

OLIVE. You'll be the first one I call, Vera. (*VERA nods and leaves.*)

MICKY. (*to OLIVE*) You sure?

OLIVE. I'm sure.

MICKY. (*loud, to FLORENCE*) Goodnight, Florence. Try to get a good night's sleep. I guarantee you things are going to look a lot brighter in the morning. (*to OLIVE, whispers*) Hide all your belts and plastic bags. (*OLIVE closes the door, looks at FLORENCE, then slowly crosses into the room.*)

OLIVE. Ohh, Florence, Florence, Florence, Florence.

FLORENCE. I know, I know, I know, I know . . . What am I going to do, Olive?

OLIVE. You're going to wash down those pills with some hot black coffee. I'll make it.

FLORENCE. The terrible thing is, I still love him. It's a lousy marriage, but I still love him. I didn't want this divorce.

OLIVE. You want a brownie? A chocolate brownie? It's about three weeks old but I could toast it.

FLORENCE. If Sidney and I break up, I'll be the first one in my family to be divorced.

OLIVE. You told me your mother and father were divorced.

FLORENCE. I mean since them . . . My sister is still married . . . Separated but married.

OLIVE. How about some espresso? With Stella D'Oro cookies?

FLORENCE. How *dare* he treat me like this? How *dare* he? (*In anger, she bangs her fist down on the arm of the chair and suddenly grabs her neck in great pain.*) Oh! Oh, my neck! My neck!

OLIVE. What did you do?

FLORENCE. (*holding her neck*) It's a nerve spasm. I get it in the neck. Oh, God. Oh, God, it hurts.

OLIVE. What can I do?

FLORENCE. A towel. Get me a hot towel. Very hot.

OLIVE. Right. What about some aspirins?

FLORENCE. Aspirin is good . . . And some brandy

. . . I can't move my neck.

OLIVE. Hot towel, aspirin and brandy. Anything else?

FLORENCE. Ben-Gay. To rub in after.

OLIVE. Right. (*starts inside*)

FLORENCE. And a scarf. A woolen scarf . . . Cashmere is better if you have one. (*paces, rubbing neck*) I knew something was coming, Olive. I knew we were in trouble. In the middle of the night I'd tiptoe into the bathroom and I would pray, "Please, God, please help me save my marriage. Please, God, tell me what to do. Tell me what I'm doing wrong. Please, God, help me" . . . And then I'd hear Sidney in the bedroom saying, "Please, God, make her shut up. Tell her to be quiet, please, God" . . .

OLIVE. (*comes back in with tray of medicants*) . . . Here. Put the scarf on. Take your aspirins.

FLORENCE. (*sits at table*) I'm not a complainer. I've never once tried to change Sidney . . . He wears a toupee two sizes too big, he looks like an English sheep dog, I never said a word.

OLIVE. Drink them down with brandy.

FLORENCE. Now he's into cowboy boots. Five foot three and a half, he wears cowboy boots. They come up to his knees . . . He looks like he jumped off a hundred foot horse. He's also into languages. He's studying Russian at the New School. Instead of yes, he says, "Da." Everything is "Da."

OLIVE. You're tensing up again, Florence. Stop tensing.

FLORENCE. I'm married to a five foot three inch man with an oversized toupee and boots up to his knees who

walks around saying, "Da," and he walks out on *ME???*

OLIVE. Will you relax!! RELAX, dammit! Your neck feels like Arnold Schwarzenegger.

FLORENCE. Sometimes I think I'm crazy. Sometimes I think I should be put in an institution.

OLIVE. Later, if the massage doesn't work.

FLORENCE. That doesn't smell like Ben-Gay.

OLIVE. (*looks at tube*) You're right. It's toothpaste.

FLORENCE. I don't think this is helping me. (*She wipes off toothpaste with towel.*)

OLIVE. Because you won't relax. Have you always been this tense?

FLORENCE. Since I was a baby. I could chew a thick sirloin steak just with my gums.

OLIVE. Bend over. (*FLORENCE bends over. OLIVE begins to massage up and down her back.*)

FLORENCE. I do terrible things, Olive. I cry. I panic. I get hysterical.

OLIVE. (*still massaging*) If this hurts just tell me because I don't know what the hell I'm doing.

FLORENCE. I take advantage of you, Olive. I abuse our friendship. I know I drive you crazy.

OLIVE. No, you don't.

FLORENCE. Yes, I do.

OLIVE. You don't.

FLORENCE. I do. I see you grit your teeth together when I talk to you. You used to have much longer teeth.

OLIVE. (*stops massaging*) Okay. How does your neck feel?

FLORENCE. Better.

OLIVE. Good.

FLORENCE. But it never lasts long.

OLIVE. Maybe this time.

FLORENCE. No. It just came back. (*She rubs neck again.*)

OLIVE. (*shakes head in despair*) Drink your brandy.

FLORENCE. I don't think I can. It doesn't go down.

OLIVE. I'll get you a plunger . . . Come on, drink the brandy. You'll feel better.

FLORENCE. Thank God the kids are away at summer camp. They'll be spared this until September.

OLIVE. Please drink your brandy.

FLORENCE. I don't want to get divorced, Olive. I don't want to suddenly change my whole life. Talk to me. Tell me what to do.

OLIVE. Alright, alright. First of all, you're going to calm down and relax. Then you and I are going to figure out a whole new life for you.

FLORENCE. Without Sidney? What kind of a life is there without Sidney?

OLIVE. I don't live with Sidney and I'm very happy. You can do it, Florence, believe me.

FLORENCE. Olive, you've been through it yourself. What did you do? How did you get through it?

OLIVE. (*She drinks some brandy.*) I drank for four days and five nights. I couldn't work. I ate a quart of Haagen-Dazs jamocha almond fudge every night. I gained fourteen pounds, seven on each hip. I looked like I was carrying my laundry in my pockets . . . But I got through it.

FLORENCE. And what about Sidney? He's human too. How's he going to get through this?

OLIVE. He's a man. Men have freedom. He can meet women anywhere. *We* have to donate a kidney and hope the man is grateful and single.

FLORENCE. You think Sidney is thinking of other women? At a time like this?

OLIVE. I guarantee you by tomorrow night he'll be at a singles bar sitting on a stool on top of two telephone books.