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ARSENIC AND OLD LACE

BY
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PLAY SERVICE
INC.



ARSENIC AND OLD LACE
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Arsenic and Old Lace was presented by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse at the Fulton Theatre in New York, on August 18, 1941, with the following cast:

ABBY BREWSTER	Josephine Hull
THE REV. DR. HARPER	Wyrley Birch
TEDDY BREWSTER	John Alexander
OFFICER BROPHY	John Quigg
OFFICER KLEIN	Bruce Gordon
MARTHA BREWSTER	Jean Adair
ELAINE HARPER	Helen Brooks
MORTIMER BREWSTER	Allyn Joslyn
MR. GIBBS	Henry Herbert
JONATHAN BREWSTER	Boris Karloff
DR. EINSTEIN	Edgar Stehli
OFFICER O'HARA	Anthony Ross
LIEUTENANT ROONEY	Victor Sutherland
MR. WITHERSPOON	William Parks

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

The entire action of the play takes place in the living room of the Brewster home in Brooklyn. Time: the present.

ACT I

An afternoon in September.

ACT II

That same night.

ACT III

SCENE 1: Later that night.

SCENE 2: Early the next morning.

ARSENIC AND OLD LACE

ACT I

TIME: *Late afternoon. September. Present.*

PLACE: *The living room of the old Brewster home in Brooklyn, N.Y. It is just as Victorian as the two sisters, Abby and Martha Brewster, who occupy the house with their nephew, Teddy.*

There is a staircase U. R. leading to the upper floor, broken by a landing with a window looking out on the front porch. At the top of the stairs a balcony with a door leading to bedrooms, and an archway beyond which are stairs to the top floor. There is a large window D. L. below which is a long window seat. There is a door U. C. that leads to the cellar, another to L. of it, that leads to the kitchen, and at R. the main door of the house, which opens onto the porch, D. R. (See stage diagram on page 98.) When the curtain rises, Abby Brewster, a plump little darling in her late sixties, is presiding at the tea table. The table is lighted by candles. Seated in armchair at her left is the Rev. Dr. Harper, and on her right, standing, her nephew, Teddy, whose costume includes a frock coat and pince-nez attached to a black ribbon. Teddy is in his forties and has a large black mustache, and his manner and makeup suggest Theodore Roosevelt.*

ABBY. Yes, indeed, my sister Martha and I have been talking all week about your sermon last Sunday. It's really wonderful, Dr. Harper—in

* The staircase and landing described here are a necessary part of the set as originally produced. However, in certain theatres it may not be possible to construct a practical staircase and landing; in which case a wide entrance can be substituted for the bottom of the stairs, with perhaps two or three practical steps showing. Some rearrangement of business and lines will, of course, in this case be necessary.

only two short years you've taken on the spirit of Brooklyn.

HARPER. That's very gratifying, Miss Brewster.

ABBY. You see, living here next to the church all our lives, we've seen so many ministers come and go. The spirit of Brooklyn we always say is friendliness—and your sermons are not so much sermons as friendly talks.

TEDDY. Personally, I've always enjoyed my talks with Cardinal Gibbons—or have I met him yet?

ABBY. No, dear, not yet. (*Changing the subject.*) Are the biscuits good?

TEDDY. (*He sits on sofa.*) Bully!

ABBY. Won't you have another biscuit, Dr. Harper?

HARPER. Oh, no, I'm afraid I'll have no appetite for dinner now. I always eat too many of your biscuits just to taste that lovely jam.

ABBY. But you haven't tried the quince. We always put a little apple in with it to take the tartness out.

HARPER. No, thank you.

ABBY. We'll send you over a jar.

HARPER. No, no. You keep it here so I can be sure of having your biscuits with it.

ABBY. I do hope they don't make us use that imitation flour again. I mean with this war trouble. It may not be very charitable of me, but I've almost come to the conclusion that this Mr. Hitler isn't a Christian.

HARPER. (*With a sigh.*) If only Europe were on another planet!

TEDDY. (*Sharply.*) Europe, sir?

HARPER. Yes, Teddy.

TEDDY. Point your gun the other way!

HARPER. Gun?

ABBY. (*Trying to calm him.*) Teddy.

TEDDY. To the West! There's your danger! There's your enemy! Japan!

HARPER. Why, yes—yes, of course.

ABBY. Teddy!

TEDDY. No, Aunt Abby! Not so much talk about Europe and more about the canal!

ABBY. Well, let's not talk about war. Will you have another cup of tea, dear?

TEDDY. No, thank you, Aunt Abby.

ABBY. Dr. Harper?

HARPER. No, thank you. I must admit, Miss Abby, that war and violence seem far removed from these surroundings.

ABBY. It is peaceful here, isn't it?

HARPER. Yes—peaceful. The virtues of another day—they're all here in this house. The gentle virtues that went out with candlelight and good manners and low taxes.

ABBY. (*Glancing about her contentedly.*) It's one of the oldest houses in Brooklyn. It's just as it was when Grandfather Brewster built and furnished it—except for the electricity—and we use it as little as possible. It was Mortimer who persuaded us to put it in.

HARPER. (*Beginning to freeze.*) Yes, I can understand that. Your nephew Mortimer seems to live only by electric light.

ABBY. The poor boy has to work so late. I understand he's taking Elaine with him to the theatre again tonight. Teddy, your brother Mortimer will be here a little later.

TEDDY. (*Baring his teeth in a broad grin.*) Dee-lighted!

ABBY. (*To Harper.*) We're so happy it's Elaine Mortimer takes to the theatre with him.

HARPER. Well, it's a new experience for me to wait up until three o'clock in the morning for my daughter to be brought home.

ABBY. Oh, Dr. Harper, I hope you don't disapprove of Mortimer.

HARPER. Well—

ABBY. We'd feel so guilty if you did—sister Martha and I. I mean since it was here in our home that your daughter met Mortimer.

HARPER. Of course, Miss Abby. And so I'll say immediately that I believe Mortimer himself to be quite a worthy gentleman. But I must also admit that I have watched the growing intimacy between him and my daughter with some trepidation. For one reason, Miss Abby.

ABBY. You mean his stomach, Dr. Harper?

HARPER. Stomach?

ABBY. His dyspepsia—he's bothered with it so, poor boy.

HARPER. No, Miss Abby, I'll be frank with you. I'm speaking of your nephew's unfortunate connection with the theatre.

ABBY. The theatre! Oh, no, Dr. Harper! Mortimer writes for a New York newspaper.

HARPER. I know, Miss Abby, I know. But a dramatic critic is constantly exposed to the theatre, and I don't doubt but what some of them do develop an interest in it.

ABBY. Well, not Mortimer. You need have no fear of that. Why, Mortimer hates the theatre.

HARPER. Really?

ABBY. Oh, yes! He writes awful things about the theatre. But you can't blame him, poor boy. He was so happy writing about real estate, which he really knew something about, and then they just made him take this terrible night position.

HARPER. My! My!

ABBY. But, as he says, the theatre can't last much longer anyway and in the meantime it's a living. (*Complacently.*) Yes, I think if we give the theatre another year or two, perhaps... (*A knock on R. door.*) Well, now, who do you suppose that is? (*They all rise as Abby goes to door R. Teddy starts for door at same time, but Abby stops him.*) No, thank you, Teddy. I'll go. (*She opens door to admit two cops, Officers Brophy and Klein.*) Come in, Mr. Brophy.

BROPHY. Hello, Miss Brewster.

ABBY. How are you, Mr. Klein?

KLEIN. Very well, Miss Brewster.

(*The cops cross to Teddy who is standing near desk, and salute him. Teddy returns salute.*)

TEDDY. What news have you brought me?

BROPHY. Colonel, we have nothing to report.

TEDDY. Splendid! Thank you, gentlemen! At ease!

(*Cops relax and drop D.S. Abby has closed door, and turns to cops.*)

ABBY. You know Dr. Harper.

KLEIN. Sure! Hello, Dr. Harper.

BROPHY. (*Turns to Abby, doffing cap.*) We've come for the toys for the Christmas Fund.

ABBY. Oh, yes.

HARPER. (*Standing below table.*) That's a splendid work you men do—fixing up discarded toys to give poor children a happier Christmas.

KLEIN. It gives us something to do when we have to sit around the station. You get tired playing cards and then you start cleaning your gun, and the first thing you know you've shot yourself in the foot. (*Klein drifts U. L. around to window seat.*)

ABBY. (*Crossing to Teddy.*) Teddy, go upstairs and get that big box from your Aunt Martha's room. (*Teddy crosses upstage toward stairs.*)

Abby speaks to Brophy. How is Mrs. Brophy today? Mrs. Brophy has been quite ill, Dr. Harper.

BROPHY. (*To Harper.*) Pneumonia!

HARPER. I'm sorry to hear that.

(*Teddy has reached first landing on stairs where he stops and draws an imaginary sword.*)

TEDDY. (*Shouting.*) CHARGE! (*He charges up stairs and exits off balcony. The others pay no attention to this.*)

BROPHY. Oh, she's better now. A little weak still—

ABBY. (*Starting toward kitchen.*) I'm going to get you some beef broth to take to her.

BROPHY. Don't bother, Miss Abby! You've done so much for her already.

ABBY. (*At kitchen door.*) We made it this morning. Sister Martha is taking some to poor Mr. Benitzky right now. I won't be a minute. Sit down and be comfortable, all of you. (*She exits into kitchen.*)

(*Harper sits again. Brophy crosses to table and addresses the other two.*)

BROPHY. She shouldn't go to all that trouble.

KLEIN. Listen, try to stop her or her sister from doing something nice—and for nothing! They don't even care how you vote. (*He sits on window seat.*)

HARPER. When I received my call to Brooklyn and moved next door my wife wasn't well. When she died and for months before—well, if I know what pure kindness and absolute generosity are, it's because I've known the Brewster sisters.

(*At this moment Teddy steps out on balcony and blows a bugle call. They all look.*)

BROPHY. (*Stepping U.S.... Remonstrating.*) Colonel, you promised not to do that.

TEDDY. But I have to call a Cabinet meeting to get the release of those supplies. (*Teddy wheels and exits.*)

BROPHY. He used to do that in the middle of the night. The neighbors raised Cain with us. They're a little afraid of him, anyway.

HARPER. Oh, he's quite harmless.

KLEIN. Suppose he does think he's Teddy Roosevelt. There's a lot worse people he could think he was.

BROPHY. Damn shame—a nice family like this hatching a cuckoo.

KLEIN. Well, his father—the old girls' brother, was some sort of a genius, wasn't he? And their father—Teddy's grandfather—seems to me I've heard he was a little crazy too.

BROPHY. Yeah—he was crazy like a fox. He made a million dollars.

HARPER. Really? Here in Brooklyn?

BROPHY. Yeah. Patent medicine. He was a kind of a quack of some sort. Old Sergeant Edwards remembers him. He used the house here as a sort of a clinic—tried 'em out on people.

KLEIN. Yeah, I hear he used to make mistakes occasionally, too.

BROPHY. The department never bothered him much because he was pretty useful on autopsies sometimes. Especially poison cases.

KLEIN. Well, whatever he did he left his daughters fixed for life. Thank God for that—

BROPHY. Not that they ever spend any of it on themselves.

HARPER. Yes, I'm well acquainted with their charities.

KLEIN. You don't know a tenth of it. When I was with the Missing Persons Bureau I was trying to trace an old man that we never did find *(Rises.)*—do you know there's a renting agency that's got this house down on its list for furnished rooms? They don't rent rooms—but you can bet that anybody who comes here lookin' for a room goes away with a good meal and probably a few dollars in their kick.

BROPHY. It's just their way of digging up people to do some good to.

(R. door opens and Martha Brewster enters. Martha is also a sweet elderly woman with Victorian charm. She is dressed in the old fashioned manner of Abby, but with a high lace collar that covers her neck. Men all on feet.)

MARTHA. *(At door.)* Well, now, isn't this nice? *(Closes door.)*

BROPHY. *(Crosses to Martha.)* Good afternoon, Miss Brewster.

MARTHA. How do you do, Mr. Brophy? Dr. Harper. Mr. Klein.

KLEIN. How are you, Miss Brewster? We dropped in to get the Christmas toys.

MARTHA. Oh, yes, Teddy's Army and Navy. They wear out. They're all packed. *(She turns to stairs. Brophy stops her.)*

BROPHY. The Colonel's upstairs after them—it seems the Cabinet has to OK it.

MARTHA. Yes, of course. I hope Mrs. Brophy's better?
BROPHY. She's doin' fine, ma'am. Your sister's getting some soup for me to take to her.

MARTHA. *(Crossing below Brophy to C.)* Oh, yes, we made it this morning. I just took some to a poor man who broke ever so many bones.

(Abby enters from kitchen carrying a covered pail.)

ABBY. Oh, you're back, Martha. How was Mr. Benitzky?

MARTHA. Well, dear, it's pretty serious, I'm afraid. The doctor was there. He's going to amputate in the morning.

ABBY. *(Hopefully.)* Can we be present?

MARTHA. *(Disappointment.)* No, I asked him but he says it's against the rules of the hospital. *(Martha crosses to sideboard and puts pail down. Then puts cape and hat on small table U. L.)*

(Teddy enters on balcony with large cardboard box and comes downstairs to desk, putting box on stool. Klein crosses to toy box. Harper speaks through this.)

HARPER. You couldn't be of any service—and you must spare yourselves something.

ABBY. *(To Brophy.)* Here's the broth, Mr. Brophy. Be sure it's good and hot.

BROPHY. Yes, ma'am. *(Drops U.S.)*

KLEIN. This is fine—it'll make a lot of kids happy. *(Lifts out toy soldier.)* That O'Malley boy is nuts about soldiers.

TEDDY. That's General Miles. I've retired him. *(Klein removes ship.)* What's this? The Oregon!

MARTHA. *(Crosses to U. L.)* Teddy, dear, put it back.

TEDDY. But the Oregon goes to Australia.

ABBY. Now, Teddy—

TEDDY. No, I've given my word to Fighting Bob Evans.

MARTHA. But, Teddy—

KLEIN. What's the difference what kid gets it—Bobby Evans, Izzy Cohen? *(Crosses to R. door with box, opens door. Brophy follows.)*

We'll run along, ma'am, and thank you very much.

ABBY. Not at all. *(The cops stop in doorway, salute Teddy and exit. Abby crosses and shuts door as she speaks. Teddy starts upstairs.)* Goodbye.

HARPER. *(Crosses to sofa, gets hat.)* I must be getting home.
ABBY. Before you go, Dr. Harper—

(Teddy has reached stair landing.)

TEDDY. CHARGE! *(He dashes upstairs. At top he stops and with a sweeping gesture over the balcony rail, invites all to follow him as he speaks.)*
Charge the blockhouse! *(He dashes through door, closing it after him.)*

(Harper looks after him. Martha, to L. of Harper, is fooling with a pin on her dress. Abby R. of Harper.)

HARPER. The blockhouse?

MARTHA. The stairs are always San Juan Hill.

HARPER. Have you ever tried to persuade him that he wasn't Teddy Roosevelt?

ABBY. Oh, no!

MARTHA. He's so happy being Teddy Roosevelt.

ABBY. Once, a long time ago— *(She crosses below to Martha.)*
remember, Martha? We thought if he would be George Washington it might be a change for him—

MARTHA. But he stayed under his bed for days and just wouldn't be anybody.

ABBY. And we'd so much rather he'd be Mr. Roosevelt than nobody.

HARPER. Well, if he's happy—and what's more important you're happy— *(He takes blue-backed legal paper from inside pocket.)* you'll see that he signs these.

MARTHA. What are they?

ABBY. Dr. Harper has made all arrangements for Teddy to go to Happy Dale Sanitarium after we pass on.

MARTHA. But why should Teddy sign any papers now?

HARPER. It's better to have it all settled. If the Lord should take you away suddenly perhaps we couldn't persuade Teddy to commit himself and that would mean an unpleasant legal procedure. Mr. Witherspoon understands they're to be filed away until the time comes to use them.

MARTHA. Mr. Witherspoon? Who's he?

HARPER. He's the Superintendent of Happy Dale.

ABBY. *(To Martha.)* Dr. Harper has arranged for him to drop in tomorrow or the next day to meet Teddy.

HARPER. *(Crossing to R. door and opening it.)* I'd better be running along or Elaine will be over here looking for me.

(Abby crosses to door and calls out after him.)

ABBY. Give our love to Elaine—and Dr. Harper, please don't think harshly of Mortimer because he's a dramatic critic. Somebody has to do those things. *(Abby closes door, comes back into room.)*

(Martha crosses to sideboard, puts legal papers on it... notices tea things on table.)

MARTHA. Did you just have tea? Isn't it rather late?

ABBY. *(As one who has a secret.)* Yes—and dinner's going to be late too.

(Teddy enters on balcony, starts downstairs to first landing. Martha steps to Abby.)

MARTHA. So? Why?

ABBY. Teddy! *(Teddy stops on landing.)* Good news for you. You're going to Panama and dig another lock for the canal.

TEDDY. Dec-lighted! That's bully! Just bully! I shall prepare at once for the journey. *(He turns to go upstairs, stops as if puzzled, hurries back to landing, cries CHARGE!, and rushes up and off.)*

MARTHA. *(Elated.)* Abby! While I was out?

ABBY. *(Taking Martha's hand.)* Yes, dear! I just couldn't wait for you. I didn't know when you'd be back and Dr. Harper was coming.

MARTHA. But all by yourself?

ABBY. Oh, I got along fine!

MARTHA. I'll run right downstairs and see. *(She starts happily for cellar door.)*

ABBY. Oh, no, there wasn't time, and I was all alone.

(Martha looks around room toward kitchen.)

MARTHA. Well—

ABBY. *(Coyly.)* Martha—just look in the window seat. *(Martha almost skips to window seat, and just as she gets there a knock is heard on R. door. She stops. They both look toward door. Abby hurries to door)*

and opens it. Elaine Harper enters. Elaine is an attractive girl in her twenties; she looks surprisingly smart for a minister's daughter.) Oh, it's Elaine. (Opens door.) Come in, dear.

(Elaine crosses to C. Abby closes door, crosses to C.)

ELAINE. Good afternoon, Miss Abby. Good afternoon, Miss Martha. I thought Father was here.

MARTHA. (Stepping to L. of table.) He just this minute left. Didn't you meet him?

ELAINE. (Pointing to window in L. wall.) No, I took the short cut through the cemetery. Mortimer hasn't come yet?

ABBY. No, dear.

ELAINE. Oh? He asked me to meet him here. Do you mind if I wait?

MARTHA. Not at all.

ABBY. Why don't you sit down, dear?

MARTHA. But we really must speak to Mortimer about doing this to you.

ELAINE. (Sits chair R. of table.) Doing what?

MARTHA. Well, he was brought up to know better. When a gentleman is taking a young lady out he should call for her at her house.

ELAINE. (To both.) Oh, there's something about calling for a girl at a parsonage that discourages any man who doesn't embroider.

ABBY. He's done this too often—we're going to speak to him.

ELAINE. Oh, please don't. After young men whose idea of night life was to take me to prayer meeting, it's wonderful to go to the theatre almost every night of my life.

MARTHA. It's comforting for us too, because if Mortimer has to see some of those plays he has to see—at least he's sitting next to a minister's daughter. (Martha steps to back of table.)

(Abby crosses to back of table, starts putting tea things on tray. Elaine and Martha help.)

ABBY. My goodness, Elaine, what must you think of us—not having tea cleared away by this time. (She picks up tray and exits to kitchen.)

(Martha blows out one candle and takes it to sideboard. Elaine blows out other, takes to sideboard.)

MARTHA. (As Abby exits.) Now don't bother with anything in the kitchen until Mortimer comes, and then I'll help you. (To Elaine.) Mortimer should be here any minute now.

ELAINE. Yes. Father must have been surprised not to find me at home. I'd better run over and say good night to him. (She crosses to R. door.)

MARTHA. It's a shame you missed him, dear.

ELAINE. (Opening door.) If Mortimer comes you tell him I'll be right back. (She has opened door, but sees Mortimer just outside.) Hello, Mort!

(Mortimer Brewster walks in. He is a dramatic critic.)

MORTIMER. Hello, Elaine. (As he passes her going toward Martha, thus placing himself between Elaine and Martha, he reaches back and pats Elaine on the fanny... then embraces Martha.) Hello, Aunt Martha.

(Martha exits to kitchen, calling as she goes.)

MARTHA. Abby, Mortimer's here!

(Elaine slowly closes door.)

MORTIMER. (Turning R.) Were you going somewhere?

ELAINE. I was just going over to tell Father not to wait up for me.

MORTIMER. I didn't know that was still being done, even in Brooklyn. (He throws his hat on sofa.)

(Abby enters from kitchen. Martha follows, stays in doorway R.)

ABBY. (Crosses to Mortimer at C.) Hello, Mortimer.

MORTIMER. (Embraces and kisses her.) Hello, Aunt Abby.

ABBY. How are you, dear?

MORTIMER. All right. And you look well. You haven't changed much since yesterday.

ABBY. Oh, my goodness, it was yesterday, wasn't it? We're seeing a great deal of you lately. (She crosses and starts to sit in chair above table.) Well, come, sit down. Sit down.

(Martha stops her from sitting.)

MARTHA. Abby—haven't we something to do in the kitchen?

ABBY. Huh?

MARTHA. You know—the tea things.

ABBY. *(Suddenly seeing Mortimer and Elaine, and catching on.)* Oh, yes! Yes! The tea things— *(She backs toward kitchen.)* Well—you two just make yourselves at home. Just—

MARTHA. —make yourselves at home.

(They exit kitchen door, Abby closing door.)

ELAINE. *(Stepping to Mortimer, ready to be kissed.)* Well, can't you take a hint?

MORTIMER. *(Complaining.)* No...that was pretty obvious. A lack of inventiveness, I should say.

ELAINE. *(Only slightly annoyed as she crosses to table, and puts handbag on it.)* Yes—that's exactly what you'd say.

MORTIMER. *(He is at desk, fishing various pieces of notepaper from his pockets, and separating dollar bills that are mixed in with papers.)*

Where do you want to go for dinner?

ELAINE. *(Opening bag, looking in hand mirror.)* I don't care. I'm not very hungry.

MORTIMER. Well, I just had breakfast. Suppose we wait until after the show?

ELAINE. But that'll make it pretty late, won't it?

MORTIMER. Not with the little stinker we're seeing tonight. From what I've heard about it we'll be at Blake's by ten o'clock.

ELAINE. *(Crosses to U.S. C.)* You ought to be fair to these plays.

MORTIMER. Are these plays fair to me?

ELAINE. *I've never seen you walk out on a musical.*

MORTIMER. That musical isn't opening tonight.

ELAINE. *(Disappointed.)* No?

MORTIMER. Darling, you'll have to learn the rules. With a musical there are always four changes of title and three postponements. They liked it in New Haven but it needs a lot of work.

ELAINE. Oh, I was hoping it was a musical.

MORTIMER. You have such a light mind.

ELAINE. Not a bit. Musicals somehow have a humanizing effect on you. *(He gives her a look.)* After a serious play we join the proletariat in

the subway and I listen to a lecture on the drama. After a musical you bring me home in a taxi, *(Turning away.)* and you make a few passes.

MORTIMER. *(Crossing D. C.)* Now wait a minute, darling, that's a very inaccurate piece of reporting.

ELAINE. *(Leaning against D.S. end of table.)* Oh, I will admit that after the Behrman play you told me I had authentic beauty—and that's a hell of a thing to say to a girl. It wasn't until after our first musical you told me I had nice legs. And I have too.

(Mortimer stares at her legs a moment, then walks over and kisses her.)

MORTIMER. For a minister's daughter you know a lot about life. Where'd you learn it?

ELAINE. *(Casually.)* In the choir loft.

MORTIMER. I'll explain that to you sometime, darling—the close connection between eroticism and religion.

ELAINE. Religion never gets as high as the choir loft. *(Crosses below table, gathers up bag.)* Which reminds me, I'd better tell Father please not to wait up for me tonight.

MORTIMER. *(Almost to himself.)* I've never been able to rationalize it.

ELAINE. What?

MORTIMER. My falling in love with a girl who lives in Brooklyn.

ELAINE. Falling in love? You're not stooping to the articulate, are you?

MORTIMER. *(Ignoring this.)* The only way I can regain my self-respect is to keep you in New York.

ELAINE. *(Few steps toward him.)* Did you say keep?

MORTIMER. No, no. I've come to the conclusion that you're holding out for the legalities.

ELAINE. *(Crossing to him as he backs away.)* I can afford to be a good girl for quite a few years yet.

MORTIMER. *(Stops and embraces her.)* And I can't wait that long. Where could we be married in a hurry—say tonight?

ELAINE. I'm afraid Father will insist on officiating.

MORTIMER. *(Turning away R. from her.)* Oh, God! I'll bet your father could make even the marriage service sound pedestrian.

ELAINE. Are you by any chance writing a review of it?

MORTIMER. Forgive me, darling. It's an occupational disease. *(She smiles at him lovingly and walks toward him. He meets her*

halfway and they forget themselves for a moment in a sentimental embrace and kiss. When they come out of it, he turns away from her quickly...breaking U.S. near desk.) I may give that play tonight a good notice.

ELAINE. Now, darling, don't pretend you love me that much.

MORTIMER. *(Looks at her with polite lechery, then starts toward her.)* Be sure to tell your father not to wait up tonight.

ELAINE. *(Aware that she can't trust either of them, and backing U.S.)* I think tonight I'd better tell him to wait up.

MORTIMER. *(Following her.)* I'll telephone Winchell to publish the banns.

ELAINE. *(Backing D.S.)* Nevertheless—

MORTIMER. All right, everything formal and legal. But not later than next month.

ELAINE. *(Runs into his arms.)* Darling! I'll talk it over with Father and set the date.

MORTIMER. No—we'll have to see what's in rehearsal. There'll be a lot of other first nights in October.

(Teddy enters from balcony and comes downstairs dressed in tropical clothes and a solar topee. At foot of stairs he sees Mortimer, crosses to him and shakes hands.)

TEDDY. Hello, Mortimer!

MORTIMER. *(Gravely.)* How are you, Mr. President?

TEDDY. Bully, thank you. Just bully! What news have you brought me?

MORTIMER. Just this, Mr. President—the country is squarely behind you.

TEDDY. *(Beaming.)* Yes, I know. Isn't it wonderful? *(He shakes Mortimer's hand again.)* Well, goodbye. *(He crosses to Elaine and shakes hands with her.)* Goodbye. *(He goes to cellar door.)*

ELAINE. Where are you off to, Teddy?

TEDDY. Panama. *(He exits through cellar door, shutting it. Elaine looks at Mortimer inquiringly.)*

MORTIMER. Panama's the cellar. He digs locks for the canal down there.

(Elaine takes his arm and they stroll D. L. to R. of table.)

ELAINE. You're so sweet with him—and he's very fond of you.

MORTIMER. Well, Teddy was always my favorite brother.

ELAINE. *(Stopping and turning to him.)* Favorite? Were there more of you?

MORTIMER. There's another brother—Jonathan.

ELAINE. I never heard of him. Your aunts never mention him.

MORTIMER. No, we don't like to talk about Jonathan. He left Brooklyn very early—by request. Jonathan was the kind of boy who liked to cut worms in two—with his teeth.

ELAINE. What became of him?

MORTIMER. I don't know. He wanted to become a surgeon like Grandfather but he wouldn't go to medical school first and his practice got him into trouble.

(Abby enters from kitchen, crossing D. L. of table.)

ABBY. Aren't you two going to be late for the theatre? *(Mortimer's l. arm around Elaine's neck, he looks at his wristwatch.)*

MORTIMER. We're skipping dinner. We won't have to start for half an hour.

ABBY. *(Backing U. L.)* Well, then I'll leave you two alone together again.

ELAINE. Don't bother, darling. *(Breaking R. in front of Mortimer.)* I'm going to run over to speak to Father. *(To Mortimer.)* Before I go out with you he likes to pray over me a little. *(She runs to R. door and opens it, keeping her L. hand on outside doorknob.)* I'll be right back—I'll cut through the cemetery.

MORTIMER. *(Crosses to her, puts his hand on hers.)* If the prayer isn't too long, I'd have time to lead you beside distilled waters.

(Elaine laughs and exits. Mortimer shuts door.)

ABBY. *(Happily, as she crosses to C.)* Mortimer, that's the first time I've ever heard you quote the bible. We knew Elaine would be a good influence for you.

MORTIMER. *(Laughs, crosses L., then turns to Abby.)* Oh, by the way—I'm going to marry her.

ABBY. What? Oh, darling! *(She runs and embraces him. Then she dashes toward kitchen door as Mortimer crosses to window L. and looks out.)* Martha, Martha! *(Martha enters from kitchen.)* Come right in

here. I've got the most wonderful news for you—Mortimer and Elaine are going to be married.

MARTHA. Married? Oh, Mortimer! *(She runs over to R. of Mortimer, who is looking out window L., embraces and kisses him. Abby comes down to his L. He has his arms around both of them.)*

ABBY. We hoped it would happen just like this.

MARTHA. Well, Elaine must be the happiest girl in the world.

MORTIMER. *(Pulls curtain back, looks out window.)* Happy! Just look at her leaping over those gravestones. *(As he looks out window Mortimer's attention is suddenly drawn to something.)* Say! What's that?

MARTHA. *(Looking out on his R. Abby is on his L.)* What's what, dear?

MORTIMER. See that statue there. That's a horundinida carnina.

MARTHA. Oh, no, dear—that's Emma B. Stout ascending to heaven.

MORTIMER. No, no,—standing on Mrs. Stout's left ear. That bird—that's a red-crested swallow. I've only seen one of those before in my life.

ABBY. *(Crosses around above table and pushes chair R. into table.)* I don't know how you can be thinking about a bird now—what with Elaine and the engagement and everything.

MORTIMER. It's a vanishing species. *(He turns away from window.)* Thoreau was very fond of them. *(As he crosses to desk to look through various drawers and papers.)* By the way, I left a large envelope around here last week. It was one of the chapters of my book on Thoreau. Have you seen it?

MARTHA. *(Pushing armchair into table.)* Well, if you left it here it must be here somewhere.

ABBY. *(Crossing to D. L. of Mortimer.)* When are you going to be married? What are your plans? There must be something more you can tell us about Elaine.

MORTIMER. Elaine? Oh, yes, Elaine thought it was brilliant. *(He crosses to sideboard, looks through cupboards and drawers.)*

MARTHA. What was, dear?

MORTIMER. My chapter on Thoreau. *(He finds a bundle of papers [script] in R. drawer and takes them to table and looks through them.)*

ABBY. *(At c.)* Well, when Elaine comes back I think we ought to have a little celebration. We must drink to your happiness. Martha, isn't there some of that Lady Baltimore cake left?

(During last few speeches Martha has picked up pail from side board and her cape, hat and gloves from table in U. L. corner.)

MARTHA. *(Crossing D. L.)* Oh, yes!

ABBY. And I'll open a bottle of wine.

MARTHA. *(As she exits to kitchen.)* Oh, and to think it happened in this room!

MORTIMER. *(Has finished looking through papers, is gazing around room.)* Now where could I have put that?

ABBY. Well, with your fiancée sitting beside you tonight, I do hope the play will be something you can enjoy for once. It may be something romantic. What's the name of it?

MORTIMER. "Murder Will Out."

ABBY. Oh dear! *(She disappears into kitchen as Mortimer goes on talking.)*

MORTIMER. When the curtain goes up the first thing you'll see will be a dead body. *(He lifts window seat and sees one. Not believing it, he drops window seat again and starts downstage. He suddenly stops with a "take," then goes back, throws window seat open and stares in. He goes slightly mad for a moment. He backs away, then hears Abby humming on her way into the room. He drops window seat again and holds it down, staring around the room. Abby enters carrying a silencer and tablecloth which she puts on armchair, then picks up bundle of papers and returns them to drawer in sideboard. Mortimer speaks in a somewhat strained voice.)* Aunt Abby!

ABBY. *(At sideboard.)* Yes, dear?

MORTIMER. You were going to make plans for Teddy to go to that...sanitarium—Happy Dale—

ABBY. *(Bringing legal papers from sideboard to Mortimer.)* Yes, dear, it's all arranged. Dr. Harper was here today and brought the papers for Teddy to sign. Here they are.

(He takes them from her.)

MORTIMER. He's got to sign them right away.

ABBY. *(Arranging silencer on table. Martha enters from kitchen door with table silver and plates on a tray. She sets tray on sideboard. Goes to table R.)* That's what Dr. Harper thinks. Then there won't be any legal difficulties after we pass on.

MORTIMER. He's got to sign them this minute! He's down in the cellar—get him up here right away.

MARTHA. (*Unfolding tablecloth. She's above table on R.*) There's no such hurry as that.

ABBY. No. When Teddy starts working on the canal you can't get his mind on anything else.

MORTIMER. Teddy's got to go to Happy Dale now—tonight.

MARTHA. Oh, no, dear, that's not until after we're gone.

MORTIMER. Right away, I tell you!—right away!

ABBY. (*Turning to Mortimer.*) Why, Mortimer, how can you say such a thing? Why, as long as we live we'll never be separated from Teddy.

MORTIMER. (*Trying to be calm.*) Listen, darlings, I'm frightfully sorry, but I've got some shocking news for you. (*The aunts stop work and look at him with some interest.*) Now we've all got to try and keep our heads. You know we've sort of humored Teddy because we thought he was harmless.

MARTHA. Why he *is* harmless!

MORTIMER. He *was* harmless. That's why he has to go to Happy Dale. Why he has to be confined.

ABBY. (*Stepping to Mortimer.*) Mortimer, why have you suddenly turned against Teddy?—your own brother?

MORTIMER. You've got to know sometime. It might as well be now, Teddy's—killed a man!

MARTHA. Nonsense, dear.

(*Mortimer rises and points to window seat.*)

MORTIMER. There's a body in the window seat!

ABBY. Yes, dear, we know.

(*Mortimer "takes" as Abby and Martha busy themselves again at table.*)

MORTIMER. You *know*?

MARTHA. Of course, dear, but it has nothing to do with Teddy. (*Gets tray from sideboard—arranges silver and plates on table: three places, U. L. and R.*)

ABBY. Now, Mortimer, just forget about it—forget you ever saw the gentleman.

MORTIMER. Forget?

ABBY. We never dreamed you'd peek.

MORTIMER. But who is he?

ABBY. His name's Hoskins—Adam Hoskins. That's really all I know about him—except that he's a Methodist.

MORTIMER. That's all you know about him? Well, what's he doing here? What happened to him?

MARTHA. He died.

MORTIMER. Aunt Martha, men don't just get into window seats and die.

ABBY. (*Silly boy.*) No, he died first.

MORTIMER. Well, how?

ABBY. Oh, Mortimer, don't be so inquisitive. The gentleman died because he drank some wine with poison in it.

MORTIMER. How did the poison get in the wine?

MARTHA. Well, we put it in wine because it's less noticeable—when it's in tea it has a distinct odor.

MORTIMER. You put it in the wine?

ABBY. Yes. And I put Mr. Hoskins in the window seat because Dr. Harper was coming.

MORTIMER. So you knew what you'd done! You didn't want Dr. Harper to see the body!

ABBY. Well, not at tea—that wouldn't have been very nice. Now, Mortimer, you know the whole thing, just forget about it. I do think Martha and I have the right to our own little secrets. (*She crosses to sideboard to get two goblets from L. cupboard as Martha comes to table from sideboard with salt dish and pepper shaker.*)

MARTHA. And don't you tell Elaine! (*She gets third goblet from sideboard, then turns to Abby who takes tray from sideboard.*) Oh, Abby, while I was out I dropped in on Mrs. Schultz. She's much better but she would like us to take Junior to the movies again.

ABBY. Well, we must do that tomorrow or next day.

MARTHA. Yes, but this time we'll go where we want to go. (*She starts for kitchen door. Abby follows.*) Junior's not going to drag me into another one of those scary pictures. (*They exit into kitchen as Mortimer wheels around and looks after them. Abby shuts door.*)

MORTIMER. (*Dazed, looks around the room. His eyes come to rest on phone on desk; he crosses to it and dials a number. Into phone.*) City desk! (*There is a pause.*) Hello, Al. Do you know who this is? (*Pause.*) That's right. Say, Al, when I left the office, I told you where I was going, remember?—Well, where did I say? (*Pause.*) Uh-huh. Well, it would take me about half an hour to get to Brooklyn. What time

have you got? *(He looks at his watch.)* That's right. I must be here. *(He hangs up, sits for a moment, then suddenly leaps off stool toward kitchen.)* Aunt Abby! Aunt Martha! Come in here! *(He backs to C. stage as the two aunts bustle in. Martha has tray with plates, cups, saucers and soup cups.)* What are we going to do? What are we going to do?

MARTHA. *(R. of table.)* What are we going to do about what, dear?

MORTIMER. *(Pointing to window seat.)* There's a body in there.

ABBY. *(U. L. of Mortimer.)* Yes—Mr. Hoskins.

MORTIMER. Well, good heavens, I can't turn you over to the police! But what am I going to do?

MARTHA. Well, for one thing, dear, stop being so excited.

ABBY. And for pity's sake stop worrying. We told you to forget the whole thing.

MORTIMER. Forget! My dear Aunt Abby, can't I make you realize that something has to be done?

ABBY. *(A little sharply.)* Now, Mortimer, you behave yourself. You're too old to be flying off the handle like this.

MORTIMER. But Mr. Hotchkiss—

(Abby, on her way to sideboard, stops and turns to Mortimer.)

ABBY. Hoskins, dear. *(She continues on her way to sideboard and gets napkins and rings from L. drawer. Martha puts her tray, with cups, plates, etc., on table. Mortimer continues speaking through this.)*

MORTIMER. Well, whatever his name is, you can't leave him there.

MARTHA. We don't intend to, dear.

ABBY. *(Crossing to table L. with napkins and rings.)* No, Teddy's down in the cellar now digging the lock.

MORTIMER. You mean you're going to bury Mr. Hotchkiss in the cellar?

MARTHA. *(Stepping to him.)* Oh, yes, dear,—that's what we did with the others.

MORTIMER. *(Walking away to R.)* No! You can't bury Mr.—*(Double take. Turns back to them.)*—others?

ABBY. The other gentlemen.

MORTIMER. When you say others—do you mean—others? More than one others?

MARTHA. Oh, yes, dear. Let me see, this is eleven. *(To Abby U. L. of table.)* Isn't it, Abby?

ABBY. No, dear, this makes twelve.

(Mortimer backs away from them, stunned, toward phone stool at desk.)

MARTHA. Oh, I think you're wrong, Abby. This is only eleven.

ABBY. No, dear, because I remember when Mr. Hoskins first came in, it occurred to me that he would make just an even dozen.

MARTHA. Well, you really shouldn't count the first one.

ABBY. Oh, I was counting the first one. So that makes it twelve. *(Phone rings. Mortimer, in a daze, turns toward it and without picking up receiver, speaks.)*

MORTIMER. Hello! *(He comes to, picks up receiver.)* Hello. Oh, hello, Al. My, it's good to hear your voice.

(Abby, at table, is still holding out for a "twelve" count.)

ABBY. Well, anyway, they're all down in the cellar—

MORTIMER. *(To aunts.)* Ssshhh—*(Into phone, as aunts cross to sideboard and put candelabras from top to bottom shelf.)* Oh, no, Al, I'm sober as a lark. I just called you because I was feeling a little Pirandello—Piran—you wouldn't know, Al. Look, I'm glad you called. Get hold of George right away. He's got to review the play tonight. I can't make it. No, Al, you're wrong. I'll tell you all about it tomorrow. Well, George has got to cover the play tonight! This is my department and I'm running it! You get ahold of George! *(He hangs up and sits a moment trying to collect himself.)* Now let's see, where were we? *(He suddenly leaps from stool.)* TWELVE!

MARTHA. Yes, Abby thinks we ought to count the first one and that makes twelve. *(She goes back to sideboard.)*

(Mortimer takes chair R. of table and faces it toward R. stage, then takes Martha by the hand, leads her to chair and sets her in it.)

MORTIMER. All right—now—who was the first one?

ABBY. *(Crossing from above table to Mortimer.)* Mr. Midgely. He was a Baptist.

MARTHA. Of course, I still think we can't claim full credit for him because he just died.

ABBY. Martha means without any help from us. You see, Mr. Midgely came here looking for a room—

MARTHA. It was right after you moved to New York.

ABBY. —And it didn't seem right for that lovely room to be going to waste when there were so many people who needed it—

MARTHA. —He was such a lonely old man...

ABBY. All his kith and kin were dead and it left him so forlorn and unhappy—

MARTHA. —We felt so sorry for him.

ABBY. And then when his heart attack came—and he sat dead in that chair (*Pointing to armchair.*) looking so peaceful—remember, Martha—we made up our minds then and there that if we could help other lonely old men to that same peace—we would!

MORTIMER. (*All ears.*) He dropped dead right in that chair! How awful for you!

MARTHA. Oh, no, dear. Why, it was rather like old times. Your grandfather always used to have a cadaver or two around the house. You see, Teddy had been digging in Panama and he thought Mr. Midgely was a Yellow Fever victim.

ABBY. That meant he had to be buried immediately.

MARTHA. So we all took him down to Panama and put him in the lock. (*She rises, puts her arm around Abby.*) Now that's why we told you not to worry about it because we know exactly what's to be done.

MORTIMER. And that's how all this started—that man walking in here and dropping dead.

ABBY. Of course, we realized we couldn't depend on that happening again. So—

MARTHA. (*Crosses to Mortimer.*) You remember those jars of poison that have been up on the shelves in Grandfather's laboratory all these years—?

ABBY. You know your Aunt Martha's knack for mixing things. You've eaten enough of her piccalilli.

MARTHA. Well, dear, for a gallon of elderberry wine I take one teaspoonful of arsenic, then add a half teaspoonful of strychnine and then just a pinch of cyanide.

MORTIMER. (*Appraisingly.*) Should have quite a kick.

ABBY. Yes! As a matter of fact one of our gentlemen found time to say "How delicious!"

MARTHA. (*Stepping U.S.*) Well, I'll have to get things started in the kitchen.

ABBY. (*To Mortimer.*) I wish you could stay for dinner.

MARTHA. I'm trying out a new recipe.

MORTIMER. I couldn't eat a thing.

(*Martha goes out to kitchen.*)

ABBY. (*Calling after Martha.*) I'll come and help you, dear. (*She pushes chair R. into table.*) Well, I feel so much better now. Oh, you have to wait for Elaine, don't you? (*She smiles.*) How happy you must be. (*She goes to kitchen doorway.*) Well, dear, I'll leave you alone with your thoughts. (*She exits, shutting door.*)

(*The shutting of the door wakes Mortimer from his trance. He crosses to window seat, kneels down, raises cover, looks in. Not believing, he lowers cover, rubs his eyes, raises cover again. This time he really sees Mr. Huskins. Closes window seat hastily, rises, steps back. Runs over and closes drapes over window. Backs up to above table. Sees water glass on table, picks it up, raises it to lips, suddenly remembers that poisoned wine comes in glasses, puts it down quickly. Crosses to cellar door, opens it. Elaine enters R., he closes cellar door with a bang. As Elaine puts her bag on top of desk he looks at her, and it dawns on him that he knows her. He speaks with faint surprise.*)

MORTIMER. Oh, it's you. (*He drops D.S. Elaine crosses to him, takes his hand.*)

ELAINE. Don't be cross, darling! Father could see that I was excited—so I told him about us and that made it hard for me to get away. But listen, darling—he's not going to wait up for me tonight.

MORTIMER. (*Looking at window seat.*) You run along home, Elaine, and I'll call you up tomorrow.

ELAINE. Tomorrow!

MORTIMER. (*Irritated.*) You know I always call you up every day or two.

ELAINE. But we're going to the theatre tonight.

MORTIMER. No—no we're not!

ELAINE. Well, why not?

MORTIMER. (*Turning to her.*) Elaine, something's come up.

ELAINE. What, darling? Mortimer—you've lost your job!

MORTIMER. No—no—I haven't lost my job. I'm just not covering that play tonight. (*Pushing her R.*) Now you run along home, Elaine.

ELAINE. But I've got to know what's happened. Certainly you can tell me.

MORTIMER. No, dear, I can't.

ELAINE. But if we're going to be married—

MORTIMER. Married?

ELAINE. Have you forgotten that not fifteen minutes ago you proposed to me?

MORTIMER. *(Vaguely.)* I did? Oh—yes! Well, as far as I know that's still on. *(Urging her R. again.)* Now you run along home, Elaine. I've got to do something.

ELAINE. Listen, you can't propose to me one minute and throw me out of the house the next.

MORTIMER. *(Pleading.)* I'm not throwing you out of the house, darling. Will you get out of here?

ELAINE. No, I won't get out of here. *(Mortimer crosses toward kitchen. Elaine crosses below to window seat.)* Not until I've had some kind of explanation. *(Elaine is about to sit on window seat. Mortimer grabs her by the hand. Phone rings.)*

MORTIMER. Elaine! *(He goes to phone, dragging Elaine with him.)* Hello! Oh, hello, Al. Hold on a minute, will you?—All right, it's important! But it can wait a minute, can't it? Hold on! *(He puts receiver on desk. Takes Elaine's bag from top of desk and hands it to her. Then takes her by hand and leads her to door R. and opens it.)* Look, Elaine, you're a sweet girl and I love you. But I have something on my mind now and I want you to go home and wait until I call you.

ELAINE. *(In doorway.)* Don't try to be masterful.

MORTIMER. *(Annoyed to the point of being literate.)* When we're married and I have problems to face I hope you're less tedious and uninspired!

ELAINE. And when we're married if we're married—I hope I find you adequate! *(She exits. Mortimer does take, then runs out on porch after her, calling—)*

MORTIMER. Elaine! Elaine! *(He runs back in, shutting door, crosses and kneels on window seat to open window. Suddenly remembers contents of window seat and leaps off it. Dashes into kitchen but remembers Al is on phone, reenters immediately and crosses to phone.)* Hello, Al? Hello... hello... *(He pushes hook down and starts to dial when doorbell rings. He thinks it's the phone. Abby enters from kitchen.)* Hello. Hello, Al?

ABBY. *(Crossing to R. door and opening it.)* That's the doorbell, dear, not the telephone. *(Mortimer pushes hook down...dials. Mr. Gibbs steps in doorway R.)* How do you do? Come in.

GIBBS. I understand you have a room to rent.

(Martha enters from kitchen. Puts "Lazy Susan" on sideboard, then gets to R. of table.)

ABBY. Yes. Won't you step in?

GIBBS. *(Stepping into room.)* Are you the lady of the house?

ABBY. Yes, I'm Miss Brewster. And this is my sister, another Miss Brewster.

GIBBS. My name is Gibbs.

ABBY. *(Easing him to chair R. of table.)* Oh, won't you sit down? I'm sorry we were just setting the table for dinner.

MORTIMER. *(Into phone.)* Hello—let me talk to Al again. City desk. *(Loud.)* AL!! CITY DESK! WHAT? I'm sorry, wrong number. *(He hangs up and starts dialing again as Gibbs looks at him. Gibbs turns to Abby.)*

GIBBS. May I see the room?

MARTHA. *(D. L. of table.)* Why don't you sit down a minute and let's get acquainted.

GIBBS. That won't do much good if I don't like the room.

ABBY. Is Brooklyn your home?

GIBBS. Haven't got a home. Live in a hotel. Don't like it.

MORTIMER. *(Into phone.)* Hello. City desk.

MARTHA. Are your family Brooklyn people?

GIBBS. Haven't got any family.

ABBY. *(Another victim.)* All alone in the world?

GIBBS. Yep.

ABBY. Well, Martha—*(Martha goes happily to sideboard, gets bottle of wine from U. L. cupboard, and a wine glass, and sets them on table, U.S. end. Abby eases Gibbs into chair R. of table and continues speaking to him, then to above table.)* Well, you've come to just the right house. Do sit down.

MORTIMER. *(Into phone.)* Hello, Al? Mort. We got cut off. Al, I can't cover the play tonight—that's all there is to it, I can't!

MARTHA. *(L. of table.)* What church do you go to? There's an Episcopal church practically next door. *(Her gesture toward window brings her to window seat and she sits.)*

GIBBS. I'm Presbyterian. Used to be.

MORTIMER. *(Into phone.)* What's George doing in Bermuda? *(Rises and gets loud.)* Certainly I told him he could go to Bermuda—

it's my department, isn't it? Well, you've got to get somebody. Who else is there around the office? *(He sits on second chair.)*

GIBBS. *(Annoyed. Rises and crosses below table to L. of it.)* Is there always this much noise?

MARTHA. Oh, he doesn't live with us.

(Abby sits above table.)

MORTIMER. *(Into phone.)* There must be somebody around the place. Look, Al, how about the office boy? You know the bright one—the one we don't like? Well, you look around the office, I'll hold on.

GIBBS. I'd really like to see the room.

ABBY. *(After seating Gibbs R. of table she has sat in chair above table.)* It's upstairs. Won't you try a glass of our wine before we start up?

GIBBS. Never touch it.

MARTHA. We make this ourselves. It's elderberry wine.

GIBBS. *(To Martha.)* Elderberry wine. Hmmp. Haven't tasted elderberry wine since I was a boy. Thank you. *(He pulls armchair around and sits as Abby uncorks bottle and starts to pour wine.)*

MORTIMER. *(Into phone.)* Well, there must be some printers around. Look, Al, the fellow who sets my copy. He ought to know about what I'd write. His name is Joe. He's the third machine from the left. But, Al, he might turn out to be another Burns Mantle!

GIBBS. *(To Martha.)* Do you have your own elderberry bushes?

MARTHA. No, but the cemetery is full of them.

MORTIMER. *(Rising.)* No, I'm not drinking, but I'm going to start now.

GIBBS. Do you serve meals?

ABBY. We might, but first just see whether you like our wine.

(Mortimer hangs up, puts phone on top of desk and crosses L. He sees wine on table. Goes to sideboard, gets glass, brings it to table and pours drink. Gibbs has his glass in hand and is getting ready to drink.)

MARTHA. *(Sees Mortimer pouring wine.)* Mortimer! Eh eh eh eh! *(Gibbs stops and looks at Martha. Mortimer pays no attention.)* Eh eh eh eh!

(As Mortimer raises glass to lips with L. hand, Abby reaches up and pulls his arm down.)

ABBY. Mortimer. Not that. *(Mortimer, still dumb, puts his glass down on table. Then he suddenly sees Gibbs who has just got glass to his lips and is about to drink. He points across table at Gibbs and gives a wild cry. Gibbs looks at him, putting his glass down. Mortimer, still pointing at Gibbs, goes around above table toward him. Gibbs, seeing a madman, rises slowly and backs toward C., then turns and runs for exit R., Mortimer following him. Gibbs opens R. door and Mortimer pushes him out, closing door after him. Then he turns and leans on door in exhausted relief. Meantime, Martha has risen and crossed to below armchair, while Abby has risen and crossed to D. C. [If necessary to cover Gibbs' cross and exit, Mortimer has the following lines... "Get out of here! Do you want to be poisoned? Do you want to be killed? Do you want to be murdered?"] Abby, great disappointment.)* Now you've spoiled everything. *(She goes to sofa and sits.)*

(Martha sits in armchair. Mortimer crosses to C. and looks from one to the other... then speaks to Abby.)

MORTIMER. You can't do things like that. I don't know how to explain this to you, but it's not only against the law. It's wrong! *(To Martha.)* It's not a nice thing to do. *(Martha turns away from him as Abby has done in his lines to her.)* People wouldn't understand. *(Points to door after Gibbs.)* He wouldn't understand.

MARTHA. Abby, we shouldn't have told Mortimer!

MORTIMER. What I mean is—well, this has developed into a very bad habit.

ABBY. *(Rises.)* Mortimer, we don't try to stop you from doing things you like to do. I don't see why you should interfere with us.

(Phone rings. Mortimer answers. Martha rises to below table.)

MORTIMER. Hello? *(It's Al again.)* All right, I'll see the first act and I'll pan the hell out of it. But look, Al, you've got to do something for me. Get hold of O'Brien—our lawyer, the head of our legal department. Have him meet me at the theatre. Now, don't let me down. OK I'm starting now. *(He hangs up and turns to aunts.)* Look, I've got to go to the theatre. I can't get out of it. But before I go will you promise me something?

MARTHA. *(Crossing to Abby at C.)* We'd have to know what it was first.

MORTIMER. I love you very much and I know you love me. You know I'd do anything in the world for you and I want you to do just this little thing for me.

ABBY. What do you want us to do?

MORTIMER. Don't *do* anything. I mean don't do *anything*. Don't let anyone in this house—and leave Mr. Hoskins right where he is.

MARTHA. Why?

MORTIMER. I want time to think—and I've got quite a little to think about. You know I wouldn't want anything to happen to you.

ABBY. Well, what on earth could happen to us?

MORTIMER. (*Beside himself.*) Anyway—you'll do this for me, won't you?

MARTHA. Well—we were planning on holding services before dinner.

MORTIMER. Services!

MARTHA. (*A little indignant.*) Certainly. You don't think we'd bury Mr. Hoskins without a full Methodist service, do you? Why he was a Methodist.

MORTIMER. But can't that wait until I get back?

ABBY. Oh, then you could join us.

MORTIMER. (*Going crazy himself.*) Yes! Yes!

ABBY. Oh, Mortimer, you'll enjoy the services—especially the hymns. (*To Martha.*) Remember how beautifully Mortimer used to sing in the choir before his voice changed?

MORTIMER. And remember, you're not going to let anyone in this house while I'm gone—it's a promise!

MARTHA. Well—

ABBY. Oh, Martha, we can do that now that Mortimer's cooperating with us. (*To Mortimer.*) Well, all right, Mortimer.

(*Mortimer heaves a sigh of relief. Crosses to sofa and gets his hat. Then on his way to opening R. door, he speaks.*)

MORTIMER. Have you got some paper? I'll get back just as soon as I can. (*Taking legal papers from coat pocket as he crosses.*) There's a man I've got to see.

(*Abby has gone to desk for stationery. She hands it to Mortimer.*)

ABBY. Here's some stationery. Will this do?

MORTIMER. (*Taking stationery.*) That'll be fine. I can save time if I write my review on the way to the theatre. (*He exits R. The aunts start after him. Martha crosses and closes door. Abby goes to sideboard and brings two candelabras to table. Then gets matches from sideboard—lights candles during lines.*)

MARTHA. Mortimer didn't seem quite himself today.

ABBY. (*Lighting candles.*) Well, that's only natural—I think I know why.

MARTHA. (*Lighting floor lamp.*) Why?

ABBY. He's just become engaged to be married. I suppose that always makes a man nervous.

MARTHA. (*During this speech she goes to first landing and closes drapes over window, then comes downstairs and turns off remote switch.*) Well, I'm so happy for Elaine—and their honeymoon ought to give Mortimer a real vacation. I don't think he got much rest this summer.

ABBY. Well, at least he didn't go kiting off to China or Spain.

MARTHA. I could never understand why he wanted to go to those places.

ABBY. Well, I think to Mortimer the theatre has always seemed pretty small potatoes. He needs something big to criticize—something like the human race. (*She sets one candelabra D. L., the other U. R. on table.*)

MARTHA. (*At C.*) Oh, Abby, if Mortimer's coming back for the services for Mr. Hoskins, we'll need another hymnal. There's one in my room. (*She starts upstairs to first landing.*)

ABBY. You know, dear, it's really my turn to read the services, but since you weren't here when Mr. Hoskins came I want you to do it.

MARTHA. (*Pleased.*) That's very nice of you, dear—but, are you sure you want me to?

ABBY. It's only fair.

MARTHA. Well, I think I'll wear my black bombazine and Mother's old brooch. (*She starts up again when doorbell rings.*)

ABBY. (*Crossing as far as desk.*) I'll go, dear.

MARTHA. (*Hushed.*) We promised Mortimer we wouldn't let anyone in.

ABBY. (*Trying to peer through curtained window in door.*) Who do you suppose it is?

MARTHA. Wait a minute, I'll look. (*She turns to landing window and peeks out the curtains.*) It's two men—and I've never seen them before.

ABBY. Are you sure?

MARTHA. There's a car at the curb—they must have come in that.
ABBY. Let me look! *(She hurries up stairs. There is a knock on door. Abby peeks out the curtains.)*

MARTHA. Do you recognize them?

ABBY. They're strangers to me.

MARTHA. We'll just have to pretend we're not at home. *(The two of them huddle back in corner of landing.)*

(Another knock at the door R., the knob is turned, and door swings slowly open. A tall man walks to C., looking about the room. He walks in with assurance and ease as though the room were familiar to him—in every direction but that of the stairs. There is something sinister about the man—something that brings a slight chill in his presence. It is in his walk, his bearing, and his strange resemblance to Boris Karloff. From stair landing Abby and Martha watch him, almost afraid to speak. Having completed his survey of the room, the man turns and addresses someone outside the front door.)

JONATHAN. Come in, Doctor. *(Dr. Einstein enters R. He is somewhat ratty in appearance. His face wears the benevolent smirk of a man who lives in a pleasant haze of alcohol. There is something about him that suggests the unfrocked priest. He stands just inside the door, timid but expectant.)* This is the home of my youth. As a boy I couldn't wait to escape from this place—now I'm glad to escape back into it.

EINSTEIN. *(Shutting door. His back to aunts.)* Yah, Chonny, it's a fine hideout.

JONATHAN. The family must still live here. There's something so unmistakably Brewster about the Brewsters. I hope there's a fatted calf awaiting the return of the prodigal.

EINSTEIN. Yah, I'm hungry. *(He suddenly sees the fatted calf in the form of the two glasses of wine on table.)* Look, Chonny, drinks! *(He runs over below to table. Jonathan crosses to above side.)*

JONATHAN. As though we were expected. A good omen.

(They raise glasses to their lips as Abby steps down a couple of stairs and speaks.)

ABBY. Who are you? What are you doing here?

(They both put glasses down. Einstein picks up his hat from armchair, ready to run for it. Jonathan turns to Abby.)

JONATHAN. Why, Aunt Abby! Aunt Martha! It's Jonathan.

MARTHA. *(Frightened.)* You get out of here.

JONATHAN. *(Crossing to aunts.)* I'm Jonathan—your nephew, Jonathan.

ABBY. Oh, no, you're not. You're nothing like Jonathan, so don't pretend you are! You just get out of here!

JONATHAN. *(Crossing closer.)* But I am Jonathan. And this *(Indicating Einstein.)* is Dr. Einstein.

ABBY. And he's not Dr. Einstein either.

JONATHAN. Not Dr. Albert Einstein—Dr. Herman Einstein.

ABBY. *(Down another step.)* Who are you? You're not our nephew, Jonathan.

JONATHAN. *(Peering at Abby's outstretched hand.)* I see you're still wearing the lovely garnet ring that Grandma Brewster bought in England. *(Abby gasps, looks at ring.)* And you, Aunt Martha, still the high collar—to hide the scar where Grandfather's acid burned you.

(Martha's hand goes to her throat. The aunts look at Jonathan. Martha comes down a few steps to behind Abby. Einstein gets to C.)

MARTHA. His voice is like Jonathan's.

ABBY. *(Stepping down to stage floor.)* Have you been in an accident?

JONATHAN. *(His hand goes to side of his face.)* No—*(He clouds.)*—my face—Dr. Einstein is responsible for that. He's a plastic surgeon. He changes people's faces.

MARTHA. *(Comes down to Abby.)* But I've seen that face before. *(To Abby.)* Abby, remember when we took the little Schultz boy to the movies and I was so frightened? It was that face!

(Jonathan grows tense and looks toward Einstein. Einstein crosses to C. and addresses aunts.)

EINSTEIN. Easy, Chonny—easy! *(To aunts.)* Don't worry, ladies. The last five years I give Chonny three new faces. I give him another one right away. This last face—well, I saw that picture too—just before I operate. And I was intoxicated.

JONATHAN. *(With a growing and dangerous intensity as he walks toward Einstein, who backs D.S.)* You see, Doctor—you see what you've done to me. Even my own family—

EINSTEIN. *(To calm him, as he is forced around R. stage.)* Chonny—you're home—in this lovely house—*(To aunts.)* How often he tells me about Brooklyn—about this house—about his aunts that he loves so much. *(To Jonathan.)* They know you, Chonny. *(To Abby as he leads her toward Jonathan.)* You know it's Jonathan. Speak to him. Tell him so. *(He drifts above table to D. L. of it.)*

ABBY. Well—Jonathan—it's been a long time—what have you been doing all these years?

MARTHA. *(Has come to far D. R.)* Yes, Jonathan, where have you been?

JONATHAN. *(Recovering his composure.)* Oh, England, South Africa, Australia, the last five years Chicago. Dr. Einstein and I were in business there together.

ABBY. Oh, we were in Chicago for the World's Fair.

MARTHA. *(For want of something to say.)* Yes—we found Chicago awfully warm.

EINSTEIN. *(He has wandered above U. L. and down to below table.)* Yah—it got hot for us too.

JONATHAN. *(Turning on the charm as he crosses above Abby, placing himself between the aunts.)* Well, it's wonderful to be in Brooklyn again. And you—Abby—Martha you don't look a day older. Just as I remembered you—sweet—charming—hospitable. *(The aunts don't react too well to this charm.)* And dear Teddy—*(He indicates with his hand a lad of eight or ten.)*—did he get into politics? *(He turns to Einstein.)* My little brother, Doctor, was determined to become President.

ABBY. Oh, Teddy's fine! Just fine! And Mortimer's well too.

JONATHAN. *(A bit of a sneer.)* I know about Mortimer. I've seen his picture at the head of his column. He's evidently fulfilled all the promise of his early nasty nature.

ABBY. *(Defensively.)* We're very fond of Mortimer.

(There is a slight pause. Then Martha speaks uneasily as she gestures toward R. door.)

MARTHA. Well, Jonathan, it's very nice to have seen you again.

JONATHAN. *(Expanding.)* Bless you, Aunt Martha. *(Crosses and sits chair R. of table.)* It's good to be home again.

(The aunts look at each other with dismay.)

ABBY. Well, Martha, we mustn't let what's on the stove boil over. *(She starts to kitchen, then sees Martha isn't following. She crosses back and tugs at Martha, then crosses toward kitchen again. Martha follows to C., then speaks to Jonathan.)*

MARTHA. Yes. If you'll excuse us for a minute, Jonathan. Unless you're in a hurry to go somewhere.

(Jonathan looks at her balefully. Martha crosses around above table, takes bottle of wine and puts it back in sideboard, then exits with Abby. Abby, who has been waiting in kitchen doorway for Martha, closes door after them. Einstein crosses U. L. around to behind Jonathan.)

EINSTEIN. Well, Chonny, where do we go from here? We got to think fast. The police. The police have got pictures of that face. I got to operate on you right away. We got to find some place for that—and we got to find a place for Mr. Spenalzo too.

JONATHAN. Don't waste any worry on that rat.

EINSTEIN. But, Chonny, we got a hot stiff on our hands. JONATHAN. *(Flinging hat onto sofa.)* Forget Mr. Spenalzo.

EINSTEIN. But you can't leave a dead body in the rumble seat. You shouldn't have killed him, Chonny. He's a nice fellow—he gives us a lift—and what happens?

JONATHAN. *(Remembering bitterly.)* He said I looked like Boris Karloff! *(He starts for Einstein.)* That's your work, Doctor. You did that to me!

EINSTEIN. *(He's backed away to D. L. of table.)* Now, Chonny—we find a place somewhere—I fix you up quick!

JONATHAN. Tonight!

EINSTEIN. Chonny—I got to eat first. I'm hungry—I'm weak.

(The aunts enter from kitchen. Abby comes to Jonathan at C. Martha remains in kitchen doorway.)

ABBY. Jonathan—we're glad that you remembered us and took the trouble to come in and say "Hello." But you were never happy in this house and we were never happy while you were in it—so, we've just come in to say goodbye.

JONATHAN. *(Takes a menacing step toward Abby, then decides to try the "charm" again.)* Aunt Abby, I can't say that your feeling toward me comes as a surprise. I've spent a great many hours regretting the many heartaches I must have given you as a boy.

ABBY. You were quite a trial to us, Jonathan.

JONATHAN. But my great disappointment is for Dr. Einstein. *(Einstein is a little surprised.)* I promised him that no matter how rushed we were in passing through Brooklyn, I'd take the time to bring him here for one of Aunt Martha's home-cooked dinners.

(Martha rises to this a bit, stepping D.S.)

MARTHA. Oh...

ABBY. *(Backing U. L.)* I'm sorry. I'm afraid there wouldn't be enough.

MARTHA. Abby, it's a pretty good-sized pot roast.

JONATHAN. *(How wonderful.)* Pot roast!

MARTHA. I think the least we can do is to—

JONATHAN. Thank you, Aunt Martha! We'll stay to dinner.

ABBY. *(Backing to kitchen door and not at all pleased.)* Well, we'll hurry it along.

MARTHA. Yes! *(She exits into kitchen.)*

ABBY. *(Stopping in doorway.)* Oh, Jonathan, if you want to freshen up—why don't you use the washroom in Grandfather's old laboratory?

JONATHAN. *(Crossing to her.)* Is that still there?

ABBY. Oh, yes. Just as he left it. Well, I'll help Martha get things started—since we're all in a hurry. *(She exits into kitchen.)*

EINSTEIN. *(Stepping U.S.)* Well, we get a meal anyway.

JONATHAN. *(Above table.)* Grandfather's laboratory! *(Looks upstairs.)* And just as it was. Doctor, a perfect operating room.

EINSTEIN. Too bad we can't use it.

JONATHAN. After you've finished with me—Why, we could make a fortune here. The laboratory—that large ward in the attic—ten beds, Doctor—and Brooklyn is crying for your talents.

EINSTEIN. Vy vork yourself up, Chonny? Anyway, for Brooklyn I think we're a year too late.

JONATHAN. You don't know this town, Doctor. Practically everybody in Brooklyn needs a new face.

EINSTEIN. But so many of the old faces are locked up.

JONATHAN. A very small percentage—and the boys in Brooklyn are famous for paying generously to stay out of jail.

EINSTEIN. Take it easy, Chonny. Your aunts—they don't want us here.

JONATHAN. We're here for dinner, aren't we?

EINSTEIN. Yah—but after dinner?

JONATHAN. *(Crossing up to sofa.)* Leave it to me, Doctor. I'll handle it. Why, this house'll be our headquarters for years.

EINSTEIN. *(A pretty picture.)* Oh, that would be beautiful, Chonny? This nice quiet house. Those aunts of yours—what sweet ladies. I love them already. I get the bags, yah?

JONATHAN. *(Stopping him.)* Doctor! We must wait until we're invited.

EINSTEIN. But you chust said that—

JONATHAN. We'll be invited.

EINSTEIN. And if they say no—?

JONATHAN. Doctor—two helpless old women—? *(He sits on sofa.)*

EINSTEIN. *(Takes bottle flask from hip pocket and unscrews cork as he crosses to window seat.)* It's like comes true a beautiful dream—Only I hope you're not dreaming. *(He stretches out on window seat, taking a swig from bottle.)* It's so peaceful.

JONATHAN. *(Stretched out on sofa.)* That's what makes this house so perfect for us—it's so peaceful.

(Teddy enters from cellar, blows a terrific blast on his bugle, as Jonathan backs R. Teddy marches to stairs and on up to first landing as the two men look at his tropical garb with some astonishment.)

TEDDY. CHARGE! *(He rushes up the stairs and off.)*

(Jonathan watches him from foot of stairs. Einstein, sitting on window seat, takes a hasty swig from his flask as the curtain comes down on the word CHARGE!)

ACT II

SCENE: *The same. Later that night.*

Jonathan, with an after-dinner cigar, is occupying armchair L. of table, completely at his ease. Abby and Martha, seated on window seat, are giving him a nervous attention in the attitude of people who wish their guests would go home. Einstein is relaxed and happy in chair R. of table. Dinner dishes have been cleared. There is a red cloth on table, with a saucer to serve as ashtray for Jonathan. The room is in order. All doors are closed, as are drapes over windows.

JONATHAN. Yes, Aunties, those five years in Chicago were amongst the busiest and happiest of my life.

EINSTEIN. And from Chicago we go to South Bend, Indiana. *(He shakes his head as though he wishes they hadn't.)*

(Jonathan gives him a look.)

JONATHAN. They wouldn't be interested in our experience in Indiana.

ABBY. Well, Jonathan, you've led a very interesting life, I'm sure—but we really shouldn't have allowed you to talk so late. *(She starts to rise. Jonathan seats her just by the tone of his voice.)*

JONATHAN. My meeting Dr. Einstein in London, I might say, changed the whole course of my life. You remember I had been in South Africa, in the diamond business—then Amsterdam, the diamond market. I wanted to go back to South Africa—and Dr. Einstein made it possible for me.

EINSTEIN. A good job, Chonny. *(To aunts.)* When we take off the bandages—his face look so different, the nurse had to introduce me.

JONATHAN. I loved that face. I still carry the picture with me. *(He produces snapshot-size picture from inside coat pocket, looks at it a moment, then hands it to Martha. She looks at it and hands it to Abby.)*

ABBY. This looks more the way you used to look, but still I wouldn't know you.

JONATHAN. I think we'll go back to that face, Doctor.

EINSTEIN. Yah, it's safe now.

ABBY. *(Rising.)* Well, I know you both want to get to—where you're going.

JONATHAN. *(Relaxing even more.)* My dear aunts—I'm so full of this delicious dinner I'm unable to move a muscle.

EINSTEIN. *(Relaxing too.)* Yah, it's nice here.

MARTHA. *(Rises.)* After all—it's very late and—

(Teddy enters on balcony wearing his solar topee, carrying a book, open, and another topee.)

TEDDY. *(Descending stairs.)* I found it! I found it!

JONATHAN. What did you find, Teddy?

TEDDY. The story of my life—my biography. *(He crosses above to L. of Einstein.)* Here's the picture I was telling you about, General. *(He lays open book on table showing picture to Einstein.)* Here we are, both of us. "President Roosevelt and General Goethals at Culebra Cut." That's me, General, and that's you.

(Einstein looks at picture.)

EINSTEIN. My, how I've changed.

(Teddy looks at Einstein, a little puzzled, but makes adjustment.)

TEDDY. Well, you see that picture hasn't been taken yet. We haven't even started work on Culebra Cut. We're still digging locks. And now, General, we will both go to Panama and inspect the new lock.

(Hands him topee.)

ABBY. No, Teddy—not to Panama.

EINSTEIN. We go some other time. Panama's a long way off.

TEDDY. Nonsense, it's just down in the cellar.

JONATHAN. The cellar?

MARTHA. We let him dig the Panama Canal in the cellar.

TEDDY. (*Severely.*) General Goethals, as President of the United States, Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy and the man who gave you this job, I demand that you accompany me on the inspection of the new lock.

JONATHAN. Teddy! I think it's time you went to bed.

TEDDY. I beg your pardon! (*He crosses above to L. of Jonathan, putting on his pince-nez as he crosses.*) Who are you?

JONATHAN. I'm Woodrow Wilson. Go to bed.

TEDDY. No you're not Wilson. But your face is familiar. Let me see—You're not anyone I know now. Perhaps later—On my hunting trip to Africa—yes, you look like someone I might meet in the jungle.

(*Jonathan stiffens. Abby crosses in front of Teddy, getting between him and Jonathan.*)

ABBY. It's your brother, Jonathan, dear.

MARTHA. (*Rising.*) He's had his face changed.

TEDDY. So that's it—a nature faker!

ABBY. And perhaps you had better go to bed, Teddy—Jonathan and his friend have to go back to their hotel.

JONATHAN. (*Rising.*) General Goethals, (*To Einstein.*) inspect the canal. (*He crosses to U. C.*)

EINSTEIN. (*Rising.*) All right, Mr. President. We go to Panama.

TEDDY. Bully! Bully! (*He crosses to cellar door, opens it.*) Follow me, General. (*Einstein goes up to L. of Teddy. Teddy taps solar topee in Einstein's hand, then taps his own head.*) It's down south you know. (*He exits downstairs.*)

(*Einstein puts on topee, which is too large for him. Then turns in cellar doorway and speaks.*)

EINSTEIN. Well—bon voyage. (*He exits, closing door.*)

JONATHAN. Aunt Abby, I must correct your misapprehension. You spoke of our hotel. We have no hotel. We came directly here—

MARTHA. Well, there's a very nice little hotel just three blocks down the—

JONATHAN. (*Cutting her off.*) Aunt Martha, this is my home.

ABBY. But, Jonathan, you can't stay here. We need our rooms.

JONATHAN. You need them?

ABBY. Yes, for our lodgers.

JONATHAN. (*Alarmed.*) Are there lodgers in this house?

MARTHA. Well, not just now, but we plan to have some.

JONATHAN. (*Cutting her off again.*) Then my old room is still free.

ABBY. But, Jonathan, there's no place for Dr. Einstein.

JONATHAN. (*Crosses to below table, drops cigar ashes into saucer.*) We'll share the room with me.

ABBY. No, Jonathan, I'm afraid you can't stay here.

(*Jonathan is below table. He grinds cigar out in saucer, then starts toward aunts. They back around above table to C., Martha first. Jonathan turns back and crosses below table to Abby at C.*)

JONATHAN. Dr. Einstein and I need a place to sleep. You remembered, this afternoon, that as a boy I could be disagreeable. It wouldn't be very pleasant for any of us if—

MARTHA. (*R. C., and frightened.*) Perhaps we'd better let them stay here tonight—

ABBY. Well, just overnight, Jonathan.

JONATHAN. That's settled. Now, if you'll get my room ready—

MARTHA. (*Starting upstairs, Abby following.*) It only needs airing out.

ABBY. We keep it ready to show our lodgers. I think you and Dr. Einstein will find it comfortable.

(*Jonathan follows them to first landing and leans on newel-post. Aunts are on balcony.*)

JONATHAN. You have a most distinguished guest in Dr. Einstein. I'm afraid you don't appreciate his skill. But you will. In a few weeks you'll see me looking like a very different Jonathan.

MARTHA. He can't operate on you here.

JONATHAN. (*Ignoring.*) When Dr. Einstein and I get organized—when we resume practice—Oh, I forgot to tell you. We're turning Grandfather's laboratory into an operating room. We expect to be quite busy.

ABBY. Jonathan, we will not let you turn this house into a hospital.

JONATHAN. (*Laughing.*) A hospital—heavens no! It will be a beauty parlor.

(*Einstein enters excitedly from cellar.*)

EINSTEIN. Hey, Chonny, down in the cellar— *(He sees aunts and stops.)*

JONATHAN. Dr. Einstein—my dear aunts have invited us to live with them.

EINSTEIN. Oh, you fixed it?

ABBY. Well, you're sleeping here tonight.

JONATHAN. Please get our room ready immediately.

MARTHA. Well—

ABBY. For tonight.

(They exit through arch. Jonathan comes to foot of stairs.)

EINSTEIN. Chonny, when I go down in the cellar, what do you think I find?

JONATHAN. What?

EINSTEIN. The Panama Canal.

JONATHAN. *(Disgusted, crossing to c.)* The Panama Canal.

EINSTEIN. It just fits Mr. Spenalzo. It's a hole Teddy dug. Six feet long and four feet wide.

JONATHAN. *(Gets the idea. Opens cellar door and looks down.)* Down there!

EINSTEIN. You'd think they knew we were bringing Mr. Spenalzo along. That's hospitality.

JONATHAN. *(Closing cellar door.)* Rather a good joke on my aunts—their living in a house with a body buried in the cellar.

EINSTEIN. How do we get him in?

JONATHAN. *(Drops D.S.)* Yes. We can't just walk him through the door. *(He sees window in L. wall.)* We'll drive the car up between the house and the cemetery—then when they've gone to bed, we'll bring Mr. Spenalzo in through the window.

EINSTEIN. *(Taking out bottle flask.)* Bed! Just think, we've got a bed tonight! *(He starts swigging.)*

JONATHAN. *(Grabbing his arm.)* Easy, Doctor. Remember you're operating tomorrow. And this time you'd better be sober.

EINSTEIN. I fix you up beautiful.

JONATHAN. And if you don't— *(Gives Einstein shove to door.)*

ABBY. *(She and Martha enter on balcony.)* Jonathan! Your room is ready.

JONATHAN. Then you can go to bed. We're moving the car up behind the house.

MARTHA. It's all right where it is—until morning.

JONATHAN. *(Einstein has opened door.)* I don't want to leave it in the street—that might be against the law. *(He exits.)*

(Einstein follows him out, closing door. Abby and Martha start downstairs and reach below table.)

MARTHA. Abby, what are we going to do?

ABBY. Well, we're not going to let them stay more than one night in this house for one thing. What would the neighbors think? People coming in here with one face and going out with another. *(She has reached table D.S. Martha is at her R.)*

MARTHA. What are we going to do about Mr. Hoskins?

ABBY. *(Crosses to window seat. Martha follows.)* Oh, Mr. Hoskins. It can't be very comfortable for him in there. And he's been so patient, the poor dear. Well, I think Teddy had better get Mr. Hoskins downstairs right away.

MARTHA. *(Adamant.)* Abby—I will not invite Jonathan to the funeral services.

ABBY. Oh, no. We'll wait until they've gone to bed and then come down and hold the services.

(Teddy enters from cellar, gets book from table and starts R. Abby stops him at c.)

TEDDY. General Goethals was very pleased. He says the Canal is just the right size.

ABBY. *(Crosses to c.)* Teddy! Teddy, there's been another Yellow Fever victim.

TEDDY. *(Takes off pince-nez.)* Dear me—this will be a shock to the General.

MARTHA. *(Stepping R.)* Then we mustn't tell him about it.

TEDDY. *(Crosses below Abby to Martha.)* But it's his department.

ABBY. No, we mustn't tell him, Teddy. It would just spoil his visit.

TEDDY. I'm sorry, Aunt Abby. It's out of my hands—he'll have to be told. Army regulations, you know.

ABBY. No, Teddy, we *must* keep it a secret.

MARTHA. Yes!

TEDDY. *(He loves them.)* A state secret?

ABBY. Yes, a state secret.

MARTHA. Promise?

TEDDY. (*What a silly request.*) You have the word of the President of the United States. (*Crosses his heart.*) Cross my heart and hope to die. (*He spits.*) Now let's see— (*Puts pince-nez on, then puts arm around both aunts.*) how are we going to keep it a secret?

ABBY. Well, Teddy, you go back down in the cellar and when I turn out the lights—when it's all dark—you come up and take the poor man down to the Canal. (*Urging him to cellar door, which he opens.*) Now go along, Teddy.

MARTHA. (*Following U.S.*) And we'll come down later and hold services.

TEDDY. (*In doorway.*) You may announce the President will say a few words. (*He starts, then turns back.*) Where is the poor devil?

MARTHA. He's in the window seat.

TEDDY. It seems to be spreading. We've never had Yellow Fever there before. (*He exits, closing door.*)

ABBY. Martha, when Jonathan and Dr. Einstein come back, let's see if we can get them to go to bed right away.

MARTHA. Yes. Then by the time they're asleep, we'll be dressed for the funeral. (*Sudden thought.*) Abby, I've never even seen Mr. Hoskins.

ABBY. Oh, my goodness, that's right—you were out. Well, you just come right over and see him now. (*They go to window seat, Abby first.*) He's really very nice looking—considering he's a Methodist. (*As they go to lift window seat, Jonathan throws window open from outside with a bang. Aunts scream and draw back. Jonathan puts his head in through drapes.*)

JONATHAN. We're bringing—the luggage through here.

ABBY. (*Now at C.*) Jonathan, your room's waiting for you. You can go right up.

(*Two dusty bags and a large instrument case are passed through window by Einstein. Jonathan puts them on floor.*)

JONATHAN. I'm afraid we don't keep Brooklyn hours—but you two run along to bed.

ABBY. Now, you must be very tired, both of you—and we don't go to bed this early.

JONATHAN. Well, you should. It's time I came home to take care of you.

MARTHA. We weren't planning to go until—

JONATHAN. (*The master.*) Aunt Martha, did you hear me say go to bed? (*Aunt Martha starts upstairs as Einstein comes in through window and picks up two bags. Jonathan takes instrument case and puts it U.S. of window seat.*) The instruments can go to the laboratory in the morning. (*Einstein starts upstairs. Jonathan closes window. Martha is partway upstairs as Einstein passes her. Abby is at R. C.*) Now, then, we're all going to bed. (*He crosses to C. as Abby breaks D. R. to light switch.*)

ABBY. I'll wait till you're up, then turn out the lights.

(*Jonathan, going upstairs, sees Einstein pausing at balcony door. Martha is almost up to balcony.*)

JONATHAN. Another flight, Doctor. (*To Martha.*) Run along, Aunt Martha. (*Martha hurries into doorway. Einstein goes through arch to third floor. Jonathan continues on to L. end of balcony. Abby is at light switch.*) All right, Aunt Abby.

ABBY. (*Stalling. Looks toward cellar door.*) I'll be right up.

JONATHAN. Now, Aunt Abby. (*Definite.*) Turn out the lights!

(*Abby turns switch, plunging stage into darkness except for spot shining down stairway from arch. Abby goes up stairs to her door where Martha is waiting. She takes a last frightened look at Jonathan and exits. Martha closes door. Jonathan goes off through arch, closing that door, blotting out the spot. A street light shines through main door R. on stage floor. Teddy opens cellar door, then turns on cellar light, outlining him in doorway. He crosses to window seat and opens it—the window seat cover giving out its usual rusty squeak. He reaches in and pulls Mr. Hoskins [a live "dummy" light enough to carry and who can remain stiff as in rigor mortis]. He gets Mr. Hoskins over his shoulder and, leaving window seat open, crosses to cellar door and goes down into cellar with Mr. Hoskins. Closes door. Jonathan and Einstein come through arch. It is dark. They light matches and listen at the aunts' door for a moment. Einstein speaks.*)

EINSTEIN. All right, Chonny.

(*The matches go out. Jonathan lights another and they come down to foot of stairs.*)

JONATHAN. I'll get the window open. You go around and hand him through.

EINSTEIN. No, he's too heavy for me. You go outside and push—I stay here and pull. Then together we get him down to Panama.

JONATHAN. All right. *(He blows out match, crosses and opens door. Einstein to his L.)* I'll take a look around outside the house. When I tap on the glass, you open the window.

EINSTEIN. All right. *(Jonathan exits, closing door. Einstein lights match and crosses L. He bumps into table and match goes out. He feels his way L. from there. We hear ejaculations and noise. Einstein has fallen into window seat. In window seat he lights another match and slowly rises up to a sitting position and looks around. He blows out match and hauls himself out of window seat, speaking.)* Who left this open? Dummkopf! *(We hear the creak of the cover as he closes it. In the darkness we hear a tap on L. window. Einstein opens it. Then in a hushed voice.)* Chonny? OK. Allez Oop. Wait—wait a minute. You lost a leg somewhere.—Ach—now I got him. Come on—ugh—*(He falls on floor and there is a crash of a body and the sound of a "Sshhhh" from outside.)* That was me, Chonny. I schlipped.

JONATHAN. *(Voice.)* Be more careful.

(Pause.)

EINSTEIN. Well, his shoe came off. *(Pause.)* All right, Chonny. I got him! *(There is a knock at R. door.)* Chonny! Somebody at the door! Go quick. NO. I manage here—go quick!

(A second knock at door. A moment's silence and we hear the creak of window seat as Einstein puts Mr. Spenalzo in Mr. Hoskins' place. A third knock, as Einstein struggles with body. A fourth knock and then the creak of the window seat as Einstein closes it. He scurries around to beside desk, keeping low to avoid being seen through door. Elaine enters R., calling softly.)

ELAINE. Miss Abby! Miss Martha! *(In the dim path of light she comes toward C., calling toward balcony.)* Miss Abby! Miss Martha! *(Suddenly Jonathan steps through door and closes it. The noise swings Elaine around and she gasps.)* Uh-h-h! Who is it? Is that you, Teddy? *(Jonathan comes toward her as she backs into chair R. of table.)* Who are you?

JONATHAN. Who are you?

ELAINE. I'm Elaine Harper—I live next door!

JONATHAN. Then what are you doing here?

ELAINE. I came over to see Miss Abby and Miss Martha.

JONATHAN. *(To Einstein, without turning. Einstein has crept to light switch after Jonathan's cross.)* Turn on the lights, Doctor. *(The lights go on. Elaine gasps as she sees Jonathan and sits in chair. Jonathan looks at her for a moment.)* You chose rather an untimely moment for a social call. *(He crosses toward window seat, looking for Spenalzo, but doesn't see him. He looks up, behind table. Looks out window, then comes back into the room.)*

ELAINE. *(Trying to summon courage.)* I think you'd better explain what you're doing here.

JONATHAN. *(D. L. of table.)* We happen to live here.

ELAINE. You *don't* live here. I'm in this house every day and I've never seen you before. *(Frightened.)* Where are Miss Abby and Miss Martha? What have you done to them?

JONATHAN. *(A step to below table.)* Perhaps we'd better introduce ourselves. This—*(Indicating.)*—is Dr. Einstein.

ELAINE. *(Looks at Einstein.)* Dr. Einstein? *(She turns back to Jonathan. Einstein, behind her back, is gesturing to Jonathan the whereabouts of Spenalzo.)*

JONATHAN. A surgeon of great distinction—*(He looks under table for Spenalzo, and not finding him—)*—and something of a magician.

ELAINE. And I suppose you're going to tell me you're Boris Kar—

JONATHAN. I'm Jonathan Brewster.

ELAINE. *(Drawing back almost with fright.)* Oh—you're Jonathan!

JONATHAN. I see you've heard of me.

(Einstein drifts to front of sofa.)

ELAINE. Yes—just this afternoon for the first time.

JONATHAN. *(Stepping toward her.)* And what did they say about me?

ELAINE. Only that there was another brother named Jonathan—that's all that was said. *(Calming.)* Well, that explains everything. Now that I know who you are—*(Running to R. door.)* I'll be running along back home. *(The door is locked. She turns to Jonathan.)* If you'll kindly unlock the door.

(Jonathan crosses to her, then, before reaching her, he turns D.S. to R. down and unlocks it. Einstein drifts down to chair R. of table. As Jonathan opens door partway, Elaine starts toward it. He turns and stops her with a gesture.)

JONATHAN. "That explains everything"? Just what did you mean by that? Why did you come here at this time of night?

ELAINE. I thought I saw someone prowling around the house. I suppose it was you.

(Jonathan closes door and locks it, leaving key in lock.)

JONATHAN. You thought you saw someone prowling around the house?

ELAINE. Yes—weren't you outside? Isn't that your car?

JONATHAN. You saw someone at the car?

ELAINE. Yes.

JONATHAN. *(Coming toward her as she backs U. L.)* What else did you see?

ELAINE. Just someone walking around the house to the car.

JONATHAN. What else did you see?

ELAINE. Just that—that's all. That's why I came over here. I wanted to tell Miss Abby to call the police. But if it was you, and that's your car, I don't need to bother Miss Abby. I'll be running along. *(She takes a step toward door above Jonathan. He steps in her path.)*

JONATHAN. What was the man doing at the car?

ELAINE. *(Excited.)* I don't know. You see I was on my way over here.

JONATHAN. *(Forcing her as she backs L.)* I think you're lying.

EINSTEIN. *(Crosses to U. R. C.)* I think she tells the truth, Chonny. We let her go now, huh?

JONATHAN. *(Still forcing her L.)* I think she's lying. Breaking into a house this time of night. I think she's dangerous. She shouldn't be allowed around loose. *(He seizes Elaine's arm. She screams.)*

ELAINE. Take your hands off me—

JONATHAN. Doctor—

(As Einstein starts L., Teddy enters from cellar, shutting door. He looks at Jonathan L., then speaks to Einstein R.)

TEDDY. *(Simply.)* It's going to be a private funeral. *(He goes up stairs to first landing. Elaine crosses to desk, dragging Jonathan with her.)*

ELAINE. Teddy! Teddy! Tell these men who I am.

(Teddy turns and looks at her.)

TEDDY. That's my daughter—Alice. *(He cries "CHARGE!" Dashes up stairs and exits.)*

ELAINE. *(Struggling to get away from Jonathan and dragging him to R. C.)* No! No! Teddy!

(Jonathan has Elaine's arm twisted in back of her, his other hand is over her mouth.)

JONATHAN. Doctor! Your handkerchief! *(As Einstein hands him a handkerchief, Jonathan releases his hand from Elaine's mouth to take it. She screams. He puts his hand over her mouth again. Spies the cellar door and speaks to Einstein.)* The cellar!

(Einstein runs and opens cellar door. [Cellar light is on.] Then he runs back and turns off light switch, putting stage in darkness. Jonathan pushes Elaine through cellar doorway. Einstein runs back and down cellar stairs with Elaine. Jonathan shuts door, remaining on stage as the aunts enter on balcony above in their mourning clothes. Everything is in complete darkness except for street lamp.)

ABBY. What's the matter?

MARTHA. What's happening down there? *(Martha shuts her door and Abby puts on lights from switch on balcony. They look down at the room a moment, then come downstairs, speaking as they come.)*

ABBY. What's the matter? *(Reaching foot of stairs as she sees Jonathan.)* What are you doing?

JONATHAN. We caught a burglar—a sneak thief. Go back to your room.

ABBY. We'll call the police.

JONATHAN. We've called the police. We'll handle this. Go back to your room. Do you hear me?

(The doorbell rings, followed by several knocks. Abby runs and opens R. door. Mortimer enters with suitcase. At the same time, Elaine runs out

of cellar and into Mortimer's arms. Jonathan makes a grab for Elaine but misses. This leaves him D.S. C. Einstein sneaks D.S. behind Jonathan.)

ELAINE. Mortimer! *(He drops suitcase.)* Where have you been?
MORTIMER. To the Nora Bayes Theatre and I should have known better. *(He sees Jonathan.)* My God!—I'm still there.

(Abby is at R. of Mortimer.)

ABBY. This is your brother Jonathan—and this is Dr. Einstein.

(Mortimer surveys his aunts all dressed in black.)

MORTIMER. I know this isn't a nightmare, but what is it?

JONATHAN. I've come back home, Mortimer.

MORTIMER. *(Looking at him, and then to Abby.)* Who did you say this was?

ABBY. It's your brother Jonathan. He's had his face changed. Dr. Einstein performed the operation.

MORTIMER. *(Taking a closer look at Jonathan.)* Jonathan! Jonathan, you always were a horror, but do you have to look like one?

(Jonathan takes a step toward him. Einstein pulls on his sleeve. Elaine and Martha draw back to desk.)

EINSTEIN. Easy, Chonny! Easy.

JONATHAN. Mortimer, have you forgotten the things I used to do to you when we were boys? Remember the time you were tied to the bedpost—the needles under your fingernails—?

MORTIMER. By God, it is Jonathan.—Yes, I remember. I remember you as the most detestable, vicious, venomous form of animal life I ever knew.

(Jonathan grows tense. Abby steps between them.)

ABBY. Now don't you two boys start quarrelling again the minute you've seen each other.

MORTIMER. *(Crosses to door, opens it.)* There won't be any fight, Aunt Abby. Jonathan, you're not wanted here—get out!

JONATHAN. Dr. Einstein and I have been invited to stay.

MORTIMER. Not in this house.

ABBY. Just for tonight.

MORTIMER. I don't want him anywhere near me.

ABBY. But we did invite them for tonight, and it wouldn't be very nice to go back on our word.

MORTIMER. *(Unwillingly.)* All right, tonight. But the first thing in the morning—out! *(He picks up his suitcase.)* Where are they sleeping?

ABBY. We put them in Jonathan's old room.

MORTIMER. That's my old room. *(Starts upstairs.)* I'm sleeping in that room. I'm here to stay.

MARTHA. Oh, Mortimer, I'm so glad.

EINSTEIN. Chonny, we sleep down here.

MORTIMER. You bet your life you sleep down here.

EINSTEIN. *(To Jonathan.)* You sleep on the sofa and I sleep on the window seat.

(At the mention of window seat, Mortimer has reached the landing; after hanging his hat on hall tree, he turns and comes slowly downstairs, speaking as he reaches the floor and crossing over to window seat. He drops back at U.S. end of window seat.)

MORTIMER. The window seat! Oh, well, let's not argue about it. That window seat's good enough for me for tonight. I'll sleep on the window seat. *(As Mortimer crosses above table, Einstein makes a gesture as though to stop him from going to window seat, but he's too late. He turns to Jonathan as Mortimer sits on window seat.)*

EINSTEIN. You know, Chonny—all this argument—it makes me think of Mr. Spenalzo.

JONATHAN. Spenalzo! *(He steps U.S. looking around for Spenalzo again. Realizing it would be best for them to remain downstairs, he speaks to Mortimer.)* Well, now, Mortimer—It really isn't necessary to inconvenience you like this—we'll sleep down here.

MORTIMER. *(Rising.)* Jonathan, your sudden consideration for me is very unconvincing.

EINSTEIN. *(Goes upstairs to landing.)* Come along, Chonny. We get our things out of the room, eh?

MORTIMER. Don't bother, Doctor!

JONATHAN. By the way, Doctor, I've completely lost track of Mr. Spenalzo.

MORTIMER. Who's this Mr. Spenalzo?

EINSTEIN. *(From landing.)* Just a friend of ours Chonny's been looking for.

MORTIMER. Well, don't bring anyone else in here!

EINSTEIN. It's all right, Chonny. While we pack I tell you all about it. *(He goes on up and through arch. Jonathan starts upstairs.)*

ABBY. *(Dropping D.S.)* Mortimer, you don't have to sleep down here. I can go in with Martha and you can take my room.

JONATHAN. *(He has reached the balcony.)* No trouble at all, Aunt Abby. We'll be packed in a few minutes. And then you can have the room, Mortimer. *(He exits through arch.)*

(Mortimer crosses up to sofa. Martha crosses to above armchair at L. of table and as Mortimer speaks she picks up sport shoe belonging to Spenalzo, that Einstein puts there in blackout scene, unnoticed by anyone. She pretends to dust hem of her dress.)

MORTIMER. You're just wasting your time—I told you I'm sleeping down here.

(Elaine leaps up from stool into Mortimer's arms.)

ELAINE. Mortimer!

MORTIMER. What's the matter with you, dear?

ELAINE. *(Semi-hysterical.)* I've almost been killed.

MORTIMER. You've almost been— *(He looks quickly at the aunts.)* Abby! Martha!

MARTHA. No! It was Jonathan.

ABBY. He mistook her for a sneak-thief.

ELAINE. No, it was more than that. He's some kind of maniac. Mortimer, I'm afraid of him.

MORTIMER. Why, darling, you're trembling. *(Seats her on sofa. To aunts.)* Have you got any smelling salts?

MARTHA. No, but do you think some hot tea, or coffee—?

MORTIMER. Coffee. Make some for me, too—and some sandwiches. I haven't had any dinner.

MARTHA. We'll make something for both of you.

(Mortimer starts to question Elaine as Abby takes off her hat and gloves and puts them on sideboard. Talking to Martha at the same time.)

ABBY. Martha, we can leave our hats downstairs here, now.

(Mortimer turns and sees her. Steps L.)

MORTIMER. You weren't going out somewhere, were you? Do you know what time it is? It's after twelve. *(The word twelve rings a bell.)*

TWELVE! *(He turns to Elaine.)* Elaine, you've got to go home!

ELAINE. Whaa-t?

ABBY. Why, you wanted some sandwiches for you both. It won't take a minute. *(She exits into kitchen.)*

(Mortimer is looking at Elaine with his back to Martha. Martha crosses to him with shoe in hand by her U.S. side.)

MARTHA. Why, don't you remember—we wanted to celebrate your engagement? *(She punctuates the word "engagement" by pointing the shoe at Mortimer's back. She looks at the shoe in wonderment. Wondering how that shoe ever got in her hand. She stares at it a moment [the other two do not see it, of course], then puts it on top of the table. Finally dismissing it, she turns to Mortimer again.)* That's what we'll do dear. We'll make a nice supper for both of you. *(She starts out kitchen door, then turns back.)* And we'll open a bottle of wine! *(She exits kitchen door.)*

MORTIMER. *(Vaguely.)* All right. *(Suddenly changes his mind and runs to kitchen door.)* No WINE! *(He closes the door and comes back to C. as Elaine rises from the sofa to him. She is still very upset.)*

ELAINE. Mortimer! What's going on in this house?

MORTIMER. *(Suspicious.)* What do you mean—what's going on in this house?

ELAINE. You were supposed to take me to dinner and the theatre tonight—you called it off. You asked me to marry you—I said I would—and five minutes later you threw me out of the house. Tonight, just after your brother tries to strangle me, you want to chase me home. Now, listen, Mr. Brewster—before I go home, I want to know where I stand. Do you love me?

MORTIMER. *(Taking her hands.)* I love you very much, Elaine. In fact I love you so much I can't marry you.

ELAINE. Have you suddenly gone crazy?

MORTIMER. I don't think so but it's just a matter of time. *(They*

both sit on sofa as Mortimer begins to explain.) You see, insanity runs in my family. *(He looks upstairs and toward kitchen.)* It practically gallops. That's why I can't marry you, dear.

ELAINE. Now wait a minute, you've got to do better than that.

MORTIMER. No, dear—there's a strange taint in the Brewster blood. If you really knew my family it's—well—it's what you'd expect if Strindberg had written *Hellzapoppin*.

ELAINE. Now just because Teddy is a little—

MORTIMER. No, it goes way back. The first Brewster—the one who came over on the Mayflower. You know in those days the Indians used to scalp the settlers—he used to scalp the Indians.

ELAINE. Mortimer, that's ancient history.

MORTIMER. No, the whole family... *(He rises and points to a picture of Grandfather over the sideboard.)* Take my grandfather—he tried his patent medicines out on dead people to be sure he wouldn't kill them.

ELAINE. He wasn't so crazy. He made a million dollars.

MORTIMER. And then there's Jonathan. You just said he was a maniac—he tried to kill you.

ELAINE. *(Rises, crosses to him.)* But he's your brother, not you. I'm in love with you.

MORTIMER. And there's Teddy, too. You know Teddy. He thinks he's Roosevelt. No, dear, no Brewster should marry. I realize now that if I'd met my father in time I'd have stopped him.

ELAINE. Now, darling, all this doesn't prove you're crazy. Look at your aunts—they're Brewsters, aren't they?—and the sanest, sweetest people I've ever known.

(Mortimer crosses above table to window seat, speaking as he goes.)

MORTIMER. Well, even they have their peculiarities.

ELAINE. *(Turning and drifting R.)* Yes, but what lovely peculiarities!—Kindness, generosity—human sympathy—

(Mortimer sees Elaine's back is to him. He lifts window seat to take a peek, and sees Mr. Spenalzo instead of Mr. Hoskins. He puts window seat down again and staggers to table, and leans on it.)

MORTIMER. *(To himself.)* There's another one!

ELAINE. *(Turning to Mortimer.)* Oh, Mortimer, there are plenty

of others. You can't tell me anything about your aunts.

MORTIMER. I'm not going to. *(Crossing to her.)* Look, Elaine, you've got to go home. Something very important has just come up.

ELAINE. Up, from where? We're here alone together.

MORTIMER. I know I'm acting irrationally, but just put it down to the fact that I'm a mad Brewster.

ELAINE. If you think you're going to get out of this by pretending you're insane—you're crazy. Maybe you're not going to marry me, but I'm going to marry you. I love you, you dope.

MORTIMER. *(Urging her to R. door.)* Well, if you love me will you get the hell out of here!

ELAINE. Well, at least take me home, won't you? I'm afraid.

MORTIMER. Afraid! A little walk through the cemetery?

(Elaine crosses to door, then changing tactics, turns to Mortimer.)

ELAINE. Mortimer, will you kiss me good night?

MORTIMER. *(Holding out arms.)* Of course, dear. *(What Mortimer plans to be a desultory peck, Elaine turns into a production number. He comes out of it with no less of poise.)* Good night, dear. I'll call you up in a day or two.

ELAINE. *(She walks to R. door in a cold fury, opens it and turns to Mortimer.)* You—you critic! *(She slams door after her.)*

(Mortimer looks at the door helplessly then turns and stalks to the kitchen door.)

MORTIMER. *(In doorway.)* Aunt Abby! Aunt Martha! Come in here!

ABBY. *(Offstage.)* We'll be in in a minute, dear.

MORTIMER. Come in here now! *(He stands down by U.S. end of window seat.)*

(Abby enters from kitchen.)

ABBY. Yes, dear, what is it? Where's Elaine?

MORTIMER. I thought you promised me not to let anyone in this house while I was gone!

(The following speeches overlap.)

ABBY. Well, Jonathan just walked in—

MORTIMER. I don't mean Jonathan—

ABBY. And Dr. Einstein was with him—

MORTIMER. I don't mean Dr. Einstein. Who's that in the window seat?

ABBY. We told you—Mr. Hoskins.

(Mortimer throws open the window seat and steps back U. L.)

MORTIMER. It is *not* Mr. Hoskins.

(Abby, a little puzzled, walks to window seat and looks in at D.S. end then speaks very simply.)

ABBY. Who can that be?

MORTIMER. *(R. of Abby.)* Are you trying to tell me you've never seen this man before?

ABBY. I certainly am. Why, this is a fine how do you do! It's getting so anybody thinks he can walk into this house.

MORTIMER. Now Aunt Abby, don't you try to get out of this. That's another one of your gentlemen!

ABBY. Mortimer, how can you say such a thing! That man's an impostor! And if he came here to be buried in our cellar he's mistaken.

MORTIMER. Oh, Aunt Abby, you admitted to me that you put Mr. Hoskins in the window seat.

ABBY. Yes, I did.

MORTIMER. Well, this man couldn't have just got the idea from Mr. Hoskins. By the way—where is Mr. Hoskins? *(He looks toward cellar door.)*

(Abby crosses above table to U. C.)

ABBY. He must have gone to Panama.

MORTIMER. Oh, you buried him?

ABBY. No, not yet. He's just down there waiting for the services, poor dear. We haven't had a minute what with Jonathan in the house.

(At the mention of Jonathan's name, Mortimer closes the window seat.)

Oh, dear. We've always wanted to hold a double funeral, *(Crossing to kitchen door.)* but I will not read services over a total stranger.

MORTIMER. *(Going up to her.)* A stranger! Aunt Abby, how can I believe you? There are twelve men in the cellar and you admit you poisoned them.

ABBY. Yes, I did. But you don't think I'd stoop to telling a fib. Martha! *(She exits into kitchen.)*

(At the same time Jonathan enters through the arch onto balcony and comes down quickly to foot of stairs. Mortimer crosses to D. R. C. Jonathan sees him and crosses to him.)

JONATHAN. Oh, Mortimer—I'd like to have a word with you.

MORTIMER. *(Standing up to him.)* A word's about all you'll have time for, Jonathan, because I've decided you and your Doctor friend are going to have to get out of this house just as quickly as possible.

JONATHAN. *(Smoothly.)* I'm glad you recognize the fact that you and I can't live under the same roof—but you've arrived at the wrong solution. Take your suitcase and get out! *(He starts to cross above Mortimer, anxious to get to the window seat, but Mortimer makes big sweep around above table and comes back to him at D.S. C.)*

MORTIMER. Jonathan!—You're beginning to bore me. You've played your one night stand in Brooklyn—move on!

JONATHAN. My dear Mortimer, just because you've graduated from the back fence to the typewriter, don't think you've grown up...

(He takes a sudden step U.S. around Mortimer and gets to the window seat and sits.) I'm staying, and you're leaving—and I mean now!

MORTIMER. *(Crossing to him.)* If you think I can be frightened—if you think there's anything I fear—

JONATHAN. *(He rises, they stand facing each other.)* I've lived a strange life, Mortimer. But it's taught me one thing—to be afraid of nothing! *(They glare at each other with equal courage when Abby marches in from kitchen, followed by Martha.)*

ABBY. Martha, just look and see what's in that window seat.

(Both men throw themselves on the window seat simultaneously. Jonathan D.S. end.)

MORTIMER and JONATHAN. Now, Aunt Abby!

(Mortimer turns his head slowly to Jonathan, light dawning on his face. He rises with smiling assurance.)

MORTIMER. Jonathan, let Aunt Martha see what's in the window seat. *(Jonathan freezes dangerously. Mortimer crosses below table up to Abby.)* Aunt Abby, I owe you an apology. *(He kisses her on forehead.)* I have very good news for you. Jonathan is leaving. He's taking the Einstein and their cold companion with him. *(Jonathan rises but holds his ground.)* Jonathan, you're my brother. You're a Brewster. I'm going to give you a chance to get away and take the evidence with you—you can't ask for more than that. *(Jonathan doesn't move.)* Very well,—in that case I'll have to call the police. *(Mortimer crosses to phone and picks it up.)*

JONATHAN. Don't reach for that telephone. *(He crosses to L. of Mortimer.)* Are you still giving me orders after seeing what's happened to Mr. Spenalzo?

MARTHA. *(She's above table.)* Spenalzo?

ABBY. *(U. C.)* I knew he was a foreigner.

JONATHAN. Remember what happened to Mr. Spenalzo can happen to you too.

(There is a knock on R. door. Abby crosses and opens it and Officer O'Hara sticks his head in.)

O'HARA. Hello, Miss Abby.

ABBY. Oh, Officer O'Hara. Is there something we can do for you?

(Mortimer puts phone down and drifts down close to O'Hara. Jonathan turns L.)

O'HARA. I saw your lights on and thought there might be sickness in the house. *(He sees Mortimer.)* Oh, you got company—I'm sorry I disturbed you.

MORTIMER. *(Taking O'Hara by the arm.)* No, no, come in.

ABBY. Yes, Come in.

MARTHA. *(Crossing to door.)* Come right in, Officer O'Hara. *(Mortimer leads O'Hara in a couple of steps and shuts door. Abby crosses back to U.S. C. Martha is near desk. Jonathan is in front of sofa R. of Abby. Martha, to O'Hara.)* This is our nephew, Mortimer.

O'HARA. Pleased to meet you.

(Jonathan starts toward kitchen.)

ABBY. *(Stopping Jonathan.)* And this is another nephew, Jonathan.

O'HARA. *(Crosses below Mortimer and gestures to Jonathan with his right stick.)* Pleased to make your acquaintance. *(Jonathan ignores him. O'Hara speaks to aunts.)* Well, it must be nice havin' your nephews visitin' you. Are they going to stay with you for a bit?

MORTIMER. I'm staying. My brother Jonathan is just leaving.

(Jonathan starts for stairs. O'Hara stops him.)

O'HARA. I've met you here before, haven't I?

ABBY. I'm afraid not. Jonathan hasn't been home for years.

O'HARA. Your face looks familiar to me. Maybe I seen a picture of you somewhere.

JONATHAN. I don't think so. *(He hurries upstairs.)*

MORTIMER. Yes, Jonathan, I'd hurry if I were you. Your things are all packed anyway, aren't they?

O'HARA. Well, you'll be wanting to say your goodbyes. I'll be running along.

MORTIMER. What's the rush? I'd like to have you stick around until my brother goes.

(Jonathan exits through arch.)

O'HARA. I just dropped in to make sure everything was all right.

MORTIMER. We're going to have some coffee in a minute. Won't you join us?

ABBY. Oh, I forgot the coffee. *(She goes out to kitchen.)*

MARTHA. *(Crossing to kitchen door.)* Well, I'd better make some more sandwiches. I ought to know your appetite by this time, Officer O'Hara. *(She goes out to kitchen as O'Hara follows as far as C.)*

O'HARA. Don't bother. I'm due to ring in in a few minutes.

MORTIMER. You can have a cup of coffee with us. My brother will be gone soon. *(He leads O'Hara below table to armchair.)* Sit down.

O'HARA. Say—ain't I seen a photograph of your brother around here some place?

MORTIMER. I don't think so. *(He sits R. of table.)*

O'HARA. He certainly reminds me of somebody.

MORTIMER. He looks like somebody you've probably seen in the movies.

O'HARA. I never go to the movies. I hate 'em! My mother says the movies is a bastard art.

MORTIMER. Yes, it's full of them.—Your, er, mother said that!

O'HARA. Yeah. My mother was an actress—a stage actress. Perhaps you heard of her—Peaches Latour.

MORTIMER. It sounds like a name I've seen on a program. What did she play?

O'HARA. Well, her big hit was *Mutt and Jeff*. Played it for three years. I was born on tour—the third season.

MORTIMER. You were?

O'HARA. Yep. Sioux City, Iowa. I was born in the dressing room at the end of the second act, and Mother made the finale.

MORTIMER. What a trouper! There must be a good story in your mother—you know, I write about the theatre.

O'HARA. You do? Saay!—you're not Mortimer Brewster, the dramatic critic!

MORTIMER. Yes.

O'HARA. Well, I certainly am glad to meet you. *(He moves his hat and stick preparatory to shaking hands with Mortimer. He also picks up the sport shoe which Martha has left on the table. He looks at it just for a split second and puts it on the D.S. end of table. Mortimer sees it and stares at it.)* Say, Mr. Brewster—we're in the same line of business.

MORTIMER. *(Still intent on shoe.)* We are?

O'HARA. Yeah. I'm a playwright. Oh, this being on the police force is just temporary.

MORTIMER. How long have you been on the force?

O'HARA. Twelve years. I'm collecting material for a play.

MORTIMER. I'll bet it's a honey.

O'HARA. Well, it ought to be. With all the drama I see being a cop. Mr. Brewster—you got no idea what goes on in Brooklyn.

MORTIMER. I think I have. *(He puts the shoe under his chair, then looks at his watch, then looks toward balcony.)*

O'HARA. Say, what time you got?

MORTIMER. Ten after one.

O'HARA. Gee, I gotta ring in. *(He starts for R. door but Mortimer stops him at C.)*

MORTIMER. Wait a minute, O'Hara. On that play of yours—I may be able to help you. *(Sits him in chair R.)*

O'HARA. *(Ecstasy.)* You would! *(Rises.)* Say, it was fate my walking in here tonight. Look—I'll tell you the plot!

(At this point Jonathan enters on the balcony followed by Dr. Einstein. They each have a bag. At the same moment Abby enters from the kitchen. Helpful as the cop has been, Mortimer does not want to listen to his plot. As he backs away from him he speaks to Jonathan as they come down stairs.)

MORTIMER. Oh, you're on your way, eh? Good! You haven't got much time, you know.

ABBY. *(U. L.)* Well, everything's just about ready. *(Sees Jonathan and Einstein at foot of stairs.)* Oh, you leaving now, Jonathan? Goodbye. Goodbye, Dr. Einstein. *(She sees instrument case above window seat.)* Oh, doesn't this case belong to you?

(This reminds Mortimer of Mr. Spenalzo, also.)

MORTIMER. Yes, Jonathan—you can't go without all of your things. *(Now to get rid of O'Hara. He turns to him.)* Well, O'Hara, it was nice meeting you. I'll see you again and we'll talk about your play.

O'HARA. *(Refusing to leave.)* Oh, I'm not leaving now, Mr. Brewster.

MORTIMER. Why not?

O'HARA. Well, you just offered to help me with my play, didn't you? You and me are going to write my play together.

MORTIMER. I can't do that, O'Hara—I'm not a creative writer.

O'HARA. I'll do the creating. You just put the words to it.

MORTIMER. But, O'Hara—

O'HARA. No, sir, Mr. Brewster. I ain't leaving this house till I tell you the plot. *(He crosses and sits on window seat.)*

JONATHAN. *(Starting for R. door.)* In that case, Mortimer...we'll be running along.

MORTIMER. Don't try that. You can't go yet. You've got to take everything with you, you know. *(He turns and sees O'Hara on window seat and runs to him.)* Look, O'Hara, you run along now, eh? My brother's just going—

O'HARA. I can wait. I've been waiting twelve years.

(Martha enters from kitchen with a tray of coffee and sandwiches.)

MARTHA. I'm sorry I was so long.

MORTIMER. Don't bring that in here. O'Hara, would you join us for a bite in the kitchen?

MARTHA. The kitchen?

ABBY. *(To Martha.)* Jonathan's leaving.

MARTHA. Oh. Well, that's nice. Come along, Officer O'Hara. *(She exits to kitchen.)*

(O'Hara gets to kitchen doorway as Abby speaks.)

ABBY. Sure you don't mind eating in the kitchen, Mr. O'Hara?

O'HARA. And where else would you eat?

ABBY. Goodbye, Jonathan, nice to have seen you again.

(O'Hara exits to kitchen, followed by Abby. Mortimer crosses to kitchen doorway and shuts door, then turns to Jonathan.)

MORTIMER. I'm glad you came back to Brooklyn, Jonathan, because it gives me a chance to throw you out—and the first one out is your boy friend, Mr. Spenalzo.

(He lifts up window seat. As he does so, O'Hara, sandwich in hand, enters from kitchen. Mortimer drops window seat.)

O'HARA. Look, Mr. Brewster, we can talk in here.

MORTIMER. *(Pushing him into kitchen.)* Coming right out.

JONATHAN. I might have known you'd grow up to write a play with a policeman.

MORTIMER. *(From kitchen doorway.)* Get going now—all three of you. *(He exits, shutting door.)*

(Jonathan puts bag down and crosses to window seat.)

JONATHAN. Doctor, this affair between my brother and me has got to be settled.

EINSTEIN. *(Crossing to window seat for instrument case and bringing it back to foot of stairs.)* Now, Chonny, we got trouble enough. Your brother gives us a chance to get away—what more could you ask?

JONATHAN. You don't understand. *(He lifts window seat.)* This goes back a good many years.

EINSTEIN. *(Foot of stairs.)* Now, Chonny, let's get going.

JONATHAN. *(Harshly.)* We're not going. We're going to sleep right here tonight.

EINSTEIN. With a cop in the kitchen and Mr. Spenalzo in the window seat.

JONATHAN. That's all he's got on us. *(Puts window seat down.)* We'll take Mr. Spenalzo down and dump him in the bay, and come right back here.—Then if he tries to interfere— *(He crosses to c. Einstein crosses to L. of him and faces him.)*

EINSTEIN. Now, Chonny.

JONATHAN. Doctor, you know when I make up my mind—

EINSTEIN. Yeah—when you make up your mind, you lose your head. Brooklyn ain't a good place for you.

JONATHAN. *(Peremptorily.)* Doctor!

EINSTEIN. OK. We got to stick together. *(He crosses to bags.)* Some day we get stuck together. If we're coming back here do we got to take these with us?

JONATHAN. No. Leave them here. Hide them in the cellar. Move fast! *(He moves to bags to L. end of sofa as Einstein goes down cellar with instrument case.)* Spenalzo can go out the same way he came in! *(He kneels on window seat and looks out. Then as he starts to lift window seat, Einstein comes in from the cellar with some excitement.)*

EINSTEIN. Hey, Chonny, come quick!

JONATHAN. *(Crossing to him.)* What's the matter?

EINSTEIN. You know that hole in the cellar?

JONATHAN. Yes.

EINSTEIN. We got an ace in the hole. Come on I show you. *(They both exit into cellar. Jonathan shuts door.)*

(Mortimer enters from kitchen, sees their bags still there. He opens window seat and sees Spenalzo. Then he puts his head out window and yells.)

MORTIMER. Jonathan! Jonathan! *(Jonathan comes through cellar door unnoticed by Mortimer and crosses to back of him. Einstein comes down into c. of room.)* Jonathan!

JONATHAN. *(Quietly.)* Yes, Mortimer.

MORTIMER. *(Leaping backwards to below table.)* Where have you two been? I thought I told you to get—

JONATHAN. We're not going.

MORTIMER. Oh, you're not? You think I'm not serious about this, eh? Do you want O'Hara to know what's in that window seat?

JONATHAN. We're staying here.

MORTIMER. (*Crossing around above table to kitchen door.*) All right! You asked for it. This gets me rid of you and Officer O'Hara at the same time. (*Opens kitchen door, yells out.*) Officer O'Hara, come in here!

JONATHAN. If you tell O'Hara what's in the window seat, I'll tell him what's down in the cellar.

(*Mortimer closes kitchen door quickly.*)

MORTIMER. The cellar?

JONATHAN. There's an elderly gentleman down there who seems to be very dead.

MORTIMER. What were you doing down in the cellar?

EINSTEIN. What's *he* doing down in the cellar?

(*O'Hara's voice is heard offstage.*)

O'HARA. No, thanks, ma'am. They were fine. I've had plenty.

JONATHAN. Now what are you going to say to O'Hara?

(*O'Hara walks in kitchen door.*)

O'HARA. Say, Mr. Brewster, your aunts want to hear it too. Shall I get them in here?

MORTIMER. (*Pulling him R.*) No, O'Hara, you can't do that now. You've got to ring in.

(*O'Hara stops at C. as Mortimer opens the door.*)

O'HARA. The hell with ringing in. I'll get your aunts in here and tell you the plot. (*He starts for kitchen door.*)

MORTIMER. (*Grabbing him.*) No, O'Hara, not in front of all these people. We'll get together alone, some place later.

O'HARA. How about the back room at Kelly's?

MORTIMER. (*Passing O'Hara R. in front of him.*) Fine! You go ring in, and I'll meet you at Kelly's.

JONATHAN. (*At window seat.*) Why don't you two go down in the cellar?

O'HARA. That's all right with me. (*Starts for cellar door.*) Is this the cellar?

MORTIMER. (*Grabbing him again, pushing toward door.*) Nooo! We'll go to Kelly's. But you're going to ring in on the way.

O'HARA. (*As he exits R.*) All right, that'll only take a couple of minutes. (*He's gone.*)

(*Mortimer takes his hat from hall tree and crosses to open R. door.*)

MORTIMER. I'll ditch this guy and be back in five minutes. I'll expect to find you gone. (*Changes his mind.*) Wait for me. (*He exits R.*)

(*Einstein sits R. of table.*)

JONATHAN. We'll wait for him, Doctor. I've waited a great many years for a chance like this.

EINSTEIN. We got him right where we want him. Did he look guilty!

JONATHAN. (*Rising.*) Take the bags back up to our room, Doctor.

(*Einstein gets bags and reaches foot of stairs with them. Abby and Martha enter from kitchen. Abby speaks as she enters.*)

ABBY. Have they gone? (*Sees Jonathan and Einstein.*) Oh—we thought we heard somebody leave.

JONATHAN. (*Crossing to R. C.*) Just Mortimer, and he'll be back in a few minutes. Is there any food left in the kitchen? I think Dr. Einstein and I would enjoy a bite.

MARTHA. (*L. of table.*) But you won't have time.

ABBY. (*At C.*) No, if you're still here when Mortimer gets back he won't like it.

EINSTEIN. (*Dropping D.S. R.*) He'll like it. He's gotta like it.

JONATHAN. Get something for us to eat while we bury Mr. Spenalzo in the cellar.

MARTHA. (*Crossing to below table.*) Oh no!

ABBY. He can't stay in our cellar. No, Jonathan, you've got to take him with you.

JONATHAN. There's a friend of Mortimer's downstairs waiting for him.

ABBY. A friend of Mortimer's?

JONATHAN. He and Mr. Spenalzo will get along fine together. They're both dead.

MARTHA. They must mean Mr. Hoskins.

EINSTEIN. Mr. Hoskins?

JONATHAN. You know about what's downstairs?

ABBY. Of course we do, and he's no friend of Mortimer's. He's one of our gentlemen.

EINSTEIN. Your chentlemen?

MARTHA. And we won't have any strangers buried in our cellar.

JONATHAN. (*Noncomprehending.*) But Mr. Hoskins—

MARTHA. Mr. Hoskins isn't a stranger.

ABBY. Besides, there's no room for Mr. Spenalzo. The cellar's crowded already.

JONATHAN. Crowded? With what?

ABBY. There are twelve graves down there now.

(The two men draw back in amazement.)

JONATHAN. Twelve graves!

ABBY. That leaves very little room and we're going to need it.

JONATHAN. You mean you and Aunt Martha have murdered—?

ABBY. Murdered! Certainly not. It's one of our charities.

MARTHA. (*Indignantly.*) Why, what we've been doing is a mercy.

ABBY. (*Gesturing outside.*) So you just take your Mr. Spenalzo out of here.

JONATHAN. (*Still unable to believe.*) You've done that—here in this house— (*Points to floor.*) and you've buried them down there!

EINSTEIN. Chonny—we've been chased all over the world—they stay right here in Brooklyn and do just as good as you do.

JONATHAN. (*Facing him.*) What?

EINSTEIN. You've got twelve and they've got twelve.

JONATHAN. (*Slowly.*) I've got thirteen.

EINSTEIN. No, Chonny, twelve.

JONATHAN. Thirteen! (*Counting on fingers.*) There's Mr. Spenalzo. Then the first one in London—two in Johannesburg—one in Sydney—one in Melbourne—two in San Francisco—one in Phoenix, Arizona—

EINSTEIN. Phoenix?

JONATHAN. The filling station. The three in Chicago and the one in South Bend. That makes thirteen!

EINSTEIN. But you can't count the one in South Bend. He died of pneumonia.

JONATHAN. He wouldn't have got pneumonia if I hadn't shot him.
EINSTEIN. (*Adamant.*) No, Chonny, he died of pneumonia. He don't count.

JONATHAN. He counts with me. I say thirteen.

EINSTEIN. No, Chonny. You got twelve and they got twelve.
(*Crossing to aunts.*) The old ladies are just as good as you are.

(The two aunts smile at each other happily. Jonathan turns, facing the three of them and speaks menacingly.)

JONATHAN. Oh, they are, are they? Well, that's easily taken care of. All I need is one more, that's all—just one more.

(Mortimer enters hastily R., closing door behind him, and turns to them with a nervous smile.)

MORTIMER. Well, here I am!

(Jonathan turns and looks at him with the widening eyes of someone who has just solved a problem, as the curtain falls.)

ACT III

SCENE 1: *The scene is the same. Still later that night. The curtain rises on an empty stage. The window seat is open and we see that it's empty. The armchair has been shifted to R. of table. The drapes over the windows are closed. All doors except cellar are closed. Abby's hymnal and black gloves are on sideboard. Martha's hymnal and gloves are on table. Otherwise the room is the same. As the curtain rises we hear a row from the cellar, through the open door. The speeches overlap in excitement and anger until the aunts appear on the stage, from cellar door.*

MARTHA. You stop doing that!

ABBY. This is our house and this is our cellar and you can't do that.

EINSTEIN. Ladies! Please!—Go back upstairs where you belong.

JONATHAN. Abby! Martha! Go upstairs!

MARTHA. There's no use your doing what you're doing because it will just have to be undone.

ABBY. I tell you we won't have it and you'd better stop it right now.

MARTHA. *(Entering from cellar.)* All right! You'll find out. You'll find out whose house this is. *(She crosses to door D. R., opens it and looks out. Then closes it.)*

ABBY. *(Entering.)* I'm warning you! You'd better stop it! *(D.S. C. To Martha.)* Hasn't Mortimer come back yet?

MARTHA. No.

ABBY. It's a terrible thing to do—to bury a good Methodist with a foreigner. *(She crosses to window seat.)*

MARTHA. *(Crossing to cellar door.)* I will not have our cellar desecrated!

ABBY. *(Drops window seat.)* And we promised Mr. Hoskins a full Christian funeral. Where do you suppose Mortimer went?

MARTHA. *(Drops D.S.)* I don't know, but he must be doing something—because he said to Jonathan, "You just wait, I'll settle this."

ABBY. *(Crossing up to sideboard.)* Well, he can't very well settle it while he's out of the house. That's all we want settled—what's going on down there.

(Mortimer enters R., closes door.)

MORTIMER. *(As one who has everything settled.)* All right. Now, where's Teddy?

(The aunts are very much annoyed with Mortimer.)

ABBY. Mortimer, where have you been?

MORTIMER. I've been over to Dr. Gilchrist's. I've got his signature on Teddy's commitment papers.

MARTHA. Mortimer, what is the matter with you?

ABBY. *(To below table.)* Running around getting papers signed at a time like this!

MARTHA. Do you know what Jonathan's doing?

ABBY. He's putting Mr. Hoskins and Mr. Spenalzo in together.

MORTIMER. *(To cellar door.)* Oh, he is, is he? Well, let him. *(He shuts cellar door.)* Is Teddy in his room?

MARTHA. Teddy won't be any help.

MORTIMER. When he signs these commitment papers I can tackle Jonathan.

ABBY. What have they got to do with it?

MORTIMER. You had to go and tell Jonathan about those twelve graves. If I can make Teddy responsible for those I can protect you, don't you see?

ABBY. No, I don't see... And we pay taxes to have the police protect us.

MORTIMER. *(Going upstairs.)* I'll be back down in a minute.

ABBY. *(Takes gloves and hymnal from table.)* Come, Martha. We're going for the police.

(Martha gets her gloves and hymnal from sideboard. They both start R. to door.)

MORTIMER. *(On landing.)* All right. *(He turns and rushes downstairs to R. door before they can reach it.)* The police. You can't go for the police.

MARTHA. *(D. R., but L. of Abby.)* Why can't we?

MORTIMER. *(Near R. door.)* Because if you tell the police about Mr. Spenalzo they'd find Mr. Hoskins too, *(Crosses to Martha.)* and

that might make them curious, and they'd find out about the other twelve gentlemen.

ABBY. Mortimer, we know the police better than you do. I don't think they'd pry into our private affairs if we asked them not to.

MORTIMER. But if they found your twelve gentlemen they'd have to report to headquarters.

MARTHA. *(Pulling on her gloves.)* I'm not so sure they'd bother. They'd have to make out a very long report—and if there's one thing a policeman hates to do, it's to write.

MORTIMER. You can't depend on that. It might leak out!—and you couldn't expect a judge and jury to understand.

MARTHA. Oh, Judge Cullman would.

ABBY. *(Drawing on her gloves.)* We know him very well.

MARTHA. He always comes to church to pray—just before election.

ABBY. And he's coming here to tea some day. He promised.

MARTHA. Oh, Abby, we must speak to him again about that. *(To Mortimer.)* His wife died a few years ago and it's left him very lonely.

ABBY. Well, come along, Martha. *(She starts toward door R. Mortimer gets there first.)*

MORTIMER. No! You can't do this. I won't let you. You can't leave this house, and you can't have Judge Cullman to tea.

ABBY. Well, if you're not going to do something about Mr. Spenalzo, we are.

MORTIMER. I am going to do something. We may have to call the police in later, but if we do, I want to be ready for them.

MARTHA. You've got to get Jonathan out of this house!

ABBY. And Mr. Spenalzo, too!

MORTIMER. Will you please let me do this my own way? *(He starts upstairs.)* I've got to see Teddy.

ABBY. *(Facing Mortimer on stairs.)* If they're not out of here by morning, Mortimer, we're going to call the police.

MORTIMER. *(On balcony.)* They'll be out, I promise you that! Go to bed, will you? And for God's sake get out of those clothes—you look like Judith Anderson. *(He exits into hall, closing door.)*

(The aunts watch him off. Martha turns to Abby.)

MARTHA. Well, Abby, that's a relief, isn't it?

ABBY. Yes—if Mortimer's really going to do something at last, it

just means Jonathan's going to a lot of unnecessary trouble. We'd better tell him. *(Abby starts to cellar door as Jonathan comes in. They meet U.S. C. front of sofa. His clothes are dirty.)* Oh, Jonathan—you might as well stop what you're doing.

JONATHAN. It's all done. Did I hear Mortimer?

ABBY. Well, it will just have to be undone. You're all going to be out of this house by morning. Mortimer's promised.

JONATHAN. Oh, are we? In that case, you and Aunt Martha can go to bed and have a pleasant night's sleep.

MARTHA. *(Always a little frightened by Jonathan, starts upstairs.)* Yes. Come, Abby.

(Abby follows Martha upstairs.)

JONATHAN. Good night, Aunties.

ABBY. Not good night, Jonathan. Goodbye. By the time we get up you'll be out of this house. Mortimer's promised.

MARTHA. *(On balcony.)* And he has a way of doing it too!

JONATHAN. Then Mortimer is back?

ABBY. Oh, yes, he's up here talking to Teddy.

MARTHA. Goodbye, Jonathan.

ABBY. Goodbye, Jonathan.

JONATHAN. Perhaps you'd better say goodbye to Mortimer.

ABBY. Oh, you'll see Mortimer.

JONATHAN. *(Sitting on stool.)* Yes—I'll see Mortimer.

(Abby and Martha exit. Jonathan sits without moving. There is murder in his thought. Einstein enters from cellar. He dusts off his trouser cuffs, lifting his leg, and we see he is wearing Spenalzo's sport shoes.)

EINSTEIN. Whew! That's all fixed up. Smooth like a lake. Nobody'd ever know they were down there. *(Jonathan still sits without moving.)* That bed feels good already. Forty-eight hours we didn't sleep. *(Crossing to second stair.)* Come on, Chonny, let's go up, yes?

JONATHAN. You're forgetting, Doctor.

EINSTEIN. Vat?

JONATHAN. My brother Mortimer.

EINSTEIN. Chonny—tonight? We do that tomorrow or the next day.

JONATHAN. *(Just able to control himself.)* No, tonight! Now!

EINSTEIN. (*Down to floor.*) Chonny, please—I'm tired— and tomorrow I got to operate.

JONATHAN. Yes, you're operating tomorrow, Doctor. But tonight we take care of Mortimer.

EINSTEIN. (*Kneeling in front of Jonathan, trying to pacify him.*) But, Chonny, not tonight—we go to bed, eh?

JONATHAN. (*Rising. Einstein straightens up too.*) Doctor, look at me. You can see it's going to be done, can't you?

EINSTEIN. (*Retreating.*) Ach, Chonny—I can see. I know dat look!

JONATHAN. It's a little too late for us to dissolve our partnership.

EINSTEIN. OK, we do it. But the quick way. The quick twist like in London. (*He gives that London neck another twist with his hands and makes a noise suggesting strangulation.*)

JONATHAN. No, Doctor, I think this calls for something special. (*He walks toward Einstein, who breaks U.S. Jonathan has the look of beginning to anticipate a rare pleasure.*) I think perhaps the Melbourne method.

EINSTEIN. Chonny—no—not that. Two hours! And when it was all over, what? The fellow in London was just as dead as the fellow in Melbourne.

JONATHAN. We had to work too fast in London. There was no esthetic satisfaction in it—but Melbourne, ah, there was something to remember.

EINSTEIN. (*Dropping D.S. as Jonathan crosses him.*) Remember! (*He shivers.*) I wish I didn't. No, Chonny—not Melbourne—not me!

JONATHAN. Yes, Doctor. Where are the instruments?

EINSTEIN. I won't do it, Chonny.—I won't do it.

JONATHAN. (*Advancing on him as Einstein backs D.S.*) Get your instruments!

EINSTEIN. No, Chonny!

JONATHAN. Where are they? Oh, yes—you hid them in the cellar. Where?

EINSTEIN. I won't tell you.

JONATHAN. (*Going to cellar door.*) I'll find them, Doctor. (*He exits to cellar, closing door.*)

(*Teddy enters on balcony and lifts his bugle to blow. Mortimer dashes out and grabs his arm. Einstein has rushed to cellar door. He stands there as Mortimer and Teddy speak.*)

MORTIMER. Don't do that, Mr. President.

TEDDY. I cannot sign any proclamation without consulting my cabinet.

MORTIMER. But this must be a secret.

TEDDY. A secret proclamation? How unusual.

MORTIMER. Japan mustn't know until it's signed.

TEDDY. Japan! Those yellow devils. I'll sign it right away. (*Taking legal paper from Mortimer.*) You have my word for it. I can let the cabinet know later.

MORTIMER. Yes, let's go and sign it.

TEDDY. You wait here. A secret proclamation has to be signed in secret.

MORTIMER. But at once, Mr. President.

TEDDY. I'll have to put on my signing clothes. (*Teddy exits.*)

(*Mortimer comes downstairs, Einstein crosses and takes Mortimer's hat off of hall tree and hands it to him.*)

EINSTEIN. (*Anxious to get Mortimer out of the house.*) Ah, you go now, eh?

MORTIMER. (*Takes hat and puts it on desk.*) No, Doctor, I'm waiting for something. Something important.

EINSTEIN. (*L. of Mortimer.*) Please—you go now!

MORTIMER. Dr. Einstein, I have nothing against you personally. You seem to be a nice fellow. Take my advice and get out of this house and get just as far away as possible.

EINSTEIN. Trouble, yah! You get out.

MORTIMER. (*Crossing to C.*) All right, don't say I didn't warn you.

EINSTEIN. I'm warning you—get away quick.

MORTIMER. Things are going to start popping around here any minute.

EINSTEIN. (*D. R.*) Listen—Chonny's in a bad mood. When he's like dis, he's a madman—things happen—terrible things.

MORTIMER. Jonathan doesn't worry me now.

EINSTEIN. Ach, himmel—don't those plays you see teach you anything?

MORTIMER. About what?

EINSTEIN. Vell, at least people in plays act like they got sense—that's more than you do.

MORTIMER. (*Interested in this observation.*) Oh, you think so, do

you? You think people in plays act intelligently. I wish you had to sit through some of the ones I have to sit through. Take the little opus I saw tonight for instance. In this play, there's a man—he's supposed to be bright... *(Jonathan enters from cellar with instrument case, stands in doorway and listens to Mortimer.)*—he knows he's in a house with murderers—he ought to know he's in danger—he's even been warned to get out of the house—but does he go? No, he stays there. Now I ask you, Doctor, is that what an intelligent person would do?

EINSTEIN. You're asking me?

MORTIMER. He didn't even have sense enough to be frightened, to be on guard. For instance, the murderer invites him to sit down.

EINSTEIN. *(He moves so as to keep Mortimer from seeing Jonathan.)* You mean—"Won't you sit down?"

MORTIMER. *(Reaches out and pulls armchair to him R. of table without turning his head from Einstein.)* Believe it or not, that one was in there too.

EINSTEIN. And what did he do?

MORTIMER. *(Sitting in armchair.)* He sat down. Now mind you, this fellow's supposed to be bright. There he sits—just waiting to be trussed up. And what do you think they use to tie him with.

EINSTEIN. Vat?

MORTIMER. The curtain cord.

(Jonathan spies curtain cords on either side of window in L. wall. He crosses, stands on window seat and cuts cords with pen-knife.)

EINSTEIN. Vell, why not? A good idea. Very convenient.

MORTIMER. A little too convenient. When are playwrights going to use some imagination! The curtain cord!

(Jonathan has got the curtain cord and is moving in slowly behind Mortimer.)

EINSTEIN. He didn't see him get it?

MORTIMER. See him? He sat there with his back to him. That's the kind of stuff we have to suffer through night after night. And they say the critics are killing the theatre—it's the playwrights who are killing the theatre. So there he sits—the big dope—this fellow who's supposed to be bright—just waiting to be trussed up and gagged.

(Jonathan drops loop of curtain cord over Mortimer's shoulder and draws it taut. At the same time he throws other loop of cord on floor beside Einstein. Simultaneously, Einstein leaps to Mortimer and gags him with handkerchief; then takes his curtain cord and ties Mortimer's legs to chair.)

EINSTEIN. *(Finishing up the tying.)* You're right about dat fella—he vasn't very bright.

JONATHAN. Now, Mortimer, if you don't mind—we'll finish the story. *(He goes to sideboard and brings two candelabras to table and speaks as he lights them. Einstein remains kneeling beside Mortimer.)* Mortimer, I've been away for twenty years, but never once in all that time—my dear brother—were you out of my mind. In Melbourne one night, I dreamed of you—when I landed in San Francisco I felt a strange satisfaction—once more I was in the same country with you. *(Jonathan has finished lighting candles. He crosses D. R. and flips light switch, darkening stage. As he crosses, Einstein gets up and crosses to window seat. Jonathan picks up instrument case at cellar doorway and sets it on table between candelabras and opens it, revealing various surgical instruments both in the bottom of case and on the inside of the cover.)* Now, Doctor, we go to work! *(He removes an instrument from the case and fingers it lovingly, as Einstein crosses and kneels on chair L. of table. He is not too happy about all this.)*

EINSTEIN. Please, Chonny, for me, the quick way!

JONATHAN. Doctor! This must really be an artistic achievement. After all, we're performing before a very distinguished critic.

EINSTEIN. Chonny!

JONATHAN. *(Flaring.)* Doctor!

EINSTEIN. *(Beaten.)* All right. Let's get it over. *(He closes drapes tightly and sits on window seat. Jonathan takes three or four more instruments out of the case and fingers them. At last, having the necessary equipment laid out on the towel [also in case] he begins to put on a pair of rubber gloves [also in case].)*

JONATHAN. All ready for you, Doctor!

EINSTEIN. I gotta have a drink. I can't do this without a drink.

(He takes bottle from pocket. Drinks. Finds it's empty. Rises.)

JONATHAN. Pull yourself together, Doctor.

EINSTEIN. I gotta have a drink. Ven ve valked in here this after-

noon there was wine here—remember? Vere did she put that? *(He looks at sideboard and remembers. He goes to it, opens L. cupboard and brings bottle and two wine glasses to D.S. end of table top.)* Look, Chonny, we got a drink. *(He pours wine into the two glasses, emptying the bottle. Mortimer watches him.)* Dat's all dere is. I split it with you. We both need a drink. *(He hands one glass to Jonathan, then raises his own glass to his lips. Jonathan stops him.)*

JONATHAN. One moment, Doctor—please. Where are your manners? *(He drops D.S. to R. of Mortimer and looks at him.)* Yes, Mortimer, I realize now it was you who brought me back to Brooklyn... *(He looks at wine, then draws it back and forth under his nose smelling it. He decides that it's all right apparently for he raises his glass—)* Doctor—to my dear dead brother—

(As they get the glasses to their lips, Teddy steps out on the balcony and blows a terrific call on his bugle. Einstein and Jonathan drop their glasses, spilling the wine. Teddy turns and exits.)

EINSTEIN. Ach Gott!

JONATHAN. Damn that idiot! *(He starts for stairs. Einstein rushes over and intercepts him.)* He goes next! That's all—he goes next!

EINSTEIN. No, Chonny, not Teddy—that's where I shtop—not Teddy!

JONATHAN. We get to Teddy later!

EINSTEIN. We don't get to him at all.

JONATHAN. Now we've got to work fast! *(He crosses above to L. of Mortimer, Einstein in front of Mortimer.)*

EINSTEIN. Yah, the quick way—eh, Chonny?

JONATHAN. Yes, Doctor, the quick way! *(He pulls a large silk handkerchief from his inside pocket and drops it around Mortimer's neck.)*

(At this point the door bursts open and Officer O'Hara comes in to C., very excited.)

O'HARA. Hey! The Colonel's gotta quit blowing that horn!

JONATHAN. *(He and Einstein are standing in front of Mortimer, hiding him from O'Hara.)* It's all right, Officer. We're taking the bugle away from him.

O'HARA. There's going to be hell to pay in the morning. We promised the neighbors he wouldn't do that anymore.

JONATHAN. It won't happen again, Officer. Good night.

O'HARA. I'd better speak to him myself. Where are the lights? *(O'Hara puts on lights and goes upstairs to landing, when he sees Mortimer.)* Hey! You stood me up. I waited an hour at Kelly's for you. *(He comes downstairs and over to Mortimer and looks at him then speaks to Jonathan and Einstein.)* What happened to him?

EINSTEIN. *(Thinking fast.)* He was explaining the play he saw tonight—that's what happened to the fella in the play.

O'HARA. Did they have that in the play you saw tonight? *(Mortimer nods his head—yes.)* Gee, they practically stole that from the second act of my play—*(He starts to explain.)* Why, in my second act, just before the—*(He turns back to Mortimer.)* I'd better begin at the beginning. It opens in my mother's dressing room, where I was born—only I ain't born yet—*(Mortimer rubs his shoes together to attract O'Hara's attention.)* Huh? Oh, yeah. *(O'Hara starts to remove the gag from Mortimer's mouth and then decides not to.)* No! You've got to hear the plot. *(He gets stool and brings it to R. of Mortimer and sits, continuing on with his "plot" as the curtain falls.)* Well, she's sitting there making up, sec—when all of a sudden through the door—a man with a black mustache walks in—turns to my mother and says—"Miss Latour, will you marry me?" He doesn't know she's pregnant.

SCENE 2: Scene is the same. Early the next morning. When the curtain rises again, daylight is streaming through the windows. All doors closed. All drapes open. Mortimer is still tied in his chair and seems to be in a semi-conscious state. Jonathan is asleep on sofa. Einstein, pleasantly intoxicated, is seated L. of table, his head resting on tabletop. O'Hara, with his coat off and his collar loosened, is standing over the stool which is between him and Mortimer. He has progressed to the most exciting scene of his play. There is a bottle of whiskey and a water tumbler on the table along with a plate full of cigarette butts.

O'HARA. —there she is lying unconscious across the table in her lingerie—the chink is standing over her with a hatchet—*(He takes the pose.)* —I'm tied up in a chair just like you are—the place is an

inferno of flames—it's on fire—when all of a sudden—through the window—in comes Mayor LaGuardia. (*Einstein raises his head and looks out the window. Not seeing anyone he reaches for the bottle and pours himself another drink. O'Hara crosses above to him and takes the bottle.*) Hey, remember who paid for that—go easy on it.

EINSTEIN. Vell, I'm listening, ain't I? (*He crosses to Jonathan on the sofa.*)

O'HARA. How do you like it so far?

EINSTEIN. Vell, it put Chonny to sleep.

(*O'Hara has just finished a swig from the bottle.*)

O'HARA. Let him alone. If he ain't got no more interest than that—he don't get a drink. (*Einstein takes his glass and sits on bottom stair. At the same time O'Hara crosses, puts stool under desk and whiskey bottle on top of desk, then comes back to center and goes on with his play.*) All right. It's three days later—I been transferred and I'm under charges—that's because somebody stole my badge. (*He pantomimes through following lines.*) All right. I'm walking my beat on Staten Island—forty-sixth precinct—when a guy I'm following, it turns out—is really following me. (*There is a knock on door. Einstein goes up and looks out landing window. Leaves glass behind D.S. drape.*) Don't let anybody in.—So I figure I'll outsmart him. There's a vacant house on the corner. I goes in.

EINSTEIN. It's cops!

O'HARA. I stands there in the dark and I see the door handle turn.

EINSTEIN. (*Rushing downstairs, shakes Jonathan by the shoulder.*) Chonny! It's cops! Cops! (*Jonathan doesn't move. Einstein rushes upstairs and off through the arch.*)

(*O'Hara is going on with his story without a stop.*)

O'HARA. I pulls my guns—braces myself against the wall—and I says—"Come in." (*Officers Brophy and Klein walk in R., see O'Hara with gun pointed at them and raise their hands. Then, recognizing their fellow officer, lower them.*) Hello, boys.

BROPHY. What the hell is going on here?

O'HARA. (*Goes to Brophy.*) Hey, Pat, whaddya know? This is Mortimer Brewster! He's going to write my play with me. I'm just tellin' him the story.

KLEIN. (*Crossing to Mortimer and untying him.*) Did you have to tie him up to make him listen?

BROPHY. Joe, you better report in at the station. The whole force is out looking for ya.

O'HARA. Did they send you here for me?

KLEIN. We didn't know you was here.

BROPHY. We came to warn the old ladies that there's hell to pay. The Colonel blew that bugle again in the middle of the night.

KLEIN. From the way the neighbors have been calling in about it you'd think the Germans had dropped a bomb on Flatbush Avenue.

(*He has finished untying Mortimer. Puts cords on sideboard.*)

BROPHY. The Lieutenant's on the warpath. He says the Colonel's got to be put away someplace.

MORTIMER. (*Staggering to feet.*) Yes! Yes!

O'HARA. (*Going to Mortimer.*) Gee, Mr. Brewster, I got to get away, so I'll just run through the third act quick.

MORTIMER. (*Staggering R.*) Get away from me.

(*Brophy gives Klein a look, goes to phone and dials.*)

KLEIN. Say, do you know what time it is? It's after eight o'clock in the morning.

O'HARA. It is? (*He follows Mortimer to stairs.*) Gee, Mr. Brewster, them first two acts run a little long, but I don't see anything we can leave out.

MORTIMER. (*Almost to landing.*) You can leave it all out.

(*Brophy sees Jonathan on sofa.*)

BROPHY. Who the hell is this guy?

MORTIMER. (*Hanging on railing, almost to balcony.*) That's my brother.

BROPHY. Oh, the one that ran away? So he came back.

MORTIMER. Yes, he came back!

(*Jonathan stirs as if to get up.*)

BROPHY. (*Into phone.*) This is Brophy. Get me Mac. (*To O'Hara.*)

sitting on bottom stair.) I'd better let them know we found you, Joe. (Into phone.) Mac? Tell the Lieutenant he can call off the big man hunt—we got him. In the Brewster house. (Jonathan hears this and suddenly becomes very much awake, looking up to see Klein to L. of him and Brophy to his R.) Do you want us to bring him in? Oh—all right, we'll hold him right here. (He hangs up.) The Lieutenant's on his way over.

JONATHAN. (Rising.) So I've been turned in, eh? (Brophy and Klein look at him with some interest.) All right, you've got me! (Turning to Mortimer, who is on balcony looking down.) And I suppose you and that stool-pigeon brother of mine will split the reward?

KLEIN. Reward?

(Instinctively Klein and Brophy both grab Jonathan by an arm.)

JONATHAN. (Dragging cops D.S. C.) Now I'll do some turning in! You think my aunts are sweet charming old ladies, don't you? Well, there are thirteen bodies buried in their cellar.

MORTIMER. (As he rushes off to see Teddy.) Teddy! Teddy! Teddy!

KLEIN. What the hell are you talking about?

BROPHY. You'd better be careful what you're saying about your aunts—they happen to be friends of ours.

JONATHAN. (Raving as he drags them toward cellar door.) I'll show you! I'll prove it to you! You come to the cellar with me!

KLEIN. Wait a minute! Wait a minute!

JONATHAN. Thirteen bodies! I'll show you where they're buried.

KLEIN. (Refusing to be kidded.) Oh, yeah?

JONATHAN. You don't want to see what's down in the cellar?

BROPHY. (Releases Jonathan's arm, then to Klein.) Go on down in the cellar with him, Abe.

KLEIN. (Drops Jonathan's arm, backs D.S. a step and looks at him.) I'm not so sure I want to be down in the cellar with him. Look at that puss. He looks like Boris Karloff. (Jonathan, at mention of Karloff, grabs Klein by the throat, starts choking him.) Hey—what the hell—Hey, Pat! Get him off me.

(Brophy takes out rubber blackjack.)

BROPHY. Here, what do you think you're doing! (He socks Jonathan on head. Jonathan falls unconscious, face down.)

(Klein, throwing Jonathan's weight to floor, backs away, rubbing his throat.)

KLEIN. Well what do you know about that?

(There is a knock on door R.)

O'HARA. Come in.

(Lieutenant Rooney bursts in R., slamming door after him. He is a very tough, driving, dominating officer.)

ROONEY. What the hell are you men doing here? I told you I was going to handle this.

KLEIN. Well, sir, we was just about to— (Klein's eyes go to Jonathan and Rooney sees him.)

ROONEY. What happened? Did he put up a fight?

BROPHY. This ain't the guy that blows the bugle. This is his brother. He tried to kill Klein.

KLEIN. (Feeling his throat.) All I said was he looked like Boris Karloff.

ROONEY. (His face lights up.) Turn him over.

(The two cops turn Jonathan over on his back. Klein steps back. Rooney crosses front of Brophy to take a look at Jonathan. Brophy drifts to R. of Rooney. O'Hara is still at foot of stairs.)

BROPHY. We kinda think he's wanted somewhere.

ROONEY. Oh, you kinda *think* he's wanted somewhere? If you guys don't look at the circulars we hang up in the station, at least you could read *True Detective*. (Big.) Certainly he's wanted. In Indiana! Escaped from the prison for the Criminal Insane! He's a lifer. For God's sake that's how he was described—he *looked* like Karloff!

KLEIN. Was there a reward mentioned?

ROONEY. Yeah—and I'm claiming it.

BROPHY. He was trying to get us down in the cellar.

KLEIN. He said there was thirteen bodies buried down there.

ROONEY. (Suspicious.) Thirteen bodies buried in the cellar? (Deciding it's ridiculous.) And that didn't tip you off he came out of a nut-house!

O'HARA. I thought all along he talked kinda crazy.

(Rooney sees O'Hara for the first time. Turns to him.)

ROONEY. Oh, it's Shakespeare! *(Crossing to him.)* Where have you been all night? And you needn't bother to tell me.

O'HARA. I've been right here, sir. Writing a play with Mortimer Brewster.

ROONEY. *(Tough.)* Yeah? Well, you're gonna have plenty of time to write that play. You're suspended! Now get back and report in!

(O'Hara takes his coat, night stick, and cap from top of desk. Goes to R. door and opens it. Then turns to Rooney.)

O'HARA. Can I come over sometime and use the station typewriter?

ROONEY. No!—Get out of here. *(O'Hara runs out. Rooney closes door and turns to the cops. Teddy enters on balcony and comes down stairs unnoticed and stands at Rooney's back to the R. of him. Rooney, to cops.)* Take that guy somewhere else and bring him to. *(The cops bend down to pick up Jonathan.)* See what you can find out about his accomplice. *(The cops stand up again in a questioning attitude. Rooney explains.)* The guy that helped him escape. He's wanted too. No wonder Brooklyn's in the shape it's in, with the police force full of flatheads like you—falling for that kind of a story—thirteen bodies in the cellar!

TEDDY. But there are thirteen bodies in the cellar.

ROONEY. *(Turning on him.)* Who are you?

TEDDY. I'm President Roosevelt.

(Rooney does a walk U.S. on this, then comes down again.)

ROONEY. What the hell is this?

BROPHY. He's the fellow that blows the bugle.

KLEIN. Good morning, Colonel.

(They salute Teddy, who returns it. Rooney finds himself saluting Teddy also. He pulls his hand down in disgust.)

ROONEY. Well, Colonel, you've blown your last bugle.

TEDDY. *(Seeing Jonathan on floor.)* Dear me—another Yellow Fever victim?

ROONEY. Whaat?

TEDDY. All the bodies in the cellar are Yellow Fever victims.

(Rooney crosses exasperatedly to R. door on this.)

BROPHY. No, Colonel, this is a spy we caught in the White House.

ROONEY. *(Pointing to Jonathan.)* Will you get that guy out of here!

(Cops pick up Jonathan and drag him to kitchen. Teddy follows them. Mortimer enters, comes down stairs.)

TEDDY. *(Turning back to Rooney.)* If there's any questioning of spies, that's my department!

ROONEY. You keep out of this!

TEDDY. You're forgetting! As President, I am also head of the Secret Service.

(Brophy and Klein exit with Jonathan into kitchen. Teddy follows them briskly. Mortimer has come to C.)

MORTIMER. Captain—I'm Mortimer Brewster.

ROONEY. Are you sure?

MORTIMER. I'd like to talk to you about my brother Teddy—the one who blew the bugle.

ROONEY. Mr. Brewster, we ain't going to talk about that—he's got to be put away!

MORTIMER. I quite agree with you. In fact, it's all arranged for. I had these commitment papers signed by Dr. Gilchrist, our family physician. Teddy has signed them himself, you see—and I've signed them as next of kin.

ROONEY. Where's he going?

MORTIMER. Happy Dale.

ROONEY. All right, I don't care where he goes as long as he goes!

MORTIMER. Oh, he's going all right. But I want you to know that everything that's happened around here Teddy's responsible for. Now, those thirteen bodies in the cellar—

ROONEY. *(He's had enough of those thirteen.)* Yeah—yeah—those thirteen bodies in the cellar! It ain't enough that the neighbors are all afraid of him, and his disturbing the peace with that bugle—but can you imagine what would happen if that cock-eyed story about

thirteen bodies in the cellar got around? And now he's starting a Yellow Fever scare. Cute, ain't it?

MORTIMER. (*Greatly relieved, with an embarrassed laugh.*) Thirteen bodies. Do you think anybody would believe that story?

ROONEY. Well, you can't tell. Some people are just dumb enough. You don't know what to believe sometimes. About a year ago a crazy guy starts a murder rumor over in Greenpoint, and I had to dig up a half acre lot, just to prove that—

(*There is a knock on R. door.*)

MORTIMER. Will you excuse me? (*He goes to door and admits Elaine and Mr. Witherspoon, an elderly, tight-lipped disciplinarian. He is carrying a briefcase.*)

ELAINE. (*Briskly.*) Good morning, Mortimer.

MORTIMER. (*Not knowing what to expect.*) Good morning, dear.

ELAINE. This is Mr. Witherspoon. He's come to meet Teddy.

MORTIMER. To meet Teddy?

ELAINE. Mr. Witherspoon's the superintendent of Happy Dale.

MORTIMER. (*Eagerly.*) Oh, come right in. (*They shake hands. Mortimer indicates Rooney.*) This is Captain—

ROONEY. Lieutenant Rooney. I'm glad you're here, Super, because you're taking him back with you today!

WITHERSPOON. Today? I didn't know that—

ELAINE. (*Cutting in.*) Not today!

MORTIMER. Look, Elaine, I've got a lot of business to attend to, so you run along home and I'll call you up.

ELAINE. Nuts! (*She crosses to window seat and sits.*)

WITHERSPOON. I had no idea it was this immediate.

ROONEY. The papers are all signed, he goes today!

(*Teddy backs into room from kitchen, speaking sharply in the direction whence he's come.*)

TEDDY. Complete insubordination! You men will find out I'm no mollycoddle. (*He slams door and comes down to below table.*) When the President of the United States is treated like that—what's this country coming to?

ROONEY. There's your man, Super.

MORTIMER. Just a minute! (*He crosses to Teddy and speaks to him*

as to a child.) Mr. President, I have very good news for you. Your term of office is over.

TEDDY. Is this March the Fourth?

MORTIMER. Practically.

TEDDY. (*Thinking.*) Let's see—OH!—Now I go on my hunting trip to Africa! Well, I must get started immediately. (*He starts across the room and almost bumps into Witherspoon at C. He looks at him then steps back to Mortimer.*) Is he trying to move into the White House before I've moved out?

MORTIMER. Who, Teddy?

TEDDY. (*Indicating Witherspoon.*) Taft!

MORTIMER. This isn't Mr. Taft, Teddy. This is Mr. Witherspoon—he's to be your guide in Africa.

TEDDY. (*Shakes hands with Witherspoon enthusiastically.*) Bully! Bully! I'll bring down my equipment. (*He crosses to stairs. Martha and Abby have entered on balcony during last speech and are coming downstairs.*) When the safari comes, tell them to wait. (*As he passes the aunts on his way to landing, he shakes hands with each, without stopping his walk.*) Goodbye, Aunt Abby. Goodbye, Aunt Martha. I'm on my way to Africa—isn't it wonderful? (*He has reached the landing.*) CHARGE! (*He charges up the stairs and off.*)

(*The aunts are at foot of stairs.*)

MORTIMER. (*Crossing to aunts.*) Good morning, darlings.

MARTHA. Oh, we have visitors.

MORTIMER. (*He indicates Rooney at C.*) This is Lieutenant Rooney.

ABBY. (*Crossing, shakes hands with him.*) How do you do, Lieutenant?

My, you don't look like the fussbudget the policemen say you are.

MORTIMER. Why the Lieutenant is here—You know, Teddy blew his bugle again last night.

MARTHA. Yes, we're going to speak to Teddy about that.

ROONEY. It's a little more serious than that, Miss Brewster.

MORTIMER. (*Easing aunts to Witherspoon who is above table where he has opened his briefcase and extracted some papers.*) And you haven't met Mr. Witherspoon. He's the Superintendent of Happy Dale.

ABBY. Oh, Mr. Witherspoon—how do you do?

MARTHA. You've come to meet Teddy.

ROONEY. (*Somewhat harshly.*) He's come to take him.

(The aunts turn to Rooney questioningly.)

MORTIMER. *(Making it as easy as possible.)* Aunties—the police want Teddy to go there, today.

ABBY. *(Crossing to R. of chair.)* Oh—no!

MARTHA. *(Behind Abby.)* Not while we're alive!

ROONEY. I'm sorry, Miss Brewster, but it has to be done. The papers are all signed and he's going along with the Superintendent.

ABBY. We won't permit it. We'll promise to take the bugle away from him.

MARTHA. We won't be separated from Teddy.

ROONEY. I'm sorry, ladies, but the law's the law! He's committed himself and he's going!

ABBY. Well, if he goes, we're going too.

MARTHA. Yes, you'll have to take us with him.

MORTIMER. *(Has an idea. Crosses to Witherspoon.)* Well, why not?

WITHERSPOON. *(To Mortimer.)* Well, that's sweet of them to want to, but it's impossible. You see, we can't take *sane* people at Happy Dale.

MARTHA. *(Turning to Witherspoon.)* Mr. Witherspoon, if you'll let us live there with Teddy, we'll see that Happy Dale is in our will—and for a very generous amount.

WITHERSPOON. Well, the Lord knows we could use the money, but—I'm afraid—

ROONEY. Now let's be sensible about this, ladies. For instance, here I am wasting my morning when I've got serious work to do. You know there are still *murders* to be solved in Brooklyn.

MORTIMER. Yes! *(Covering.)* Oh, are there?

ROONEY. It ain't only his bugle blowing and the neighbors all afraid of him, but things would just get worse. Sooner or later we'd be put to the trouble of digging up your cellar.

ABBY. Our cellar?

ROONEY. Yeah.—Your nephew's been telling around that there are thirteen bodies in your cellar.

ABBY. But there are thirteen bodies in our cellar.

(Rooney looks disgusted. Mortimer drifts quietly to front of cellar door.)

MARTHA. If that's why you think Teddy has to go away—you come down to the cellar with us and we'll prove it to you. *(Goes U.S.)*

ABBY. There's one—Mr. Spenalzo—who doesn't belong here and who will have to leave—but the other twelve are our gentlemen. *(She starts U.S.)*

MORTIMER. I don't think the Lieutenant wants to go down in the cellar. He was telling me that only last year he had to dig up a half-acre lot—weren't you, Lieutenant?

ROONEY. That's right.

ABBY. *(To Rooney.)* Oh, you wouldn't have to dig here. The graves are all marked. We put flowers on them every Sunday.

ROONEY. Flowers? *(He steps up toward Abby, then turns to Witherspoon, indicating the aunts as he speaks.)* Superintendent—don't you think you can find room for these ladies?

WITHERSPOON. Well, I—

ABBY. *(To Rooney.)* You come along with us, and we'll show you the graves.

ROONEY. I'll take your word for it, lady—I'm a busy man. How about it, Super?

WITHERSPOON. Well, they'd have to be committed.

MORTIMER. Teddy committed himself. Can't they commit themselves? Can't they sign the papers?

WITHERSPOON. Why, certainly.

MARTHA. *(Sits in chair L. of table as Witherspoon draws it out for her.)*

Oh, if we can go with Teddy, we'll sign the papers. Where are they?

ABBY. *(Sitting R. of table. Mortimer helps her with chair.)* Yes, where are they?

(Witherspoon opens briefcase for more papers. Klein enters from kitchen.)

KLEIN. He's coming around, Lieutenant.

ABBY. Good morning, Mr. Klein.

MARTHA. Good morning, Mr. Klein. Are you here too?

KLEIN. Yeah. Brophy and me have got your other nephew out in the kitchen.

ROONEY. Well, sign 'em up, Superintendent. I want to get this all cleaned up. *(He crosses to kitchen door, shaking his head as he exits and saying:)* Thirteen bodies.

(Klein follows him out. Mortimer is to the L. of Abby, fountain pen in hand. Witherspoon to R. of Martha, also with pen.)

WITHERSPOON. (*Handing Martha pen.*) If you'll sign right here.

(*Martha signs.*)

MORTIMER. And you here, Aunt Abby.

(*Abby signs.*)

ABBY. (*Signing.*) I'm really looking forward to going—the neighborhood here has changed so.

MARTHA. Just think, a front lawn again.

(*Einstein enters through arch and comes down stairs to door D. R. carrying suitcase. He picks hat from hall tree on way down.*)

WITHERSPOON. Oh, we're overlooking something.

MARTHA. What?

WITHERSPOON. Well, we're going to need the signature of a doctor.

MORTIMER. Oh! (*He sees Einstein about to disappear through the door.*) Dr. Einstein! Will you come over here—we'd like you to sign some papers.

EINSTEIN. Please, I must—

MORTIMER. (*Crosses to him.*) Just come right over, Doctor. At one time last night, I thought the Doctor was going to operate on me. (*Einstein puts down suitcase and his hat just inside the door.*) Just come right over, Doctor. (*Einstein crosses to table, L. of Abby.*) Just sign right here, Doctor.

(*The Doctor signs Abby's paper and Martha's paper. Rooney and Klein enter from kitchen. Rooney crosses to desk and dials phone. Klein stands near kitchen door.*)

ABBY. Were you leaving, Doctor?

EINSTEIN. (*Signing papers.*) I think I must go.

MARTHA. Aren't you going to wait for Jonathan?

EINSTEIN. I don't think we're going to the same place.

(*Mortimer sees Elaine on window seat and crosses to her.*)

MORTIMER. Hello, Elaine. I'm glad to see you. Stick around, huh?
ELAINE. Don't worry, I'm going to.

(*Mortimer stands back of Martha's chair. Rooney speaks into phone.*)

ROONEY. Hello, Mac. Rooney. We've picked up that guy that's wanted in Indiana. Now there's a description of his accomplice—it's right on the desk there—read it to me. (*Einstein sees Rooney at phone. He starts toward kitchen and sees Klein standing there. He comes back to R. of table and stands there dejectedly waiting for the pinch. Rooney repeats the description given him over phone, looking blankly at Einstein the while.*) Yeah—about fifty-four—five foot six—hundred and forty pounds—blue eyes—talks with a German accent. Poses as a doctor. Thanks, Mac. (*He hangs up as Witherspoon crosses to him with papers in hand.*)

WITHERSPOON. It's all right, Lieutenant. The Doctor here has just completed the signatures.

(*Rooney goes to Einstein and shakes his hand.*)

ROONEY. Thanks, Doc. You're really doing Brooklyn a service.

(*Rooney and Klein exit to kitchen.*)

(*Einstein stands amazed for a moment then grabs up his hat and suitcase and disappears through R. door. The aunts rise and cross over, looking out after him. Abby shuts the door and they stand there D. R.*)

WITHERSPOON. (*Above table.*) Mr. Brewster, you sign now as next of kin.

(*The aunts whisper to each other as Mortimer signs.*)

MORTIMER. Yes, of course. Right here?

WITHERSPOON. That's fine.

MORTIMER. That makes everything complete—everything legal?

WITHERSPOON. Oh, yes.

MORTIMER. (*With relief.*) Well, Aunties, now you're safe.

WITHERSPOON. (*To aunts.*) When do you think you'll be ready to start?

ABBY. (*Stepping L.*) Well, Mr. Witherspoon, why don't you go upstairs and tell Teddy just what he can take along?

WITHERSPOON. Upstairs?

MORTIMER. I'll show you.

ABBY. (*Stopping him.*) No, Mortimer, you stay here. We want to talk to you. (*To Witherspoon.*) Yes, Mr. Witherspoon, just upstairs and turn to the left.

(*Witherspoon puts his briefcase on sofa and goes upstairs, the aunts keeping an eye on him while talking to Mortimer.*)

MARTHA. Well, Mortimer, now that we're moving, this house really is yours.

ABBY. Yes, dear, we want you to live here now.

MORTIMER. (*Below table.*) No, Aunt Abby, this house is too full of memories.

MARTHA. But you'll need a home when you and Elaine are married.

MORTIMER. Darlings, that's very indefinite.

ELAINE. (*Rises and crosses to L. of Mortimer.*) It's nothing of the kind—we're going to be married right away.

(*Witherspoon has exited off balcony.*)

ABBY. Mortimer—Mortimer, we're really very worried about something.

MORTIMER. Now, darlings, you're going to love it at Happy Dale.

MARTHA. Oh, yes, we're very happy about the whole thing. That's just it—we don't want anything to go wrong.

ABBY. Will they investigate those signatures?

MORTIMER. Don't worry, they're not going to look up Dr. Einstein.

MARTHA. It's not his signature, dear, it's yours.

ABBY. You see, you signed as next of kin.

MORTIMER. Of course. Why not?

MARTHA. Well, dear, it's something we never wanted to tell you. But now you're a man—and it's something Elaine should know too. You see, dear—you're not really a Brewster.

(*Mortimer stares as does Elaine.*)

ABBY. Your mother came to us as a cook—and you were born about

three months afterward.* But she was such a sweet woman—and such a good cook we didn't want to lose her—so brother married her.

MORTIMER. I'm—not—really—a—Brewster?

MARTHA. Now, don't feel badly about it, dear.

ABBY. And Elaine, it won't make any difference to you?

MORTIMER. (*Turning slowly to face Elaine. His voice rising.*) Elaine! Did you hear? Do you understand? I'm a bastard!

(*Elaine leaps into his arms. The two aunts watch them, then Martha starts U. L. a few steps.*)

MARTHA. Well, now I really must see about breakfast.

ELAINE. (*Leading Mortimer to R. door, opening door.*) Mortimer's coming over to my house. Father's gone to Philadelphia, and Mortimer and I are going to have breakfast together.

MORTIMER. Yes, I need some coffee—I've had quite a night.

ABBY. In that case I should think you'd want to get to bed.

MORTIMER. (*With a sidelong glance at Elaine.*) I do. (*They exit R., closing door.*)

(*Witherspoon enters on balcony, carrying two canteens. He starts downstairs when Teddy enters carrying large canoe paddle. He is dressed in Panama outfit with pack on his back.*)

TEDDY. One moment, Witherspoon. Take this with you! (*He exits off balcony again as Witherspoon comes on downstairs to sofa. He puts canteens on sofa and leans paddle against wall.*)

(*At the same time Rooney and the two cops with Jonathan between them enter. The cops have twisters around Jonathan's wrists. Rooney enters first and crosses to R. C. The other three stop D. L. of table. The aunts are R. of the table.*)

ROONEY. We won't need the wagon. My car's out front.

MARTHA. Oh, you leaving now, Jonathan?

ROONEY. Yeah—he's going back to Indiana. There's some people

* Directors who may wish to modify the situation mentioned by Abby may add the following to the text after the words "three months afterward": "...her poor husband had just died, and she was such," etc. Then add, "So we adopted the baby and brought him up ourselves." Mortimer's line "I'm a bastard" will, in this case, be omitted.

there want to take care of him for the rest of his life. Come on.

(Rooney opens door as the two cops and Jonathan cross to R. C. Abby steps D.S. after they pass.)

ABBY. Well, Jonathan, it's nice to know you have some place to go.

MARTHA. We're leaving too.

ABBY. Yes, we're going to Happy Dale.

JONATHAN. Then this house is seeing the last of the Brewsters.

MARTHA. Unless Mortimer wants to live here.

JONATHAN. I have a suggestion to make. Why don't you turn this property over to the church?

ABBY. Well, we never thought of that.

JONATHAN. After all, it *should* be part of the cemetery.

ROONEY. All right, get going, I'm a busy man.

JONATHAN. *(Holding his ground for his one last word.)* Goodbye, Aunties. Well, I can't better my record now but neither can you—at least I have that satisfaction. The score stands even, *twelve to twelve.* *(Jonathan and the cops exit R., as the aunts look out after them.)*

(Witherspoon crosses above to window seat and stands quietly looking out the window. His back is to the aunts.)

MARTHA. *(Starting toward R. door to close it.)* Jonathan always was a mean boy. Never could stand to see anyone get ahead of him. *(She closes door.)*

ABBY. *(Turning slowly around L. as she speaks.)* I wish we could show him he isn't so smart! *(Her eyes fall on Witherspoon. She studies him. Martha turns from door and sees Abby's contemplation. Abby speaks sweetly.)* Mr. Witherspoon? *(Witherspoon turns around facing them.)* Does your family live with you at Happy Dale?

WITHERSPOON. I have no family.

ABBY. Oh—

MARTHA. *(Stepping into room.)* Well, I suppose you consider everyone at Happy Dale your family?

WITHERSPOON. I'm afraid you don't quite understand. As head of the institution, I have to keep quite aloof.

ABBY. That must make it very lonely for you.

WITHERSPOON. It does. But my duty is my duty.

ABBY. *(Turning to Martha.)* Well, Martha— *(Martha takes her cue*

and goes to sideboard for bottle of wine. Bottle in L. cupboard is empty. She puts it back and takes out full bottle from R. cupboard. She brings bottle and wine glass to table. Abby continues talking.) If Mr. Witherspoon won't join us for breakfast, I think at least we should offer him a glass of elderberry wine.

WITHERSPOON. *(Severely.)* Elderberry wine?

MARTHA. We make it ourselves.

WITHERSPOON. *(Melting slightly.)* Why, yes... *(Severely again.)*

Of course, at Happy Dale our relationship will be more formal—but here— *(He sits in chair L. of table as Martha pours wine. Abby is beside Martha.)* You don't see much elderberry wine nowadays—I thought I'd had my last glass of it.

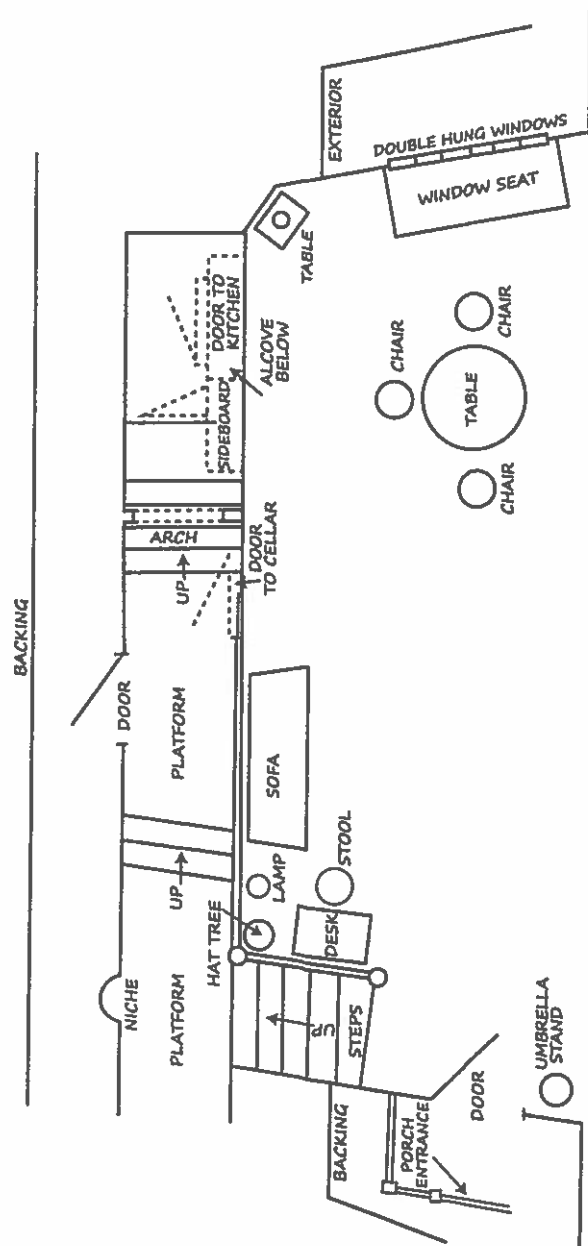
ABBY. Oh, no—

MARTHA. *(Handing him glass of wine.)* No, here it is.

(Witherspoon toasts the ladies and lifts glass to his lips, but the curtain falls before he does...)

(For a curtain call it is suggested the twelve elderly gentlemen file out of the cellar entrance, stand in a line across the stage, and bow.)

THE END



SCENE DESIGN
"ARSENIC & OLD LACE"

NOTES

(Use this space to make notes for your production)