

yourself into the idea that all you're thinking of is my happiness. You're thinking of yourself a little bit, too, and all those months of breaking in somebody new. I've seen you in a passion before when your life has been disrupted, and you couldn't dine in Calcutta on July twelfth with Boo-Boo. Well, that's too bad, but there it is. *(Crosses to stairs.)* I'm going to marry Bert if he'll have me, and don't you dare try any of your tricks. I'm on to every one of them. So lay off. That's my message to you, Big Lord Fauntleroy. *(And she is up the stairs.)*

*(Left stewing in his own juice, Whiteside is in a perfect fury. He bangs arm of his chair, then slaps at manuscript in his lap. As he does so, the dawn of an idea comes into his mind. He sits perfectly still for a moment, thinking it over. Then, with a slow smile, he takes manuscript out of its envelope. He looks at title page, riffles through the script, then stops and thinks again. His face breaks out into one great smile. He reaches for phone receiver.)*

WHITESIDE. *(In a lowered voice, meanwhile discarding cables from basket until he finds right one.)* Long distance, please. I want to put in a Transatlantic call. *(He looks at cablegram again for confirmation.)* Hello. Transatlantic operator? ... This is Mesalia 1-4-2. I want to talk to Miss Lorraine Sheldon—S-h-e-l-d-o-n. She's on the *Normandie*. It sailed from Southampton day before yesterday. *(Doorbell.)* Will it take long? ... All right. My name is Whiteside... thank you.

*(He hangs up. He goes back to manuscript again and looks through it. John then ushers in Dr. Bradley.)*

BRADLEY. *(Offstage.)* Good evening, John.

JOHN. Good evening, Doctor. *(Exits swinging-door U. L.)*

START

BRADLEY. *(Crosses to R.; heartily as usual.)* Well, well! Good evening, Mr. Whiteside!

WHITESIDE. Come back tomorrow—I'm busy.

BRADLEY. *(Turning cute.)* Now what would be the best news that I could possibly bring you?

WHITESIDE. You have hydrophobia.

BRADLEY. *(Laughing it off.)* No, no... Mr. Whiteside, you are a well man. You can get up and walk now. You can leave here tomorrow.

WHITESIDE. What do you mean?

BRADLEY. (*Ease R.*) Well, sir! I looked at those X-rays again this afternoon, and do you know what? I had been looking at the wrong X-rays. I had been looking at old Mrs. Moffat's X-rays. You are perfectly, absolutely well!

WHITESIDE. Lower your voice, will you?

BRADLEY. What's the matter? Aren't you pleased?

WHITESIDE. Delighted...naturally... Ah—this is a very unexpected bit of news, however. It comes at a very curious moment. (*He is thinking fast; suddenly he gets an idea. He clears his throat and looks around apprehensively.*) Dr. Bradley, I—ah—have some good news for you, too. I have been reading your book—ah—“Forty Years”—what is it?

BRADLEY. (*Eagerly crossing to Whiteside.*) “An Ohio Doctor”—Yes.

WHITESIDE. I consider it extremely close to being one of the great literary contributions of our time.

BRADLEY. Mr. Whiteside!

WHITESIDE. So strongly do I feel about it, Dr. Bradley, that I have a proposition to make to you. Just here and there the book is a little uneven, a little rough, and what I would like to do is to stay here in Mesalia and work with you on it.

BRADLEY. (*All choked up.*) Mr. Whiteside, I would be so terribly honored—

WHITESIDE. Yes. But there is just one difficulty. ~~You see, if my lecture bureau and my radio sponsors were to learn that I am well, they would insist on my fulfilling my contracts, and I would be forced to leave Mesalia.~~ Therefore ~~We~~ We must not tell anyone—not anyone at all—that I am well.

BRADLEY. I see. I see.

WHITESIDE. Not even Miss Cutler, you understand.

BRADLEY. No, I won't. Not a soul. Not even my wife.

WHITESIDE. That's fine.

BRADLEY. Mr. Whiteside. When do we start work—tonight? I've got just one patient that's dying and then I'll be *perfectly free*.

~~(Phone rings.)~~

~~WHITESIDE. (Waving him away—Doctor starts to go.) Ah—tomorrow morning. This is a private call—would you forgive me? ... Hello... Yes, I'm on. (He turns again to Doctor.) Tomorrow morning.~~

~~BRADLEY. Tomorrow morning it is. Good night. I'll be so proud to work with you. You've made me very proud, Mr. Whiteside. (He exits up L.)~~

END

WHITESIDE. Yes, yes, I know—very proud. *(Again on phone.)* Yes, yes, this is Mr. Whiteside on the phone. Put them through... Hello. Is this my Blossom Girl? How are you, my lovely? ... No, no, I'm all right... Yes, still out here... Lorraine dear, when do you land in New York? ... Tuesday? That's fine... Now listen closely, my pet. I've great news for you. I've discovered a wonderful play with an enchanting part in it for you. Cornell would give her eye-teeth to play it, but I think I can get it for you. ... Now wait, wait. Let me tell you. The author is a young newspaper man in this town. Of course he wants Cornell, but if you jump on a train and get out here, I think you could swing it, if you play your cards right. ... No, he's young, and very attractive, and just your dish, my dear. It just takes a little doing, and you're the girl that can do it. Isn't that exciting, my pet? ... Yes... Yes, that's right... And look. Don't send me any messages. Just get on the train and arrive... Oh, no, don't thank me, my darling. It's perfectly all right. Have a nice trip and hurry out here. Goodbye, my blossom.

*(He hangs up and looks guiltily around. Then he straightens up and gleefully rubs his hands together. Miss Preen enters D. R., medicine in hand, and frightened, as usual.)*

*(Whiteside, jovial as hell.)* Hello, Miss Preen. God, you're looking radiant this evening!

*(He takes medicine from her and swallows it at one gulp. Miss Preen, staggered, retreats into library D. R., just as Maggie comes downstairs. She is dressed for the street.)*

MAGGIE. *(Pausing on landing, crossing to c.)* Sherry, I'm sorry for what I said before. I'm afraid I was a little unjust.

WHITESIDE. *(All nobility.)* That's all right, Maggie dear. We all lose our tempers now and then.