



The SPEISENSTEIN Files

11. Domestic Science

Speisenstein bursts into the laboratory, his moustache trembling.

“So what in the hell’s going on here? Think you live in some goddam pigsty or somethin? Where’s Stephanie? Yoe! You just throw that coffee down the sink. Right now! Didn’t nobody tell you you don’t eat in this lab? Nobody told you about radiocontamination? What’ve I got here, a bunch of goons?”

He advances on Joe’s bench. “Just take a look at that bench. Covered in shit of ages. Is that how you live at home? Joe! Joe, where’re you going? ... Joe!”

I am feeling sorry for Speisenstein.

“Sorry about the TV programme,” I say.

“Yea. I c’d kill that Nancy bitch. But that’s all history now. You learn your lesson. Much worse problems with the Dubois girl.”

How d’y mean? Wedding bells?”

“No way. She’s walking out on us. Dumping Joe.”

“You don’t say. Where’s she going?”

“Huh! Can you guess, buddy? That shiksa waltzes into my office with a long spiel about needing to get away for personal reasons.

‘So you got plans?’ I say.

‘I had an offer,’ she says, and I’ll have to take it.

‘So where you going?’ I ask.

‘I’m going to join Dr Witherington’s team,’ she says. Just like that. I’ll do something to that bastard.’

Chuck Robinson taps the racquet against his left heel.

“You think I’ll beat him this time, Joe?”

“Sure thing. Just remember: racquet back and eye on the ball.”

“Gee, I sure am grateful to you for this coaching. If I win I’ll take you to the US Open. That’s a promise.”

“Then I’ll be there. But don’t kill him. I’m kinda fond of the old guy. I tell you, he’s been like a second father to me.”

“I bet, Joe. Dr Speisenstein’s a great guy.”

“And a great scientist. Think he knows about me ‘n Stephanie?”

“Sure thing he knows.”

“He talked about it?”

“Yeah, he did kinda mention it.”

“You busy this weekend, Joe?”

“Not particularly, Dr Speisenstein. Why? You need me in the lab?”

“Chuck Robinson ‘n me are going down to see the Dolphins play the Bills. Stay overnight. Care to come?”

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