



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

All rights reserved.  
© 1997 / rewrite 2001  
Screenplay 9/06

**Please Contact:**

**Sidney Goldberg**  
80 Norman Place  
Tenafly, NJ 07670  
201 567-6533  
ShaiyaG@optonline.net  
[www.SidneyGoldbergWriter.com](http://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 your 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 muhzi. 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 *dribing* 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 muhzi 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