

CORKY. Norm, they're here in fifteen minutes.

NORM. I'm going crazy. Help me.

CORKY. What?

(NORM is exasperated. He's trying to remember something.)

NORM. I'm trying to think...this book title. It's for *Jeopardy*...

(Indicates the TV back in the bedroom.)

It's...oh...the tip of my tongue. Something like...Death to the Cuckoo. But not that...com'n...book title. It's like Death to the Cuckoo...

CORKY. *To Kill a Mockingbird.*

NORM. Thank you! Thank you! How'd you come up with that?

CORKY. I know your brain.

NORM. And yet another reason to be married.

CORKY. You'd repressed it, that's all.

NORM. Yeah. And when I repress something, I push it way down and kick dirt over it. It's not coming back.

CORKY. If you don't deal with your subconscious, it will deal with you.

NORM. That's good. Who said that?

CORKY. In that book, remember?

NORM. Oh yeah.

CORKY. You want a pre-wine?

NORM. A what?

CORKY. A pre-wine. A wine before the wine. Doesn't count.

NORM. Doesn't count?

CORKY. Not if it's before the guests come. Doesn't count.

NORM. Then what's the problem?

(NORM takes a sip of wine.)

(Sees the eggplants.) What are these?

CORKY. Eggplants. Arrived this afternoon. No note.

NORM. Must be from the Newmans.

CORKY. Thoughtful.

NORM. I guess.

CORKY. What's *she* like?

NORM. I don't know her; just him. She was a West Coast editor at *Vogue* for three years. She seemed fine.

CORKY. You met her?

NORM. She was picking up Gerald after tennis. She's the one who mentioned the meteor shower.

CORKY. Oh.

(Then.) How does a meteor shower come up in conversation?

NORM. She said Gerald wanted to leave town to see this meteor shower, first I had heard of it. So he puffs up – kept calling it a rain of fire, can't miss the rain of fire, once in a lifetime, blah blah, and I said we live in Ojai and he said can you see stars there and I said, "Yeah, shopping on the weekends."

(**CORKY** *stares.*)

And he looked at me like that...

(*Points to her face.*)

...but she laughed.

CORKY. You liked that.

NORM. Well, yeah. She got the joke.

CORKY. I read people know if they want to sleep with a person within two seconds of meeting them. I believe it. Do you?

NORM. I could see that.

CORKY. (*Miffed.*) Oh yeah well that's fine.

NORM. I didn't mean I wanted to... You said you believed it.

CORKY. I said I read it; you said you believed it.

NORM. No, I didn't say I believed it; I said I could see it.

CORKY. Oh, so you can see the moon but you don't believe the moon.

NORM. What?

CORKY. (*Relaxing.*) Hey, remember the summer I believed in crystals?

NORM. (*Laughs a bit.*) Yeah. And how about me? In college I had a moment with the power of pyramids.

CORKY. Put a weapon in the hand of a stupid belief and it kills you.

NORM. Wow. That's a thought. Who said that?

CORKY. I did.

NORM. You did?

CORKY. Why?

NORM. It's clever. It just doesn't sound like you.

(**CORKY**, *hurt, steps toward him and enters a "talking mode."* **NORM** goes to meet her. They hold hands and face each other. They've done this a hundred times.)

CORKY. I love you and I know you love me.

NORM. (*Quoting CORKY back to her.*) You said, "I love you and I know you love me."

CORKY. I understand you probably did not know you hurt me.

NORM. You said, "I probably did not know I hurt you." That's what you meant?

CORKY. Yes. I'm asking you to be more careful with my feelings. They are not playthings.

NORM. Your feelings are not playthings. That's what you meant?

CORKY. Yes.

NORM. I'm sorry that I hurt you in this way. I hope that you understand that I did not intend to hurt you, and I will try to use that particular joking manner less often.

CORKY. I do understand.