

ELSA SCENE 1

CAPTAIN. You left us without any explanations whatsoever -without even saying goodbye.

MARIA. It was wrong of me. Forgive me.

CAPTAIN. Why did you do this to us? Tell me.

MARIA. Please don't ask me. Anyway, the reason no longer exists.

(She crosses and picks up the guitar case and carpet bag.)

CAPTAIN. Then you're back to stay?

MARIA. Only until you can make arrangements for another governess.

CAPTAIN. Oh, no! You've been missed by the children, I've missed - everybody missed you very much. Nothing was the same while you were away. Everything was wrong.

MARIA. But I...

CAPTAIN. We'll talk about it later. You go up to the children now.

(MARIA starts toward the house.)

Maria, a new dress?

MARIA. We have a new postulant.

(She exits into the house. The CAPTAIN sits left of the coffee table, strumming the guitar.)

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

MAX. (Following her on and crossing center.) 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 left.) I didn't argue about it.

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

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(FRANZ enters from the house.)

FRANZ. 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 into the house.)

Georg, what were we just talking about?

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 right 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 the 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."

(The CAPTAIN strums the guitar.)

ELSA. Georg, if they - if they should invade us - would you defy them?

CAPTAIN. Yes.

MAX. Do you realize what might happen to you? To your...

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ELSA. To your children?

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

CAPTAIN. (Rises, crosses downstage center with guitar.) Well, what will you do if they come?

MAX. (Takes chair left of coffee table, places it downstage center, 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.

(He rises, crosses left center.)

ELSA. (Crosses above downstage center chair, pushing the CAPTAIN onto chair.) Don't look so serious, darling. Take the world off your shoulders. Relax.

[MUSIC NO. 33 "NO WAY TO STOP IT"]

(Above the 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, left of the CAPTAIN.)
BE WISE, COMPROMISE!

CAPTAIN.
COMPROMISE, AND BE WISE!

ELSA.
LET THEM THINK YOU'RE ON THEIR SIDE, BE NONCOMMITTAL,

CAPTAIN.
I WILL NOT BOW MY HEAD TO THE MEN I DESPISE.

MAX.
YOU WON'T HAVE TO BOW YOUR HEAD, JUST STOOP A LITTLE.

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(He stoops a little.)