

CAPTAIN: I can't see you sitting behind a desk. (*He sits R. of coffee table.*)

ELSA: Well, of course, I wear a business suit and smoke a big cigar. (*FRANZ enters from the house.*)

FRANZ: Excuse me, Captain, Herr Detweiler would like his coffee.

CAPTAIN: While he's telephoning?

FRANZ: He just finished.

MAX

(*FRANZ pours a cup of coffee. MAX DETWEILER enters. He is charming and vital. He carries a small notebook and pencil.*)

START

L MAX: I'm sorry I took so long.

CAPTAIN: Any luck?

MAX: How would you like this for the Kaltzberg Festival—the finest choral group in Austria, the greatest mixed quartet in all Europe—and the best soprano in the world?

ELSA: Max, that's something I'd love to hear!

MAX: So would I. (*MAX sits on stool D.L.*) All I've got up to now is a basso who isn't even profundo.

(*FRANZ exits into the house.*)

ELSA: Max, you always come up with a good Festival Concert.

(*The CAPTAIN takes MAX a cup of coffee with a piece of pastry on the saucer.*)

MAX: And why? Because my motto is: "Never start out looking for the people you wind up getting." That's why I've been telephoning Paris, Rome, Stockholm, London—

ELSA: On Georg's telephone?

MAX: How else could I afford it? Why am I up here?

CAPTAIN: I hoped it was because you liked me.

MAX: Of course I like you. Why shouldn't I like you? You live like a king. You have an excellent wine cellar—

ELSA: Max!

MAX: I like rich people. I like the way they live. I like the way / live when I'm with them. (*We hear the Abbey bells.*) Speaking as a government official, I—Georg, is there a cathedral around here?

CAPTAIN: That's our Abbey—Nonnberg Abbey.

MAX: Do they have a choir?

CAPTAIN: A beautiful one.

MAX: Good! In the next few days I have to visit all these towns around here and listen to saengerbunds, choirs, quartets—

CAPTAIN: You'll be here for meals, won't you?

MAX: Oh, yes! (*MAX rises and looks off over the heads of the audience, where MAX plainly sees a mountain village.*) It was in a town just about that size—Watzmann—where I discovered the St. Ignatius Boys Choir. In 1930 they won the Festival, became very famous, toured all over the world.

ELSA: Oh, yes—whatever became of them?

MAX: By the time their voices changed they were rich enough to live in America. (*Indicating.*) Who lives in that dilapidated castle down there? Rumpelstiltskin? **END**

CAPTAIN: Baron Elberfeld. The oldest family in the valley.

ELSA: I'd like to meet him. I'd like to meet all your friends. Georg, why don't you give a dinner for me while I'm here? Nothing very much—just something lavish.

CAPTAIN: I wouldn't know whom to invite. Today it's difficult to tell who's a friend and who's an enemy.

ELSA: This isn't a good time to make enemies. Let's make some friends.

(*Wishing to change the subject, the CAPTAIN goes up-stage and looks off.*)

CAPTAIN: I can't understand what's happened to the children.

ELSA: You're not worried about them, are you?

CAPTAIN: We'll talk about it later. You go up to the children now. (*MARIA starts toward house.*) Maria, a new dress?

MARIA: We have a new postulant. (*She exits into the house. CAPTAIN sits L. of coffee table, strumming guitar.*)

ELSA: (*Entering from garden*) I know I'm right, Max. We'll find him and ask him.

MAX: (*Following her on and crossing C.*) I'll take your word for it, Elsa.

ELSA: Georg, settle this for Max and me, will you. How far down the mountain does your property go?

CAPTAIN: Can you make out that stone wall? That's the property line.

ELSA: (*Turning to MAX*) You see.

MAX: (*Sits on bench L.*) I didn't argue about it.

ELSA: I know, that makes me furious. I don't like to win without a fight.

FRANZ: (*FRANZ enters from the house*) Herr Detweiler, while you were gone, you had a long distance call from Berlin.

MAX: (*Innocently*) Who could be calling me from Berlin?

FRANZ: They said you'd know who it was.

MAX: Oh! Thank you, Franz. (*FRANZ exits to the house.*)
Georg, what were we just talking about?

START

CAPTAIN: Max, this isn't the first call you've had from Berlin.

MAX: Georg, you know I have no political convictions. Can I help it if other people have?

ELSA: Let's not stir that up again. The Germans have promised not to invade Austria. (*Crosses to R. of coffee table.*) Max knows that.

CAPTAIN: Then why does he bother to answer those calls from Berlin?

MAX: Because if they don't keep their promise, I want to have some friends among them.

ELSA: Naturally.

CAPTAIN: Oh, you agree, too?

MAX: (*Rises, crosses to CAPTAIN*) Georg, this is the way I look at it. There was a man who was dying. They were giving him the last rites. They asked him, "Do you renounce the devil and all his works?" and he said, "At this moment, I prefer not to make any enemies."

(*Crosses L. CAPTAIN strums his guitar.*)

ELSA: Georg—if they—if they should invade us—would you defy them?

CAPTAIN: . . . Yes.

MAX: (*Crosses to CAPTAIN*) Do you realize what might happen to you? To your property?

ELSA: To your children?

MAX: To everyone close to you. . . to Elsa. . . to me!

CAPTAIN: (*Rises, crosses D.R.*) Well, what will you do if they come?

MAX: (*Takes chair L. of coffee table, places it D.C. and sits*) What anyone with any sense would do—just sit tight and wait for it all to blow over.

CAPTAIN: And you think it will?

MAX: One thing is sure—nothing you can do will make any difference. (*Rises, crosses L.C.*)

END

ELSA: (*Crosses above D.C. chair, pushing CAPTAIN on to chair*) Don't look so serious, darling. Take the world off your shoulders. Relax.

ELSA: (*Above CAPTAIN*)

You dear attractive dewy-eyed idealist,

Today you have to learn to be a realist.

MAX: You may be bent on doing deeds of derring-do
But up against a shark what can a herring do?

ELSA: (*Moves to MAX, L. of CAPTAIN*)

Be wise, compromise!

CAPTAIN: Compromise, and be wise!