SYLVIA. Good old Marjorie. Always up to spoil a laugh.

MARJORIE. I'm just trying to avoid a murder scene!

DIERDRE. *(Back on target.)* Oh yes!

SYLVIA. *(To Dierdre.)* We wanted to marry, Dierdre, but he joined the Navy and was killed in the war.

DIERDRE. *(Easily distracted.)* Oh no!

SYLVIA. I was seventeen. William had a job in my father's apothecary. Stocking shelves, sweeping up, you know. After school I would manage the till. We would make eyes at one another across the aisles. It was incredibly romantic.

MARJORIE. Yes, drugstores are famous for their dim lighting. Sylvie, please get dressed!

SYLVIA. My father would leave the store and William and I would share toffees and sticky kisses when the customers had gone.

DIERDRE. That does sound romantic.

CLARKE. So he joined the Navy, and that was that, now go get dressed.

SYLVIA. The morning of his funeral my heart died. The man I knew I was meant to love was no more, and therefore I knew nothing else would ever really matter.

CLARKE. Nothing?

DIERDRE. *(Choked up.)* Oh, you poor, poor girl.

SYLVIA. And then my father met Clarke's father at a pharmaceuticals assembly, and the rest, as they say, was history.

CLARKE. How come you never told me about this? About William?

MARJORIE. What do you care, Clarke?

CLARKE. It's just information I would've liked to have had!

SYLVIA. Really, Clarke. You might not love me at the moment, but there was a time when you were quite fond of me. I doubt you'd wanted to hear about my past lover.

CLARKE. I expect you're right. Only now for you to say that nothing after him mattered, implies that I never mattered. That's a bit of a blow, isn't it?

MARJORIE

SYLVIA. I'd say in light of your present behavior, it's neither here nor there.

MARJORIE. Hear, hear! Now, Sylvie, won't you please get dressed?!! It really would be frightful to leave you here alone.

DIERDRE. Oh yes! It truly would. Despite the fact that he really is a nice fellow, Richard is a madman.

Beau enters with his luggage, dressed handsomely, without his shoes, his tie untied.

BEAU. Right then, let's be off. *(Noticing.)* Sylvie, you're not dressed.

SYLVIA. Oh, you're all incorrigible! Fine, give me a moment.

BEAU. Well, hurry please. The next train leaves on the hour—and it's at least a ten-minute walk.

SYLVIA. I'll be quick, Beau. Like your heart.

Sylvia exits to the bedroom.

DIERDRE. All that dancing! I think I'll have some water. Anyone else?

MARJORIE. No, BEAU. Not I. CLARKE. Scotch for me. thank you.

Dierdre exits to the kitchen. Clarke fixes himself a drink at the bar.

BEAU. *(Re: his tie.)* Darling, you know I'm useless. Do you mind?

MARJORIE. Alright, quickly then.

She ties his tie throughout.

Are you angry with us?

BEAU. What right have I to be angry?

MARJORIE. I'm a bit miffed, I must admit.

BEAU. Are you?

MARJORIE. I'd never have strayed, had you been faithful.

BEAU. You knew?

MARJORIE. Well, of course, darling. The wife always knows.

BEAU. Why didn't you say anything?

MARJORIE. I hate unpleasant conversation.

CLARKE. She really does. One time I mentioned—

MARJORIE. *(Interrupting—sternly.)* Clarke.

CLARKE. *(Saving face.)* Nothing! I mentioned nothing!

MARJORIE. I think I loved you terribly when we first met.

BEAU. Did you?

MARJORIE. Didn't you love me?

BEAU. I thought we made a handsome couple.

MARJORIE. Is that love?

BEAU. I was fine.

MARJORIE. Is fine enough for you?

BEAU. I've always thought so.

MARJORIE. Well, I don't want to be someone else's "fine."

BEAU. That's understandable.

MARJORIE. Thank you.

CLARKE. *(Popping up between them.)* I hope you'll come to the wedding.

BEAU. Wedding?

MARJORIE. Yes, Beau. I'm hoping we can be sharp about a divorce. I'd like to be properly wed to Clarke by the time the baby comes.

BEAU. Not so scandalous after all then, divorce?

MARJORIE. What choice do I have, really?

CLARKE. Fortunately, she won't have to change her name.

The tie is tied. Dierdre pokes her head out of the kitchen door.

DIERDRE. Anyone want a picnic for the road?

All at once...

MARJORIE. Yes, please. BEAU. Why not? CLARKE. Lovely.

DIERDRE. Right.

Dierdre disappears back into the kitchen.

MARJORIE. Will you do it, Beau? Will you draw up the papers?

BEAU. You're certain then, that Clarke is the husband for you?

MARJORIE. I am.

BEAU. All this certainty is a bit unnerving.

MARJORIE. How so?

Beau shines/laces his shoes throughout the following.

BEAU. Well, you see, I'm not a bit certain there's a precisely perfect woman for me.

MARJORIE. Why not?

BEAU. There's so many of them. Certainty seems an impossible task.

MARJORIE. *(With eyes for Clarke.)* When you're in love, you'll know.

BEAU. [illegible] that's just it.

MARJORIE. What?

BEAU. I must have been in love.

MARJORIE. With me?

BEAU. But by your theory, it would seem that I haven't.

MARJORIE. I never said...

BEAU. By your philosophy, in fact, I have not yet found the correct person to be in love with.

MARJORIE. Well...

BEAU. Thus proving that actually, I've never been in love. So then, if that's true, I ask, what if the right woman for me is on the other side of the earth entirely?

CLARKE. In Antarctica!

BEAU. Precisely. What if I never meet her because she's too busy doing whatever it is she's doing in Antarctica?

CLARKE. *(A genuine question.)* What *do* women do in Antarctica?

DIERDRE. *(From the front door—holding a bouquet of flowers.)* Alright to bring some flowers from the garden back to town?

ALL. Lovely.

DIERDRE. Right.

She shuts the door.

MARJORIE. That's an awfully odd way to think about things.

BEAU. It's quite logical actually. If every person waited to marry until a moment of absolute certitude, than I suspect there would be very few marriages altogether.