

OSCAR FELIX

36

THE ODD COUPLE

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*