

ELAINE & MORTIMER

MORTIMER: Hello, Elaine. Were you going somewhere?

ELAINE: I was just going over to tell Father not to wait up for me.

MORTIMER: I didn't know that was still being done, even in Brooklyn.

ELAINE: [*moves to MORTIMER ready to be kissed*] Well, can't you take a hint?

MORTIMER: No. That was pretty obvious, I should say.

ELAINE: Yes—that's exactly what you'd say! [*She walks away, ruffled*]

MORTIMER: [*Not noticing the ruffle*] Where do you want to go for dinner?

ELAINE: I don't care. I'm not very hungry.

MORTIMER: Well, I just had breakfast. Suppose we wait until after the show?

ELAINE: But that'll make it pretty late, won't it?

MORTIMER: Not with the little stinker we're seeing tonight. From what I've heard about it, we'll be at Polly's by ten o'clock.

ELAINE: You ought to be fair to these plays.

MORTIMER: Are these plays fair to me?

ELAINE: I've never seen you walk out on a musical.

START

MORTIMER: That musical isn't opening tonight.

ELAINE: [*Disappointed*] No? I was hoping it was a musical. After a serious play we join the proletariat in the subway and I listen to a lecture on the drama. After a musical you bring me home in a taxi and you make a few passes.

MORTIMER: Now wait a minute, darling, that's a very inaccurate piece of reporting.

ELAINE: Oh, I will admit that after the Behrman play you told me I had authentic beauty—and that's a hell of a thing to say to any girl. It wasn't until after our first musical you told me I had nice legs. And I have, too.

MORTIMER: For a minister's daughter you know a lot about life. Where did you learn it?

ELAINE: [*Casually*] In the choir loft.

MORTIMER: I'll explain that to you sometime, darling—the close connection between eroticism and religion.

ELAINE: Religion never gets as high as the choir loft. Which reminds me, I'd better tell Father please not to wait up for me tonight.

MORTIMER: [*Almost to himself*] I've never been able to rationalize it.

ELAINE: What?

MORTIMER: My falling in love with a girl who lives in Brooklyn.

ELAINE: Falling in love? You're not stooping to the articulate, are you?

MORTIMER: [*Ignoring this*] The only way I can regain my self-respect is to keep you in New York.

ELAINE: Did you say *keep*?

MORTIMER: No, I've come to the conclusion you're holding out for the legalities.

ELAINE: I can afford to be a good girl for quite a few years yet.

MORTIMER: And I can't wait that long. Where could we be married in a hurry—say tonight?

ELAINE: I'm afraid Father will insist on officiating.

MORTIMER: Oh, God! I'll bet your father could make even the marriage service sound pedestrian.

ELAINE: Are you, by any chance, writing a review of it?

MORTIMER: Forgive me, darling. It's an occupational disease. [*She smiles and they forget themselves for a moment in a sentimental embrace and kiss.*]
I may give that show tonight a good notice!

ELAINE: Now, darling, don't pretend you love me *that* much.

MORTIMER: [*with polite lechery*] Be sure to tell your father not to wait up tonight.

ELAINE: [*Aware that she can't trust either of them*] I think tonight I'd better tell him to wait up. Darling, I'm going to run over to speak to Father. Before I go out with you, he likes to pray over me a little. I'll be right back—I'll cut through the cemetery.

MORTIMER: Well, if the prayer isn't too long, I'll have time to lead you beside distilled waters.

[ELAINE *laughs and exits*]

STOP
START

ELAINE: I'm sorry I took so long, dear. [*As she approaches he looks in her direction and as her presence dawns on him he speaks*]

MORTIMER: Oh, it's you!

ELAINE: Don't be cross, darling! Father saw I was excited—so I told him about, us and that made it hard for me to get away. [*She goes to him and puts her arm around him*] But, listen, darling—he's not going to wait up for me tonight.

MORTIMER: Elaine—you run on back home and I'll call you up tomorrow.

ELAINE: Tomorrow!

MORTIMER: [*Irritated*] You know I always call you up every day or two.

ELAINE: But we're going to the theater tonight.

MORTIMER: No—no, we're not.

ELAINE: Well, why not?

MORTIMER: Elaine, something's come up.

ELAINE: What, darling? Mortimer—you've lost your job!

MORTIMER: No—no! I haven't lost my job! I'm just not covering the play tonight. Now, you run along home, Elaine.

ELAINE: But I've got to know what's happened. Certainly, you can tell me.

MORTIMER: No, I can't, dear.

ELAINE: But if we're going to be married. . . .

MORTIMER: Married?

ELAINE: Have you forgotten that not fifteen minutes ago you proposed to me?

MORTIMER: I did? Oh—yes! Well, as far as I know, that's still on. But you go home now. I've got to do something.

ELAINE: Listen, you can't propose to me one minute and throw me out of the house the next.

MORTIMER: I'm not throwing you out of the house, darling. Will you get out of here?

ELAINE: No, I won't get out of here. Not until I've had some kind of explanation!

[She stalks across the room and almost sits on the window seat. He intercepts her]

MORTIMER: Elaine, you're a sweet girl and I love you. But I have something on my mind now and I want you to go home and wait until I call you.

STOP

ELAINE: Don't try to be masterful!

MORTIMER: *[Annoyed]* When we're married and I have problems to face I hope you'll be less tedious and uninspired!

ELAINE: And when we're married, *if* we're married, I hope I find you adequate! *[She exits]*

MORTIMER: Elaine! *[He runs out on the porch after her, calling]* Elaine! *[He rushes back in, slams the door, and runs across to call to her out of the window.]*