

GASTON

Well in this bar tonight are two men; one is Einstein, the other Picasso. Both nearly the same age, who think that somehow their work is going to change the century. So let's give it to them and say ~~they are~~ ^{it is}. One. Two. There must be a third; there's always a triptych, the father the son and the holy ghost, the three graces, not to mention that bad news always comes in threes. Need I say more?

EINSTEIN

So who is the third point in the triangle, so to speak?

GERMAINE

Maybe it's Matisse.

PICASSO

No! Matisse cannot be third! If he wants he can be fourth or fifth, but he cannot be the third point in the triangle.

EINSTEIN

I hate to tell you this but the idea of a triangle with four points will not fly. A triangle with four points is what Euclid rides into hell.

GERMAINE

Well, who is the third?

(Enter SCHMENDIMAN, bursting in)

SCHMENDIMAN

You are lucky tonight. You were here at the moment and you heard it straight from the horse's mouth. I will be changing the century. The other bars know it, you may as well too.

EINSTEIN

And what is your name?

SCHMENDIMAN

Schmendiman. Charles Dabernow Schmendiman.

EINSTEIN

And how will you change the century?

SCHMENDIMAN

With my invention.

PICASSO

What is your invention?

SCHMENDIMAN

It's an inflexible and very brittle building material.

EINSTEIN

Oh? What's it made from?

SCHMENDIMAN

And I'll tell you what it's made from: equal parts of asbestos, kitten paws, and radium. The only problem with it is that building considerations only allow it to be used in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and the island of Krakatoa, East of Java. But still! That's a big market! So everyone have a drink...!

FREDDY

On you?

SCHMENDIMAN

Uh...no. Just have a drink and remember my name: Schmendiman. (They all say "Schmendiman" rather lamely) You see there's a distinction between talent and genius. And it's not just that they are spelled completely different. Talent is the ability to say things well, but genius is the ability to well, say things! Talent sells a million in a year, but genius, sells 5000 a year for 200 years! You have to work to have talent. But genius comes gift wrapped in a blue box from Tiffany's!

GASTON

Picasso, Einstein and Schmendiman. Somehow it doesn't have a ring.

SCHMENDIMAN

Which one's Picasso? (Gaston points) I've heard of you...nice work. If you like blue. Come to think of it, it's about time for a Spaniard again...I mean it's been a long time since "Bell-ath-kweth"...I'm just needlin' ye! You would be interested in my process. Creation is easy! Just follow the path of least resistance. Want to paint butcha feel like dancin'? DANCE! Want to write butcha feel like singin'? SING! That's what I did. Remember, the shortest distance between two points is a foot and a half. No pun intended.

FREDDY

No pun achieved.

SCHMENDIMAN

I struggled to be a writer but my heart told me to invent a very brittle and inflexible building material, which by the way is called "Schmendimite." And I did! That's why I know my place in history is secure...I followed my heart. Next bar! (goes to the door, turns) Schmenda...Schunenda...Men Men Men! (He goes out the door, stops suddenly in the doorway) Wait! I just had another idea! A tall pointy cap for dunces! (Snaps his fingers. He exits).

GASTON

What the hell was that?

FREDDY

I admire his confidence. And nothing else.

EINSTEIN

Here's the way I look at it. We're not so much going to change the century, as bend it. Let's say Picasso here is a genius. The century is just flying along in space and it whizzes by Picasso here and it picks up speed and it flings itself off in a new direction. Like a comet veering left at the sun. The century is just zigzagging along, bending and curving, influenced by the powerful gravity of people like Picasso. But the century itself, because we're in it, appears to be heading straight.

GASTON

How can something be curved but appear to be straight? Come on, buddy.

EINSTEIN

(Sarcastic) Gee, I never thought of that. I guess you're right. HOW ABOUT THE HORIZON YOU NITWIT?

GASTON

Are you trying to get my goat?

EINSTEIN

No, I'm just trying to explain something. You'll be happy to know that not only is the horizon something that appears to be straight but is actually curved, but so is space in general.

GASTON

Horseshit.

EINSTEIN

Well it just so happens that it is!