

## 17. THE RESPECTABLE SUIT

“You better get dressed.”

“I’m trying.”

“He’s coming back. You don’t want him to catch us together.”

“What should I put on?”

“One of his suits.”

“Are they going to fit?”

“You’ll just have to see.”

“It looks pretty good on me.”

“Too good. You look like a dead ringer for the man himself.”

“Where is he?”

“He’s almost here.”

“Oh shit, I better get crackin’! Give me a kiss.”

He checks himself in the mirror before he sneaks out.

“You look terrible.”

“What are you trying to tell me?”

“Who are you imitating?”

“You. I’m not doing a good job.”

“I never take chances like that.”

He picks up the suit from the dry cleaner. He is airing it out on the porch to get rid of the smell of the cleaning fluid.

“You’re so into yourself that you can’t stand the fact that there’s at least one woman who isn’t head over heels over you.”

“I’m not cursing my fate in the wilderness.”

“You’re not afraid.”

“Why should I be?”

“Someone is going to stop you in your tracks. Doesn’t that freak you out.”

“I’m way beyond that. The me that you see now is only part of the me that existed a long time ago.”

“I’m not really the marrying kind.”

“What kind are you?”

“I get turned on by a touch and a twist.”

“That’s exactly what I need.”

“Aren’t you afraid that I’m going to drag you down to my level.”

“You don’t look like you’re going to be a threat to your future

“I have a portfolio. Maybe you could help me with my career.”

“You think that is enough to develop a career.”

“It’s practically an analysis of my anatomy.”

“It’s like painting by the numbers.”

“I have my own method. It’s a little more artistic.”

“It all amounts to pretty much the same thing. You get the colors to match with the numbers.”

“Or you get the body parts to match the numbers.”

“And you think that is going to convince people that you have real skills.”

“Do you have a better suggestion? I offer you a service. I give you the body that you want to think about when you’re thinking about getting off.”

“That makes you special.”

“More special than the body that you are asked to use when you need to get it off.”

“Huh!”

“I love you, and you love me. But you may not be enough to take me to seventh heaven. So I will get a little help to speed it along.”

“Without the speed, what happens?”

“You may never know. That is why you need to jump in the middle when you have the chance.”

“I have the chance. Excellent!”

“Of course, it is pretty despicable. You can never love the one that you’re with, because you always need the one who is not!”

“That makes it all seem pretty ugly.”

“Admit it: you are looking for pretty.”

“I just want to reach the point of arousal that will guarantee my gratification of a most intense urge.”

“It’s not going to be as easy as you think.”

“Explain yourself!”

“You can gratify, but you may not be able to satisfy your need to be accepted socially.”

“What is that supposed to mean?”

“You’re really not into embarrassing yourself, are you?”

“How is that?”

“The body that satisfies has no idea what it take to advance yourself socially. People could all be laughing.”

“Why should I care?”

“You are in a field where advancement is measure in terms of respectability.”

“If I was going to create the perfect lover, she would most definitely be you.”

“That’s just flattery.”

“It would be flattery if there was someone else who matched your attributes. But you’re without equal. I am only stating an evident fact!”

“Even you can scream in total fear!”

“Do you ever sleep?”

“I’m doing what I can to survive on sheer will.”

“How can you manage that?”

“It’s not something that I give much thought to.”

“If I tried to do what you do, I’d be a candidate for a heart attack.”

“A little mind over body!”

“So you know what’s happening?”

“I haven’t analyzed it in that much detail.”

“What if you examine it a little more closely?”

“That’s really not my style.”

“What kind of mind is going to have such super powers?”

“I know that I have pretty good powers of concentration. But that doesn’t make me some kind of superman.”

“You are thinking about a change of heart.”

“I am trying to redesign the biology. But it’s more of a professional interest!”

“It has no bearing on your personal life.”

“That is much more an issue of science fiction.”

“But you do show signs of benefitting from your knowledge.”

“More of a coincidence than anything else.”

“You’re acting like the missing link towards the next evolutionary step for the species.”

“It’s one thing to act in a certain way. But it’s quite another to show any results on a scientific basis.”

“Why are you being so coy with me?”

“What do you want me to say? That I am the representative of the future. I’m feeling pretty healthy today. But tomorrow, I’ll probably be weak and sick.”

“Are you having a bad day?”

“No, I told you that I was as strong as ever. But that’s no guarantee that I’m going to feel any better tomorrow.”

“That’s why you’re not sleeping. You have a sense that there are no limits to your power.”

“More fantasy!”

“You need to level with me. Are you working on how psychic changes can affect the body?”

“I am interested. But I have nothing solid to go on.”

“This is all about your life. You can surely have some kind of effect on your own life.”

“I don’t believe in ESP if that’s what you’re asking. It does sound like a lot of fun. But it’s more of a belief than anything else.”

“Why are you such a skeptic?”

“I’m not. I just don’t let my imagination go off on a tangent!”

“What’s the big problem?”

“You’re asking me to think of myself as a lot more than I am. I know my limits. I’m lucky now and then. But I’m not going to bet my life on my good luck!”

“You never know what you’re going to find.”

“I know quite well. That’s why I seem to be doing quite well without sleep.”

“So you are working on something revolutionary. You’re just not telling me!”

If the sun is shining, he will get his way.

“Who are you to think that you can change human biology?”

“If you delay having a meal when you’re hungry, and you’re already fucking with biology.”

“That seems satanic.”

“Why should I worry about it?”

“You can’t put on a bunch of electrodes on your head and shoot them full of juice, and all

of a sudden you're superman. It's not Frankenstein!"

"Have you been spying on me?"

"So you are doing some kind of weird genetics stuff."

"I'm a microbiologist. So what's the big deal?"

"You really think that you have the right to mess with the sacred plan for life."

"What do you think you're doing when you get off on the latest flavor of cupcake that they've concocted in the bio-lab."

"Why are you teasing me?"

"That's how things work."

"You're just not talking about cupcakes. You really are screwing with out biological nature."

It's there to mess with. That's called living. Otherwise, we'd still be living in trees."

"We've never been in the trees unless you're talking about a Boy Scout meeting."

"Humankind has been quite a few places. And before that, our ancestors really got around."

"You and your ilk are trying to rewrite history."

"You can't remake your present if you can't rewrite your past."

"The habits of human beings have always been flexible. We're not talking about baboons."

"That's exactly my point."

"What point?"

"Humans live to find a higher purpose other than rolling around in the mud with their buddies."

"What is a higher purpose? Trying to escape your origins. Working to disturb the biological program."

"The higher purpose is the calling bestowed upon us from on high."

"The higher purpose is simply a way of trying to make sense of the multiple environments that we explore."

"How is that?"

"Lower organisms have their biology tied to an habitat that seems familiar. Adaptation permits an alteration in the program to respond to significant changes in the environment. But humans are able to adapt to a multitude of environments."

"What's the point?"

"The desire for a higher purpose is the hope that there is a consistency among the different habitats."

"But there already has to be a consistency if human beings are ever going to relate. This is the fundamental order that is built into the world."

"You're assuming that things will work out before you've even tried it. You end up ignoring the real basis for communication."

He wants the sense of completeness that will help make sense of his life.

"What are you hoping for?"

"I'm not like you. I can't be like you. You assume that the world has this fundamental order that helps you cope. So everything makes sense from day to day. You never have to face

that dark moment.”

“I have my doubts.”

“But you never really let go of faith. So there is no risk. You’re playing a game. Like betting on a football game. You wake up, and the game is just a thing of your past.”

“I’m not really a sport fan.”

“It’s pretty much the same thing.”

“What thing?”

“You never walk the tight rope without a rope.”

“Cut the metaphors, and explain it as it really is.”

“That’s it. There is no really. You are the one who’s devoted to metaphors.”

“My belief is not a metaphor.”

“Everything is some kind of picture for you. There is no empty space in your universe.”

“I’m having difficulty following you. One moment it’s football, then it’s the tight rope.”

“You’ve got me all wrong! What I’m telling you has nothing to do with games.”

“Tell me then.”

“It’s deep and philosophical.”

“I don’t have too much time for deep.”

“What are you looking for?”

“I want answers.”

“I thought you had the answers.”

“I do. You’re the one who’s trying to convince me differently.”

“I’m advising you to examine how things are. There is no one who’s going to rescue from your confusion.”

“I’m not that confused.”

“So you can find the order of the universe in all environments.”

“I know that it is there. It’s just that some things are beyond my ability to explain.”

“But that could be the place where your simplistic explanation of the world falls apart.”

“Where is that?”

“In the dark recesses of the mind. The place where you’re afraid to go.”

“Are you kidding me?”

“I’m not holding you up. You’re going to have to learn how to walk on your own.”

“I don’t go down that easily.”

“I can give you a little push if that’s what you’re looking for.”

“Do you know what you’re saying? No one is as alone in the universe as you claim.”

“You are the one who’s arguing for the fundamental loneliness of the self. You can’t live with other people. You rely on revelation from above to make things whole.”

“I’m not that hopeless.”

They keep trading barbs, but they have not come any closer to the meaning of the universe.

“You are only looking for what I have already found.”

“And I have only found what you have already been looking for.”

“Have you observed the chaos in her face?”

“Do they have any idea what is going on?”

“He knows nothing.”

“Either does she!”

“You were telling me that she’s really into kinky stuff.”

“She always tells me that she’s so into new stuff. But she’s held back by her religious guilt.”

“So what does that end up meaning?”

“Give her a few drinks, and she’s a wild tiger!”

“Is that your hope: that things get out of control?”

“I don’t want to make it appear that this is our idea.”

“Not at all. We can get both of them to do pretty much what we want. Just let them loose on their own.”

“You really think that is going to happen.”

“I know her better than anyone else. Can you say the same thing about him?”

“He is a little stiff. And he is a little difficult to open up. But when he feels peer pressure, he’ll go along with pretty much anything.”

“Maybe we shouldn’t bother with this.”

“We have to.”

“Why are you so adamant? Are you just looking for an excuse to absolve your own guilt?”

“I have nothing to feel guilty about.”

“Then you have nothing to worry about.”

“I don’t want them finding out!”

“Don’t you think that they already know?”

“If they have a little fun, they won’t be so apt to judge.”

“That is a pretty good take on morality.”

“We are making a new world!”

“I don’t know if I want to be a part of it.”

“You’re developing a conscience all of a sudden.”

“I think that a conscience only encourages me to get a little naughty.”

“And that is why you recruited me for your little game?”

“Are you enjoying yourself?”

“I’m learning how to adapt.”

“You are one sick puppy.”

“You want to recruit others for the sport.”

“You can see through all my motivation because I’m a lot like you.”

“I could walk away from this.”

“I already have.”

“You’re not going to go through with it.”

“We don’t have to. They’re going to do the work for us.”

“Sound the starting gun.”

“I’ll cover my ears!”

“And I’ll close my eyes.”

He wants to be noticed.

“It’s terrible when you can have whatever you want.”

“How can you live with yourself?”

“I’m not kidding.”

“Girls fall at your feet. What’s the problem?”

“It makes no sense. I’m a total jerk. Not a good person to be with. And they assume that I’m a wonderful guy.”

“You are fun to be with.”

“I want more than fun in my life.

“What do you really want?”

“Something that I can’t have.”

“You want the unattainable!”

“I wouldn’t put it in quite so esoteric terms.”

“Don’t women feel the same way about you? That you can give them the key to immortality.”

“I wish that I had those powers.”

“Maybe you do, and you don’t realize that.”

“I doubt it. Look at me.”

“Yeah! Look at yourself.”

“What are you saying?”

“That you are the guy. I swear that I’ve seen you walk through walls.”

“I’ve done the best that I can.”

“You just have to hold on. There’s a point in life when it’s all going to fall into place.”

“I’m telling you that it is falling into place. But it’s not exactly something that I enjoy.”

“You could try being with one of these women.”

“What do you think: that I’m some kind of saint? I’ve more than taken advantage of it. That’s why it’s all so disgusting to me.”

“Treat yourself!”

“How? By discussing oceanography with my new lover.”

“There is someone!”

“It’s just a manner of speaking.”

“So you’re not really into that kind of romantic vision.”

“All these girls are just like deers in the headlights.”

“What does that make you?”

“The forest ranger!”

“You are a cynic!”

“It’s an attitude born of knowledge not imagination.”

“Your cruelty seems to feed on their naivete. Doesn’t that make you ashamed?”

“That’s exactly what I feel. It makes me feel as if I’m a bad person.”

“I’m starting to understand how things appear in your eyes.”

“You are sympathetic to me.”

“I’m afraid that I am.”

“That is the most obscene part of it all. I know how bad that I am. But I just give myself

a free pass.”

“You don’t have to think of it as such a bad thing. It the price of fame.”

She doesn’t want to base her life on flattery, but does give her a rush when a guy stares her down to the core!

“That was one nasty mind-fuck!”

“You got a kick out of that.”

“I love it when guys try to play games with me, and they just come up completely short.”

“Don’t you have to give quite a bit of yourself to get that close?”

“I don’t exist in that place. I have a cocoon that protects me.”

“And no one can penetrate that place.”

“They try. None of them can get very close.”

“Are you letting me in?”

You’re like a reporter. I’m telling you a story. And you’re writing it down. But it has nothing to do with me at all.”

“It is your story. And I can definitely see where my emotions match experiences that you’ve had.”

“That’s like reading a magazine and seeing things that excite you. It’s an entertainment. You’re life has nothing to do with people that you read about inside the pages.”

“The shared feelings may connect you with the people.”

“You can be so close. But it’s a world of difference. And it’s impossible to penetrate the wall that separate you.”

“That is the same with us.”

“A little. You just don’t have what I need.”

“I could try to change myself.”

“You could try. But that doesn’t mean that it is going to have an effect at all.”

“Don’t we want the same things.”

“Not at all. I wish that I did. You don’t have a spiritual side. You’re all about yourself.”

“We are both working on the same thing. Trying to make life a better place.”

“You are talking like a child. Spirituality isn’t about trying resurrect a dead pet. What are you about? Do you have a soul. Can you read a book? Is there anything that makes you whole.”

“I have dreams. Do you have dreams?”

“We all do!”

“Have you crossed over to the other side?”

“I’m talking about real spiritual development!”

“It’s impossible to reach that point without recognizing that we all have the power to remake ourselves.”

“I admit that the power is universal. But not everyone knows what to do with such a blessing.”

“I know what to do!”

“For yourself. But it’s not something that can really be shared. People like me have even more profound powers.”

“That’s a little arrogant.”



“I didn’t get here by depending on people like you.”

“You don’t have to be so mean.”

“I’m stating a fact. You can’t deal with reality.”

“I’m trying. But I prefer a little fantasy.”

I have no idea what has been happening to me. It only took a little push to bring me to my senses, and now I am pulling things together.

“Where have you been? I’ve been calling and calling you.”

“I’ve been buying a new wardrobe.”

“Has something come over you?”

“I thought that it was time to make a change!”

“That’s all that it takes.”

“It’s not as if I have to go to rehab.”

“You’ve been hanging out at home all this time.”

“That’s exactly it. I’ve been hibernating. And now it’s springtime. I’m ready to come out of my shell.”

“Aren’t you a little frightened?”

“I don’t want to spend all my time locked inside.”

“So things are making sense.”

“I want to say that they are. But I’m not sure about the self that I am becoming.”

I wish that I could just snap my fingers and say that I’ve got my edge back. But it is nowhere that easy. I’m going to have to do some real work if I want to call myself a professional.

“Are you telling me that someone’s on to your game?”

“I can’t pretend to be the simmering intellect for the rest of my life.”

“So what do you have in mind?”

“I’m working on that.”

“You’ve spent all your life behind the screen. It’s a little scary to show your real face in public.”

“Fear is always the beginning of a bigger payoff.”

“Is that what you’re hoping for? Some good celebrity fucking?”

“I’m a nobody.”

“Why have all these doors been opening for you?”

“I guess that I’m being mistaken for someone else.”

“It must be someone pretty classy.”

“That’s what I’ve been telling everyone.”

“It’s that easy to clean up!”

“Yeah, life is pretty straight-forward: you work a little bit, you fuck a little bit, you write about it.”

“I guess life is that straight-forward.”

“I wouldn’t mind if I could be a little sneakier. It’s just out there.”

“You are going to be successful.”

This ought to be illegal. I am going to jail for this.

“Do I know you? You play music!”

“I write scripts.”

“For the movies.”

“Yeah!”

“Can you get me an audition.”

“It doesn’t work like that.”

Maybe I should tell her what she needs to hear.

“I do know people.”

Her mouth goes into a pout when I tell her that.

“She looks really cute.”

“Is she even out of high school?”

“She’s got to be!”

If she wants to be an actress, I wonder how she reads.

“I take you out to eat, and you don’t eat a thing.”

“You like me thin.”

“If you don’t eat, you’re going to waste away.”

There ought to be a law.

“There is. But I’m giving you a free pass.”

“You’re acting as if you can read my mind.”

“No one else is as good as I am. That’s why you were attracted to me.”

“You think that you’re going to get by on your physical attributes.”

“I told you that I want to act.”

“Are you very good?”

“How good do you want me to be?”

Her perfumes permeates my every pore. I wanted this to be easy, but it is overtaking me.

“He knows how to touch me.”

“Who?”

“The guy who I was last with.”

“You’re talking as if you’re still with him.”

“I want to keep you honest.”

“I’m not going to write a story about you if that’s what you’re hoping for.”

“Maybe you could find a part for me in one of the stories that you’ve already written.”

“You’re not the sort to take second billing.”

I should keep feeding her all my best lines.

“Your devotion to the body and clothes makes me think that you are part of some secret order.”

“I try to impress my vision on my body just like I work to impress that same sense of order on the world.”

“That sort of thing works.”

“What are you telling me?”

“What kind of vision of the world do you have? Like a checkerboard.?”

“More like an abstract expressionistic painting.”

“Are you kidding?”

“What do you want me to say: the solar system?”

“Something more down to earth.”

“My pussy! I see the world as an extension of my pussy!”

“Wow!”

“What do you want me to say? That I’m starving myself so that all that you can see is my sex!”

“You’re kidding?”

“You’re a pig. No one loves you.”

“I want you to love me.”

“You’re going to have to beg!”

I can’t watch anymore. I don’t want to ruin things.”

“Did you think that we were going to be together forever?”

“At least, until I wanted to kill you.”

What am I supposed to say to her.

“What do I say to her?”

“She has a great fashion sense. That is a beautiful dress.”

“Did she make it herself?”

“I told you that she’s a painter.”

“That is what she wishes. She’s an actress, she’s a painter. And she works as a waitress.”

“You have to start somewhere.”

“I can tell you where I’m going to start.”

I know that she is guilty.

“Where did you bury the bodies?”

“Next to the highway?”

“A little bit of neo-primitivism.”

You’ve got to hit the road, lover!

“Don’t you get tired of entertaining self-centered people.”

“People who are too busy to get busy don’t need entertainment.”

“What do they need?”

“Self-help.”

“That’s how it works.”

“Do you know that the same demographics that consumes horror movies also goes in for plastic surgery?”

“That seems quite unbelievable.”