

(REGINA and DORIS sit on a park bench. They pass between them a small bag of popcorn. There is a Frenchman crumpled up on DORIS's foot. Pause.)

REGINA

Did you just see that Frenchman.

DORIS

What.

(Pause.)

REGINA

You know, just so you know, it's very rude to say "what" when you wish someone to repeat herself or to clarify what she said.

(Pause.)

REGINA (CONT'D)

You should say, "pardon."

DORIS

Oh.

(Small pause.)

REGINA

So?

(Pause.)

DORIS

Pardon?

REGINA

The Frenchman. Did you not see him?

DORIS

Now, I believe that is rude.

(Pause.)

REGINA

Pardon?

DORIS

I believe it is rude to ask a rhetorical question, a question to which you already know the answer, a question meant only to stupefy and embarrass.

REGINA

And I believe it is rude to call another person rude.

DORIS

But you had just done it, only a moment ago; there is precedent.

REGINA

No I didn't.

DORIS

Now you are lying, and we have exited the realm of etiquette and have entered the realm of ethics.

REGINA

I believe it is rude to discuss ethics.

DORIS

Do you?

REGINA

Outside.

DORIS

Oh?

REGINA

Yes.

DORIS

And why?

REGINA

Because, dear sister, when one is outside, there are squirrels, who bandy about.

DORIS

Who bandy about?

REGINA

Yes, who bandy about. It is a well-known fact that squirrels absolutely detest Nietzsche. It makes them charge at random.

DORIS

But, dear sister, Friedrich Nietzsche was not an ethicist. You said that it was dangerous to discuss ethics outside because squirrels hate Nietzsche, but it is a well-known fact that Nietzsche was a philosopher and philologist.

REGINA

Are you sure?

Yes. DORIS

Perhaps. REGINA

No, certainly. DORIS

(Pause.)

But then there is the matter of the Frenchman. REGINA

What? DORIS

(Pause.)

The Frenchman. REGINA