

Act II

Scene Seven

Lights up on **DAVID** and **BIELE's** parlor at left and **BIELE**, at a sewing machine—in her former place of employment—at right. **DAVID** enters from left.

TZALEL

The following day was a fateful day for David.

NATHAN

In his search for work, he met his former factory steward on the street—

DAVID

—and, what do you know, the fellow offered him his old job back!

GOLDY

He was elated and, not pausing to look further for temporary work that day, he raced home immediately.

DAVID

Biele! I have news! Biele?

DAVID sees the paper propped up on the salt cellar on the table, picks it up and opens it. Music under.

BIELE

(Aside, as he reads her words.)

David, my beloved. I have been thinking, and thinking, and have arrived at a decision. I am doing my best to struggle out of this state of mind, but while it lasts, I cannot live with you as long as my mind is constantly occupied with somebody else. I cannot help it.

DAVID sinks into a chair. **BIELE** rises and sings at her sewing machine.

IF

BIELE

If I had never found myself in love—
If I had never found myself in you—
If I had never come to guess that everything I could confess
Was something I already knew—I knew

That everything is only every thing,
And things that matter only matter more
Than everything that mattered once before,
When everything that mattered once was new.

And the thing that matters most—of all
The things that mattered more—is you.

BIELE

(Aside, as before.)

I do not blame anybody but myself. I have struggled hard to keep out the thoughts of him, but it is of no avail. The best thing for us to do is to part for a time. Do not attempt to persuade me to stay.

If I had never thought to look away—
If I had never ventured from my home—
If I had never found myself at war with how I'd bound myself,
At once in love and still alone—alone

When everything we wanted falls away—
And everything we told ourselves was firm
Surprises us by coming to its term,
Leads me to forsaking you, and home.

Of all the things that mattered most of all—
Of all the things that mattered most—was you.

BIELE

(Speaking, again.)

My darling, under new circumstances we may well yet be reunited to live as we should as a man and his wife again. I pray for that day to come. Until then, please believe I am your best friend in the world.

BIELE seats herself at the machine and resumes her sewing.

Dim out.