

# THE DATE DINGER

© June 2003 by Albi Gorn  
9 Clinton Avenue  
Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706  
914 478-2281  
[agraj17@aol.com](mailto:agraj17@aol.com)

**(A park bench)**

CAROL

I feel like, you know, we just shouldn't say anything until –

RANDOLPH

No, no, you're right.

CAROL

I mean, I was going to say something about the weather.

RANDOLPH

(Interested) Really?

CAROL

But it could be anything.

RANDOLPH

Yeah.

CAROL

So it's better not to say anything.

RANDOLPH

Hmmm.

(Silence)

RANDOLPH

I don't think talking about the weather is –

CAROL

It wasn't that interesting, believe me.

RANDOLPH

Oh. (Beat) Because it has been kind of cold, and –

CAROL

You think it's been cold?

RANDOLPH

Brisk then.

CAROL

What's wrong with brisk?

RANDOLPH

Noth –

CAROL

I like brisk. See, there we go. I told you. Let's just drop it.

RANDOLPH

Right. You were right.

(Beat. RANDOLPH starts to hum)

CAROL

Even humming.

RANDOLPH

Right, right, sorry. (Beat. Very quiet humming) But what is that?

CAROL

What?

RANDOLPH

That tune. (Hums) Madonna?

CAROL

Hum it again.

(RANDOLPH hums)

CAROL

Leonard Cohen.

RANDOLPH

(Baffled) Who?

CAROL

(Giving him a fiercely incredulous stare) Leonard Cohen, you don't – we're talking too much.

RANDOLPH

Right, right. Sorry.

(Silence)

CAROL

(Looking at watch) What time did you tell him – is it a him?

RANDOLPH

I don't know.

CAROL

You don't know what time you told him?

RANDOLPH

I don't know if it's a him. I did it on line, just filled out a form and they sent a confirmation that they would send someone here at 5:30.

CAROL

(Looks at watch again) It's 5:40.

RANDOLPH

(Figuring it out) They're late.

(CAROL rolls her eyes)

RANDOLPH

I'll shut up.

(Silence)

CAROL

On line? How did you find somebody on line?

RANDOLPH

Google.

CAROL

Duh. I mean what did you search for?

RANDOLPH

I just typed in "I need a person to facilitate a date." And I got this service. I also got about thirty Lebanese importers.

CAROL

"Facilitate?" What's the name of the service?

RANDOLPH

Umm, I think, I think it was Date Dingers.

CAROL

What?

RANDOLPH

Date Dingers, I think that was it.

CAROL

(Stares at him for awhile)

RANDOLPH

We're talking too much.

CAROL

Forget talking, I'm thinking too much. See, there is it, that's the problem

RANDOLPH

Yeah, definitely, me too.

CAROL

I can't stay focused on – what do you mean, you too? You don't know what I'm going to say.

RANDOLPH

No, I don't. Not a clue. Isn't that the problem?

CAROL

No. I mean that's not what I was going to say.

RANDOLPH

What were you going to say?

CAROL

I was going to say that I'm just *thinking* about myself, and what I'm doing and saying. *I'm* not here.

RANDOLPH

Oh.

CAROL

I'm thinking about what I'm doing, but I'm not here.

RANDOLPH

Oh. (Beat) It's just as well that you're not here, since the guy's fifteen minutes late.

CAROL

Does that ever happen to you? That you're so judgmental of yourself that you're just not there?

RANDOLPH

Yeah, actually. I hate that about myself.

CAROL

That's why I told you this is useless.

RANDOLPH

Uh-huh. Well, maybe this guy –

CAROL

If he ever shows up. (Beat) I'm not against the guy.

RANDOLPH

Good.

CAROL

I mean, I definitely need help here.

RANDOLPH

Me too.

CAROL

We're talking too much

RANDOLPH

Yeah. (Beat) Not that it's not interesting.

CAROL

It is interesting, and kinda different, sitting here not talking.

RANDOLPH

Yeah. (Beat) Although I've been on plenty of dates where –

CAROL

But I mean not talking because we don't want to talk.

RANDOLPH

(Not totally convinced) Uh-huh.

(Silence)

CAROL

You have problems with making conversation on dates?

RANDOLPH

Big time. You?

CAROL

Yeah. I mean, it's like I said –

RANDOLPH

You're not really there.

CAROL

Right.

RANDOLPH

Bummer.

CAROL

How about you?

RANDOLPH

Well –

**(EUCLID enters)**

EUCLID

Ah, you must be Randolph and Carol.

RANDOLPH

Right.

EUCLID

(To RANDOLPH) And which one are you?

RANDOLPH

(Beat) Randolph.

EUCLID

And you're Carol, fine, I'm –

CAROL

You didn't know which one was Randolph and which one was Carol?

EUCLID

One of the modalities we like to employ as a modular reference is not to lapse into gender profiling. It would have been distancing to reopen some old wound unintentionally inflicted by the outside-the-box thinking of one or more of your parental units. Now, my name is Euclid and I'm here to shepherd you through these –

CAROL

Euclid?

EUCLID

Right. (Bright smile) See, there it is.

CAROL

(Not following) What.

EUCLID

Now, as I was saying, I'm here to shepherd you through what we professionals have come to recognize as a very difficult transition from the comfort of unincorporated oneness to the chaos of deconstruction and re-formation as a particled unit. So first we need to particularize ourselves in the context of the history that brings us here. (Stares expectantly at CAROL)

CAROL

(Beat) Euclid?

EUCLID

It's a Greek name. So, Carol, we're not looking for your analysis, it becomes hard to move off of that; instead, pick a moment, go to the center of that moment and then take us to the edge.

CAROL

(Beat) Okay. There was this one date. We were at Quagmire's, that's a club in Buffalo. I was doing graduate work in –

EUCLID

It's so, so, so very easy to hide in the details. Just take us to the edge.

CAROL

The edge, right. And (viscerally recalling) this guy, Frank something – Corelli, Frank Corelli, at first I thought he was really kind of sweet and cute but then he ordered scungilli and I totally shut down because I became convinced that the next time I opened my mouth I was going to start screaming at him: Wop! Wop! Wop!, and I wouldn't be able to control myself. So there I was, yet again, just looking at myself from someplace else.

RANDOLPH

Buffalo.

CAROL

No, not Buffalo. (Anguished) Detached, judgmental, self-hating, self-absorbed, out of control, a looney toon, a psycho, suicidal loser.



(There is a silence as a smile spreads across EUCLID's face)

EUCLID

(To RANDOLPH) A door has opened here, Randolph. These are transcendental portals through our shells; ephemerations in our armor. Step into it.

(RANDOLPH looks to EUCLID, then looks to CAROL and then back to EUCLID, who gives him a smile of encouragement)

RANDOLPH

(Tentatively to CAROL) I'll bet it's really brisk in Buffalo.

EUCLID

(Beat) That may not be the door that was just opened.

RANDOLPH

Right.

EUCLID

I sense you may be somewhat wary. Touching can be such a powerful force. Are you afraid of being touched by your touching?

RANDOLPH

Actually, I was mostly afraid she was going to call me a wop.

EUCLID

Carol, I'm visualizing a bridge; do you see it? Do you see the bridge, Carol?

CAROL

(To RANDOLPH) You're Italian?

RANDOLPH

No.

EUCLID

That's more like a tunnel, we need –

CAROL

So why are you afraid I'm going to call you a wop?

EUCLID

Ah, good, good.

CAROL

And why would you care?

EUCLID

Ah, Randolph, we –

CAROL

Why would you care what some pathetic, classless loser called you?

EUCLID

Now, Carol, think buoyant thoughts.

RANDOLPH

That's a good point, actually. I mean not what you said, but I think I'd maybe rather have you call me names –

CAROL

Irrelevant names.

RANDOLPH

Yeah, any kind of names, rather than have you sit there quietly not being there.

EUCLID

We may be meandering a bit from the synchronus.

CAROL

That's kind of sweet, actually.

EUCLID

I'll be the judge of that. This is a moment (beat; he smiles knowingly, raises his hands and quickly opens his fists) pffft! And now it's gone. Uhh – here comes another one. Seize it, seize it.

RANDOLPH

Seize it, right...

EUCLID

Randolph. Randolph, Randolph, Randolph, Carol has peeled back a layer; can you reciprocate?

RANDOLPH

Reciprocate? Well, I guess. You want me to go to the rim?

EUCLID

The edge. Conceive of it this way; find your grieving, nurture it, and then radiate out from there. Think Saturn, think pebble in the water, the end of Day in the Life. Come out, come out, come out.

CAROL

Wait a minute. Are you gay?

RANDOLPH

Umm, I don't think so; I'm not sure how you know –

CAROL

'Cause you wouldn't be the first I went out with, trust me.

RANDOLPH

I'm really pretty uncomplicated, so I'm probably not.

CAROL

And god knows how many became gay after they went out with me.

EUCLID

We're not radiating.

RANDOLPH

Sorry. See, I guess I'm afraid to peel, that's my problem.

EUCLID

(A delighted shiver) Oooh, I just got a rush. Didn't you feel that; couldn't you just grock him?

RANDOLPH

Like Donna, she really liked me. We were at her apartment, on her couch and I know if I said the right thing, you know, we coulda – but I didn't say anything. Like I was afraid.

EUCLID

Of peeling.

RANDOLPH

Uhh, (not sure) I guess.

EUCLID

Of unraveling that –

CAROL

Not Corelli. Frank Corelli is somebody else. It wasn't Corelli. I can't remember what it was.

EUCLID

(A beat of composure) Of unraveling that macramé cocoon that contains the boo scary butterfly of your darkest moments. Carol, feed the need. Let Randolph know you see the whole, not the blemish. Can you holisticize for him?

CAROL

Can I what?

RANDOLPH

It wasn't the butterfly so much. But, like, I don't know if I should be saying this, but I'm really small and she looked like size mattered to her. So that's what always happens to me, 'cause if you talk to them, sooner or later you're going to have to get – I mean peel, you're gonna have to peel.

EUCLID

(Delightedly empathetic) Oh. Oh, oh, oh, Randolph, we've all been there. Carol, can you tell Randolph we've all been there?

CAROL

I don't know. I'm practically titless and it never stopped me.

EUCLID

(Smiles at RANDOLPH) You should never be trepidatious about sharing a good laugh, Randolph. Carol's joking is her way of telling you how comfortable she feels with you.

RANDOLPH

Franco Corelli you're probably thinking of. He was an opera singer.

CAROL

You like opera?

EUCLID

Good, good.

RANDOLPH

Yeah, sometimes.

CAROL

Wop.

(There is a silence)

EUCLID

O-kay. I think we should probably move on. Now, you're standing on the edges of your experience, and look! They come together to form the center of something entirely new. Let us blend. Let us slip into the vortex. Let us heal.

(CAROL and RANDOLPH look at each other. A beat)

CAROL

How small?

RANDOLPH

Well, I –

EUCLID

Don't go there, Randolph; it's not moving the ball forward. Strip down the intellectual affectations, find the rhythm of the moment, and dance to it; turn off the computer, Luke.

**(RANDOLPH tries. Finally, he jumps on CAROL and starts to kiss and grope her)**

CAROL

Whoa, stop, what are you doing?

EUCLID

Good, good.

CAROL

What do you mean, good, good. (Of RANDOLPH's continued groping) Don't touch that; that's a third date item at best.

EUCLID

Dance, Carol, dance. God, the honesty of this moment. The openness.

CAROL

I – (of RANDOLPH's breath) what is that, souvlaki? Would you please stop pawing me – can you call off your pet, please.

EUCLID

Ah. I think, Carol, that you need to give Randolph *permission* to stop.

CAROL

What? He sure didn't need *permission* to start.

EUCLID

If Randolph were to pull his affection away from you now, it might seem like he was rejecting you. I know he's afraid of that; aren't you afraid of that, Randolph?

RANDOLPH

**(RANDOLPH's mouth is full of some part of CAROL's body) Mmmpf, mmmmpf.**

CAROL

You have my permission to stop, Randolph. (He continues) You have my – (she grabs him by the shoulders and speaks fiercely into his face) You, souvlaki breath, you have my permission to stop.

RANDOLPH

Oh. Okay. (a beat of attempted composure) I told you about the talking.

EUCLID

My, we've come so –

CAROL

This has nothing to do with talking. (To EUCLID) Look, Pythagoras –

EUCLID

Euclid.

CAROL

Whatever, before we go any further, are you guys covered by insurance?

EUCLID

You knew my name was Euclid, didn't you? I think one of the stumbling –

CAROL

Because for all we know, Thumbelina over here is a latent Hannibal the Cannibal, and you would be just the guy to get him in touch with that side of himself.

RANDOLPH

(Looking at his crotch) Thumbelina? Is that a reference to –

CAROL

Beside the obligatory MSW, do you have any training? I mean, really, what does it take to be a date dinger?

EUCLID

Date dinger?

CAROL

Is there like some course that –

EUCLID

Date dinger?

RANDOLPH

Isn't that what you guys are called? I thought that's what it said on the website.

EUCLID

(A beat of disbelief) Romance resonator.

RANDOLPH

Oh. Yeah. I thought it was date dinger, I don't know why. Maybe --

CAROL

God, your brain is smaller than your --

EUCLID

Breathing time. Everyone take a deep breath and let's clear our palette of --

CAROL

Well, I'll certainly have cocktail conversation for years to come, in the remote chance that anyone would ever invite me to anything.

RANDOLPH

Yeah, this is fun.

EUCLID

Now, slowly turn your head --

CAROL

What? You think this is fun?

RANDOLPH

Yeah. I like being with you.

CAROL

You do?

EUCLID

And lift your hands up, extend your arms --

RANDOLPH

Yeah. I don't think that I like *you* very much, but I like *being* with you.

CAROL

Why?

EUCLID

Yeah, why? (catches CAROL's hostile stare; covering) And slowly let the air out --

RANDOLPH

Well, two reasons, actually. First, all these things you say to me, they're nothing compared to what I say to myself. And if you keep belittling me, then I don't have to

worry about doing it. And, and, and second, it's comforting to know that there's some other battered ego out there, whose self-hate drives her to such antisocial, self-destructive behavior. It's good to know I'm not alone.

CAROL

(Beat; **CAROL tenderly takes his hand in hers**) It is good to know. And who would have thought such an inconsequential nerd like you could have such deep thoughts. Are you sure you're not gay?

EUCLID

(A sigh of delight) Awwww. Boy, it's a crime to accept a fee when the process is this rewarding.

CAROL

(**Looking at RANDOLPH's hands**) Did you like have leprosy?

RANDOLPH

No.

EUCLID

So fulfilling.

CAROL

(Dropping RANDOLPH'S hands) God, feels like sandpaper.

EUCLID

(Looking at his watch) Well, I think we have a spic and span Dodge here. My job is done. (To RANDOLPH) Do you need a receipt?

RANDOLPH

Don't think so. Is this tax de --

EUCLID

No. (As he leaves) Great, I can get home in time for Touched by an Angel.

(**EUCLID is gone**)

RANDOLPH

(Looks at his hands) Why are you so uptight about Italians?

CAROL

My parents are Italian.

RANDOLPH

That'll do it.



CAROL

(Threateningly) You watch your mouth about my mother.

RANDOLPH

Sorry. (Beat) Do you ever think about having kids?

CAROL

Great, that's all I need; someone else to hate me. (Looking him over) Do you, like, buy your clothes on line or something?

RANDOLPH

Mostly. The shoes are Kohl's. Where did I get date dinger from?

CAROL

God. (Looking out; a beat of silence) But really, how small?

(Lights out)

**- end of play -**