

ACT TWOScene 11**Oscar, Charity**
THE PARK

Electric sign appears. It reads:

47

"PLANS"

Two arcs pick up OSCAR and CHARITY HAND IN HAND. The rest of the stage is dark. Park trees can be seen. CHARITY is glowing and speaks rapidly, filled with emotion. There is music under.

CHARITY

... Oh, Oscar. I didn't like the first half of my life much but the second half sure is getting good.

(Electric sign off)

(Snaps fingers, remembering something.)

Ooh, I knew I had something to show you.

(Fishes through her purse. Takes out a card.)

A joint bank account ... I deposited the entire can of Chase and Sanborn ... So that's my entire dowry ... The point I'm trying to get across, Oscar Lindquist, is that I'm very happy.

(Music Fade out)

OSCAR

(Uncomfortably)

Charity ... there is something I have to tell you.

CHARITY

Oh, I've been doing all the talking. OK, it's your turn, Oscar.

OSCAR

Charity, ... I'm very fond of you, you know that. And I find you unique --

CHARITY

That's me!

OSCAR

-- and different and sweet and wonderful and tender -- and I just can't marry you. Did you hear me, Charity?

CHARITY

(Quickly)

Yeah, I heard you. I heard you.

OSCAR

I can't, Charity -- I can't go through with it.

CHARITY

Alright, Oscar, I know this isn't a joke because you certainly wouldn't joke about a thing like that at a time like this. It couldn't be a joke because it would be a very rotten joke. But I can't figure what else it could be ... Oscar -- is it a joke?

OSCAR

This is not easy for me, Charity. Not easy at all.

CHARITY

I know it's not easy, Oscar ... but is it a joke?

OSCAR

(Irritated)

It is not a joke ... It is no joke!

CHARITY

(Mumbles)

It's no joke.

OSCAR

I thought this time it would be different. But it's not. It's the same ... It's always the same.

CHARITY

What's the same?

OSCAR

The other men. I always get this far and then I start thinking about the other men ...

CHARITY

What other men?

OSCAR

(Gently)

You know what other men!

CHARITY

(Pause)

But Oscar, you said ...

OSCAR

Oh, I know I kept saying it didn't matter because I thought if I said it enough I could convince myself it was true.

CHARITY

That certainly makes sense to me, Oscar.

OSCAR

It's not your fault, Charity. You're a wonderful girl.

CHARITY

(Hopeful)

I am?

OSCAR

But it's my problem, Charity. I have this neurosis ... a -- mental block.

CHARITY

There's a lot of that going around.

OSCAR

(With self-anger)

But I have this childish, incomprehensible, idiotic, fixation about purity. In this day and age? It's laughable, isn't it?

(SHE laughs.)

It's not funny. But every time I think of you -- with all those other men --

CHARITY

Oscar, you're making a mountain out of a couple of guys.

OSCAR

How many?

CHARITY

What?

OSCAR

(Shouts)

HOW MANY? I want to know exactly how many.

CHARITY

Gee, when you yell like that, I can't think.

(SHE starts to count on fingers.)

Frank, Harry, Sidney -- How far back do you want me to go?

OSCAR

(Covers eyes in agony.)

Oh, my God, don't tell me. I don't want to hear.

CHARITY

Oscar, I know I'm not very bright. I could go to a night school. We could be so happy in that gas station, I know it. On the days you felt 'sick,' you could stay in bed and I'd work the pumps ... I've got so much to give ... Let me give it to you.

OSCAR

Charity, get up. You're too good to be on your knees to me.

CHARITY

(Weak smile)

Give the little girl a break, heh?

OSCAR

Together, I'd destroy you. Sooner or later it would start again and I'd hound you day and night "What were their names?" "How long did you know them before?" "How did you feel when they ----" ...

CHARITY

You could ask me anything. I won't hide a thing. I'll tell you everything you want to know.

OSCAR

You'd like that, wouldn't you? ... I'd get all the pretty details, wouldn't I? Give you quite a thrill, heh?

CHARITY

You won't get one word out of me, not a word -- Don't you see, Oscar, I'm very flexible. I can go either way.

OSCAR

There's only one way to go with me. To destruction. Marry me and I'll destroy you, Charity.

CHARITY

That's okay. I'm not doing much now, anyway.

OSCAR

But the one shred of decency left in me won't let me destroy you. I must save you from me. I'm doing this for your own good, Charity. Run. Run. I'M SAVING YOU, CHARITY ... SAVING YOU!!!!

(HE has forced her down to the apron. HE pushes her into the orchestra pit.

48

FINALE

Electric sign appears:

"DITTO"

After four counts, sign goes off.

OSCAR leans over, looks down.)

Woops.