

The Odd Couple

By Neil Simon

Directed by John Lange

Assistant Directed by Janel Culver

Summary:

This comedy follows two divorced, mismatched friends—fastidious Felix Ungar and slovenly Oscar Madison—who share a New York apartment. Oscar has money problems and a poorly kept house, but enjoys life. Felix seems utterly incapable of enjoying anything and his propensity to constructive criticism, and compulsive neatness drives Oscar crazy. Their clashing lifestyles cause comedic upheaval, and a rift; can their friendship survive their differences?

Setting:

An apartment on Riverside Drive, on the Upper West side of New York City.

Characters:

OSCAR MADDISON- (Male late 30's-mid 50's) A carefree, good-natured, divorced sportswriter who lives alone in a messy eight-room New York.

FELIX UNGAR- (Male late 30's-mid 50's) A fussy man who knows that he is difficult to live with but cannot—or will not—make any concessions or compromises.

SPEED- (Male 30-60's) One of Oscar and Felix's poker buddies. Gruff and sarcastic, often picking on Vinnie and Murray.

MURRAY- (Male 30-60's) A NYPD policeman, one of Oscar and Felix's poker buddies.

ROY- (Male 30-60's) One of Oscar and Felix's poker buddies. Oscar's accountant. Roy has a dry wit but is less acerbic than Speed.

VINNIE- (Male 30-60's) One of Oscar and Felix's poker buddies. Vinnie is mild-mannered and henpecked, making him an easy target for Speed's verbal barbs.

GWENDOLYN PIGEON- (Female 30's) Oscar and Felix's giggly upstairs neighbor, one of a pair of English sisters. She is a widow.

CECILY PIGEON- (Female 30's) Oscar and Felix's giggly upstairs neighbor, one of a pair of English sisters. She is a divorcée.

Schedule:

This schedule is very likely to change based on the availability of the actors and actresses casted. Whatever days work best for the cast will be changed and reflected by the time of the first read through. This calendar is included to give everyone who's auditioning the general gist of the production moving forward.

SUN 27	MON 28	TUE 29	WED 30	THU Oct 1	FRI 2	SAT 3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 ● 7pm First Night of Auc	12 Columbus Day ● 7pm Second Night of	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21 ● 6pm Table Read	22	23	24
25	26 ● 6pm Practice	27	28 ● 6pm Practice	29	30	31 Halloween
SUN Nov 1	MON 2	TUE 3	WED 4	THU 5	FRI 6	SAT 7
Daylight Saving Time en	● 6pm Practice	Election Day	● 6pm Practice			
8	9 ● 6pm Practice	10	11 Veterans Day ● 6pm Practice	12	13	14
15	16 ● 6pm Practice	17	18 ● 6pm Practice	19	20	21
22	23 No Practice	24	25 No Practice	26 Thanksgiving Day	27 Black Friday	28
29	30 ● 6pm Practice	Dec 1	2 ● 6pm Practice	3	4	5

SUN 29	MON 30	TUE Dec 1	WED 2	THU 3	FRI 4	SAT 5
	● 6pm Practice		● 6pm Practice			
6	7 ● 6pm Practice	8	9 ● 6pm Practice	10	11	12
13	14 ● 6pm Practice	15	16 ● 6pm Practice	17	18	19
20	21 No Practice	22	23 No Practice	24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day	26
27	28 No Practice	29	30 No Practice	31 New Year's Eve	Jan 1 New Year's Day	2

SUN 27	MON 28	TUE 29	WED 30	THU 31	FRI Jan 1	SAT 2
	No Practice		No Practice	New Year's Eve	New Year's Day	
3	4 ● 6pm Practice (Off Bo	5	6 ● 6pm Practice	7 ● 6pm Practice	8	9
10	11 ● 6pm Practice	12	13 ● 6pm Practice	14 ● 6pm Practice	15	16
17	18 Martin Luther King Jr. D. ● 6pm Practice	19	20 ● 6pm Practice	21 ● 6pm Practice	22	23
24	25 ● 6pm Practice	26	27 ● 6pm Practice	28 ● 6pm Practice	29	30
31	Feb 1 ● 6pm Practice	2	3 ● 6pm Practice	4 ● 6pm Practice	5	6

SUN 31 +	MON Feb 1 ● 6pm Practice	TUE 2	WED 3 ● 6pm Practice	THU 4 ● 6pm Practice	FRI 5	SAT 6
7	8 ● 6pm In the Theater	9	10 ● 6pm Practice	11 ● 6pm Practice	12	13
14 Valentine's Day	15 Presidents' Day ● 6pm Practice	16	17 ● 6pm Practice	18 ● 6pm Practice	19	20
21	22 No Practice	23	24 ● 6pm Practice	25 ● 6pm Practice	26	27
28	Mar 1 ● 6pm Practice	2	3 ● 6pm Practice	4 ● 6pm Practice	5	6
SUN 28 +	MON Mar 1 ● 6pm Practice	TUE 2	WED 3 ● 6pm Practice	THU 4 ● 6pm Practice	FRI 5	SAT 6
7 ● 12pm Start of Tech Wk	8 ● 6pm Practice	9 ● 6pm Practice	10 ● 7:30pm Dress Rehear	11	12 ● 7:30pm Opening Nigh	13 Performance
14 Performance Daylight Saving Time st	15	16	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19 Performance	20 Performance
21 Performance	22	23	24	25	26 Performance	27 Performance
28 Set Strike Easter Sunday	29 Easter Monday	30	31	Apr 1	2	3

The Odd Couple
Actor/Actress Information Auditions October 11th & 12th

*Please complete and turn in at auditions the following

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Age: _____

Do you prefer to call or text? Circle One. Call Text Both

T-Shirt Size _____

List any Theatrical Experience: _____

Please put a checkmark next to the Character(s) you wish to audition for:

_____ OSCAR MADDISON _____ GWENDOLYN PIGEON

_____ FELIX UNGAR _____ CECILY PIGEON

_____ SPEED

_____ MURRAY

_____ ROY

_____ VINNIE

Using the aforementioned calendar, please provide what days you would like to have practice on. Show days and tech week cannot be adjusted, and as we press on, a third day will be added to the weekly practices. Also provide which dates, that you know of, could cause conflict for you.

Side 1

and painful business. SPEED shakes his head in disbelief. This is all done wordlessly.)

SPEED. *(Cups his chin in his hand and looks at MURRAY.)*
...Tell me, Mr. Maverick, is this your first time on the riverboat?

MURRAY. *(With utter disregard.)* You don't like it, get a machine. *(He continues to deal slowly.)*

ROY. Geez, it stinks in here.

VINNIE. *(Looks at his watch.)* What time is it?

SPEED. Again what time is it?

VINNIE. *(Whiny.)* My watch is slow. I'd like to know what time it is.

SPEED. *(Glares at him.)* You're winning ninety-five dollars, that's what time it is... Where the hell are you running?

VINNIE. I'm not running anywhere. I just asked what time it was. Who said anything about running?

ROY. *(Looks at his watch.)* It's ten-thirty.

(Pause. MURRAY continues to shuffle.)

VINNIE. *(Pause.)* I got to leave by twelve.

SPEED. *(Looks up in despair.)* Oh, Christ!

VINNIE. I told you that when I sat down. I got to leave by twelve. Murray, didn't I say that when I sat down? I said I got to leave by twelve.

SPEED. All right, don't talk to him. He's dealing.
(To MURRAY.) Murray, you wanna rest for a while? Go lie down, sweetheart.

MURRAY. You want speed or accuracy, make up your mind.
(He begins to deal slowly.)

(SPEED puffs on his cigar angrily.)

ROY. Hey, you want to do me a really big favor? Smoke towards New Jersey.

(SPEED blows smoke at ROY.)

MURRAY. No kidding, I'm really worried about Felix. *(Points to empty chair.)* He's never been this late before. Maybe

somebody should call. (*Yells offstage.*) Hey, Oscar, why don't you call Felix?

ROY. (*Waves hand through smoke.*) Listen, why don't we chip in three dollars apiece and buy another window. How the hell can you breathe in here?

MURRAY. How many cards you got, four?

SPEED. Yes, Murray, we all have four cards. When you give us one more, we'll all have five. If you were to give us two more, we'd have six. Understand how it works now?

ROY. (*Yells offstage.*) Hey, Oscar, what do you say? In or out?

(*From offstage we hear OSCAR's voice.*)

OSCAR. (*Offstage.*) Out, pussycat, out!

(*SPEED opens, and the others bet.*)

VINNIE. I told my wife I'd be home by one the latest. We're making an eight o'clock plane to Florida. I told you that when I sat down.

SPEED. Don't cry, Vinnie. You're forty-two years old. It's embarrassing. Give me two... (*Discards.*)

ROY. Why doesn't he fix the air-conditioner? It's ninety-eight degrees and it sits there sweating like everyone else. I'm out. (*Goes to window and looks out.*)

MURRAY. Who goes to Florida in July?

VINNIE. It's off season. There's no crowds and you get the best room for one-tenth the price. No cards...

SPEED. Some vacation. Six cheap people in an empty hotel.

MURRAY. Dealer takes four... Hey, you think maybe Felix is sick? (*He points to empty chair.*) I mean he's never been this late before.

ROY. (*Takes laundry bag from armchair and sits.*) You know it's the same garbage from last week's game. I'm beginning to recognize things.

MURRAY. (*Throwing cards down.*) I'm out...

SPEED. (*Showing hand.*) Two kings...

VINNIE. Straight... (*Shows hand and takes in pot.*)

MURRAY. Hey, maybe he's in his office locked in the john again. Did you know Felix was once locked in the john overnight? He wrote out his entire will on a half a roll of toilet paper! ...Heee, what a nut!

(VINNIE is playing with his chips.)

SPEED. *(Glares at him as he shuffles cards.)* Don't play with your chips. I'm asking you nice, don't play with your chips.

VINNIE. *(To SPEED.)* I'm not playing. I'm counting. Leave me alone. What are you picking on me for? How much do you think I'm winning? Fifteen dollars!

SPEED. *Fifteen dollars?* You dropped more than that in your cuffs! *(SPEED deals a game of draw poker.)*

MURRAY. *(Yells offstage.)* Hey, Oscar, what do you say?

OSCAR. *(Enters carrying a tray with beer, sandwiches, can of peanuts, and opened bags of pretzels and Fritos.)* I'm in! I'm in! Go ahead. Deal!

(OSCAR MADISON is 43. He is a pleasant, appealing man. He seems to enjoy life to the fullest. He enjoys his weekly poker game, his friends, his excessive drinking and his cigars. He is also one of those lucky creatures in life who even enjoys his work, a sportswriter for the New York Post. His carefree attitude is evident in the sloppiness of his household but it seems to bother others more than it does OSCAR. This is all not to say that OSCAR is without cares or worries. He just doesn't seem to have any.)

VINNIE. Aren't you going to look at your cards?

OSCAR. *(Sets tray on side chair.)* What for? I'm gonna bluff anyway. *(Opens bottle of Coke.)* Who gets the Coke?

MURRAY. I get a Coke.

OSCAR. My friend Murray, the policeman, gets a warm Coke. *(He gives him the bottle.)*

ROY. *(Opens the betting.)* You still didn't fix the refrigerator? It's been two weeks now. No wonder it stinks in here.

OSCAR. (*Picking up his cards.*) Temper, temper. If I wanted nagging I'd go back with my wife... (*Throws them down.*) I'm out... Who wants food?

MURRAY. What have you got?

OSCAR. (*Looks under bread.*) I got brown sandwiches and green sandwiches... Well, what do you say?

MURRAY. What's the green?

OSCAR. It's either very new cheese or very old meat.

MURRAY. I'll take the brown.

(**OSCAR** gives **MURRAY** a sandwich.)

ROY. (*Glares at MURRAY.*) Are you crazy? You're not going to eat that, are you?

MURRAY. I'm hungry.

ROY. His refrigerator's been broken for two weeks. I saw milk standing in there that wasn't even in the bottle.

OSCAR. (*To ROY.*) What are you, some kind of a health nut? Eat, Murray, eat!

ROY. I've got six cards...

SPEED. That figures... I've got three aces. Misdeal.

(*All throw their cards in. SPEED begins to shuffle.*)

VINNIE. You know who makes very good sandwiches? Felix. Did you ever taste his cream cheese and pimento on date nut bread?

SPEED. (*To VINNIE.*) All right, make up your mind, poker or menus.

(**OSCAR** opens a can of beer, which sprays in a geyser over all players and table. There is a hubbub as they all yell at **OSCAR**. He hands **ROY** the overflowing can, and pushes the puddle of beer under the chair. The Players start to go back to the game only to be sprayed by the beer again as **OSCAR** opens another can. There is another outraged cry as they try to stop **OSCAR** and mop up the beer on the table with a towel which is hanging on the standing lamp. **OSCAR**, undisturbed, gives

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the game... I can't talk to you now... You *know* I do, darling... All right, just a minute. (*He turns.*) Murray, it's your wife. (*Puts phone on table and sits on sofa.*)

MURRAY. (*Mends disgustedly as he crosses to phone.*) I wish you were having an affair with her... Then she wouldn't bother me all the time. (*Picks up phone.*) Hello, Mimi, what's wrong?

(**SPEED** gets up, stretches, and goes into bathroom.)

OSCAR. (*Woman's voice, imitating Mimi.*) What time are you coming home? (*Then imitating MURRAY.*) I don't know, about twelve, twelve-thirty.

MURRAY. (*Into phone.*) I don't know, about twelve, twelve-thirty! (**ROY** gets up and stretches.) Why, what did you want, Mimi? ...“A corned beef sandwich and a strawberry malted!”

OSCAR. Is she pregnant again?

MURRAY. (*Holds phone over chest.*) No, just fat!

(*There is the sound of a toilet flushing, and after SPEED comes out of the bathroom, VINNIE goes in. Into phone again.*)

What? ...How could you hear that, I had the phone over my chest? ...Who? ...Felix? ...No, he didn't show up tonight... What's wrong? ...You're kidding! ...How should I know? ...All right, all right, goodbye...

(*The toilet flushes again, and after VINNIE comes out of the bathroom, ROY goes in.*)

Goodbye, Mimi... Goodbye. (*He hangs up. To others.*) Well, what did I tell you? I knew it!

ROY. What's the matter?

MURRAY. (*Pacing above the couch.*) Felix is missing!

OSCAR. Who?

MURRAY. Felix! Felix Ungar! The man who sits in that chair every week and cleans ashtrays. I told you something was up.

SPEED. (*At the table.*) What do you mean, missing?

MURRAY. He didn't show up for work today. He didn't come home tonight. No one knows where he is. Mimi just spoke to his wife.

VINNIE. (*In his chair at the poker table.*) Felix?

MURRAY. They looked everywhere... I'm telling you he's missing.

OSCAR. Wait a minute. No one is missing for one day.

VINNIE. That's right. You've got to be missing for forty-eight hours before you're missing. The worst he could be is lost.

MURRAY. How could he be lost? He's forty-four years old and lives on West End Avenue. What's the matter with you?

ROY. (*Sitting in armchair.*) Maybe he had an accident.

OSCAR. They would have heard.

ROY. If he's laying in a gutter somewhere? Who would know who he is?

OSCAR. He's got ninety-two credit cards in his wallet. The minute something happens to him, America lights up.

VINNIE. Maybe he went to a movie. You know how long those pictures are today.

SPEED. (*Looks at VINNIE contemptuously.*) No wonder you're going to Florida in July! *Dumb dumb dumb!*

ROY. Maybe he was mugged?

OSCAR. For thirty-six hours? How much money could he have on him?

ROY. Maybe they took his clothes. I knew a guy who was mugged in a doctor's office. He had to go home in a nurse's uniform.

(**OSCAR** throws a pillow from the couch at **ROY**.)

SPEED. Murray, you're a cop. What do you think?

MURRAY. I think it's something real bad.

SPEED. How do you know?

MURRAY. I can feel it in my bones.

SPEED. (*To others.*) You hear? Bulldog Drummond.

ROY. Maybe he's drunk. Does he drink?

OSCAR. Felix? On New Year's Eve he has Pepto Bismal...
What are we guessing? I'll call his wife. (*He picks up phone.*)

SPEED. Wait a minute! Don't start anything yet. Just 'cause we don't know where he is doesn't mean *somebody else* doesn't... Does he have a girl?

VINNIE. A what?

SPEED. A girl? You know. Like when you're through work early.

MURRAY. Felix? Playing around? Are you crazy? He wears a vest and galoshes.

SPEED. (*Gets up and moves towards MURRAY.*) You mean you automatically know who has and who hasn't got a girl on the side?

MURRAY. (*Moves to SPEED.*) Yes, I automatically know.

SPEED. All right, you're so smart. Have *I* got a girl?

MURRAY. No, you haven't got a girl. What you've got is what *I've* got. What you *wish* you got and what you *got* is a whole different civilization! ...Oscar maybe has a girl on the side.

SPEED. That's different. He's divorced. That's not on the *side*. That's in the *middle*. (*Moves to table.*)

OSCAR. (*To them both as he starts to dial.*) You through? 'Cause one of our poker players is missing. I'd like to find out about him.

VINNIE. I thought he looked edgy the last couple of weeks.
(*To SPEED.*) Didn't you think he looked edgy?

SPEED. No. As a matter of fact, I thought *you* looked edgy.
(*Moves down right.*)

OSCAR. (*Into phone.*) Hello? ...Frances? ...Oscar. I just heard.

ROY. Tell her not to worry. She's probably hysterical.

MURRAY. Yeah, you know women. (*Sits down on couch.*)

OSCAR. (*Into phone.*) Listen, Frances, the most important thing is not to worry... Oh! (*To others.*) She's not worried.

MURRAY. Sure.

OSCAR. (*Into phone.*) Frances, do you have *any* idea where he could be? ...He what? ...You're kidding? ...Why? ...No, I didn't know... Gee, that's too bad... All right, listen, Frances, you just sit tight and the minute I hear anything I'll let you know... Right... G'bye.

(He hangs up. They all look at him expectantly. He gets up wordlessly and crosses to the table, thinking. They all watch him a second, not being able to stand it any longer.)

MURRAY. Ya gonna tell us or do we hire a private detective?

OSCAR. They broke up!

ROY. Why?

OSCAR. Felix and Frances! They broke up! The entire marriage is brough.

VINNIE. You're kidding?

ROY. I don't believe it.

SPEED. After twelve years?

(OSCAR sits down at the table.)

VINNIE. They were such a happy couple.

MURRAY. Twelve years doesn't mean you're a *happy* couple.

It just means you're a *long* couple.

SPEED. Go figure... Felix and Frances.

ROY. What are you surprised at? He used to sit there every Friday night and tell us how they were fighting.

SPEED. I know. But who believes Felix?

VINNIE. What happened?

OSCAR. She wants out, that's all.

MURRAY. He'll go to pieces. I know Felix. He's going to try something crazy.

SPEED. That's all he ever used to talk about. "My beautiful wife. My wonderful wife." What happened?

MURRAY. We don't say nothin'. Like we never heard a thing.

OSCAR. *(Trying to get their attention.)* You through with this discussion? Because he already could have hung himself out in the hall. *(To VINNIE.)* Vinnie, open the door!

MURRAY. Remember! Like we don't know nothin'.

(All rush back to their seats and grab up cards, which they concentrate on with the greatest intensity. VINNIE opens the door. FELIX UNGAR is there. About 44. His clothes are rumpled as if he had slept in them, and he needs a shave. Although he tries to act matter-of-fact, there is an air of great tension and nervousness about him.)

FELIX. *(Softly.)* Hi, Vin!

(VINNIE quickly goes back to his seat and studies his cards. FELIX has his hands in his pockets, trying to be very nonchalant. Controlled calm.)

Hi, fellas.

(They all mumble hello, but do not look at him. He puts his coat over the railing and crosses to the table.)

How's the game going?

(They all mumble appropriate remarks, and continue staring at their cards.)

Good! ...Good! ...Sorry I'm late.

(FELIX looks a little disappointed that no one asks "What?" ...He starts to pick up a sandwich, changes his mind, and makes a gesture of distaste. He vaguely looks around.)

Any Coke left?

OSCAR. *(Looking up from his cards.)* Coke? ...Gee, I don't think so... I got a Seven Up!

FELIX. *(Bravely.)* No... I felt like a Coke. I just don't feel like Seven Up...tonight! *(Stands watching the game.)*

OSCAR. What's the bet?

SPEED. You bet a quarter...it's up to Murray... Murray,
what do you say? (**MURRAY** *is staring at FELIX.*) Murray!
...Murray!

ROY. (*To VINNIE.*) Tap his shoulder.

VINNIE. (*Taps MURRAY's shoulder.*) Murray!

MURRAY. (*Startled.*) What? What?

SPEED. It's up to you.

MURRAY. Why is it always up to me?

SPEED. It's not always up to you. It's up to you now. What
do you do?

MURRAY. I'm in. I'm in. (*He throws in quarter.*)

FELIX. (*Moves to bookcase.*) Anyone call about me?

OSCAR. Er...not that I can remember. (*To others.*) Did
anyone call for Felix? (*They all shrug and ad-lib "No."*)
Why? ...Were you expecting a call?

FELIX. (*Looking at books on shelf.*) No! ...No! ...Just asking.
(*He opens book and examines it.*)

ROY. Er... I'll see his bet and raise it a dollar.

FELIX. (*Without looking up from book.*) I just thought someone
might have called.

SPEED. It costs me a dollar and a quarter to play, right?

OSCAR. Right!

FELIX. (*Still looking at book...sing-song.*) But...if no one
called, no one called. (*Slams book shut and puts it back.*
All jump at the noise.)

SPEED. (*Getting nervous.*) What does it cost me to play again?

MURRAY. (*Angry.*) A dollar and a quarter! *A dollar and a
quarter!* Pay attention, for crise sakes!

ROY. All right, take it easy. Take it easy.

OSCAR. Let's calm down, everyone, heh?

MURRAY. I'm sorry. I can't help it. (*Points to SPEED.*) He
makes me nervous.

SPEED. I make *you* nervous. You make *me* nervous. You
make *everyone* nervous.

MURRAY. (*Sarcastic.*) I'm sorry. Forgive me. I'll kill myself.

OSCAR. Murray! *(He motions with his head to FELIX.)*

MURRAY. *(Realizes his error.)* Oh! ...Sorry.

(SPEED glares at him. They all sit in silence a moment, until VINNIE catches sight of FELIX who is now staring out upstage window. He quickly calls the others' attention to FELIX.)

FELIX. *(Looking back at them from the window.)* Gee, it's a pretty view from here... What is it, twelve floors?

OSCAR. *(Quickly crossing to the window and closing it.)* No. It's only eleven. That's all. Eleven. It says twelve but it's really only eleven. *(He then turns and closes the other window as FELIX watches him. OSCAR shivers slightly.)* Chilly in here. *(To others.)* Isn't it chilly in here? *(Crosses back to table.)*

ROY. Yeah, that's much better.

OSCAR. *(To FELIX.)* Want to sit down and play? It's still early.

VINNIE. Sure. We're in no rush. We'll be here 'til three, four in the morning.

FELIX. *(Shrugs.)* I don't know... I just don't feel much like playing now.

OSCAR. *(Sitting at table.)* Oh! ...Well...what do you feel like doing?

FELIX. *(Shrugs.)* I'll find something... *(Starts to walk toward other room.)* Don't worry about me...

OSCAR. Where are you going?

FELIX. *(Stops in the doorway. He looks at others who are all staring at him.)* To the john.

OSCAR. *(Looks at others worried, then at FELIX.)* Alone?

FELIX. *(Nods.)* I always go alone! Why?

OSCAR. *(Shrugs.)* No reason! ...You gonna be in there long?

FELIX. *(Shrugs, then says meaningfully, like the martyr.)* As long as it takes.

(Then he goes into the bathroom and slams the door shut behind him. Immediately they all jump

Side 4

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?~~

didn't know where the kitchen was 'til I came here and showed you.

OSCAR. You wanna talk to me, put down the spoon.

FELIX. (*Exploding in rage, again waving ladle in his face.*) Spoon? You dumb ignoramus. It's a ladle. You don't even know it's a ladle.

OSCAR. All right, Felix, get a hold of yourself.

FELIX. (*Pulls himself together, sits on love seat.*) You think it's so easy? Go on. The kitchen's all yours. Go make a London broil for four people who come a half hour late.

OSCAR. (*To no one in particular.*) Listen to me. I'm arguing with him over gravy.

(*The BELL rings.*)

FELIX. (*Jumps up.*) Well, they're here. Our dinner guests. I'll get a saw and cut the meat. (*Starts for kitchen.*)

OSCAR. (*Stopping him.*) Stay where you are!

FELIX. I'm not taking the blame for this dinner.

OSCAR. Who's blaming you? Who even *cares* about the dinner?

FELIX. (*Moves to OSCAR.*) I care. I take *pride* in what I do. And you're going to explain to them exactly what happened.

OSCAR. All right, you can take a Polaroid picture of me coming in at eight o'clock! . . . Now take off that stupid apron because I'm opening the door. (*Rips the towel off FELIX and goes to the door.*)

FELIX. (*Takes jacket from dining chair and puts it on.*) I just want to get one thing clear. This is the last time I ever cook for you. Because people like you don't even appreciate a decent meal. That's why they have T.V. dinners.

OSCAR. You through?

FELIX. I'm through!

OSCAR. Then smile. (*OSCAR smiles and opens the door. The GIRLS poke their heads through the door. They are*

BOTH *in their young thirties and somewhat attractive. They are undoubtedly British.*) Well, hello.

GWENDOLYN. *(To OSCAR.)* Hallo!

CECILY. *(To OSCAR.)* Hallo.

GWENDOLYN. I do hope we're not late.

OSCAR. No, no. You timed it perfectly. Come on in. *(He points to them as they enter.)* Er, Felix, I'd like you to meet two very good friends of mine, Gwendolyn and Cecily—

CECILY. *(Pointing out his mistake.)* Cecily and Gwendolyn.

OSCAR. Oh, yes. Cecily and Gwendolyn . . . er . . . *(Trying to remember their last name.)* Er . . . Don't tell me. . . . Robin? . . . No, no. . . . Cardinal?

GWENDOLYN. Wrong both times. It's Pigeon!

OSCAR. Pigeon. Right. Cecily and Gwendolyn Pigeon.

GWENDOLYN. *(To FELIX.)* You don't spell it like Walter Pidgeon. You spell it like "Coo Coo" Pigeon.

OSCAR. We'll remember that if it comes up. . . . Cecily and Gwendolyn, I'd like you to meet my room-mate . . . and our chef for the evening . . . Felix Ungar.

CECILY. *(Holding hand out.)* Heh d'yew dew?

FELIX. *(Moving to her and shaking her hand.)* How do you do?

GWENDOLYN. *(Holding hand out.)* Heh d'yew dew?

FELIX. *(Stepping up on landing and shaking her hand.)* How do you do?

(This puts him nose to nose with OSCAR, and there is an awkward pause as they look at each other.)

OSCAR. Well, we did that beautifully. . . . Why don't we sit down and make ourselves comfortable?

(FELIX steps aside and ushers the GIRLS down into the room. There is ad-libbing and a bit of confusion and milling about as they ALL squeeze between the armchair and the couch, and the PIGEONS finally seat themselves on the couch. OSCAR sits in the armchair,

and FELIX sneaks past him to the love seat. Finally
ALL have settled down.)

CECILY. This is ever so nice, isn't it, Gwen?

GWENDOLYN. (*Looking around.*) Lovely. And much
nicer than our flat. Do you have help?

OSCAR. Er, yes. I have a man who comes in every
night.

CECILY. Aren't you the lucky one?

(CECILY, GWENDOLYN and OSCAR all laugh at her joke.
OSCAR looks over at FELIX but there is no response.)

OSCAR. (*Rubs hands together.*) Well, isn't this nice?
. . . I was telling Felix yesterday about how we hap-
pened to meet.

GWENDOLYN. Oh? . . . Who's Felix?

OSCAR. (*A little embarrassed. Points to FELIX.*) He is!

GWENDOLYN. Oh, yes, of course. I'm so sorry.

(FELIX nods that it's all right.)

CECILY. You know it happened to us again this morn-
ing.

OSCAR. What did?

GWENDOLYN. Stuck in the elevator again.

OSCAR. Really? Just the two of you?

CECILY. And poor old Mr. Kessler from the third floor.
We were in there half an hour.

OSCAR. No kidding? What happened?

GWENDOLYN. Nothing much, I'm afraid.

(CECILY and GWENDOLYN both laugh at her latest joke,
joined by OSCAR. He once again looks over at FELIX,
but there is no response.)

OSCAR. (*Rubs hands again.*) Well, this really is nice.

CECILY. And ever so much cooler than our place.

GWENDOLYN. It's like equatorial Africa on our side of
the building.

CECILY. Last night it was so bad Gwen and I sat there in Nature's Own cooling ourselves in front of the open frig. Can you imagine such a thing?

OSCAR. Er . . . I'm working on it.

GWENDOLYN. Actually, it's impossible to get a night's sleep. Cec and I really don't know what to do.

OSCAR. Why don't you sleep with an air-conditioner?

GWENDOLYN. We haven't got one.

OSCAR. I know. But we have.

GWENDOLYN. Oh you! I told you about that one, didn't I, Cec?

FELIX. They say it may rain Friday.

(They ALL stare at FELIX.)

GWENDOLYN. Oh?

CECILY. That should cool things off a bit.

OSCAR. I wouldn't be surprised.

FELIX. Although sometimes it gets hotter after it rains.

GWENDOLYN. Yes, it does, doesn't it?

(They continue to stare at FELIX.)

FELIX. *(Jumps up and, picking up ladle, starts for the kitchen.)* Dinner is served!

OSCAR. *(Stopping him.)* No, it isn't!

FELIX. Yes, it is!

OSCAR. No, it isn't! I'm sure the girls would like a cocktail first. *(To GIRLS.)* Wouldn't you, girls?

GWENDOLYN. Well, I wouldn't put up a struggle.

OSCAR. There you are. *(To CECILY.)* What would you like?

CECILY. Oh, I really don't know. *(To OSCAR.)* What have you got?

FELIX. London broil.

OSCAR. *(To FELIX.)* She means to drink. *(To CECILY.)* We have everything. And what we don't have, I mix in the medicine cabinet. What'll it be? *(Crouches next to her.)*

CECILY. Oh . . . a double vodka.

GWENDOLYN. Cecily . . . not before dinner.

CECILY. (*To the MEN.*) My sister . . . She watches over me like a mother hen. (*To OSCAR.*) Make it a *small* double vodka.

OSCAR. A small double vodka! . . . And for the beautiful mother hen?

GWENDOLYN. Oh . . . I'd like something cool. I think I would like to have a double Drambuie with some crushed ice unless you don't have the crushed ice.

OSCAR. I was up all night with a sledge hammer. . . . I shall return! (*Goes to bar and gets bottles of vodka and Drambuie.*)

FELIX. (*Going to him.*) Where are you going?

OSCAR. To get the refreshments.

FELIX. (*Starting to panic.*) Inside? What'll I do?

OSCAR. You can finish the weather report. (*He exits into kitchen.*)

FELIX. (*Calls after him.*) Don't forget to look at my meat! (*He turns and faces the GIRLS. He crosses to chair and sits. He crosses his legs nonchalantly. But he is ill at ease and he crosses them again. He is becoming aware of the silence and he can no longer get away with just smiling.*) Er . . . Oscar tells me you're sisters.

~~CECILY. Yes. That's right. (*She looks at GWENDOLYN.*)~~

~~FELIX. From England.~~

~~GWENDOLYN. Yes. That's right. (*She looks at CECILY.*)~~

~~FELIX. Yes. (*Silence. Then, his little smile.*) We're not brothers.~~

~~CECILY. Yes. We know.~~

~~FELIX. Although I am a brother. I have a brother who's a doctor. He lives in Buffalo. That's upstate in New York.~~

~~GWENDOLYN. (*Taking cigarette from her purse.*) Yes, we know.~~

~~FELIX. You know my brother?~~

~~GWENDOLYN. No. We know that Buffalo is upstate in New York.~~

FELIX. Felix.

GWENDOLYN. Oh, yes. Felix.

CECILY. Like a Cat.

(FELIX takes wallet from his jacket pocket.)

GWENDOLYN. Well, the Pigeons will have to beware of the cat, won't they? *(She laughs.)*

CECILY. *(Nibbles on a nut from the dish.)* Mmm, cashews. Lovely.

FELIX. *(Takes snapshot out of wallet.)* This is the worst part of breaking up. *(He hands picture to CECILY.)*

CECILY. *(Looks at it.)* Childhood sweethearts, were you?

FELIX. No, no. That's my little boy and girl. *(CECILY gives picture to GWENDOLYN, and takes pair of glasses from her purse and puts them on.)* He's seven, she's five.

CECILY. *(Looks again.)* Oh! Sweet.

FELIX. They live with their mother.

GWENDOLYN. I imagine you must miss them terribly.

FELIX. *(Takes back picture and looks at it longingly.)* I can't stand being away from them. *(Shrugs.)* But—that's what happens with divorce.

CECILY. When do you get to see them?

FELIX. Every night. I stop there on my way home! . . . Then I take them on the weekends and I get them on holidays and July and August.

CECILY. Oh! . . . Well, when is it that you miss them?

FELIX. Whenever I'm not there. If they didn't have to go to school so early, I'd go over and make them breakfast. They love my French toast.

GWENDOLYN. You're certainly a devoted father.

FELIX. It's Frances who's the wonderful one.

CECILY. She's the little girl?

FELIX. No. She's the mother. My wife.

GWENDOLYN. The one you're divorcing?

FELIX. *(Nods.)* Mm! . . . She's done a terrific job bringing them up. They always look so nice. They're so

polite. Speak beautifully. Never "Yeah." Always "Yes."
. . . They're such good kids. And she did it all. She's the
kind of woman who— Ah, what am I saying? You don't
want to hear any of this. (*Puts picture back in wallet.*)

CECILY. Nonsense. You have a right to be proud. You
have two beautiful children and a wonderful ex-wife.

FELIX. (*Containing his emotions.*) I know. I know.
(*He hands CECILY another snapshot.*) That's her. Fran-
ces.

GWENDOLYN. (*Looking at picture.*) Oh, she's pretty.
Isn't she pretty, Cecy?

CECILY. Oh, yes. Pretty. A pretty girl. Very pretty.

FELIX. (*Takes picture back.*) Thank you. (*Shows them
another snapshot.*) Isn't this nice?

GWENDOLYN. (*Looks.*) There's no one in the picture.

FELIX. I know. It's a picture of our living room. We
had a beautiful apartment.

GWENDOLYN. Oh, yes. Pretty. Very pretty.

CECILY. Those are lovely lamps.

FELIX. Thank you! (*Takes picture.*) We bought them
in Mexico on our honeymoon. . . . (*He looks at picture
again.*) I used to love to come home at night. (*He's be-
ginning to break.*) That was my whole life. My wife, my
kids . . . and my apartment. (*He breaks down and sobs.*)

CECILY. Does she have the lamps now, too?

FELIX. (*Nods.*) I gave her everything. . . . It'll never
be like that again. . . . Never! . . . I—I— (*He turns
head away.*) I'm sorry. (*He takes out a handkerchief and
dabs eyes.* GWENDOLYN and CECILY look at each other
with compassion.) Please forgive me. I didn't mean to
get emotional. (*Trying to pull himself together. He pi ks
up bowl from side table and offers it to GIRLS.*) Would
you like some potato chips?

(*CECILY takes the bowl.*)

GWENDOLYN. You mustn't be ashamed. I think it's a
rare quality in a man to be able to cry.

FELIX. (*Hand over eyes.*) Please. Let's not talk about it.

CECILY. I think it's sweet. Terribly terribly sweet.
(*Takes potato chip.*)

FELIX. You're just making it worse.

GWENDOLYN. (*Teary-eyed.*) It's so refreshing to hear a man speak so highly of the woman he's divorcing! . . . Oh, dear. (*She takes out her handkerchief.*) Now you've got me thinking about poor Sydney.

CECILY. Oh, Gwen. Please don't. (*Puts bowl down.*)

GWENDOLYN. It was a good marriage at first. Everyone said so. Didn't they, Cecily? Not like you and George.

CECILY. (*The past returns as she comforts GWENDOLYN.*) That's right. George and I were never happy. . . . Not for one single, solitary day. (*She remembers her unhappiness and grabs her handkerchief and dabs her eyes.*) ALL THREE are now sitting with handkerchiefs at their eyes.)

FELIX. Isn't this ridiculous?

GWENDOLYN. I don't know what brought this on. I was feeling so good a few minutes ago.

CECILY. I haven't cried since I was fourteen.

FELIX. Just let it pour out. It'll make you feel much better. I always do.

GWENDOLYN. Oh dear oh dear oh dear.

(ALL THREE sit sobbing into their handkerchiefs. Suddenly OSCAR bursts happily into the room with a tray full of drinks. He is all smiles.)

OSCAR. (*Like a corny M.C.*) Is ev-rybuddy happy? (*Then he sees the maudlin scene. FELIX and the GIRLS quickly try to pull themselves together.*) What the hell happened?

FELIX. Nothing! Nothing! (*He quickly puts handkerchief away.*)

OSCAR. What do you mean, nothing? I'm gone three minutes and I walk into a funeral parlor. What did you say to them?

FELIX. I didn't say anything. Don't start in again, Oscar.

from the hat and puts them in the butt-filled ash-tray on the coffee table. Then takes the ashtray and dumps it on the floor. As he once more settles down with his newspaper, FELIX comes out of the kitchen carrying a tray with steaming dish of spaghetti. As he crosses behind OSCAR to the table, he smells it "deliciously" and passes it close to OSCAR to make sure OSCAR smells the fantastic dish he's missing. As FELIX sits and begins to eat, OSCAR takes can of aerosol spray from the bar, and circling the table sprays all about FELIX, puts can down next to him and goes back to his newspaper.

FELIX. (*Pushing spaghetti away.*) All right, how much longer is this gonna go on?

OSCAR. (*Reading his paper.*) Are you talking to me?

FELIX. That's right, I'm talking to you.

OSCAR. What do you want to know?

FELIX. I want to know if you're going to spend the rest of your life not talking to me. Because if you are, I'm going to buy a radio. (*No reply.*) Well? (*No reply.*) I see. You're not going to talk to me. (*No reply.*) All right. Two can play at this game. (*Pause.*) If you're not going to talk to me, I'm not going to talk to you. (*No reply.*) I can act childish too, you know. (*No reply.*) I can go on without talking just as long as you can.

OSCAR. Then why the hell don't you shut up?

FELIX. Are you talking to me?

OSCAR. You had your chance to talk last night. I begged you to come upstairs with me. From now on I never want to hear a word from that shampooed head as long as you live. That's a warning, Felix.

FELIX. (*Stares at him.*) I stand warned. . . . Over and out!

OSCAR. (*Gets up taking key out of his pocket and slams it on the table.*) There's a key to the back door. If you stick to the hallway and your room, you won't get hurt. (*Sits back down on couch.*)

FELIX. I don't think I gather the entire meaning of that remark.

OSCAR. Then I'll explain it to you. Stay out of my way.

FELIX. (*Picks up key and moves to couch.*) I think you're serious. I think you're really serious. . . . Are you serious?

OSCAR. This is my apartment. Everything in my apartment is mine. The only thing here that's yours is you. Just stay in your room and speak softly.

FELIX. Yeah, you're serious. . . . Well, let me remind you that I pay half the rent and I'll go into any room I want. (*He gets up angrily and starts towards hallway.*)

OSCAR. Where are you going?

FELIX. I'm going to walk around your bedroom.

OSCAR. (*Slams down newspaper.*) You stay out of there.

FELIX. (*Steaming.*) Don't tell me where to go. I pay a hundred and twenty dollars a month.

OSCAR. That was off-season. Starting tomorrow the rates are twelve dollars a day.

FELIX. All right. (*He takes some bills out of his pocket and slams them down on table.*) There you are. I'm paid up for today. Now I'm going to walk in your bedroom. (*He starts to storm off.*)

OSCAR. Stay out of there! Stay out of my room!

(*He chases after him. FELIX dodges around the table as OSCAR blocks the hallway.*)

FELIX. (*Backing away, keeping table between them.*) Watch yourself! Just watch yourself, Oscar!

OSCAR. (*With a pointing finger.*) I'm warning you. You want to live here, I don't want to see you, I don't want to hear you and I don't want to smell your cooking. Now get this spaghetti off my poker table.

FELIX. Ha! Haha!

OSCAR. What the hell's so funny?

FELIX. It's not spaghetti. It's linguini!

(OSCAR picks up the plate of linguini, crosses to the doorway, and hurls it into the kitchen.)

OSCAR. Now it's garbage! (*Paces above couch.*)

FELIX. (*Looks at OSCAR unbelievably. What an insane thing to do.*) You are crazy! . . . I'm a neurotic nut but you are crazy!

OSCAR. I'm crazy, heh? That's really funny coming from a fruitcake like you.

FELIX. (*Goes to kitchen door and looks in at the mess. Turns back to OSCAR.*) I'm not cleaning that up.

OSCAR. Is that a promise?

FELIX. Did you hear what I said? I'm not cleaning it up. It's your mess. (*Looking into kitchen again.*) Look at it. Hanging all over the walls.

OSCAR. (*Crosses up on landing and looks at kitchen door.*) I like it. (*Closes door and paces Right.*)

FELIX. (*Fumes.*) You'd just let it lie there, wouldn't you? Until it turns hard and brown and . . . yich. . . . It's disgusting. . . . I'm cleaning it up.

(*He goes into kitchen. OSCAR chases after him. There is the sound of a STRUGGLE and falling POTS.*)

OSCAR. (*Off.*) Leave it alone! . . . You touch one strand of that linguini—and I'm gonna punch you right in your sinuses.

FELIX. (*Dashes out of kitchen with OSCAR in pursuit. Stops and tries to calm OSCAR down.*) Oscar . . . I'd like you to take a couple of phenobarbital.

OSCAR. (*Points.*) Go to your room! . . . Did you hear what I said? Go to your room!

FELIX. All right . . . let's everybody just settle down, heh? (*He puts his hand on OSCAR's shoulder to calm him but OSCAR pulls away violently from his "touch."*)

OSCAR. If you want to live through this night, you'd better tie me up and lock your doors and windows.

FELIX. (*Sits at table with great pretense of calm.*) All right, Oscar, I'd like to know what's happened.

OSCAR. (*Moves towards him.*) What's happened?

FELIX. (*Hurriedly slides over to the next chair.*) That's right. Something must have caused you to go off the deep end like this. What is it? Something I said? Something I did? Heh? What?

OSCAR. (*Pacing.*) It's nothing you said. It's nothing you did. It's *you!*

FELIX. I see. . . . Well, that's plain enough.

OSCAR. I could make it plainer but I don't want to hurt you.

FELIX. What is it, the cooking? The cleaning? The crying?

OSCAR. (*Moving towards him.*) I'll tell you exactly what it is. It's the cooking, cleaning and crying. . . . It's the talking in your sleep, it's the moose calls that open your ears at two o'clock in the morning. . . . I can't take it any more, Felix. I'm crackin' up. Everything you do irritates me. And when you're not here, the things I know you're gonna do when you come in irritate me. . . . You leave me little notes on my pillow. I told you a hundred times, I can't stand little notes on my pillow. "We're all out of Corn Flakes. F.U." . . . It took me three hours to figure out that F.U. was Felix Ungar. . . . It's not your fault, Felix. It's a rotten combination.

FELIX. I get the picture.

OSCAR. That's just the frame. The picture I haven't even painted yet. . . . I got a typewritten list in my office of the "Ten Most Aggravating Things You Do That Drive Me Berserk." . . . But last night was the topper. Oh, that was the topper. Oh, that was the ever loving lulu of all times.

FELIX. What are you talking about, the London broil?

OSCAR. No, not the London broil. I'm talking about those two lamb chops. (*He points upstairs.*) I had it all set up with that English Betty Boop and her sister and I wind up drinking tea all night and telling them *your* life story.

FELIX. (*Jumps up.*) Oho! So *that's* what's bothering you. That I loused up your evening!

OSCAR. After the mood you put them in, I'm surprised they didn't go out to Rockaway and swim back to England.

FELIX. Don't blame me. I warned you not to make the date in the first place. (*He makes his point by shaking his finger in OSCAR's face.*)

OSCAR. Don't point that finger at me unless you intend to use it!

FELIX. (*Moves in nose to nose with OSCAR.*) All right, Oscar, get off my back. Get off! Off! (*Startled by his own actions, FELIX jumps back from OSCAR, warily circles him, crosses to the couch and sits.*)

OSCAR. What's this? A display of temper? I haven't seen you really angry since the day I dropped my cigar in your pancake batter. (*Starts towards the hallway.*)

FELIX. (*Threateningly.*) Oscar . . . You're asking to hear something I don't want to say. But if I say it, I think you'd better hear it.

OSCAR. (*Comes back to table, places both hands on it, leans towards FELIX.*) If you've got anything on your chest besides your chin, you'd better get it off.

FELIX. (*Strides to table, places both hands on it, leans towards OSCAR. They are nose to nose.*) All right, I warned you. . . . You're a wonderful guy, Oscar. You've done everything for me. If it weren't for you, I don't know what would have happened to me. You took me in here, gave me a place to live and something to live for. I'll never forget you for that. You're tops with me, Oscar.

OSCAR. (*Motionless.*) If I've just been told off, I think I may have missed it.

FELIX. It's coming now! . . . You're also one of the biggest slobs in the world.

OSCAR. I see.

FELIX. And completely unreliable.

OSCAR. Finished?

FELIX. Undependable.

OSCAR. Is that it?

FELIX. And irresponsible.

OSCAR. Keep going. I think you're hot.

FELIX. That's it. I'm finished. *Now you've been told off. How do you like that? (Crosses to couch.)*

OSCAR. *(Straightening up.)* Good. Because now I'm going to tell you off. . . . For six months I lived alone in this apartment. All alone in eight rooms. . . . I was dejected, despondent and disgusted. . . . Then you moved in. My dearest and closest friend. . . . And after three weeks of close, personal contact—I am about to have a nervous breakdown! . . . Do me a favor. Move in'to the kitchen. Live with your pots, your pans, your ladle and your meat thermometer. . . . When you want to come out, ring a bell and I'll run into the bedroom. *(Almost breaking down.)* I'm asking you nicely, Felix. . . . As a friend. . . . Stay out of my way! *(And he goes into the bedroom.)*

FELIX. *(Hurt by this; then remembering something. Calls after him.)* Walk on the paper, will you? The floors are wet. *(OSCAR comes out of the door. He is glaring maniacally, as he slowly strides back down the hallway. FELIX quickly puts the couch between him and OSCAR.)* Awright, keep away. Keep away from me.

OSCAR. *(Chasing him around the couch.)* Come on. Let me get in one shot. You pick it. Head, stomach, or kidneys.

FELIX. *(Dodging about the room.)* You're gonna find yourself in one sweet law suit, Oscar.

OSCAR. It's no use running, Felix. There's only eight rooms and I know the short cuts.

(They are now poised at opposite ends of the couch.)

FELIX *(picks up a lamp for protection.)*

FELIX. Is this how you settle your problems, Oscar? Like an animal?

OSCAR. All right. You see how I settle my problems. I'll show you. *(Storms off into FELIX's bedroom. There is the sound of falling objects and he returns with a suitcase.)* I'll show you how I settle them. *(Throws suitcase on table.)* There! That's how I settle them!