

Sagot
(Male or Female)

EINSTEIN

Let me ask you. What do you see?

GERMAINE

I'll answer. I see air travel becoming common, with hundreds of people being carried in giant "airplanes." I think we'll see images sent through the air and the receivers will become so popular that mass taste will diminish their potential. The city of Hiroshima will be completely modernised (Einstein's head jerks toward her). There will be a brief craze for lawn flamingos. Vast quantities of information will be stored in very small spaces. Cruelty will be perfected. By the end of the century, smoking in restaurants will be banned. (they all react: how ludicrous) Music by four lads from Liverpool.

GASTON

Oh brother.

FREDDY

Uh huh.

SUZANNE

(dismissive) Right.

EINSTEIN

(yeah sure) Next.

~~GERMAINE~~ SUZANNE

Oh well fine.

I predict that a yoyo will be a wonderful thing to play with out a terrible thing to

FREDDY

Here's mine. Led by Germany, this will be known as the century of peace. Clothes will be made of wax. There will be a craze for automobiles but it will pass. The French will be the military might of Europe. Everyone will be doing a new dance called the "toad." A carton of cigarettes will be one of the most thoughtful get-well gifts. And the Wright brothers will be long remembered for the invention and manufacture of a low-calorie fudge..(everyone nods, "sounds about right...could be, etc.")

(A man enters, early fifties and a bit rotund, nattily dressed. It is SAGOT, vibrant and energetic. He goes over to Freddy.)

SAGOT

Anyone in tonight?

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...I got him to give it to me. 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

Does anyone feel a draft in here?

EINSTEIN

(indicates the Matisse) What makes it so great?

SAGOT *you want to know what make it so great*

I'll show you what makes it great. (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 Appolinaire; 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 sold to Russia and I've sold to America and I've sold to dealers in Paris who've sold everywhere. And the dealers like to buy from me because frankly they don't get it, and they want me to discern the good ones from the bad ones.

EINSTEIN

How did you learn to tell the difference?

SAGOT

I wish I knew! But I can look at two pictures that no one has ever seen before and know that one is for me (he points in the air) and that one (points to a different place) is for the people whose idea of art is something ugly done by a relative. They come to the galleries with bags of money and say "Show me what you've got, taste is no object!" (finishes his drink) Another Freddy.