

Without the kids! Now they'll go without me.

(VINNIE gets his coat and OSCAR ushers them all to the door)

MURRAY (Stopping at the door) Maybe one of us should stay?

OSCAR It's all right, Murray.

MURRAY Suppose he tries something again?

OSCAR He won't try anything again.

MURRAY How do you know he won't try anything again?

FELIX (Turns to MURRAY) I won't try anything again. I'm very tired.

OSCAR (To MURRAY) You hear? He's very tired. He had a busy night. Good night, fellows.

(They all ad lib goodbyes and leave. The door closes, but opens immediately and ROY comes back in)

ROY If anything happens, Oscar, just call me.

(He exits, and as the door starts to close, it reopens and SPEED comes in)

SPEED I'm three blocks away. I could be here in five minutes.

(He exits, and as the door starts to close, it reopens and VINNIE comes back in)

VINNIE If you need me I'll be at the Meridian Motel in Miami Beach.

OSCAR You'll be the first one I'll call, Vinnie.

(VINNIE exits. The door closes and then reopens as MURRAY comes back)

MURRAY (To OSCAR) You're sure?

OSCAR I'm sure.

MURRAY (Loudly to FELIX, as he gestures to OSCAR to come to the door) Good night, Felix. Try to get a good night's sleep. I guarantee you things are going to look a lot brighter in the morning. (To OSCAR, sotto voce) Take away his belt and his shoe laces.

(He nods and exits. OSCAR turns and looks at FELIX sitting in the armchair and slowly moves across the room. There is a moment's silence)

Start

OSCAR (He looks at FELIX and sighs) Ohh, Felix, Felix, Felix, Felix!

FELIX (Sits with his head buried in his hands. He doesn't look up) I know, I know, I know, I know! What am I going to do, Oscar?

OSCAR You're gonna wash down the pills with some hot, black coffee. (He starts for the kitchen, then stops) Do you think I could leave you alone for two minutes?

FELIX No, I don't think so! Stay with me, Oscar. Talk to me.

OSCAR A cup of black coffee. It'll be good for you. Come on in the kitchen.

FELIX Oscar, the terrible thing is, I think I still love her. It's a lousy marriage but I still love her. I didn't want this divorce.

OSCAR (Sitting on the arm of the couch) How about some Ovaltine? You like Ovaltine? With a couple of fig newtons or chocolate mallomars?

FELIX All right, so we didn't get along. But we had two wonderful kids, and a beautiful home. Didn't we, Oscar?

OSCAR How about vanilla wafers? Or Vienna fingers? I got everything.

FELIX What more does she want? What does any woman want?

OSCAR I want to know what you want. Ovaltine, coffee or tea. Then we'll get to the divorce.

FELIX It's not fair, damn-it! It's just not fair! (He bangs his fist on the arm of the chair angrily, then suddenly winces in great pain and grabs his neck) Oh! Ohh, my neck. My neck!

OSCAR What? What?

FELIX (He gets up and paces in pain. He is holding his twisted neck) It's a nerve spasm. I get it in the neck. Oh! Ohh, that hurts.

OSCAR (Rushing to help) Where? Where does it hurt?

FELIX (Stretches out an arm like a halfback) Don't touch me! Don't touch me!

OSCAR I just want to see where it hurts.

- FELIX It'll go away. Just let me alone a few minutes. Ohh!
Ohh!
- OSCAR (*Moving to the couch*) Lie down; I'll rub it. It'll ease the pain.
- FELIX (*In wild contortions*) You don't know how. It's a special way. Only Frances knows how.
- OSCAR You want me to ask her to come over and rub you?
- FELIX (*Yells*) No! No! We're getting divorced. She wouldn't want to rub me anymore. It's tension. I get it from tension. I must be tense.
- OSCAR I wouldn't be surprised. How long does it last?
- FELIX Sometimes a minute, sometimes hours. I once got it while I was driving. I crashed into a liquor store. Ohhh! Ohhh!
(*He sits down, painfully, on the couch*)
- OSCAR (*Getting behind him*) You want to suffer or do you want me to rub your stupid neck?
(*He starts to massage it*)
- FELIX Easy! Easy!
- OSCAR (*Yells*) Relax, damn it: relax!
- FELIX (*Yells back*) Don't yell at me! (*Then quietly*) What should I do? Tell me nicely.
- OSCAR (*Rubbing the neck*) Think of warm jello!
- FELIX Isn't that terrible? I can't do it. I can't relax. I sleep in one position all night. Frances says when I die on my tombstone it's going to say, "Here Stands Felix Ungar."
(*He winces*) Oh! Ohh!
- OSCAR (*Stops rubbing*) Does that hurt?
- FELIX No, it feels good.
- OSCAR Then say so. You make the same sound for pain or happiness.
(*Starts to massage his neck again*)
- FELIX I know. I know. Oscar—I think I'm crazy.
- OSCAR Well, if it'll make you feel any better, I think so too.
- FELIX I mean it. Why else do I go to pieces like this?

Coming up here, scaring you to death. Trying to kill myself. What is that?

OSCAR That's panic. You're a panicky person. You have a low threshold for composure.
(*He stops rubbing*)

FELIX Don't stop. It feels good.

OSCAR If you don't relax I'll break my fingers. (*Touches his hair*) Look at this. The only man in the world with clenched hair.

FELIX I do terrible things, Oscar. You know I'm a cry baby.

OSCAR Bend over.

(*FELIX bends over and OSCAR begins to massage his back*)

FELIX (*Head down*) I tell the whole world my problems.

OSCAR (*Massaging hard*) Listen, if this hurts just tell me, because I don't know what the hell I'm doing.

FELIX It just isn't nice, Oscar, running up here like this, carrying on like a nut.

OSCAR (*Finishes massaging*) How does your neck feel?

FELIX (*Twists his neck*) Better. Only my back hurts.
(*He gets up and paces, rubbing his back*)

OSCAR What you need is a drink.
(*He starts for the bar*)

FELIX I can't drink. It makes me sick. I tried drinking last night.

OSCAR (*At the bar*) Where were you last night?

FELIX Nowhere. I just walked.

OSCAR All night?

FELIX All night.

OSCAR In the rain?

FELIX No. In a hotel. I couldn't sleep. I walked around the room all night. It was over near Times Square. A dirty, depressing room. Then I found myself looking out the window. And suddenly, I began to think about jumping.

OSCAR (He has two glasses filled and crosses to FELIX.)

What changed your mind?

FELIX Nothing. I'm still thinking about it.

OSCAR Drink this.

(He hands him a glass, crosses to the couch and sits)

FELIX I don't want to get divorced, Oscar. I don't want to suddenly change my whole life. (He moves to the couch and sits next to OSCAR) Talk to me, Oscar. What am I going to do? What am I going to do?

OSCAR You're going to pull yourself together. And then you're going to drink that Scotch, and then you and I are going to figure out a whole new life for you.

FELIX Without Frances? Without the kids?

OSCAR It's been done before.

FELIX (Paces around) You don't understand, Oscar. I'm nothing without them. I'm—nothing!

OSCAR What do you mean, nothing? You're something! (FELIX sits in the armchair) A person! You're flesh and blood and bones and hair and nails and ears. You're not a fish. You're not a buffalo. You're you! You walk and talk and cry and complain and eat little green pills and send suicide telegrams. No one else does that, Felix. I'm telling you, you're the only one of *its kind in the world!* (He goes to the bar) Now drink that.

FELIX Oscar, you've been through it yourself. What did you do? How did you get through those first few nights?

OSCAR (Pours a drink) I did exactly what you're doing.

FELIX Getting hysterical!

OSCAR No, drinking! Drinking! (He comes back to the couch with the bottle and sits) I drank for four days and four nights. And then I fell through a window. I was bleeding but I was forgetting.

(He drinks again)

FELIX How can you forget your kids? How can you wipe out twelve years of marriage?

OSCAR You can't. When you walk into eight empty rooms every night it hits you in the face like a wet glove. But

those are the facts, Felix. You've got to face it. You can't spend the rest of your life crying. It annoys people in the movies! Be a good boy and drink your Scotch.

(He stretches out on the couch with his head near

FELIX)

FELIX I can imagine what Frances must be going through.

OSCAR What do you mean, what *she's* going through?

FELIX It's much harder on the woman, Oscar. She's all alone with the kids. Stuck there in the house. She can't get out like me. I mean where is she going to find someone now at her age? With two kids. Where?

OSCAR I don't know. Maybe someone'll come to the door! Felix, there's a hundred thousand divorces a year. There must be *something* nice about it. (FELIX suddenly puts both his hands over his ears and hums quietly) What's the matter now?

(He sits up)

FELIX My ears are closing up. I get it from the sinus. It must be the dust in here. I'm allergic to dust.

(He hums. Then he gets up and tries to clear his ears by hopping first on one leg then the other as he goes to the window and opens it)

OSCAR (Jumping up) What are you doing?

FELIX I'm not going to jump. I'm just going to breathe. (He takes deep breaths) I used to drive Frances crazy with my allergies. I'm allergic to perfume. For a while the only thing she could wear was my after-shave lotion. I was impossible to live with. It's a wonder she took it this long.

(He suddenly bellows like a moose. He makes this strange sound another time. OSCAR looks at him dumbfounded)

OSCAR What are you doing?

FELIX I'm trying to clear my ears. You create a pressure inside and then it opens it up.

(He bellows again)

OSCAR Did it open up?

FELIX A little bit. (He rubs his neck) I think I strained my throat.

(He paces about the room)

end