

## Scene Three

*(The next evening about 7:30 p.m.)*

*(The room is once again set up for the game, the chairs set around it. FLORENCE is vacuuming the living room rug. The door opens and OLIVE comes in looking a little weary. She wears a raincoat over her slacks and shirt. She carries the evening newspaper. FLORENCE is oblivious to OLIVE. OLIVE takes off her raincoat, then she crosses to the wall plug and unplugs the vacuum. FLORENCE notices it and turns and sees OLIVE. OLIVE sits in the wing chair and opens her newspaper.)*

*(FLORENCE takes the vacuum cleaner and crosses into the kitchen with it.)*

*(OLIVE steps on the cord, as FLORENCE yanks from the kitchen. On the third yank, OLIVE lifts her foot and we hear a loud crash from the kitchen.)*

*(FLORENCE comes out limping as OLIVE smiles and sits on sofa. FLORENCE is carrying a tray with a steaming dish of spaghetti on it. She sits at the table and sprays cheese on the spaghetti and begins to eat.)*

*(OLIVE gets up, takes deodorizer can and crosses. She sprays all around FLORENCE to erase the scent of the spaghetti and gives one final spray into the dish of spaghetti itself... FLORENCE puts down her fork and napkin, trying to contain her anger. OLIVE has resumed her seat on the sofa and continues reading.)*

**FLORENCE.** Alright, how much longer is this going to go on? Are you going to spend the rest of your life not talking to me?

**OLIVE.** You had your chance to talk last night. I begged you to come upstairs with me. I was looking for romance

and instead I got a petrified woman standing in my doorway. I never want to hear the sound of your voice again, do you understand?

**FLORENCE.** *Sí. Yo comprendo. Gracias.*

**OLIVE.** *(Takes key out of pocket, crosses to FLORENCE.)* There's a key to the back door. Stick to the hallway and your room and you won't get hurt.

**FLORENCE.** *(Indignant.)* Oh, really? Well, let me remind you that I pay half the rent and I'll go into any room I want.

**OLIVE.** Not in my apartment. I don't want to see you. Cover the mirrors when you walk through the house... *(Threatening.)* And I'm sick and tired of smelling your cooking. I've had it up to here with your polyunsaturated oils. Now get that spaghetti off of my table.

**FLORENCE.** *(Laughs.)* That's funny. That's really funny.

**OLIVE.** What the hell's so funny about it?

**FLORENCE.** It's not spaghetti. It's linguini.

*(OLIVE looks at her as if she's crazy. Then OLIVE picks up the plate of pasta, crosses to the kitchen door and hurls it into the room against the far, unseen wall.)*

**OLIVE.** Now it's garbage!!

*(OLIVE looks self-satisfied. FLORENCE looks into the kitchen, aghast.)*

**FLORENCE.** Are you CRAZY??? ...I'm not cleaning that up... It's *your* mess... Look at it hanging all over the walls.

**OLIVE.** *(Looks at it.)* I like it.

**FLORENCE.** You'd just let it hang there, wouldn't you? Until it turns hard and brown and yich – I'm cleaning it up! *(She starts in.)*

**OLIVE.** *(Yells.)* You touch one strand of that linguini and I'll break every sinus in your head.

**FLORENCE.** Why? What is it I've done? What's driving you crazy? The cooking? The cleaning? The crying? What?

**OLIVE.** I'll tell you exactly what it is. It's the cooking, the cleaning and the crying. It's the moose calls that open your ears at two o'clock in the morning. I can't take it anymore, Florence. I'm cracking up. Everything you do irritates me. And when you're not here, the things I know you're going to do when you come in irritate me... You leave me little notes on my pillow. "We're all out of corn flakes. F.U." ...It took me three hours to figure out that F.U. was Florence Unger... It's no one's fault, Florence. We're just a rotten pair.

**FLORENCE.** I get the picture.

**OLIVE.** That's just the frame. The picture I haven't even painted yet... Every night in my diary I write down the things you did that day that aggravate me... This is June and so far I filled up till January... And I haven't even put down the Gaspacho Brothers yet.

**FLORENCE.** Oh! Is that what's bothering you? That I loused up your sex life last night?

**OLIVE.** What sex life? I can't even have dirty dreams. You come in and clean them up.

**FLORENCE.** (*Shakes finger in OLIVE's face.*) Don't blame me. I warned you not to make that date in the first place.

**OLIVE.** Don't point that finger at me unless you intend to use it.

**FLORENCE.** Alright, Olive, get off my back. Off! You hear me? (*She turns away as if she's just won a major battle.*)

**OLIVE.** What's this? A display of temper? I haven't seen you really angry since the day I dropped my eyelashes in your pancake batter.

**FLORENCE.** Olive, you're asking to hear something I don't want to say... But if I say it, I think you'd better hear it.

**OLIVE.** (*Sarcastically.*) I'm trembling all over. Look how I'm trembling all over. (*Sits in a chair, crosses legs calmly.*)

**FLORENCE.** Alright, I warned you... You're a wonderful girl, Olive. You've done everything for me. If it weren't

for you, I don't know what would have happened to me. You took me in here, gave me a place to live and something to live for. I'll never forget you for that. You're *tops* with me, Olive.

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

**FLORENCE.** It's coming now.

**OLIVE.** Good.

**FLORENCE.** You are also one of the biggest slobs in the world.

**OLIVE.** I see.

**FLORENCE.** And completely unreliable.

**OLIVE.** Is that so?

**FLORENCE.** Undependable.

**OLIVE.** Is that it?

**FLORENCE.** Unappreciative, irresponsible and indescribably inefficient.

**OLIVE.** What is that, a Cole Porter song?

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

**OLIVE.** Good. Because now I'm going to tell you off...

(**FLORENCE** *rushes, sits in chair, crosses legs calmly.*)

For eight months I've lived all alone in this apartment. I thought I was miserable. I thought I was lonely. I took you in here because I thought we could help each other... And after three weeks of close, personal contact, I have hives, shingles and the heartbreak of psoriasis... I am growing old at twice the speed of sound... I have seven new liver spots on my hand that look like the Big Dipper... I can't take any more, Florence... Do me a favor and move into the kitchen. Live with your pots, your pans, your ladle and your meat thermometer... I'm going inside to lie down now... My teeth are coming loose and I'm afraid if I