

MARC. Serge, where's your sense of humor? Why aren't you laughing? ... It's fantastic, you buying this painting. (*Marc laughs. Serge remains stony.*)

SERGE. I don't care how fantastic you think it is, I don't mind if you laugh, but I would like to know what you mean by "this shit."

MARC. You're kidding!

SERGE. No, I'm not. By whose standards is it shit? If you call something shit, you need to have some criterion to judge it by.

MARC. Who are you talking to? Who do you think you're talking to? Hello!

SERGE. You have no interest whatsoever in contemporary painting, you never have. This is a field about which you know absolutely nothing, so how can you assert that any given object, which conforms to laws you don't understand, is shit?

MARC. Because it is. It's shit. I'm sorry.

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SERGE. (*Alone.*) He doesn't like the painting.

Fine ...

But there was no warmth in the way he reacted.

No attempt.

No warmth when he dismissed it without a thought.

Just that vile pretentious laugh.

A real know it all laugh.

I hated that laugh.

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MARC. (*Alone.*) It's a complete mystery to me, Serge buying this painting. It's unsettled me, it's filled me with some indefinable unease. When I left his place, I had to take three pellets of Gelsemium 9C which Paula recommended — Gelsemium or Ignatia, she said, Gelsemium or Ignatia, which do you prefer, I mean, how the hell should I know? — because I couldn't begin to understand how Serge, my friend, could have bought that picture.

Two hundred thousand francs!

He's comfortable, but he's not rolling in money.

Comfortable, that's all, just comfortable. And he spends two hundred grand on a white painting.

I have to go see Yvan, he's a friend of ours, I have to discuss this with Yvan. Although Yvan's a very tolerant guy, which of course, when it comes to relationships, is the worst thing you can be. Yvan's tolerant because he couldn't care less.

If Yvan tolerates the fact that Serge has spent two hundred grand on some piece of white shit, it means he couldn't care less about Serge. Obviously.

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(At Yvan's. On the wall, some motel painting. Yvan is on all fours with his back to us. He seems to be looking for something underneath a piece of furniture. As he does so, he turns to introduce himself.)

YVAN. I'm Yvan.

I'm a little tense at the moment, because, having spent my life in textiles, I've just found a new job as a sales agent for a wholesale stationery business.

People like me. My professional life has always been a failure and I'm getting married in two weeks. She's a lovely intelligent girl from a good family. *(Marc enters. Yvan has resumed his search and has his back to him.)*

MARC. What are you doing?

YVAN. I'm looking for the top to my pen. *(Time passes.)*

MARC. All right, that's enough.

YVAN. I had it five minutes ago.

MARC. It doesn't matter.

YVAN. Yes, it does. *(Marc gets down on his knees to help him look. Both of them spend some time looking. Marc straightens up.)*

MARC. Forget about it. Buy another one.

YVAN. It's a very special felt tip. It writes on any surface ... It's infuriating. Objects, I can't tell you how much they infuriate me. I had it in my hand five minutes ago.