

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.*]

ВРОПНУ. [*Stepping U. S. . . . Remonstrating.*] Colonel, you promised not to do that.

ТЕДДУ. But I have to call a Cabinet meeting to get the release of those supplies. [*ТЕДДУ whistles and exits.*]

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

НАРРЕР. Oh, he's quite harmless.

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

ВРОПНУ. Damn shame—a nice family like this hatching a cuckoo. КЛЕИН. 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.

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

НАРРЕР. Really? Here in Brooklyn?

ВРОПНУ. 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.

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

ВРОПНУ. The department never bothered him much because he was pretty useful on autopsies sometimes. Especially poison cases. КЛЕИН. Well, whatever he did he left his daughters fixed for life.

Thank God for that —

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

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

КЛЕИН. 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 looking for a room goes away with a good meal and probably a few dollars in their kick.*

ВРОПНУ. 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.*]

МАРТНА. [*At door.*] Well, now, isn't this nice? [*Closes door.*]
ВРОПНУ. [*Crosses to MARTNA.*] Good afternoon, Miss Brewster.
МАРТ ИА. How do you do, Mr. Brophy? Dr. Harper. Mr. Klein.
КЛЕИН. How are you, Miss Brewster? We dropped in to get the Christmas toys.

МАРТНА. Oh, yes, Teddy's Army and Navy. They wear out. They're all packed. [*She turns to stairs. ВРОПНУ stops her.*]

ВРОПНУ. The Colonel's upstairs after them—it seems the Cabinet has to O.K. it.

МАРТНА. Yes, of course. I hope Mrs. Brophy's better?

ВРОПНУ. She's doin' fine, ma'am. Your sister's getting some soup for me to take to her.

МАРТНА. [*Crossing below ВРОПНУ 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.*]

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

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

АВВУ. [*Hopefully.*] Can we be present?

МАРТНА. [*Disappointment.*] No. I asked him but he says it's against the rules of the hospital. [*МАРТНА crosses to sidebo- puts pail down. Then puts cape and hat on small table U. L.*]

[*ТЕДДУ enters on balcony with large cardboard box and comes downstairs to desk, putting box on stool. КЛЕИН crosses to toy box НАРРЕР speaks through this.*]

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

АВВУ. [*To ВРОПНУ.*] Here's the broth, Mr. Brophy. Be sure it's good and hot.

ВРОПНУ. Yes, ma'am. [*Drops U. S.*]

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

ТЕДДУ. That's General Miles. I've retired him. [*КЛЕИН removes ship.*]*What's this! The Oregon!*

МАРТНА. [*Crosses to U. L.*] Teddy, dear, put it back.

ТЕДДУ. But the Oregon goes to Australia.

АВВУ. Now, Teddy —