

pressing yourself or revealing yourself.... I know you got very angry when I suggested you find a doctor who specializes in "communicatively challenged" people.... You were always sweet and gentle, Albert, but we had a vague marriage.... It was like a window that needed washing. Something was out there but I could never see what.... The only thing you were clear about was your silence and your silence was deafening.... Why such a cruel punishment to me, Albert? Why? *(He goes to the door, opens it, goes through and slams it. He reenters door and slams it. He repeats whole process and then he looks at her.)* Because I walked out of the door twice, yes, I understand.... But you know what I would have preferred, Albert? ... That when you rang my doorbell, I would open it and you would call me the vilest names in the world ... and then you would throw foul things at my feet ... things that even animals would walk around ... and having said and done that, you'd be finished with me ... and the past would be over with.... Is it possible for you to do that for me, Albert? Please? *(ALBERT looks at the floor.)* Alright, then don't speak to me. But do you have to seek me out and confront me everywhere? On the street, in shops, at the movies.... If you'll release me from this torture, Albert, I'll give you anything you want... Not that I have much because I never took a penny from you for the divorce.... Each divorce... But I'll beg, borrow or steal just to hear your voice again. *(She looks at him. He is till stony silent.)* Say something, Albert. Move your lips, carve it in stone, drop leaflets from a plane, write graffiti on my face with chalk, BUT SAY SOMETHING, dammit! *(He suddenly holds up his index finger and writes a word in the air. She watches his finger.)* You're spelling something ... NEVER! ... I see. *(He now spells the same word with the finger, more rapidly this time.)* Never, never, never, never, yes, I got it, Albert.... Well, there's nothing left to say, is there? *(He points to himself, then points to the door.)* You're leaving, yes, I understand.... It was wonderful speaking to your finger, Albert.

(ALBERT walks to the doorway, turns the knob halfway, then suddenly sneezes loudly.)

YVONNE. *(Without looking up.)* God bless you.

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ALBERT. (*As a reflex.*) Thank you.

(*He leaves, closing the door behind him. YVONNE looks up, realizing what just happened. She stands.*)

YVONNE. Was that him? Did he just say "Thank you"? ... Oh, dear God. He spoke to me.... HE SPOKE TO ME!!!

(*The door reopens, ALBERT reenters, his head down in despair. He bangs on the door with his fist, angrily.*)

ALBERT. I knew one day this would happen.... But I *NEVER* thought it would be like *THIS!*

(*He bangs door again.*)

YVONNE. For whatever reason, even if you didn't mean it, it's over, Albert.... You spoke to me.

ALBERT. I didn't *speak* to you. It was a reaction to God Bless You.... If *you* had sneezed, I would have Gezuntheited you.

YVONNE. Still it's over, Albert. I'm free. I can breathe again.

ALBERT. You're *not* free. I was just being polite.

YVONNE. No, I'm free. Free free free. I'm free as a *bird*. (*She jumps and twirls through the air like a ballerina.*) Gold bless you, Albert, my dear sweet friend.

ALBERT. I spoke not because I wanted to. But because I couldn't take the pressure any more.

YVONNE. Was your anger that great?

ALBERT. It was the only defense I had.

YVONNE. Defense against what?

ALBERT. Against admitting to myself that I still loved you. Still wanted you.... If I kept silent, unapproachable, I would have built a wall so high, it would keep me safe from you forever.

YVONNE. What's safer than two divorces, Albert? ... I'm sorry I caused you so much pain.

ALBERT. Not talking to you kept me from not wanting you.

YVONNE. Why do you still want me?

ALBERT. I will *always* want you ... but now I can survive without you.... It's safe for me to say your name now. (*Cheerfully.*) Hello, Yvonne. What's new, Yvonne? How've you been, Yvonne?

YVONNE. Oh, so so. Not much new. Saw a wonderful movie last week.

ALBERT. I know. I waited for you to come out and not say a word to you.

YVONNE. Yes, I saw you.

ALBERT. Please don't smile.

YVONNE. I'm not laughing at you.

ALBERT. I know. But your smile weakens my resolve.

YVONNE. Sorry.... So, are you seeing anyone? Special, I mean.

ALBERT. Actually, yes. Well, very, very briefly. I'm not sure it will work out.

YVONNE. Who is she?

ALBERT. Mariette.

YVONNE. I thought you just met her.

ALBERT. Yes. I said it was very, very brief.... What about you? Are you seeing anyone?

YVONNE. Well, you would know. You've been four steps behind me the entire year.

ALBERT. Partly hounding you and partly to protect you from unsuitable men ... like me.

YVONNE. You weren't the wrong man, Albert. We were the wrong *couple*.... And now that we've settled things, you'll never confront me on the street corners and other places, will you?

ALBERT. No. Never. (*They shake on it. ALBERT doesn't flinch.*) It doesn't hurt with you!

YVONNE. Thank you.... So since you've promised not to hound me anymore, I promise not to marry you a third time.

ALBERT. A third time? I don't have a friend close enough to *come* to a third wedding.

YVONNE. Then let's be grateful for little things.

ALBERT. It's nice talking to you again ... without rancor and anger about — well, what I've done to you this year.

YVONNE. But I understand why you did it. I'm sure you thought I was very cruel to you. (*ALBERT shrugs.*) But in marriage, people are

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always cruel to each other.

ALBERT. I loved you all the time.

YVONNE. You *thought* you did. But many's the time I saw that "God, I dislike you intensely" look.

ALBERT. I never disliked you intensely.

YVONNE. *In-tense-ly*. Sometimes you would glare at me and your eyes would grit their pupils.

ALBERT. You can't grit your pupils. You'd go blind.

YVONNE. And you would flare your nostrils. And bite your lower lip. And bang the side of your head with your knuckles. (*She does it to show him. She flares her nostrils, bites her lower lip and bangs the side of her head with her knuckles.*) ... You looked like a small gorilla that hadn't been fed in the zoo.

ALBERT. I *NEVER* did that. *EVER*.

YVONNE. I have pictures of it.

ALBERT. You went and got your camera while I was banging my head with my knuckles?

YVONNE. Yes. You were furious with me because I was angry with you. And do you know what you did to *make* me that angry?

ALBERT. No, but I'm sure you have a picture of it.

YVONNE. I'll tell you what you did.... You loved me too much.

ALBERT. I *loved* you too much?? ... How is a thing like that possible?

YVONNE. Because it was all about *your* feelings, *your* emotions, *your* need to tell me how wonderfully happy you were. Gushing all that love and devotion for me with, "God, I'm so lucky to have you. How did a man like me wind up with someone as great as you?" ... Never *once* thinking that I may be having a terrible day but *no*, you're too busy *fawning* all over me to ask how I'm feeling.

ALBERT. (*Glares at her.*) I'm not going to take a picture of what you just said, but I could do a quick oil painting of how neurotic and deranged you are.

YVONNE. *I'm* deranged? (*She laughs.*) Was I the one following me all around the city, running into me face to face, for the satisfaction of not saying a word to me?

ALBERT. If I didn't seek you out, how would you know I wasn't speaking to you? I had to chase you all over the city to let you know I