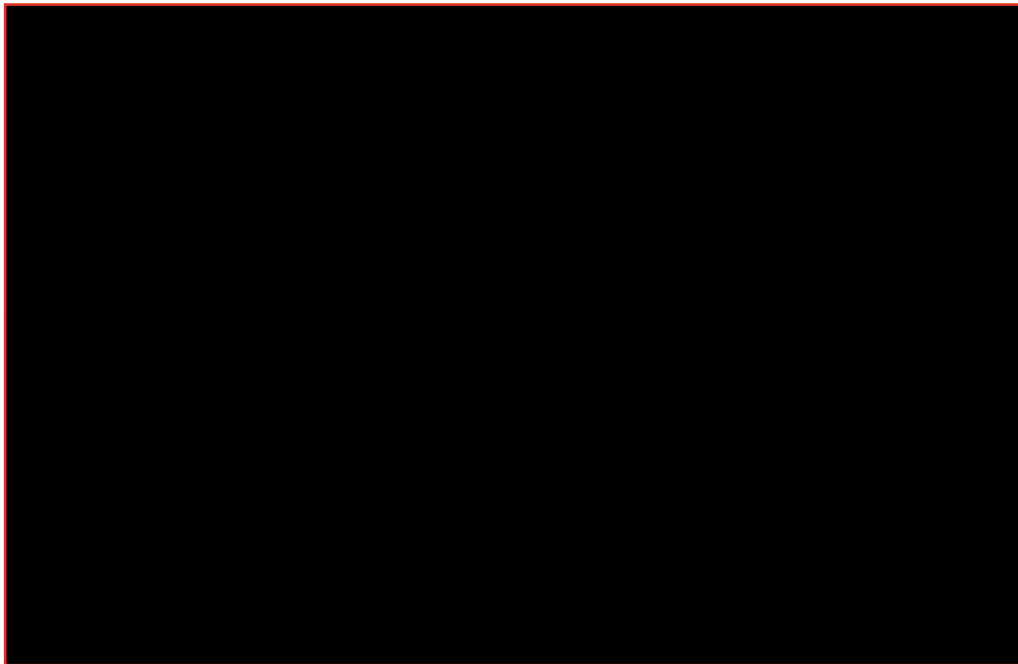




MONICA. *(Crossing to DAPHNE.)* Have you known Mr. Essendine long?

DAPHNE. Well, no, not exactly – I mean of course I've *known him* for ages. I think he's wonderful, but we actually only *met* last night for the first time.

MONICA. *(Quizzically.)* I see.

DAPHNE. I think he's even more charming off the stage than on, don't you?

MONICA. *(With a slight smile.)* I can never quite make up my mind.

DAPHNE. Have you been with him for a long while?

MONICA. Just on seventeen years.

DAPHNE. *(Enthusiastically.)* How wonderful! I expect you know him better than anybody.

MONICA. *(Crosses to chair center and sits.)* Less intimately than some, better than most.

DAPHNE. (*Swings around.*) Is he happy, do you think? I mean really happy?

MONICA. I don't believe I've ever asked him.

DAPHNE. He has a sad look in his eyes every now and then.

MONICA. Oh, you noticed that, did you?

DAPHNE. We talked for hours last night. He told me all about his early struggles.

MONICA. Did he by any chance mention that Life was passing him by?

DAPHNE. I think he did say something like that.

MONICA. Oh dear!

DAPHNE. Why?

MONICA. I only wondered.

DAPHNE. You've no idea how I envy you, working for him, but then I expect everybody does. It must be absolute heaven.

MONICA. It's certainly not dull.

(*Pause.*)

DAPHNE. (*Rise.*) I hope you don't think it's awful of me spending the night – I mean it does look rather bad, doesn't it?

MONICA. (*Rise.*) Well really, Miss – Miss –?

DAPHNE. Stillington, Daphne Stillington.

MONICA. (*Crossing to table left.*) Miss Stillington – it's hardly my business, is it?

DAPHNE. No, I suppose not, but I wouldn't like you to think –

MONICA. Seventeen years is a long time, Miss Stillington. I gave up that sort of thinking in the spring of nineteen thirty-three –

DAPHNE. Oh, I see.

(*FRED comes out of the kitchen with a tray of orange juice, coffee, and toast.*)

FRED. (*Crossing left center.*) Will you 'ave it in here, Miss, or in the bedroom?

DAPHNE. (*Sits on pouffe.*) Here, please.

MONICA. (*Crossing to center.*) I think it would really be more comfortable for you in the bedroom.

(**FRED** exits down right.)

The studio becomes rather active round about eleven. People call, you know, and the telephone rings –

(*Takes coat off. DAPHNE rises. Pushing DAPHNE to door down right.*)

I'll let you know the minute he wakes up.

DAPHNE. Thank you so much

(**MONICA** crosses to center. **FRED** enters, whistling.)

MONICA. Fred, is there any soap in that bathroom?

FRED. (*Crossing to center.*) Yes, but the tap's a bit funny. You 'ave to go on turning it till Kingdom Come. (*Doorbell rings.*)

MONICA. (*Crossing to center.*) Did you tell her?

FRED. (*Goes to front door.*) She'll find out for herself.

MONICA. (*Crossing to table left.*) You'd better send Miss Erikson in to her.

FRED. (*Returns with a box.*) She's gone to the grocers, but I'll tell 'er when she comes back.

MONICA. Fred! Were you here last night?

FRED. No. She's news to me.

MONICA. If he hasn't rung by twelve we'd better wake him.

FRED. (*Starts out.*) Well, if the balloon goes up don't blame me.

(*At this moment GARRY ESSENDINE appears at the top of the stairs. He is in his pajamas and his hair is tousled.*)

GARRY. (*Furiously.*) I suppose it's of no interest to any of you that I have been awakened from a deep sleep by everybody screaming like banshees. What's going on?

MONICA. I've been talking to Miss Stillington.

GARRY. Who the hell is Miss Stillington?

MONICA. She's in the spare room.

GARRY. (*Coming down.*) I didn't ask you where she was,
I asked you who she was?

MONICA. We might look her up in the telephone book.

FRED. She forgot her latchkey if you know what I mean.

GARRY. (*Crossing down center.*) Go away, Fred, and get me
some coffee.

FRED. (*Crossing to step center.*) Rightyo.

GARRY. And don't say rightyo.

FRED. Very good, sir. (*He goes to kitchen.*)

MONICA. You met her at a party and brought her home
here and told her about your early struggles, and she
stayed the night.

GARRY. (*Sits on sofa.*) She's a darling. I remember now. I'm
mad about her. What did you say her name was?

MONICA. Stillington. Daphne Stillington.

GARRY. I knew it was Daphne, but I hadn't the faintest idea
it was Stillington. How did she look to you?

MONICA. Restive.

GARRY. Poor sweet, I hope you were nice to her. Has
anybody given her anything to eat?

MONICA. Fred took her some coffee and orange juice.

GARRY. What's she doing now?

MONICA. I don't know, drinking it, I suppose.

GARRY. It's awful, isn't it? What are we to do?

MONICA. She wants to say goodbye to you and to thank
you.

GARRY. Whatever for?

MONICA. That, Garry dear, I am in no position to say.

GARRY. (*Rises and crosses to center.*) Why didn't you tell her
to dress quietly like a mouse and go home? You know
perfectly well it's agony here in the morning with
everybody banging about.

MONICA. You might have thought of that before you asked her to stay the night.

GARRY. She had to stay the night. She'd lost her key.

MONICA. The sooner we turn that spare room into a library the better *(Smiling.)*

GARRY. She's probably sobbing her heart out.

MONICA. Why don't you go and see?

GARRY. Lend me a comb and I will.

MONICA. *(Taking a comb out of her bag.)* Here.

GARRY. *(Taking mirror from center table.)* Good God, I look ninety-eight.

MONICA. Never mind.

GARRY. I bet some day. I'll be bald as a coot, and then you'll be sorry.

MONICA. On the contrary I shall be delighted. There will be fewer eager young debutantes willing to lose their latchkeys for you when you've got a toupee perched on the top of your head, and life will be a great deal simpler.

GARRY. *(Crossing to MONICA. Thoughtfully.)* I shall never wear a toupee, Monica, however bald I get. Perhaps on the stage I might have a little front piece, but in life, never! I intend to grow old with distinction. *(Sits on sofa.)*

