

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, having reached first landing on stairs where he stands and draws an imaginary sword.)

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

BROPHY. Oh, she's better, but a little weak still—

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

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

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

(Teddy, having reached first landing on stairs where he stands 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.

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.

(A woman enters from the left. She is dressed in the old-fashioned manner of America but with a high lace collar that covers her neck. Men enter from the right.)

MARTHA. *(Looks at door.)* Well, now, isn't this nice? *(Opens door.)*

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

MARTHA. How do you do, Mr. Brophy, Mr. 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 speaks.)*

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