and touches BRIAN's face. It startles them both. He covers her hand with his. The moment is almost more...then a mutual agreement to let it pass.)

(Light fades, VALERIE continues sorting, as BRIAN returns to the glow of his computer. The sound of typing accompanies:)

VALERIE. White. White. White. White. Other. White. White. White. White... *(pause)* Hey Brian?

BRIAN. What.

VALERIE. I do believe I heard you call me pretty.

BRIAN. I said beautiful.

End

(The glow of BRIAN's computer is the last thing we see.)