

HOWARD: I-I-I just want to tell you before you say anything else, that I think you're the most wonderful actress that ever lived!

CHARLOTTE (*suddenly the soul of graciousness*): . . . Please, come in. I'm Charlotte Hay.

HOWARD (*extending his hand*): Hi. I'm . . . I'm uh . . . I'm uh . . . (*He turns white; his worst nightmare is happening; he's forgotten his name*) Oh my God!

(*He buries his face in his hands—as Richard Maynard enters through the open street door. He is a loveable, good-looking man in his fifties, in a conservative suit and tie*)

RICHARD: Knock 'knock.

CHARLOTTE: Richard!

(*She runs to him and embraces him*)

RICHARD: Hello, Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE: What a wonderful surprise!

RICHARD (*to Howard, who has looked up*): How do you do. Richard Maynard. You are . . . ?

CHARLOTTE: I wouldn't ask him that. Apparently it's a trick question.

HOWARD: Are you famous, too?!

RICHARD: No, but apparently I remind some people of Loretta Young.

CHARLOTTE: Mr. Maynard is our lawyer and represents every major star in Hollywood.

HOWARD: Wow.

RICHARD: Who's your favorite? Besides Charlotte, of course?

HOWARD: Esther Williams. Do you know her?!

RICHARD (*nods*): I taught her to swim.

HOWARD: Wow!

CHARLOTTE: I'm awfully sorry, but do you think you could possibly come back another time?

HOWARD: Oh. Sure . . .

CHARLOTTE (*helping him out the door*): It was stunning meeting you. Whoever you are.

HOWARD (*as the door closes in his face*): Wait! I remember! It's How . . . (*The door is closed*)

CHARLOTTE: Richard, what are you doing here?!

RICHARD: Well, I was sitting in my office this morning, making a great deal of money, and I suddenly realized that I was terribly bored. So I thought, what can I do to cheer myself up. Well, I considered raising my billing rate, that usually works, but then I

thought no, I would much rather take Charlotte to lunch.

CHARLOTTE: So you flew here all the way from New York City?

RICHARD (*nods*): I was in a plane, of course.

CHARLOTTE (*hugging him*): Oh, Richard, you're such a darling. I accept. In fact, I could use some cheering up myself.

RICHARD: What has the brute done this time?

CHARLOTTE: I'm not sure. Maybe it's nothing. Maybe I'm just tired.

RICHARD: Well of course you're tired! It's inhuman the way he drags you around from one city to another.

CHARLOTTE: On top of everything else, I just found out that we're not meeting our payroll.

RICHARD: Oh, I know that.

CHARLOTTE: You do?

RICHARD: It's quite serious. I've told George for months to start cutting down expenses.

CHARLOTTE: Is there anything I can do?

RICHARD: Well, you could do a movie. Or better yet, some television.

CHARLOTTE: We could try a different play. *Pygmalion* always makes money . . .

RICHARD: Charlotte. Halloo in there. It's 1953. The road is dead. The only stars left touring anymore, besides you two, are Cornell and the Lunts, and they have a combined age of one thousand four hundred and sixty-two.

CHARLOTTE: Well what am I supposed to do?!

RICHARD: Well, for starters, you can marry me. I've got tons of money and no one to spend it on. Except a cat with a thyroid problem. He's getting very large. I had some friends in last night, they thought I'd bought a new sofa.

CHARLOTTE: Would you be serious.

RICHARD: I'm being serious. I'll have to move out soon.

CHARLOTTE: Richard!

RICHARD (*suddenly very serious*): Charlotte, listen at me. (*Pause*) I'm not very good at this. I cannot lie the way most men do and tell you that your cheeks remind me of damask. I don't know what the hell damask is. But you really do deserve better than this. Let me pamper you a little. We can take a cruise together. Anywhere you want in the entire world. Rochester. Schenectady . . .

(*Charlotte laughs*)

CHARLOTTE: Oh, Richard, you make me very happy.