

GERMAINE. There's a problem.

EINSTEIN. What?

GERMAINE. Well, it seems to me, if you judge it only by its meaning, then any bad painting is just as good as any good painting if they have the same meaning.

(There is a pause while everyone thinks.)

EINSTEIN. Women!

GASTON. I would like a wine. The purpose of the wine is to get me drunk. A bad wine will get me as drunk as a good wine. I would like the good wine. And since the result is the same no matter which wine I drink, I'd like to pay the bad wine price. Is that where you're headed, Einstein?

FREDDY. I really don't think he's that clever, Gaston.

SUZANNE. *(Reaches in her bag and produces a folded-up piece of paper.)* Want to see the drawing he gave me.

(She hands it to EINSTEIN. He gets up and walks downstage holding the drawing, examining it in the light.)

EINSTEIN. I never thought the twentieth century would be handed to me so casually...scratched out in pencil on a piece of paper. Tools thousands of years old, waiting for someone to move them in just this way. I'm lucky tonight; I was open to receive it. Another night and I might have dismissed it with a joke, or a cruel remark. Why didn't it happen before, by accident? Why didn't Raphael doodle this absentmindedly?

FREDDY. What do you think of the drawing?

EINSTEIN. *(Innocent.)* What could it matter?

FREDDY. Huh? Let me see it.

(He looks at it.)

Hmmm. Yeah. Here.

(He hands it to GERMAINE.)

GERMAINE. *(She looks at it.)* I like it all right.

(She offers it to GASTON, who looks at it.)

GASTON. I don't get it.

SUZANNE. I don't think it looks like me.

EINSTEIN. There you go. Four more opinions. I wonder how many opinions the world can hold. A billion? A trillion? Well we've just added four. But look, the drawing stays the same.

FREDDY. Hey look. What kind of a person would I be if I didn't form an opinion? I see the drawing, I think about it, I form an opinion. Then I see other people and I express my opinion. Suddenly, I'm fascinating. And because I'm so fascinating, someone else sees the drawing, and they have an opinion and they're fascinating too. Soon, whereas before I was standing in a room of dumbbells, I am now standing in a room of completely fascinating people with opinions.

(He takes a swig of EINSTEIN's drink.)

SUZANNE. My name's Suzanne.

GASTON. And you're waiting for Picasso.

SUZANNE. Right. Do you know him?

GASTON. Oh yeah, I've heard of him. Big guy, plays the ukulele.

SUZANNE. Uh, no...

GASTON. What's his first name?

SUZANNE. Pablo.

GASTON. Oh, no. Different guy.

GERMAINE. Oh Gaston, lay off. So how did you meet Picasso? **SUZANNE.** I...it was about two weeks ago. I was walking down the street one afternoon and I went up the stairs into my flat and I looked back and he was there framed in the doorway looking up at me. I couldn't see his face because the light came in from behind him and he was in shadow and he said, "I am Picasso." And I said, "Well so what?" And then he said he wasn't sure yet but he thinks that it means something in the future to be

*(The VISITOR thinks, steps back, then gestures toward the painting. Effect: The painting changes into the full-size, eight-foot square painting of Picasso's "Les Demoiselle D'Avignon."** **PICASSO** and the **VISITOR** stare at the painting in wonder. No one else, of course, sees it. **PICASSO** turns away from the painting, entranced.)

PICASSO. *(To himself.)* I could dream it forever and still not do it, but when the time comes for it to be done God I want to be ready for it, to be ready for the moment of convergence between the thing done and the doing of it, between the thing to be made and its maker. At that moment I am speaking for everyone; I am dreaming for the billions yet to come, I am taking the part of us that cannot be understood by God and letting it bleed from the wrist onto the canvas. And it can only be made because I have felt these things: my love, my lust, my greed, my happiness.

(Turns to the bar.)

So this is what it's like.

GERMAINE. What?

PICASSO. To be there at the moment.

GASTON. What moment?

PICASSO. The moment I leave blue behind. I'd like some wine.

GERMAINE. Any special color?

PICASSO. *(He looks back at the painting.)* Rosè.

(To the VISITOR.)

My name is Picasso. Are you an artist?

VISITOR. I had my moment.

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Picasso

PICASSO. What kind of moment?

VISITOR. I had my moment of...perfection.

PICASSO. I know the feeling. I just had it over there.

VISITOR. It's a good feeling.

PICASSO. Yes it is.

VISITOR. I think not many people have it.

PICASSO. No, no they don't.

VISITOR. Hard to know when it's happening, till it's over.

PICASSO. Don't tell anyone that; better to let them think you always knew.

VISITOR. Yes sir.

PICASSO. Don't let anyone in on the fact that we can't help it. We're like the chickens that cross the road. We do it and we don't know why.

VISITOR. Yes sir.

PICASSO. And remember, in a sense, we are both exalted, because we are originals.

VISITOR. Well, that's a pretty bold statement, Mr. Picasso, considering we both took ideas from the art of the Negro.

(Magic music. The set pulls away, revealing a backdrop of stars in the sky. The painting is still visible. EINSTEIN pops out of his chair, looking up.)

Whoa!

EINSTEIN. Did you see that?

VISITOR. The roof is gone.

EINSTEIN. The stars have come out.

PICASSO. Millions and millions of stars.

EINSTEIN. You're way low.

VISITOR. It's night. I didn't know it was night, you know, the time traveling thing. I arrive, I don't know if it's lunch or dinner or what. I've put on eighteen pounds. Hoping to take it off when I go back.

SAGOT. (*Takes a short look.*) Oh that. I see a five hundred pound lemon.

FREDDY. What?

SAGOT. I know that there are two subjects in paintings that no one will buy. One is Jesus, and the other is sheep. Love him as much as they want, no one really wants a painting of Jesus in the living room. You're having a few people over, having a few drinks, and there's Jesus over the sofa. Somehow it doesn't work. And not in the bedroom either, obviously. I mean you want Jesus watching over you but not while you're in the missionary position. You could put him in the kitchen maybe but then that's sort of insulting to Jesus. Jesus, ham sandwich, Jesus, ham sandwich; I wouldn't like it and neither would He. Can't sell a male nude either, unless they're messengers. Why a messenger would want to be nude I don't know. You'd think they'd at least need a little pouch or something. In fact, if a nude man showed up at my door and I asked who is it, and he said, "Messenger," I would damn well look and see if he has a pouch and if he doesn't, I'm not answering the door. Sheep are the same, don't ask me why, can't sell 'em.

GASTON. Here's what I don't get. A month goes by, every night no different than another. People come in, people go out. So why do all the nuts show up in one evening?

GERMAINE. Picasso's definitely coming in tonight.

SUZANNE. I hope he comes in.

FREDDY. Me too. He owes me a bar bill.

EINSTEIN. I'd like to meet him.

SAGOT. Maybe I could get a painting out of him.

GERMAINE. Well, we all have an interest in Picasso; let's give a little toast to him.

EINSTEIN. I'll do it...to... Pi...

(They all raise their glasses. Through the door, PICASSO enters, age twenty-three. Moody, brooding.)

PICASSO. I have been thinking about sex all day. Can't get it out of my mind.

GASTON. I've been thinking about it for sixty-two years.

PICASSO. I did sixteen drawings today, two in pencil, the rest in ink. All women. What does that tell you? It tells me a painter has the obligation to stay sexually exhausted...

(EINSTEIN reacts with a gasp.)

...otherwise the mind drifts off the easel, out the window and across the street to the grocer's daughter.

(To EINSTEIN.)

You were proposing a toast.

EINSTEIN. Oh yes, to... Picasso.

PICASSO. Hey, to him. I mean did you talk about anything else besides me? Did the weather come up?

EINSTEIN. It was mostly about you.

PICASSO. God I feel good! How lucky for you! To be talking about someone and then in they come. Anyway, how do I look, be honest. That spot!

(Points to the sheep painting.)

We've got to do something about it.

(To SAGOT.)

Why don't you come by tomorrow? I have something to show you. Something's afoot. The moment is coming I can feel it.

SAGOT. The last month's work has been spectacular. I sat in front of the last piece I got from you with some friends and explained it for two hours.

PICASSO. Did they get it?

SAGOT. Don't know. They left after the first hour.

PICASSO. Forget it. That was piss, piss I tell you; this is different already. There is nothing in my way anymore. If I can think it I can draw it. I used to have an idea, then a month later I would draw it. The idea was a

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FREDDY. Not that you're looking for, Sagot.

SAGOT. I got a Matisse today, small but juicy. A little beach-scape...give me a rum... Here take a look.

(He pulls out a small 4"x5" canvas and hands it to FREDDY.)

It says everything about Matisse you want to know. I bought eight drawings and got him to throw it in. The smaller it is, the harder it is to say it, no doubt about it, and that thing's got it all. This thing will hold a wall. Stick it up there.

(He indicates the bar. FREDDY hands him a drink and puts the painting up on the back bar. SAGOT stands back.)

Look at it... Beautiful.

(He picks up SUZANNE and makes her look at the painting. He moves back a few more feet, stops.)

...still works...

(A few more feet, stops.)

...Still working. Still holds the wall.

(He moves as far back as he can, stops.)

Lost it there. But damn, you see what I mean?

SUZANNE. Not really.

SAGOT. Up to ten feet away, that bar is working for the Matisse. Then the bar takes over.

(He downs the rest of the drink.)

One more Freddy.

GASTON. Is it getting windy in here?

EINSTEIN. *(Indicates the Matisse.)* What makes it so great?

SAGOT. I'll show you what makes it great.

Sagot

(He goes to the bar and picks up the Matisse. He takes it out of its frame. He holds up the frame.)

This is what makes it great.

GASTON. The frame?

SAGOT. The boundaries. The edge. Otherwise anything goes. You want to see a soccer game where the players can run up into the stands with the ball and order a beer? No. They've got to stay within the boundaries to make it interesting. In the right hands, this little space is as fertile as Eden.

EINSTEIN. That frame is about the size of my book.

SAGOT. Well I hope you chose your words carefully. Ideas are like children, you have to watch over them or they might go wrong.

FREDDY. I know what he means.

SAGOT. *(To EINSTEIN.)* I told that to Appollinaire; he squiggled and squirmed.

(To the Matisse.)

I'm going to turn a nice profit on that, you watch.

FREDDY. Well, considering you got it for free, it might not be too difficult.

EINSTEIN. But you got it because you loved it. How can you sell it?

SAGOT. What do you do?

EINSTEIN. I'm a physicist.

SAGOT. Good. Then you must know how naive a question can sound. I'll tell you how it works.

(Drinking all the time through this.)

When I bought it, I identified it. I identified it as something worth having. I have named it as a work of art.

Once I've done that, I don't have to own it. It will always be mine. And I guarantee you Matisse is happy about it too. He wants his work out there, out of Paris. I've

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