

HARPER. Really?

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

HARPER. My! My!

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

BROPHY. Hello, Miss Brewster.

ABBY. How are you, Mr. Klein?

KLEIN. Very well, Miss Brewster.

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

TEDDY. What news have you brought me?

BROPHY. Colonel, we have nothing to report.

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

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

ABBY. You know Dr. Harper.

KLEIN. Sure! Hello, Dr. Harper.

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

ABBY. Oh, yes.

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

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

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

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

BROPHY. *(To Harper.)* Pneumonia!

HARPER. I'm sorry to hear that.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HARPER. Oh, he's quite harmless.