The Way You Look Tonight

from Swing Time

Reading or singing the lyrics that Dorothy Fields wrote for Jerome Kern's lovely, lilting melody "The Way You Look Tonight," one would never guess that they are ironic. "Oh, but you're lovely," Fred Astaire sang to Ginger Rogers in Swing Time. "Never, never change . . . keep that breathless charm . . . just the way you look tonight." The way Ginger looked at the moment was awful—or, at least, Hollywood's version of awful: She was in the midst of shampooing her hair. Out of the film, this song (which won an Academy Award in 1936) has always been treated as a charming love song—which, of course, it is. But it just shows how deceptive words, particularly endearing words, can be when they are taken out of context.

Words by Dorothy Fields Music by Jerome Kern

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