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As an Engineering student, my instincts around the theater world all lie in logistics. How do we make sure scene transitions look smooth when set pieces have to move? How do we adjust the timing of light changes so no one is unlit for an unreasonable amount of time? This is my third theater class at MIT (the first two of which were playwriting classes) and my fourth year as a member of the Shakespeare Ensemble, and yet I think only now, taking Contemporary American Theater, am I finally grasping what it means to connect with the artistic part of the theater.

During this rehearsal of *The Immortals*, there were no logistics. This was a table reading of the play, and for me, my first time observing a rehearsal where my job wasn't to take down notes or time scenes. I was surprised by the interaction of the actors, even over the table. I found myself almost as invested in the story as I would have been actually watching a performance, just due to the strength of the actors. There were pauses and pointed glances from across the table while the actors were reading. They were really diving into the text. I noticed that the text was malleable, though: whenever an actor had trouble saying an unnatural-sounding line, Ken Urban, the playwright, marked it down. During a break, the director and one of the actors discussed a relationship between two characters, trying to dig below the surface of the writing. Why is this intellectual married couple role-playing a debate? Is role play something tied to their relationship, or something they use as a regular resource to work through complex thoughts? What would it mean either way, and do we want the audience to know? I watched the actors and director really care about this.

I also watched the whole room care about each other in a way that surprised me. Kindness and fondness, whether expressed through sharing pastries with the random student in the room observing rehearsal, or sharing chips amongst the table, existed throughout the whole rehearsal process. I don't know the history of this team, but what I do know is that they were a team. The whole group—the director, playwright, dramaturg, actors—had a shared goal of being present in the moment, being present with the play, and understanding their relationship to the play. I have seen a lot of kindness and support in student theater, where we bond over just how *hard* it is to be a student and also put on a performance. Watching this rehearsal makes me hopeful for my future, as I prepare to leave MIT soon, that maybe I will find kindness in the outside theater world as well.

I am not an incredible and intelligent black woman on a tenure track, like the main character of this play, but that doesn't matter, because the play, as I was taught by my Playwrights' Workshop professor two years ago, just *works*, and I connect to this character deeply. There is *something* there that feels right. The characters are complex and interesting, and go beyond the surface text; these characters are people I want to invest in, root for, and get to know better. I believe that through workshopping, this play will become something truly amazing.