Yvan and Marc Audition Duologue

*Context: Serge has shown Marc the painting and he has come to discuss the serious matter of what to do about their mutual friend.*

Marc What are you doing?

Yvan I'm looking for the top of my pen.

Marc All right, that’s enough.

Yvan I had it five minutes ago.

Marc It doesn't matter.

Yvan Yes, it does.

Marc Stop it. Buy another one.

Yvan It's a felt-tip, they’re special, they’ll write on any surface… It's just infuriating. Objects, I can't tell you how much they infuriate me. I had it in my hand five minutes ago.

Marc Are you going to live here?

Yvan Do you think it's suitable for a young couple?

Marc Young couple! Ha, ha…

Yvan Try not to laugh like that in front of Catherine.

Marc How's the stationery business?

Yvan All right. I'm learning.

Marc You’ve lost weight.

Yvan A bit. I'm pissed off about that top. It’ll all dry up. Sit down.

Marc If you go and looking for that top, I'm leaving.

Yvan OK, I'll stop. You want something to drink?

Marc A Perrier, if you have one.

Have you seen Serge lately?

Yvan No. Have you?

Marc Yesterday.

Yvan Is he well?

Marc Very.

He's just bought a painting.

Yvan Oh yes?

Marc Mm.

Yvan Nice?

Marc White.

Yvan White?

Marc White.

Imagine a canvas about five foot by four… with a white background… completely white in fact… with fine white diagonal stripes… you know… and maybe another horizontal white line, towards the bottom…

Yvan How can you see them?

Marc What?

Yvan These white lines. If the background’s white, how can you see the lines?

Marc You just do. Because I suppose the lines are slightly grey, or vice versa, or anyways there are degrees of white! There's more than one kind of white!

Yvan Don't get upset. Why are you getting upset?

Marc You immediately start quibbling. Why can't you let me finish?

Yvan All right. Go on.

Marc Right. So, you have an idea of what the painting looks like.

Yvan I think so, yes.

Marc Now you have to guess how much Serge paid for it.

Yvan Who’s the painter?

Marc Antrios. Have you heard of him?

Yvan No. Is he fashionable?

Marc I knew you were going to ask me that.

Yvan Well, it's logical…

Marc No, it isn't logical…

Yvan Of course it's logical you ask me to guess the price, you know very well the price depends on how fashionable the painter might be…

Marc I'm not asking you to apply a whole set of critical standards, I'm not asking you for professional valuation, I'm asking what you, Yvan, would give for a white painting tarted up with a few off-white stripes.

Yvan Bugger all.

Marc Right. And what about Serge? Pick a figure at random.

Yvan Ten thousand francs.

Marc Ha!

Yvan Fifty thousand

Marc Ha!

Yvan A hundred thousand.

Marc Keep going.

Yvan A hundred and fifty? Two hundred?!

Marc Two hundred. Two hundred grand.

Yvan No!

Marc Yes.

Yvan Two hundred grand?

Marc Two hundred grand.

Yvan Has he gone crazy?

Marc Looks like it.

Yvan All the same…

Marc What do you mean, all the same?

Yvan If it makes him happy… he can afford it…

Marc So that's what you think, is it?

Yvan Why? What do you think?

Marc You don't understand the seriousness of this, do you? Don't you see that suddenly, in some grotesque way, Serge fancies himself a ‘collector’.