

WALTER. And I stopped her in the alley outside the theater afterwards, and I got down on one knee – the pavement was wet but I didn't care – and I got out the ring.

TESS. And you said yes, of course?

MARJORIE. It was "maybe."

WALTER. *(to TESS, scandalized)* "Maybe"!

MARJORIE. *(playful)* I had world number eight to consider.

WALTER. But she came around.

TESS. How?

WALTER. A campaign of constant prodding.

MARJORIE. He wore me down – isn't that romantic?

WALTER. But aren't you glad I did?

MARJORIE. I am.

WALTER. And the rest is history.

(Beat.)

TESS. Such a nice story.

WALTER. How did Jon propose again?

TESS. We went on a hike. It was his idea. Sugarloaf Mountain.

MARJORIE. *(as if reading this in her head)* Maine.

TESS. No, this was the one in Maryland. "Mountain" was generous, it was barely a hill. Just a little day hike. And when we got to the top, he pretended like he'd found a really interesting pine cone. He was trying to get me to look at it. And I was like, Jon, a conifer is a conifer. And he said "I really think you should check this out Tess."

MARJORIE. *(laughing)* Poor Jon!

TESS. And I didn't know what he was on about but finally I looked at the pinecone and of course he had hidden the ring inside.

(She holds up her hand.)

Half a carat. I know it's small.

MARJORIE. I didn't say anything!

TESS. He said just until he could afford something bigger, but I got attached to it. That's how it was with Jon. At first I wasn't sure, but then I got...

WALTER. Attached.

MARJORIE. It's a good thing you found him.

TESS. Lucky I found someone so tolerant.

MARJORIE. That's not what I meant.

TESS. No, I'm not picking a fight, I'm serious. Jon is so good.

MARJORIE. You should tell him more often.

TESS. I should.

WALTER. *(as if he might have just gone out for coffee)* Where is Jon?

TESS. I'm afraid I don't have that information.

*(Long pause. *)*

WALTER. I wish he would stop by.

MARJORIE. I didn't always like him, you know.

TESS. I'm aware.

MARJORIE. I didn't like his beard.

WALTER. Or his politics. What did you call him? A latter-day hippie?

MARJORIE. Mostly it was the beard.

WALTER. Luckily the politics went out with the beard.

TESS. That's not true! The beard went away overnight. The politics...mellowed.

MARJORIE. Well, I'm glad you have someone dear.

TESS. *(bemused)* "Someone dear."

MARJORIE. What. What have I done now.

TESS. It's just – it's an elegant thing to say. People don't talk like that anymore. I wish they did.

*Very Important: The three pauses in this scene are much longer than in the previous ones – far too long to be natural. (Ten seconds? Longer?) Notably, none of the characters has the least discomfort with the silences. They simply sit very still until they're ready to speak again. Placid.