

MARC. Could it be the Antrios, buying the Antrios?

No — It started some time ago ...

To be precise, it started on the day we were discussing some work of art and you uttered, quite seriously, the word *deconstruction*.

It wasn't so much the word *deconstruction* that upset me, it was the air of solemnity you imbued it with.

You said, humorlessly, unapologetically, without a trace of irony, the word *deconstruction*, you, my friend. I didn't know the best way to handle the situation, so I made this throwaway remark, I said I guess I must be getting intolerant in my old age, and your response was, who do you think you are? What makes you so high and mighty? ...

What gives you the right to set yourself apart? Serge responded in the shittiest possible way. And totally unexpectedly.

You're just Marc, what makes you think you're so special?

That day, I should have punched him right in the mouth. And when he was lying there on the ground, half-dead, I should have said to him, you're supposed to be my friend, what sort of a friend are you, Serge, if you don't think your friends are special?

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(At Serge's. Marc and Serge, as we left them.)

MARC. Lyonnaise, you said? Little heavy, isn't it? Little fatty, all those sausages ... what do you think? *(The doorbell rings.)*

SERGE. Twelve minutes past eight. *(Serge goes to open the door to Yvan. Yvan walks into the room, already talking.)*

YVAN. So, a crisis, insoluble problem, major crisis, both step-mothers want their names on the wedding invitation. Catherine adores her step-mother, who more or less brought her up, she wants her name on the invitation, she wants it and her step-mother is not anticipating, which is understandable, since the mother is dead, not appearing next to Catherine's father, whereas my step-mother, whom I detest, it's out of the question

her name should appear on the invitation, but my father won't have his name on it if hers isn't, unless Catherine's step-mother is left off, which is completely unacceptable, I suggested none of the parents' names should be on it, after all we're not adolescents, we can announce our wedding and invite people ourselves, so Catherine screamed her head off, arguing that would be a slap in the face for her parents who are paying through the nose for the reception, and particularly for her step-mother, who's gone to so much trouble when she isn't even her daughter and I finally let myself be persuaded, totally against my better judgment, because she wore me down, I finally agreed that my step-mother, whom I detest, who's a complete bitch, will have her name on the invitation, so I telephone my mother to warn her, mother, I said, I've done everything I can to avoid this, but we have absolutely no choice, Colette's name has to be on the invitation, she said, if Colette's name is on the invitation, take mine off it, mother, I said, please, I beg you, don't make things even more difficult, and she said, how dare you suggest my name is left to float around the card on its own, as if I was some abandoned woman, below Colette, who'll be clamped on to your father's name, like a limpet, I said to her, mother, I have friends waiting for me, I'm going to hang up and we'll discuss all this tomorrow after a good night's sleep, she said, why is it I'm always an afterthought, what are you talking about, mother, you're not always an afterthought, of course I am and when you say don't make things even more difficult, what you mean is, everything's already been decided, everything's been organized without me, everything's been cooked up behind my back, good old Nadia, she'll agree to anything and all this, she said — get this — in aid of an event, the importance of which I'm having some trouble grasping, mother, I have friends waiting for me, that's right, there's always something better to do, anything's more important than I am, good-bye and she hung up, Catherine, who was next to me, but who hadn't heard her side of the conversation, said, what did she say, I said she doesn't want her name on the invitation with Colette, which is understandable, I'm not talking about that, what did she say about the wedding, nothing, you're lying, I'm not, Cathy, I promise you, she just doesn't want her name on the invitation

with Colette, call her back and tell her when your son's getting married, you rise above your vanity, you could say the same thing to your step-mother, that's got nothing to do with it, Catherine shouted, it's me, I'm the one who's insisting her name's on it, it's not her, the poor thing, she's tact personified, if she had any idea of the problem this is causing, she'd be down on her knees, begging for her name to be taken off the invitation, now call your mother, so I called her again, by now I'm in shreds, Catherine's listening on the extension, Yvan, my mother says, up to now you've conducted your affairs in the most chaotic way imaginable and just because, out of the blue, you've decided to embark on matrimony, I find myself obliged to spend all afternoon and evening with your father, a man I haven't seen for seventeen years and to whom I was not expecting to have to reveal my hip-size and my puffy cheeks, not to mention Colette who incidentally, I may tell you, according to Felix Perolari, has now taken up bridge — my mother always played bridge — I can see all that can't be helped, but on the invitation, the one item everyone is going to receive and examine, I insist on making a solo appearance, Catherine, listening on the extension, shakes her head and screws up her face in disgust, mother, I say, why are you so selfish, I'm not selfish, I'm not selfish, Yvan, you're not going to start too, you're not going to be like Mme Romero this morning and tell me I have a heart of stone, that everybody in our family has a heart of stone, that's what Mme Romero said this morning — she's gone completely insane by the way — when I refused to raise her pay to sixty francs an hour cash, she had the gall to say everyone in the family had a heart of stone, when she knows perfectly well about poor Andre's pacemaker, you haven't even bothered to drop him a line, yes, that's right, very funny, everything's a joke to you, it's not me who's the selfish one, Yvan, you've still got a lot to learn about life, but you go, darling, go ahead, go ahead, go and see your precious friends ... (*Silence.*)

SERGE. Then what? ...

YVAN. Then nothing. Nothing's been resolved. I hung up. Minidrama with Catherine. Cut short, because I was late.

MARC. Why do you let yourself be fucked over by all these women?