

Now come. I want . . .

ELLEN. (*Pulling free, restrained anger.*) No, Milt.

MILT. Why not? He's waiting . . .

ELLEN. He can wait. I want to talk to you. (*Returns kerchief and sunglasses to her pocketbook, places pocketbook beside bench R.*)

MILT. (*Annoyed.*) El . . .

ELLEN. What I have to say will only take a few minutes. There may not be many more of them. You didn't come home until after one last night. . . .

MILT. I told you what happened, hon. I was stuck in the office. These clients came and the boss was there and I couldn't . . .

ELLEN. (*Sharply.*) Milt.

MILT. It's the truth, El!

ELLEN. It wouldn't give me any satisfaction to prove you're lying, so we'll let it stay like that. I have something to show you. I made this while you were out last night. (*She hooks graph to lamppost.*) Let me explain it to you. (*She pulls graph down to its full length, points with finger.*) These black vertical lines divide our five years of marriage into months; these blue vertical lines divide the months into weeks. Now. Each time this red horizontal line running across

the top of the graph hits the blue vertical line that indicates the number of sexual experiences over a seven-day period.

MILT. (*Covers graph with his body.*) Ellen, for God's sake . . . (*Looks about in embarrassment.*) We can talk about this later.

ELLEN. You're always saying later. That's a favorite play of yours. No, Milt. Not tonight. These things must be said while they still can be said. (*Mumbling under his breath Milt crosses to bench, sits.*) I'd like to continue if you don't mind. Now. You'll notice on this graph how at the beginning of our marriage the red horizontal line touches the blue vertical line at a point of . . . 14, 15 times a week, and how, gradually, the number of contacts become less and less until 18 months ago, when we have an abrupt break-off, the last time being July 23rd, the night of your sister's wedding, and after that date the red horizontal line doesn't touch the blue vertical line once, not once! I have nothing further to say, Milt. (*She tugs down on graph so that it snaps up cleanly and disappears in the wooden casing, pause.*) When something like this is allowed to happen to a marriage, you can't go on pretending. (*Removes graph from lamppost.*) You want to pretend. Oh, the temptation is great to overlook, to find excuses, to rationalize. (*Waving graph.*) But here, Milt, here are the facts. Our relationship has deteriorated to such an extent that I don't feel responsible any more for my own behavior.

MILT. (*Rises, arms held out, smiling.*) Hon, you're mad at me.

ELLEN. (*Still angry.*) It isn't a question of being mad at you. We've gone a long ways from that.

MILT. I see. (*Takes graph from her.*) Just the same I'd like to ask you something, El.

ELLEN. Speak. I can't stop you.

MILT. Do you think our marriage is a failure?

ELLEN. I do.

MILT. (*Triumphantly.*) I thought so. I thought that was behind it. Well, before I give you a divorce . . .

ELLEN. There isn't going to be a divorce.

MILT. There isn't?

ELLEN. We've made a mistake, but we've got to make the best of it.

MILT. We'll act like civilized human beings.

ELLEN. I have no intention of doing otherwise.

MILT. Good. (*Formally.*) Ellen, I'd like you to meet a friend of