



They Don't Have *Earthquakes*
in the BRONX
(A Movie adapted from the Play)
By
Sidney Goldberg

Please Contact:

All rights reserved.
©TXU 1-576826 rewrite 2001

Sidney Goldberg
20 West Palisade Avenue #3120
Englewood, NJ 07631
201 567-6533
Sidneyg6@gmail.com
www.SidneyGoldbergWriter.com

They Don't Have *Earthquakes* in the Bronx

Cast

- DR. ZIFF**.....60ish. Dedicated Jewish psychiatrist, who has spent his life, treating underprivileged people in the South Bronx. Upon the death of Charlie, his best friend and partner, HE goes through a hysterical and tumultuous midlife, identity crisis.
- DEEDLY**.....50ish. Ziff's loving and supportive wife.
- SOPHIE**.....50ish, Deedle's colorful and ballsy sister.
- MENDY**.....60ish. Ziff's oldest friend. Slick and devious, a big time Hollywood manager.
- ONI ROMANTICA**.....20ish. Puerto Rican taxi driver. handsome, the supposed next Elvis and very funny.
- MRS. ROSELLI**.....40ish. A patient of Ziff's for many years, over sexed, Italian Catholic, that never had an orgasm. Strong, comedic actress.

INT. A couple of years ago. Noon. There is one large common. The living room is to the left and the kitchen is to the right. A bathroom door is right. Furnishings denoted are of aged affluence. There's a large draped mirror, oriental rug, oil painting, two armchairs, photographs, end tables, lamps etc. A table with lots of food on it and a clock in the kitchen. ZIFF has a thick gray mustache, blue, buttoned sweater and is clutching a porcelain urn. The phone will ring throughout which HE will disregard. Whenever HE talks to CHARLEY we hear "Kol Nidre" on a sad cello. 1

ZIFF

(ZIFF speaking to an urn.)

Charley, I still can't believe you're not here. How could you leave me, your best friend, your partner. You didn't even say goodbye. You just had a heart attack and "pffft." And why you wanted to be cremated, I'll never understand. Jews are not supposed to be cremated. And what do I know from sitting 'Shiva?' Am I religious? 40 years ago my grandfather died. That was last time. Deedle got a wooden box for me to sit on and she covered the mirrors, and I'm taking the whole week off. I hope I'm doing it right, because you deserved it. More than anyone, you deserved it... And I know you would have done the same for me, not that I would want to be cremated... Too hot. I know how disappointed you were that Sophie didn't show up, but she couldn't catch a flight, and what are you making such a big deal for, she'll be here any minute... I was also surprised to see

(MORE)

ZIFF (Cont'd)

that big-shot, Mendy-the-Manager finally show up after all these years... When he drove us home in his stretch limo, for a second I thought he changed... until he cackled, "The smart pick L.A. and Ziffy picked the Bronx! Ziffy picked the Bronx while Mendy ate caviar. Caviar." and he laughed... You're right, Charley, even though you only got six little lines in the N.Y. Post, we did the right thing, didn't we Charley? I don't question the life we chose for a moment. Not a moment. Really, I promise... You didn't waste your life. You helped a lot of people. We helped a lot of people, didn't we...? Why am I crying? I don't know what I'm going to do with out you. (Picks up frying pan and looks at his reflection in it.)

You see all these wrinkles, Charley? I got so old lately... What will people think if they see me talking to a ghost? Let them think what they want. Who cares...

(Distracted, he finally notices phone ringing.)

What, what is it?

(Answers phone.)

Dr. Ziff speaking... Oh, hello Mendy... Yeah, Deedle went to Kennedy to pick up Sophie... You want to come up? All right, come up.

(Hangs up phone and

(MORE)

ZIFF (Cont'd)
resumes talkin' to Charley.)
You hear that Charley, we
haven't seen that chorlehrya
in three years and suddenly
out of no-where he pops up
and says he wants to sit a
little '*Shiva*' for you.
Probably sit two minutes.
What audacity, because I can
assure you he won't cover all
his mirrors and he definitely
won't sit on a wooden box.
"Too many splinters," he'll
say. Remember when he use to
call me his best friend...?
You're right Charley, once a
bullshit artist always a
bullshit artist.

Down stair door buzzer rings, ZIFF buzzes him in.

ZIFF (cont'd)
That's probably why he became
the most successful manager
in show-bizzz. I wonder how
many millions he has and what
about his estate in Beverly
Hills?

There's a knock on the door, Mendy opens it and enters
doing a soft-shoe.

MENDY
I bet no one ever called you
from a limo before, Ziffy.
(Looks at surroundings.)
Except for you going bald,
nothing ever changes, does
(Sings.)
*it. "Mem'ries, la da da da
da..."* I've been trying to
reach you for hours, where
were you? Didn't I tell you
I wanted to sit a little
'*Shiva*' with you?
(MORE)

MENDY (Cont'd)

(Sits-gets up.)

Nu...? That's enough for the
'Shiva, don'tcha think?.'
So, did Mendy-the- Manager
create a happening at the
funeral parlor, or did I
create a happening?

ZIFF

You certainly did.

MENDY

I mean, you and Deedle looked
as if your best friend died,
(Does soft shoe.)
so I did a little soft shoe
and everybody lightened up,
didn't we? That's a joke,
Ziffy. You and Deedle looked
as if your best friend died,
is a joke. You also think
that Charley died because he
was so fat. Too much
cholesterol, right, doctor?
BULLSHIT! Anonymity was the
destruction of our best
friend; Anonymity, and if
you don't wise up, it'll be
your epitaph too.

ZIFF

(Feeling old and vulnerable.)
My epitaph? What makes you
say my epitaph?

MENDY

Didn't I predict when I left
for the coast nine million
years ago, that eventually
the Bronx would kill my two
best friends...? Hey, that
sounds like possibly a movie.
Yeah, I can see it all now.
Instead of "Death of a

(MORE)

MENDY (Cont'd)

Salesman," this one'll be called "Death of a Bronx Psychiatrist." When you go Ziffy, I bet you won't
(Laughs.)
even get six lines in the Post...

ZIFF

(To urn.)
...And I could hardly see them... I'm sorry they were
(Holds two fingers together.)
so small, Charley.

MENDY

The payoff Charley received was disgusting, I mean it was embarrassing. You guys always said I was wasting my life pursuing fame and fortune. Well, who do you think's right, now,
(Looks at food on table.)
Ziff...? What, no caviar? The last time I saw you, you didn't have caviar either...
So, uh, how is she?

ZIFF

Deedle's fine, thank you.

MENDY

Come on, not Deedle... you know who I mean, don'tcha?

ZIFF

You mean, Sophie, don't you. Hmmm. She's a successful business woman. She has children's shoe stores all over South Miami. With all the famous woman you said you've dated, you still think about Sophie?

MENDY

So, how come she wasn't at the funeral? Not that I care.

ZIFF

She'll be here soon. Why don't you ask her yourself? You probably haven't spoken to her in 30 years. It's been along a long time, Mendy, a long time.

MENDY

Why don't you ask her yourself and talking about long times; how long has your adorable wife been putting up with your psychological B.S.?

ZIFF

Soon it will be forty years... and Charley almost as long.

MENDY

Six lines in the Post, Ziffy and you could hardly see them, remember? How many years have you donated to the poor, Ziff? And what did it get you or your beloved partner? Six lines in the Post? That's some payoff, don't you think?

Sadly, ZIFF places two fingers together.

MENDY (cont'd)

...That's going to be your payoff too, dummy, unless
(Sings.)
you... *"Wake up, wake up you sleepy head. Get up, get up, get out of bed."*

ZIFF

(To urn.)
You hear that, Charley.
Suddenly he's become a song
and dance man.

MENDY

Who ya talking to?

ZIFF

(Embarrassed, whispers.)
Charley.

MENDY

Really?

ZIFF coyishly nods yes.

MENDY (cont'd)

Ziff, are you all right?

ZIFF, signals, so-so.

MENDY (cont'd)

Well then, give him my
regards and make sure you
tell him how much I miss him.

ZIFF

(Tries to give urn to Mendy.)
Here, why don't you tell him
yourself?

MENDY

(Uncomfortable with urn.)
No, Ziffy, please, I'd rather
not.

ZIFF

What do you mean, you'd
rather not? Take it, he was
(tries push urn on Mendy.)
your friend too.

MENDY

(pushes urn away.)
Forget it, will you please?

The urn falls and shatters. Mendy finds it all very funny as ZIFF, in utter desperation rips open his tobacco pouch, dumps out it's contents puts the ashes into it.

MENDY

OOPS!

ZIFF

CHARLEY! I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry. I'll put you in my tobacco pouch and I promise you'll be with me forever. Always.

MENDY

ZIFF, GET A DUST BUSTER! GET AN ORICK! GET THIS *SCHMUTZ* OUTAHERE! Don't tell Charley, but I think there's a little in the corner, near the window... Near the window. The near window. It's definitely a movie. Yeah, maybe Dinero. I'd say perfect.

ZIFF

Robert Dinero, really?

MENDY

They scatter his ashes in the romantic Bronx River. I bet Newman'll love it too.

ZIFF

You mean Paul Newman?

MENDY

No, Phyllis Newman. Of course I mean Paul Newman. At your age, you should be treating movie stars like Hoffman and Pacino.

ZIFF

Me treating Dustin Hoffman and Al Pacino?

MENDY

That's what you deserve,
boichic, movie stars.

ZIFF

And what about Goldie Hawn?

MENDY

Who ever you want. I'm
talking about twelve million
meshugeneh stars that live in
L.A. and I either manage or
know them all personally... I
can see it all now, Ziffy.
Sitting at your pool munching
on caviar and sipping pina
coladas with sexy Deedle.
Treating maybe five, six
movie stars a week and you'll
make a fortune.

ZIFF

Me, treating movie stars and
I'll make a fortune?

MENDY

Who's better qualified, Mr.
Genius? And in case you
haven't noticed, like you
baldy, the neighborhood's
changed. I know a big
developer and I mean BIG!
Probably can get you a bundle
for this old house. What do
you need it for...? We
haven't been best friends all
these years for nothing...
Ziffy, I don't know how to
ask you this, but I need you
to do me a favor... I
wouldn't ask you if I didn't
have so much riding on this
kid. He's a brand new singer
that has a voice, the
greatest voice since Presley.

(MORE)

MEND (Cont'd)

I discovered him driving a cab when I was in town about eight or nine months ago.

ZIFF

It's been at least three years since I saw you and you were in town eight or nine months ago?

MENDY

Eight, nine, ten months. Who can remember. And how I discovered this kid is another movie all together. His name is Oni Romantica, (Forgets names.)
uh, ladada, dadada, dadada. Typical, just typical. The prototype. A true blue, born-and-bred poor Spanish kid with a million names, a million names. Believe me, I know you'll help this kid sing again, 'cause who's better than you. Ziffy, I'm counting on you. I really need your help, this time.

ZIFF

I'd really love to help you and this Oni Romantica, but unfortunately I have to sit 'Shiva' for Charley on this box. Here, why don't you try it?

MENDY

A wooden Box...? I should sit on a wooden box in these Armani pants?

ZIFF

Besides, Deedle told me she made arrangements to have my office redecorated, tomorrow, so, it's out of the question.

MENDY

If you won't do it for yourself, do it for Deedle. Who loves you more than your wife and me? And like Charley, no one will ever know you existed... Pina coladas, Ziffy. Pina coladas. Don't you understand?

ZIFF

Pina coladas?

MENDY

And don't forget the caviar.

ZIFF

And don't you forget about Sophie.

MENDY

Do me a favor a drop the Sophie bit, alright? And on Wednesdays, just to make you feel at home, I'm sure I can round up all the poor Spanish kids you want to help. In the mean time, tell me when I can bring Oni over for a little of your magic? Do this one thing for me and I promise AN-Y-THING. Anything for a best friend. Name it
(looks at watch)
and it's yours. Listen, I got an appointment with Mayor Giuliani, so I have to run. I'll call you later about Oni Romantica... ladada,
(MORE)

MENDY (Cont'd)

(hugs Ziff)

dadada, dadada. You're the
only best friend I have left,
Ziffy. I'm counting on you.
I'm really counting on you...
(exits)
Later.

We see ZIFF, and hear Kol Nidre.

ZIFF

You like the idea about
treating movie stars
Charley...? That's not true,
that's just not true. Just
because Mendy-the-Manager got
all those movie stars,
doesn't mean we made a
mistake about living in the
Bronx. You're not so sure
anymore. Well, who did more
good here than you, Mother
Theresa...? They wrote a
dozen books about Schweitzer
in Africa and not a word
about you... I'm sorry, I
forgot about the six lines in
the Post. Sure they count...
No body cares about the
Bronx, Charley? You really
think so?

INT: DEEDLE and SOPHIE with suitcase enter and stare at 2
ZIFF who, after staring this reflection in frying pans,
etc., examines HIS face, hands and especially a little
later mustache while clutching pouch. HE opens mouth to
talk to pouch, but catches himself and shakes head, no, in
response.

SOPHIE

(talking to Ziff)

Hello, Ziffy. Sorry about
Charley. He was very
special... I travel
(MORE)

SOPHIE (Cont'd)
fifteen-hundred miles to pay
my favorite brother-in-law a
little respect and does he
even give me a kiss? No-o-o.

ZIFF
(remorseful)
Hello Sophie.

SOPHIE goes to KISS ZIFF, HE offers cheek. SOPHIE reacts.
After a beat telephone rings. DEEDLE rushes into kitchen,
on cue waving goodbye to ZIFF, SOPHIE follows. DEEDLE
places clothes on chair and will ALWAYS answer in English
accent.

DEEDLE
Don't go anywhere, I'll be
(into phone)
right back. At the sound of
the beep, you will have
thirty seconds, please speak
distinctly and leave your
name,...

A despondent ZIFF waves goodbye to the air. Ashes spew as
HE enters kitchen, sits on box and HE rests head on table.
SOPHIE looks HIM.

DEEDLE (Cont'd)
...telephone number and Dr.
Ziff will return your call as
soon as possible...
Sometimes, a beep takes a
long time...
Beep!

DEEDLE writes on pad. Clutching pouch, ZIFF will not
respond.

SOPHIE
Deedle, ya know they have
answering machines
now-a-days. When are you
going to stop? You've been
(MORE)

SOPHIE (Cont'd)
beeping for thirty years.
Enough with the beeping!...
Hello Ziffy, remember me?

ZIFF does not respond, DEEDLE returns to SOPHIE.

SOPHIE (Cont'd)
DEEDLE, I remember exactly
when I was here last, April
6th. It was very cold in
Miami that week. With out me
there, they sold 311 pairs of
shoes. Maybe I should come
to see you more often?

DEEDLE
I heard that story before,
Sophie.

Banging empty pipe, ZIFF removes HIS shoes and tosses them
uncaringly as HE ambles.

SOPHIE
Now I can see why you're
going nuts. He used to be so
neat. Everything had to be
perfect.

DEEDLE
Now, look at him.

SOPHIE
Do I have to?

DEEDLE
YES!

SOPHIE
Did you see the big hello he
gave me? What did I do? He
was always so happy to see
me.

DEEDLE

You know how much he loves
you, Sophie.

(to Ziff)

Are you looking for your
slippers?...

ZIFF grunts yes.

SOPHIE

...Better he should find his
disposition.

DEEDLE

(to Ziff)

Under the radiator in the
living room.

Ambling, ZIFF picks up frying pan and looks into it, as HE
strokes HIS mustache. SOPHIE unwraps plate on table.

SOPHIE

I'm famished, this smells
"delicious."

DEEDLE

Everyone that's paid a *Shiva*
call, brought something.
Roast CHICKEN, a little
CHICKEN soup with MATZOH
balls, CHICKEN fricasee,
gedempt CHICKEN, CHICKEN
salad, CHICKEN paprika,
CHICKEN cacciatore, CHICKEN
chow mein...

SOPHIE

...Don't tell me he started
treating Frank Perdue?...

ZIFF

Not Frank Perdue, not even
Colonel Sanders... Nobody
big. Nobody.

DEEDLE

Ziffy, that was Mrs. Roselli on the phone. She's going to be a few minutes late. Why don't you get ready?

ZIFF

I don't want any patients. I have no patience for
(exits to bathroom)
patients!

DEEDLE

He's so mixed up. My sweetheart is literally
(whispers)
falling apart... I heard him talking to Charley.

SOPHIE

Oh, don't be silly. He hasn't been a psychiatrist all these years for nothing. Ziffy's too smart to be talking to ghosts.

ZIFF

(WE hear Ziff scream.)
HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT CHARLEY?"

DEEDLE

Did you hear him?

SOPHIE

No, only you heard him... I wonder what it means when you start talking to ghosts?

DEEDLE

Maybe he's tired of talking to me.

SOPHIE

(laughs)

I'm the only one that's tired
of talking to you.

DEEDLE

Do you think he's talking to
Charley because he's afraid
of dying?

SOPHIE

He's not afraid of dying.
He's just questioning his
entire existence, that's all.

DEEDLE

Including me?

SOPHIE

Not you, not you and who's
Mrs. Roselli?

DEEDLE

She said she absolutely had
to see him. She's a patient
that's been coming to him for
at least 15 years.

SOPHIE

Treating the same person for
15 years. That's not saying
too much for my favorite
brother-in-law.

DEEDLE

Oh, stop with your favorite
brother-in-law... What a
week, since we're going to
celebrate our fortieth, I
made arrangements last week
to have Ziffy's office
redecorated and Charley dies.
Nu?

SOPHIE

Poor Charley. he never had good timing. But don't change the subject. Who's this Roselli and why has she been seeing your husband for so long?

DEEDLE

You should see her. She used to be some sex-pot, but she has luck I wouldn't wish on your worst enemy.

SOPHIE

Tell me more.

DEEDLE

I really shouldn't.

SOPHIE

But you will, won't you.

DEEDLE

Her new name she said was Mrs. Roselli. Must be at least two, two-and-a-half years since she was here. She's been married five or six times, who knows? She's a regular Zsa. Soon as I heard the desperation in her voice, I knew she needed an appointment.

SOPHIE

That *meshugeh*, huh?

DEEDLE

Oh, stop. I told him that she said it was an emergency, you know how dedicated he is. He's going to see her in the living room. She'll be here any second. Come, Sophie, we'll go to the store for a few things.

SOPHIE

I think I'd rather stay and
watch him fall apart.

DEEDLE

Never mind, you're coming
with me.

ZIFF enters without mustache.

DEEDLE (cont'd)

ZIFFY! YOU SHAVED YOUR
MUSTACHE! YOU LOOK
WONDERFUL! You look so
young, so handsome.

SOPHIE

A regular Michael Douglas.
You better be careful DEEDLE,
every woman on the block is
going to run after him.
Especially that Roselli
sex-pot.

DEEDLE

Oh, stop.

buzzer rings and DEEDLE answers it.

DEEDLE

Who is it?

ROSELLI

(o/s on intercom)
It's Mrs. Roselli.

DEEDLE buzzes her in.

DEEDLE

Dr. Ziff's waiting for you up
here.

After a beat MRS. ROSELLI enters.

DEEDLE (cont'd)

Mrs. Roselli, it's been quite awhile... How are you? This is my sister Sophie. Well, we have to be going, goodbye.

DEEDLE and SOPHIE, eyeing MRS. ROSELLI, exit.

MRS. ROSELLI

Dr. Ziff, what happened to your stash? I don't believe it but you look gorgeous. What a hunk.

ZIFF

Sorry for the inconvenience, Maria. Please have a seat on the couch.

SHE sits and ogles draped mirror as ZIFF ambles.

ROSELLI

So, I see you're getting your office redone. It needed it.

ZIFF

Unfortunately these plans were made before you made an appointment... How have you been these past couple years?

ROSELLI makes so-so with hand. ZIFF goes to file cabinet, removes file and scans it.

ZIFF (cont'd)

(looks at note book)

Now, according to my notes... the last time you, you were about to get married to...

ROSELLI

(Smiles because Ziff remembers, then cries.)
Johnny.

ZIFF

Yes, Johnny C...

ROSELLI

NO, big Johnny R... I had two Johnnies in-a-row and neither of them were any good... He lasted all of two years.

ZIFF

(writing)

Big Johnny R. Two years. I'm so sorry, Maria. My condolences.

ROSELLI

I've had it with condolences up to here. I'm tired of wearing black. I'm tired of driving out to the cemetery. They all know me by my first name... Why do I keep getting married? I can't take it any more. And you, you should have cut that stash off years ago. Anybody ever tell you that you have some gorgeous lips. And what's with that wife of yours? I told her that I had to see you and she gives me this garbage that you're gonna be shivering the whole week. You look pretty hot to me, despite your shivering.

ZIFF

I'm not shivering. I am sitting shiver on this box; which means I am in mourning.

ROSELLI

I got five dead husbands and he says he's in mourning.

ZIFF

After practicing in the Bronx
for thirty five years,

(holds pouch)

these ashes are all that's
left of my beset friend, Dr.
Charles Green His ashes and
six lines in the Post.

(sobs, holds two fingers
together)

They were this big.

SOPHIE

I'm sorry, I don't read the
Post. I didn't know Dr.
Green died, but if I was you,
I'd put that thing away
before there's nothing left.
It's dripping. Ya know, you
just solved a major problem
for me.

ZIFF

Really?

SOPHIE

I'm going to cremate the
next, pardon the expression,
sonofabitch, just like you
did with your best friend...
Want to look at your notes or
something? And why don't
stop walking and sit next to
me already?

ZIFF

I can only sit on this wooden
box.

ROSELLI

Well, I'm getting a headache
yelling across the room.

ZIFF

Would you like some Tylenol?

ROSELLI

No, but for some strange
reason I think I'm getting a
little...

ZIFF

...A little?

ROSELLI

You know, without your stash,
you make feel a little
horny. Imagine that. Me,
Mrs. Proper just said

(Dreamy.)

"Horny." Yeah, I never said
"Horny" out loud before, but
I sure like the way it
sounds, "Horny." I like the
way it sounds, "Horny."

ZIFF

Transference! Merely
imagination. Throughout
history, many
patients have been known to
romanticize about their
therapists.

ROSELLI

Exactly what I need, a little
romance in my doctor's
office. That oughta do the
trick. After all, I can't
think of anything more
romantic at the moment, can
you?

SHE rises, unbuttons blouse and moves towards ZIFF, who
backs off accordingly.

ZIFF

MARIA! You have never
reacted like this before.
What's the matter with you?
Try and understand that I've
been faithfully married for
almost 40 years.

ROSELLI

Well, I think it's time you sampled some native dessert, don't you?

ZIFF

It is entirely unethical for me to eat dessert with any of my patients.

ROSELLI

I don't give a damn about any of your patients! Just do it to me...! Ain't it something how I just figured out why I've been coming to you all these years. "Coming," that's funny, me "Coming." Yeah, I like the way it sounds, "Coming." I want you, you sexy devil. Let's make a little hootchy-cootchy (purses lips and wiggles tongue.) and maybe I'll finally have a...

ZIFF

MARIA! You must stop this immediately!

ROSELLI

I can't...

ZIFF

You must!

ROSELLI

I don't want to.
(wiggles tongue and sings)
"This is the moment, I've been waiting for."

ZIFF

My wife will be home any moment. Now, if you do not gain your composure and control yourself, I will have to ask you to leave.

ROSELLI

Leave huh? No way... I'll show you mine if you let me see yours...

ZIFF

MARIA! I don't know what's gotten into you, but I'm certain that you came here to discuss something more important.

ROSELLI

Don't try and change the subject. I'm wise to you mister. You're playing hard to get, because you know I like it. It turns me on. How many times have you written that, doctor...? Tony, my first husband, may he rest in peace was like that until he finally conked out on me... I thought I was finally going to get my rocks off like all those young broads you read about in those girlie magazines and then he conked out on me.

ZIFF

Conked out... Please continue.

ROSELLI

We were only doing it, maybe one, I swear to Christ, the most, two hours. I should have believed him when he said he couldn't do it any more. (MORE)

ROSELLI (Cont'd)

I should have believed all those old bastards. Tony, Carmine, Murray, Johnny C, Johnny R.

ZIFF

Big Johnny R.

ROSELLI

But you know all that shit
(dreamy)
already. "Shit." Don't you love the way it sounds? I probably told you this "Shit" a thousand times. I can't understand, Doc. They were all so big and strong. Shit.

ZIFF

And you think they were all playing hard to get.

ROSELLI

(passionately)

Always... Even though they all died, I got 'em. Those poor bastards left me a fortune, and now I'm going to get you and when I do... Come on, sit on your shiver box and for starters, I'll eat you all up...

ZIFF

(ala Deedle)

If you're hungry, we have roast CHICKEN, a little CHICKEN soup with matzo balls, CHICKEN fricassee, gedempt CHICKEN, CHICKEN salad, CHICKEN paprika, CHICKEN cacciatore, CHICKEN chow mein. ANYTHING you want.

ROSELLI

I told what I want! Now, why don't I sit on your shiver box with you and we'll shiver together.

SHE runs after ZIFF who evades her.

ZIFF

You must try and control yourself. Mrs. Roselli! I'm warning you for the last time!

Embarrassed, she sits on couch.

ROSELLI

I must be losing my mind. I'm sorry, I just deluded myself into thinking that maybe... You could make me have a... a...

ZIFF

A...?

ROSELLI

A... muh...

ZIFF

A... muh...?

ROSELLI

A... muh...

ZIFF

What's a muh?

ROSELLI

Even Halley's comet comes once every 76 years. What about me? Why you know more about me than anybody. I know you can give ma a... muh.

ZIFF

Tell me, what's a... muh...?

DEEDLE (o/s)

(from behind door)

I hope he's finished with
Mrs. Roselli.

ZIFF runs to door, opens it and DEEDLE and SOPHIE enter
with packages.

ZIFF

Deedle, I thought I heard you
and Sophie. Let me help you
with the packages.

DEEDLE

Is she gone?

ROSELLI

(buttoning blouse)

Hello and goodbye Mrs. Ziff.
I was just leaving...
Shivering huh?

DEEDLE and SOPHIE stare at her as she exits, buttoning her
blouse. SOPHIE rubs spine.

SOPHIE

You want a little Frank
Perdue?

DEEDLE

(smiles because she love her sister)
Maybe later... Ziffy?

ZIFF

What do you what now?

DEEDLE

Why was she buttoning up her
blouse when she ran out of
here?

ZIFF

You're asking me? You know I never discuss my patients with you.

DEEDLE

Ziffy? Ziffy?

ZIFF

(comes up with answer)
All right, all right, I'll tell you. All of a sudden... Mrs. Roselli seems to get these hot flashes and she panics. Yeah, that's why she was buttoning up her blouse. Hot flashes.

SOPHIE

FLASHES?! I get the flashes, but I don't go around flashing my buhbies, do I?

DEEDLE

Taste the kuhgle, I'm telling you it's delicious.

SOPHIE

We were just talking about flashing buhbies and you're still with the kuhgle? What's the matter with you?

DEEDLE

Sophie, I'm begging you. Please forget it.

There is an awkward silence.

ZIFF

Soon, you'll be sitting on this box for me because I'm dying. Did you hear that, Deedle. Slowly but surely I'm dying.

DEEDLE

(serves kuhgle)

Eat the kuhgle. I'm sure no
one ever died eating kuhgle.

ZIFF

Even if I did, who would
know? And don't say you
would know and you would
care. That's not enough...
Deedle, I don't want to end
up like...

Phone rings and DEEDLE answers it.

DEEDLE

(into phone, accent)

You have reached Dr. Ziff...
At the sound of the beep,
please leave your name and
telephone number and Dr. Ziff
will return your call as soon
as possible... Beep...! Wait,
Mendy, don't hang up.

ZIFF raises head.

DEEDLE (cont'd)

...Yes, I'm really talking to
you... That's right, in a few
days we'll be celebrating our
fortieth anniversary... Thank
you, Mendy, it was nice
seeing you, too. Hold on,
I'll get your oldest and best
friend.

ZIFF hurries to phone and appears very excited.

ZIFF
MENDY?

DEEDLE
Sit down, I'll bring you some
kuhgle.

SOPHIE

For your information, I didn't come here to eat kuhgle. And what is she, one of those flashers? Don't tell me you've let this go on between them for fifteen years?

DEEDLE

Oh, stop...

ZIFF

Ah, ha...!

SOPHIE

And why does "HE" keep calling? I don't understand. Doesn't Ziff remember he hasn't seen him in years. They're not friends anymore. No one's his friend.

ZIFF

You're a real friend, Mendy. Thank you.
(Hangs up, returns excitedly, puts pouch on table.)
You should have heard him. Soon as he gets back to the coast he promised to sprinkle Charley's ashes between Charley Chaplain and Charley McCarthy. Three Charleys. Together forever...

SOPHIE

Mark my words. Mendy, will throw his ashes in the garbage can, just like your friendship.

ZIFF

Remember when I told you about his new singer? The one he signed up in the cab? He needs me to help him, sweetheart. How could I say no, to my oldest and best friend? (MORE)

ZIFF (Cont'd)

This could be the opportunity
I've been waiting for.

DEEDLE

You see, I told you things
would get better.

ZIFF

This Oni Romantica, uh,
something, says he can't sing
anymore. Something about
bongos.

DEEDLE and SOPHIE

Bongos?

ZIFF

Yeah, Bongos! I haven't got
much time. He has to go on
tour next month with Gloria
Esteban...

SOPHIE

That's Estefan.

ZIFF

Yeah, what ever. Suddenly I
feel wonderful. They're
coming to see me this
afternoon. He also asked
about you, Sophie.

SOPHIE

About me? You have to be
kidding. Why would he still
ask about me?

DEEDLE

They're coming this
afternoon? Without an
appointment? And I thought
you said you were going to
sit 'Shiva?'

ZIFF

At two o'clock, and you know what else Mendy said? He owes me one. Anything I want. For a best friend, AN-Y-THING. And as far as me sitting 'Shiva,' I'm sure Charley will forgive me.

(Lights dim and we see only Ziff.)

I can't tell you what this means to me Charley... Wait a minute, wait a minute. Just because Mendy-the-Manager promised me an-y-thing, doesn't mean you're not included... Of course when they give me my star on Hollywood and Vine, your name's going to be right next to mine. You had to ask? We're still partners... Don't worry, soon as I start treating those big movie stars and I become famous, they'll all believe me. And Deedle will learn to like pina coladas. She has too. She just has too. And what do you mean you don't think Deedle and Sophie believe me about Mrs. Roselli's flashes? Why shouldn't they believe me...?

Preoccupied with self, downstairs buzzer rings and ZIFF buzzes back. Again we hear steps, familiar rap on door and MENDY opens it with Oni trailing, doing soft-shoe. MENDY is wearing sun glasses and Hawaiian shirt.

MENDY

You're sure she won't be here, because, after all these years, I'm just not in the mood to say hello.

(MORE)

MENDY (Cont'd)

I'm just not in the mood...
And it's time to meet my
number one protégé, Oni
(forgets all last names)
Romantica, uh, ladada, dadada,
dadada. Why this schmuck has
so many names I'll never
understand, GODDAMNIT! NEVER!

ZIFF

Pleas make your self
comfortable on the sofa, Mr.
Romantica, or do you prefer
Oni? I am very anxious to
help you with your temporary
and I mean temporary dilemma.

MENDY

(looking at food)
No caviar...?

ZIFF

Er, Oni, I like Stevie Wonder,
do you like Stevie Wonder?

ONI nods yes Vigorously.

ZIFF (cont'd)

What about Billy Joel? He's
still a good singer, isn't he?

Again ONI nods yes vigorously.

MENDY

Er, Ziff, I hate to interrupt
this tête-à-tête you got going
here, but, er, how the hell
does she look?

ZIFF

Obviously you are referring
to...

MENDY

...Sophie. Only because I'm a little pissed about how you "Implied" that I still dig her. After all the broads That I made with, I just don't understand you and you're supposed to be a shrink?

ZIFF

That was now implication and yes, as you so rudely put it, I am a shrink.

MENDY

I think Charley's six lines effected you more than it did him, because you are out of your snap, Dr. Shrink! You, are absurd, and I couldn't give two shits about her, because for your information, I made it with, Sharon, and Michelle and Liz...

ZIFF

...Liz, shmiz. I don't care. You don't have the honesty, the integrity to admit that you were wrong leaving Sophie, and that's it!

MENDY

That's it shit! You remember how I begged her, pleaded with her to move to L.A. with me, but she wouldn't live with me unless we got married. Well, I wasn't going to let her con me into getting married, no way, 'cause I always do what I want, remember?

ZIFF

Mendy, what are you doing here? The reason Oni isn't talking is because you're not giving him a chance. You have to leave. This, is unheard of.

MENDY

(angry)

Mr. Romantica! I got you this appointment with a great doctor. I'm trying to help you, Goddamnit! So, say something! Talk to him!

ONI nods no.

MENDY (cont'd)

All you do is nod your head, yes and no! What the hell's the matter with you?! I have a couple of million bucks tied up in you, don't you understand?!

ONI points to draped mirror. MENDY rests foot on wooden box.

MENDY (cont'd)

He's playing twenty questions, nu? Does it have to do with the draped mirror?

ONI nods yes.

MENDY (cont'd)

The draped mirror bothers you, right?

ONI nods yes.

MENDY (cont'd)

I knew, it, I knew it, I knew it. He wants you to undrape it, Ziff. So what are you waiting for?

ZIFF

I can't and for your
edification mister, I'm
supposed to be sitting "Shiva"
on this wooden box.

MENDY

(removes foot from box)

Oops...

ZIFF

..."Shiva" is a Jewish ritual
for the deceased, Oni. I'm
sorry we're up here where's
there no privacy, but
unfortunately my office is
being renovated. I suppose
you know that everything you
say will be held in the
strictest of confidence, that
is as soon as our mutual
associate leaves.

MENDY

Oh, I get it, I understand.
I'm outa here. Just help this
kid sing for me and every
major star on the planet is
yours for the asking, Ziffy.
Every one... Listen, I gotta
run. Lunch at the Friars,
Sinatra's room. Oni, tell him
everything and fast. You got
a photo session in an hour.
The limo will be back to pick

(to Ziff)

you up in one hour. And Ziff,
do me a favor and stop with
the Sophie bit, already. That
was a million years ago. To
tell you the truth, I don't
even remember what she looks
like. My, how times flies
when you're having a good

(Look at watch, exits.)

time. I got to run. Ciao.

ZIFF

Mr. Romantica, have you ever visited a psychiatrist before?

ONI nods yes.

ZIFF (cont'd)

May I ask how many times

ONI raises ten fingers.

ZIFF (cont'd)

You've visited ten different psychiatrists?

ONI nods yes.

ZIFF (cont'd)

Extraordinary and you're so young.

ONI nods yes.

ZIFF (cont'd)

Would you like me to continue asking you questions?

ONI nods no.

ZIFF (cont'd)

I see... Do you have a mother and father?

ONI nods so-so.

ZIFF (cont'd)

Does that mean you have a mother?

ONI nods no.

ZIFF (cont'd)

I'm sorry. What about your father? Would you prefer to speak about him?

ONI waves later.

ZIFF (cont'd)
Fine, we'll discuss your
father later... Any sisters
and brother?

ONI holds up three fingers on left hand and two on right
hand.

ZIFF (cont'd)
You have three sister and two
brothers?

ONI nods no.

ZIFF (cont'd)
Then you have three brothers
and two sisters.

ONI nods no.

ZIFF (cont'd)
(annoyed, hold up three and two fingers)
Well then, what does this
mean?

ONI
(Spanish accent)
Fi sisters...
(holds up three fingers on left hand)
Tree older...
(two fingers on right hand)
...and two junger.

ZIFF
Any of your sisters have any
talent like you?

ONI
My sister Carmen is a dancer
and she would be real good
too, but...

ZIFF
Please continue.

ONI
She has flat feet.

ZIFF

I can assure you that your sister Carmen's flat feet has nothing to do with your temporary and I mean temporary dilemma.

ONI

I mean she's a real good dancer and she was just about to make it too, but, when you least expect it, flat feet. It's always something, ain't it? She had to have flat feet.

ZIFF

Would you like to tell me why you are here?

ONI nods yes.

ZIFF (cont'd)

You may begin.

After a beat, ONI gulps.

ONI

I really don't understand, Doc. Soon as I start to sing, it feels like somebody's using my tonsils as bongos. I can't figure it out. It used to be the other way around. Because of my accent, whenever I tried to talk in school or in public, I was so embarrassed that I'd die. But singing always made me feel real good.

ZIFF

The way you sound, that is very understandable. I can see why you were happy when you sang.

ONI nods yes and points to kitchen.

ZIFF (cont'd)

And you want to be happy again
and sing as soon as possible,
don't you?

ONI

(nods yes and points to draped mirror)
Even though that thing gives
me the creeps, it sure smells
pretty good in here. You sure
have a lot of food, amigo.
Are you gonna have a party or
something?

ZIFF

When you sit "*Shiva*," people
come and pay their respect.
Uncomfortable with death, they
don't know what to say, so
they bring food and stuff
their mouths.

ONI

Hewish people are berry smart.
Instead of carrying on like we
(Spanish crying mantra)
do when somebody dies... Ju
cover jour mirrors, ju sit on
a box and have a feast. What
a great idea. What do ju
think? Maybe I should become
Hewish like you and my
manager?

ZIFF

I don't think so. We got
enough "*Tsores*" with out you/
Now, would you like to
continue?

ONI

Ju want me to start with my
Poppi?

ZIFF

Poppi sound fine.

ONI

The day I was born, he told all his amigos that I was going to be the next Elvis. That's why I was Christened, Oni Romantica Jose Elvis Garcia.

ZIFF

Did you say Elvis?

ONI

Yeah, you see, Poppi had this grande visones that I was gonna make him rich. That's why he called me Elvis. Since I was his only son to carry on the Garcia name, he was determines that I would become rich and famous, because he always thought "He" should be rich and famous... Soon as I opened my mouth and went to el banyo, he made me sing. I guess that's the least I could have done for him, no? My Poppi is quite a guy., isn't he? When he heard I was a *dribbing* a cab, he wrote he was too embarrassed and he wouldn't tell his amigos until I make it. Only then should I write him... I wish I could his face when he reads that I'm going on tour with Gloria Estefan.

ZIFF

I hear she's quite famous.

ONI

She's berry famous and Mendy says I'm gonna be bery famous too.

ZIFF

I'm sure soon as you start to sing, you will become very famous, Oni, because if Mendy-the-manager says you got it, you got it.

ONI

Now, I don't want you to get the wrong impression about my Poppi. He just feels me, his only son and "him" deserve more. That's the reason he wants me to make it bery big.

ZIFF

Would you tell me what you were doing the moment before you lost your beautiful voice?

ONI yes.

ZIFF

Well, what are you waiting for?

ONI

I think it happened right after I ate Cheerios.

ZIFF

Cheerios, I see. Hmmm.

ONI

Or maybe it was after I had Chinese. You know with those noodles and that hot mustard. I love Chinese.

ZIFF

Noodles and mustard. How interesting.

ONI

I saw Larry King on C.N.N.

ZIFF

Larry King... Extraordinary...
Mmmm.

ONI

Now, I can't even sing in the
chower. Bongos man, bongos.
(looks at watch)
Look at time. The limo must
be waiting for me. Dey gonna
take my picture.

ZIFF

I can try and help you sing
again, but I must see you as
soon and as often as possible.

ONI

I know you gonna help me sing
real soon, 'cause I wanna make
it real bad. Yust when my
sister Carmen was gonna make
it... flat feet. Ai
Chihuahua, it's always
something, ain't it. And even
though I went to all those
doctors, it's the first time I
ever opened up and it felt
muey bueno, Doc. I would love
to see you tomorrow morning.

ZIFF

Wonderful. Tomorrow morning
sounds just wonderful.

ONI

But I can't. How's about
dinner thee day after?

ZIFF

I've never had a patient over
for dinner before, but since
you are a client of my best
friend, I think I can make an
exception.

ONI

(does street handshake with Ziff)
Muchas gracias amigo. I'll be here. You can count on it, 'cause I could us a little rice and beans. Yust remember, I don't like the rice too soft.

There is a knock on door and DEEDLE enters carrying slippers. SOPHIE'S with her.

ZIFF

Come in...

DEEDLE

Oh, hello. I'm Dr. Ziff's assistant, Deedle.

ONI

Like Deedle Dee, Deedle dum? That's a mighty fine name; Deedle Dee, Deedle Dum. Sure sounds pretty. Like a little bird.

DEEDLE

Why thank you and this is my sister Sophie.

SOPHIE

What's the matter? Sophie's not good enough for you?

ONI

No, no senora. My tia's name is Sophie, only she's muey grande. Not like you. You are *que linda*.

SOPHIE

Well in that case, you can stay a while.

ONI

That's funny. The limo's waiting and I can stay awhile. See for dinner el Doctor.

(Exits.)

Hasta luego.

DEEDLE

So that's Mendy new rock star. To me he looks like a regular...

SOPHIE

...Elvis has left the building.

DEEDLE

Ziffy, are you hungry?

ZIFF

Hungry, hungry? What do you think I forgot?! You're the one that picked the Bronx and don't think I forgot! I could have been in Hollywood with Mendy and she picks the "Facockta" Bronx. Pina coladas, Deedle. Pina coladas...

SOPHIE

...What's all this B. S. about the Bronx and pina coladas?

ZIFF

(fondles pouch)

You wouldn't understand. No one does... Only charley.

SOPHIE

Deedle, forget this yutz. We'll eat later. Get the Scrabble. After I straighten up we'll have a game... Hey gorgeous and I use that term quite loosely, how'd you like to join us?

ZIFF

I have no time for games. I'm a doctor, a dedicated psychiatrist like, Charley was.

SOPHIE

You better pull yourself together and fast, because you don't know what you're doing to my sister. Shit happens, so get over it. Now, up-'n-at-em! Hup, two, three, four! Hup, two, three, four!

Marching to hup, two, three, four, DEEDLE brings dish to ZIFF, who clutches pouch, mouths Charley and catches himself.

DEEDLE

(sort of singing)

I made Ziffy's favorite, 'stewed prunes' and I took out all the pits. Feh, ashes. Where ever I look, Charley's ashes.

SOPHIE

Is that what's all over this (feigns tasting ashes) place? Hmmm, tastes just like pepper. Here, try it.

DEEDLE pushes SOPHIE away.

SOPHIE (cont'd)

Who told him to take Charley's ashes home anyway?

DEEDLE

Who else? Charley had no family. Besides, do you think he would have given them to Mendy?

SOPHIE

(trying to remember)
Mendy... Ya know it's been so long since I've seen that Sonofabitch's face I don't remember what he looks like. Tell me he's fat and wrinkled.

DEEDLE

(remembering)
Oy, what could have been, could have been.

SOPHIE

Coulda been, shmoulda been. Dumping him was the best thing that ever happened to me. Look, I'm rich, I still got my figure and men... need I say more?

ZIFF

(clutches pouch, mouths Charley)
At least my best friend Mendy made it big, but who will remember me?

DEEDLE

I will, sweetheart.

SOPHIE

She will, too. Some people never learn and what about that Roselli broad?

ZIFF

Roselli? What do you know about Mrs. Roselli?

SOPHIE

We know plenty. We ain't saying anything, but we know plenty.

ZIFF

Trying to find out why people
in the Bronx are more
depressed than anywhere else
in the world, I've dedicated
my entire life and who will
know?

DEEDLE

I will darling.

ZIFF

Deedle, I'm so confused. I
don't know what's happening to
me. I shaved my mustache off
because I thought it made me
look old...

SOPHIE

...You still look old...

ZIFF

...I still look old. I've
wasted my entire life, and
I've always been in control
What's wrong with me? Doesn't
anyone care?

DEEDLE

I care sweetheart, Sophie
cares, your patients care.

ZIFF

Don't blame it on my patients!
There's only one person to
blame! You picked the Bronx!
You picked the Bronx! You
picked the Bronx! There, you
are the original culprit!

DEEDLE

(angry, face to face)
How dare you call me a
culprit?! For almost 40 years
I've been your wife, secretary
(MORE)

DEEDLE (Cont'd)

and personal answering
machine, because you were too
damn cheap to buy one and
culprit is the thanks I get?
You have the audacity to me a
culprit?

ZIFF

Don't try to make up with me,
it won't work.

DEEDLE

Don't worry, I won't!

ZIFF

Sweetheart, please listen to
me. Mendy knows a big
developer.

SOPHIE

Is that what they call "*Them*"
these days, "*Developers?*"

ZIFF

He says he could get us a
fortune for this old house.
Let's get rid of it and move
to L.A> Let's start over
again. What do you say,
honey? They say they have a
million movie stars and says
they're all a little
"meshugeh." What are we
waiting for? Stars Deedle.
Just a few stars, is that
asking so much?

DEEDLE

You mean like Cary Grant?

ZIFF

Exactly.

DEEDLE

And Billy Crystal?

ZIFF

He would be perfect, just perfect.

DEEDLE

And what about Mel Brooks?

ZIFF

The greatest of them all? I'd give anything to treat that "*Meshugeneh*."

DEEDLE

And what about your favorite, Goldie Hawn?

ZIFF

I love her. You know I love her. Why are you torturing me like this...? Can we go see Goldie, sweetheart? I'm begging you. Let's sell this "*fahschtunkeneh*" house.

DEEDLE

You want me to sell my house because Mendy-the-manager told you. And if he told you to jump off the roof, would you do it too?

SOPHIE

And since when did you start believing anything he says?

ZIFF

Mendy says I could be treating movie stars. Think about it, sweetheart. Sitting around our pool sipping pina coladas. Pina coladas Deedle, pina coladas, and palm trees, darling. When was the last time you saw palm trees?

SOPHIE

When she visited me last year
and for your information, my
sister hates pina coladas and
so do I.

ZIFF

I'm almost there Deedle.
Don't you think I deserve more
than six lines in the Post?
And you could hardly see them.
(shows closed fingers)
They were this big.

DEEDLE

I promise you more than six
lines. More than six lines
(spreads arms)
And they'll be this big!

SOPHIE

Stop with the six lines
already. I'm getting a
headache from your six lines.

ZIFF

And so the dedicated Dr. Ziff
remains anonymous. On my
tombstone, make sure it says,
"All he needed was a few
stars."

SOPHIE

Enough with the stars, too.
If you want stars, spend a
buck cheapskate and visit the
planetarium. They got a
million stars for nuts like
you. I promise.

DEEDLE

All of a sudden you want to go
to Hollywood, you want movie
stars? Have you forgotten the
reason why you set up your
practice in the Bronx? You
(MORE)

DEEDLE (Cont'd)

wanted to help poor under-privileged people.

In those days, becoming famous was the last thing on your
(becomes melancholy)

mind. You were so dedicated and I couldn't have been more proud of you. And what was so bad? We were both born in the Bronx, weren't we? The Grand Concourse was so beautiful. Trees, lovely homes, a grocery store on every other block and the finest schools... Who knew I couldn't have children? I'm so sorry...

SOPHIE

Again with the children? That's yesterday's newspaper. I'm more interested in... what's her name again?

BUZZER sounds and DEEDLE answers it/

DEEDLE

(catches herself and laughs)
At the sound of the... who is it?

ROSELLI (o/s)

It's me, Mrs. Roselli and I have to see Dr. Ziff, so let me in.

SOPHIE

Speaking of the devil.

DEEDLE

Mrs. er... I don't believe you have an appointment, but
(buzzes her in)
alright, come up.

SOPHIE

Does she have timing, or does she have timing?

ROSELLI

(knocks and enters in a huff)
The names Roselli, Deedle and I'm sorry about the intrusion but, I got problems, lots of problems.

SOPHIE

(aside)
Tell me something I don't know.

DEEDLE

I'm sorry you have problems, but Dr. Ziff is not available.

ZIFF

It's okay, Deedle. I'll see her.

DEEDLE

Really. Come Sophie, I think it's getting a little stuffy in here. Besides, I believe Dr. Ziff would like some privacy.

SOPHIE

Shall we go?

DEEDLE

I thought you'd never ask.

SOPHIE and DEEDLE exit.

ZIFF

I don't believe it, but I don't know where I put Charley?

ROSELLI

When the hell is you office going to be finished? I want some privacy. That's what I'm paying for, ain't it?

ZIFF

(annoyed)

Two sessions in one day? This is quite unusual. The only reason I am allowing you to stay is you seemed quite disturbed this morning, but I want you to understand Mrs. Roselli, I do not want a repeat of your last performance. I am in

(sad, doubts self)

morning... Perhaps I am not the right doctor for you. As you are aware, I've never been able to really help you.

ROSELLI

Well. you may have failed in the past, but you better help me get through this Sunday.

ZIFF

Sunday? What are you doing this Sunday?

ROSELLI

What all good little Catholic girls do. I'm getting married. Again, can you believe it, again.

ZIFF

You've decided to get married since this morning. Mrs. Roselli, Maria, think about it. Is that what you really want to do?

ROSELLI

(desperate, she sobs)

Remember when I told you about my father? How I used to love him more than anything... When I was little girl he used to take me to the zoo and laugh, when he said I was the prettiest swan in the whole world. I was this fat blimp but he still said I looked like a swan... He called me his princess. Nobody ever made me feel like that.

ZIFF

Mrs. Roselli, this morning you said a word. I need to ask you about it. What is it?

ROSELLI

What's what?

ZIFF

What's A...?

ROSELLI

A...?

ZIFF

A... muh?

ROSELLI

A... muh?

ZIFF

Go on, go on. A... muh...

ROSELLI

(coy)

You know.

ZIFF

I don't know, but I assure you that it is very important that I do know. Now what is a muh?

ROSELLI

A... muhzhi. A muhzhi.

ZIFF

A... muhzhi. Very
interesting. What's a muhzhi.

ROSELLI

(coy)

You know... It's another word
for... orgaaa.

ZIFF

Say it, Maria! You must say
it!

ROSELLI

It's an orgaaa... an orgaaa...
Orgasm! I never had an
(dreamy)
orgasm! ORGASM, ORGASM! All
right, are you happy now?!
Orgasm... Even though I never
had one, I like the way it
sounds... Yeah, orgasm.

ZIFF

I've treated countless women
who have never had an orgasm.

ROSELLI

You have?

ZIFF

In the Bronx it'd quite
common.

ROSELLI

Even Haley's comet "Comes"
once every 76 years. What
about me?

ZIFF

There are tens of millions of
women that have never had an
orgasm. The next time you
make love, stop trying to have
(MORE)

ZIFF (Cont'd)

a muhzhi. Don't think about it. Just be in the moment and enjoy it.

ROSELLI touches ZIFF'S face endearingly.

ZIFF (cont'd)

I can't tell you how sorry I am. All these years I didn't know about muhzhi. I thought death was what was troubling you... I've been trying to show that death is normal... You are going to die and one day, unfortunately, so will I.

Saddened, ZIFF is motionless as MRS. ROSELLI nears HIM.

ROSELLI

No, I don't want you to die. Angelo, Carmine, Murray, Johnny C., Johnny R... All my husbands died, but you can't. You can't leave me too.

O/S WE hear DEEDLE and SOPHIE.

DEEDLE (o/s)

I wonder if Dr. Ziff is still working?

Compassionate, MRS. ROSELLI innocently kisses ZIFF just as DEEDLE opens door and sees kiss. Before SOPHIE can see what has happened, DEEDLE slams door)

DEEDLE (o/s)

Oy...! I see Dr. Ziff is still busy. We'll come back later.

WE hear Kol Nidre as spot light ZIFF.

ZIFF

Is that what mankind has been reduced to, having a muhzhzhi? And if you don't have a muhzhzhi, does it mean you no longer exist? You no longer matter...? At the end, how much loving and giving, caring and sharing one did are the only things that matter? Truer words, Charley, truer words. I guess that's why you were the greatest. You sure knew how to be a friend. My friend. My best friend... Remember that time you pushed me out of the way of that car as we were crossing Claremont Parkway? You saved my life in more ways than one. There are those that go through life a nobody. Am I a nobody too? You think I'm really important? To who? Besides Deedle and you, to who? All right, Sophie too. By the way, Sophie told Deedle that she was very sorry missing your... What was it you used to say? The reason why people become overly concerned with death is because they're not having a good time in life. Well don't worry about me not having a good time, because with all the movie stars I'll be treating soon, life is definitely for the living. And when Deedle taste that

(sings)

Pina we'll be off... "Open up those golden gates, Cal-for-nia here I come."

INT: Same day: 6:30 P.M.: SOPHIE is setting table 4
and DEEDLE is near stove. ZIFF is wearing Hawaiian shirt
and pacing. Less ashes drip. There is a nock and DEEDLE
opens door and finds ONI with suitcase.

SOPHIE

First his mustache and now a
Hawaiian shirt. What's next,
he'll change his name to
Mendy?

DEEDLE

I'm asking you.

Buzzer sounds and DEEDLE answers it.

DEEDLE (cont'd)

Who is it?

ONI (o/s)

It's Oni.

DEEDLE buzzes him in. After a beat HE enters.

DEEDLE

Why hello, Oni. How nice to
see you.

ONI

Hello Deedle dee, Deedle dum.
I just love your name. *Que
linda.*

ZIFF

I see you have your suitcase.
Any particular reason?

ONI

Mendy told me to pack my
suitcase, 'cause I'm moving
in with you. He says he
doesn't want to have anything
to do with me until I start
singing again. So, I guess
it's up to you how long I
stay amigo.

SOPHIE

Typical. That sonofabitch
pawnd Oni off on you.

DEEDLE

I'm sure Mendy's not serious
about Oni living with us. He
probably had to leave town
for a few days. I'm sure
he'll be back, because Oni
Romantica is his number one
protégé, aren't you,
buhbaleh?

ONI

I don't think I'm numero uno
any more. This time he was
really P.O.'d.

DEEDLE

Never mind. If you have to
stay with us for a few days,
nu, it could be worse.

ZIFF

Absolutely not! A patient
does not move in with his
doctor!

DEEDLE

This is still my house too,
remember?!

SOPHIE

I'm glad I'm going home in a
couple of days. No offense,
Oni.

DEEDLE

Are you hungry?

ZIFF

I'm starving.

DEEDLE

Not you.

ZIFF

Did you buy the rice and
beans?

DEEDLE

What do you need rice and
beans for? We have so much
food.

ZIFF

No? How can you say no? Oni
wanted rice and beans and not
too soft. Didn't you hear
what I just said? And not too
soft.

ZIFF and DEEDLE face to face.

DEEDLE

I'm not listening to you
anymore, TOO!.

ZIFF

Anything else you're not
going to do any more, TOO?

DEEDLE

I'll tell you what else I'm
NOT going to do, TOO; I'm
not going to dust, I'm not
going to sweep, I'm not going
to shop anymore for your lean
corned beef, your salt free
rye bread, sugar free candy,
and "your" special double
edged razor blades! And from
now on you'll have to find
your own slippers which
reminds me, if you want
tobacco, you know where the
store is and you can forget
the Epsom salt for your sick
feet, TOO.

ZIFF

Not my feet too-oo.

DEEDLE

Right now, I hate you and
your rotten feet.

ONI

(touches feet)

I got flat feet too. Yust
like my sister.

DEEDLE

Not your feet Oni. You have
lovely feet, and a lovely
smile. Are you hungry?

ONI rubs stomach.

DEEDLE (cont'd)

Would you like some chicken
soup with matzo balls? I
made them myself.

ONI

Matzo balls? No thank you.
I'm a vegetarian.

DEEDLE

(laughs)

Vegetarian? Oh, you're so
funny... Come, try it, you'll
love it. Or, how about some
gefilte fish?

ONI

I think I'd rather have the
matzo balls.

ZIFF

Leave him alone with matzo
balls. Matzo balls... Better
he should sing. He has some
beautiful voice.

ONI

How do you know?

ZIFF

Mendy told me.

SOPHIE

Mendy told him. Did you hear that, Deedle, Mendy told him.

DEEDLE

I'd love to hear him sing. Wouldn't you, Sophie?

ONI

You know, if I would sing for anybody, it would be for you, Deedle dee, Deedle dum and you Dr. Ziff. See, you're not the first shrink Mendy brought me to. He took me to see the best. Fifth Avenue, Beverly Hills He says he spent over a hundred grand on doctors and, I still can't do it, I can't sing. Mendy says there's no more shrinks left, but, you really care...you're the first one that had me over for dinner... I guess you're my last hope doc, my last hope.

ZIFF

I'm not your last hope, but I will try and help you sing again.

DEEDLE

Dr. Ziff's a wonderful doctor...

ONI

I know, I know. Don't you see Doc.? I really need you, because I know you can help me sing again.

SOPHIE

You really think so, huh?

ONI

Muchas gracias for letting me
stay, Deedle Dee, Deedle Dum.
Muchas Gracias.

DEEDLE

Come, Sophie, let's go to the
grocery store.

SOPHIE

What do you need in the
grocery store?

DEEDLE

(whispers to Sophie)
Rice and beans.

THEY start to exit.

ZIFF

AND DON'T FORGET THE RICE AND
BEANS!

SOPHIE

What is he a mind reader?

DEEDLE

That's not the only thing he
(whispers to Oni)
is. You stay and talk to Dr.
Ziff, sweetheart.

THEY exit. ZIFF, holding pouch that will drip less ashes
is looking for slippers.

ZIFF

(looking at notes)
So, you told me you lost your
voice when you were eating
Cheerios.

ONI

I don't remember.

ZIFF

Would you tell me what you do
remember?

ONI

I remember a...

ZIFF

A...?

ONI

A... muh...

ZIFF

A... muh? What's a muh?

ONI

A museum.

ZIFF

A museum... Very interesting.

ONI

When I was about twelve, my Poppi took me to the museum to see the dinosaurs.

ZIFF

Did you like them?

ONI

Not really.

Buzzer sounds and ZIFF buzzes back. After a beat, MENDY enters.

MENDY

She's not here, right?

ZIFF

She just left...

MENDY

(to Oni)

Thank God. The reason I came by was to give you this letter. I accidentally opened up, but who can understand it. Here, knock yourself out.

ONI takes and opens letter.

MENDY (cont'd)

Ziff, I brought him here so
you would help him sing
again. I sure hope that
means he's singing again.
Well, is he? You're my last
hope, boichic.

ONI

(Reads letter and cries out in Spanish.)
A yude me, Jesus! A yude me!
etc...

MENDY

Don't play games with me
Ziffy. What's going on with
my number one protégé? Why
doesn't he just hum a few
bars for me? HUM, GODDAMNIT,
HUM!

ONI cries out and runs off.

MENDY (cont'd)

Would you please tell me what
just happened? Why did he
run away? Ziff, I got a
couple of million bucks tied
up in that kid. What should
I do? Ziffy! Caviar! This
kid's my caviar.

ZIFF

Unfortunately, we can't do
anything... These things take
time.

MENDY

Time...? Time? I have no
time. The tour's starting in
a couple of weeks. I need
him, Ziff... I really need
HER!

ZIFF

...HER!?

MENDY

Her? What her? I didn't say her... I said him.

ZIFF

Him? You didn't say him. I distinctly heard you say, her.

MENDY

You did not hear, 'Her.'
Him, her... what's the difference?

ZIFF

Very interesting...

MENDY

What's very interesting?

ZIFF

You, and Sophie.

MENDY

You, my good man are out of your snap.

ZIFF

Oy, what coulda been, shoulda been.

MENDY

(Remembers.)
Coulda been, shmoulda been...
We sure used to have good times together, didn't we?
It's funny, for some strange reason, I feel sort of nostalgic. Remember when we all used to go to beach ten at Orchard Beach? You used to bring the salami sandwiches and those Kosher

(MORE)

MENDY (Cont'd)

pickles. Thank God your father owned that Kosher deli or we would all have starved to death. Your father was quite a guy, it was your mother that I wasn't too crazy about. She sure was tough.

ZIFF

Joe Louis wouldn't fight her... And Charley would bring his portable radio and a few beers. We'd all Lindy, Deedle, Sophie, Charley...

MENDY

Charley, that poor bastard... And what did I bring? Don't tell me you forgot? Sunflower seeds, halvah, Tootsie rolls. Boy, Sophie sure liked my Tootsie roll, didn't she?

ZIFF

So, why don't you talk to her. What are you waiting for... 'til it's too late?

MENDY

(Looks at watch.)

I gotta fly, partner. But if it makes you feel any better, say hello to Sophie for me. Give her my best.

MENDY exits.

ZIFF

Can you believe it, Charley? Mendy says 'her' and he says he said 'He.' I think he still loves her but won't admit it.

(MORE)

ZIFF (Cont'd)

I think he still loves her...
Of course I love Deedle. Why
shouldn't I admit it? But
I'm not sure how much she
loves me. She's still
ignoring me... Why...? Why,
why, why? I told you ten
times already. I don't know
why she stopped talking to
me. Maybe she doesn't want
me to become famous.? Who
knows? Maybe she's jealous
and maybe you're jealous.
What's the matter, afraid I'm
going to get more than six
lines in the Post? I can
assure you, when I go, I'll
get a full page in the Times.
And just when I'm about to
start a whole new career,
everybody deserts me. Even
you... Why, why, why? Again
with the whys? Listen
Charley, friends or no
friend. When you calm down,
we'll talk. Can you imagine,
Charley? Mendy drops off Oni
at our door like an abandoned
child. He must feel terribly
(Walks away then returns.)
alone... You think I can
help him, Charley? If I can
only get him to sing, I'd
become the most successful
psychiatrist in Beverly
Hills... Psychiatrist to the
stars, and then I'll build
the Charles Green Foundation.
That's what I like about you,
Charley, you always give me
such confidence.

CUT: Two days later: DEEDLE and SOPHIE, wearing late 6
at night bathrobes, enter living room, which is in a mess.

DEEDLE

(upset)

Look at what they did!

SOPHIE

(sarcastic)

Beautiful. Another two days
and it will...

(holds hand above HER head)

...be up to here. Then,
maybe you'll come to your
senses. Come home with me.

(pleads)

Right now you need that
Romantica, like a hole in the
head. What's the matter, you
don't like palm trees, you
don't like to look at the
ocean anymore? You always

(SOPHIE rubs HER spine)

said it was your ocean.

DEEDLE

Your back still hurts?

SOPHIE

Why didn't you make him eat
in the cafeteria?...

Tomorrow's the last day of
Shiva. What other excuse are
you going to give yourself,
then? Nu, should I make
reservations?

DEEDLE

(remorseful)

Sophie, he doesn't know what
he's doing, or else he
wouldn't have...

SOPHIE

Does he have to hit you over
the head before you wake up?
Did he even ask why you slept
in my room? To explain, to
apologize? Should I start
packing?

DEEDLE

It's the first time we
haven't slept together.

SOPHIE

You think he's any different
than Mendy was?

DEEDLE

Mendy? How can you compare
my Ziffy to Mendy?

There is silence.

SOPHIE

Can you imagine? After all
these years, he asked about
me?

DEEDLE

(knowing her sister)
I couldn't believe it
myself-- neither could Ziffy.

SOPHIE

(recalling love affair with Mendy. Dreamy.)
There was a time, when he
used to bring me flowers
everyday. When he used to
sing to me and we danced all
the time. I was the only
thing that mattered,
remember?

DEEDLE

Do I.

SOPHIE

That's when I loved him more,
and I trusted him more, and I
wanted him more... When he
left me. It killed me in
(Almost sobs but catches HERSELF.)
more ways than one... And
(MORE)

SOPHIE (Cont'd)

now, I wouldn't even take the
time to spit on him,
although, just out of
curiosity, I'd like to show
(Shakes hips.)
him what he missed out on.

DEEDLE

You'd show him alright. You
look beautiful.

SOPHIE

Go on, you're just saying
that because you love me.

DEEDLE

Do I... I can't believe he
would do such a thing... And
just before our fortieth
(Very emotional.)
anniversary. Forty years is
almost forever, isn't it?

SOPHIE

You think he'll remember your
anniversary, when he hasn't
even remembered to say he's
sorry? None of them ever say
they're sorry.

DEEDLE

There's NOTHING to be sorry
about?

SOPHIE

Is that why you closed the
door in my face, so we
wouldn't see "NO-THING?"
When are you going to stop
being Miss Goody-Two-Shoes?
And what about that Oni guy
moving in? Isn't this still
your home? Your husband's
making you sneak around your
own home. And you want me to
believe that SHE was sitting
Shiva on his lap?

DEEDLE

I'm sure I made a mistake. I didn't see anything. Nothing happened, absolutely nothing.

SOPHIE

Nothing huh? You said you saw Ziff and that spider woman kissing and that's nothing huh?

DEEDLE makes hands to forget it.

SOPHIE

A psychiatrists suddenly goes around talking to Charley's ashes and I suppose that's nothing huh? Well I call your nothing, ridiculous. Everything, all of you.

DEEDLE

Why, because Ziffy wants to make a change, it's ridiculous? What's ridiculous is not getting married and having a family.

SOPHIE

Family? I never wanted to have kids, that was you, remember? So, would you please tell me what you're talking about?

DEEDLE

Well, at least I have a husband.

SOPHIE

Well, don't be too sure..

After beat.

DEEDLE

Oh, Sophie, I'm so sorry.
I'm just upset about Ziffy,
that's all.

SOPHIE

(Cries and laughs.)
It's all right just don't
start with the family bit,
again.

DEEDLE

It's just that I couldn't and
I always hoped that you
would...

SOPHIE

It's alright, Dee... After
Mendy, I just couldn't bear
the thought of settling down
and having a family with
anyone.

DEEDLE

Not even with Charley.

SOPHIE sadly shakes head, no.

DEEDLE (cont'd)

He always wanted you...

SOPHIE

Don't I know.

DEEDLE

So, why...?

SOPHIE

No chemistry.

DEEDLE

Oh, Sophie.

THEY embrace as buzzer sounds.

DEEDLE (cont'd)

It's two o'clock in the morning. Who could that be?

(Answers buzzer.)

Who is it?

ONI (o/s)

It's me, Oni.

DEEDLE

Oh, it's Oni. Come up sweetheart, come up.

ONI

(Enters.)

Hello, Deedle dee and hello Sophie. I'm sorry if I woke you. I had no place else to go.

SOPHIE

You didn't wake us, we were up.

DEEDLE

Where were you? I hear Dr. Ziff was worried about you. We all were.

ONI

I guess too much on my mind.

SOPHIE

Want to tell us about it?

ONI

I really don't understand it and it seems nobody else does either. I've been to a million shrinks and... This is my big opportunity and... How could this happen. How could this happen to me? I can't sing, I can't sing...

DEEDLE

You poor thing. You poor,
poor thing. You'll sing. I
promise.

SOPHIE

You'll sing, and you'll
survive. We all do.

DEEDLE

Could I interest you in some
chopped liver?

ONI

No, but I wouldn't mind some
more matzo balls. They were
really 'delicioso.' You
know, Deedle Dee, Deedle Dum,
you remind so much of my
mother. She tried to feed me
all the time, too. She was a
wonderful lady, *yust* like
you.

SOPHIE

Hey, Deedle, I think I'm
beginning to like this kid.

ONI

Jou mean you're not sure?

DEEDLE

Would like to tell us about
your mother?

ONI

She was the nicest person I
ever met. Everybody loved
her. When I was a little
bambino, she used to sing to
me all the time.

SOPHIE

I guess that's why you became
a singer, isn't it?

ONI

When she got sick, the only thing that made her feel better was when I sang to her... She would have been proud of me...
So proud.

DEEDLE

I'm sure Dr. Ziff will help you sing very soon.

SOPHIE

It might take you fifteen years, but don't worry kid, you'll sing... And if I was you, I'd watch my back. You'll sing and Mendy will have it for lunch.

DEEDLE

Soon as Oni starts to sing again, I'm sure Mendy will help him become very successful. He does it for everybody.

SOPHIE

Successful maybe, but happy?

ONI

Maybe being happy is up to me.

SOPHIE

It always is, kid. Take it from someone that knows.

DEEDLE

You can say that again.

SOPHIE

Listen, it's very late.

DEEDLE

I am a little tired myself. Maybe we should all go to bed? Well, good night, Oni.

SOPHIE

Nighty night, kid.

ONI

Good night Deedle dee and
good night Sophie. Muchas
(Starts to exit.)
gracias for listening to
me...

DEEDLE

Aren't you going to go to
sleep?

ONI

No, I think I want to think
awhile.

CUT: INT - ZIFF is wearing Hawaiian shirt the following 7
day and sun glasses, and stares out living room window.
As he examines self for wrinkles. HE pounds his empty his
pipe and mutters. Buzzer sounds as ONI enters.

ONI

You gonna get that buzzer or
what?

ZIFF

Where were you last night?
Where were you?

ONI

I was dribbling my cab around.
Wow, you wouldn't believe the
things I saw. And you won't
believe what my Poppi wrote.
(Waves letter.)
I can't believe he don't love
me no more. He don't love me
no more.

ZIFF

I'm sure he still loves you.
Perhaps you'd like to talk
about it?

Buzzer sounds and ZIFF buzzes back. After a beat MRS. ROSELLI enters before ZIFF can open door.

MRS. ROSELLI

(Concerned.)

Excuse the interruption Dr. Ziff, but, I have to see you about this Sunday.

ZIFF

Mrs. Roselli, as you can see I am busy.

ROSELLI

Please. Pretty please.

ZIFF

I'm sorry, but I'm with another patient. You'll have to leave. Please call Deedle for an appointment.

MRS. ROSELLI

Absolutely not.

ONI

I gotta get going, so why don't you let her stay?

MRS. ROSELLI

Thanks a lot, kid.

ONI

Denada. My name's Oni Romantica Jose Elvis Garcia.

MRS. ROSELLI

Did you say Elvis? He was my secret muhzhí. My name's Maria Dambrisi, Marino, Slimowitz, Carlucci, Roselli. Five dead husbands and none of them were any damn good.

ONI

(Waves letter.)

Dr. Ziff. Remember my sister Carmen?

ZIFF

That great dancer with the flat feet.

ROSELLI

Flat feet?

ONI

...Yeah, she gonna be rich too. She's getting married to Juan Miguel Jose Roberto Luiz Alfredo Rivera, next week.

MRS. ROSELLI

All at the same time? Too bad I never thought of that.

ZIFF

Congratulations.

ONI

Juan Miguel happens to own the largest hotel in San Turce, and he just gave Popi and my sisters two suites for life.

MRS. ROSELLI

Sweets for life. Mmmm... How sweet.

ONI

I know, now Popi says that he loves Juan Miguel Roberto Luiz Alfredo Rivera as much, as if he were his own son. I

(Sad.)

thought I was his only son. I'm telling you, he don't love me no more. He don't love me.

ZIFF

You can love more than one son at the same time, Oni.

ONI

Now, all of a sudden Popi says, it's okay with him if I spend the rest of my life *driving* a cab. You see, he don't love me no more. He don't love me.

ZIFF

Do you really want to spend the rest of your life driving a cab?

MRS. ROSELLI

Just, look outside kid. Cab drivers are a dime a dozen, but you can sing and that makes you different.

ZIFF

That's right. You're a gifted singer with a beautiful voice, and you were born to sing. So, sing. Let me hear your beautiful voice. Just one time. Please.

MRS. ROSELLI

Do you really have a beautiful voice?

ONI nods yes.

MRS. ROSELLI (cont'd)

Go on, I don't believe it.

ONI nods yes, vigorously.

ZIFF

He's as good as Elvis.

ONI nods yes, excitedly.

MRS. ROSELLI

YOU'RE KIDDING! I love
Elvis. I just saw him. Do
it for me, kid. I know you
can do it.

ZIFF

Being a singer, fame, it's
what you've always wanted,
isn't it?... Or do you think
(Has understanding.)
that's what your Poppi always
wanted?... Is that it?... You
want your Poppi to love you,
whether or not you become a
famous singer. That's it,
isn't it?

ONI whimpers.

ZIFF (cont'd)

I assure you, your Poppi
loves you, and you won't be
fulfilling his vision if you
sing and become famous, only
your own. What ever you do
now, is for yourself, not
Poppi. Don't you really want
to be happy? So sing, sing.

MRS. ROSELLI

(Sings.)

*"You ain't nothing but a
hound dog, cryin' all the
time."*

MRS. ROSELLI

*"You ain't nothin' but a hound
dog, cryin' all the time.
Well, you ain't never caught
a rabbit, you ain't no
friend of mine."*

ZIFF

(sings scales)

Do...

Re...

Me...

Fa... Sol... La

ONI is bursting until he finally sings.

ONI

*"Let's rock, ev'rybody let's
rock. Ev'rybody in the whole
cell block, was dancin' to
the Jail House Rock."*

ALL hug, then ONI reads letter.

ONI (Cont'd)

(Shows letter.)

Hey, it says my kid sister is
getting married this Sunday.
I better get moving. I gotta
make reservations.

HE shakes ZIFF's hand and kisses MRS. ROSELLI and starts
to exit.

ONI (Cont'd)

Thanks for everything Doc,
and especially you, Mrs.
Roselli.

(Kisses her hand, laughs and
opens door.)

I'll never forget you.

Muchas gracias, amigos and

(Exits.)

Zai gehzunt.

ZIFF

(Remorseful because Oni left him)
It looks like Elvis has left
me flat...

MRS. ROSELLI

(Seeing Ziff help Oni has elated Roselli.)

That was great Dr. Ziff.

ZIFF

What's so great?

MRS. ROSELLI

You, the way you helped that
kid. Besides being my
favorite doctor, I think
you're quite a guy.

ZIFF

Thank you Maria, I think
you're quite special
yourself.

MRS. ROSELLI

(Happily surprised.)
Ya really think so, huh?

ZIFF

You must always remember,
married or not, you are still
a warm, intelligent human
being;

ROSELLI

Now, I know I like you.

ZIFF

Unfortunately, you've had a
penis fixation...

MRS. ROSELLI

(Dreamy.)
...PENIS FIXATION? "*Penis
fixation.*" Yeah, I like the
way it sounds. "*Penis
fixation.*" Yeah.

ZIFF

Maria, perhaps one day you
will discover that marriage
in it's self, may not be the
answer. But perhaps liking
and trusting yourself is.

MRS. ROSELLI

(Has revelation.)
Thanks to you, I just figured
it out... What a strunz.
Tens of millions of chicks
never had a muhzhz and they
make it, right Doc.? It's
not the end of the world. Ya
know my wedding this Sunday?

(MORE)

ROSELLI (Cont'd)
Forget it. Suddenly, I don't
wanna get married. Who the
hell needs it? Dancing. The
Mambo. Yeah, I'm gonna MAMBO
(Sings.)
tonight. "*Hey mambo, mambo
Italiano. Go, go, go...*"
Hate to run, but this girl
doesn't mambo everyday, you
(Exits, dancing and singing.)
know.

ZIFF
Let 'em go, let 'em all go...
You don't have to rub it in,
Charley. Of course I miss
Deedle, but I wouldn't tell
her... You think I should?...
I know how I feel, don't I?
I know how I feel. And I've
become so absent minded. I
don't even remember where I
put you, Charley... With out
you, I'm all alone...

SOPHIE enters.

ZIFF
SHE sent you, didn't she?

SOPHIE
Deedle's taking a nap. She
doesn't know I'm here.

ZIFF
Then, what are you doing
here?

SOPHIE
All she does is stare out the
window.

ZIFF

Then let her stare. She said she doesn't want to do anything for me, soon, she won't have to. And did I bother her, did I ask her for anything? What does she want from me?

SOPHIE

Try honesty.

ZIFF looks around for pouch.

ZIFF

When I lost Charley, I lost everything.

SOPHIE

Charley's gone and if you're not careful you'll lose the best friend you ever had; my sister.

ZIFF

(Sad.)

She left me.

SOPHIE

You made her leave. She told me what you did with that Roselli, Zsa of yours. If you want to save your marriage, you better explain yourself to her, and fast!

ZIFF

The world's crazy. Explain my doctor-patient relationship, never!

SOPHIE

Well, you better start explaining something. Deedle knows all about the affair you've been having with that Roselli sex-pot.

ZIFF

Me? Having an affair? Is she crazy?

SOPHIE

She saw you kiss that spider woman.

ZIFF

WHAT? Me, kiss Mrs. Roselli? So, that's why she stopped talking to me. Sophie, I swear I never touched her.

SOPHIE

Don't tell me, tell her.

ZIFF

(Looks around.)
I don't know where I put Charley.

Walking to radiator, SOPHIE removes pouch from pocket and feigns picking it up.

SOPHIE

Here, I found your Charley.

HE shakes empty pouch.

ZIFF

Charley's gone.

SOPHIE

And if you don't do something quick, Deedle will be gone.

ZIFF looks at SOPHIE. HE shakes empty pouch.

ZIFF

Even though I got him to sing, I'm not the greatest Charley. You were... And you think I helped Mrs. Roselli too? I hope you're right, partner. (MORE)

ZIFF (Cont'd)

Because it's been
(Caressing empty pouch.)
15 years... Deedle needs me,
Charley? Tell you the truth,
I need her even more. I
always have... I know I've
been deluding myself, but no
more. Ya see, sooner or
later, even an old fool like
me has to face reality... In
life, you were my best
friend, and in death I turned
to you, because I was afraid
of dying. I guess that's why
I started talking to you; I
was afraid of dying. But not
any more. Not any more. I
guess this means goodbye,
dear friend. Auf veider
zein, Charley. Yeah, see ya
around. Not too soon I hope,
not too soon.

INT: The same day: MENDY opens door and is stunned 9
Late afternoon when he confronts SOPHIE. For a moment,
time stands still. They BOTH go back thirty-five years ago
when they were in love.

MENDY

Oh, my god, Sophie? I don't
believe it. Is that really
you?...

SOPHIE

You can't tell? Don't tell
me I've changed that much.

MENDY

Changed, what changed? You
look wonderful... Damn near
delectable... Gorgeous, just
gorgeous.

SOPHIE

You don't look so bad
yourself, Mister.

MENDY

Thanks, thanks a lot... Gee,
Sophie, it's sure great
seeing that beautiful face of
yours, again.

SOPHIE

What about all the wrinkles?

MENDY

What wrinkles? You're more
beautiful than ever. I
swear.

SOPHIE

What a line. I guess that's
why I fell for you
thirty-five years ago.

MENDY

I always thought it was my
body, sexy...

SOPHIE

Maybe it was. But, it's been
so long, who can remember?

MENDY

I remember, Sophie.

SOPHIE

(Flirtatious.)
Everything?

MENDY

(Flirtatious.)
Everything, I mean
everything.

SOPHIE

That weekend at the Concord?

MENDY

(flirtatious)

Every moment.

SOPHIE

Remember when we used to go dancing at the Palladium every Wednesday night?

MENDY

We sure use to love to mambo, didn't we.

SOPHIE

Tito Puente...

MENDY

(holds out arms as if to dance)
Cal Tjader. May I have this dance?

SOPHIE

There's no music.

MENDY

(takes Sophie in arms and sings)
"I have dreamed that your arms are lovely. And I have dreamed what a joy you'd be..."

SOPHIE

Oh, Mendy.

MENDY

Aw, Sophie, please don't cry. Please, I'm begging you. You should be happy. What are you crying about?

SOPHIE

Why do you think I'm crying?

MENDY

Maybe you're crying 'cause
you're still hung-up on...
what might have been. Well,
I've been hung-up once or
twice myself about what might
been these past couple of
years.

SOPHIE

Only once or twice?

MENDY

Okay, a thousand times; are
you happy now?

SOPHIE

Ecstatic.

MENDY

Ecstatic, huh? You're not
the only one that regrets
what happened... I, I've
missed you Sophie.

SOPHIE

(whimpers)

Why'd you come here, Mendy?
Why'd you come back and ruin
everything? Why?

MENDY

(About to say he came to see
her, he can't admit it so, he
catches himself.)
I, I,... I came to see, I
came to see y... I had to sit
'Shiva' for Charley, didn't
I? I have to help Ziff get
through this, don't I? After
all, a fella needs a best
friend.

SOPHIE

(sobbing)

You said I was your best friend and look what happened.

After a beat.

MENDY

You never forget, do you. Give me a break. We all make mistakes, don't we?

SOPHIE

You made a mistake alright, but "I" paid for it, Mister.

MENDY

What do you mean, you paid for it? Don't you think it still hurts me too?

SOPHIE

Because of you, I've been in pain my whole life and it 'hurts' you?

MENDY

Because of me? What did I do? You left me! I was the one that was hurt. I asked you to go with me to L.A., didn't I...? I never thought I would say this but, I've always cared about you, Sophie. Like what made Sammy run, like a fool, running after success I ran away from...you.

SOPHIE

You ran away from me alright. Do you remember what I did, just before "you" left for the coast? Before "you" left me behind in quest of fame and fortune?

MENDY

(trying to remember)
Remind me.

SOPHIE

I went to Philadelphia to
take care of some business.

MENDY

Business? I told you I would
take care of you and you left
me for business. Why'd you
go, Sophie... Why'd you leave
me? You didn't even say
goodbye. I was so hurt.

SOPHIE

(emotional)
I didn't say goodbye, because
I hated you.

MENDY

Hate? I always thought you
loved me.

SOPHIE

You thought right, Mister. I
did love you. I guess that's
why I was so happy when I
became...

MENDY

When you became what?

SOPHIE

When, I became pregnant with
your baby for the first and
only time it would happen in

(hesitant)
my life... Our baby was a
girl. I would have called
her Rebecca, after my
favorite aunt. Instead, I
got an abortion...

MENDY

WHAT? You went to Philadelphia to get an abortion with my child... How could you?

SOPHIE

(in tears)

If I knew then what I know now... I would have had the baby. Back then, not being married and having a baby was impossible, because it was a '*Shanda.*'

MENDY

And Ziff and Deedle knew about this?

SOPHIE

I never told your best friend or my sister... I've never told a soul, until now. I've shared everything with my sister except telling her about the most traumatic experience in my life.

MENDY

(stunned)

Are you crazy? I wanted to have kids, more than anything. You knew that. Why? Why didn't you tell me you were pregnant? We could have gotten married in L.A... I always wanted kids. I told you to come with 'cause I was gonna make it big. I told you I would marry you, soon as I got established, didn't I?

SOPHIE

And I thought marriage was getting established. If you wouldn't marry then, you wouldn't have married when you became 'established.' And that's exactly why I didn't tell you. I wanted you to marry me because, you loved me, not because I was pregnant with your child. I wanted you to love me... More than anything, I wanted you to love me... And do you know how much I wanted to have children? More than anything, but how could I have had a child in those days without being married. How could I do that to my parents? Besides, I was too proud too shame you into marrying me... After the A.B. I could never have children again... He was a butcher. He scarred my tubes, that's why my back hurts me every month. He was a butcher. An out an out butcher. And because of my love for you I never gave Charley a chance.

MENDY

Oh, Sophie, I'm so sorry.
How can I make it up to you?

SOPHIE

How about making me the beneficiary to your life insurance and make sure I collect real soon.

MENDY

(laughs)

That's what I always liked about you, Sophie, what a sense of humor... What can I say? I'm sorry. Please, I'll do anything to make it up to you, to us. What do you say about dinner at the Four Seasons, tonight? I could cancel my flight, if you want me to.

SOPHIE

Maybe I'll think about it.

MENDY

Oh, would you?

SOPHIE

On second thought, not a chance.

MENDY

Please, give me another chance...

SOPHIE

I'll give you another chance, when I collect on your insurance policy, and that can't be son enough.

MENDY

Is that all you have to say after all these years? Insurance? You know, I didn't need you then and I sure as hell don't need you
(Exits.)
now. See ya around sister.

SOPHIE

I'll see around all right, in hell. Sonofabitch!

INT: The following day: At night, the In total 11
darkness we hear following day ZIFF and DEEDLE entering
kitchen.

DEEDLE

I believe you, I believe you.

ZIFF

It was the only time since
we've been married. I swear,
I couldn't help it. She
kissed me but, I didn't kiss
her
back.

DEEDLE

What do I have to do to make
you believe me that I believe
you?

ZIFF

I'll show you!

DEEDLE

(romantically surprised)
Ziffy, Ziffy what are you
doing? Stop it. Ziffy, put
me down.

INT: We see Ziff struggle as HE carries DEEDLE over 13
threshold into kitchen. The living room has been restored:
A banner is hanging stating, "HERE'S TO FORTY MORE. GUESS
WHO?" Champagne and glasses are evident. The wooden box is
gone. The mirror is undraped. DEEDLE looks at banner.

DEEDLE (Cont'd)

You remembered.

ZIFF

Would I forget?

DEEDLE

Never, you never forget
anything.

ZIFF

A toast to you, my beloved.

THEY drink entire glass.

DEEDLE

(laughs)

You know how I start laughing
from one glass.

ZIFF

That's what we've been
missing around here, a good
laugh. Now, how about a
toast to our next forty
together?

HE fills glasses and THEY drink it all. There is a knock on
door and DEEDLE reels as she goes to answer it.

ZIFF

(answers door and returns.)
Sweetheart, allow me.

DEEDLE

Who was it?

ZIFF

(sings)
Guess who?

DEEDLE

Oni?

ZIFF

Not even close. Guess again.

DEEDLE

(playful)
I have no time to play games!
Don't you know, this is my
anniversary?

ZIFF

I'm glad you reminded me, I
(gives her ruby wedding band)
almost forgot.

DEEDLE

Oh, Ziffy... A ruby wedding
band.

ZIFF blows her a kiss and goes to door and ushers in
SOPHIE.

ZIFF (Cont'd)

Introducin, my...

SOPHIE

...Favorite sister in-law.
HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

THEY all hug and kiss.

ZIFF

Shut up and start drinking.
You have a lot of catching
up to do.

ZIFF gives SOPHIE champagne.

DEEDLE

Drink it in one shot, look.

DEEDLE downs champagne and laughs harder. SOPHIE follows
suit and ZIFF refills glasses.

ZIFF

There's plenty more where
that came from.

Affected by the champagne ZIFF sways to refrigerator.

DEEDLE

He's like a changed man.

SOPHIE

No he isn't, he's still my
favorite brother-in-law.

DEEDLE

Are you definitely leaving
tomorrow?

SOPHIE

I have to, business calls.

DEEDLE

What's your rush? Sophie, I don't know what I would have done without you.

SOPHIE

You would've done just fine.

THEY embrace as ZIFF returns with more champagne and glasses.

SOPHIE (Cont'd)

It certainly took you long enough.

ZIFF pinches HER cheek.

ZIFF

You know what I like about you Sophie?

SOPHIE

What?

ZIFF

I don't know, but, give me a minute.

THEY laugh. There is a knock on door. ZIFF weaves HIS way to door and opens it. ONI and enters. ALL laugh.

ZIFF

Oni! I'm so glad you could come.

DEEDLE

(laughing)

Have some champagne. You have a lot of catching up to do.

ZIFF

(pours champagne.)
I propose a toast.

ONI

Toast is fine, but personally
I could go for one of Deedle
Dee's matzo balls.

SOPHIE

So could I. With a cup of
(pinches Oni endearingly)
coffee and I'm in heaven.

ONI

(to Ziff)
Dr. Ziff, I don't know how to
tell you this, but, I'm
really grateful for
everything you've done for
me, and thanks to you, I
don't think anyone will ever
play the bongos on my tonsils
again.

ZIFF

I'm very happy for you.

DEEDLE

And so am I.

ONI

I know.
(hugs them both, then starts to exit)
Deedle dee, I had to come
back to say *muchas gracias*
for making me feel welcome
and a part of your family.
I'll always miss your matzo
balls.

DEEDLE

And I'll miss you.

SOPHIE

So will I.

ONI

Thanks for reminding me of my
mama. I'll never forget you.

DEEDLE and ONI embrace.

ONI

(takes Deedle in his arms, waltzes and sings.)

"I could have danced all
night. I could have danced
all night. And still have
begged for more. I could
have spread my wings,..."

DEEDLE and ONI

(singing)

*"And done a thousand things,
I've never danced before..."*

ONI steps on DEEDLE's toe, then kisses it. We will hear
laughter throughout.

ONI

(to Ziff)

I heard about your rotten
feet, so don't expect the
same treatment. Deedle Dee's
my Cinderella.

ZIFF

(laughing)

Never mind "your" Cinderella,
here's to "my" Cinderella,
whom I'll always love; My
Deedle.

ONI

I got to go. Mendy's waiting
for me in the limo
downstairs. Any way, thank
you Dr. Ziff, muchas gracias
and *zai gehzunt*.

ONIE exits laughing, as ZIFF and DEEDLE kiss.

ZIFF

I wonder why Mendy didn't
come up? Anyway, let's make
another toast.

THEY lift glasses.

ZIFF, DEEDLE and SOPHIE
The Bronx!

Through the laughter, SOPHIE gets two presents and gives
them to DEEDLE and ZIFF.

SOPHIE

A little something for your
anniversary.

ZIFF

Sophie, you shouldn't have.

SOPHIE

You're probably right, but I
did anyway.

ZIFF unwraps present shows new tobacco pouch. DEEDLE
displays answering machine.

ZIFF

(smells tobacco)
A tobacco pouch... with my
favorite tobacco. How
thoughtful. Thank you,
Sophie.

DEEDLE

A telephone answering
machine. Oh Sophie, I don't
know what to say.

SOPHIE

Nothing. No running, no Dr.
Ziff will return your call as
soon as possible, *gornisht*.
From now on your beeping days
are over.

The phone rings.

DEEDLE

Wait, I'm going to beep for
the last time.
(into phone - High, slurs
words)
This is-- Ziffy's, office...
At the sound of the
beep-beep, please beep.
MENDY! How did you know it
was me?... You recognized my
beep... Yes, forty more would
be wonderful, just wonderful.
How nice of you to
remember...

MENDY enters talking on cellular phone, holding two
bouquets of flowers.

MENDY

I'll be up in a second to pay
off my best friend.

DEEDLE

You'll be up in a second to
payoff your best friend?
Mendy, you're actually here.

MENDY goes to give flowers to SOPHIE, who turns away, so,
he catches himself and gives them both to DEEDLE.

MENDY

Bet you thought I forgot your
anniversary.

DEEDLE awkwardly takes flowers. MENDY goes to kiss DEEDLE
but ZIFF steps in front and HE accidentally kisses ZIFF)

ZIFF

Would you forget?

MENDY

Anyway, before I go back to
the coast, I just had to give
my oldest and best friend the
great news. Thanks to you,
Oni's singing up a storm

(MORE)

MENDY (Cont'd)
again; sounds better than
ever and he's raring to go.

DEEDLE
We know, he sounds wonderful.

ZIFF

Beautiful. And Mendy, how'd
you'd like some caviar.
We're celebrating, you know.

MENDY

(looks at Sophie)
Caviar, really...? I
could've had someone better
than caviar, but I was a
schmuck. Any way, remember
when I said, "Anything for a
best friend?" ...Well, here
it is, brother. Opening
night, fifth row center.
Now, we are even-stein,
partner. On second thought,
(looks at SOPHIE)
I almost forgot about you,
Sophie. Make that three
seats.

SOPHIE

Don't bother. I already saw
the show and I wasn't
impressed.

Diverting the hurt, MENDY turns and whispers to ZIFF, who
responds, excitedly.

MENDY

Impressed...? You'll all be
impressed when I tell Ziffy
(whispers to Ziff)
who his next patient is...

DEEDLE

Who?

MENDY

He's been depressed since he started losing his hair, and he's gained an awful lot weight.

DEEDLE

Tell me who is it already.

MENDY

He doesn't think he's funny anymore and personally, neither do I.

DEEDLE

Are you going to tell me, or what?

MENDY

He needs your help and real fast. I made arrangements for you to treat him in the Beverly Hills Hotel this Monday at four. The honeymoon suite is yours and how does ten thou for the day sound? Plus expenses of course. And I figure at least ten or fifteen times year. The studios are always having problems. Movie stars, they're all crazy. My driver will pick you up at nine A.M. sharp. And Deedle is more than welcome to join you pool side. I'll have two pina coladas waiting.

ZIFF takes DEEDLE'S hand. MENDY is insecure.

ZIFF

I don't think so Mendy.

MENDY

Why not?

ZIFF

We really don't like pina
coladas, right honey? And I
like helping people, here.
Always have, always will.

DEEDLE applauds.

MENDY

Are you crazy? Have you
forgotten already?! All
Charlie got was six lines in
the post, Ziffy!... Why not?
Tell me why not!

ZIFF

Too many earthquakes.

DEEDLE and SOPHIE
Earthquakes?

MENDY

(in disbelief)
WHAT?!!!

ZIFF

They don't have earthquakes
in the Bronx, Mendy. Never.

DEEDLE and SOPHIE find "Too many earthquakes" to be
terribly funny which makes them laugh as THEY repeat, "They
don't Have Earthquakes in the Bronx. There is lots of
hilarity which adds to MENDY feeling defeated. ALL laugh
and hug, echoing "They don't Have Earthquakes in the
Bronx."

ZIFF

(a little drunk)
Charley, my dear beloved best
friend. I can still feel you
(hiccups, then touches heart)
here, right next to Deedle,
because that's where you both
belong; right here, forever,
and I'm not letting either of
(laughs)
you go. Like it or not,

(MORE)

ZIFF (Cont'd)

drunk or not, and I do think
I'm a little... you're

(hiccups)

staying right here,
understand? Thank God we did
what we believed in, Charley.
Do what you believe in and

you'll never regret a thing.
Because, they don't have

(Laughs.)

earthquakes in the Bronx.
Never.

THE END