

GEORG

I forgive you, Mr. Maraczek. Whatever happened — why ever it happened. I don't care.

MARACZEK

No. You can't let me off that easily. I did a terrible thing to you, and there's no excuse.

(Changes his mind)

Well — I guess there's *one* excuse: the jealousy of an old man.

GEORG

Jealousy?

MARACZEK

(Ruefully)

Poor Georg. Still in the dark. I guess you're the only man in the world who ever had an affair without knowing it.

GEORG

An affair?

MARACZEK

(Calmly)

You've been having an affair with my wife.

GEORG

(Appalled)

With your wife? With Mrs. Maraczek?

MARACZEK

I have all the facts.

GEORG

But it's not true!!

MARACZEK

I know it's not true. I know now. But last week — and two weeks ago — I didn't know.

GEORG

I can't believe it! Mrs. Maraczek and...? Did you really think — ?

MARACZEK

That's just the point. I didn't think.

GEORG

I can't get over it.

MARACZEK

Well — Georg — starting today — if you're willing — I'd like you to take over the shop.

GEORG

Of course I will. At least — keep the doors open — 'til you're well enough to come back.

Act II Scene I

MARACZEK

The key is on the table. Oh, and Georg... now that you're the boss, if you want to give yourself a raise...

GEORG

Well, I'll have a little talk with myself and if I don't ask for too much, I may grant it.

MARACZEK

The prefect executive! Now you better get going. You'll be very short-handed today. Arpad tells me Miss Balash isn't coming in —

GEORG

(Upset)

Miss Balash! Why not?

MARACZEK

She's sick.

GEORG

What's wrong with her?

MARACZEK

He didn't say. But you'll have to manage without her. And without one other clerk as well — Mr. Kodaly. I want you to fire him.

GEORG

Fire him?

MARACZEK

Just give him two weeks' salary...

GEORG

I didn't realize Mr. Kodaly was that unsatisfactory. He works hard...

MARACZEK

But at the wrong things.

GEORG

I'm not sure I understand...

MARACZEK

If you ever run into Mrs. Maraczek — perhaps she'll explain it to you... Well, my boy — it looks like I'm a bachelor again — same as you. Perhaps one night you'll take me to a cabaret...

GEORG

But I —

MARACZEK

I know. You never go to cabarets.

GEORG

I'll stop by later and give you a full report.