

## SCENE #1

**NORM**  
**CORKY**  
**GERALD**  
**LAURA**

**NORM.** Welcome.

**CORKY.** You found us!

*(NORM sticks out his hand to GERALD.)*

**GERALD.** I don't shake hands.

**NORM.** I don't blame you. Number one way of spreading germs.

**GERALD.** Number two. Handrails are number one.

**NORM.** Good to know.

**CORKY.** *(To LAURA.)* I'm Norm's wife, Corky.

**LAURA.** I'm Gerald's wife, Laura.

**GERALD.** And I'm a guy with a vision of a wonderful night.

**NORM.** Ha! Us, too.

*(GERALD is holding wine, offers it to CORKY.)*

**GERALD.** Small production winery in Santa Barbara. Eighty dollars.

**CORKY.** Wow, eighty.

*(Then.)* Something to drink?

**LAURA.** White wine is fine.

**CORKY.** Coming right up.

**GERALD.** Do you have a white that I could mix with Pellegrino? I love Pellegrino. The Coopers introduced us to Pellegrino. Remember that, Laura?

**LAURA.** You don't forget something like that.

**CORKY.** You know the Coopers?

**NORM.** We'd love to meet the Coopers.

**CORKY.** How long ago did you see them?

**GERALD.** Oh...four months ago?

*(CORKY hands wine to both of them.)*

**CORKY.** Did you hear anything about him going off the rails?

*(GERALD and LAURA glance at each other.)*

**LAURA.** *(Thinks.)* No...

**GERALD.** No...

*(Then.)* The Coopers were interesting. On a certain level.

**NORM.** What do you mean?

**GERALD.** They were so well-behaved. Makes you suspicious.

**LAURA.** But they weren't hiding anything, did you think, Gerald?

**GERALD.** Maybe their true selves. Ha!

*(GERALD starts to light a cigarette.)*

**CORKY.** Do you mind? Norm used to smoke. It's hard for him.

**GERALD.** Hard for all of us.

*(He puts it out, then, explosive.)* SHIT!

*(Pause.)*

**CORKY.** *(In the awkward silence.)* Oh look, it's night.

**GERALD.** Meteors are coming. Strangers from out of the blue. They remind me of me!

**LAURA.** *(Friendly, to NORM and CORKY.)* You should be aware that everything reminds him of him.

**GERALD.** It's kinda true.

*(NORM walks over and picks up an eggplant. He starts bouncing it in his hand.)*

**NORM.** Love these eggplants by the way.

**CORKY.** Yes. They're lovely. Such an unusual gift.

**NORM.** So, thank you.

**LAURA.** Thank you...? For what?

**CORKY.** You didn't send them?

**LAURA.** What do you mean?

**CORKY.** We thought you sent them.

**GERALD.** Serious?

**NORM.** They came today. No card. Santa Barbara address.  
We figured from you.

**GERALD.** Sorry.

*(Looks at them.)*

I wonder why three.

**NORM.** I wonder why one.

*(CORKY wanders over by LAURA.)*

**GERALD.** Eggplants are a nightshade. Ever heard of deadly nightshade? Kill you like that. Tobacco's a nightshade. Point made. This is definitely a message.

*(Re: the eggplants.)* This is scary.

**LAURA.** Gerald can turn the brightest day into the darkest night.

**GERALD.** Norm, ever made eggplant lasagna?

**LAURA.** *(Privately, to CORKY.)* I bet Norm really loves your body.

*(What? NORM is not sure what he heard.)*

**NORM.** *(Soldiers on.)* I...find...eggplant hard to prepare. We don't buy much eggplant on our own. That's why we were excited to get these.

**GERALD.** First, you are an interesting conversationalist. I'll bet you get a lot of requests for that eggplant story. Second, eggplant lasagna is easy: ricotta, eggs, half cup Parmesan, oregano, mushrooms. But you gotta preheat the oven...four hundred degrees...

**LAURA.** Hey Chef Boyardee, you gonna list the whole recipe?

**GERALD.** Shut your stupid face.

**LAURA.** Eat me.

**GERALD.** You wish.

**LAURA.** I sure do, cowboy.

*(Pause.)*

**CORKY.** Well, what an interesting exchange of ideas.

*(Lights out.)*