

Excerpt from DON'T TOUCH THAT DIAL!, a play by Steve Ivings

Elizabeth addresses the audience.

ELIZABETH:

We're really excited about doing our program in front a live audience tonight, our first show of 1944. Now remember that occasionally we have to break away from the network to give the local stations some time for their own commercial announcements. During those breaks we prepare for our next live segment so please don't feel left out if we're talking to each other and we're ignoring you. We'll be back to perform for every one of you here in the studio as soon as we return to the network.

Arthur Fleming enters, moving down the aisle, greeting audience members.

ELIZABETH:

There he is. Our show's host, Arthur Fleming.

Arthur acknowledges the audience reaction, whether he receives applause or not. Elizabeth hurries over to him. They exchange "air kisses".

ELIZABETH:

Good evening Arthur. Isn't this a wonderful audience?

ARTHUR:

Yes, wonderful. (To Elizabeth) I don't know if I can do the show tonight.

ELIZABETH:

What now?

ARTHUR:

Angelina left me today.

ELIZABETH:

Oh Arthur, I'm so sorry. (Turning back to Audience) I gave them a little hint about our guest stars. (To Arthur) I thought she left you last week.

ARTHUR:

Big stars, direct from Hollywood. (To Elizabeth) She did...then she came back today with a movers and a big truck. She took almost everything.

ELIZABETH:

Almost everything?

ARTHUR:

I got to keep all the stuff that fell off the truck when it drove away.

ELIZABETH:

(To Audience) We'll be starting our show in just a little while, right Arthur?

ARTHUR:

(To Audience) It's going to be a fabulous show tonight. (To Elizabeth) She took the new Cadillac.

ELIZABETH:

(To Arthur) I thought that was your car.

Elizabeth introduces Arthur to a member of the audience. Arthur takes the person's program and autographs it without being asked.

ARTHUR:

(To Elizabeth) Well, not now. I had to come in the Plymouth. And then when I got here there was a car in my parking place. I had to park out on the street.

Arthur moves down the front row of the audience taking programs and signing autographs, all the while talking to Elizabeth as if the audience can't hear.

ARTHUR:

I was already late. I couldn't find my navy blue suit. I think Angelina took that too. I don't know why. Navy blue makes her butt look huge.

ELIZABETH:

Does Bethany know?

ARTHUR:

Of course she knows. I think she was the one who told Angelina about our...little indiscretion.

ELIZABETH:

You were having an affair with Bethany for six months. That's not exactly a little indiscretion.

ARTHUR:

It started as a little indiscretion. Then it became a big indiscretion. A big, big indiscretion.

ELIZABETH:

I tried to warn you about her, Arthur.

ARTHUR:

I was weak. Bethany took advantage of my confusion. You know Bethany.

ELIZABETH:

Everybody knows Bethany.

Arthur and Elizabeth move back onto the stage.

ARTHUR:

A car in my parking place, my navy suit missing. What else can go wrong?

Sparky bumps into a music stand and knocks it over.

SPARKY:

Sorry, sorry.

ARTHUR:

There's my answer. (To Elizabeth) Why do we have Sparky? This is an important show. Where's what's-his-name?

ELIZABETH:

Who?

ARTHUR:

What's his name? You know the fellow we usually have.

ELIZABETH:

Oh, you mean Alexander? They called him up. He shipped out Monday.

ARTHUR:

This war is becoming a real inconvenience to me.