



'The Arcata Promise' by David Mercer

Laura: I came to live with you because I loved you. I stayed with you because I loved you. (pause). I endured you because I couldn't imagine life without you. (pause). I feel battered. Ignored. Belittled. (pause). I didn't care for you because you're a famous actor. You remember talking about that party where we met? Well when you came over and talked to me- I thought I'd never seen a man so haunted. So defensive and uptight. (Pause). I never thought you'd find me attractive. I never thought you'd see me again. (pause). When you asked me to, I said yes for you. Not because I was impressed, or flattered, or anything like that. I almost didn't dare to think you'd have any serious interest in me. (pause) But you did. (pause) Girls at school used to laugh at me because I said I wouldn't go to bed until it was somebody I loved. Very old-fashioned, or whatever. At my school you were considered freaky if you were still a virgin after sixteen (Pause). And because of you- I was glad. I was happy I'd never been with anyone else. (Pause), I've been happy with you- but too sad as well. Too sad as well. Too humiliated. (Pause). Too hurt. (Pause) I never thought it mattered at all your being so much older. Now I can see it does. Not the years. Not the difference in experience. (pause). It's that you'll go on being exactly the same. (her voice rising). And I'm changing.... (standing), I've loved you. I believe you love me. But you've lived and behaved exactly as you wanted- with me like some kind of appendage. (pause). Where have I been? Who did anybody ever think I was? Some of your friends still can't even remember my surname! Others pity me. I can count on one hand the

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number of items I've ever been asked a question about myself. I imagine people find me dull and boring. You drink. You talk. You dominate. I'm the one who drives you home. You rant. You rave. You're the evening's entertainment. I'm the one you turn on when we get home. I should think I'm despised. Not because anyone's taken the trouble to find out what I'm like. No. But because I must seem like your bloody shadows. (Pause). I'm not envious. I admire your acting and respect it as much as anybody else does. But I'm not just a servicing arrangement to your needs. I'm something else. (Pause). And I'm going to find out what that is.