BEAU

SYLVIA. *(Calling off with gusto.)* Beau, I've made a decision, darling.

BEAU. *(From offstage.)* Mmmm?

SYLVIA. *(As she stops the music.)* A decision about us.

BEAU. *(Popping his head back in.)* Is it so serious we must have silence?

SYLVIA. *(A joyful declaration.)* I'm leaving Clarke!

Beau chuckles and moves to exit again.

Don't laugh. I'm leaving him, Beau. I can't bear it another moment.

BEAU. Oh, Sylvie. You are adorable.

He exits.

SYLVIA. *(Calling off passionately.)* I love you, Beau!

His door slams shut.

Sylvia drops her robe and calls off with great expectation.

I've sent him a telegram.

He's back.

BEAU. *(With sudden real interest.)* Sorry?

SYLVIA. Last night, after supper, you went to take a bath.

BEAU. Yes.

SYLVIA. I sent a wire.

BEAU. You really are busy while I'm in the loo.

SYLVIA. Kiss me!

She runs to him! He pecks her cautiously.

BEAU. Saying what, precisely?

SYLVIA. What?

BEAU. The telegram?

SYLVIA. Ah yes. I said, "Clarke. Stop. In love with Beau. Stop. I'm leaving. Stop. Sorry, darling. Stop."

BEAU. What?

SYLVIA. *(Repeating her action precisely.)* It said, "Clarke. Stop. In love with Beau…"

BEAU and SYLVIA. *(She's reciting, he is not.)* Stop.

BEAU. *(Continuing on—cutting her off from continued recitation.)* No, no, I heard you the first time I just…

SYLVIA. *(On her own track.)* I feel so free! Haven't you noticed how free I've been? Last night? *(Coquettishly.)* And this morning?

BEAU. Yes, but I attributed that to my new cologne.

SYLVIA. *(Inhaling him.)* It is rather divine.

BEAU. Thank you. A telegram?

SYLVIA. *(Still breathing him in.)* Mmm-hmm.

BEAU. Really?

SYLVIA. *(Unable to get enough of him.)* It's true.

BEAU. You know, I think I will take a cigarette.

He breaks away from her and lights himself a cigarette. They are on opposite ends of an emotional spectrum.

SYLVIA. *(Adoringly.)* I love it when you smoke. You look the picture of health.

BEAU. What time was it when I took that bath?

SYLVIA. Nearly ten, I'd say.

BEAU. So you think Clarke's received the telegram by now?

SYLVIA. I'd say so.

BEAU. He'll see red, Sylvia.

SYLVIA. Will he?

BEAU. A Baldwin Conservative. A believer in convention, finance, and God…

SYLVIA. I'm not sure he'll really mind.

BEAU. You're rather apathetic.

SYLVIA. No. I don't feel apathetic. I feel alive!

BEAU. You don't think your husband will mind that you've declared your love for another man—his *brother*?

A slight beat.

SYLVIA. Well, when you put it like that.

BEAU. Is there another way to put it?

SYLVIA. Look, he might be a bit miffed, I'll give you that. But I doubt he'll truly mind.

BEAU. Doesn't he love you at all?

SYLVIA. Isn't it all or nothing?

BEAU. *(Turning away.)* I'm not sure.

SYLVIA. *(Turning away.)* Well then neither am I.

BEAU. *(Back into her.)* Still, darling…a telegram?

She goes to him. They're on different emotional tracks.

SYLVIA. I can't live without you, Beau. I don't want to go another three hundred and sixty-four days dreaming of you, only to have one short-lived night over all too soon.

BEAU. How poetic.

SYLVIA. I know you want more than just one day with me per year.

BEAU. How well you know me.

SYLVIA. Beau, darling, you and I have been stuck in the wrong marriages.

BEAU. That may be so, Sylvie, but they are marriages nonetheless.

SYLVIA. True, but they needn't be an obstacle.

BEAU. You seem so sure.

SYLVIA. We're in love! What could be surer than that?

BEAU. Even still, a telegram's a rather cold way to make such an announcement, Sylvie.

SYLVIA. Oh I could never *face* Clarke. He gets all sweaty and pathetic-looking when he's upset.

BEAU. Ah! So you admit, he'll be upset.

SYLVIA. Perhaps a trifle. But darling, really it's you I can't bear to see upset.

Beau begins to clear the table, Sylvia at his heels. (If there's a swinging kitchen door, they are back and forth through the door. If no door, then they are back and forth through the exit as dialogue swiftly continues.)

BEAU. Well, darling, then perhaps you could have mentioned this telegram to me before you'd sent it.

SYLVIA. You told me last night you like it when I "take charge."

BEAU. Context darling.

SYLVIA. This is perfect context! I'm taking charge of my life! I'm starting our lives anew!

BEAU. I'd argue that when Clarke arrives, our lives will be quite ended.

SYLVIA. But Clarke won't come here.

BEAU. Won't he?

SYLVIA. How could he? He's no idea where we are.

BEAU. Hasn't he?

SYLVIA. *(Smartly.)* I told him I was going to my aunt's in London.

BEAU. Ah. Did it occur to you that perhaps I speak to Clarke occasionally.

SYLVIA. *(This has not occurred to her.)* Sorry?

BEAU. I speak to my brother, occasionally. For example, Friday. He phoned to tell me about Mama's condition…

SYLVIA. Poor dear…

BEAU. *(Nearly an aside.)* Awful. *(Immediately moving on.)* And as we were hanging up he inquired about my weekend plans.

SYLVIA. Well surely, you didn't…

BEAU. "I'll be at the cottage," I told him. I assume he assumed I meant with Marjorie.

SYLVIA. I see. So you think that means he'll…

A knock at the door. Sylvia and Beau look out.

BEAU. I do.

SYLVIA. Oh dear.

BEAU. And the pair of us still in our skivvies.

Sylvia desperately looks for a nook. Beau, tense, lights another cigarette.

SYLVIA. *(And now a panic.)* Hide me! Where shall I hide?

BEAU. But why should he be upset if he doesn't love you?

SYLVIA. Because he's a man!