

ELSA SCENE 2

(FRANZ exits into the house.)

ELSA. (Rising, taking the CAPTAIN's arm, and crossing downstage center.) Georg, those mountains they're magnificent!

CAPTAIN. Yes, they're not like any other mountains they're friendly. Look, that green stretch of woods over there -when the wind moves through it, it's like a restless sea.

ELSA. And that sweet little village.

CAPTAIN. That's not a village. That's a town.

ELSA. Oh, I'm sorry - I didn't mean to hurt its feelings.

CAPTAIN. It's fun being with you. You're quite an experience for me.

ELSA. You're quite an experience for me, too. Somewhere in you there's a fascinating man. Occasionally I catch a glimpse of him, and when I do, he's exciting.

(She sits left of table.)

CAPTAIN. (Crosses up to left of her.) Exciting? I've never been called exciting before.

ELSA. I'm beginning to understand you better now that I see you here. You know, you're a little like those mountains -

(The CAPTAIN crosses down left center.)

except that you keep moving. How can you be away from this place as much as you are?

CAPTAIN. Maybe I've been searching for a reason to come back here to stay.

ELSA. Georg, I like it here very much.

CAPTAIN. (Embarrassed.) Max can't still be on the telephone.

(He crosses above the coffee table, right of ELSA.)

I know he's desperate about getting singers for the Kaltzberg Festival but -

(To ELSA.) You like it here?

ELSA. Oh, we'd have to spend some time in Vienna. I have Heinrich's estate to look after.

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CAPTAIN. I thought that was a corporation now.

ELSA. It is, and I'm president.

CAPTAIN. You, president of a corporation?

ELSA. After all, I managed Heinrich's affairs for years before he died.

CAPTAIN. I can't see you sitting behind a desk. (He sits right of the coffee table.)

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

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

CAPTAIN. While he's telephoning?

FRANZ. He just finished.

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

MAX. I'm sorry I took so long.

CAPTAIN. Any luck?

world? 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

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

MAX. So would I. (He sits on the stool downstage left.)

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?

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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 I 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!

(He rises and looks off over the heads of the audience, where he 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?

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