

ANDY/ANDIE (*Into the phone*) Oh—Mrs. Mackinnee I was wondering if I could beg off tonight's karate party . . . I just don't think I'm up to an entire evening of being thrown against the wall . No Mrs. Mackinnee, I definitely don't think I can make it tonight . . . I think this is hardly the time to discuss a rent increase . . . All right, if that's how you feel about it, you can pick up your apartment in the morning.

(*He hangs up. NORMAN/NORA comes out of his bedroom carrying a flower box with a few tiny leaves starting to sprout.*)

NORMAN/NORA I'm taking the marijuana plant.

ANDY/ANDIE I think you're making a mistake.

NORMAN/NORA I've only made two mistakes in my life. One was trusting you!

ANDY/ANDIE NORMAN/NORA, I've known you for eight years. Can you ever remember me lying to you once in all those eight years?

NORMAN/NORA Yes. I've known you for nine years.

ANDY/ANDIE All right, nine years. I don't care what you saw yesterday, I'm telling you the truth. I cannot abide that girl and she finds me snide, smug, and repulsive.

NORMAN/NORA I see. And I walked in just as she was sinking her fangs into your throat, and you fought off the attack with your mouth.

ANDY/ANDIE No, she was...

NORMAN/NORA Kissing you . . . ? You're a foot taller than she is and you can't stand her. So the way I see it, the only way she could have kissed you against your wishes is for her to have nineteen-inch lips.

ANDY/ANDIE I don't care what you think, I did not act overtly to her.

NORMAN/NORA In other words, she was the one who did overtly.

ANDY/ANDIE Correct.

NORMAN/NORA It is now three o'clock. I will be hysterical until three-fifteen.

ANDY/ANDIE You mean to tell me that you would let that flag-waving sea urchin come between us?

NORMAN/NORA. I can live with a slob, a sadist, a forger, or a junkie. I draw the line at finks.

ANDY/ANDIE And what about the magazine?

NORMAN/NORA The magazine is no longer my concern.

ANDY/ANDIE You—hypocrite! You pretend to be devoted and dedicated to an ideal that we've literally starved for, and you can blithely toss it all aside because we're suddenly embroiled in a romantic triangle!

NORMAN/NORA Now I know why this magazine never made a cent. You, me, the girl and the Marine are a quadrangle, not a triangle!! You can't add!

ANDY/ANDIE And what do you think you're going to do once you leave here?

NORMAN/NORA In exactly thirty minutes I have an interview for a job with the A-P.

ANDY/ANDIE Doing what?

NORMAN/NORA I'm a writer. They'll pay me for writing . . . Just as, I imagine, you'll make your living by finking!

ANDY/ANDIE A writer? Without me to push you, prod you, and encourage you, you couldn't hold down a job writing Rhode Island license plates.

NORMAN/NORA No . . . ? L J Seven-one-nine-six . . . ! And there's plenty more ideas where that came from.

ANDY/ANDIE Okay, NORMAN/NORA, if I have to fight for my magazine, I'll fight for it.

NORMAN/NORA You're joking, surely.

ANDY/ANDIE Surely not.

NORMAN/NORA I'm warning you. I'm not wiry, but I'm thin. I'll cut you to ribbons.

ANDY/ANDIE I've already faced death with our paratrooper landlady. I'm not afraid of a skinny typist.

(He takes the short stool to the door. He sits on it and crosses his legs in a Gandhi fashion)

NORMAN/NORA What is that supposed to be?

ANDY/ANDIE What does it look like? It's a sit-in!

NORMAN/NORA Get up! What do you think you're doing?

ANDY/ANDIE The same as they did in Bombay in 1947 when twelve thousand Indians threw themselves across fifteen miles of railroad tracks.

NORMAN/NORA Well, Charley, in thirty seconds the five-fifteen is coming through.

ANDY/ANDIE If you go over to their side it's the end of free, creative thinking. They'll have you writing weather reports and shipping news.

NORMAN/NORA In two minutes I bring in my first story about dead man leaning against a door.

ANDY/ANDIE *(Looks at him, then gets up)* All right . . . I had hoped to avoid bloodshed . . . The pain I am about to inflict is done purely on request.

NORMAN/NORA Do you mean it is your intention to actually come to blows? Hard hitting and everything? Knowing full well that on July sixteenth I finish a three-year course in Oriental combat?

ANDY/ANDIE I intend to compensate by fighting dirty.

NORMAN/NORA It's my legal obligation to warn you that karate may be hazardous to one's health.

ANDY/ANDIE And let me warn you that I have never once in my life struck another human being in anger.

(Both ANDY/ANDIE and NORMAN/NORA pick up the center coffee table and carry it stage right) I don't want to kill you, but I have no idea how strong I am. (Goes left and takes the director's chair to the right of the desk) If you feel yourself dying, just speak up.

(NORMAN/NORA tries to lift the right chair with one hand. ANDY/ANDIE comes to his rescue. NORMAN/NORA then carries the chair up right and puts it down near the table—he bows to the chair) (NORMAN/NORA assumes a sort of professional pose while ANDY/ANDIE just tries to look menacing)

NORMAN/NORA Is that the way you're going to stand? You won't last ten seconds.

ANDY/ANDIE When you're able to talk again, you can teach me.

NORMAN/NORA Can I show you the four basic positions? I'm still going to break your neck, but at least you'll look better. *(He goes toward ANDY/ANDIE, who growls at him)* You have no defense at all. I'm not even enjoying this.

ANDY/ANDIE If you want entertainment, turn on the television.

NORMAN/NORA I want to fight . . . *(In true karate fashion, NORMAN/NORA takes a step towards ANDY/ANDIE. He repeats the move with the other hand and the sound)*

ANDY/ANDIE If you're gonna do that, why don't you put on those big white bloomers like the Japanese wear?

NORMAN/NORA *(NORMAN/NORA approaches ANDY/ANDIE. He raises his hand. ANDY/ANDIE runs upstage of the pole.)* Damnit, ANDY/ANDIE, why don't you stand still and fight like a man?

ANDY/ANDIE Because I'm afraid, that's why.

NORMAN/NORA I told you that before we started.

ANDY/ANDIE Not of you, of myself. I am so fed up with your monumental stupidity and infantile behavior, that, I swear by everything I believe in this world, I'll crack your head wide open.

NORMAN/NORA Then you'd better do it to me before I do it to you.

ANDY/ANDIE All right, dammit, here!! *(And in a karate-type swipe, ANDY/ANDIE swings at NORMAN/NORA, who simultaneously swings at him with an identical blow, but they succeed in landing both blows on each other's arms between the wrist and elbow, causing enormous pain to both. They both stop and rub their painful arms and moan together)*

ANDY/ANDIE & NORMAN/NORA Oohhhh ... Oh, boy, that hurts .. .

ANDY/ANDIE *(Goes toward him)* Are you all right?

NORMAN/NORA Let me alone. Why don't you look where you're hitting? In karate you hit the neck or the kidneys, not the arm. *(He looks at his wrist)* Ah, damn.

ANDY/ANDIE What's wrong?

NORMAN/NORA You broke my Benrus watch.—it's my good watch, too.

ANDY/ANDIE I'm sorry.

NORMAN/NORA And I just put in a new crystal.

ANDY/ANDIE Why didn't you take the watch off first?

NORMAN/NORA Because I didn't expect to get hit on the wrist. I told you you didn't know what you were doing . . . I don't want to fight anymore.

ANDY/ANDIE Well, what are we gonna do?

NORMAN/NORA *(Putting on his jacket)* You can do whatever you want, I'm going.

ANDY/ANDIE Okay, if you wanna go, then go. I think you're wrong, but if that's what you want, I wish you the very best of luck.

NORMAN/NORA *(Points to his watch)* If I knew what time it was, I'd hang around another ten minutes and watch you cry.

ANDY/ANDIE You don't think I'm sincere about our friendship.

NORMAN/NORA (*Picks up his suitcase*) For this magazine you would sell your own mother—who, incidentally, no one has seen for three years.

ANDY/ANDIE NORMAN/NORA, Please believe me when I say I'd rather have a handshake from you right now—than the Pulitzer Prize. (*He extends his hand out to NORMAN/NORA. NORMAN/NORA looks at him, puts down his suitcase and goes left to ANDY/ANDIE*) What's the matter?

NORMAN/NORA I'm afraid you're going to grab me and handcuff me to the steampipe.

ANDY/ANDIE (*He extends his hand again*) Good-bye, Norman/Nora.

NORMAN/NORA Good-bye, Andy/Andie. (*NORMAN/NORA extends his hand to ANDY/ANDIE, who in a flash of dexterity pulls up a pair of hand-cuffs from the pole table. One handcuff has been affixed to the steampipe, the other one ANDY/ANDIE puts on NORMAN/NORA'S wrist. It happened so fast NORMAN/NORA is dumbfounded and can only stare blankly at what ANDY/ANDIE has done. You dirty, no-good rat, I even have to write your lousy ideas!*)

ANDY/ANDIE That one was my own, sweetheart. I heard you on the phone this morning with the A-P. Now we have one article to finish, one more page. And we're down to the finish line, Norman/Nora, because in forty-five minutes, Mr. Franklyn's two Neanderthal sons will be here to pick up our completed magazine or their six hundred dollars. And if I can't give them either one, I'll give them you!

NORMAN/NORA You mean you're serious? You actually intend, in real life, to keep a human being chained to a steampipe?

ANDY/ANDIE (*He gets the typewriter from the sofa and takes it to the pole table*) Until tomorrow—when the police find a unidentified broken object dangling from a post. (*He puts the typewriter on the table*)

NORMAN/NORA. All right, ANDY/ANDIE, I'm in no mood for the "Prisoner of Zenda." Open up!

ANDY/ANDIE Not until I see some paper work. (*He starts for the kitchen*)

NORMAN/NORA Where are you going?

ANDY/ANDIE To the kitchen to get myself a tiny-kumquat sandwich. (*He goes into the kitchen*)

NORMAN/NORA (*Shouts toward the window*) Help! Help! I'm being held prisoner! (*He looks out the window and shouts to someone*) Hey, lady! You wanna make a dollar? (*ANDY/ANDIE re-enters and approaches NORMAN/NORA*) What are you going to do?

ANDY/ANDIE Murder! I'm going to commit cold-blooded murder right in this room. --- I'm going to kill the only thing in this world that really means anything to me—my magazine. (*He takes the key and unlocks NORMAN/NORA'S handcuffs*) There! Go on, you're free. Now get out of here and let me bury the body. Go on, you were in such a hurry to go, why don't you go?

NORMAN/NORA (*Goes to the suitcase*) Yeah . . . Want me to help you straighten up before I go?

ANDY/ANDIE I wouldn't want you to be late for your appointment.

NORMAN/NORA Any idea what you're gonna do now?

ANDY/ANDIE I might go back to Philadelphia. Maybe work for my father.

NORMAN/NORA Yeah. *(He pauses)* I just want to say that if you decide not to go back to Philadelphia, that maybe someday, I'll be able to forget our differences, forget what's happened here the last few days, forget everything . . . And when I do, maybe someday I'll be back.

ANDY/ANDIE I hope so, . . . So long.

(NORMAN/NORA nods and leaves. There is a moment's silence, then the door opens and NORMAN/NORA returns)

NORMAN/NORA I forgot everything; I'm back.

ANDY/ANDIE What took you so long?

NORMAN/NORA I got stuck in traffic. Hey, tell the truth! Were you really going back to Philadelphia.

ANDY/ANDIE Of course not. I was going to marry Mrs. Mackinnee and open up the only discotheque funeral parlor in California.

NORMAN/NORA And you'll be glad to know I'm NORMAN/NORA the writer . . . NORMAN/NORA the man who's dedicated to this magazine.

(He goes to the window)

ANDY/ANDIE Promise me you'll never go off the deep end over a girl like that again.

NORMAN/NORA *(At the window)* I'll promise tomorrow. Why not today?

NORMAN/NORA 'Cause there's a gorgeous redhead across the street. *(Yells out)* Hey, beautiful redhead lady, I love you!

ANDY/ANDIE NORMAN/NORA, get back to that typewriter. We've got a magazine to get out.