

MERRITT: What kind of distinction are you trying to make? What is *black black*?

SIDNEY: We seem to be getting in a bit of a tangle here. I'm sure Royce intended for us to talk about your grant-writing abilities.

MERRITT: You don't believe me, do you?

SIDNEY: About what, exactly? I suppose a person can be—

MERRITT: Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln, Harding and Eisenhower.

SIDNEY: (*After a moment*) Eisenhower?

MERRITT: His wife *was* named Mamie.

SIDNEY: But he didn't seem—

(MERRITT *just stares.*)

SIDNEY: I mean, there was nothing to suggest—

(MERRITT *stares.*)

SIDNEY: He was German, wasn't he, or Dutch? By descent—

MERRITT: We're all descended from Eve, genetically speaking, that prehistoric woman in Africa—

SIDNEY: Then you could as easily say *everyone's black!*

MERRITT: Is that somehow offensive to you?

CHRIS: (*Appearing*) Sounds like you're having too much fun.

SIDNEY: Oh, Chris, so good to see you.

MERRITT: Am I talking to the Director next?

CHRIS: Pinky only has a few minutes, so we need to get over there.

SIDNEY: And I'm overdue for a committee meeting. Terrific to meet you, Merritt.

(SIDNEY *holds out a hand.* MERRITT *responds with a soul handshake.*)

MERRITT: Thank you. This has been most enlightening.

SIDNEY: Indeed. Good-bye. (*Rushes off*)

CHRIS: (*As they walk*) How was that?

MERRITT: (*Dropping the accent*) Let me ask you this. I assume you like working here.

CHRIS: Of course.

MERRITT: Why?

CHRIS: The collection is incredible.

MERRITT: The art or the people?

CHRIS: Both. The people are great.

MERRITT: Some real characters.

CHRIS: Exactly. While the art is so...solid. So beautiful and perfect.

MERRITT: It's about contrast? Human frailty versus artistic purity?

CHRIS: Sort of. But art grows out of human imperfection. Artists aren't perfect either.

MERRITT: I keep expecting one of these bozos to poke an elbow through a painting.

CHRIS: They seem to like you.

MERRITT: Really? You've been getting feedback?

CHRIS: Some. Royce is hearing more, of course.

MERRITT: So I'm doing all right?

CHRIS: The Director's opinion is the make-or-break. Isn't sposed to be, but it is. No pressure.