

GILLETTE. Hm? Yes. Of course it is. Absolutely.

MARTHA. (to AGGIE:) And you're so brave to get married again after what happened the last time.

(Dead silence.)

GILLETTE. Mother...

MARTHA. Well she is. I mean her husband died on their honeymoon, didn't he? That's what I heard.

GILLETTE. Mother, for heaven's sake -

AGGIE. Yes, he did die, Mrs. Gillette, and I don't mind talking about it. In fact talking about it makes it more bearable.

MARTHA. (to GILLETTE) There. Are you satisfied?

(to AGGIE) Now tell us what happened. I want to know everything.

AGGIE. There isn't really much to tell. Hugo and I - that was my husband - we were married just over a year ago, and we went to Killington in Vermont to ski for our honeymoon.

MARTHA. Did you really? I hear that's very expensive.

MADGE. Her husband was quite well off.

MARTHA. That's what I heard. They say he was loaded. One of the richest men in the entire -

GILLETTE. That's it. I give up.

MARTHA. Oh Willie, stop it. I hate it when people beat around the bush. It's like you and Penelope. You were married, she died, you miss her and there's an end to it. And it makes you feel better when we talk about it, doesn't it?

GILLETTE. (with a rueful smile at his mother's wisdom) ...Yes it does.

MARTHA. Thank you.

Start

(to AGGIE) Go on, my dear. Spill the beans.

AGGIE. Well...my husband was an excellent skier, but he decided to try the Black Diamond slope, which is the most dangerous one at the resort. He got all dressed

in his jacket and goggles and the attendant tightened his gloves and boots and Hugo set off down the hill, as happy as I've ever seen him...and then...

MARTHA. Yes?

AGGIE. The strap on his boot just...broke while he was coming down the hill, and...the ski sort of came apart or something, and he lost control on the iciest part of the slope and he...he hit a tree and died instantly.

MARTHA. Oh, no.

AGGIE. I must have been in shock at first because I tried to just...talk to people and pretend that things were manageable...but by the end of the first night I was shaking so hard I couldn't stop.

MARTHA. And you were all alone.

SIMON. Well, not for long. She had the good sense to wire me that night. We've been best friends for ages, and I was in a show in New York at the time -

AGGIE. And he dropped everything and arrived the next day. He was a great comfort.

MARTHA. And the rest is history. How romantic.

FELIX. (in a lugubrious sort of way.)

MADGE. Don't you start. Martha's right. You have to face up to life. No matter what the world throws at you, no matter how difficult it can get sometimes, you just have to say to hell with the bastards and go on living.

FELIX. That's my girl. Let's cheer things up with a little music, shall we?

(He heads for the radio.)

SIMON. Here, here!

MADGE. To the happy couple!

ALL. The happy couple!

(FELIX turns on the radio and tries to find a good tune. But he only finds opera and news broadcasts...and meanwhile, SIMON has found a ukulele lying about. He starts to play; and he and AGGIE sing a popular song)

stop