**Frank**

Amazing. This is amazing. Listen to this: The entire work force of the state of Virginia...

...had to have solitaire removed from their computers......because they hadn't done any work in six weeks.

**Kathleen**

That's so sad.

**Frank**

Do you know what this is?

The end of Western civilization as we know it.

**Kathleen**

Aren't you late?

**Frank**

Technology. Name me one thing that we've gained from technology.

**Kathleen**

Electricity.

**Frank**

That's one. You think this machine's your friend, but it's not.

l'm out of here. See you tonight!

Sushi!

**Kathleen**

Bye!

**Computer**

Welcome. You've got mail.

**Kathleen**

''Brinkley is my dog. He loves New York streets as much as l do.''

**Joe**

Although he likes to eat bits of pizza and bagel off the sidewalk...

...and I prefer to buy them. Brinkley is a great catcher who was offered a tryout on the Mets. But he chose to stay with me so he could spend 18 hours a day...

...sleeping on a large green pillow the size of an inner tube.

Don't you love New York in the fall? Makes me want to buy school supplies.

**Voice (Patricia)**

l'm almost ready.

**Joe**

I would send you a bouquet of newly sharpened pencils...

...if I knew your name and address. On the other hand, this not knowing has its charms.

**Voice (Patricia)**

Did you push it?

**Joe**

Yes, l pushed it.

**Patricia**

l'm so late.

Random House fired Dick Atkins. Good riddance.

Murray Chilton died, which makes one less person l'm not speaking to.

Hurry! Hurry! Hurry!

Vince got a great review. He'll be insufferable.

Tonight, PEN dinner.

**Joe**

Am l going?

**Patricia**

Joe Fox, you promised.

**Joe**

lt's black-tie. Can't l just give money instead?

What is it this week? Free Albanian writers?

l'm in favor of that.?

Okay, l'll go. l'll go. You're late.

**Patricia**

l know. l know.

**Joe**

Who's a happy dog? Who's a happy dog?

**Computer**

Welcome. You've got mail.

**Joe**

All right. Okay. Get down, get down.

**Kathleen**

Dear friend, I like to start my notes to you......as if we're already

in the middle of a conversation. I pretend that we're the oldest

and dearest friends......as opposed to what we actually are:

People who don't know each other's names......and met in a chat room where

we both claimed we'd never been before.

"What will NY1 52 say today?" I wonder.

I turn on my computer. I wait impatiently as it connects. I go online...

...and my breath catches in my chest until I hear 3 little words:

"You've got mail. "

I hear nothing, not even a sound on the streets of New York.

Just the beat of my own heart. I have mail......from you.

**Kevin**

The electrical contractor called. His truck hit a deer last night.

So he won't be here till tomorrow.

And upstairs the shelves are late...

...because the pine we ordered has beetles.

**Joe**

Very good.

**Kevin**

And we got a $50,000 ticket for workers peeing off the roof.

**Joe**

Great. That is great. ls the electrician here today?

**Kevin**

l just told you he hit a deer. l knew you weren't listening to me.

**Joe**

You're right. l wasn't. l hear nothing. Nothing.

Not a sound on the city streets, just the beat of my own heart.

l think that's how it goes. Something like that.

**Kevin**

You and Patricia got engaged. You can tell me.

**Joe**

Engaged? Are you crazy?

**Kevin**

l thought you liked Patricia.

**Joe**

l do. l do. l love Patricia. l love Patricia. Patricia is amazing.

Patricia makes coffee nervous. We should announce ourselves to

the neighborhood. ''Here we come.''

**Kevin**

l don't know, this is the Upper West Side.

We might as well tell them we're opening a crack house.

They're going to hate us. Soon as they hear, they'll be lining up...

...to picket the big bad chain store.

That's out to destroy—

**Joe**

Everything they hold dear. We're going to seduce them

with our square footage......and our discounts, and our deep armchairs...

...and our cappuccino.

That's right. They're going to hate us at the beginning...

**Kevin**

...but we'll get them in the end.

**Joe**

And you know why?

**Kevin**

Why?

**Joe**

Because we'll sell them cheap books and legal addictive stimulants.

ln the meantime, we'll just put up a big sign: ''Coming soon, a Fox Books Superstore.

The End of Civilization...

...As You Know It!"

**Kathleen**

Good morning, Christina.

**Christina**

Good morning, Kathleen.

**Kathleen**

lt's a beautiful day. lsn't it just the most beautiful day?

**Christina**

l guess. Yeah, sure.

**In the stree**

ldiot, what are you doing?

Where you going? l got the green light!

**Kathleen**

Don't you just love New York in the fall?

Perfect. Can't beat that. Scotch tape?

**Christina**

What is going on with you?

**Kathleen**

Nothing.

**Christina**

You're in love.

**Kathleen**

ln love? No. Yes. That's right. l'm in love with Frank.

l'm practically living with Frank.

Could you get our Christmas mailers out this week?

**Christina**

Yeah, by Monday. l promise. l have this paper due Friday.

What is going on?

**Kathleen**

Nothing. Nothing at all.

**Christina**

You know, l am just going to stand here until you tell me.

**Kathleen**

All right. ls it infidelity if you're involved with someone on e-mail?

**Christina**

Have you had sex?

**Kathleen**

No, of course not. l don't even know him.

**Christina**

l mean cybersex. Don't do it. The minute you do, they lose all respect for you.

**Kathleen**

lt's not like that. We just e-mail. lt's really nothing.

On top of which, l'm thinking of stopping, because it's getting....

**Christina**

Out of hand?

**Kathleen**

Confusing. But not. Because it's nothing.

**Christina**

Where'd you meet him?

**Kathleen**

Listen, l can't even remember. On my birthday, l wandered into the ''over 30'' room...

...for a joke, sort of. And he was there. And we started chatting.

**Christina**

About what?

**Kathleen**

Books and music, how much we both love New York....

Harmless, harmless. Meaningless. Bouquets of sharpened pencils.

**Christina**

Excuse me?

**Kathleen**

Forget it. We don't talk about anything personal, so l don't know his name...

...or what he does or where he lives exactly......so it'll be easy for me to stop

seeing him, because l'm not.

**Christina**

God. He could be the next person to walk into the store.

**Kathleen**

l know.

**Christina**

He could be... ...George.

**George**

Morning.

**Christina**

Are you online?

**George**

As far as l'm concerned...

...the lnternet is just another way of being rejected by a woman.

**Kathleen**

Good morning, Birdie.

**Birdie**

What are you girls talking about?

**Christina**

Cybersex.

**Birdie**

l tried to have cybersex once,

but l kept getting a busy signal.

**Christina**

l know.

**Birdie**

l know. l was really depressed one Saturday night about 9:00--

Time to open up.

**Kathleen**

Jessica and Maya, how are you today?

**Customer**

-Want to say hi to Kathleen?

**Kid**

-Hi, Kathleen.

**Joe**

Construction's going well. We should open on time.

Although Kevin and l are both a little concerned...

...about the neighborhood response.

This fabric on the couch, what is it? Does it have a name?

**Nelson**

Money.lts name is money.

**Joe**

Gillian selected it.

**Nelson**

Good guess.

**Schuyler**

Your father's getting married again.

**Joe**

Really? -Congratulations.

**Nelson**

-Thank you.

**Joe**

Why?

**Nelson**

Who knows?

**Joe**

Love?

**Nelson**

Possible.

**Schuyler**

l think you're a damn fool.

**Nelson**

Pops, Matthew is four years old, okay? lt'd be nice for him if he knew

his parents were married.

**Joe**

Listen, l have a sad announcement to make.

City Books... ...on 23rd Street? lt's going under.

**Nelson**

Another independent bites the dust.

**Schuyler**

On to the next!

**Joe**

Going to buy out their entire inventory of architecture...

...and New York history for the new store.

**Nelson**

How much, son? How much you paying?

**Joe**

Whatever it costs, it won't be as much......as that exquisitely uncomfortable

mohair episode there. Which is now all over my suit.

**Nelson**

Here you go.

**Joe**

We're also going to have a section......dedicated just to writers

who've lived on the West Side.

**Schuyler**

As a sop to the neighborhood.

**Nelson**

Perfect. Keep those West Side

Liberal nuts, pseudo-intellectual--

**Joe**

Readers, Dad. They're called readers.

**Nelson**

Don't romanticize them.

lt'll keep them......from jumping down your throat.

**Schuyler**

What's the competition?

**Joe**

One mystery store, Sleuth, at 78th and Amsterdam...

...and a children's bookstore, Shop Around The Corner.

Been there forever.

**Schuyler**

Cecilia's store.

**Joe**

Who's that?

**Schuyler**

Cecilia Kelly. Lovely woman. l think we might have had a date once.

Or maybe we just exchanged letters.

**Joe**

You wrote her letters?

**Schuyler**

Mail. lt was called mail.

**Nelson**

Stamps, envelopes--

**Joe**

You know, l've heard of it.

**Schuyler**

Cecilia had beautiful penmanship. She was too young for me...

...but she was......enchanting.

**Joe**

Enchanting?

**Schuyler**

Her daughter owns it now.

**Nelson**

Too bad for her.

**Man**

Excuse me, Mr. Fox.

**Joe**

My father is getting married again. For 5 years, he's been living

with a woman named Gillian......who studied decorating at Caesar's Palace.

**Joe**

ls it porcelain?

**Nelson**

Rubber.

**Kathleen**

Once I read a story about a butterfly in the subway, and today...

...I saw one. It got on at 42nd......and off at 59th...

...where I assume it went to Bloomingdale's......to buy a hat that will

turn out to be a mistake. As almost all hats are.

**Joe**

Listen to this: Every night a truck pulls up to my neighborhood bagel place...

...and pumps about a ton of flour into underground tanks. Then the air is filled...

...with white dust which never seems to land. Why is that?

**Kathleen**

Confession: I have read Pride and Prejudice about 200 times. I get lost in the language.

Words like...... " thither. ""Mischance. " "Felicity. "I'm always in agony over whether

Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy......are really going to get together.

Read it. I know you'll love it.

**Joe**

The whole purpose of places like Starbucks......is for people with no

decision-making ability whatsoever......to make six decisions

just to buy one cup of coffee. Short, tall,lite, dark......caf, decaf......low-fat, nonfat......et cetera.So people who don't know what the hell they're doing...

...or who on earth they are can, for only $ 2.95...

...get not just a cup of coffee......but an absolutely

defining sense of self. Tall. Decaf. Cappuccino.

**Customer**

Tall decaf cappuccino.

**George**

Bummer. A Fox Books Superstore.

**Christina**

Quell nightmare.

**Kathleen**

lt has nothing to do with us.lt's big......impersonal......overstocked and full of ignorant salespeople.

**George**

But they discount.

**Kathleen**

But they don't provide any service. We do.

So really......it's a good development.

You know how in the flower district there are all those flower shops...

...so you can find whatever you want? Well......this is going to be

the book district. lf they don't have it, we do.

**Birdie**

And vice versa.

**Kathleen**

Absolutely.

**Frank**

When you are finished with Fox Books......The Shop Around The Corner

is going to be responsible......for reversing the entire course of the lndustrial Revolution.

**Kathleen**

Well, now, that is so sweet. Thank you. That is so sweet.

Although l--

**Frank**

What?

**Kathleen**

Wait a minute. What is that doing here?

**Frank**

Oh, my gosh......this is amazing. Listen.

The Olympia Report Deluxe Electric. Report.

As in gunshot.

**Kathleen**

-That sound is familiar.

**Frank**

-Listen to this.

**Kathleen**

What, that whirring?

**Frank**

The gentle, soothing lullaby......of a piece of machinery so perfect--

**Kathleen**

l know where l've heard that before.

**Frank**

l needed a **backup**.

**Kathleen**

Don't you have another one of these at your apartment?

**Frank**

-l might!

**Kathleen**

-That you wrote a column about?

**Frank**

Who cares? What were you going to say?

**Kathleen**

-When?

**Frank**

-Before.

**Kathleen**

Nothing.

**Frank**

Come on.

**Kathleen**

l'm just wondering. l'm wondering about my work. l mean, what is it that l do, exactly?

All l really do is—

**Frank**

All you really do......is this incredibly noble thing.

**Kathleen**

l don't know. Really, l'm just--

**Frank**

You are a lone reed. You are a lone......reed......standing......tall......waving boldly...

...in the corrupt sands......of commerce.

**Kathleen**

l am a lone reed. l am a lone reed.

Sometimes I wonder about my life. I lead a small life. Well, valuable, but small.

And sometimes I wonder......do I do it because I like it? Or because I haven't been brave?

So much of what I see reminds me of something I read in a book......when, shouldn't it be

the other way around? I don't really want an answer. I just want to send this

cosmic question out into the void. So......good night, dear void.

**Joe**

l know you! l know you. Hello, Annabel, little girl.

How are you? And you. Matthew, how are you?

**Matthew**

Good.

**Joe**

Ready to say hello to New Jersey?

Hello, New Jersey!

**Gillian**

Don't l get a ''hello''?

**Joe**

Hello, Gillian.

**Gillian**

Kiss me. l'm going to be your wicked stepmother.

**Joe**

There you go. Hello. And who is this?

**Gillian**

Nanny Maureen. l brought her in case you couldn't handle the kids.

**Annabel**

Maureen's getting a divorce.

**Joe**

l'm sorry to hear that.

**Maureen**

lt's my own fault. Never marry a man who lies.

**Joe**

That is so wise. Yes. Annabel, remember that.

**Annabel**

She taught Matt how to spell his name.

**Joe**

Really? -Let's hear it.

**Matthew**

-F-O-X.

**Joe**

Excellent.Excellent. l've got this covered.

You can have the day off. And you must be late for something.

Volunteering, rolling bandages......for Bosnian refugees.

**Gillian**

l am. l'm having my eggs harvested.

**Joe**

And getting those eggs harvested. Don't worry about a thing. See you later.

**Matthew**

Bye, Mom.

**Joe**

All right, you guys, are you ready to go out on the boat?

**Children**

No

**Joe**

What happened to you? What happened?

**Annabel**

-How are the fish?

**Joe**

-They're very well. Very happy.

**Annabel**

Are they?

**Joe**

You guys want to go to a movie?

**Annabel**

There's nothing good playing. Look, the storybook lady.

**Joe**

Are we at the right time? Yeah, let's go.

**Kathleen**

''That it was l and l alone......who had the idea for the great

and daring mouse plot. We all have our moments of brilliance and glory...

...and this was mine. 'Why don't we,' l said......'slip it into one of

Mrs. Pratchett's jars of sweets? And then......when she puts her dirty hand in

to grab a handful......she will grab a stinky, dead mouse instead.'

The other four stared at me in wonder. Then, as the sheer genius

of the plot began to sink in......they all started grinning.

They slapped me on the back.They cheered me.They danced around the classroom.

'We will do it today!' they cried.'We'll do it on the way home. You had the idea,' they said to me.'So you can be the one who puts the mouse in the jar.' ''

**George**

Who belongs to this fish?

**Joe**

That's mine. Could you give me a hand with these used books?

**Kathleen**

And this is her best friend Tacy......whose real name is Anastasia.

And the next book, Betsy and Tacy become friends with Tib......whose real name, l am sorry

to tell you, is Thelma.

**George**

The illustrations are hand-tipped.

**Joe**

And that's why it costs so much?

**George**

No, that's why it's worth so much.

**Joe**

l'll think about it.

**Kathleen**

That's a lot for your dad to buy at one time.

**Annabel**

My dad gets me all the books l want.

**Kathleen**

That's very nice of him.

**Annabel**

That's not my dad. That's my nephew.

**Kathleen**

l don't really think that he could be your nephew.

**Joe**

lt's true. Annabel is my aunt. lsn't that right, Aunt Annabel?

**Annabel**

And Matt is his--

**Kathleen**

Wait, wait, let me guess. Are you his uncle?

**Matthew**

No.

**Kathleen**

His grandfather? His great-grandfather?

**Matthew**

l'm his brother.

**Joe**

Matt is my father's son. Annabel is my grandfather's daughter. We are...

...an American family.

**Kathleen**

Here you go, young lady.

**Annabel**

What's that?

**Kathleen**

That's a handkerchief. Do children not even know what handkerchiefs are?

A handkerchief is a Kleenex you don't throw away. You see? My mother embroidered this for me.

My initials and a daisy, because daisies are my favorite flower.

**Joe**

May l ask who you are?

**Kathleen**

Kathleen Kelly. l own this store.And you are?

**Joe**

Joe. Just call me Joe. We'll take these books.

**George**

You're going to come back, aren't you?

**Joe**

Of course.

**George**

See? That is why we won't go under. Our customers are loyal.

**Kathleen**

They're opening a Fox Books around the corner.

**Annabel**

Fox Books! -My daddy—

**Joe**

-Likes to buy discount. Don't tell anybody.

lt's nothing to be proud of.

**Matthew**

F-O-X.

**Kathleen**

That's amazing. You can spell fox. Can you spell dog?

**Matthew**

F-O-X.

**Joe**

Look at this dinosaur book.lt's a pop-up dinosaur book. Wouldn't you like to have

a dinosaur book like that? Wouldn't you like to read that? Sit here and read Matt the book

until l take care of things. Whatever you do, just don't listen to anything l say. Thank you.

We'll take that pop-up book as well. The dinosaur one.

**Kathleen**

The world is not driven by discounts, believe me.l have been in business forever.l started helping my mother after school here when l was six......and l used to watch her. lt wasn't that she was just selling books. lt was that she was......helping people become whoever

they were going to turn out to be. When you read a book as a child,it becomes part of your identity......in a way that no other reading in your whole life does. And l have gotten carried away.

**Joe**

Yeah, you have. You've made me feel...Enchanting. Your mother was enchanting.

**Kathleen**

Yes, she was.

**George**

How will you pay for this?

**Joe**

Cash.

**Kathleen**

How did you know that?

**Joe**

From the photograph. That you in the photograph? What are you doing?

**Kathleen**

Twirling. My mother and l used to twirl. Anyway, she left the store to me,

and l'll leave it to my daughter.

**George**

-$ 7 3, please.

**Joe**

-How much?

**George**

$ 7 3.

**Joe**

How old is your daughter now?

**Kathleen**

l don't have a daughter.l'm not married. But eventually....So the big bad Fox Books

can just go to hell. Here you go.

**Joe**

Thank you. We're ready? This is nice.

**Kathleen**

Goodbye, Annabel. Goodbye, Matt. Matt, you know what?

l have to ask you another thing. Can you spell cat?

**Matthew**

F-O-X.

**Joe**

F-O-X. Cat. Thanks. Good thing it wasn't the fish. Take care!

No protests. No demonstrations. The neighborhood loves us.

**Nelson**

They're wondering where we've been all these years. Wondering how they did without us.

**Schuyler**

lt's a hit!

**Nelson**

How's the children's department?

**Joe**

lt's early yet. School's not out. And there is that children's store

nearby. Shop Around The Corner.

**Schuyler**

Cecilia's store. Cecilia Kelly.l think we might have had a date once.

**Joe**

Her daughter owns it now.

**Nelson**

We'll crush it!

**Schuyler**

She was enchanting.

**Birdie**

They've been open 6 days. And we did......$ 1200 less than the same week......last year.

**Kathleen**

That could be a fluke, right?

**Birdie**

Or not.

**Kathleen**

Listen, their store is new. lt's a novelty.lt'll all shake out. Meanwhile,

l'm putting up more twinkle lights.

**Birdie**

That's a fine idea.

**Christina**

What if we have to fold? l'm never going to find another part-time job.

Then l won't be able to pay my rent, and l'll have to move.To Brooklyn.

**George**

The joy of rent control. Six rooms......$450 a month.

**Christina**

We know. You've told us a million times.l can't believe you're bringing

this up at a time like this. lt's like those people who brag because they're tall.

**Kathleen**

Guys, we are not going to fold.

**George**

This place is a tomb. l'm going to the nut shop, where's it's fun.

**Kathleen**

Miranda!

**Miranda**

Kathleen, are you surviving?

**Kathleen**

We're excited about your new book. When should we schedule a signing?

**Miranda**

lt's being published in January. Will you be in business in January? l'm so worried.

**Kathleen**

We're doing great.Aren't we?

**Birdie**

No difference whatsoever!

**Christina**

Great.

**Miranda**

Thank God. You can count on me for anything. Support. Rallies. Picket lines.

We can get the Times to write something. Or that nut from the Observer.

**Kathleen**

What nut in the Observer ?

**Miranda**

Frank something-or-other. The one who's so in love with his typewriter. This is just the sort of thing that would outrage him.

**Frank**

A nut? She called me a nut?

**Kathleen**

That's not the point. She thinks my store is in trouble. Why would she say that?

There's enough business for us all.

**Frank**

Yes, there is. No question.

**Kathleen**

We are fine. You're more than fine.

**Frank**

You're absolutely fine. We are fine.

**Woman**

How are you?

**Kathleen**

Fine.

**Woman**

Come in. Vince will be so happy to see you.

**Frank**

Congratulations. Guess who l saw on the subway today? William Spungeon.

**Man**

l don't know him.

**Frank**

This is amazing. He said:

**Patricia**

''You should go to a retreat. You really should go to a retreat.''

Honey, will you get me another drink? l'm out. ''Because it's a

really great place......to calm down.'' He said that to me. lsn't that hilarious?

**Man**

Champagne, please.

**Joe**

Stoli on the rocks. But a fresh glass, please.

**Kathleen**

White wine, please.

**Waiter**

Here you go.

**Kathleen**

Remember me from the bookstore?

**Joe**

Of course l remember you.

**Kathleen**

How's your aunt?

**Joe**

She's great. Thanks. l'd better go deliver this.l have a very thirsty date.

She's part camel.

**Kathleen**

Joe, right? Joe, isn't it?

**Joe**

And you are Kathleen.

**Kathleen**

Kathleen Kelly.

**Man**

Two white wine, please.

l cannot believe that you were speaking to Joe Fox.

**Kathleen**

Joe Fox? As in--

**Man**

As in, he's going to take over everything.

**Kathleen**

Fox? Your last name is Fox.

**Joe**

F-O-X.

**Kathleen**

God......l didn't realize-- l didn't know--

**Joe**

Who you were with? l didn't know who you were with.

**Kathleen**

Excuse me?

**Joe**

lt's from The Godfather. Sorry, it's from The Godfather. lt's when......the movie producer realizes that Tom Hagen......is an emissary of Vito Corleone. Just before the horse's head

ends up in the bed......with all the bloody sheets. Wakes up and it's-- Never mind.

**Kathleen**

You were spying on me, weren't you? You probably rented those children.

**Joe**

Why would l spy on you?

**Kathleen**

Because l am your competition, which you know perfectly well...

...or you wouldn't have put up the sign:''Just around the corner.''

**Joe**

The entrance to our store is around the corner.

There's no other way to say it. lt's not the name of our store.

lt's where it is. And you do not own......the phrase ''around the corner.''

**Kathleen**

What is that? What are you doing? What is that? What are you doing? You're taking all the caviar?

That caviar is a garnish.

**Joe**

Look......the reason l came into your store is because......l was spending the day with

Annabel and Matt. l was buying them presents. l'm the type of guy who buys his way...

...into the hearts of children who are relatives.There was only one place to find a children's book in the neighborhood. That will not always be the case.And it was yours. And it is......a charming little bookstore. You probably sell, what, $350,000 worth of books in a year?

**Kathleen**

How did you know that?

**Joe**

l'm in the book business.

**Kathleen**

l am in the book business.

**Joe**

l see. And we are the Price Club. Only instead of a ten-gallon vat

of olive oil for $3.99......that won't even fit under your kitchen cabinet, we sell cheap books.

Me, a spy? Absolutely. l have in my possession......the super-duper, secret printout

of the sales figures......of a bookstore so inconsequential, yet full of its own virtue......that l was compelled to rush over......for fear that it will put me out of business.

What? What?

**Frank**

How you doing? Frank Navasky.

**Joe**

Joe Fox.

**Frank**

The inventor of the superstore,of course. The enemy of the mid-list novel.

The destroyer of City Books.Tell me something. How do you sleep at night?

**Patricia**

l use a wonderful......over-the-counter drug.''Ultra-dorm.''Don't take the whole thing.

Just half. You'll wake up without even the tiniest hangover. You're Frank Navasky, aren't you?

Your last piece in the Observer......about Anthony Powell was brilliant. Brilliant. Yes. l'm Patricia Eden. Eden Books. This man is the greatest

living expert......on Julius and Ethel Rosenberg.

**Frank**

You really liked--

**Joe**

This is Kathleen Kelly.

**Frank**

My piece? l'm sorry. l just-- You know? l'm flattered.

You write these things. You think somebody'll mention them. The phone doesn't ring for a week

and you think: ''l'm a fraud. l'm a failure or something.''

**Patricia**

You know what fascinated me......about Julius and Ethel Rosenberg? ls how old they looked

when they were really just......our age. You know? l'm so happy to have

finally met you. We'll talk. Have you ever thought about doing a book?

**Frank**

lt's crossed my mind, something relevant for today......like the Luddite movement in

1 9th century England. We should talk. Call me.

**Joe**

Have you ever had a caviar garnish?

**Patricia**

l had no idea Frank Navasky......was going to be so down-to-earth. You know, you read his stuff......you think he's going to be so obscure and abstruse. He's always talking about Heidegger......and Foucault. And l have no idea what any of it's about really. Where you going?

**Joe**

l'm not tired. l'm not.

Do you ever feel you've become the worst version of yourself? That a Pandora's box......of all the secret, hateful parts, your arrogance, your spite......your condescension......has sprung open? Someone provokes you, and instead of just smiling......and moving on, you zing them?

"Hello, it's Mr. Nasty. " I'm sure you have no idea what I'm talking about.

**Kathleen**

No, I know what you mean, and I'm completely jealous. What happens to me when I'm provoked

is I get tongue-tied. My mind goes......blank. Then I toss and turn all night......trying to figure out what I should have said. What should I have said,for example, to the......bottom-dweller......who recently belittled my existence? Nothing. Nothing. Even now. Even now......days later......I can't figure it out.

**Joe**

Wouldn't it be wonderful if I could pass all my zingers to you? Then I'd never behave badly and

you could behave badly all the time. And we'd both be happy. On the other hand,I must warn you...

...that when you finally say the thing you mean to say......the moment you mean to say it,

remorse inevitably follows. Do you think we should meet?

**Kathleen**

Meet? Oh, my God.

**Cashier**

$ 7 2.2 7. This is a cash-only line. Cash only.

**Kathleen**

Oh, my God.l just have a credit card. l'm sorry. ls that okay?

**Customer**

No, it's not okay.There's a sign.

**Kathleen**

l'm sorry. l'm very sorry. l never do this. But l ask you to make an exception in this one case.

**Customer**

You have no cash?

She has no cash.

No, she has no cash.

Get on another line, lady.

**Kathleen**

l have a dollar. That's all l have. l have a dollar. One dollar. ls there anything you can do?

**Joe**

Do you need some money?

**Kathleen**

No, l do not need any money. Thank you very much.

**Customer**

Get in another line.

**Joe**

Rose. That is a great name. Rose. This is Kathleen. l'm Joe. And--

**Customer**

And l'm Henry.

**Joe**

Henry, how are you? Happy holidays. This is a credit card machine. Happy Thanksgiving.

lt's your turn to say ''Happy Thanksgiving'' back.

**Cashier**

Happy Thanksgiving back.

**Joe**

Knock, knock.

**Cashier**

Who's there?

**Joe**

Orange.

**Cashier**

Orange who?

**Joe**

Orange you going to give us a break......by zipping this credit card

through the credit card machine? Come on. You can do it. Zip, zip.

There you go. Rose? That is a great name. So you're fine.

**Kathleen**

Fine.

**Joe**

Happy Thanksgiving. Henry, happy Thanksgiving.

**Kathleen**

l'm so sorry. Really, l apologize. -From the bottom of my heart.

**Customer**

-So sign there!

**Kathleen**

l'd like to get home.

**Cashier**

You have my pen.

**Annabel’song**

The sun'll come out tomorrow Bet your bottom dollar that Tomorrow there'll be sun Just thinking about tomorrow Clears away the cobwebs and the sorrow Till there's none When I'm stuck with a day that's gray And lonely I just stick out my chin and grin And say: Oh, the sun'll come out tomorrow So you got to hang on till tomorrow Come what may Tomorrow, tomorrow I love you, tomorrow You're always a day Away

**Nelson**

Wonderful.

**Annabel**

Thank you.

**Kathleen & Christina ‘s song**

The violins Sing with joyful ring The violins Sing with joyful ring The clarinet, the clarinet

Goes doodly, doodly, doodly, doodly det The horn, the horn It sounds....The horn sounds so forlorn l got it. "

**Kathleen**

It's coming on Christmas. They're cutting down trees. " Do you know that Joni Mitchell song?

"I wish I had a river I could skate away on. " Such a sad song. And not really about Christmas at all.I was thinking about it tonight......as I was decorating my Christmas tree. Unwrapping funky ornaments made of Popsicle sticks......and missing my mother so much I almost couldn't breathe. I always miss my mother at Christmas. But somehow it is worse this year......since I need some advice from her. I need her to make me cocoa. And tell me that everything

going badly in my life......will sort itself out.

**Joe**

What kind of advice do you need? Can I help?

**Kathleen**

Can you help? I wish you could help. I wish....

**Joe**

I had a gut feeling you would be online now. I can give you advice.I'm great at advice.

**Kathleen**

If only you could help.

**Joe**

Is it about love? Please say no.

**Kathleen**

No. How cute is that? My business is in trouble.

**Joe**

Well. I'm a brilliant businessman. It's what I do best. What's your business?

**Kathleen**

No specifics. Remember?

**Joe**

Well. Minus specifics, it's hard to help......except to say: ''Go to the mattresses.''

**Kathleen**

''Except to say, 'Go to the mattre--' '' What? What does that mean?

**Joe**

It's from The Godfather. It means you have to go to war.

**Kathleen**

What is it with men and The Godfather ?

**Joe**

Hello? Oh, come on. Hello? Well.... Well, what can l....Michael-- The Godfather.....is the

1. The Godfather is the sum of all wisdom. The Godfather is the answer to any question.

What should I pack for my summer vacation? "Leave the gun. Take the cannoli. "What day of the week is it? ''Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Wednesday.'' The answer to your question......is " Go to the mattresses. " You're at war."It's not personal, it's business. "It's not personal. It's business. Recite that to yourself......every time you feel ou're losing your nerve.I know you worry about being brave. Don't.This is your chance. Fight. Fight to the death! lt's not personal.

lt's business. Just fight! Fight, fight, fight!

**Kathleen**

l've been thinking.

**Frank**

What?

**Kathleen**

l've decided to go to the mattresses. Do you think it would be gigantic conflict of interest...

...if you wrote something about the store?

**Frank**

Yes.

**Kathleen**

Yes?

**Frank**

No.

**Kathleen**

So you'll do it?

**Frank**

Yes.

**Kathleen**

Do you know what it is to go to the mattresses?

**Frank**

From The Godfather.

**Georgr**

Good morning, Shop Around The Corner. George speaking, may l help you?

**Christina**

The Channel Two truck just pulled up.

**Kathleen**

ln a second.

**Birdie**

Everyone's read the article. ''And so, you do not have to look to any of the usual places...

...where good and evil face off......the places Herodotus called 'the happy land......of absolutes.' We have the perfect example here on the West Side......where the cold cash cow Fox Books......threatens survival of a temple......to one of the twentieth century's most profound truths: You are what you read.''

**Frank**

l believe that.

**Birdie**

''Save The Shop Around The Corner......and you will save your soul.'' Frank, that's charming.

**Frank**

You think it's a little over the top?

**George**

That was The Village Voice.

l told them to come over whenever.

**Kathleen**

Okay. All right. ''Float like a butterfly. Sting like a bee.''

**Demonstrator**

One, two, three, four! We don't want your superstore! Five, six, seven, eight!

Go away and close the gate! One, two, three, four!

**Joe**

''We don't want this superstore.'' -ls that what they're saying?

-Catchy, yeah. Well, who wrote that?

**Schuyler**

Annoying. Pissing me off, actually.

**Kathleen**

Do you want the West Side......to become one big gigantic strip mall?

Do you want to get off the subway at 72nd and Broadway......and not even know

you're in New York City? Can we save The Shop Around The Corner?

**TV**

We're here......in front of The Shop Around The Corner......the famous West Side

children's bookstore......now on the verge of having to close its doors......because the big bad wolf,Fox Books......has opened only a few hundred feet away......wooing customers with its sharp

discounts and designer coffee.

**Kathleen**

They have to have discounts and lattes......because most of the people who work there have never read a book.

**Joe**

She's not as nice as she seems on television.

**Kevin**

You met her?

**Joe**

Boy, she's a pill.

**Kevin**

She probably ain't as fine as she look on TV, either?

**Joe**

No, no. She's beautiful. But......she's a pill.

**Kevin**

You don't feel bad......about basically sending her ass......back to the projects

with food stamps? Broke, single, white lady.

**Joe**

lt's not personal.

**Kevin**

lt's business.

**Joe**

Here's a good-looking guy. I sell cheap books.I do. So sue me.

**TV**

And that, in a nutshell......is the Fox Books philosophy.

**Kevin**

That's what you said? Discount them and sell them.

**Joe**

Yeah, that's not all l said! l can't believe those bastards. l said we were great! l said you could read for hours and no one will bother you.l said we had 1 50,000 titles.l showed them the New York City section. l said we were a goddamn piazza. A place in the city where people could mingle and mix.

**Kevin**

Piazza?

**Joe**

l was eloquent! Shit! lt's inevitable, l guess. People want to turn her into Joan of Arc.

**Kevin**

And you into Attila the Hun.

**Joe**

Not me personally, but the company, yeah.

**Kathleen**

I have met Joe Fox. And I've heard him compare his store to a Price Club......and the books in it to cans of olive oil.

**TV**

The bookstore, tell us about it.

**Frank**

The Shop Around The Corner......has a kind of Jeffersonian purity to it......that the city needs in order to maintain historical integrity.

**TV**

Jeffersonian purity. That was nice. Thank you. That sounded good.

**Frank**

Are you taping this?

**Kathleen**

Yeah, l'm taping this.

**Frank**

Technologically speaking, the world's out of hand.I mean, take the VCR. The whole idea behind the VCR is that it makes it possible......for you to tape what's on television......when you leave the house. Of course, the whole idea behind leaving the house......is so you can miss......what's on television.

**Kathleen**

-l've heard you say that before.

**Frank**

-She hasn't.

**TV**

Absolutely. Right. She gets it. Radio.There's a medium I can get behind.

**Kathleen**

Are you going to start collecting radios-- We're on television.

You're good at it. She's coming on to you.

**Frank**

No. They do this on television. The Shop Around The Corner......it's a true New York treasure.

**TV**

As are you. Honestly, I'd love to have you back.

**Kathleen**

ls she sweating? She's touching herself. And she's sweating.

**Frank**

Anytime. Okay, we can turn it off.

**Kathleen**

Oh, my God.

**Frank**

I just want to say that yours is the only show I do watch.

**Kathleen**

Oh, my God.

**Frank**

No! l was being polite.

**TV**

Thank you, Frank Navasky.

**Frank**

Thank you're...? I'm sorry.

**Kathleen**

Thank you're?

**TV**

Thank you're, ladies and gentlemen.

**Frank**

l slobbered all over her, didn't l? But l think that there's something there.

**George**

So first, l got to go get some eucalyptus candles......because it makes......my apartment smell mossy.Then l'm going to the market.And l can't decide whether to get......sausage for the meat sauce, or chopped meat.

**Birdie**

Spare us.

**George**

You know what? Clam sauce. Because this is a big date.

**Kathleen**

Don't tell me. Not the slightest difference? How can that be? All this publicity and not one bit of difference? Birdie, what am l going to do? What would Mom have done?

**Birdie**

Well, let's ask her. Cecilia, what should we do? She has no idea. But she thinks

the window display is lovely. Good night, dearie.

**Kathleen**

I need help. Do you still want to meet me?

**Joe**

I would love to meet you. Where? When?

**Kevin**

So l suppose she's carrying a copy......of a book with a flower in it? Not really? She could be a real dog, man.

**Joe**

l'm only staying 1 0 minutes. l'll say hello, have a cup of coffee and then split.That's what l'm going to do. Hope she doesn't have a squeaky voice like the mice in Cinderella.l hate that.Why am l doing this? Why am l compelled to meet her?! Why?

**Kevin**

Relax. You're just taking it to the next level.l always do that.l always take a relationship to the next level.lf that works out, l take it to the next level after that. Till l finally reach that level where it becomes absolutely necessary......for me to leave.

**Joe**

l'm not going to stay that long anyway.l already said that, didn't l?

Well, okay. Cafe Lalo. This is it. Eight o'clock.Boy, we got here fast, didn't we? This woman is the most adorable creature l've ever been in contact with. And if she turns out even to be as good-looking as a mailbox......l'd be crazy not to turn my life upside-down and marry her.

**Kevin**

She could be a real dog. But good luck.

**Joe**

Would you go and look for me? Yes, go look through the window and check her out. Please?

**Kevin**

All right. -You're pathetic, man.

**Joe**

-l know.

**Kevin**

All right. l'll see what l see.

**Joe**

You see her?

**Kevin**

Wait, yeah. l see a very beautiful girl. She's fine.

**Joe**

-l knew it.

**Kevin**

-She's gorgeous.

**Joe**

l knew she would be.l knew it.

**Kevin**

But no book.All right. Okay, wait. Wait a minute. There's a book with a flower. So this got to be her.

**Joe**

And what does she look like?

**Kevin**

Can't see her. Waiter's blocking.

**Joe**

Damn it!

**Kevin**

Hold on. He's moving.

**Joe**

Can you see her? Can you see her?

**Kevin**

Yeah.

**Joe**

And?

**Kevin**

She's very pretty.

**Joe**

She is! l knew she would be! She had to be! She had to be!

**Kevin**

You know what? She look--l mean, she almost has the same coloring as......that Kathleen Kelly person.

**Joe**

Kathleen Kelly of the little bookstore?

**Kevin**

Why not? You said you thought she was attractive.

**Joe**

Absolutely, yes. Why not? Who cares about Kathleen Kelly?

**Kevin**

Well, if you don't like Kathleen Kelly......l can tell you right now......you ain't going to like this girl.

**Joe**

Why not?

**Kevin**

Because it is Kathleen Kelly. So what are you going to do?

**Joe**

Nothing.

**Kevin**

You're going to let her wait all night?

**Joe**

Yes. That's exactly what l'm going to do. Good night, Kevin. l'll see you in the morning.

**Customer**

Do you mind if l borrow this chair?

**Kathleen**

Yes, l mind. Sorry. l'm expecting someone.

**Waiter**

Would you like another tea?

**Kathleen**

Yes. Thank you.

**Joe**

This is a coincidence. Would you mind if l sat down?

**Kathleen**

Yes, l would, actually. l'm expecting someone.

**Joe**

Pride and Prejudice.

**Kathleen**

Do you mind?

**Joe**

l bet you read that book every year.l bet you just love that......Mr. Darcy.Your sentimental heart beats wildly at the thought he and......you know, whatever her name is......are truly, honestly going to end up together.

**Waiter**

Can l get you something?

**Kathleen**

No. He's not staying.

**Joe**

Mochaccino decaf, nonfat.

**Kathleen**

No. You are not staying!

**Joe**

l'll stay until your friend gets here.ls he late?

**Kathleen**

The heroine of Pride and Prejudice is Elizabeth Bennet. She is a great and complex character.

Not that you would know.

**Joe**

As a matter of fact, l've read it.

**Kathleen**

Good for you.

**Joe**

l think you'd discover a lot of things if you really knew me.

**Kathleen**

lf l really knew you,l know what l'd find. lnstead of a brain, a cash register. lnstead of a heart, a bottom line.

**Joe**

What?

**Kathleen**

l just had a breakthrough.

**Joe**

What is it?

**Kathleen**

l have you to thank for it. For the first time in my life......when confronted with a horrible,

insensitive person......l knew exactly what l wanted to say, and l said it.

**Joe**

You have a gift for it. That was a perfect blend of poetry and meanness.

**Kathleen**

Meanness? Let me tell you something about meanness.

**Joe**

Don't misunderstand me. l'm trying to pay you a compliment.

**Kathleen**

Why are you touching that? What are you doing?

**Joe**

ls this a red rose? No.lt's a crimson rose. Something you read in a book,no doubt.

**Kathleen**

lt's funny to you, isn't it? Everything is a joke to you. Please leave. Please, please leave. l beg you. Thank you.

**Joe**

You know what that hanky reminds me of? First day l met you.

**Kathleen**

First day you lied to me.

**Joe**

-l didn't lie to you.

**Kathleen**

-You did too.

**Joe**

-No, l didn't. l did not.

**Kathleen**

-Yes, you did. Did too.You did too.l thought all that Fox stuff was so charming. F-O-X.

**Joe**

Well, l didn't lie about it.

**Kathleen**

''Joe''? ''Just call me Joe.''

**Joe**

Sure.

**Kathleen**

As if you were a stupid 22-year-old girl with no last name.''Hi, l'm Kimberly.'' ''Hi, l'm Janice.''Don't they know you're supposed to have a last name? lt's like they're an entire generation of cocktail waitresses.

**Joe**

Look.l am not a 22-year-old cocktail waitress.

**Kathleen**

That is not what l meant.

**Joe**

When l said the thing about the cans of olive oil......that's not what l meant.

**Kathleen**

You poor, sad multimillionaire. l feel so sorry for you.

**Joe**

Take a wild guess that's not him either? So who is he, l wonder? Certainly not, l gather,

the world's greatest living expert... ...on Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. But somebody else entirely different.Will you be mean to him too?

**Kathleen**

No, l will not. The man who is coming here tonight is completely unlike you.The man who is coming here tonight is kind and funny. He's got the most wonderful sense of humor.

**Joe**

But......he's not here.

**Kathleen**

lf he's not here, he has a reason......because there is not a cruel or careless bone in his body.

l wouldn't expect you to understand anybody like that.You with your theme park, multilevel......homogenize-the-world mochaccinoland. You've deluded yourself into thinking...

...you're some sort of benefactor bringing books to the masses.But no one will ever remember you,

Joe Fox. And maybe no one will remember me either.But plenty of people remember my mother.And they think she was fine......and they think her store was something special.You are nothing but a suit.

**Joe**

That's my cue. Good night.

**Patricia**

So then the agent asks for $ 600,000 and l said to her:''lf you think l'm even going

to talk to you......about paying that kind of advance for an author......whose last book is being used as trivets all over the whole world......you are completely crazy.''

**Joe**

She was insulting and provocative.The only thing pleasant about her......was the way her hair fell across her forehead.

**Kevin**

But underneath that disagreeable exterior......she may turn out to be a real--

**Joe**

A real bitch. Let's not talk about it. l'm going back to the office.

l'm sure you have work.

**Kevin**

Not really.This place is a well-oiled machine, my friend.

**Christina**

So? What happened?

**Kathleen**

He never came.

**Christina**

He stood you up.

**Kathleen**

l wouldn't characterize it that way.l think something happened.Something terrible and unexpected

that made it impossible for him to....What if he showed up,took one look at me and left?

**Christina**

Not possible.

**Kathleen**

Maybe there was a subway accident.

**Christina**

Absolutely.

**Kathleen**

A train got trapped underground with him inside.

**Christina**

And no phone.

**Kathleen**

And you know how those express trains create suction.

**Christina**

He got sucked onto the tracks.

**Kathleen**

The third rail.He's toast.

**George**

What happened?

**Kathleen**

He was unable to make it.

**George**

He stood you up?

**Kathleen**

Maybe......he had a car accident.Those cab drivers are maniacs.

**Christina**

They hit something and you slam into that plastic partition.

**Kathleen**

Or his elbows could be in splints, so he couldn't dial.

**Christina**

Or he could be unconscious.

**Kathleen**

ln a coma. Stuck in intensive care.With that heart monitor beeping.And, like....No phone.

What are you saying?

**George**

lt could be.He was arrested two blocks from the cafe.

**Christina**

ls there a picture? So that explains it.

**George**

He was in jail.

**Christina**

And there was a phone.

**George**

But he only got one call, so he had to call his lawyer.

**Christina**

You are so lucky.

**George**

You could be dead.

**Kathleen**

He couldn't possibly be the Rooftop Killer!

**Christina**

Remember when you thought Frank might be the Unabomber?

**Kathleen**

Well......that was different.

**Christina**

How long did you sit there all alone?

**Kathleen**

Not long. Joe Fox came in.l don't want to talk about it.Let's just get to work.There's got to be something to do. There's always something to do.

**George**

Look at this. He looks kind of cute.

**Birdie**

So? He was unavoidably detained. He stood you up?

**Kathleen**

I've been thinking about you. Last night I went to meet you, and you weren't there.I wish I knew why.I felt so foolish. As I waited, someone else showed up. A man who has made my professional life a misery. And an amazing thing happened. I was able, for the first time......to say the exact thing I wanted to say......at the exact moment I wanted to say it. And of course,afterwards I felt terrible......just as you said I would.I was cruel......and I'm never cruel. Though I can hardly believe what I said mattered to this man.To him, I am just a bug to be crushed.But what if it did? No matter what he's done to me......there is no excuse for my behavior. Anyway......I so wanted to talk to you.I hope you have a good reason for not being there last night. You don't seem like the kind of person who'd do something like that. The odd thing about this form of communication......is you're more likely to talk about nothing than something. But I just want to say......that all this nothing has meant more to me than so many...

...somethings. So, thanks.

**Computer**

Goodbye.

**Joe**

I am in...... Vancouver.I was stuck in a meeting......which I couldn't get out of......and...

...the electricity went out in the building. And......we were trapped......on the 38th floor, and......the telephone system blew too......amazingly enough.

Dear friend. I cannot tell you what happened last night. But I beg you from the bottom of my heart......to forgive me for not being there. For what happened. I feel terrible that you

found yourself in a situation......that caused you additional pain. But I'm absolutely sure...

...that whatever you said last night was provoked. Even deserved. Everyone says things they regret when they're worried or stressed. You were expecting to see someone you trusted...

...and met the enemy instead. The fault is mine. Someday I'll explain everything. Meanwhile...

...I'm still here. Talk to me.

**Christina**

Did he say anything about wanting to meet you again?

**Kathleen**

No, not really. Listen, it doesn't matter. We'll be like George Bernard Shaw and Mrs. Patrick Campbell. We'll write letters our whole lives.

**Birdie**

Thank you for the scones. They look lovely.

**Christina**

Birdie, where was this one taken?

**Birdie**

Seville.

**Kathleen**

When you fell madly in love?

**Birdie**

So, dearie, what have you decided to do?

**Kathleen**

Close. We're going to close.

**Christina**

Close.

**Birdie**

Closing the store......is the brave thing to do.

**Kathleen**

You are such a liar. But thank you.

**Birdie**

You are daring to imagine that you could have a different life.l know it doesn't feel like that.

You feel like a big fat failure now.But you're not. You are marching into the unknown, armed with......nothing. Have a sandwich.

**Kathleen**

Well, not nothing. l have a little money saved.

**Birdie**

lf you need more, ask me. l'm very rich. l bought lntel at six.l suppose you want me......to tell you who it was......l fell madly in love with. But l'm not going to tell.

**Christina**

Who was it? Come on, tell. That's so mean. But so romantic.

**Birdie**

lt wasn't meant to be.

**Kathleen**

Why not?

**Birdie**

He ran Spain.

**Christina**

Spain?

**Birdie**

The country. He ran it.lt was his job. And then he died.Just as well. Milk or lemon?

**Frank**

She fell in love with Generalissimo Franco.

**Kathleen**

Don't say that. We don't know that for sure.

**Frank**

Who else could it have been? lt was probably around 1960.

**Kathleen**

-Do you want some popcorn?

**Frank**

-l can't believe this. lt's not like he was something normal......like a socialist, or an anarchist.

**Kathleen**

lt happened in Spain. People do stupid things in foreign countries.

**Frank**

Absolutely. They buy leather jackets for much more than they're worth.But they don't fall in love with fascist dictators.

**Kathleen**

Birdie is a very special person to me. She is practically my surrogate mother.

**Frank**

She's out of her mind.

**Kathleen**

She is not.

**Frank**

l could never be with anyone......who doesn't take politics as seriously as l do.

**Kathleen**

Do you mind?

**Frank**

A hot dog is singing.You need quiet while a hot dog is singing?

**Kathleen**

l have something to tell you, Frank. l didn't vote.

**Frank**

What?

**Kathleen**

ln the last mayoral election......when Rudy Giuliani was running against Ruth Messinger.l went to get a manicure. And forgot to vote.

**Frank**

Since when do you get manicures?

**Kathleen**

l suppose you could never be with a woman who got manicures?

**Frank**

Never mind. lt's okay.l forgive you.

**Kathleen**

You forgive me? Excuse me, l'm sorry. Excuse me.

**Frank**

This has been a big week. You're closing the store.

**Kathleen**

No, it's not that. Really, it's not.

**Frank**

l know. That was terrible of me.

**Kathleen**

What was terrible?

**Frank**

Jumping all over you when l'm the one....God, l don't even know how to say this.

**Kathleen**

What is it? What?

**Frank**

You're a wonderful person, Kathleen.

**Kathleen**

So are you.

**Frank**

And l'm so honored that you'd want to be with me......because you would never be......with anyone......who wasn't truly worthy.

**Kathleen**

l feel exactly......the same way.

**Frank**

Don't say that.That makes it worse.

**Kathleen**

What? You don't love me. Me either.

**Frank**

You don't love me?

**Kathleen**

No.

**Frank**

But we're so right for each other.

**Kathleen**

l know. Well, is there someone else? That woman on television, Sidney-Ann.

**Frank**

Nothing has happened or anything, but....

**Kathleen**

ls she a Republican?

**Frank**

l can't help myself. What about you? ls there someone else?

**Kathleen**

No. No. But......but there is the dream of someone else.

**Customer**

Honey, grab a copy of The Trumpet of the Swan. This is a tragedy.

Are these chairs for sale?

**Kathleen**

Anything not nailed down.

Ten dollars, it's yours.

**Customer**

What are you going to do now?

**Kathleen**

l think l'll take some time. l'm almost looking forward to it.

**Customer**

Good luck to you.

l came here every Saturday when l was a little girl.l remember when your mother gave me Anne of Green Gables. ''Read it with a box of Kleenex,'' she said. That's what she told me.

**Customer**

Could someone help me?

**Kathleen**

She's looking down on you right now.

**Customer**

l'm sure she is.

Why don't we bomb Fox Books?

**Customer**

Do you have the ''shoe'' books?

**Employee**

The ''shoe'' books? Who's the author?

**Customer**

l don't know. My friend told me my daughter has to read the ''shoe'' books......so here l am.

**Kathleen**

Noel Streatfeild. Noel Streatfeild wrote Ballet Shoes and Skating Shoes......and Theatre Shoes...

...and Dancing Shoes and....l'd start with Ballet Shoes first, it's my favorite. Although Skating Shoes......is completely wonderful.But it's out of print.

**Employee**

Streatfeild. How do you spell that?

**Kathleen**

S-T-R-E-A-T-F-E-l-L-D.

**Customer**

Thank you.

**Patricia**

Kathleen Kelly. I swear it was like her name was in the air.

**Joe**

Just like that?

**Patricia**

Everyone was talking about her today. Kathleen Kelly and her ''situation.'' And l was thinking that she'd make a great children's book editor.

**Joe**

What makes you think that?

**Patricia**

Well......she knows everything.She has flawless taste. She's famous for it.Salesmen swear by her. lf she likes the book, it sells. Period.

**Joe**

So you're going to offer her a job?

**Patricia**

What else has she got to do?

**Joe**

Now that she's destitute.

**Patricia**

Thanks to you.

**Joe**

l don't see her working for you.

**Patricia**

Why not?

**Joe**

Because she lacks the killer instinct. She's never fired anybody. Look at that little shop of hers. Those people have been there forever. Till recently, when they all lost their jobs.

**Patricia**

Thanks to you. Hold the elevator!

**Charlie**

Mr. Fox.

**Joe**

Hello, Charlie.

**Patricia**

l love how you've forgotten......you've had any role in her current situation. lt's so obtuse.lt's so insensitive. Reminds me of someone. Who? Who does it remind me of? Me.

**Joe**

What is going on?

**Charlie**

Could be stuck.

**Joe**

What are you doing?

**Charlie**

l hope this thing doesn't plummet to the basement.

**Woman**

Can it do that?

**Joe**

lt cannot plummet to the basement. Hi, this is Joe Fox. Who's this? Juan? Juan, we are stuck in the elevator......between the sixth and seventh floor. There's four of us.

**Patricia**

lf you don't get your ass......up here in two shakes......and get us the hell out of here...!

**Joe**

Listen......call the super......and then 9-1 -1 .9-1 -1 .The fire department, that's right.Thank you very much.

**Charlie**

Everyone should jump in the air.

**Patricia**

What?

**Charlie**

We jump......the elevator thinks no one is here. And it opens.

**Joe**

One......two.......three, jump.

**Woman**

lf l ever get out of here......l'm going to start speaking to my momma. Wonder what she's doing

right this very minute?

**Charlie**

lf l ever get out of here......l'm marrying Orit.l love her.l should marry her.l don't know what's been stopping me.

**Patricia**

lf l ever get out of here,l'm having my eyes lasered.

**Joe**

lf l ever get out of here....

**Patricia**

Where are my Tic-Tacs? What?

**Joe**

I came home tonight.And got into the elevator to go to my apartment. An hour later I got out of the elevator......and Brinkley and I moved out.Suddenly everything had become clear.It's a long story......full of the personal details we avoid so carefully.Let me just say there was a man sitting in the elevator with me who knew exactly what he wanted and I found myself wishing I were as lucky as he.

**Kathleen**

People are always telling you that change is a good thing. But all they're really saying is that something you didn't want to happen at all has happened. My store is closing this week.I own a

store. Did I ever tell you that? It's a lovely store. And in a week it will be something really depressing like a Baby Gap. Soon we'll just be a memory. In fact, someone, some foolish person...

...will probably think it's a tribute to this city. The way it keeps changing on you. Or the way you can never count on it, or something. I know, because that's the sort of thing I'm always saying. But the truth is......I'm heartbroken. I feel as if a part of me has died......and my mother has died all over again. And no one......can ever make it right.

**Joe**

What happened?

**Nelson**

Oh, hell. How are you?

**Joe**

You know, Dad, you did pretty well. At least you didn't marry her.

**Nelson**

Welcome aboard.

**Joe**

lt lasted a while.

**Nelson**

You know......l've stayed on this boat after...let's see...well, your mother. Laurette, the ballet dancer.

**Joe**

My nanny.

**Nelson**

She was the nanny? l forgot that. How ironic. And then there was the ice skater.

**Joe**

Also my nanny.

**Nelson**

Really? Well, that's amazingly ironic. And then there was Sybil. The......it's an ''A'' word.

**Joe**

Astrologer.

**Nelson**

Exactly. Yeah.

**Joe**

Whose moon turned out to be in someone else's house.

**Nelson**

Just like Gillian.

**Joe**

Gillian ran off with someone?

**Nelson**

The nanny.

**Joe**

Nanny Maureen? Gillian ran off with Nanny Maureen.

**Nelson**

You got it.

**Joe**

lt's incredibly ironic.

**Nelson**

That's true.

**Joe**

No other word for it.

**Nelson**

Well, who's better than us?

**Joe**

Father and son, together at last.

**Nelson**

Who did you say you broke up with?

**Joe**

Patricia. You met her.

**Nelson**

Would l like her? Just kidding, son. Now, is this beautiful or what? l'll be living out of a suitcase for......at least 3 weeks. And then there's the inevitable legal hassle. More of your inheritance down the drain.

**Joe**

Don't you worry about it.

**Nelson**

l won't. l'll just have to meet someone new, that's all. That's the easy part.

**Joe**

Right, yeah. A snap to find the one person in the world......who fills your heart with joy.

**Nelson**

Well, don't be ridiculous. Have l ever been with anybody who fit that description? Have you?

**Kathleen**

Who is it?

**Joe**

lt's Joe Fox.

**Kathleen**

What are you doing here?

**Joe**

May l please come up?

**Kathleen**

No, I don't. No, I don't really think that that is a good idea, because..I have a...l have a terrible... ...cold. Can you hear that?

**Kathleen**

I'm sniffling, and I'm not really awake......and I'm taking echinacea......and vitamin C and sleeping practically.. ...24 hours a day. l have a temperature. And I think I'm contagious. So I would......l would really appreciate it if you would just go away.

Just a second! Yes, just a second. What are you doing here?

**Joe**

l heard you were sick......and l was worried. And l wanted....to make-- ls there somebody here?

**Kathleen**

lt's the Home Shopping Network.

**Joe**

You buy any of those little porcelain dolls?

**Kathleen**

l was thinking about it. You put me out of business.

**Joe**

Yes, l did.

**Kathleen**

Did you come to gloat? To offer me a job?

**Joe**

l would never--

**Kathleen**

l have plans. l have plenty of offers. You know, l got offered a job by--

**Joe**

By my former....

**Kathleen**

Your former?

**Joe**

We broke up.

**Kathleen**

That's too bad. You were so perfect for each other.l don't mean to say things like that. No matter what you've done......there's no excuse for my saying anything like that. But every time l see you--

**Joe**

Things like that just fly out of your mouth. l brought you flowers.

**Kathleen**

Thank you.

**Joe**

Why don't l just put these in some water? You're sick. You should sit down. l need a vase?

**Kathleen**

Above the refrigerator.

**Joe**

There it is. Obviously. George says hello, by the way. He told me you were sick.

**Kathleen**

How is George?

**Joe**

He's great, really great. He's revolutionizing the place. You can't work in his department......unless you have a Ph.D. in Children's Literature.

**Kathleen**

l love daisies.

**Joe**

You told me.

**Kathleen**

They're so friendly. Don't you think daisies are the friendliest flower?

**Joe**

l do.

**Kathleen**

When did you break up?

**Joe**

Couple of weeks ago.

**Kathleen**

Everyone is breaking up. You. Me. This other person l know broke up with someone in an elevator......or after it, or just outside it, or.... lt got stuck.... When l saw you at the coffee place, l was waiting for him. And l was....

**Joe**

Charming.

**Kathleen**

l was not charming.

**Joe**

Well, you looked charming. Tea?

**Kathleen**

Yes. l was upset and horrible.

**Joe**

Honey? l was the horrible one.

**Kathleen**

Well, that's true. But l have no excuse.

**Joe**

l see what you're saying. That's interesting. Whereas l am a horrible person......therefore l have no choice but to be horrible.That's what you're saying. But that's all right. That's all right. l put you out of business, so... ...you're entitled to hate me.

**Kathleen**

l don't hate you.

**Joe**

But you'll never forgive me. Just like Elizabeth.

**Kathleen**

Who?

**Joe**

Elizabeth Bennet......in Pride and Prejudice. She was too proud.

**Kathleen**

l thought you hated Pride and Prejudice.

**Joe**

Or was she too prejudiced......and Mr. Darcy is too proud? Well, l can't remember.lt wasn't personal.

**Kathleen**

What is that supposed to mean? l'm so sick of that. All that means is that it wasn't personal to you. But it was personal to me. lt's personal to a lot of people. What is so wrong with being personal?

**Joe**

Nothing.

**Kathleen**

Whatever else anything is, it ought to begin by being personal. My head is starting to get fuzzy.

Why did you stop by again? l forget.

**Joe**

l wanted to be your friend. l knew it wasn't possible. What can l say? Sometimes a guy just wants the impossible. Can l ask you a question?

**Kathleen**

What?

**Joe**

What happened with that guy at the cafe?

**Kathleen**

Nothing.

**Joe**

But you're crazy about him?

**Kathleen**

Yes, l am.

**Joe**

Why don't you run off with him? What are you waiting for?

**Kathleen**

l don't actually know him.

**Joe**

Really?

**Kathleen**

l only know him through the....You're not going to believe this.

**Joe**

Let me guess. Through the lnternet?

**Kathleen**

Yes.

**Joe**

''You've......got mail.'' Those are very powerful words. l'm happy for him. Although....

Could l just make a little suggestion?

**Kathleen**

What?

**Joe**

l think... ...you should meet him. No, wait, l take that back. Why would you want to meet

somebody you're crazy about?

**Kathleen**

l hardly think l need to take advice from a person who--

**Joe**

Now l can see that l bring out the worst in you. But let me just help you to not say something...

...you're just going to torture yourself about......for years to come. l hope you feel better soon. lt would be a shame to miss New York in the spring.

**Kathleen**

Thank you for the daisies.

**Joe**

Well... ...you take care.

**Kathleen**

l will.

**Joe**

Goodbye.

**Kathleen**

Goodbye. I've been thinking about this......and I think we should meet.

**Joe**

We should meet. And we will meet. But I'm in the middle of a project that needs......tweaking.

Some tweaking? A project that needed... ...''tweaking.''

**Kathleen**

-Yeah, that's what he said.

**Joe**

-T-W-E-A-lK-l-N-G? -Tweaking.

**Kathleen**

-That's what he said.

**Joe**

lt sounds to me like he's married......3 kids.

**Kathleen**

That's a terrible thing to say. He couldn't possibly be married. How do you know?

**Joe**

Have you said, ''Are you married?'' Have you written to him?

**Kathleen**

No, l'm not going to-- No.

I know this is probably a little late to be asking, but... ...are you married?

**Joe**

Am I married? What kind of question is that? How can you ask me that? Don't you know me at all?

Wait, I get it. Your friends are telling you the reason we haven't met......is that I'm married. Am I right?

So he didn't answer the question.

**Kathleen**

Yes, he did.

**Joe**

-He did not.

**Kathleen**

-He did too. He did. He nailed me. He knew exactly what l was after......which is, by the way,

exactly like him.

**Joe**

He did not answer the question, did he?

**Kathleen**

No.

**Joe**

Maybe he's fat. He's fat. He's a fatty.

**Kathleen**

l don't care about that.

**Joe**

You don't care that he's so fat... ...he has to be removed from his house by a crane. You don't care.

**Kathleen**

That is very unlikely. That is completely ridiculous.

**Joe**

So what's his handle? l'm not going to write him. You think l'm going to e-mail him?

**Kathleen**

All right, N-Y-1 -5-2.

**Joe**

N-Y-1 -5-2? 152. He's 1 52 years old.He's had 1 52 moles removed......so now he's got 152 pockmarks on his......on his face.

**Kathleen**

The number of people......who think he looks like Clark Gable.

**Joe**

152 people who think he looks like a Clark Bar.

**Kathleen**

-Why'd l tell you about this?

**Joe**

-152 stitches from his nose job. The number of his souvenir shot glasses......that he's collected......in his travels.

**Kathleen**

His address. No, he would never do anything that prosaic. The only thing l really care about is that......aside from the married thing and the jail thing...

**Joe**

Of course.

**Kathleen**

...is the boat thing.

**Joe**

What boat thing?

**Kathleen**

l could never be with someone who had a boat.

**Joe**

l have a boat. Which clinches it. We'll never be together. How many?

**Kathleen**

Three.

**Joe**

Allow me.

**Kathleen**

Thank you.

**Joe**

l could never be with someone who likes Joni Mitchell.'' lt's cloud's illusions l recall.l really don't know clouds at all.'' What does that mean? ls she a pilot? ls she taking flying lessons? lt must be a metaphor for something, but l don't know what it is. So how's your book coming?

**Kathleen**

There's this children's book editor l know from the store......and she's excited to read it when l'm finished. Who would ever have thought that l would write? lf l hadn't had all this time....

You know what?

**Joe**

What?

**Kathleen**

The truth is that he was the one who started me thinking about writing.

**Joe**

Mr. 1 52 Felony lndictments.

**Kathleen**

Mr. 1 52 lnsights lnto My Soul.

**Joe**

No competing with that.

**Kathleen**

l keep on bumping into you. Hope your mango's ripe.

**Joe**

l think it is. You want to bump into me on......Saturday around lunchtime? Over there?

How about meeting... ...Saturday? Four o'clock? There's a place in Riverside Park at 91st Street......where the path curves and there's a garden. Brinkley and I will be waiting.

Today? Wow

**Kathleen**

l know. ln Riverside Park.

**Joe**

That would mean he's a West Sider.

**Kathleen**

lsn't that amazing? Maybe l've seen him and don't even know it.

**Joe**

You could have seen him every day and not know it.

**Kathleen**

lt's very possible.

**Joe**

He could be anybody. He could be anyone. He could be that guy right there. And those flowers are for you. Could be the Zipper Man.

**Kathleen**

Who's that?

**Joe**

The Zipper Man.

**Kathleen**

Who is that?

**Joe**

He repairs zippers on Amsterdam Avenue.

**Kathleen**

Will you cut it out?

**Joe**

You'd never have to buy new luggage.

**Kathleen**

Cut it out.

**Joe**

The timing here is everything.He's waited until you're primed. See? Until you are absolutely convinced......that there's no other man......that you could possibly love.

**Kathleen**

Yes.

**Joe**

You know, sometimes l wonder.

**Kathleen**

What?

**Joe**

Well......if l hadn't been Fox Books and you hadn't been......The Shop Around The Corner......and you and l had just, you know, met.

**Kathleen**

l know.

**Joe**

l'd have asked for your number.l wouldn't have been able to wait......24 hours before calling

and saying: ''How about some coffee or......you know, drinks or dinner......or a movie......for as long as we both shall live.''You and l would never have been at war.The only thing we'd fight about would be......which video to rent on a Saturday night.

**Kathleen**

Who fights about that?

**Joe**

Some people. Not us.

**Kathleen**

We would never.

**Joe**

lf only.

**Kathleen**

l got to go.

**Joe**

Let me ask you something. How can you forgive this guy for standing you up......and not forgive me for this tiny little thing......of putting you out of business? How l wish you would.

**Kathleen**

l really have to go.

**Joe**

You don't want to be late.

Brinkley! on't cry, Shopgirl. Don't cry.

**Kathleen**

l wanted it to be you.

l wanted it to be you so badly.