

**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 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. *(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 crybaby.

**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 neck.)* Better. Only my back hurts. *(Gets up and paces, rubbing back.)*

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

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

**OSCAR.** *(At 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 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... *(Moves to 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 right.)* 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 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!* *(Goes to 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 drink.*) I did exactly what you're doing.

**FELIX.** Getting hysterical!

**OSCAR.** No, drinking! *Drinking!* (*Comes back to couch with bottle. 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. (*Stretches out on couch with 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? (*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. (*Hums. Then gets up and tries to clear 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 does 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 neck.*) I think I strained my throat. (*Paces about the room.*)

**OSCAR.** Felix, why don't you leave yourself alone? Don't tinker.

**FELIX.** I can't help myself. I drive everyone crazy. A marriage counselor once kicked me out of his office. He wrote on my chart, Lunatic! ...I don't blame her. It's impossible to be married to me.

**OSCAR.** It takes two to make a rotten marriage. (*Lies back down on couch.*)

**FELIX.** You don't know what I was like at home. I bought her a book and made her write down every penny we spent. Thirty-eight cents for cigarettes, ten cents for a paper. Everything had to go in the book. And then we had a big fight because I said she forgot to write down how much the book was... Who could live with anyone like that?

**OSCAR.** An accountant! ...What do I know? We're not perfect. We all have faults.

**FELIX.** Faults? Heh! ...Faults... We have a maid who comes in to clean three times a week. And on the other days, Frances does the cleaning. And at night, after they've both cleaned up, I go in and clean the whole place again. I can't help it. I like things clean. Blame it on my mother. I was toilet trained at five months old.

**OSCAR.** How do you remember things like that?

**FELIX.** I loused up the marriage. Nothing was ever right. I used to recook everything. The minute she walked out of the kitchen I would add salt or pepper. It's not that I didn't trust her, it's just that I was a better cook... Well, I cooked myself out of a marriage. (*He bangs his head*



*with the palm of his hand three times.) God-damned-idiot!*  
*(Sinks down in armchair.)*

OSCAR. Don't do that, you'll get a headache.

FELIX. I can't stand it, Oscar. I hate me. Oh, boy, do I hate me.

OSCAR. You don't hate you. You love you. You think no one has problems like you.

FELIX. Don't give me that analyst jazz. I happen to know I hate my guts.

OSCAR. Come on, Felix, I've never *seen* anyone so in love.

FELIX. *(Hurt.)* I thought you were my friend.

OSCAR. That's why I can talk to you like this. Because I love you almost as much as you do...

FELIX. Then help me.

OSCAR. *(Up on one elbow.)* How can I help you when I can't help myself? You think *you're* impossible to live with? Blanche used to say, "What time do you want dinner?" And I'd say, "I don't know. I'm not hungry." Then at three o'clock in the morning I'd wake her up and say, "Now!" ...I've been one of the highest paid sports writers in the East for the past fourteen years—and we saved eight and a half dollars—in pennies! I'm never home, I gamble, I burn cigar holes in the furniture, drink like a fish and lie to her every chance I get, and for our tenth wedding anniversary, I took her to see the New York Rangers-Detroit Red Wings hockey game, where she got hit with a puck. And I *still* can't understand why she left me. That's how impossible I am!

FELIX. I'm not like you, Oscar. I couldn't take it living all alone. I don't know how I'm going to work. They've got to fire me... How am I going to make a living?

OSCAR. You'll go on street corners and cry. They'll throw nickels at you! ...You'll work, Felix, you'll work. *(Lies back down.)*

FELIX. You think I ought to call Frances?

OSCAR. *(About to explode.)* What for? *(Sits up.)*

FELIX. Well...talk it out again.

OSCAR. You've *talked* it all out. There are no words left in your entire marriage. When are you going to face up to it?

FELIX. I can't help it, Oscar, I don't know what to do.

OSCAR. Then listen to me. Tonight you're going to sleep here. And tomorrow you're going to get your clothes and your electric tooth brush and you'll move in with me.

FELIX. No, no. It's your apartment. I'll be in the way.

OSCAR. There's eight rooms. We could go for a year without seeing each other... Don't you understand? I *want* you to move in.

FELIX. Why? I'm a pest.

OSCAR. I *know* you're a pest. You don't have to keep telling me.

FELIX. Then why do you want me to live with you?

OSCAR. Because I can't-stand-living-alone, that's why! ...For crying out loud, I'm proposing to you. What do you want, a ring?

FELIX. *(Moves to OSCAR.)* Well, Oscar, if you really mean it, there's a lot I can do around here. I'm very handy around the house. I can fix things.

OSCAR. You don't have to fix things.

FELIX. I want to do *something*, Oscar. Let me do something.

OSCAR. *(Nods.)* All right, you can take my wife's initials off the towels. Anything you want.

FELIX. *(Beginning to tidy up.)* I can cook. I'm a terrific cook.

OSCAR. You don't have to cook. I eat cold cuts for breakfast.

FELIX. Two meals a day at home, we'll save a fortune. We've got to pay alimony, you know.

OSCAR. *(Happy to see FELIX's new optimism.)* All right, you can cook. *(Throws pillow at him.)*

FELIX. *(Throws pillow back.)* Do you like leg of lamb?

OSCAR. Yes, I like leg of lamb.

FELIX. I'll make it tomorrow night... I'll have to call Frances. She has my big pot.

OSCAR. *Will you forget Frances!* We'll get our own pots. Don't drive me crazy before you move in. *(The phone rings.*

OSCAR *picks it up quickly.*) Hello? ...Oh, hello, Frances!

FELIX. *(Stops cleaning and starts to wave his arms wildly and whispers screamingly.)* I'm not here! I'm not here! You didn't see me. You don't know where I am. I didn't call. I'm not here. I'm not here.

OSCAR. *(Into phone.)* Yes, he's here.

FELIX. *(Pacing back and forth.)* How does she sound? Is she worried? Is she crying? What is she saying? Does she want to speak to me? I don't want to speak to her.

OSCAR. *(Into phone.)* Yes, he is! ...

FELIX. You can tell her I'm not coming back. I've made up my mind. I've had it there. I've taken just as much as she has. You can tell her for me if she thinks I'm coming back she's got another think coming. Tell her. Tell her.

OSCAR. *(Into phone.)* Yes! ...Yes, he's fine.

FELIX. Don't tell her I'm fine! You heard me carrying on before. What are you telling her that for? I'm not fine.

OSCAR. *(Into phone.)* Yes, I understand, Frances.

FELIX. *(Sits down next to OSCAR.)* Does she want to speak to me? Ask her if she wants to speak to me?

OSCAR. *(Into phone.)* Do you want to speak to him?

FELIX. *(Reaches for phone.)* Give me the phone. I'll speak to her.

OSCAR. *(Into phone.)* Oh. You don't want to speak to him.

FELIX. She doesn't want to speak to me?

OSCAR. *(Into phone.)* Yeah, I see... Right... Well, goodbye. *(He hangs up.)*

FELIX. She didn't want to speak to me?

OSCAR. No!

FELIX. Why did she call?

OSCAR. She wants to know when you're coming over for your clothes... She wants to have the room repainted.

FELIX. Oh!

OSCAR. *(Pats FELIX on shoulder.)* Listen, Felix, it's almost one o'clock. *(Gets up.)*

FELIX. Didn't want to speak to me, huh?

OSCAR. I'm going to bed. Do you want a cup of tea with Fruitanos or Raisonettos?

FELIX. She'll paint it pink. She always wanted it pink.

OSCAR. I'll get you a pair of pajamas. You like stripes, dots, or animals? *(Goes into downstage bedroom.)*

FELIX. She's really heartbroken, isn't she? ...I want to kill myself and she's picking out colors.

OSCAR. *(In bedroom.)* Which bedroom do you want? I'm lousy with bedrooms.

FELIX. *(Up and moves towards bedroom.)* You know, I'm glad. Because she finally made me realize...it's over. It didn't sink in until just this minute.

OSCAR. *(Comes back with pillow, pillowcase, and pajamas.)* Felix, I want you to go to bed.

FELIX. I don't think I believed her until just now. My marriage is *really* over.

OSCAR. Felix, go to bed.

FELIX. Somehow it doesn't seem so bad now. I mean I think I can live with this thing.

OSCAR. Live with it tomorrow. Go to bed tonight.

FELIX. In a little while. I've got to think. I've got to start rearranging my life... Do you have a pencil and paper?

OSCAR. Not in a little while. Now! It's my house, I make up the bedtime. *(Throws pajamas to him.)*

FELIX. Oscar, please... I have to be alone for a few minutes. I've got to get organized. Go on, you go to bed... I'll—I'll clean up. *(Begins picking up debris from floor.)*

OSCAR. *(Putting pillow in pillowcase.)* You don't have to clean up. I pay a dollar fifty an hour to clean up.