

CRYPTIC VIBES

Robin, twenty-four, a painting contractor, and Gloria, twenty-six, a manager at a local art gallery, have been friends for the past two years and have been dating for the last four months. Robin has unexpectedly shown up at Gloria's house tonight to confess his secret. He has just, within the last few days, accepted that he is gay. Gloria, too, has something she needs to share with Robin. In the last week, she has begun to fall for her new next-door neighbor, Jack. She wants to break it off with Robin because it's just not happening between them. Neither suspects that the other has such news. They each are terrified that the breakup will destroy the other. Gloria is making dinner for Jack when Robin arrives.

CHARACTERS

Robin: 24, a painting contractor

Gloria: 26, a manager at a local art gallery

SETTING

Gloria's kitchen, which opens onto the living room

TIME

The present

ROBIN: *(Entering nervously.)* I'm sorry, I didn't call. I couldn't wait. I had to see you.

GLORIA: *(Nervous and annoyed.)* Robin?! I didn't expect you. Um. Hi!

ROBIN: This is . . . I just . . . this is very important, Gloria, please. I think we should sit.

GLORIA: Sit? Like down? I don't think sitting is a good idea right now.

ROBIN: I've been walking by the lake, thinking. Every night just thinking and thinking.

GLORIA: Oh, honey. Don't do that. You're not made for that.

ROBIN: It's mostly about us, Gloria.

GLORIA: Us? Really? Us?

ROBIN: No, now, now it's not bad. Exactly. Surprising, and a bit serious.

GLORIA: Serious? Not serious. Oh, no, no, Robin. Not serious. This is not a good time.

ROBIN: Of course I must propose that we —

GLORIA: No, no, no proposing anything now! I'm cooking dinner. Pitting olives, peeling potatoes, ripping peas. It's not good timing.

ROBIN: You're going to hate me, Gloria. *(Reflecting.)* Ripping peas, did you say? You're cooking? Since when do you cook?

GLORIA: Since . . . now. I just thought I'd try it, but . . . I'm sorry that you must be going.

ROBIN: Going? Oh no, not yet. You're learning to cook for me, aren't you?

GLORIA: No. I mean, well, I-I wouldn't exactly . . .

ROBIN: And you hate it don't you? *(She nods.)* And all this cooking is for me?

GLORIA: Well, I wouldn't go so far as to say that. I wouldn't call it cooking, I mean.

ROBIN: Oh, I'm certain it's delicious. What is it?

GLORIA: Burnt. Actually. Burnt is what it is.

ROBIN: Oh, well, I'm sure it's not *all* burnt. *(Looking.)* Well. Burnt is good. I'm not complaining.

GLORIA: We'll probably have to go out.

ROBIN: Oh, no! We can't. We have to talk here. In private.

GLORIA: No! I mean, not tonight. When I said we have to go out just now, it wasn't you and me. I meant, I had plans with a person. I was cooking for a — a friend-person, Robin.

ROBIN: Oh? A friend?

GLORIA: Yes. My friendly neighbor.

ROBIN: Your neighbor? Oh, good. Good. Sheila?

GLORIA: No. Uhhhh . . . well, he fixed my light last week. I felt like I owed him.

ROBIN: He? *(Beat.)* Oh she's a he, huh? Mr. Woods?

GLORIA: No. I, uh . . . not Woods. It's uh, remember the new guy in 17C — the, the really built guy with the *(Getting into it.)* gorgeous, incredibly lush . . . well, average-looking . . . we made fun of him? He had a very ugly cat? You probably don't remember —

ROBIN: Jack?

GLORIA: You know his name?

ROBIN: It's funny that you mentioned him.

GLORIA: Funny?

ROBIN: Well, I ran into Jack in the hall a few days ago when you got off late.

GLORIA: Oh. You talked to Jack?

ROBIN: Yes, in the hall. And for a few hours at his place. It was like therapy.

GLORIA: Really?

ROBIN: It turns out he's a hell of a guy. Very interesting and sensitive.

GLORIA: Interesting that you didn't tell me, sweetie. Sensitive . . . great. How sensitive?

ROBIN: Interesting that you didn't happen to mention that you invited him to dinner either.

GLORIA: What did you talk about? I wouldn't think you'd have a whole lot in common.

ROBIN: Oh, you'd be surprised. I guess you've realized he's not the jock we first thought.

GLORIA: Yes, I noticed he knew a great deal about art. He asked me about my gallery. He came up to my studio. He loved my *Woman with Grapefruits* painting.

ROBIN: Well, they're impressive grapefruits, honey. Great grapefruits.

GLORIA: Yes, he loved them. He bought a miniature Kafka my student painted. Still, he plays football and drinks milk out of the carton. He's kinda jock-ey.

ROBIN: I know, I *love* that. I mean, that he's not stuffy. It turns out he teaches English and has a thing for antique cande-

labras. He wants his kitchen redone in dusty blue and avocado. My guys are going to repaint it for him. He actually said "dusty blue and avocado."

GLORIA: Did he?

ROBIN: He knows his decor lingo. He also collects English flatware.

GLORIA: Well, how "Antiques Roadshow" of him. So what else did you talk about, Robin?

ROBIN: Well, funny that you ask.

GLORIA: You keep saying that but nothing's very ha ha yet.

ROBIN: Well, I just meant that it's odd we mentioned him.

GLORIA: We didn't mention him. I did. Because he happens to be stopping by. For dinner. Now.

ROBIN: He's the reason I'm here, Gloria. I mean, certain things came up out of our —

GLORIA: That lousy good-for-nothing! He told you everything, didn't he, Robin?

ROBIN: Well — I — he — you know. He said it was based on a vibe.

GLORIA: A vibe? My God. I gave him a lot more than a vibe. I gave him a whole viibration.

ROBIN: Oh my God! You told him to ask me? You told him to confront me for you?

GLORIA: What?! No, I was going to tell you everything, Robin. I swear. I don't know what came over me. I just couldn't help it. I got so completely ravenous.

ROBIN: I understand. I understand your need to know and your suspicions all along. I should have known myself by my obsessions — fine china, *Martha Stewart* magazine.

GLORIA: No, I should have been honest about everything. I . . . *(Beat.)* *Martha Stewart* magazine? What are you talking about?

ROBIN: The relief. The relief of having the truth out there. I feel so much better that you know.

GLORIA: Know what?

ROBIN: I thought you'd fall apart.

GLORIA: Me fall apart? I was afraid *you'd* fall apart.
ROBIN: Me? Why am I falling apart?
GLORIA: Because I practically — I lusted after . . . well, he already told you . . .
ROBIN: Just because I'm gay, it doesn't mean I'm falling apart.
GLORIA: What?!
ROBIN: Excuse me. Did you just use the word *lusted*?
GLORIA: Never mind that, you Martha groupie. You're telling me you're gay? You're gay?!! (*Beat.*) Wait. Don't tell me Jack's gay too?
ROBIN: Well, who would care if he was, hmmm? You were confessing, weren't you? Cheater!
GLORIA: Cheater? You can't call me a cheater! How could I cheat on a gay man?!
ROBIN: That doesn't count. You didn't *know* that I was gay.
GLORIA: Ohhh, details! Let's not stray from the subject at hand. Are you saying that Mr. Jack sings in your choir?
ROBIN: No. He sings in yours. He's just very in touch with his vibe.
GLORIA: Oh, I bet he is.
ROBIN: So why did you put Jack up to raising the crux?
GLORIA: Put Jack up to what? Raising the *what*?
ROBIN: The crux, the question, the point.
GLORIA: I didn't put Jack up to raising anything, honey, because I raised the gay question months ago. Remember? And you told me, swore to me, you told me men did nothing for you! Now, all you want to do is raise the crux. You told me how much you loved my body, my spirit — me. "You're so attractive, Gloria." Well, you're so full of crap! You're gay? When were you going to tell me? We've been dating for four months, pal!
ROBIN: And you've been cheating with Jack for weeks!
GLORIA: That's not true! I wouldn't say weeks. Maybe *a* week.
ROBIN: Did you think nothing of what we had together?
GLORIA: (*Irritated.*) Meeee? You weren't even in the right ocean. You don't even like my fish. I told you you were gay.

I knew it. From the beginning. Didn't I call that? What was wrong with *my* vibe? You only listen to guys' vibes?
ROBIN: You don't count. You think everyone is gay when you first meet them, Gloria.
GLORIA: Yeah. And you are! See? It pays to think that way.
ROBIN: I wanted to tell you gently.
GLORIA: Oh, yeah, real gently. Just stick it between the hot guy's thing for dusty avocado and English pottery —
ROBIN: Flatware.
GLORIA: Whatever!! The point is that you should have told me directly a long time ago. Instead of lying all over the place.
ROBIN: Lying?! I wasn't lying. If I was lying, I was lying to myself.
GLORIA: While you were lying next to me. Don't I count?
ROBIN: I understand your condemnation, Gloria.
GLORIA: What are you now? Some sort of New Age therapist? I can't believe Jack didn't tell me about you either.
ROBIN: How many times have you "talked" to this guy?
GLORIA: None of your beeswax, Mr. Gay Boyfriend.
ROBIN: Did you feel it?
GLORIA: Feel what? In particular?
ROBIN: My gayness, of course?! Is that why you had an affair?
GLORIA: Had an affair? He taught me proper downward dog position. (*Robin's mouth drops. Gloria is disgusted.*) Yoga! We're talking yoga! Don't be disgusting!
ROBIN: Oh lovely. So, he's been over every night.
GLORIA: Not every night. Just three times this week. I told you. He fixed my lightbulb!
ROBIN: Oh, yeah! Lit ya right up I bet, Ms. Yogi Poodle.
GLORIA: Don't fake jealousy. You're not even interested in me. Or my sisters. You think of kissing me and pictures of stale white bread fill your mind.
ROBIN: Tostada chips dipped in mild salsa. You're kinda feisty, but fat.

GLORIA: (*Appalled.*) What?! Fat?! You have a lot of nerve! I'm a very attractive woman.

ROBIN: Oh, who told you that besides me? Mr. Jack?

GLORIA: Well, if you must know, he complimented my posture.

ROBIN: (*Softer.*) Ohhh. Sweetheart. Is he not into you?

GLORIA: Well, apparently, he's more into talking about pottery with you. I flirted with him like a madwoman. Didn't make any headway. It's disgusting!

ROBIN: (*Going to hug her.*) Oh honey!

GLORIA: Don't you dare feel sorry for me, you lousy . . . gay guy.

ROBIN: To tell you the truth, sweetie, I don't think he's interested in your type.

GLORIA: So he *is* gay?! Fine. Give me a gun. Is everyone gay? I fully expect my cat to come out tomorrow.

ROBIN: No, I think he's into, ya know, women that are extremely . . . athletic.

GLORIA: What are you trying to say? I could tone up a bit. How athletic are we talking? Suzanne Somers . . . sort of ab-building, thigh-crunching, bun-toning —

ROBIN: Muscle-bulking, gender-confusing, facial hair-growing —

GLORIA: Oh. Ewwwy. That's not pretty.

ROBIN: Bingo! You got it.

GLORIA: Well, I never liked his cleft chin anyway. There were hairs in it.

ROBIN: I know. Uck. He's got terrible cuticles too. We could do much better. (*Pause.*) So are you still mad at me?

GLORIA: Yes.

ROBIN: You are still very sexy to me, ya know?

GLORIA: Please.

ROBIN: I mean it.

GLORIA: That means a whole lot coming from a homo like you. (*She smiles at him.*) So you want to hang out with me tonight? I'll dump the jock.

ROBIN: Absolutely. We're done with that namby-pamby, ugly cat-owning nimrod.

GLORIA: Good. What are we going to do about dinner?

ROBIN: Well, we aren't eating your black, decaying, burnt opus out there.

GLORIA: Leo's?

ROBIN: Where else?

GLORIA: Ya know, I always wondered why on Saturday nights I wanted to eat a whole bag of cookie dough with you and do your nails. Now, everything makes perfect sense.

ROBIN: I love you madly, you know.

GLORIA: Oh, hush up, you big ole poop.