

THE ODD COUPLE

back to read his newspaper. FELIX has watched this all in silence, and now carefully picks up the cigar wrappings and the match and drops them into OSCAR's hat. He then dusts his hands and takes the vacuum cleaner into the kitchen, pulling the cord in after him. OSCAR takes the wrappings from the hat and puts them in the butt-filled ashtray on the coffee table. Then he 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 a steaming dish of spaghetti. As he crosses behind OSCAR to the table, he indicates that it smells delicious 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 a can of aerosol spray from the bar, and circling the table, sprays all around FELIX, then puts the can down next to him and goes back to his newspaper.

FELIX (*Pushing the 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?

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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, takes a 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.

(*He sits back down on the 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 the key and moves to the 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 toward the hallway*)

OSCAR Where are you going?

FELIX I'm going to walk around your bedroom.

OSCAR (*Slams down his 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*)

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and slams them down on the 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 the 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! Ha, ha!

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!

(He paces by the 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 the 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.

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It's your mess. (*Looking into the kitchen again*) Look at it. Hanging all over the walls.

OSCAR (*Crosses to the landing and looks in the kitchen door*) I like it.

(*He closes the door and paces around*)

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 the kitchen. OSCAR chases after him. There is the sound of a struggle and falling pots*)

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

FELIX (*Dashes out of the kitchen with OSCAR in pursuit. He 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 the table with a great pretense of calm*) All right, Oscar, I'd like to know what's happened?

OSCAR (*Moves toward 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?

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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 toward 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!

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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.

(He starts toward 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 the table, places both hands on it and leans toward FELIX)* If you've got anything on your chest besides your chin, you'd better get it off.

FELIX *(Strides to the table, places both hands on it and leans toward 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.

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

FELIX It's coming now! You're also one of the biggest slobbs 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?

(*He crosses to the 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 into 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 (*Is hurt by this, then remembers something. He 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