

MRS. DEXTER. Can we stay and see him?

MRS. STANLEY. Why, of course—he'd love it. *(June enters L. Crosses to stairs.)* Girls, do you know what just happened?

JUNE. *(Departing upstairs.)* I'll be upstairs, Mother, if you want me.

MRS. STANLEY. What? ... Oh, yes. June, tell your father he'd better come down, will you? Mr. Whiteside is coming out.

JUNE. Yes, Mother. *(Exits upstairs.)*

MRS. DEXTER. Is he really coming out this morning? I brought him a plant—do you think it's all right if I give it to him?

MRS. STANLEY. Why, I think that would be lovely.

MRS. McCUTCHEON. And some calf's-foot jelly.

MRS. STANLEY. Why, how nice! Who do you think was on the phone just now? H. G. Wells, from London. And look at those cablegrams. *(The ladies cross L.)* He's had calls and messages from all over this country and Europe. The *New York Times*—and Felix Frankfurter, and Dr. Dafoe, the Mount Wilson Observatory—I just can't tell you what's been going on, I'm simply exhausted. *(Crosses R., sits chair R. C.)*

MRS. DEXTER. *(Crossing to Mrs. Stanley R.)* There's a big piece about it in this week's *Time*. Did you see it?

MRS. STANLEY. No—really? *(she reads from "Time" Mag.)*

MRS. S. CONT'D: ~~MRS. McCUTCHEON.~~ *(Crosses R., gives Mrs. Dexter calf's-foot jelly, reads from Time.)* Your name's in it too, Daisy. Listen: "Portly Sheridan Whiteside, critic, lecturer, wit, radio orator, intimate friend of the great and near great, last week found his celebrated wit no weapon with which to combat an injured hip. The Falstaffian Mr. Whiteside, trekking across the country on one of his annual lecture tours, met his Waterloo in the shape of a small piece of ice on the doorstep of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest W. Stanley, of Mesalia, Ohio. Result: Cancelled lectures and disappointment to thousands of adoring clubwomen in Omaha, Denver, and points West. Further result: The idol of the airwaves rests until further notice in home of surprised Mr. and Mrs. Stanley. Possibility: Christmas may be postponed this year." What's *that* mean?

*(Mrs. S. continues)* ~~MRS. STANLEY.~~ *(Takes magazine, reads.)* "A small piece of ice on

the doorstep of Mr. and Mrs..." Think of it!

MRS. McCUTCHEON. (*Crosses L. to sofa D. L., sits.*) Of course if it were *my* house, Daisy, I'd have a bronze plate put on the step, right where he fell.

(*Mrs. Dexter eases back of couch.*)

MRS. STANLEY. Well, of course, I felt terrible about it. He just never goes to dinners anywhere, and he finally agreed to come here, and then *this* had to happen. Poor Mr. Whiteside! But it's going to be so wonderful having him with us, even for a little while. Just think of it! We'll sit around in the evening, and discuss books and plays, all the great people he's known. And he'll talk in that wonderful way of his. He may even read "Goodbye, Mr. Chips" to us.

(*Mr. Stanley, solid, substantial—the American business man—is descending stairs c.*)

STANLEY. (*Coming down c.*) Daisy, I can't wait any longer. If Mr. Whiteside—ah, good morning, ladies.

LADIES. Good morning.

MRS. STANLEY. (*Rises, crosses c.*) Ernest, he's coming out any minute, and H. G. Wells telephoned from London, and we're in *Time*. Look. (*She hands Time to Stanley.*)

STANLEY. (*As he hands magazine back to her*) I don't like this kind of publicity at all, Daisy. When do you suppose he's going to leave?

MRS. STANLEY. Well, he's only getting up this morning—after all, he's had quite a shock, and he's been in bed for two full weeks. He'll certainly have to rest a few days, Ernest.

STANLEY. Well, I'm sure it's a great honor his being in the house, but it is a little upsetting—phone going all the time, bells ringing, messenger boys running in and out—

(*Out of the sickroom comes a business-like-looking young woman about thirty, with letters and notebook. Her name is Margaret Cutler—Maggie to her friends.*)

MAGGIE. (*Closing library doors.*) Pardon me, Mrs. Stanley—have the cigarettes come yet?

(*Stanley eases U. L.*)

MRS. STANLEY. (*Crosses R.*) They're on the way, Miss Cutler. My

↑  
END

Mr. Whiteside, but I am leaving the nursing profession. I became a nurse because all my life, ever since I was a little girl, I was filled with the idea of serving a suffering humanity. After one month with you, Mr. Whiteside, I am going to work in a munitions factory. From now on anything that I can do to help exterminate the human race will fill me with the greatest of pleasure. If Florence Nightingale had ever nursed you, Mr. Whiteside, she would have married Jack the Ripper instead of founding the Red Cross. Good day. *(She goes U. L.)*

*(Mrs. Stanley, in a state of great fluttery excitement, rushes down the stairs.)*

Side #2

START

MRS. STANLEY. *(Headed for front door L.)* Mr. Stanley is here with June. He's brought June back. Thank goodness, *thank goodness.* *(We hear her at door.)* June, June, thank God you're back! You're not married, are you?

JUNE. *(From hallway.)* No, Mother, I'm not. And please don't be hysterical.

*(Then Mrs. Stanley comes into view, her arms around a rebellious June. Behind them looms Stanley, every inch the stern father.)*

MRS. STANLEY. *(L.)* Oh, June, if it had been anyone but that awful boy. Thank goodness you stopped it, Ernest; how did you do it?

STANLEY. *(D. L.)* Never mind that, Daisy. Just take June upstairs. I have something to say to Mr. Whiteside.

MRS. STANLEY. What about Richard? Is there any news?

STANLEY. It's all right, Daisy—all under control. Just take June upstairs.

JUNE. Father, haven't we had enough melodrama? I don't have to be taken upstairs—I'll go upstairs... Merry Christmas, Mr. Whiteside. It looks bad for John L. Lewis. Come on, Mother—lock me in my room.

MRS. STANLEY. Now, June, you'll feel much better after you've had a hot bath, I know. Have you had anything to eat? *(She follows her daughter upstairs.)*

END

STANLEY. *(Turns to Whiteside; crosses to C.)* I am pleased to inform you, sir, that your plans for my daughter seem to have gone a trifle awry. She is not, nor will she ever be, married to that Labor agitator