

GEORG

There is?

AMALIA

So much salt —

GEORG

Are you surprised? All those tears falling into it.

AMALIA

Oh. I'd better cry in the other direction.

GEORG

Why cry at all?

AMALIA

How little you understand, Mr. Nowack. I'm like a rag doll, and somebody's kicked out the stuffing.

GEORG

You'll soon fill up again — good as new.

AMALIA

(Shaking her head again)

You're looking at a very disillusioned girl, Mr. Nowack.

GEORG

You know, Miss Balash — I'll never forgive myself for last night at the café. I must have been drunk...

AMALIA

But — strangely enough — you were right, Mr. Nowack! — when you guessed I'd never met the man I was waiting for. He was just someone who'd been writing letters to me — such glorious letters.

GEORG

And he never showed up.

AMALIA

I waited 'til closing.

GEORG

I feel very responsible.

START

AMALIA

Oh, no — it wasn't just you, Mr. Nowack. There could have been so many reasons. But — if he cared at all — he would have explained — he would have written — a letter, a note, two words — something!

(AMALIA'S tears flow forth again. GEORG watches sadly for a minute)

GEORG

(Impulsively)
Miss Balash, he *will* write!

AMALIA

I don't think so.

GEORG

He will! I'm not just guessing! I know it definitely!

AMALIA.

How?

GEORG

He told me himself!

AMALIA

He — himself?

GEORG

Yes — of course! Dear Friend! No one else!

AMALIA

(Ecstatic)
Dear Friend?! When? How? Oh — tell me, Mr. Nowack. Tell me!!

GEORG

Well —

(Madly improvising)
— let's see now — You know — when I left the café last night, I had the oddest feeling that someone was following me. And I kept looking back — and there *was* a...

AMALIA

(Eagerly)
A young man?

GEORG

A *man* — and when I was almost home — he came up and started asking questions about you and me.

AMALIA

What sort of questions?

GEORG

Oh — just what you'd expect...

AMALIA

But I want to know the *words* he said.

GEORG

I'm not very good at remembering exact words...

AMALIA

Try — please?

GEORG

Well — let's see. I think the first thing he said was: "Excuse me, but I'd like to ask you a question." Or something like that. And then he said: "Did you just leave the Café Imperiale?" You want to know what *I* said, too?

AMALIA

Of course!

GEORG

All right. I said: "Yes."

AMALIA

(Eagerly)

And then —

GEORG

He said: "Tell me — that girl you were sitting with. Is she a special friend of yours?" Those were his exact words: "Special friend." And I said: "No. We just work at the same shop. As a matter of fact, she has an appointment with someone else tonight." I'm remembering very clearly now. And I remember he suddenly looked quite sad.

AMALIA

(Rapturous)

He looked sad?

END