JOE AND EDIE

(EDIE's bedroom door opens on the upper landing. She emerges dressed for the party looking resplendent in taffeta and a bold summer scarf. She descends the stairs happily in pointed patent-leather shoes. JOE and EDITH watch silently.)

EDIE
(gaily)

I'm not late for my own party, am I?

EDITH

Darling!

JOE

Mrs. Beale. Do you mind?

EDITH

Not at all.

(to EDIE)

Sweetheart you look divine.

(EDITH exits up the stairs to dress for the party. EDIE looks at JOE.)

EDIE

START Why the long face, Joe?

JOE

Edie. Your mother—she just told me—

EDIE

I know! She canceled the concert! I've never seen Mother so accommodating. It must be your influence, don't you think?

JOE

It wasn't about music.

EDIE
(concerned now)

Oh, no.

(blanching)

She wasn't flirtatious, was she? She has been, you know, with friends of mine. She told Sumner Wadsworth he had a "Renaissance face."

JOE

She's not the one who worries me, Edie.

EDIE

What did she tell you, Joe?

JOE

"Body Beautiful Beale?"

EDIE
(stricken)

What?

(a beat)

No, she didn't.....she *wouldn't*....

JOE

It's not about HER, Edie. It's about ME. *My future.*

(then, directly)

Be straight with me. Have there been other fellas?

EDIE

I may have *kissed* once or twice. I may have *held hands--*

JOE

We've done more than kiss, Edie. We've done more than just hold hands.

EDIE

-- because you're the one, Joe! Because we said we were *sure* --

JOE

How do I know I'm not "business as usual" –

EDIE

Joe!

JOE

-- that you'd oblige any fella -- any time, any place -- *just to get out of Grey Gardens--*

EDIE
(deeply stung)

That's not true!

JOE

But not two minutes ago, your mother sat right here and said--