

HARRIET. Oh, no. I would have remembered. It would have been one of my cherished memories—like these. *(She spreads portfolio before him.)* Look! Here I am with my first sweetheart, under our lovely beechwood trees. I was eight and he was ten. I have never forgotten him. What happy times we had! What— *(She stops short as she hears footsteps on stairway.)*

STANLEY. *(From upstairs.)* But I tell you I'm going to.

HARRIET. There's someone coming! I'll come back!...

*(She gathers up portfolio and vanishes into dining room U. R. Whiteside looks after her, puzzled. It is Stanley who comes down the stairs. He is plainly coming into the room for a purpose—this is no haphazard descent. He is carrying a slip of paper in his hand, and he is obviously at the boiling point. A few steps behind comes Mrs. Stanley, apprehensive and nervous.)*

MRS. STANLEY. *(From stairs.)* Now, Ernest, please—

STANLEY. *(To c.)* ~~Be quiet, Daisy...~~ Mr. Whiteside, I want to talk to you. I don't care whether you're busy or not. I have stood all that I'm going to stand.

WHITESIDE. Indeed?

STANLEY. This is the last straw. I have just received a bill from the telephone company for seven hundred and eighty-four dollars. *(He reads from slip in his hand.)* Oklahoma City, Calcutta, Hollywood, Australia, Rome, New York, New York, New York, New York. *(His voice trails off in an endless succession of New Yorks.)* Now I realize, Mr. Whiteside, that you are a distinguished man of letters—

MRS. STANLEY. *(c.)* Yes, of course, we both do.

STANLEY. Please... But in the past week we have not been able to call our souls our own. We have not had a meal in the dining room *once*. I have to tiptoe out of the house in the mornings.

MRS. STANLEY. Now, Ernest—

STANLEY. *(Waving her away.)* Oh, I come home to find convicts sitting at my dinner table—*butcher-shop* murderers. A man putting cockroaches in the kitchen.

MRS. STANLEY. They just escaped, Ernest.

STANLEY. That's not the point. I go into my bathroom and bump

MR. STANLEY

START

into twenty-two ~~other~~ students that you invited here. I tell you I won't stand for it, no matter *who* you are.

WHITESIDE. Have you quite finished?

STANLEY. No, I have not. I go down into the cellar this morning and trip over that octopus that William Beebe sent you. I tell you I won't stand it. Mr. Whiteside, I want you to leave this house— (*Mrs. Stanley starts to tap Stanley's shoulder.*) as soon as you can, and go to a hotel... Stop pawing me, Daisy... That's all I've got to say, Mr. Whiteside.

WHITESIDE. And quite enough, I should think. May I remind you again, Mr. Stanley, that I am not a willing guest in this house. I am informed by my doctor that I must remain quiet for another ten days, at which time I shall get out of here so fast that the wind will knock you over, I hope. If, however, you insist on my leaving before that, thereby causing me to suffer a relapse, I shall sue you for every additional day that I am held inactive, which will amount I assure you, to a tidy sum.

STANLEY. (*To Mrs. Stanley.*) This is outrageous. Outrageous!

~~WHITESIDE. As for the details of your petty complaints, those twenty-two ~~other~~ students came straight from the White House, where I assure you they used the bathroom, too!~~

MRS. STANLEY. Mr. Whiteside, my husband didn't mean—

STANLEY. Yes, I did. I meant every word of it.

WHITESIDE. There is only one point that you make in which I see some slight justice. I do not expect you to pay for my telephone calls, and I shall see to it that restitution is made. Can you provide me with the exact amount?

STANLEY. I certainly can, and I certainly will.

WHITESIDE. Good. I shall instruct my lawyers to deduct it from the hundred and fifty thousand dollars that I am suing you for.

(*Stanley starts to speak, but simply chokes with rage. Furious, he storms up steps again.*)

END MRS. STANLEY. (*Following.*) Now, Ernest—

WHITESIDE. (*Calling after him.*) And I'll thank you not to trip over that octopus, which once belonged to Chauncey Depew.