“Arsenic and Old Lace”

To Be Performed May 2-4, 2014, Clubhouse 3 Main Stage

Brett Halsey, Director, Sheila Bialka, Assistant Director

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Character Descriptions: Arsenic and Old Lace

Abby and Martha Brewster: Darling elderly ladies whose main recreation is poisoning elderly men. They are very close sisters aunts to Teddy, Jonathan, and Mortimer. No one would ever suspect such older ladies who possess a Victorian charm would be serial killers.

Mortimer Brewster: The main character of the play, he is nephew of Abby and Martha, Mortimer is a drama critic who is engaged to Elaine. He is a nice man who cares for his dear aunts and is extremely surprised to discover their “hobby” of disposing of old men by having Teddy bury them in the basement. Mortimer is the only Brewster who is relatively sane.

Elaine Harper: An attractive woman and Mortimer’s fiancée, Elaine is the daughter of the Rev. Dr. Harper. She is surprisingly wise in the ways of the world for a minister’s daughter.

The Rev. Dr. Harper: Kindly and conservative Minister and father of Elaine, Mortimer’s bride-to-be.

Teddy Brewster: Nephew of Abby and Martha Brewster, Teddy is a mentally ill man who thinks that he is Theodore Roosevelt, working on the Panama Canal.

Jonathan Brewster: Nephew of Abby and Martha Brewster, he is a wanted murderer who is running from the law. Jonathan is a psychopath who has had botched plastic surgery and now looks like Boris Karloff.

Dr. Einstein: A failed plastic surgeon and alcoholic, Dr. Einstein has changed Jonathan’s face three times, successful only in deforming his appearance. Comic, he speaks with a heavy German accent.

Mr. Gibbs: A bitter old man who wishes to rent a room from the Brewster sisters. The sisters are very happy to take him in.

Officer O’Hara: A police officer, O’Hara is a would-be playwright who pesters Mortimer to read his play.

Officer Brophy and Officer Klein: Police officers who regularly visit the Brewster home for tea and cookies; of course, they have NO IDEA that these kindly old ladies are actually homicidal maniacs!

Lieutenant Roony: A tough and dominating police officer.

Mr. Witherspoon: The superintendent of Happy Dale Sanitarium, an institution for the mentally ill.
"Arsenic and Old Lace" Audition Scenes

ABBY & MARTHA

It is late afternoon in September. As the curtain rises, ABBY BREWSTER, a plump little darling in her late sixties. At her left, in the comfortable armchair, is the REV. DR. HARPER, the elderly rector of the nearby church.

ABBY: My sister Martha and I have been talking all week about your sermon last Sunday. It’s really wonderful, Dr. Harper—in only two short years you’ve taken on the spirit of Brooklyn.

DR. 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. Have another cup of tea, Dr. Harper?

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

ABBY: It is peaceful here, isn’t it?

DR. 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. We use it as little as possible—it was Mortimer who persuaded us to put it in.

DR. HARPER: [Dryly] Yes, I can understand that. Your nephew Mortimer seems to live only for bright lights.

ABBY: The poor boy has to work so late. I understand he’s taking Elaine to the theater again tonight.

ABBY: We’re so happy Mortimer is taking Elaine to the theater with him.

DR. 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.

DR. 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.

DR. HARPER: I must also admit that I have watched the growing intimacy between him and my daughter with some trepidation. For the reason, Miss Abby, of your nephew's unfortunate connection with the theater.

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

DR. HARPER: I know, I know. But a dramatic critic is constantly exposed to the theater, and I don't doubt that some of them develop an interest in it.

ABBY: Well, not Mortimer! You need have no fear at all. Why, Mortimer hates the theater.

DR. HARPER: Really?

ABBY: Oh, yes! He writes awful things about the theater. 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.

DR. HARPER: My! My!

ABBY: But as he says, the theater can't last much longer and in the meantime, it's a living. [Complacently] I think if we give the theater another year or two. . . . [There is a knock. She goes to door and opens it] Come right in, Mr. Brophy. [Two uniformed policemen enter. BROPHY and KLEIN]

BROPHY: [To ABBY] We've come for the toys for the Christmas Fund.

ABBY: Oh, yes! How is Mrs. Brophy today? Mrs. Brophy has been quite ill, Dr. Harper.

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

ABBY: 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:  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 goes into the kitchen]

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

DR. HARPER:  When I moved next door, my wife wasn't well. And 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.

MARTHA BREWSTER enters.

MARTHA is also a plump, sweet, elderly woman with Victorian charm. She is dressed in the old-fashioned manner of ABBY,

MARTHA:  [Closing the door] Well, isn't this nice?

BROPHY:  Good afternoon, Miss Brewster.

MARTHA:  How do you do, Mr. Brophy?

DR. HARPER:  Good afternoon, Miss Brewster.

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

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

MARTHA:  Oh, yes! They're all packed. I hope Mrs. Brophy's better?

BROPHY:  She's doing fine, ma'am. Your sister's getting some soup for me to take to her.

MARTHA:  Oh, yes, we made it this morning. I just took some to a poor man who broke ever so many bones.

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

MARTHA:  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:  No. I asked him, but he says it's against the rules of the hospital.

ABBY:  Here's the broth, Mr. Brophy. [She hands the pail to BROPHY]
BROPHY: Thank you, Miss Brewster.

ABBY: Be sure it's good and hot.

KLEIN: [hooking into the box of toys] This is fine—it'll make a lot of kids happy. We'll run along now, ma'am, and thank you very much.

ABBY: [Closing door] Not at all. Good-by.

MARTHA: Good-by.

DR. HARPER: I must be getting home. But... Have you ever tried to persuade your Teddy that he wasn't Teddy Roosevelt?

ABBY: Oh, no!

MARTHA: He's so happy being Teddy Roosevelt.

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

DR. HARPER: Well, if he's happy Ah... I'd better be running along. [He leaves]

ABBY: [At door; calling after him] Please don't think harshly of Mortimer because he's a dramatic critic. Somebody has to do those things.
ELAINE & MORTIMER

MORTIMER: Hello, Elaine. 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.

ELAINE: [moves to MORTIMER ready to be kissed] Well, can't you take a hint?

MORTIMER: No. That was pretty obvious, I should say.

ELAINE: Yes—that's exactly what you'd say! [She walks away, ruffled]

MORTIMER: [Not noticing the ruffle] Where do you want to go for dinner?

ELAINE: 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 Polly's by ten o'clock.

ELAINE: 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? I was hoping it was a musical. 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 and you make a few passes.

MORTIMER: Now wait a minute, darling, that's a very inaccurate piece of reporting.
ELAINE: 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 any girl. It wasn't until after our first musical you told me I had nice legs. And I have, too.

MORTIMER: For a minister's daughter you know a lot about life. Where did 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. 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: Did you say keep?

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

ELAINE: I can afford to be a good girl for quite a few years yet.

MORTIMER: 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: 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 and they forget themselves for a moment in a sentimental embrace and kiss.] I may give that show tonight a good notice!
ELAINE:  Now, darling, don't pretend you love me \textit{that} much.

MORTIMER:  \textit{[with polite lechery]} Be sure to tell your father not to wait up tonight.

ELAINE:  \textit{[Aware that she can't trust either of them]} I think tonight I'd better tell him to wait up. Darling, I'm going to run over to speak to Father. Before I go out with you, he likes to pray over me a little. I'll be right back—I'll cut through the cemetery.

MORTIMER:  Well, if the prayer isn't too long, I'll have time to lead you beside distilled waters.

\textit{[ELAINE laughs and exits]}

\underline{ELAINE & MORTIMER}

\underline{SCENE 2}

ELAINE:  I'm sorry I took so long, dear. \textit{[As she approaches he looks in her direction and as her presence dawns on him he speaks]}

MORTIMER:  Oh, it's you!

ELAINE:  Don't be cross, darling! Father saw I was excited—so I told him about, us and that made it hard for me to get away. \textit{[She goes to him and puts her arm around him]} But, listen, darling—he's not going to wait up for me tonight.

MORTIMER:  Elaine—you run on back home and I'll call you up tomorrow.

ELAINE:  Tomorrow!

MORTIMER:  \textit{[Irritated]} You know I always call you up every day or two.

ELAINE:  But we're going to the theater tonight.

MORTIMER:  No—no, we're not.

ELAINE:  Well, why not?

MORTIMER:  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 the play tonight. Now, you run along home, Elaine.
ELAINE: But I've got to know what's happened. Certainly, you can tell me.

MORTIMER: No, I can't, dear.

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: I did? Oh—yes! Well, as far as I know, that's still on. But you go home now. 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: 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. Not until I've had some kind of explanation!

[She stalks across the room and almost sits on the window seat. He intercepts her]

MORTIMER: 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: Don't try to be masterful!

MORTIMER: [Annoyed] When we're married and I have problems to face I hope you'll be less tedious and uninspired!

ELAINE: And when we're married, if we're married, I hope I find you adequate! [She exits]

MORTIMER: Elaine! [He runs out on the porch after her, calling] Elaine! [He rushes back in, slams the door, and runs across to call to her out of the window.]
MORTIMER, ABBY & MARTHA

MORTIMER: [He looks about the room] By the way, I left a large envelope around here last week. It's one of the chapters of my book on Thoreau. Have you seen it? [MORTIMER starts searching the room, cupboards, desk, etc.]

MARTHA: What, Mortimer?

MORTIMER: My chapter on Thoreau!

MORTIMER: Now, where could I have put that...?

ABBY: I do hope the play tonight will be something you can enjoy for once. It may be something romantic. What's the name of it?

MORTIMER: [He is still searching for the envelope] Murder Will Out!

ABBY: Oh, dear!

MORTIMER: When the curtain goes up the first thing you see will be a dead body. . . . [He lifts the window seat and sees one. Not believing it, he drops the window seat again and turns away. He looks back quickly toward the window seat, opens it again, stares in. He goes slightly mad for a moment. He drops the window seat again and sits on it, as if to hold it down.

When MORTIMER [in a strained voice] Aunt Abby!

ABBY: Yes, dear?

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

ABBY: Yes, dear, it's all arranged. Dr. Harper was here today and brought the things for Teddy to sign. Here they are.

MORTIMER: He's got to sign them right away!

ABBY: That's what Dr. Harper thinks. . . . Then there won't be any legal difficulties after we pass on.

MORTIMER: [Glancing through the papers] He's got to sign them this minute! He's down in the cellar—get him up here right away.

MARTHA: There's no such hurry as that.
ABBY: When he 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, Mortimer! That's not until after we're gone!

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

ABBY: Mortimer, how can you say such a thing? Why, as long as we live we won't be separated from Teddy.

MORTIMER: [Trying to be calm] Listen, darlings, I'm frightfully sorry, but I've got some shocking news for you. Now, we've all got to try to 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: 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: [points to the window seat] There's a body in the window seat!

ABBY: [Not at all surprised] Yes, dear, we know.

MORTIMER: You know?

MARTHA: Of course, dear, but it has nothing to do with Teddy.

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: No, he died first.

MORTIMER: But how?

ABBY: 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: 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: Not at tea! That wouldn't have been very nice! All right, you know about it and you can forget about it. I do think we have the right to our own little secrets.

MARTHA: MORTIMER stands looking at his aunts, stunned, MARTHA turns to ABBY] Oh, Abby, while I was out I dropped in on Mrs. Schultz. She's much better, but she would like to have us take Junior to the movies again.

ABBY: We must do that tomorrow or the next day.

MARTHA: This time we'll go where we want to go, Junior's not going to drag me into another one of those scary pictures.

ABBY: They shouldn't be allowed to make pictures just to frighten People.
[They exit into the kitchen. MORTIMER, dazed, looks around the room, goes to the telephone and dials a number]

MORTIMER: [Into telephone] City desk. . . . 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? [Pause] 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, then suddenly leaps out of the chair toward the kitchen] Aunt Martha! Aunt Abby! Come in here! [The two sisters bustle in] What are we going to do? What are we going to do?

MARTHA: What are we going to do about what, dear?

MORTIMER: There's a body in there!

ABBY: Yes, Mr. Hoskins'.

MORTIMER: Good God, I can't turn you over to the police. But what am I going to do?

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

ABBY: And for pity's sake stop worrying. We told you to forget about it.

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

ABBY: [A little sharply] Mortimer, you behave yourself! You're too old to be flying off the handle like this!

MORTIMER: But Mr. Hotchkiss . . .

ABBY: Hoskins, dear.

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

MARTHA: We don't intend to, dear.

ABBY: Teddy's down in the cellar now digging a lock.

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

MARTHA: Why, of course, dear. That's what we did with the others.

MORTIMER: Aunt Martha, you can't bury Mr. . . . 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, isn't it, Abby?

ABBY: No, dear, this makes twelve.

[MORTIMER backs up and sinks stunned on the stool beside the desk]

MARTHA: Oh, I think you're wrong, Abby. This is only eleven, you really shouldn't count the first one.

ABBY: Oh, I was counting the first one. So that makes it twelve.

[The telephone rings. MORTIMER, picks up the receiver]

MORTIMER: Hello! Hello. Oh, hello, Al. My, it's good to hear your voice! Oh, no, Al, I'm as sober as a lark. No, I just called you because I was feeling a little Pirandello. Pirandel. . . . 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, you're wrong, Al. I'll tell you about it tomorrow. . . . No—Well, George has got to cover the play tonight! This is my department and I'm running it! You get hold of George! [He hangs up and sits for a moment, trying to collect himself] Now, let's see, where were we? [suddenly] Twelve!

MARTHA: Yes, Abby says we should count the first one and that makes twelve.

ABBY: Yes, Mortimer. Oh dear, it's getting late, I'll have to get things started in the kitchen. [TO MORTIMER] I wish you could stay to dinner, dear.

MORTIMER: I couldn't eat a thing.

MORTIMER stands dazed and then summons his courage and goes to the window seat, opens it and peeks in, then closes it and backs away.
TEDDY

TEDDY, in a frock coat, and wearing pince-nez attached to a black Ribbon.
TEDDY is in his forties and has a large mustache.

ABBY: Living here all our lives, we've seen so many ministers come and go.—But 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: Bully!

KLEIN: This one is fine—it'll make a lot of kids happy. [Holding up a toy soldier] That O'Malley boy is nuts about soldiers.

TEDDY: That's General Miles. I've retired him, and you can't have that ship! It's the Oregon! [He takes the ship from KLEIN]

MARTHA: Put it back, dear.

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

ABBY: Teddy! [He stops halfway downstairs] Good news for you! You're going to Panama and dig another lock for the canal.

TEDDY: Dee-lighted! Bully! Bully, bully! I shall prepare at once for the journey. [He turns to go back upstairs and cries] charge!

[TEDDY enters from above and comes down the stairs carrying his bugle and dressed in tropical clothes and a pith helmet. He sees MORTIMER]

TEDDY: Hello, Mortimer! [He goes to MORTIMER and they shake hands]
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, good-by

MORTIMER:  Where are you off to, Teddy?

TEDDY:  Panama. [He exits through the cellar door, ]  
[Teddy at the head of the stairs]  
TEDDY:  I found it! I found it!

JONATHAN:  What did you find, Teddy?

TEDDY:  The story of my life—my biography. [He goes to Einstein] Here's the picture I was telling you about, General. Here we are, both of us. [He shows the open book to Einstein] "President Roosevelt and General Goethals at Culebra Cut." That's me, General, and that's you.

EINSTEIN:  [He looks at the picture] My, how I've changed!

TEDDY:  [Teddy looks at Einstein, a little puzzled] 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 go to Panama and inspect the new lock.

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

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

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

TEDDY:  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 for you to go to bed.

TEDDY:  I beg your pardon. Who are you?

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.

EINSTEIN: All right, Mr. President. We go to Panama.

TEDDY: Bully! Bully! [EINSTEIN follows him. TEDDY opens the cellar door]
Follow, me, General. It's down south, you know.

EINSTEIN: Well—bon voyage.

TEDDY: [TEDDY enters from the cellar]
General Goethals was very pleased. He said the Canal was just the right size.

ABBY: Teddy, there's been another yellow fever victim.

TEDDY: Dear me—that will be a shock to the General.

MARTHA: Then we mustn't tell him about it.

TEDDY: But it's his department.

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

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'll have to keep it a secret.

MARTHA: Yes!

TEDDY: A state secret?

ABBY: Yes, a state secret.

MARTHA: Promise?

TEDDY: You have the word of the President of the United States. Cross my heart and hope to die. [Following the childish formula, he crosses his heart and spits] Now let's see—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 you come up and take the poor man down to the Canal.
TEDDY: You may announce the President will say a few words. [He starts to the cellar door, then stops] Where is the poor devil?

MARTHA: In the window seat.

TEDDY: It seems to be spreading. We've never had yellow fever there before. [He exits into the cellar]
JONATHAN & EINSTEIN

He walks in with assurance and ease as though the room were familiar to him. There is something sinister about the man—It his strange resemblance to Boris Karloff. He addresses someone outside the front door.

JONATHAN: Come in, Doctor, This is the home of my youth, [DR. EINSTEIN looks about him timidly] As a boy, I couldn't wait to escape from this house. And now I'm glad to escape back into it.

EINSTEIN: [DR. EINSTEIN enters. He is somewhat ratty in his appearance. His There is something about him that suggests the unfrocked priest.] Yah, Chonny, it's a good 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. Look, Chonny! Drinks!

JONATHAN: As if we were expected! A good omen.

ABBY: Who are you? What are you doing here? [EINSTEIN and JONATHAN turn and see the two sisters]


MARTHA: You get out of here!

JONATHAN: 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: Yes, Aunt Abby. I am Jonathan. And this is Dr. Einstein.

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

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

ABBY: Who are you? You're not our nephew, Jonathan!

JONATHAN: I see you're still wearing the lovely garnet ring that grandma Brewster bought in England, And you, Aunt Martha, still the high collar—to hide the scar where Grandfather's acid burned you.
MARTHA: His voice is like Jonathan's.

ABBY: Have you been in an accident?

JONATHAN: No. . . My face. . . . [He clouds] Dr. Einstein is responsible for that. He's a plastic surgeon. [Flatly] He changes people's faces.

MARTHA: But I've seen that face before 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: Chonny—easy! Don't worry! The last five years I give Chonny three faces. I give him another one right away. The last face—I saw that picture, too—just before I operate. And I was intoxicated.

JONATHAN: You see, Doctor—what you've done to me. Even my own family.

EINSTEIN: [To calm him] Chonny—you're home!—in this lovely house! [To the aunts] How many times he tells me about Brooklyn—about this house—about his aunts that he loves so much! [To JONATHAN] They know you, Chonny. [To the aunts] You know it's Jonathan. Speak to him! Tell him so!

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

MARTHA: Yes, Jonathan, where have you been?

JONATHAN: [Recovering his composure] England, South Africa, Australia—the last five years, Chicago. Dr. Einstein and I have been in business together there.

ABBY: Oh! We were in Chicago for the World's Fair. We found it awfully warm.

EINSTEIN: Yah—it got hot for us, too.

JONATHAN: [Turning on the charm] 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. And dear Teddy? [He indicates with his hand a lad of eight or ten] Did he go into politics? [Turns to EINSTEIN] My little brother, Doctor, was determined to become President.

ABBY: Oh, Teddy's fine! Just fine. Mortimer's well, too.
JONATHAN:  [Grimly] 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.

MARTHA:  [Uneasily] Well, Jonathan, it's very nice to have seen you again.

JONATHAN:  Bless you, Aunt Martha! It's good to be home again.

ABBY:  Martha, we mustn't let what's on the stove boil over. If you'll excuse us for just a minute, Jonathan—unless you're in a hurry to go somewhere.

ABBY and Martha exit to the kitchen.

EINSTEIN:  Well, Chonny, where do we go from here? We got to think fast. The police! They got pictures of that face. I got to operate on you right away. We got to find someplace—and we got to find some 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:  Forget Mr. Spenalzo!

EINSTEIN:  But we can't leave a dead body in the trunk! You shouldn't have killed him, Chonny. He's a nice fellow—he gives us a lift—and what happens? [He gestures strangulation]

JONATHAN:  He said I looked like Boris Karloff! That's your work, Doctor. You did that to me!

EINSTEIN:  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.

[ABBY enters, MARTHA hovers in the doorway]

ABBY:  Jonathan, we're glad that you remembered us and took the trouble to come and say "Hello." But you were never happy in this house and we were never happy while you were here. So we've just come in to say good-by.

JONATHAN:  [Smoothly] Aunt Abby, I can't say your feeling toward me comes as a surprise. I've spent a great many hours regretting the 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 I promised him that no matter how rushed we were, I would take the time to bring him here for one of Aunt Martha's home cooked dinners.

MARTHA: Oh? Well, I think the least we can do is . . .

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

ABBY: Well, we'll hurry it along. If you want to freshen up, Jonathan—why don't you use the washroom in grandfather's laboratory?

EINSTEIN: Okay! We get a meal, anyway.

JONATHAN: Grandfather's laboratory! [He looks upstairs] And just as it was! Doctor, a perfect operating room!

EINSTEIN: Too bad we can't use it.

JONATHAN: After you finished with me. . . . Doctor, 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: 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: Leave that to me, Doctor, I'll handle it. This house will be our headquarters for years.

EINSTEIN: 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: Yes, Doctor. Yes, this house so perfect for us. It's so peaceful.

CURTAIN

SCENE TWO

JONATHAN, is completely at ease, ABBY and MARTHA, sitting together are giving him a nervous attention. EINSTEIN is relaxed and happy.

JONATHAN: Yes, those five years in Chicago were 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: My meeting Dr. Einstein in London, I might say, changed my whole life. 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 the aunts] When we take off the bandages, he look so different the nurse had to introduce me.

JONATHAN: I'm sorry, Aunt Abby, but 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 down the street.

JONATHAN: Aunt Martha, this is my home!

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

JONATHAN: He'll share the room with me.

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

JONATHAN: [Coldly] Dr. Einstein and I need a place to sleep. This afternoon, you remembered that as a boy I could be disagreeable. . .

MARTHA: [To ABBY, frightened] Perhaps we'd better let them stay here to-night.

ABBY: Well, just overnight, Jonathan.

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

MARTHA: But he can't operate here!

JONATHAN: When Dr. Einstein and I get organized . . . when we resume practice . . . I forgot to tell you—we're turning Grandfather's laboratory into an operating room. We expect to be very busy.

ABBY: Jonathan, we're not going to let you turn this house into a hospital.

JONATHAN: A hospital! Heavens, no! It will be a beauty parlor!

EINSTEIN: [He enters from the cellar] Hey, Chonny! Down in the cellar.
JONATHAN: Dr. Einstein. My dear aunts have invited us to live with them.

ABBY: Just for tonight. [They exit to the third floor]

EINSTEIN: Chonny, when I was in the cellar, what do you think I find?

JONATHAN: What?

EINSTEIN: The Panama Canal.

JONATHAN: The Panama Canal!

EINSTEIN: Chonny, it just fits Mr. Spenalzo! A hole Teddy dug, four feet wide and six feet long.

JONATHAN: [Pointing] Down there?

EINSTEIN: You'd think they knew we were bringing Mr. Spenalzo along. Chonny, that's hospitality.

JONATHAN: Rather a good joke on my aunts, Doctor, their living in a house with a body buried in the cellar.

EINSTEIN: How do we get him in, Chonny?

JONATHAN: Yes, we can't just walk him through the door. [Looks from door to window] We'll drive the car up between the house and the cemetery and, after they've gone to bed, we'll bring Mr. Spenalzo in through the window.

EINSTEIN: Just think! We got a bed tonight. [He takes a swig from his bottle]

JONATHAN: 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 . . .

ABBY: [ABBY enters] Your room's all ready, Jonathan.

JONATHAN: You can go to bed. We're moving the car up behind the house.

MARTHA: It will be all right where it is—until morning.

JONATHAN: I don't want to leave it in the street—that might be against the law. [He and EINSTEIN exit]
REV. HARPER

REV. DR. HARPER, the elderly rector of the nearby church is thoughtfully sipping a cup of tea.

ABBY: My sister ABBY and I have been talking all week about your sermon last Sunday. It's really wonderful, Dr. Harper.

DR. HARPER: That's very gratifying, Miss Brewster.

ABBY: Your sermons are not so much sermons as friendly talks. Have another cup of tea, Dr. Harper?

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

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

DR. 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: This house is just as it was when Grandfather Brewster built it—except for the electricity. It was Mortimer who persuaded us to put it in.

DR. HARPER: [dryly] Yes, I can understand that. Your nephew Mortimer seems to live only for bright lights.

ABBY: The poor boy has to work so late. I understand he's taking Elaine to the theater again tonight. We're so happy Mortimer is taking Elaine to the theater with him.

DR. 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.

DR. HARPER: Well ... 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 acid stomach—he's bothered with it so, poor boy.
DR. HARPER: Not his stomach, Miss Abby, I'm speaking of your nephew's unfortunate connection with the theater.

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

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

ABBY: Well, not Mortimer! You need have no fear at all. Why, Mortimer hates the theater.

DR. HARPER: Really?

ABBY: Oh, yes! He writes awful things about the theater.

DR. HARPER: My! My!

ABBY: But as he says, the theater can't last much longer and in the meantime, it's a living. [There is a knock at the door. Two uniformed policemen enter.

BROPHY: [To ABBY] We've come for the toys for the Christmas Fund.

ABBY: Oh, yes!

DR. HARPER: 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.

ABBY: How is Mrs. Brophy today? Mrs. Brophy has been quite ill, Dr. Harper.

BROPHY: [To DR. HARPER] Pneumonia.

DR. HARPER: I'm sorry to hear that.

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

ABBY: 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.
DR. HARPER: When I 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.

BROPHY: [To TEDDY] Colonel, you promised not to do that!

TEDDY: But I have to call a Cabinet meeting to get the release of those supplies. [He 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.

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. But he made a million dollars.

DR. HARPER: Really? Here in Brooklyn?

BROPHY: Yeah—patent medicine. He was kind of a quack of some sort. But whatever he did, he left his daughters fixed for life.

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

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

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

ABBY: How is Mr. Benitzky, Dr. Harper?

DR. HARPER: 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?

DR. HARPER: No, it's against the rules of the hospital. But you couldn't be of any service—and you must spare yourselves something. [stands] I must be getting home.

TEDDY: Charge! Charge the blockhouse!

DR. HARPER: The blockhouse?

ABBY: The stairs are always San Juan Hill.

DR. HARPER: Have you ever tried to persuade him that he wasn't Teddy Roosevelt?
ABBY: Oh, no!

ABBY: He's so happy being Teddy Roosevelt.

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

DR. HARPER: Well, if he's happy—and what's more important, you're happy. You will see that he signs these. *He takes some legal documents from his pocket and hands them to ABBY*

ABBY: What are they?

ABBY: Dr. Harper has made arrangements for Teddy to go to Happy Dale Sanitarium after we pass on. But why should Teddy sign any papers now?

DR. 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.

ABBY: Mr. Witherspoon? Who's he?

DR. HARPER: He's the Superintendent of Happy Dale.

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

DR. HARPER: I'd better be running along or Elaine will be over here looking for me. *He leaves*
KLEIN & BROPHY

[Two uniformed policemen enter. They are BROPHY and KLEIN]

BROPHY: Hello, Miss Brewster.

ABBY: How are you, Mr. Klein?

KLEIN: Very well, Miss Brewster.

BROPHY: [To ABBY] We've come for the toys for the Christmas Fund.

ABBY: Oh, yes!

DR. HARPER: That's a splendid work you men are doing.

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.

ABBY: How is Mrs. Brophy today? Mrs. Brophy has been quite ill.

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

ABBY: 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: Sister Martha is taking some to poor Mr. Benitzky right now. I won't be a minute. Sit down and be comfortable.

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.

[TEDDY steps out on the balcony with a brass bugle and blows a bugle call]

BROPHY: Colonel, you promised not to do that! [TEDDY exits] 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.

KLEIN: So he thinks 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—in patent medicine. He was a quack of some sort. Old Sergeant Edwards remembers him. He used the house here as 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.

KLEIN: Folks 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. . . 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.

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

MARTHA: [She enters and closes the door] Well, isn't this nice?

BROPHY: Good afternoon, Miss Brewster.

MARTHA: How do you do, Mr. Brophy?

DR. HARPER: Good afternoon, Miss Brewster.

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

KLEIN: How do you do, Miss Brewster? We dropped in for the Christmas toys.

MARTHA: Oh, yes! Teddy's Army and Navy. They're all packed. I hope Mrs. Brophy's better?

BROPHY: She's doing fine, ma'am. Your sister's getting some soup for me to take to her.
MARTHA: Oh, yes, we made it this morning. I just took some to a poor man who broke ever so many bones.

ABBY: [SHE enters] Oh, you're back, Martha. How was Mr. Benitzky?

MARTHA: 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: No. I asked him, but he says it's against the rules of the hospital.

ABBY: Here's the broth, Mr. Brophy. [She hands the broth to BROPHY]

BROPHY: Thank you, Miss Brewster.

ABBY: Be sure it's good and hot.

KLEIN: These toys are fine—they'll make a lot of kids happy

BROPHY: We'll run along, ma'am, and thank you very much. [they exit]

SCENE 2

O’HARA: "Come in!" [OFFICERS BROPHY and KLEIN walk in, see O’HARA—with his gun pointed toward them, and start to raise their hands] Hello, boys!

BROPHY: [Recognizing O’HARA] What the hell's going on here?

O’HARA: This is Mortimer Brewster! He's going to write my play with me! I'm just telling him the story.

KLEIN: Did you have to tie him up to make him listen? [He unties MORTIMER]

BROPHY: Joe, you'd better report in. The whole force is out looking for you.

O’HARA: Did they send you boys 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.

BROPHY: The Lieutenant's on the warpath. He says the Colonel's got to be put away some place. [BROPHY goes to the telephone and dials]

KLEIN: Say, do you know what time it is? It's after eight o'clock in the morning.

BROPHY: [sees JONATHAN on the couch] Who the hell is this guy?

MORTIMER: It's my brother.

BROPHY: Oh, the one that ran away? So he came back.

MORTIMER: Yes, he came back!

BROPHY: [Into the telephone] This is Brophy. Mac? Tell the Lieutenant he can call off the big man hunt. We got him. In the Brewster house. 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: All right, you've got me! I suppose you and my stool-pigeon brother will split the reward?

KLEIN: Reward? [KLEIN and BROPHY both grab JONATHAN by an arm]

JONATHAN: Now I'll do some turning in! You think my aunts are charming, sweet old ladies? Well, there are thirteen bodies buried in their cellar!

KLEIN: What the hell are you talking about?

BROPHY: You'd better be careful what you say about your aunts—they happen to be friends of ours.

JONATHAN: Thirteen bodies—I'll show you where they're buried!

KLEIN: [Refusing to be kidded] Oh, yeah?

JONATHAN: Yeah. Come see what's down in the cellar!

KLEIN: [To BROPHY] 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 the mention of Boris Karloff, leaps at KLEIN's throat]
KLEIN: Get him off me. Pat! Grab him!

[BROPHY *swings his nightstick*. JONATHAN *falls unconscious*. ROONEY *bursts in.*] ROONEY: What are you men doing? I told you I was going to handle this.

KLEIN: Well, sir, we was just... 

BROPHY: [His eyes go to the prostrate JONATHAN] This ain't the guy that blows the bugle. This is his brother. He tried to kill Klein.

KLEIN: [Feeling his throat] We kinda think he's wanted somewhere.

ROONEY: Oh, you kinda *think* he's wanted somewhere? Certainly he's wanted! In Indiana! Escaped from the Prison for the Criminal Insane!

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: Thirteen bodies buried in the cellar? And that didn't tip you off he came out of a nut house? No wonder Brooklyn's in the shape it's in. With the police force full of flatheads like you.
GIBBS

ABBY: [She goes to door and opens it] How do you do? Come in. [MR. GIBBS enters. A very disgruntled old man]

GIBBS: I understand you have a room to rent.

ABBY: Yes. Won't you step in?

GIBBS: Are you the lady of the house?

ABBY: Yes, I'm Miss Brewster. This is my sister, another Miss Brewster.

GIBBS: My name is Gibbs.

ABBY: Oh, won't you sit down? I'm sorry we're just setting the table for dinner.

GIBBS: May I see the room?

MARTHA: Why don't you sit down 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.

MARTHA: Are your family Brooklyn people?

GIBBS: Haven't got any family.

ABBY: All alone in the world? Well, you've come to just the right place. What church do you go to? There's an Episcopal church practically next door.

GIBBS: I'm Presbyterian. Used to be. But, if you don't mind, I'd really like to see the room.

ABBY: 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: Elderberry. [Looking at the wine] Haven't tasted elderberry wine since I was a boy. Thank you. Do you have your own elderberry bushes?

MARTHA: No, but the cemetery's full of them.

MORTIMER suddenly, he sees Mr. Gibbs is about to drink, he utters a blood-curdling cry and points his finger at Mr. Gibbs, who puts his glass down and stares at Mortimer, terrified

MORTIMER: Get out of here! Do you want to be killed? Do you want to be poisoned? Do you want to be murdered?

Mr. Gibbs starts to run and dashes out of the house.
OFFICER O’HARA

[There is a knock at the door; it opens and OFFICER O’HARA sticks his head in]

O’HARA: Oh, hello. . . .

ABBY: Hello, Officer O'Hara. Is there anything we can do for you?

O’HARA: Saw your lights on—thought there might be sickness in the house. Oh, you got company. Sorry I disturbed you.

MORTIMER: [He pulls him through the door into the room] No! Come in!

ABBY: Yes, come in! Officer O'Hara. These are our nephews, Mortimer and Jonathon.

O’HARA: Pleased to make your acquaintance. Well, it must be nice having your nephews visiting you. Are they going to stay for a bit?

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

O’HARA: [To JONATHAN] I've met you here before, haven't I?

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

O’HARA: [To JONATHAN] Your face looks familiar to me. Perhaps I've seen a picture of you somewhere.

JONATHAN: I don't think so. [He hurries up the stairs]

O’HARA: Well, you'll be wanting to say your good-bys. I'll be running along. [He starts for the door]

MORTIMER: [Stopping him] What's the rush? I'd like to have you stick around until my brother goes.

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 hurries out]

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 going soon.

O’HARA: Haven't I seen a photograph of your brother around here some place?

MORTIMER: I don't think so.

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 mother said that?

O’HARA: Yeah. My mother was an actress—a stage actress. Perhaps you've heard of her—Peaches Latour.

MORTIMER: Sounds like a name I've seen on a program. What did she play?

O’HARA: 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: Yeah. Sioux City, Iowa. I was born in the dressing-room at the end of the second act and mother made the finale.

MORTIMER: Sounds interesting. You know, I write about the theater.

O’HARA: You do? Say, you're not Mortimer Brewster, the dramatic critic? Say, I'm glad to meet you. We're in the same line of business.

MORTIMER: We are?

O’HARA: Yes, I'm a playwright. 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!


MORTIMER: [Stopping him] Wait a minute! On that play of yours—you know, I might be able to help you.

O’HARA: You would? Say, it was fate my walking in here tonight. Look, I'll tell you the plot.

MORTIMER: [To O’HARA] Not now, but it was nice meeting you. I'll see you again—we'll talk about your play.

O’HARA: 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: No, O'Hara, I can't do that. You see, 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 going to leave this house till I tell you the plot, [O’HARA sits on the window seat]

MORTIMER: Look, O'Hara, you run along now. My brother's just going and. . .

O’HARA: I can wait. I've been waiting twelve years.

MORTIMER: O'Hara, would you join us for a bite in the kitchen? You don't mind eating in the kitchen?

O’HARA: Where else would you eat?[He exits to the kitchen]
[There is a knock at the door]

O’HARA:  Come in!

[LIEUTENANT ROONEY bursts in. He is a very tough, driving, dominating police 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... [KLEIN’s eyes go to the prostrate 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. 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. 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:  Thirteen bodies buried in the cellar? 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]

ROONEY:  Oh—it's Shakespeare! 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:  Yeah? Well, you're going to have plenty of time to write that play. You're suspended!
O’HARA: Can I come over some time and use the station typewriter?

ROONEY: No! Get out! Take that guy somewhere else and bring him to. See what you can find out about his accomplice—the guy that helped him escape. He's wanted, too.

[KLEIN and BROPHY are bending over JONATHAN]

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 buried 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 goes slightly crazy]

ROONEY: What the hell is this?

BROPHY: He's the fellow that blows the bugle.

ROONEY: Well, Colonel, you've blown your last bugle! [TEDDY'S attention has been attracted to the body on the floor]

TEDDY: Dear me, another yellow fever victim! All the bodies in the cellar are yellow fever victims.

ROONEY: What?

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.

TEDDY: If there's any questioning of spies—that's my department!

ROONEY: Hey, you—keep out of that!

TEDDY: You're forgetting! As President, I'm also head of the Secret Service. [He exits into the kitchen, MORTIMER has come down]

MORTIMER: Captain—I'm Mortimer Brewster.

ROONEY: [Dizzy by this time] 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, Captain. In fact, it's all arranged for. I had these commitment papers signed by Dr. Gilchrist last night.

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 understand that everything that's happened around here Teddy's responsible for. Now, those thirteen bodies in the cellar. . . .

ROONEY: Yeah—those thirteen bodies in the cellar! It ain't enough that the neighbors are afraid of him and his disturbing the peace with that bugle—but can you imagine what would happen if that cockeyed story about thirteen bodies in the cellar got around? And now he's starting a yellow fever scare. Cute, ain't it?

MORTIMER: [with an embarrassed laugh] Thirteen bodies! Do you think anybody would believe that story?

ROONEY: You can't tell. Some people are just dumb enough. You don't know what to believe sometimes. A year ago, a crazy guy started a murder rumor over in Irvine and I had to dig up a half-acre lot, just to prove . . .

[There is a knock at the door]

WITHERSPOON: I'm Mr. Witherspoon, the Superintendent of Happy Dale.

ROONEY: Lieutenant Rooney. I'm glad you're here, Super, because you're taking him back with you today!

WITHERSPOON: Today! I didn't realize it was this immediate.

ROONEY: The papers are all signed. He goes today. [TEDDY enters from the kitchen]

TEDDY: It's insubordination! When the President of the United States is treated that way, what's this country coming to?

ROONEY: There's your man, Super.
MARTHA: Good morning. Well, we have visitors.

MORTIMER: This is Lieutenant Rooney.

MORTIMER: Why the Lieutenant is here—you know Teddy blew that 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: And you haven't met Mr. Witherspoon—he's the Superintendent of Happy Dale.

MARTHA: Oh—you've come to meet Teddy.

ROONEY: He's come to take him.

MORTIMER: Aunties, the police want Teddy to go there today.

ABBY: Oh—no! Not as long as 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 won't be separated from Teddy!

ROONEY: I know how you feel, ladies, but the law's the law. And 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! [He remembers a few] 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 is telling around that there are thirteen bodies buried in your cellar.

ABBY: But there are thirteen bodies in our cellar.

ROONEY: [He looks at WITHERSPOON]
Superintendent—don't you think you can find room for these ladies?

WITHERSPOON: Well, I . . .

ABBY: You can come with us—and see the graves.

ROONEY: I'll take your word for it, lady—I'm a busy man. How about it, Super?

WITHERSPOON: They'd have to be committed.

ROONEY: Come on, sign 'em up, Superintendent. I want to get this all cleaned up. Thirteen bodies! [ROONEY goes to the telephone].

Hello, Mac? Rooney. We've picked up that guy that's wanted in Indiana. There's a description of his accomplice on the circular—it's right on the desk there. Read it to me. ROONEY'S eyes are somewhat blankly on EINSTEIN through the following description] Yeah—about fifty-four—five-foot-six—a hundred and forty pounds—blue eyes—talks with a German accent—poses as a doctor—Thanks, Mac [He hangs up]

MARTHA: [Pleasantly] Jonathan is leaving now?

ROONEY: Yes. He's going to Indiana. Some people out there want to take care of him the rest of his life. [To JONATHAN] Come on. We won't need the wagon. My car's out front.
[Upon a door knock, Mortimer admits Elaine and Mr. Witherspoon, an elderly, tight-lipped disciplinarian. He is carrying a briefcase]

ELAINE: This is Mr. Witherspoon. He's the Superintendent of Happy Dale.

MORTIMER: [Eagerly] Oh, come right in! I'm glad you're here, Super, because you're taking him back with you today!

WITHERSPOON: Today! I had no idea. I didn't realize it was this immediate.

ROONEY: The papers are all signed. He goes today. [TEDDY enters]

TEDDY: It's insubordination! I'm no mollycoddle. When the President of the United States is treated that way, what's this country coming to?

ROONEY: There's your man, Super. I'm sorry, Miss Brewster, but the papers are all signed and he's going along with the Superintendent.

ABBY: We won't permit it! If he goes, we're going too!

MARTHA: Yes, you'll have to take us with him!

WITHERSPOON: It's sweet of you to want to, but it's impossible. You see, we can't take sane people at Happy Dale.

MARTHA: 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: The Lord knows we could use the money, but I'm afraid . . .

ROONEY: Now, let's be sensible about this. 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. Superintendent—don't you think you can find room for these ladies?

WITHERSPOON: Well, I . . .

ROONEY: I'm a busy man. How about it, Super?

WITHERSPOON: They'd have to be committed.

MORTIMER: Teddy committed himself. Can't they do that? Can't they sign the papers?
WITHERSPOON: Certainly.

MARTHA: Oh, if we can go with Teddy we'll sign the papers. Where are they?

ABBY: Yes, where are they?

WITHERSPOON: [produces the papers from his briefcase] If you'll sign right here, Miss Martha. And you here, Miss Abby.

WITHERSPOON: Oh—we're overlooking something.

MARTHA: What?

WITHERSPOON: Well, we're going to need the signature of a physician.

MORTIMER: [sees EINSTEIN slipping out the door] Oh, Dr. Einstein! Will you come over here and sign some papers?

[ROONEY WATCHES EINSTEIN sign the papers]

WITHERSPOON: It's all right now, Lieutenant. The doctor here has just completed the signatures.

WITHERSPOON: [To MORTIMER] Mr. Brewster, you sign now as next of kin.

MORTIMER: Oh, yes, of course. Right here? [He signs the papers]

WITHERSPOON: Yes. . . . That's fine.

MORTIMER: That makes everything complete? Everything legal?

WITHERSPOON: Oh, yes. [To the aunts] When do you think you'll be ready to start?

ABBY: [Nervously] Well, Mr. Witherspoon, why don't you go up and tell Teddy what he can take along?

WITHERSPOON: Upstairs?

MORTIMER: Just up the stairs and turn left.

ABBY: Ah... Mr. Witherspoon, does your family live with you at Happy Dale?

WITHERSPOON: I have no family.
ABBY: Oh... 

MARTHA: Well, I suppose you consider everyone at Happy Dale your family? 

WITHERSPOON: I'm afraid you don't 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: Well, Martha... If Mr. Witherspoon won't have breakfast with us, I think at least we should offer him a glass of elderberry wine. 

WITHERSPOON: Elderberry wine? 

MARTHA: We make it ourselves. [She uncorks the fresh bottle] 

WITHERSPOON: Why, yes! Of course, at Happy Dale our relationship will be more formal, but here... Well, you don't see much elderberry wine nowadays. I thought I'd had my last glass of it. 

ABBY: [Handing it to him] Here it is! 

Witherspoon bows to the ladies and lifts the glass to his lips...
Arsenic and Old Lace

by JOSEPH KESSELRING

MARTHA BREWSTER
ABBY BREWSTER
MORTIMER BREWSTER
TEDDY BREWSTER
JONATHAN BREWSTER
DR. EINSTEIN
ELAINE HARPER
LIEUTENANT ROONEY
OFFICER O'HARA
OFFICER BROPHY
OFFICER KLEIN
THE REV. DR. HARPER
MR. GIBBS
MR. WITHERSPOON
SCENE: The living room of the Brewster home in Brooklyn.

ACT ONE
An afternoon in September.

ACT TWO
That same night.

ACT THREE
SCENE 1: Later that night.
SCENE 2: Early the next morning.

ACT ONE
The living room of the old Brewster home in Brooklyn. It is just as 'Victorian as the two sisters, ABBY and MARTHA BREWSTER, who occupy the house with their nephew, TEDDY.

It is late afternoon in September. As the curtain rises, ABBY BREWSTER, a plump little darling in her late sixties, is presiding at tea. She is sitting behind the table in front of a high silver tea service. At her left, in the comfortable armchair, is the REV. DR. HARPER, the elderly rector of the nearby church. Standing, at her right, thoughtfully sipping a cup of tea, is her nephew, TEDDY, in a frock coat, and wearing pince-nez attached to a black ribbon, TEDDY is in his forties and has a large mustache.

ABBY: My sister Martha and I have been talking all week about your sermon last Sunday. It's really wonderful, Dr. Harper—in only two short years you've taken on the spirit of Brooklyn.

DR. 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: Bully! [TEDDY retires to the sofa, with his teacup and his thoughts]
ABBY: Have another cup of tea, Dr. Harper?

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

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

DR. 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—which Mortimer persuaded us to put in.

DR. HARPER: [Dryly] Yes, I can understand that. Your nephew Mortimer seems to live for bright lights.

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

TEDDY: [Bearing his teeth in a broad grin] Dee-lighted!

ABBY: We're so happy Mortimer is taking Elaine to the theater with him.

DR. 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.

DR. 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.

DR. 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 acid stomach—he's bothered with it so, poor boy.

DR. HARPER:  Not his stomach, Miss Abby, I'm speaking of your nephew's unfortunate connection with the theater.

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

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

ABBY:  Well, not Mortimer! You need have no fear at all. Why, Mortimer hates the theater.

DR. HARPER:  Really?

ABBY:  Oh, yes! He writes awful things about the theater. 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.

DR. HARPER:  My! My!

ABBY:  But as he says, the theater can't last much longer and in the meantime, it's a living. [Complacently] I think if we give the theater another year or two. . . . [There is a knock at the door. They all rise, TEDDY starts toward door] Now who do you suppose that is? [To TEDDY] Never mind, Teddy, I'll go [She goes to door and opens it] Come right in, Mr. Brophy. [Two uniformed policemen enter. They are BROPHY and KLEIN]

BROPHY:  Hello, Miss Brewster.

ABBY:  How are you, Mr. Klein?

KLEIN:  Very well, Miss Brewster.

TEDDY:  [To the policemen] Gentlemen, what news have you brought me?

BROPHY:  [As he and KLEIN salute him] Colonel, we have nothing to report.

TEDDY:  [Returning the salute] Splendid! Thank you, gentlemen! At ease!
ABBY: [To the policemen] You know Dr. Harper.

KLEIN: Sure! Hello, Dr. Harper.

BROPHY: [To ABBY] We've come for the toys for the Christmas Fund.

ABBY: Oh, yes!

DR. HARPER: 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.

ABBY: Teddy, go upstairs and get that box in your. Aunt Martha's room [TEDDY starts for the stairs] How is Mrs. Brophy today? Mrs. Brophy has been quite ill, Dr. Harper.

BROPHY: [To DR. HARPER] Pneumonia.

DR. HARPER: I'm sorry to hear that.

TEDDY: [On the landing, Teddy stops, draws an imaginary sword and shouts] Charge! [He charges up the stairs and exits through the door to the bedrooms. The others pay no attention to this]

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

ABBY: 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: 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 goes into the kitchen, DR. HARPER sits again]

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 the window seat]

DR. HARPER: When I 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 the balcony with a large brass bugle and blows a bugle call]

BROPHY: [To TEDDY] Colonel, you promised not to do that!

TEDDY: But I have to call a Cabinet meeting to get the release of those supplies. [He 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.

DR. 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.

DR. HARPER: Really? Here in Brooklyn?

BROPHY: Yeah—patent medicine. He was kind of a quack of some sort. Old Sergeant Edwards remembers him. He used the house here as 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.

DR. 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. . . . [Rising] 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.

BROPHY: It's just their way of digging up people to do some good to. [The doorknob rattles, the door opens and MARTHA BREWSTER enters.]

MARTHA is also a plump, 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]

MARTHA: [Closing the door] Well, isn't this nice?

BROPHY: Good afternoon, Miss Brewster.

MARTHA: How do you do, Mr. Brophy?

DR. HARPER: Good afternoon, Miss Brewster.

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

KLEIN: How do you do, 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.

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

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

MARTHA: Oh, yes, we made it this morning. I just took some to a poor man who broke ever so many bones.

[ABBY enters from the kitchen, carrying a small covered pail]

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

MARTHA: 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: No. I asked him, but he says it's against the rules of the hospital.

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

[TEDDY enters on balcony with a box of toys and comes downstairs and puts the box down on the stool by the desk]

ABBY: Here's the broth, Mr. Brophy. [She hands the pail to BROPHY]

BROPHY: Thank you, Miss Brewster.

ABBY: Be sure it's good and hot.

KLEIN: [hooking into the box of toys] This is fine—it'll make a lot of kids happy. [Holding up a toy soldier] That O'Malley boy is nuts about soldiers.

TEDDY: That's General Miles. I've retired him [KLEIN holds up a toy ship] What's this! The Oregon! [He takes the ship from KLEIN]

MARTHA: Put it back, dear.

TEDDY: But the Oregon goes to the Philippines.

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

[He picks up the box and he and BROPHY salute TEDDY and exit]

ABBY:  [Closing door] Not at all. Good-by.

MARTHA:  Good-by.

DR. HARPER:  I must be getting home.

ABBY:  Before you go, Doctor—

TEDDY:  [TEDDY has reached the stair landing] CHARGE!  [He dashes up the stairs. At top, he stops and with a sweeping gesture over the balcony rail] Charge the blockhouse!  [He dashes through the door]

DR. HARPER:  The blockhouse?

MARTHA:  The stairs are always San Juan Hill.

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

DR. HARPER:  Well, if he's happy—and what's more important, you're happy. You will see that he signs these.[He takes some legal documents from his pocket and hands them to ABBY]

MARTHA:  What are they?

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

MARTHA:  But why should Teddy sign any papers now?
DR. 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?

DR. 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.

DR. HARPER: I'd better be running along or Elaine will be over here looking for me. [He leaves]

ABBY: [At door; calling after him] Give Elaine our love. . . . And please don't think harshly of Mortimer because he's a dramatic critic. Somebody has to do those things.

MARTHA: [Noticing the tea things] Did you just have tea?

ABBY: [As one who has a secret] Yes—and dinner's going to be late, too. [TEDDY enters on the balcony]

MARTHA: So? Why? [TEDDY starts downstairs]

ABBY: Teddy! [He stops halfway downstairs] Good news for you! You're going to Panama and dig another lock for the canal.

TEDDY: Dee-lighted! Bully! Bully, bully! I shall prepare at once for the journey. [He turns to go back upstairs, stops as if puzzled, then hurries to the landing and cries] CHARGE! [He rushes up and disappears]

MARTHA: [Elated] Abby! While I was out?

ABBY: 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 the cellar door*]

ABBY: Oh, no, there wasn't time. I was all alone. [*MARTHA looks around the room and toward the kitchen*]

MARTHA: Well?

ABBY: Martha . . . *Coyly* You just look in the window seat, [*MARTHA almost skips to the window seat, but just as she gets there, a knock is heard on the door. She stops. They both look toward the door, ABBY hurries to the door and opens it. ELAINE HARPER enters, ELAINE is an attractive girl who looks surprisingly smart for a minister's daughter*] Oh, it's Elaine! Come in, dear.

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

MARTHA: He just this minute left. Didn't you meet him?

ELAINE: *Pointing to the window* 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: *Cordially* Not at all.

ABBY: Why don't you sit down?

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

ELAINE: Doing what?

MARTHA: 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: 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: Don't bother! After young men whose idea of night life was to take me to prayer meeting, it's wonderful to go to the theater 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.

ABBY: My goodness, Elaine, what must you think of us—not having tea cleared away by this time. [She picks up the tea tray and starts toward the kitchen]

MARTHA: [To ABBY] Now don't bother with anything in the kitchen until Mortimer comes. Then I'll help you [ABBY exits into the kitchen. To ELAINE] He 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.

MARTHA: It's a shame you missed him.

ELAINE: If Mortimer comes you tell him I'll be right back. [She has opened the door, but sees MORTIMER just outside] Hello, Mort!

[ABBY exits. 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] Hello, Aunt Martha. [He kisses her]

MARTHA: [Calling off] Abby, Mortimer's here!

MORTIMER: [To ELAINE] 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. [ELAINE closes the door, staying inside, as ABBY comes in from the kitchen]

ABBY: Hello, Mortimer.

MORTIMER: Hello, Aunt Abby. [He kisses her]
ABBY: How are you, dear?

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

ABBY: It was yesterday, wasn't it? We're seeing a great deal of you lately. [She laughs and looks at ELAINE] Sit down! Sit down! [It looks as though she's going to settle down, too]

MARTHA: [Knowingly] Abby—haven't we something to do in the kitchen? You know—the tea things.


MARTHA: Just make yourselves at home!

[ABBY and MARTHA exit happily into the kitchen, ELAINE moves over to MORTIMER ready to be kissed]

ELAINE: Well, can't you take a hint?

MORTIMER: No. That was pretty obvious. A lack of inventiveness, I should say.

ELAINE: Yes—that's exactly what you'd say! [She walks away, ruffled]

MORTIMER: [Not noticing the ruffle] Where do you want to go for dinner?

ELAINE: 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 Polly's by ten o'clock.

ELAINE: 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. [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 and you make a few passes.

MORTIMER: Now wait a minute, darling, that's a very inaccurate piece of reporting.

ELAINE: 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 any 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 for a moment, then walks over and kisses her]

MORTIMER: For a minister's daughter you know a lot about life. Where did 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. 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: Did you say keep?

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

ELAINE: I can afford to be a good girl for quite a few years yet.

MORTIMER: 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: 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] I may give that show tonight a good notice!

ELAINE: Now, darling, don't pretend you love me that much. [MORTIMER looks at her with polite lechery]

MORTIMER: Be sure to tell your father not to wait up tonight.

ELAINE: [Aware that she can't trust either of them] I think tonight I'd better tell him to wait up.

MORTIMER: [Reassuringly] Darling, I'll telephone Van Houten to publish the banns.

ELAINE: Nevertheless . . .

MORTIMER: All right, everything formal and legal. But not later than next month.
ELAINE: Darling. [She kisses him] I'll talk it over with Father and set the date.

MORTIMER: Oh, no! We'll have to consult the Zolotow list. There'll be a lot of other first nights in October.

[TEDDY enters from above and comes down the stairs carrying his bugle and dressed in tropical clothes and a pith helmet. He sees MORTIMER]

TEDDY: Hello, Mortimer! [He goes to MORTIMER and they shake hands]

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.


ELAINE: Where are you off to, Teddy?

TEDDY: Panama. [He exits through the cellar door, ELAINE looks at MORTIMER inquiringly]

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

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

MORTIMER: Well, Teddy was always my favorite brother.

ELAINE: Favorite? Were there more of you?

MORTIMER: There's another brother—Jonathan.


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: [Shuddering] What became of him?
MORTIMER: I don't know. He wanted to be a surgeon like Grandfather, but he wouldn't go to medical school—and his practice got him into trouble. [ABBY enters from the kitchen]

ABBY: Aren't you going to be late for the theater?

MORTIMER: We're skipping dinner. [Consulting his wristwatch, then to ELAINE] We won't have to start for half an hour.

ABBY: Then I'll leave you two alone again.

ELAINE: Don't bother. Darling. 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. I'll be right back—I'll cut through the cemetery.

MORTIMER: Well, if the prayer isn't too long, I'll have time to lead you beside distilled waters. [ELAINE laughs and exits]

ABBY: [Happily] That's the first time I ever heard you quote the Bible! We knew Elaine would be a good influence on you.

MORTIMER: Oh, by the way—I'm going to marry her.

ABBY: Oh, Mortimer! [She runs to him and embraces him. Then she dashes to the kitchen door, as MORTIMER crosses toward the window] Martha, Martha! Come right in here! I've got wonderful news for you! [MARTHA hurries in from the kitchen] Mortimer and Elaine are going to be married!

MARTHA: Married! Oh, Mortimer. [She runs over to MORTIMER, who is looking out the window, embraces and kisses him]

ABBY: We hoped it would happen just like this!

MARTHA: Elaine must be the happiest girl in the world!

MORTIMER: [Looking out the window] Happy! Just look at her leaping over those gravestones! [He and ABBY wave to ELAINE, outside. He turns away from the window and looks about the room] By the way, I left a large envelope around here last week. It's one of the chapters of my book on Thoreau. Have you seen it?
MARTHA: Well, if you left it here, it must be here somewhere.

[MORTIMER starts searching the room, looking in drawers, cupboards, desk, etc.]

ABBY: 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.

MARTHA: What, Mortimer?

MORTIMER: My chapter on Thoreau!

ABBY: 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?

MARTHA: Oh, yes!

ABBY: And we'll open a bottle of wine.

MARTHA: And to think that it happened in this room! [She exits into the kitchen]

MORTIMER: 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: [He is still searching for the envelope] Murder Will Out!

ABBY: Oh, dear!
[She disappears into the kitchen, MORTIMER doesn't notice her absence and goes on talking. He is beside the window seat]

MORTIMER: When the curtain goes up the first thing you see will be a dead body. . . . [He lifts the window seat and sees one. Not believing it, he drops the window seat again and turns away. He looks back quickly toward the window seat, opens it again, stares in. He goes slightly mad for a moment. He drops the window seat again and sits on it, as if to hold it]
down, ABBY comes into the room, carrying a tablecloth, which she puts on a chair and turns to the table, clearing it of its impedimenta.

When MORTIMER speaks to her it is in a somewhat strained voice] Aunt Abby!

ABBY: Yes, dear?

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

ABBY: Yes, dear, it's all arranged. Dr. Harper was here today and brought the things for Teddy to sign. Here they are.

[She takes the papers from the sideboard and hands them to him]

MORTIMER: He's got to sign them right away!

ABBY: That's what Dr. Harper thinks. . . . [MARTHA enters from the kitchen, carrying a tray with the table silver. Throughout the scene the two sisters go ahead setting the table—three places] Then there won't be any legal difficulties after we pass on.

MORTIMER: [Glancing through the papers] He's got to sign them this minute! He's down in the cellar—get him up here right away.

MARTHA: There's no such hurry as that.

ABBY: When he 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, Mortimer! That's not until after we're gone!

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

ABBY: Mortimer, how can you say such a thing? Why, as long as we live we won't 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 sisters stop work and look at him with some interest] Now, we've all got to try to 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: 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: [He rises and points to the window seat] There's a body in the window seat!

ABBY: [Not at all surprised] Yes, dear, we know.

MORTIMER: You know?

MARTHA: Of course, dear, but it has nothing to do with Teddy. [Relieved, they resume setting the table]

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 climb into window seats and die.
ABBY: No, he died first.

MORTIMER: But how?

ABBY: 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: 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: Not at tea! That wouldn't have been very nice! All right, you know about it and you can forget about it. I do think Martha and I have the right to our own little secrets.

MARTHA: And don't you tell Elaine![MORTIMER stands looking at his aunts, stunned, MARTHA turns to ABBY] Oh, Abby, while I was out I dropped in on Mrs. Schultz. She's much better, but she would like to have us take Junior to the movies again.

ABBY: We must do that tomorrow or the next day. [They start toward the kitchen]

MARTHA: This time we'll go where we want to go, Junior's not going to drag me into another one of those scary pictures.

ABBY: They shouldn't be allowed to make pictures just to frighten people. [They exit into the kitchen. MORTIMER, dazed, looks around the room, goes to the telephone and dials a number]

MORTIMER: [Into telephone] City desk. . . . 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? [Pause] 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 out of the chair toward the kitchen] Aunt Martha! Aunt Abby! Come in here! [The two sisters bustle in. Mortimer turns to them in great excitement] What are we going to do? What are we going to do?

MARTHA: What are we going to do about what, dear?

MORTIMER: There's a body in there!

ABBY: Yes, Mr. Hoskins'.

MORTIMER: Good God, I can't turn you over to the police. But what am I going to do?

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

ABBY: And for pity's sake stop worrying. We told you to forget about it.

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

ABBY: [A little sharply] Mortimer, you behave yourself! You're too old to be flying off the handle like this!

MORTIMER: But Mr. Hotchkiss . . .

ABBY: Hoskins, dear.

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

MARTHA: We don't intend to, dear.

ABBY: Teddy's down in the cellar now digging a lock.

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

MARTHA: Why, of course, dear. That's what we did with the others.

MORTIMER: Aunt Martha, you can't bury Mr. . . . 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, isn't it, Abby?

ABBY: No, dear, this makes twelve.

MORTIMER backs up and sinks stunned on the stool beside the desk

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

ABBY: No. When Mr. Hoskins first came in, it occurred to me that he would make a round dozen.

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

ABBY: Oh, I was counting the first one. So that makes it twelve.

MORTIMER, in a daze, turns toward it and without picking up the receiver speaks

MORTIMER: Hello! [It rings the second time and he realizes it's the telephone and picks up the receiver] Hello. Oh, hello, Al. My, it's good to hear your voice!

ABBY: [To MARTHA] But he is in the cellar, dear.

MORTIMER: [To aunts] Ssh! [Into telephone] Oh, no, Al, I'm as sober as a lark. No, I just called you because I was feeling a little Pirandello. Pirandel. . . . 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, you're wrong, Al. I'll tell you about it tomorrow. . . . No— Well, George has got to cover the play tonight! This is my department and I'm running it! You get hold of George! [He hangs up and sits for a moment, trying to collect himself] Now, let's see, where were we? [He suddenly leaps from his chair] Twelve!

MARTHA: Yes, Abby thinks we ought to count the first one and that makes twelve.

MORTIMER: Now, let me get this. . . . [Grabs MARTHA and sits her in a chair] Who was the first one?
ABBY: Mr. Midgely. He was a Baptist.

MARTHA: Of course, I still think we can't take 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 that your nice room should go 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: And then when his heart attack came, and he sat dead in that chair, so peaceful—remember, Martha?—well, we decided then and there that if we could help other lonely old men to find that peace, we would.

MORTIMER: He dropped dead, right in that chair. How awful for you!

MARTHA: Not at all! 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. *[Rising]* You see, that's why we told you not to bother about it. 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: Well, we realized we couldn't depend on that happening again.

MARTHA: Remember those jars of poison that have been up on the shelves in Grandfather's laboratory all these years?

ABBY: You know the knack your Aunt Martha has for mixing things. You've
eaten enough of her piccalilli!

MARTHA: Well, Mortimer, for a gallon of elderberry wine I take a teaspoon-full of arsenic, and add a half-teaspoonful of strychnine, and then just a pinch of cyanide.

MORTIMER: [Appraisingly] Should have quite a kick.

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

MARTHA: Well, I'll have to get things started in the kitchen. [She starts out]

ABBY: [To MORTIMER] I wish you could stay to dinner, dear.

MARTHA: I'm trying out a new recipe.

MORTIMER: I couldn't eat a thing.

[ABBY exits into the kitchen]

MARTHA exits into the kitchen

ABBY: [Calling after MARTHA] I'll come and help you. [She turns to MORTIMER, relieved] Well, I feel better now that you understand. You have to wait for Elaine, don't you? [She smiles] How happy you must be! I'll leave you alone with your thoughts.

MORTIMER stands dazed and then summons his courage and goes to the window seat, opens it and peeks in, then closes it and backs away. He backs around the table and is still looking at the window seat when there is a knock at the door, immediately followed by ELAINE'S entrance. This, however, does not arouse him from his thought. She smiles at him softly]

ELAINE: I'm sorry I took so long, dear. [She starts slowly toward him. As she approaches he looks in her direction and as her presence dawns on him he speaks]

MORTIMER: Oh, it's you!

ELAINE: Don't be cross, darling! Father saw I was excited—so I told him about, us and that made it hard for me to get away. [She goes to him and puts her arm around him] But, listen, darling—he's not going to wait up for me tonight.

MORTIMER: Elaine—you run on back home 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 theater tonight.

MORTIMER: No—no, we're not.

ELAINE: Well, why not?

MORTIMER: 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 the play tonight. Now, you run along home, Elaine.

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

MORTIMER: No, I can't, dear.

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: I did? Oh—yes! Well, as far as I know, that's still on. But you go home now. 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: 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. Not until I've had some kind of explanation! [She stalks across the room and almost sits on the window seat. He intercepts her]
MORTIMER: Elaine! [The telephone rings. He goes to it and answers] Hello! Oh, hello, Al. Hold on just a minute, will you, Al? I'll be right with you. All right, it's important! But it can wait a minute, can't it? Hold on! [He puts the receiver down on the table and goes back to ELAINE] 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: 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: Elaine! [He runs out on the porch after her, calling] Elaine! [He rushes back in, slams the door, and runs across to call to her out of the window. *When he kneels on the window seat, he suddenly remembers Mr. Hoskins, and leaps off it. He dashes toward the kitchen, then he remembers Al is waiting on the telephone. He hurries across the room and picks up the receiver] Al . . . ? Al . . . ? [He hangs up and starts to dial again, when the doorbell rings. He lifts the receiver and speaks into it] Hello . . . Hello . . . ?

[ABBY enters from the kitchen, followed by MARTHA]

ABBY: It's the doorbell ringing. [She goes to door and opens it, as MORTIMER hangs up and starts to dial] How do you do? Come in.

[M. GIBBS enters. A very disgruntled old man]

GIBBS: I understand you have a room to rent.

ABBY: Yes. Won't you step in?

GIBBS: Are you the lady of the house?

ABBY: Yes, I'm Miss Brewster. This is my sister, another Miss Brewster.

GIBBS: My name is Gibbs.

ABBY: Oh, won't you sit down? I'm sorry we're just setting the table for dinner.
MORTIMER: [Into the telephone] Hello . . . Let me talk to Al again. City desk! Al! City desk! What? I'm sorry? wrong number. [He hangs up and dials again]

GIBBS: May I see the room?

MARTHA: Why don't you sit down 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 the telephone] Hello. City desk.

MARTHA: Are your family Brooklyn people?

GIBBS: Haven't got any family.

ABBY: All alone in the world? Why, Martha. . . . [MARTHA crosses to the sideboard for the wine] Well, you've come to just the right place. Do sit down. [She eases GIBBS into a chair by the table]

MORTIMER: [Into the telephone] 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: What church do you go to? There's an Episcopal church practically next door.

GIBBS: I'm Presbyterian. Used to be.

MORTIMER: [Into the telephone] What's George doing in Bermuda? Certainly, I told him he could go to Bermuda. . . . It's my department, isn't it? Well, Al, you've got to get somebody. Who else is there around the office?

GIBBS: [Rising] Is there always this much noise?

MARTHA: Oh, he doesn't live with us.
MORTIMER: [Into the telephone] There must be somebody around the place. How about the office boy? You know, the bright one. The one we don't like. Well, look around the office . . . I'll hold on.

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

ABBY: 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. [Looking at the wine] Haven't tasted elderberry wine since I was a boy. Thank you. [He sits, ABBY pours a glass of wine for MR. GIBBS]

MORTIMER: [Into the telephone] 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. . . .

GIBBS: Do you have your own elderberry bushes?

MARTHA: No, but the cemetery's full of them.

MORTIMER: [Into the telephone] No, I'm not drinking, but I'm going to start now! [He hangs up and starts for the sideboard. When he sees the wine bottle on the table, he rushes and gets a glass from the sideboard and starts pouring himself a glass of wine]

MARTHA: [Seeing MORTIMER pouring the wine] Mortimer, eh . . . eh . . . eh!

MORTIMER: [Engrossed in pouring the wine] Huh?

MARTHA: [To MORTIMER] Eh . . . eh . . . eh! . . .

ABBY: [Seeing what MORTIMER is doing] Mortimer! Not that! [She drags his arm down as he is about to drink, MORTIMER puts his glass down, then realizes that it must be the poisoned wine. Suddenly, he sees MR. GIBBS is about to drink, MORTIMER utters a blood-curling cry and points his finger at MR. GIBBS, who puts his glass down on the table and stares at MORTIMER, terrified]
MORTIMER: Get out of here! Do you want to be killed? Do you want to be poisoned? Do you want to be murdered?

[In the middle of the above speech, Mr. GIBBS starts to run and dashes out of the house, with MORTIMER chasing him. MORTIMER slams the door behind Mr. GIBBS and leans against it weakly]

ABBY: [To MORTIMER] Now, you've spoiled everything.

MORTIMER: You can't do things like that! I don't know how I can explain this to you. But it's not only against the law, it's wrong! It's not a nice thing to do! People wouldn't understand. 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: Now, Mortimer, we don't try to stop you from doing the things you like to do. I don't see why you should interfere with us.

[The telephone rings, MORTIMER answers it]

MORTIMER: [Into the telephone] Hello? Yes, Al. . . . All right, Al, I'll see the first act and I'll pan the hell out of it. But, Al, you've got to do this for me. Get hold of O'Brien. Our lawyer . . . the head of our legal department! Have him meet me at the theater. Now, don't let me down. O.K. I'm starting now. [He hangs up, then speaks to his aunts] I've got to go to the theater. I can't get out of it. But before I go will you promise me something?

MARTHA: 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 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 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: Anyway—you'll do that for me, won't you?

MARTHA: Well, we were planning to hold services before dinner.

MORTIMER: Services?

MARTHA: [A little indignant] You don't think we'd bury Mr. Hoskins without a full Methodist service? He was a Methodist.

MORTIMER: Can't that wait until I get back?

ABBY: Oh, then you could join us!

MORTIMER: Yes! Yes!

ABBY: You'll enjoy the services, Mortimer—especially the hymns. [To MARTHA] Remember how beautifully Mortimer sang in the choir before his voice changed?

MORTIMER: And you're not going to let anybody in this house until I get back? It's a promise.

MARTHA: Well. . . .

ABBY: Oh, Martha—we can do that now that Mortimer's cooperating with us. All right, Mortimer.

MORTIMER: Have you got any paper? [ABBY goes to the desk and gets a sheet of stationery] I'll be back as soon as I can. [MORTIMER takes out the commitment papers, looks at them] There's a man I've got to see.

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

MORTIMER: [Taking it] That's fine. I can save some time if I write my review on the way to the theater. [He hurries out. MARTHA closes the door behind him. ABBY returns to setting the table]

MARTHA: Mortimer didn't seem quite himself today.
ABBY:  [Lighting the candelabra] Well, that's only natural—I think I know why.

MARTHA:  [Going up to landing to close the drapes on the window of the landing] Why?

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

MARTHA:  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. [She comes down into the room again, turns off the electric lights, straightens the telephone on the desk, lights the standing lamp beside the desk]

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 theater has always seemed pretty small potatoes. He needs something really big to criticize—something like the human race.

MARTHA:  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]

ABBY:  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:  [She stops on the stairs] That's very nice of you, dear. Are you sure you want me to?

ABBY:  It's only fair.

MARTHA:  I think I'll wear Mother's old brooch. [She starts up again and ABBY starts toward the kitchen. The doorbell rings]

ABBY:  I'll go, dear.

MARTHA:  [Hushed] We promised Mortimer we wouldn't let anyone in.

ABBY:  Who do you suppose it is?
MARTHA: Wait a minute—I'll look. [She turns to the landing window and peeks out the curtains] It's two men—and I've never seen them before.

ABBY: Are you sure?

MARTHA: [Peeking out again] There's a car at the curb—they must have come in that.

ABBY: Let me look! [She hurries up the stairs. There is another knock at the door, ABBY peeks out the window]

MARTHA: Do you recognize them?

ABBY: They're strangers to me.

MARTHA: We'll just have to pretend we're not home.

[There is another knock, then the door is slowly opened and a tall man walks into the center of the room. He walks in with assurance and ease as though the room were familiar to him. He stands and looks about 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 the 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. He is somewhat ratty in his appearance. His face wears the benevolent smirk of a man who lives in a 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, [DR. EINSTEIN looks about him timidly] As a boy, I couldn't wait to escape from this house. And now I'm glad to escape back into it.

EINSTEIN: Yah, Chonny, it's a good 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 sees the fatted calf in the form of the two glasses of wine] Look, Chonny! Drinks!
JONATHAN:  As if we were expected! A good omen.

    [EINSTEIN almost scampers to the table, passing JONATHAN, also on his way to the table. As they start to reach for the glasses, ABBY speaks]

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

    [EINSTEIN and JONATHAN turn and see the two sisters]


MARTHA:  You get out of here!

JONATHAN:  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! [Little belligerent, she comes two or three steps down the stairs]

JONATHAN:  Yes, Aunt Abby. I am Jonathan. And this is Dr. Einstein.

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

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

ABBY:  Who are you? You're not our nephew, Jonathan!

JONATHAN:  I see you're still wearing the lovely garnet ring that grandma Brewster bought in England,

    [ABBY gasps, looks at the ring and then looks toward MARTHA] 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 two sisters stare at each other, then back at JONATHAN]

MARTHA:  His voice is like Jonathan's.

ABBY:  Have you been in an accident?

JONATHAN:  No. . . . [His hand goes up to his neck] My face. . . . [He clouds] Dr. Einstein is responsible for that. [The two sisters look at EINSTEIN] He's a plastic surgeon. [Flatly] He changes people's faces.
MARTHA: But I've seen that face before. [To 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: Chonny—easy! [He goes quickly between JONATHAN and his aunts] Don't worry! The last five years I give Chonny three faces. I give him another one right away. The last face—I saw that picture, too—just before I operate. And I was intoxicated.

JONATHAN: [With a growing and dangerous intensity] You see, Doctor—what you've done to me. Even my own family. . . .

EINSTEIN: [To calm him] Chonny—you're home!—in this lovely house! [To the aunts] How many times he tells me about Brooklyn—about this house—about his aunts that he loves so much! [To JONATHAN] They know you, Chonny. [To the aunts] You know it's Jonathan. Speak to him! Tell him so! [ABBY starts slowly downstairs]

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

[MARTHA starts to follow her cautiously]

MARTHA: Yes, Jonathan, where have you been?

JONATHAN: [Recovering his composure] England, South Africa, Australia—the last five years, Chicago. Dr. Einstein and I have been in business together there.

ABBY: Oh! We were in Chicago for the World's Fair.

MARTHA: [For want of something to say] We found Chicago awfully warm.

EINSTEIN: Yah—it got hot for us, too.

JONATHAN: [Turning on the charm] 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. [They exchange a quick look] And dear Teddy? [He indicates with his hand a lad of eight or ten] Did he go into politics? [Turns to EINSTEIN] My little brother, Doctor, was determined to become President.
ABBY: Oh, Teddy's fine! Just fine. Mortimer's well, too.

JONATHAN: [Grimly] 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 pause]

MARTHA: [Uneasily] Well, Jonathan, it's very nice to have seen you again.

JONATHAN: [Expanding] Bless you, Aunt Martha! It's good to be home again. [He sits down. The two women look at each other with dismay]

ABBY: Martha, we mustn't let what's on the stove boil over. [She tugs at MARTHA]

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

[JONATHAN looks at her balefully. ABBY exits to the kitchen taking the glasses of wine with her. MARTHA takes the bottle of wine from the table, puts it in the compartment of the sideboard, then hurries out after ABBY]

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

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

EINSTEIN: But, Chonny, we got a hot stiff on our hands.

JONATHAN: Forget Mr. Donati!

EINSTEIN: But we 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 . . . ? [He gestures strangulation]

JONATHAN: He said I looked like Boris Karloff! That's your work, Doctor. You did that to me!
EINSTEIN: 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.

[ABBY enters and comes spunkily up to JONATHAN, MARTHA hovers in the doorway]

ABBY: Jonathan, we're glad that you remembered us and took the trouble to come and say "Hello." But you were never happy in this house and we were never happy while you were here. So we've just come in to say good-by.

JONATHAN: [Smoothly] Aunt Abby, I can't say your feeling toward me comes as a surprise. I've spent a great many hours regretting the 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. [The aunts look at EINSTEIN] I promised him that no matter how rushed we were in passing through Brooklyn, I would take the time to bring him here for one of Aunt Martha's home cooked dinners. [MARTHA rises to this a bit]

MARTHA: Oh?

ABBY: I'm sorry. I'm afraid there wouldn't be enough.

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

JONATHAN: Pot roast!

MARTHA: I think the least we can do is . . .

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

ABBY: Well, we'll hurry it along.

MARTHA: Yes! [She exits into the kitchen]

ABBY: If you want to freshen up, Jonathan—why don't you use the washroom in grandfather's laboratory?
JONATHAN: 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: Well, we get a meal, anyway.

JONATHAN: Grandfather's laboratory! [He looks upstairs] And just as it was! Doctor, a perfect operating room!

EINSTEIN: Too bad we can't use it.

JONATHAN: After you finished with me. . . . Doctor, 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: Why work yourself up, Chonny? Anyway, for Brooklyn 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: Leave that to me, Doctor, I'll handle it. This house will be our headquarters for years.

EINSTEIN: Oh, that would be beautiful, Chonny! This nice quiet house! Those aunts of yours—what sweet ladies! I love them already. [Starts to the door] I get the bags, yah?

JONATHAN: [Stopping him] Doctor! We must wait until we're invited.

EINSTEIN: But you just said . . .
JONATHAN: We'll be invited.

EINSTEIN: And if they say no?

JONATHAN: [Grimly] Doctor—two helpless old women? [He sits on the sofa]

EINSTEIN: [Taking out flask, and relaxing on the window seat] It's like comes true a beautiful dream. Only I hope you're not dreaming [Takes a swig from the flask] It's so peaceful.

JONATHAN: [Stretching out on the sofa] Yes, Doctor, that's what makes this house so perfect for us. It's so peaceful.

[TEDDY enters from the cellar, blows a blast on his bugle, then marches to the stairs and on up to the landing as the two men look at his tropical garb with some astonishment]

TEDDY: [On the landing] CHARGE! [He rushes up the stairs and off through the balcony door. JONATHAN has risen, watching him. EINSTEIN stares and takes another hasty swig from his flask]

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

JONATHAN, smoking an after-dinner cigar, is occupying the most comfortable chair, completely at ease, ABBY and MARTHA, sitting together on the 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. The dinner dishes have been cleared and the room has been restored to order.
JONATHAN: Yes, those five years in Chicago were 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 shouldn't have allowed you to talk so late. [She starts to rise]

JONATHAN: My meeting Dr. Einstein in London, I might say, changed my whole life. 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 the aunts] When we take off the bandages, he look so different the nurse had to introduce me.

JONATHAN: I loved that face. I still carry the picture with me. [He produces a picture from his pocket, looks at it a moment and then hands it to MARTHA, who takes it. ABBY looks over her shoulder]

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

[MARTHA returns the picture to JONATHAN]

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

EINSTEIN: Yah! It's safe now.

ABBY: [Rising] I know that you both want to get to where you're going.

MARTHA: Yes. [She rises, too, hintingly]

JONATHAN: My dear aunts—I am so full of that delicious dinner that I just can't move a muscle. [He takes a puff of his cigar]

EINSTEIN: Yes, it's nice here. [He relaxes a little more]

MARTHA: After all, it's very late and [TEDDY at the head of the stairs, wearing his pith helmet, carrying an open book and another pith helmet]
TEDDY: I found it! I found it!

JONATHAN: What did you find, Teddy?

TEDDY: [Descending] The story of my life—my biography. [He goes to EINSTEIN] Here's the picture I was telling you about, General. Here we are, both of us. [He shows the open book to EINSTEIN] "President Roosevelt and General Goethals at Culebra Cut." That's me, General, and that's you.

EINSTEIN: [He looks at the picture] My, how I've changed!

TEDDY: [TEDDY looks at EINSTEIN, a little puzzled, but makes the adjustment] 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 go to Panama and inspect the new lock. [He hands EINSTEIN the pith helmet]

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: 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 for you to go to bed.

TEDDY: I beg your pardon. Who are you?

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

TEDDY: No—you're not Wilson. But your face is familiar. [JONATHAN stiffens] 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 begins to burn]
ABBY: It's your brother, Jonathan, dear . . .

MARTHA: He's had his face changed.

TEDDY: So that's it—a nature faker!

ABBY: Perhaps you had better go to bed—he and his friend have to get back to their hotel.

[JONATHAN looks at ABBY and then, rising, turns to EINSTEIN]

JONATHAN: General Goethals inspect the Canal.

EINSTEIN: All right, Mr. President. We go to Panama.

TEDDY: [On his way to the cellar door] Bully! Bully! [EINSTEIN follows him. TEDDY opens the cellar door] Follow, me, General. It's down south, you know.

EINSTEIN: [EINSTEIN puts on the pith helmet] Well—bon voyage.

[TEDDY exits, EINSTEIN follows him off. When the cellar door closes JONATHAN turns to ABBY]

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 street.

JONATHAN: Aunt Martha, this is my home!

ABBY: But, Jonathan, you can't stay here. [JONATHAN gives her a look] 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: Then my old room is still free.

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

JONATHAN: He'll share the room with me.

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

JONATHAN: [Coldly] Dr. Einstein and I need a place to sleep. This afternoon, you remembered that as a boy I could be disagreeable. It wouldn't be pleasant for any of us if . . .

MARTHA: [To ABBY, 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] It only needs airing out. . . .

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

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

MARTHA: [Stopping on the balcony] But he can't operate here!

JONATHAN: When Dr. Einstein and I get organized . . . when we resume practice . . . I forgot to tell you—we're turning Grandfather's laboratory into an operating room. We expect to be very busy.

ABBY: [On the balcony] Jonathan, we're not going to let you turn this house into a hospital.

JONATHAN: A hospital! Heavens, no! It will be a beauty parlor!

EINSTEIN: [He enters excitedly from the cellar] Hey, Chonny! Down in the cellar. . . . [He sees the 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 to the third floor]

EINSTEIN: Chonny, when I was in the cellar, what do you think I find?

JONATHAN: What?

EINSTEIN: The Panama Canal.

JONATHAN: The Panama Canal!

EINSTEIN: Chonny, it just fits Mr. Donati! A hole Teddy dug, four feet wide and six feet long.

JONATHAN: [Pointing] Down there?

EINSTEIN: You'd think they knew we were bringing Mr. Donati along. Chonny, that's hospitality.

JONATHAN: Rather a good joke on my aunts, Doctor, their living in a house with a body buried in the cellar.

EINSTEIN: How do we get him in, Chonny?

JONATHAN: Yes, we can't just walk him through the door. [Looks from door to window] We'll drive the car up between the house and the cemetery and, after they've gone to bed, we'll bring Mr. Donati in through the window.

EINSTEIN: Bed! Just think! We got a bed tonight. [He takes out his bottle and starts to take a swig]

JONATHAN: 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 . . .

[ABBY and MARTHA enter on the balcony]

ABBY: Your room's all ready, Jonathan.

JONATHAN: [Crossing to the outside door] Then you can go to bed. We're moving the car up behind the house.

MARTHA: It will be all right where it is—until morning. [EINSTEIN has opened the door]

JONATHAN: I don't want to leave it in the street—that might be against the law. [He and EINSTEIN exit]

MARTHA: Abby, what are we going to do?

ABBY: [Coming downstairs] 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 into this place with one face and going out with another.

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

ABBY: Oh, yes, Mr. Hoskins. It can't be very comfortable for him in there. He's been so patient, the poor dear. I think Teddy ought to get Mr. Hoskins downstairs right away.

MARTHA: Abby, I will not invite Jonathan to the services.

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

[TEDDY enters from the cellar]

TEDDY: General Goethals was very pleased. He said the Canal was just the right size.

ABBY: Teddy, there's been another yellow fever victim.

TEDDY: Dear me—that will be a shock to the General.
MARTHA: Then we mustn't tell him about it.

TEDDY: But it's his department.

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

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'll have to keep it a secret.

MARTHA: Yes!

TEDDY: A state secret?

ABBY: Yes, a state secret.

MARTHA: Promise?

TEDDY: You have the word of the President of the United States. Cross my heart and hope to die. [Following the childish formula, he crosses his heart and spits] Now let's see—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 dark—you come up and take the poor man down to the Canal. Go along, Teddy.

MARTHA: We'll come down later and hold services.

TEDDY: You may announce the President will say a few words. [He starts to the cellar door, then stops] Where is the poor devil?

MARTHA: In the window seat.

TEDDY: It seems to be spreading. We've never had yellow fever there before. [He exits into the cellar]

ABBY: When Jonathan and Dr. Einstein come back, let's see whether we can't get them to go to bed right away.

MARTHA: Yes, then they'd be asleep by the time we got dressed for the funeral. Abby, I haven't even seen Mr. Hoskins yet.
ABBY: Oh, my goodness, that's right—you were out. Well, you just come right over and see him now. *They go to the window seat* He's really very nice-looking—considering he's a Methodist. *Martha is about to lift the window seat when Jonathan thrusts his head through the window curtains. They jump back in fright*

JONATHAN: We're bringing our luggage through here. *He climbs into the room*

ABBY: Your room's waiting for you. You can go right up.

*Two bags and a large instrument case are passed through the window. Jonathan puts them down*

JONATHAN: I'm afraid we don't keep Brooklyn hours. You two run along to bed.

ABBY: 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: Oh, we weren't planning to go until . . .

JONATHAN: *Sternly* Did you hear me say go to bed, Aunt Martha? *Martha retreats upstairs, Einstein comes through the window* Take the bags upstairs. *Putting the instrument case beside the window seat* The instruments can go to the laboratory in the morning. *Closes the window* Now we're all going to bed.

*Einstein starts upstairs, reaching the upper landing, where he stops*

ABBY: I'll wait till you're up, then turn out the lights. *She retreats toward the light switch*

JONATHAN: Another flight, Doctor. Run along, Aunt Martha, *Martha goes to the upstairs door and opens it. Einstein goes through the arch with the bags and Jonathan stops on the landing, looks down at Abby* All right, Aunt Abby. *Looking toward cellar door* I'll be right up.

JONATHAN: Now, Aunt Abby! Turn out the lights.
[ABBY snaps out the lights. JONATHAN waits until ABBY has come upstairs and she and MARTHA have gone through their door and closed it, then turns and goes up through the arch. The stage is entirely dark. TEDDY opens the cellar door, looks out and sees everything is safe, then switches the cellar light on and moves toward the window seat. In the darkness we hear the familiar creak of the window seat as it is opened. A few seconds later we see the faint shadow of TEDDY carrying a burden, passing through the cellar door, then this door is closed behind him shutting off the light. After a second or two JONATHAN and EINSTEIN come out on the upper landing. JONATHAN lights a match and in its light he comes down the stairs]

EINSTEIN: [On the balcony, listening at the aunts' door] It's all right, Chonny. [He comes downstairs]

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

EINSTEIN: Chonny, 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. But be quick. I'll take a look around outside the house. When I tap on the glass you open the window. [JONATHAN goes out front door, closing it behind him.]

EINSTEIN: [He moves toward the window, holding lighted match. He bumps into the table, burns his finger, and we hear him suck the burnt place. He continues to window in darkness. Then we hear a crash] Ach! Himmel! [He lights a match and in its wavering light we see that he has fallen into the window seat] Who left this open, the dumm-kopf? [We hear tapping on the glass, as he closes the window seat and then we hear him open the window] Chonny? O.K. Allez oop! Wait a minute, Chonny. You lost a leg somewhere. Ach! Now I got him [There is a crash of a body and then the sound of a "Sh-hl" from outside] That was me, Chonny. I schlipped.

JONATHAN'S VOICE: [Off] Quiet!

EINSTEIN: Well, his shoe came off. [Pause] All right, Chonny. I got him. Whew! [In the silence there is a knock at the door] Chonny! Somebody at the door! Go quick. No, I manage here. Go quick! [There is a second knock at the door. There is a moment's silence and we hear the creak of the window seat, the noise of EINSTEIN struggling with Mr. Donati's body, then another creak of the window seat. There is a third knock at the door, then it
is opened and by the dim glow of a remote street light we see ELAINE peering into the room]

ELAINE: [Calling softly] Miss Abby! Miss Martha! [In the dim path of light she comes in and moves toward the center of the room, calling toward the staircase] Miss Abby! Miss Martha! [JONATHAN enters hurriedly and we hear the closing of the door, ELAINE whirls and gasps] Who is it? Is that you, Teddy? [JONATHAN advances on her] Who are you?

JONATHAN: Who are you?

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

JONATHAN: What are you doing here?

[EINSTEIN circles around ELAINE toward front door]

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

JONATHAN: Turn on the lights, Doctor, [EINSTEIN switches on the lights] I'm afraid you've chosen an untimely moment for a social call. [He moves past her toward the window expecting to see Mr. Donati there. He doesn't, and this bewilders him]

ELAINE: [Trying to summon courage] I think you'd better explain what you're doing here.

JONATHAN: We happen to live here. [JONATHAN looks out the window in his search for the missing Mr. Donati]

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

JONATHAN: Perhaps we had better introduce ourselves. May I present Dr. Einstein.

ELAINE: Dr. Einstein!

[JONATHAN moves toward the table and looks under the table cloth for Mr. Donati]

JONATHAN: A surgeon of great distinction—and—[Not finding Mr. Donati] something of a magician.
ELAINE: And I suppose you're going to tell me you're Boris . . .

[JONATHAN stiffness and speaks sharply]

JONATHAN: I'm Jonathan Brewster!

ELAINE: [Almost with fright] Oh—you're Jonathan!

JONATHAN: I see you've heard of me.

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

JONATHAN: And what did they say about me?.

ELAINE: Only that there was another brother named Jonathan—that's all that was said. Well, that explains everything. Now that I know who you are I'll run along back home [She runs to the door and finds it locked]—if you'll kindly unlock the door.

[JONATHAN goes to the door and unlocks it. ELAINE starts toward the door but JONATHAN 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 reaches back and locks the door again, leaving the key in the lock, EINSTEIN and JONATHAN both move slowly toward ELAINE]

JONATHAN: You thought you saw someone prowling about the house?

ELAINE: Yes—weren't you outside? Is that your car?

JONATHAN: Oh, you saw someone at the car!

ELAINE: Yes.

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 the door. JONATHAN blocks her way]

JONATHAN: What was the man doing at the car?

ELAINE: I don't know. You see I was on my way over here.

JONATHAN: I think you're lying.

EINSTEIN: Chonny, I think she tells the truth. We let her go now, huh?

JONATHAN: I think she's lying. Breaking into a house at this time of night. I think she's dangerous. She shouldn't be allowed around loose. [He seize ELAINE'S arm. She pulls back]

ELAINE: [In a hoarse frightened tone] Take your hands off me...

JONATHAN: And now, young lady...

[The cellar door suddenly opens and TEDDY comes through and closes it with a bang. They all jump, TEDDY looks them over]

TEDDY: [Blandly] It's going to be a private funeral. [He starts for the steps]

ELAINE: [Struggling] Teddy! Teddy! Tell these men who I am!

TEDDY: That's my daughter, Alice. [She struggles to get away from JONATHAN]

ELAINE: No! No! Teddy! Teddy! [Still struggling]]

TEDDY: Now, Alice, don't be a tomboy. Don't play rough with the gentlemen. [He has reached the landing on the stairs, draws his imaginary sword] CHARGE! [He charges up the stairs and off]

ELAINE: Teddy! Teddy!

JONATHAN: [JONATHAN pulls her arm behind her back and claps a hand over her mouth] Doctor, your handkerchief! [JONATHAN takes EINSTEIN'S handkerchief in his free hand and starts to stuff it in her mouth. As he releases his hand for this ELAINE lets out a scream. JONATHAN claps his hand over her mouth again] Doctor, the cellar!
[EINSTEIN opens the cellar door, then dashes for the light switch and turns off the lights. JONATHAN forces ELAINE into the cellar and waits until EINSTEIN takes hold of her. In the dark, we hear]

ABBY: What's the matter?
MARTHA: What's happening down there?

[JONATHAN closes the cellar door on EINSTEIN and ELAINE as ABBY turns on the lights from the balcony switch and we see ABBY and MARTHA on the balcony. They are dressed for Mr. Hoskins funeral. Mr. Hoskins is being paid the respect of deep and elaborate mourning]

ABBY: What's the matter? What are you doing? [JONATHAN is holding the cellar door]

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

ABBY: I'll call the police! [She starts downstairs]

JONATHAN: We've called the police. We'll handle this. You go back to your room. [They hesitate] Did you hear me? [ABBY turns as if to start upstairs when the knob of the outside door is rattled followed by a knock. They all turn toward the door, ABBY starts down again] Don't answer that! [ELAINE rushes out of the cellar, EINSTEIN follows, grabbing for her]

ELAINE: Miss Abby! Miss Martha!

MARTHA: Why, it's Elaine! [There is a peremptory knock at the door, ABBY hurries over, unlocks it and opens it. MORTIMER enters carrying a suitcase. At the sight of him ELAINE rushes into his arms. He drops the suitcase and puts his arms around her. EINSTEIN and JONATHAN have withdrawn toward the kitchen door, ready to make a run for it]

ELAINE: Oh, Mortimer, where have you been?

MORTIMER: To the Barrymore Theatre—and I should have known better. [He sees JONATHAN] My God, I'm still there!

ABBY: This is your brother Jonathan—and this is Dr. Einstein. [MORTIMER surveys the roomful]
MORTIMER: I know this isn't a nightmare, but what is it?

JONATHAN: I've come back home, Mortimer.

MORTIMER: [Looking at him then at ABBY] Who did you say that was?

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

MORTIMER: Jonathan, you always were a horror, but do you have to look like one?

[JOHATHAN takes a step toward him. EINSTEIN pulls his sleeve]

EINSTEIN: Easy, Chonny! Easy!

JONATHAN: Mortimer, have you forgotten the things I used to do to you? Remember the time you were tied to the bedpost—the needles—under your fingernails. I suggest you don't ask for trouble now.

MORTIMER: Yes, I remember. I remember you as the most detestable, vicious, venomous form of animal life I ever knew.

[JOHATHAN gets tense and takes a step toward MORTIMER, ABBY steps between them]

ABBY: Now, don't you boys start quarreling again the minute you've seen each other.

MORTIMER: There won't be any fight, Aunt Abby. Jonathan, you're not wanted here, so get out!

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

MORTIMER: Oh, no—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, Mortimer, and it wouldn't be very nice to go back on our word.

MORTIMER: [Reluctantly giving in] All right, tonight—but the first thing in the morning—out. Where are they sleeping?
ABBY: We put them in Jonathan's old room.

MORTIMER: *Picking up his suitcase and starting up the stairs* That's my old room. I'm moving into that room. I'm here to stay.

MARTHA: Oh, Mortimer, I'm so glad!

EINSTEIN: *To JONATHAN* Chonny, we sleep down here.

MORTIMER: You bet your life you'll sleep down here.

EINSTEIN: *To JONATHAN* You sleep on the sofa—I sleep on the window seat.

MORTIMER: *Stopping suddenly, as he remembers Mr. Hoskins* The window seat! Oh, well, let's not argue about it. That window seat's good enough for me tonight. *Descending as he talks* I'll sleep on the window seat.

EINSTEIN: Chonny—all this argument—it makes me think of Mr. Donati.

JONATHAN: Donati! Well, Mortimer, there's no real need to inconvenience you. We'll sleep down here.

MORTIMER: Jonathan, this sudden consideration for me is very unconvincing.

EINSTEIN: Come, Chonny, we get our things out of the room, yes?

MORTIMER: Don't bother, Doctor.

JONATHAN: You know, Doctor, I've completely lost track of Mr. Donati.

MORTIMER: Who's this Mr. Donati?

EINSTEIN: *On the stairs* Just a friend of ours Chonny's been looking for.

MORTIMER: Don't you bring anybody else in here!

EINSTEIN: *Reassuringly* It's all right, Chonny. While we pack I tell you about him.

   *[JONATHAN starts upstairs]*
ABBY: Mortimer, you don't have to stay down here. I could sleep with Martha and you could have my room.

JONATHAN: [On the balcony] No trouble at all, Aunt Abby. We'll be packed in a few minutes, and then you can have the room, Mortimer.

MORTIMER: You're just wasting time. I told you I'm sleeping down here! [JONATHAN exits through the arch, MORTIMER starts for stairs and almost bumps into ELAINE] Oh, hello, Elaine!

ELAINE: Mortimer!

MORTIMER: [Taking her in his arms] What's the matter with you, dear?

ELAINE: I've almost been killed!

MORTIMER: You've almost been . . . Abby! Martha! [He looks quickly at the aunts]

MARTHA: It was Jonathan.

ABBY: He mistook her for a sneak thief.

ELAINE: No, it was more than that. He's some kind of a maniac. [She draws close to MORTIMER again] Mortimer, I'm afraid of him.

MORTIMER: Why, darling, you're trembling. [Sitting ELAINE on sofa. To the 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 get something for both of you.

[ABBY takes off her hat and gloves and puts them on sideboard]

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

MORTIMER: You weren't going out anywhere, were you? Do you know what time it is? It's after twelve. Twelve! [He glances at the cellar door, remembering] Elaine, you go along home.
ELAINE: What?

ABBY: Why, Mortimer, you wanted some sandwiches for you and Elaine. It won't take us a minute.

MARTHA: Remember, we wanted to celebrate your engagement. That's what we'll do. We'll have a nice supper for you—and we'll open a bottle of wine.

MORTIMER: [Reluctantly] All right. [The aunts exit to the kitchen. He calls after them] No wine!

ELAINE: [Rising] Mortimer, what's going on in this house?

MORTIMER: What do you mean—What's going on in this house?

ELAINE: You were supposed to take me to dinner and the theater tonight. You called it off. You asked me to marry you. I said I would. 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: [Going to her] I love you very much, Elaine. In fact, I love you so much I can't marry you.

ELAINE: [Drawing away] Have you suddenly gone crazy?

MORTIMER: I don't think so—but it's just a matter of time. [He seats her on sofa] You see, insanity runs in my family. [He looks toward the kitchen] It practically gallops! That's why I can't marry you, dear.

ELAINE: [Unconvinced] 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—well—it's what you would expect if Edgar Allen Poe had written I Remember Mama!

ELAINE: Now, just because Teddy . . .

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! 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: But he's your brother, not you. I'm in love with you.

MORTIMER: And Teddy! You know Teddy. He thinks he's Roosevelt.

ELAINE: Even Roosevelt thinks he's Roosevelt.

MORTIMER: No, dear, no Brewster should marry. I realize now that if I'd met my father in time I would have stopped him.

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

MORTIMER: [Glancing at the window seat and moving toward it] Well, even they have their peculiarities!

ELAINE: [ELAINE walks away from him] Yes, but what lovely peculiarities—kindness, generosity, human sympathy!

MORTIMER: [He lifts the window seat to take a peek at Hoskins and sees Mr. Donati and says to himself] There's another one!

ELAINE: [Turning to MORTIMER] There are plenty of others! You can't tell me anything about your aunts.

MORTIMER: I'm not going to! [Crossing to ELAINE] Elaine, you've got to go home. Something very important has just come up.

ELAINE: Come up from where? We're here alone together.
MORTIMER: Elaine, 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 nitwit!

MORTIMER: [Pushing her toward the door] Well, if you love me, will you get the hell out of here?

ELAINE: Well, at least take me home. I'm afraid!

MORTIMER: Afraid! A little walk through the cemetery?

ELAINE: [Changing tactics] Mortimer, will you kiss me good night?

MORTIMER: [He goes over to her] Of course. [What MORTIMER plans to be a desultory peck, ELAINE turns into a production number, MORTIMER comes out of it with no loss of poise] Good night, dear. I'll call you up in a day or two.

ELAINE: [She walks to the door in a cold fury, opens it and starts out, then wheels on MORTIMER] You—you critic! [She exits, slamming the door]

MORTIMER: [He turns and rushes determinedly to the kitchen door] Aunt Abby, Aunt Martha! Come in here!

ABBY’S VOICE: We'll be in in just a minute, dear.

MORTIMER: Come in here now!

ABBY: [enters from the kitchen] What do you want, Mortimer? Where's Elaine?

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

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 is that in the window seat?

ABBY: We told you—it's Mr. Hoskins.

MORTIMER: It is not Mr. Hoskins. [He opens the window seat, ABBY goes over and looks down at Mr. Donati]

ABBY: [Puzzled at the sight of a stranger] Who can that be?

MORTIMER: 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 anyone thinks he can walk into our house.

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

ABBY: Mortimer, that man's an impostor! Well, if he came here to be buried in our cellar, he's mistaken.

MORTIMER: 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?

ABBY: He must have gone to Panama.

MORTIMER: You buried him?

ABBY: 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.

MORTIMER: Jonathan. . . .
[At the mention of JONATHAN'S name, he closes the window seat]

ABBY: We've always wanted to hold a double funeral, but we're not going to read services over a perfect stranger.
MORTIMER: A stranger! Aunt Abby, how can I believe you? There are twelve men in the cellar and you admit you poisoned them.

ABBY: [Drawing herself up] I did. But you don't think I'd stoop to telling a fib? [She bustles indignantly into the kitchen, calling] Martha!

[MORTIMER starts to pace. JONATHAN, having learned where Mr. Donati is, enters from above and comes down the stairs hurriedly, making for the window seat. He sees MORTIMER and stops]

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

MORTIMER: 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 as quickly as possible.

JONATHAN: I'm glad you recognize the fact that you and I can't live under the same roof. But you have arrived at the wrong solution. Take your suitcase and get out! [He starts toward the window seat]

MORTIMER: Jonathan, you're beginning to bore me! [He circles around the table, heading JONATHAN off] 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're grown up. [He slips past MORTIMER, and sits on window seat] I'm staying—you're leaving—and I mean now!

MORTIMER: If you think I can be frightened, Jonathan, if you think there's anything I fear. . . .

JONATHAN: [Rising and facing MORTIMER] I've led a strange life, Mortimer. But it's taught me one thing—to be afraid of nothing! [For a second they glare at each other with equal courage, ABBY marches in from kitchen, followed by Martha]

ABBY: Martha, you just look and see what's in that window seat. [Both men throw themselves on the window seat and speak and gesture simultaneously]

MORTIMER AND JONATHAN: Now, Aunt Abby. . . .
[Light dawns on MORTIMER’s face. He rises with smiling assurance]

MORTIMER: Jonathan, let Aunt Martha see what's in the window seat. [JONATHAN freezes dangerously] Aunt Abby, I owe you an apology. I have very good news for you. Jonathan is leaving. He's taking Dr. Einstein and their cold companion with him. [He walks to JONATHAN] You're my brother, Jonathan. You're a Brewster. I'm giving you a chance to get away and take the evidence with you. You can't ask for more than that. [JONATHAN doesn't move] All right. In that case, I'll have to call the police, [MORTIMER starts for the telephone]

JONATHAN: Don't reach for that telephone [He crosses quickly toward MORTIMER] Are you still giving me orders after seeing what's happened to Mr. Donati?

MARTHA: Donati?

ABBY: I knew he was a foreigner.

JONATHAN: [To MORTIMER] Remember, what happened to Mr. Donati can happen to you, too.

[There is a knock at the door; it opens and OFFICER O'HARA sticks his head in]

O'HARA: Oh, hello. . . .

ABBY: Hello, Officer O'Hara. Is there anything we can do for you?

O'HARA: Saw your lights on—thought there might be sickness in the house. Oh, you got company. Sorry I disturbed you.

MORTIMER: [He hurries to O'HARA and pulls him through the door into the room] No! Come in!

ABBY: Yes, come in!

MARTHA: Come right in, Officer O'Hara. This is our nephew, Mortimer.

O'HARA: Pleased to meet you.

ABBY: And this is another nephew, Jonathan.
O’HARA: Pleased to make your acquaintance. Well, it must be nice having your nephews visiting 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: [To JONATHAN] Your face looks familiar to me. Perhaps I've seen a picture of you somewhere.

JONATHAN: I don't think so. [He hurries up the stairs]

MORTIMER: I'd hurry if I were you, Jonathan. You're all packed anyway, aren't you?

[JONATHAN exits upstairs]

O’HARA: Well, you'll be wanting to say your good-bys. I'll be running along. [He starts for the door]

MORTIMER: [Stopping him] What's the rush? I'd like to have you stick around until my brother goes.

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 hurries out]

MARTHA: I'd better make some more sandwiches. I ought to know your appetite by this time, Mr. O'Hara.[She exits to the kitchen]

O’HARA: [Calling after her] 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 going soon.

O’HARA: Haven't I seen a photograph of your brother around here some place?
MORTIMER: I don't think so.

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 mother said that?

O’HARA: Yeah. My mother was an actress—a stage actress. Perhaps you've heard of her—Peaches Latour.

MORTIMER: Sounds like a name I've seen on a program. What did she play?

O’HARA: 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: Yeah. 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 theater.

O’HARA: You do? Say, you're not Mortimer Brewster, the dramatic critic? [MORTIMER nods] Say, I'm glad to meet you. We're in the same line of business.

MORTIMER: We are?

O’HARA: Yes, I'm a playwright. 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!

O’HARA: What time you got?

MORTIMER: Ten after one.

O’HARA: Gee, I got to ring in. [He starts to go]

MORTIMER: [Stopping him] Wait a minute! On that play of yours—you know, I might be able to help you.

O’HARA: You would? Say, it was fate my walking in here tonight. Look, I'll tell you the plot.

[They see JONATHAN and EINSTEIN enter on the balcony carrying suitcases]

MORTIMER: Oh, Jonathan, you're on your way, eh? Good! You haven't got much time, you know.

ABBY: [Entering from kitchen] Everything's about ready. [She sees JONATHAN and EINSTEIN] Oh, you leaving now, Jonathan? Well, good-by. Good-by Dr. Einstein. [She notices the instrument case by the window] Oh, doesn't this case belong to you?

MORTIMER: Yes, Jonathan. You can't go without all of your things! [To O’HARA] Well, O'Hara, it was nice meeting you. I'll see you again—we'll talk about your play.

O’HARA: 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: No, O'Hara, I can't do that. You see, 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 going to leave this house till I tell you the plot, [O'HARA sits on the window seat]

JONATHAN: In that case, Mortimer, we'll be running along. [He starts toward the outside door]

MORTIMER: No, Jonathan! Don't try that! You can't go yet. You're taking everything with you. . . . [To O'HARA] Look, O'Hara, you run along now. My brother's just going and. . . .

O'HARA: I can wait. I've been waiting twelve years.

MARTHA enters with sandwiches and coffee on a tray.

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: Jonathan's leaving.

MARTHA: Oh, that's nice! Come along, Mr. O'Hara. [She takes the tray back into the kitchen]

ABBY: Mr. O'Hara, you don't mind eating in the kitchen?

O'HARA: Where else would you eat? [He exits to the kitchen]

ABBY: Good-by, Jonathan, it's nice to have seen you again. [She hurries into kitchen]

MORTIMER: [Closing the kitchen door after ABBY] Jonathan, I'm glad you came back to Brooklyn because it gives me a chance to throw you out! [He opens window seat] And the first one out is your boy friend, Mr. Donati.

O'HARA: [Appearing in doorway] Look, Mr. Brewster! [MORTIMER hurriedly closes the window seat]. We can talk in here.

MORTIMER: No. I'll be right out, O'Hara. [He pushes O'HARA back into the kitchen]
JONATHAN:  *[Scornfully]* I might have known you'd grow up to write a play with a policeman.

MORTIMER:  Get going, now—all *three* of you! *[He exits; closing the door]*

JONATHAN:  *[Putting the bags down]* Doctor, this affair between my brother and me has got to be settled.

EINSTEIN:  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, Doctor. *[Opening window seat].* This goes back many years.

EINSTEIN:  Now, Chonny, let's get going.

JONATHAN:  We're not going—we're going to sleep right here tonight.

EINSTEIN:  With a cop in the kitchen and Mr. Donati in the window seat?

JONATHAN:  That's all he's got on us, Doctor. *[He closes the window seat]* We'll take Mr. Donati down and dump him in the bay. That done, we're coming back here. And then if he tries to interfere . . .

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, Chonny.

JONATHAN:  *[Peremptorily]* Doctor!

EINSTEIN:  O.K. We got to stick together. Some day we get stuck together. *[He points to the bags]* If we're coming back do we got to take them with us?

JONATHAN:  No. Leave them here. *[He looks toward upstairs, then toward the cellar door]* Hide them in the cellar, *[Einstein moves toward the cellar with the instrument case]* Move fast! Donati can go out the same way he came in.
[**EINSTEIN** exits into the cellar. **JONATHAN** goes to the foot of the staircase, takes the other bags to the cellar door, goes to the window and opens it. **EINSTEIN** comes up from the cellar, excited]

**EINSTEIN:** Hey, Chonny! Come quick!

**JONATHAN:** What's the matter?

**EINSTEIN:** You know that hole in the cellar?

**JONATHAN:** Yes.

**EINSTEIN:** Well—we got an ace in the hole.

[They both disappear down the cellar steps, **MORTIMER** enters from kitchen, finishing a sandwich and looks around the room. He sees their two bags and notices the open window. He goes to the window seat, looks in and sees Mr. Donati is still there, closes the window seat and, kneeling on it, leans out the window and calls softly]

**MORTIMER:** Jonathan! Jonathan! [**JONATHAN** and **EINSTEIN** come in through the cellar door unnoticed by **MORTIMER** and walk into the room] Jonathan!

**JONATHAN:** Yes, Mortimer!

**MORTIMER:** [Turning around and seeing **JONATHAN**, he speaks angrily] Where have you two been? I thought I told you. . . .

**JONATHAN:** We're not going.

**MORTIMER:** Oh, you're not? You think I'm not serious about this, eh? Do you want the police to know what's in that window seat?

**JONATHAN:** [Firmly] We're staying here.

**MORTIMER:** All right! You asked for it! This gets me rid of you and O'Hara both at the same time. [He goes to the kitchen door] Officer O'Hara!

**JONATHAN:** If you tell O'Hara what's in the window seat, I'll tell him what's in the cellar.

**MORTIMER:** [Closing the door swiftly] The cellar?
JONATHAN: There's an elderly gentleman down there who seems to be very dead.

MORTIMER: What were you doing in the cellar?

EINSTEIN: What's he doing in the cellar?

O'HARA: [Offstage] No, thank you, ma'am. I've had plenty! They were fine!

JONATHAN: Now, what are you going to say to Officer O'Hara?

O'HARA: [walks in] Say, your aunts want to hear it, too. Shall I get them in here?

MORTIMER: [Pulling him toward the outside door] No, O'Hara! You can't do that now! You've got to ring in!

O'HARA: The hell with ringing in! I'll get your aunts in and tell you the plot.

MORTIMER: No, O'Hara, not in front of all these people! We'll get together alone someplace, later.

O'HARA: Say, how about the back room at Kelly's?

MORTIMER: [Hurrying him toward door] Fine! You go ring in and I'll meet you at Kelly's.

JONATHAN: Why don't you two go down in the cellar?

O'HARA: That's all right with me [He starts for the cellar door] Is this the cellar?

MORTIMER: [Grabbing him] No! We'll go to Kelly's. But you're going to ring in on the way, aren't you?

O'HARA: All right, that will only take a couple of minutes.
[-mortimer pushes him through the outside door, then turns to get his hat]

MORTIMER: [To JONATHAN] I'll ditch this guy and be back in five minutes. I expect to find you gone. No! Wait for me. [He exits, closing the door]
JONATHAN: We'll wait for him, Doctor. I've waited a great many years for a chance like this.

EINSTEIN: We got him where we want him. Did he look guilty!

JONATHAN: Take the bags back to our room, Doctor. [He goes to the window and closes it.]

ABBY, who is wiping her hands on her apron, enters, followed by Martha, who has a saucer and dish towel in her hand]

ABBY: Have they gone? [She sees JONATHAN and EINSTEIN] Oh—we thought we heard somebody leave.

JONATHAN: Just Mortimer—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: You won't have time. . . .

ABBY: Yes, if you're still here when Mortimer gets back, he won't like it.

EINSTEIN: He'll like it! He's gotta like it!

JONATHAN: Get something for us to eat, while we bury Mr. Donati in the cellar.

MARTHA: Oh, no!

ABBY: [Spiritedly] He can't stay in our cellar, 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. Donati will get along fine together. They're both dead.

MARTHA: They must mean Mr. Hoskins."

EINSTEIN: Mr. Hoskins?
JONATHAN: So 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 gentlemen?

MARTHA: [Firmly] And we won't have any strangers buried in our cellar.

JONATHAN: But Mr. Hoskins . . .

MARTHA: Mr. Hoskins isn't a stranger.

ABBY: Besides, there's no room for Mr. Donati. The cellar's crowded already.

JONATHAN: Crowded? With what?

ABBY: There are twelve graves down there now.

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: What we've been doing is a mercy.

ABBY: [a gesture of dismissal] So you take your Mr. Donati out of here.

JONATHAN: [Amazed and impressed] You've done that—right in this house—and buried them down there?

EINSTEIN: Chonny, we been chased all over the world . . . They stay right here in Brooklyn and do just as good as you do.

JONATHAN: What?

EINSTEIN: You got twelve, Chonny. They got twelve.

J
JONATHAN:  [*His pride wounded*] I've got thirteen.

EINSTEIN:  No, twelve, Chonny.

JONATHAN:  Thirteen! There's Mr. Donati! 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, Chonny, you can't count the one in South Bend. He died of pneumonia.

JONATHAN:  [*His record at stake*] He wouldn't have got pneumonia if I hadn't shot him.

EINSTEIN:  No, Chonny, he died of pneumonia. He don't count.

JONATHAN:  He counts with me! I say thirteen!

EINSTEIN:  No, Chonny. You got twelve. They got twelve. The old ladies are just as good as you are.

JONATHAN:  [*Wheeling on them*] Oh, they are, are they? That's easily taken care of! All I need is one more!—that's all—just one more!

[MORTIMER enters hastily, closing the door behind him and turns to them with a nervous smile]

MORTIMER:  Well—here I am!

[JONATHAN looks at MORTIMER with the widening eyes of someone who has just solved a problem]

CURTAIN
ACT THREE
SCENE ONE

The curtain rises on an empty stage. We hear voices, voices in disagreement, from the cellar, through the open cellar door.

MARTHA: [Offstage] You stop doing that!

ABBY: [Offstage] This is our house and this is our cellar and you can't do that!

EINSTEIN: [Offstage] Ladies! Please go back upstairs where you belong.

JONATHAN: [Offstage] Abby! Martha! Go upstairs! \ 

MARTHA: [Offstage] There's no use of your doing what you're doing because it will just have to be undone!
ABBY:  [Offstage] I tell you we won't have it!

MARTHA:  [enters from the cellar] You'll find out! You'll find out whose house this is! [She goes to the street door, opens it and looks out.

ABBY enters from the cellar. Both women are wearing their hats]

ABBY:  I'm warning you! You'd better stop! [To MARTHA] Hasn't Mortimer come back yet?

MARTHA:  [She closes the door] No.

ABBY:  It's a terrible thing—burying a good Methodist with a foreigner!

MARTHA:  I won't have our caller desecrated!

ABBY:  And we promised Mr. Hoskins a full Christian funeral. . . . Where do you suppose Mortimer went?

MARTHA:  I don't know. But he must be doing something. He said to Jonathan, "You just wait, I'll settle this!"

ABBY:  Well, he can't settle it while he's out of the house. [Turning to the cellar door] That's all we want settled—what's going on down there.

MORTIMER:  [enters carrying TEDDY's commitment papers in his hand] [Grimly] All right. Now, where's Teddy?

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's the matter with you?

ABBY:  Running around getting papers signed at a time like this!

MARTHA:  Do you know what Jonathan is doing?

ABBY:  He's putting Mr. Hoskins and Mr. Donati in together.

MORTIMER:  Oh, he is, is he? Well, let him. Is Teddy in his room?
MARTHA: Teddy won't be any help.

MORTIMER: When he signs these commitment papers, I can tackle Jonathan.

MORTIMER: You had to 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: [Starting upstairs] I'll be back down in a minute.

ABBY: Come, Martha. [To MORTIMER] We're going for the police.

[The sisters get their gloves]

MORTIMER: All right. [He suddenly realizes what has been said] The police! You can't go for the police! [He rushes downstairs to the street door]

MARTHA: Why can't we?

MORTIMER: Because, if you told them about Mr. Donati, they'd find Mr. Hoskins too; and that might make them curious, and they'd find out about the other 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 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: 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: We'll have to speak to him again about that, Abby. [To MORTIMER] His wife died a few years ago and it's left him very lonely.

ABBY: Come along, Martha. [She starts toward the door. MORTIMER, however, gets there first]

MORTIMER: 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. Donati, we are.

MORTIMER: But 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. Donati, too!

MORTIMER: Will you please let me do it my own way? I've got to see Teddy. [He starts upstairs]

ABBY: If they're not out of here by morning, we're going to call the police. MORTIMER: [turns at the top of the stairs] They'll be out. I promise you that! And for God's sake, please go to bed, will you? [He exits upstairs]

MARTHA: Well, that's a relief, Abby.

ABBY: If Mortimer is doing something at last then Jonathan's just going to a lot of unnecessary trouble. We'd better tell him. [JONATHAN comes up the cellar steps into the room] Jonathan, you might as well stop what you're doing.

JONATHAN: It's all done. Did I hear Mortimer?

ABBY: Well, it will have to be undone. You're all going to be out of this house by morning.
JONATHAN: Oh, we are? In that case, you and Aunt Martha can go to bed and have a peaceful night's sleep.

MARTHA: [Always a little frightened by JONATHAN] Yes. Come, Abby. [They start up the stairs]

JONATHAN: Good night, aunties.

[The sisters turn at the top of the stairs]

ABBY: Not good night, Jonathan. Good-by! By the time we get up you'll be out of this house. Mortimer's promised.

MARTHA: And he has a way of doing it, too!

JONATHAN: Then Mortimer is back?

ABBY: Yes, he's up here talking to Teddy.

MARTHA: Good-by, Jonathan.

ABBY: Good-by, Jonathan.

JONATHAN: [Quietly] Perhaps you'd better say good-by to Mortimer.

ABBY: Oh, you'll see Mortimer.

JONATHAN: [Tense] Yes, I'll see Mortimer.

[ABBY and MARTHA exit. JONATHAN stands without moving. There is murder on his mind.

After an appreciable pause EINSTEIN comes up from the cellar dusting himself off. He is wearing Mr. Donati's shoes]

EINSTEIN: Whew! That's all fixed up. Smooth like a lake. Nobody'd ever know they're there. [JONATHAN still stands without moving] That bed feels good already. Forty-eight hours we didn't sleep. Whew! Come on, Chonny, let's go up, yes?

JONATHAN: You're forgetting, Doctor.

EINSTEIN: Vas?
JONATHAN: My brother Mortimer.

EINSTEIN: Chonny, tonight? I'm sleepy. We do that tomorrow—the next day.

JONATHAN: No, tonight. Now!

EINSTEIN: Chonny, please! I'm tired. . . . Tomorrow I got to operate.

JONATHAN: You're going to operate tomorrow, Doctor. But tonight we take care of Mortimer.

EINSTEIN: Chonny, not tonight—we go to bed, eh?

JONATHAN: Doctor, look at me! [EINSTEIN looks and straightens up] You can see that it's going to be done, can't you?

EINSTEIN: Ach, Chonny! I can see! I know that look!

JONATHAN: It's a little late for us to dissolve our partnership.

EINSTEIN: O.K., Chonny. We do it. But the quick way? The quick twist, like in London. [He gives that London neck another twist with his hands]

JONATHAN: No, Doctor, I think this calls for something special. [JONATHAN begins 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 aesthetic satisfaction in it. Now, Melbourne—ah, there was something to remember.

EINSTEIN: Remember! [He shivers] I wish I didn't. 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: 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: I'll find them, Doctor.

[He exits to the cellar, EINSTEIN paces desperately for a moment.]

TEDDY steps out on the balcony with his bugle and lifts it as if to blow. MORTIMER dashes out after him and grabs his arm]

MORTIMER: Don't do that, Mr. President!

TEDDY: I cannot sign any proclamation without consulting my cabinet.

MORTIMER: But this must be secret.

TEDDY: A secret proclamation? How unusual!

MORTIMER: Russia mustn't know until it's signed.

TEDDY: Russia? Those devils! I'll sign it right away. 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. If it's a secret proclamation it has to be signed in secret.

MORTIMER: At once, Mr. President.

TEDDY: I'll put on my signing clothes.

[He exits, MORTIMER comes downstairs, EINSTEIN takes MORTIMER's hat from the hall tree and meets him at the foot of the stairs]

EINSTEIN: You go now, eh? [He hands MORTIMER his hat]

MORTIMER: No, Doctor, I'm waiting for something—something important.

[He hands his hat on the couch]
EINSTEIN:  *[Urging MORTIMER to the door]* Please, you go now!

MORTIMER:  Dr. Einstein, I have nothing against you personally. You seem to be a nice fellow. If you'll take my advice, you'll get out of this house and get just as far away as possible. . . . There's going to be trouble.

EINSTEIN:  Trouble, yah! You get out!

MORTIMER:  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:  *[Glancing nervously toward the cellar]* Chonny is in a bad mood. When he is like this—he is 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:  At least people in plays act like they got sense.

MORTIMER:  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. This little opus tonight—for instance. In this play, there's a man . . . [JONATHAN enters from the cellar, carrying the instrument case, He pauses in the doorway, unseen by MORTIMER] . . . he's supposed to be bright. 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. Does he go? No, he stays there. I ask you—is that what an intelligent person would do?

EINSTEIN:  You're asking me!

MORTIMER:  He didn't even have sense enough to be scared—to be on guard. For instance, the murderer invites him to sit down.

EINSTEIN:  You mean "Won't you sit down"?

MORTIMER:  Believe it or not, that one was in there, too.
EINSTEIN: And what did he do?

MORTIMER: He sat down! Mind you—this fellow is supposed to be bright. [MORTIMER sits down] There he is—all ready to be trussed up. And what do they use to tie him with?

EINSTEIN: What?

MORTIMER: The curtain cord.

[JOHNATHAN draws his knife, and goes to the window]


[JOHNATHAN cuts the curtain cord]

MORTIMER: A little too convenient. When are playwrights going to use some imagination? [JOHNATHAN has coiled the curtain cord and is moving behind MORTIMER] The curtain cord!

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 theater. It's the playwrights that are killing the theater. So there he sat—the big dope—this guy that's supposed to be bright—waiting to be tied up and gagged!

[JOHNATHAN drops the looped curtain cord over MORTIMER's shoulders, pulls it taut and ties it behind the hack of the chair. Simultaneously EINSTEIN leaps to MORTIMER, pulls MORTIMER'S handkerchief out of his pocket and gags him with it. JOHNATHAN steps to MORTIMER'S side]

EINSTEIN: [Tying MORTIMER's legs] You're right about that fellow—he wasn't very bright.

JOHNATHAN: Now if you don't mind, Mortimer—we'll finish the story, [MORTIMER is making muted, unintelligible sounds. JOHNATHAN goes to the sideboard and brings the candelabra down to the table and lights the candles] Mortimer, I've been away for twenty years, but never, my dear brother, were you out of my mind. . . . In Melbourne one night—I dreamt of you. . . . When I landed in San Francisco—I felt a strange satisfaction—Once again I was in the same country with you.
[**Jonathan** turns out the lights, throwing the room into an eerie candlelight. He picks up the instrument case and sets it down on the table between the candelabra] Now, Doctor—we go to work.

**Einstein:** Please, Chonny—for me—the quick way—eh?

**Jonathan:** Doctor, this must be an artistic achievement! After all, we're performing before a very distinguished critic.

**Einstein:** Chonny. . .

**Jonathan:** [Flaring] Doctor. . . .

**Einstein:** All right, let's get it over! [Jonathan takes several instruments out of the case, handling them as potential accessories to torture. The last of these is a long probe, which he measures to Mortimer's face. Finally he begins to put on rubber gloves, Einstein takes a bottle from his pocket, finds it empty] Chonny, I gotta have a drink, I can't do this without a drink.

**Jonathan:** Pull yourself together, Doctor!

**Einstein:** I gotta have a drink! Chonny, . . . when we walked in this afternoon—there was wine there. . . . [He points to the table] Remember? Where did she put it? [He remembers] Ah. . . . [He goes to sideboard and opens it, finding the wine] Look, Chonny! [He takes the wine bottle to the table with two wine glasses] We got a drink. [He pours the wine into the two glasses, the second glass emptying the bottle. Mortimer, who has been squirming, stops, eyeing the bottle, then Jonathan and Einstein] That's all there is. I split it with you. We both need a drink! [Einstein hands one glass to Jonathan, then raises the glass of poisoned wine and is about to drink]

**Jonathan:** One moment, Doctor! Please! Where are your manners? [To Mortimer] Yes, Mortimer. I realize now that it was you who brought me back to Brooklyn. We drink to you! [He raises his glass, sniffs the wine, hesitates, then proposes a grim toast] Doctor—to my dear dead brother! [They are raising their glasses to their lips, when Teddy, fully and formally dressed, steps out of the upper door onto the balcony and blows a terrific blast on his bugle, Einstein and Jonathan drop their glasses, spilling the wine, Teddy turns around and goes out again]

**Einstein:** Ach, Gott!
JONATHAN: Damn that idiot! He goes next! That's all. He goes next! [He rushes to the staircase]

EINSTEIN: No, Chonny, not Teddy! That's where I stop—not Teddy! [He intercepts JONATHAN at the stairs]

JONATHAN: We'll get to him later.

EINSTEIN: We don't get to him at all!

JONATHAN: Now we have to work fast!

EINSTEIN: Yah—the quick way—eh, Chonny?

JONATHAN: Yes—the quick way! [He darts behind MORTIMER, pulling a large silk handkerchief from his pocket and drops it around MORTIMER'S neck. There is a knock at the door. JONATHAN and EINSTEIN are startled. The door opens and officer O'HARA enters]

O'HARA: Hey, the Colonel's gotta quit blowing that horn! [JONATHAN and EINSTEIN quickly stand between MORTIMER and O'HARA]

JONATHAN: 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 better speak to him myself. Where are the lights? [O'HARA turns on the lights, EINSTEIN and JONATHAN break for the kitchen door but stop when the lights go on. O'HARA closes the door and starts up the stairs. MORTIMER mumbles through the gag. O'HARA turns and sees him] Hey, you stood me up! I waited an hour at Kelly's for you! [He comes downstairs. MORTIMER is trying to talk, O'HARA turns to EINSTEIN] What happened to him?

EINSTEIN: He was explaining the play he saw tonight. That's what happened to a fellow in the play.

O'HARA: Did they have that in the play you saw tonight? [MORTIMER nods his head] Gee, they practically stole that from the second act of my play. In the
second act just before. 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** _mumbles and moves his head_] Huh? Oh, yes. [**He goes to Mortimer** _and starts to remove the gag then hesitates_] No! You've got to hear the plot! [**O'Hara** _goes enthusiastically into his plot as the curtain is coming down_] Well, she's sitting there making up, see—when out of a clear sky the door opens—and a man with a black mustache walks in. . . .

CURTAIN

**SCENE TWO**

When the curtain rises again, daylight is streaming through the windows. **Mortimer** is still tied in his chair and seems to be in a semiconscious state. **Jonathan** is asleep on the couch near the stairs. **Einstein**, pleasantly intoxicated, is seated, listening. There is a bottle of whisky on the table and two glasses, **O'Hara**, with his coat off and his collar loosened, has progressed to the most exciting scene of his play.

**O'Hara:** . . . there she is, lying unconscious across the table—in her longeray—the Nazi 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—great effect we got there—when all of a sudden—through the window—in comes Mayor La Guardia! [**Mortimer** _is startled into consciousness, then collapses again, O'Hara is pacing with self-satisfaction._] **Einstein** _pours himself a drink_] Hey, remember who paid for that—go easy on it.

**Einstein:** Well, I'm listening, ain't I?

**O'Hara:** How do you like it, so far?

**Einstein:** It put Chonny to sleep [**Einstein goes over and shakes Jonathan**] Hey, Chonny!—Chonny!—want a drink?

**O'Hara:** [Pouring drink] Let him alone—if he ain't got no more interest than that—he don't get a drink, [**O'Hara tosses a drink down, ready to resume his story**] All right. It's three days later, I been transferred and I'm under charges—that's because somebody stole my badge—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 at the door**] Don't let
anybody in. [EINSTEIN hurried to the landing window and looks out] So I figure I'll outsmart him. There's a vacant house on the corner. I goes in.

EINSTEIN:  [Looking out] It's cops!

O’HARA:  I stands there in the dark and I sees the door handle turn.

EINSTEIN:  [Shaking JONATHAN'S shoulder] Chonny! It's cops! It's cops! [EINSTEIN hurries up the stairs]

O’HARA:  I pulls my gun, I braces myself against the wall and I say "Come in!" [OFFICERS BROPHY and KLEIN walk in, see O’HARA -with his gun pointed toward them, and start to raise their hands. EINSTEIN exits upstairs] Hello, boys!

BROPHY:  [Recognizing O’HARA] What the hell's going on here?

O’HARA:  Hey, Pat, what do you know? This is Mortimer Brewster! He's going to write my play with me! I'm just telling him the story.

KLEIN:  Did you have to tie him up to make him listen? [He goes over and unties MORTIMER]

BROPHY:  Joe, you'd better report in at the station. The whole force is out looking for you.

O’HARA:  Did they send you boys 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.

BROPHY:  The Lieutenant's on the warpath. He says the Colonel's got to be put away some place.

          [KLEIN helps MORTIMER to his feet]

MORTIMER:  [Weakly] Yes! [staggers toward the stairs, O’HARA follows him]
O’HARA: Listen, Mr. Brewster. I got to go, so I’ll just run through the third act quick.

MORTIMER: Get away from me! [BROPHY goes to the telephone and dials]

KLEIN: Say, do you know what time it is? It’s after eight o’clock in the morning.

O’HARA: It is? Gee, Mr. Brewster, them first two acts run a little long. But I don’t see anything we can leave out.

MORTIMER: You can leave it all out.

BROPHY: [sees JONATHAN on the couch] Who the hell is this guy?

MORTIMER: It's my brother.

BROPHY: Oh, the one that ran away? So he came back.

MORTIMER: Yes, he came back! [He has reached the balcony]

BROPHY: [Into the telephone] This is Brophy. Get me Mac. [To O’HARA] I’d better let them know I found you, Joe. [KLEIN has wandered over to the other side of JONATHAN and looks down at him. BROPHY is looking at O’HARA] Mac? Tell the Lieutenant he can call off the big man hunt. We got him. In the Brewster house.[JONATHAN hears this and suddenly comes very awake, looking up to see a policeman on each side of him] 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 is now on his feet between the two policemen, under the impression that he is cornered]

JONATHAN: So, I've been turned in, eh? [BROPHY and KLEIN look at him with interest] All right, you've got me! I suppose you and my stool-pigeon brother will split the reward?

KLEIN: Reward? [Instinctively KLEIN and BROPHY both grab JONATHAN by an arm]

JONATHAN: Now I'll do some turning in! You think my aunts are charming,
sweet old ladies, don't you? Well, there are thirteen bodies buried in their cellar!

MORTIMER:  [Exits upstairs, calling] Teddy! Teddy!

KLEIN:  What the hell are you talking about?

BROPHY:  You'd better be careful what you say about your aunts—they happen to be friends of ours.

JONATHAN:  I'll show you! I'll prove it to you! Come down in the cellar with me! [He starts to drag them toward the cellar door]

KLEIN:  Wait a minute!

JONATHAN:  Thirteen bodies—I'll show you where they're buried!

KLEIN:  [Refusing to be kidded] Oh, yeah?

JONATHAN:  Oh, you don't want to see what's down in the cellar!  
[Brophy releases Jonathan's arm]

BROPHY:  Go on down in the cellar with him, Abe.

KLEIN:  [Stepping away from Jonathan] 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 the mention of Boris Karloff, leaps at Klein's throat]

BROPHY:  What d'you think you're doing?

KLEIN:  Get him off me. Pat! Grab him!  
[Brophy swings n Jonathan with his nightstick. Jonathan falls, unconscious]  
Well, what do you know about that?  
[There is a knock at the door]

O'HARA:  Come in!

[Lieutenant Rooney bursts in. He is a very tough, driving, dominating police 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. . . . [KLEIN’s eyes go to the prostrate 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: [ROONEY gives them a look] Turn him over!

BROPHY: We kinda think he's wanted somewhere.

[ROONEY and BROPHY turn JONATHAN over and ROONEY takes a look at him]

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. 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: Thirteen bodies buried in the cellar? 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]

ROONEY: Oh—it's Shakespeare! 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: Yeah? Well, you're going to have plenty of time to write that play. You're suspended!
O’HARA: [Getting his hat and coat] Can I come over some time and use the station typewriter?

ROONEY: No! Get out! [O’HARA gets out. TEDDY enters on the balcony and comes downstairs] Take that guy somewhere else and bring him to. See what you can find out about his accomplice—the guy that helped him escape. He’s wanted, too. [KLEIN and BROPHY are bending over JONATHAN] 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 buried in the cellar!

TEDDY: [TO ROONEY] But there are thirteen bodies in the cellar.

ROONEY: [Turning on him] Who are you?

TEDDY: I'm President Roosevelt. [ROONEY goes slightly crazy]

ROONEY: What the hell is this?

BROPHY: He's the fellow that blows the bugle.

KLEIN: Good morning, Colonel.

[BROPHY and KLEIN salute TEDDY, TEDDY returns the salute, ROONEY almost salutes but stops halfway]

ROONEY: Well, Colonel, you've blown your last bugle!

[TEDDY'S attention has been attracted to the body on the floor]

TEDDY: Dear me, another yellow fever victim!

ROONEY: What?

TEDDY: All the bodies in the cellar are yellow fever victims.

[ROONEY throws up his hands]

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? [BROPHY and KLEIN pick up JONATHAN] Bring him to and question him.
[MORTIMER enters on the balcony carrying TEDDY’s commitment papers, and starts downstairs]

TEDDY: If there's any questioning of spies—that's my department!

[BROPHY and KLEIN drag JONATHAN into the kitchen, TEDDY starts to follow]

ROONEY: Hey, you—keep out of that!

TEDDY: You're forgetting! As President, I'm also head of the Secret Service. [He exits into the kitchen, MORTIMER has come down]

MORTIMER: Captain—I’m Mortimer Brewster.

ROONEY: [Dizzy by this time] 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, Captain. In fact, it's all arranged for. I had these commitment papers signed by Dr. Gilchrist last night. Teddy has just signed them himself—you see. And I've signed them as next of kin. [ROONEY looks at the papers, EINSTEIN enters hurriedly through the arch, sees the policeman and sneaks back out of sight]

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 understand that everything that's happened around here Teddy's responsible for. Now, those thirteen bodies in the cellar. . . .

ROONEY: Yeah—those thirteen bodies in the cellar! It ain't enough that the neighbors are afraid of him and his disturbing the peace with that bugle—
but can you imagine what would happen if that cockeyed 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 and with an embarrassed laugh] Thirteen bodies! Do you think anybody would believe that story?

ROONEY: You can't tell. Some people are just dumb enough. You don't know what to believe sometimes. A year ago, a crazy guy started a murder rumor over in Greenpoint and I had to dig up a half-acre lot, just to prove ...
[There is a knock at the door]

MORTIMER: Excuse me!
[He goes to the door and admits ELAINE and MR. WITHERSPOON, an elderly, tight-lipped disciplinarian. He is carrying a briefcase]

ELAINE:  [Briskly] Good morning, Mortimer!

MORTIMER: 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! 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 had no idea . . .

ELAINE: Not today!

MORTIMER: 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 walks over and plants herself on the window seat]

WITHERSPOON: I didn't realize it was this immediate.
ROONEY: The papers are all signed. He goes today.

TEDDY: [TEDDY enters from the kitchen] It's insubordination! You'll find out I'm no mollycoddle. [He advances into the room angrily] When the President of the United States is treated that way, what's this country coming to?

ROONEY: There's your man, Super.

MORTIMER: Just a minute! [to TEDDY with great dignity] Mr. President! I have very good news for you. Your term of office is over.

TEDDY: Is this March fourth?

MORTIMER: Practically.

TEDDY: Let's see! [He thinks it over] Oh—now I go on my hunting trip to Africa! Well, I must get started immediately. [He starts across, sees WITHERSPOON, steps back to MORTIMER, and speaks sotto voce] 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 going to be your guide in Africa.

TEDDY: Bully! Bully! [He shakes MR. WITHERSPOON's hand] Wait right here—I'll bring down my equipment,[MARTHA AND ABBY enter on the balcony and come downstairs] When the safari comes tell them to wait. [To his aunts as he passes them on the stairs] Good-by, Aunt Abby. Good-by, Aunt Martha. I'm on my way to Africa. Isn't it wonderful? [He has reached the landing] CHARGE! [He charges up and out]

MARTHA: Good morning, Mortimer.

MORTIMER: Good morning, darlings.

MARTHA: Good morning, Elaine. Well, we have visitors.

MORTIMER: This is Lieutenant Rooney.
ABBY:  [Going to him] Well, Lieutenant, you don't look like the fuss-budget the policemen say you are.

MORTIMER:  Why the Lieutenant is here—you know Teddy blew that 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:  And you haven't met Mr. Witherspoon—he's the Superintendent of Happy Dale.

ABBY:  How do you do?

MARTHA:  Oh—you've come to meet Teddy.

ROONEY:  He's come to take him.

MORTIMER:  Aunties, the police want Teddy to go there today.

ABBY:  Oh—no!

MARTHA:  Not as long as 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 know how you feel, 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:  Well, why not?
WITHERSPOON:  [To MORTIMER] It's sweet of them to want to, but it's impossible. You see, we can't take sane people at Happy Dale.

MARTHA:  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:  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! [He remembers a few] 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 is telling around that there are thirteen bodies buried in your cellar.

ABBY:  But there are thirteen bodies in our cellar.

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.

ABBY:  There's one, Mr. Donati—who doesn't belong there and is going to have to leave—and the other twelve are our gentlemen. [MORTIMER crosses and stands in front of the cellar door to head them off]

MORTIMER:  I don't think the Lieutenant wants to go down in the cellar. He was just telling me that last year he had to dig up a half-acre lot—weren't you, Lieutenant?

ABBY:  Oh, he doesn't have to dig here. The graves are all marked. We put flowers on them every Sunday.

ROONEY:  Flowers? [He thinks that one over and looks at WITHERSPOON] Superintendent—don't you think you can find room for these ladies?
WITHERSPOON: Well, I . . .

ABBY: You come along with us—and see the graves.

ROONEY: I'll take your word for it, lady—I'm a busy man. How about it, Super?

WITHERSPOON: They'd have to be committed.

MORTIMER: Teddy committed himself. Can't they do that? Can't they sign the papers?

WITHERSPOON: Certainly.

MARTHA: Oh, if we can go with Teddy we'll sign the papers. Where are they?

ABBY: Yes, where are they?

[The sisters cross to the table and sit ready to sign, WITHERSPOON produces the papers from his briefcase, KLEIN enters from kitchen]

KLEIN: [To ROONEY] He's coming around, Lieutenant.

ABBY: Good morning, Mr. Klein.

MARTHA: Good morning, Mr. Klein. Are you here, too?

KLEIN: Yeah, me and Brophy have got your other nephew out in the kitchen.

ROONEY: Sign 'em up, Superintendent. I want to get this all cleaned up. Thirteen bodies!

[He and KLEIN exit into the kitchen, WITHERSPOON and MORTIMER produce fountain pens]

WITHERSPOON: [To MARTHA] If you'll sign right here. [MARTHA takes his pen]

MORTIMER: [Handing ABBY his pen] And you here, Aunt Abby.

ABBY: I'm really looking forward to going. The neighborhood here has changed so.

MARTHA: Just think, a front lawn again!
[They both sign, EINSTEIN enters on the balcony and comes downstairs stealthily]

WITHERSPOON: Oh—we're overlooking something.

MARTHA: What?

WITHERSPOON: Well, we're going to need the signature of a physician.

[MORTIMER straightens up, sees EINSTEIN slipping out the door]

MORTIMER: Oh, Dr. Einstein! Will you come over here and sign some papers?

EINSTEIN: Please. ...

MORTIMER: Come right along, Doctor. At one time last night, I thought the doctor was going to operate on me. [EINSTEIN crosses nervously to the table] Just sign right here.

[ROONEY enters and goes to the telephone, unseen by EINSTEIN, and starts dialing. KLEIN has come in through the kitchen door]

ABBY: Were you leaving, Doctor?

EINSTEIN: Yes, I think so.

MARTHA: Aren't you going to wait for Jonathan?

EINSTEIN: I don't think we're going to the same place. [He signs the papers hurriedly]

MORTIMER: [suddenly rediscovers ELAINE patiently sitting on the window seat] Oh, hello, darling! Glad to see you. Stick around.

ELAINE: Don't worry. I'm going to.

ROONEY: [Into the telephone] Hello, Mac? Rooney. We've picked up that guy that's wanted in Indiana. There's a description of his accomplice on the circular—it's right on the desk there. Read it to me. [EINSTEIN starts for the kitchen but sees KLEIN. He retreats toward the front door but is stopped by ROONEY'S voice, ROONEY'S eyes are somewhat blankly on EINSTEIN through
Yeah—about fifty-four—five-foot-six—a hundred and forty pounds—blue eyes—talks with a German accent—poses as a doctor—Thanks, Mac [He hangs up]

WITHERSPOON: [To ROONEY] It's all right, Lieutenant. The doctor here has just completed the signatures.

ROONEY: [Going to einstein and shaking his hand] Thanks, Doc. You're really doing Brooklyn a service.

[ROONEY and KLEIN exit into kitchen]

EINSTEIN: [Bolts for the front door] If you'll excuse me, I'd better hurry. [He exits, waving a goodbye. The aunts wave gaily back]

WITHERSPOON: [To MORTIMER] Mr. Brewster, you sign now as next of kin.

ABBY: [A little upset by this] Martha... [The sisters go into a huddle]

MORTIMER: Oh, yes, of course. Right here? [He signs the papers]

WITHERSPOON: Yes. That's fine.

MORTIMER: That makes everything complete? Everything legal?

WITHERSPOON: Oh, yes.

MORTIMER: Well, Aunties, now you're safe!

WITHERSPOON: [To the aunts] When do you think you'll be ready to start?

ABBY: [Nervously] Well, Mr. Witherspoon, why don't you go up and tell Teddy what he can take along?

WITHERSPOON: Upstairs? [He starts across the room]

MORTIMER: I'll show you.[He starts, but ABBY stops him]

ABBY: No, Mortimer, you stay here. We want to talk to you. [To WITHERSPOON] Just up the stairs and turn left.

[WITHERSPOON starts up, the sisters keeping an eye on him while talking to MORTIMER]
MARTHA: Mortimer, now that we're moving—this house is really yours.

ABBY: Yes, Mortimer, we want you to live here.

MORTIMER: No, Aunt Abby, I couldn't do that. 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: [Still in there fighting] It's nothing of the kind. We're going to be married right away.

[The sisters watch WITHERSPOON as he exits through the balcony door, then turn to MORTIMER]

ABBY: Mortimer, we're really very worried about something.

MORTIMER: Now, Aunt Abby, 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: Now, 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: It's something we've never wanted to tell you, Mortimer. But now you're a man—and it's something Elaine should know, too. You see, you're not really a Brewster.

[MOUMTER stares]
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—and 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, Mortimer.

ABBY: And you won't let it make any difference, Elaine?

MORTIMER: Elaine! Did you hear—do you understand? I'm a bastard! [ELAINE leaps into his illegitimate arms]

MARTHA: [Relieved] Well, I'll have to see about breakfast. [She starts for the kitchen]

ELAINE: Mortimer's coming 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: Well, Mortimer, in that case, I should think you'd want to get to bed.

MORTIMER: [With a glance at ELAINE] I do. [He leads her out. ABBY closes the door, WITHERSPOON enters from balcony door, carrying an armful of canteens, TEDDY enters with an enormous, two-bladed canoe paddle]

TEDDY: Just a minute, Mr. Witherspoon. Take this with you! [He hands the paddle to WITHERSPOON and goes back through the balcony door, WITHERSPOON, encumbered, comes downstairs, ROONEY enters from the kitchen, followed by JONATHAN, handcuffed to KLEIN and BROPHY]

ROONEY: We won't need the wagon. My car's out front.

MARTHA: [Pleasantly] Oh, you leaving now, Jonathan?

ROONEY: Yes. He's going to Indiana. Some people out there want to take care of him the rest of his life. [To JONATHAN] Come on. [The handcuffed three start]

ABBY: Well, Jonathan, it's nice to know you have some place to go.

MARTHA:  We're leaving, too.

ABBY:  We're going to Happy Dale.

JONATHAN:  Then this house is seeing the last of the Brewsters.

MARTHA:  Unless Mortimer would like to live here.

JONATHAN:  I have a suggestion. Why don't you turn this property over to the church?

ABBY:  [The aunts look at each other] Well, we never thought of that.

JONATHAN:  [Dryly] After all, it should be a part of the cemetery. [He starts, then turns back] Well, I won't be able to better my record now, but neither will you. At least, I have that satisfaction. The score stands even—twelve to twelve.

[JONATHAN and the policemen exit. The aunts bristle slightly, looking out after JONATHAN]

MARTHA:  Jonathan always was a mean boy. He never could stand to see anyone get ahead of him. [She closes the door]

ABBY:  I wish we could show him he isn't so smart! [She turns and her eyes fall on WITHERSPOON, standing looking out the window. She studies him. MARTHA turns from the door and sees ABBY’S contemplation] Mr. Witherspoon, does your family live with you at Happy Dale?

WITHERSPOON:  I have no family.

ABBY:  Oh... .

MARTHA:  Well, I suppose you consider everyone at Happy Dale your family?

WITHERSPOON:  I'm afraid you don't 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: [Benignly] Well, Martha... [MARTHA immediately starts for the sideboard] If Mr. Witherspoon won't have breakfast with us, I think at least we should offer him a glass of elderberry wine.

WITHERSPOON: Elderberry wine?

[MARTHA takes out a wine bottle but it is the one EINSTEIN has emptied. She reaches in for another]

MARTHA: We make it ourselves. [She uncorks the fresh bottle]

WITHERSPOON: Why, yes! Of course, at Happy Dale our relationship will be more formal, but here... [He sits, as MARTHA brings the wine with a single wine glass to the table] You don't see much elderberry wine nowadays. I thought I'd had my last glass of it.

ABBY: Oh, no. [MARTHA hands the wine glass to him] Here it is!

[WITHERSPOON bows to the ladies and lifts the glass to his lips, but the CURTAIN FALLS before he does]