

BANJO. (*Putting MISS PREEN on her feet.*) Come to my room in half an hour and bring some rye bread. (*Slaps MISS PREEN's fanny.*)

MISS PREEN. (*Outraged.*) Really, Mr. Whiteside! (*She adjusts her clothes with a quick jerk or two and marches into library—closes doors.*) (*JOHN, at the same time, comes hurrying down stairs; BANJO beckons to him. Bending his leg and raising it, BANJO puts it in JOHN's hand. Amazed, JOHN rushes off U.R.*)

BANJO. (*Crosses to C.*) Whiteside, I'm here to spend Christmas with you. Give me a kiss.

WHITESIDE. Get away from me, you reform school fugitive. How did you get here anyway?

BANJO. (*C.*) Darryl Zanuck loaned me his reindeer. Whiteside, we finished shooting the picture yesterday and I'm on my way to Nova Scotia. Flew here in twelve hours—borrowed an airplane from Howard Hughes. Whiteside, I brought you a wonderful Christmas present. (*He produces a little tissue-wrapped package. Crosses to WHITESIDE.*) This brassiere was once worn by Hedy Lamarr. (*Dropping it in WHITESIDE's lap.*)

WHITESIDE. Listen, you idiot, how long can you stay?

BANJO. Just long enough to take a bath. I'm on my way to Nova Scotia. Where's Maggie?

WHITESIDE. Nova Scotia? What are you going to Nova Scotia for?

BANJO. I'm sick of Hollywood and there's a dame in New York I don't want to see. So I figured I'd go to Nova Scotia and get some smoked salmon . . . Where the hell's Maggie? I want to see her . . . What's the matter with you? Where is she?

WHITESIDE. Banjo, I'm glad you're here. I'm very annoyed at Maggie. Very!

BANJO. What's the matter?

(*WHITESIDE rises, crosses to L.*) Say, what is this? I thought you couldn't walk. (*Crossing to C.*)

WHITESIDE. Oh, I've been all right for weeks. That isn't the point. I'm furious at Maggie. She's turned on me like a viper. You know how fond I am of her. Well, after these years she's repaying my affection by behaving like a fishwife.

BANJO. What are you talking about?

WHITESIDE. (*A step L.*) But I never believed for a moment she was really in love with him.

BANJO. In love with who? I just got here—remember? (*BUSINESS of pointing to himself.*)

WHITESIDE. (*Pace L.*) Great God, I'm telling you, you Hollywood

nitwit. A young newspaper man here in town.

BANJO. Maggie finally fell—well, what do you know? What kind of a guy is he?

WHITESIDE. (*Crosses to him.*) Oh, shut up and listen, will you?

BANJO. Well, go on. What happened?

WHITESIDE. (*Pacing L.*) Well, Lorraine Sheldon happened to come out here and visit me.

BANJO. Old hot-pants—here?

WHITESIDE. (*Back to BANJO.*) Now listen! This young fellow, he'd written a play. You can guess the rest. He's going away with Lorraine this afternoon. To "rewrite." So there you are. Maggie's in there now, crying her eyes out. (*Crosses to sofa—sits.*)

BANJO. (*Crosses L.*) Gee! . . . Say, wait a minute. What do you mean Lorraine Sheldon happened to come out here? I smell a rat, Sherry—a rat with a beard.

WHITESIDE. Well, all right, all right. But I did it for Maggie—because I thought it was the right thing for *her*.

BANJO. (*Crosses R.*) Oh, sure. You haven't thought of yourself in years . . . Gee, poor kid. Can I go in and talk to her?

WHITESIDE. No—no. Leave her alone.

BANJO. (*Crosses L.*) Any way I could help, Sherry? Where's this guy live—this guy she likes? Can we get hold of him?

WHITESIDE. (*Rises—crosses to BANJO.*) Now wait a minute, Banjo. We don't want any phony warrants, or you pretending to be J. Edgar Hoover. I've been through all that with you before. (*He paces again L.*) I got Lorraine out here and I've got to get her away.

BANJO. It's got to be good, Sherry. Lorraine's no dope. (*Crosses U.R.*) . . . Now, there must be *something* that would get her out of here like a bat out of hell. (*Crosses to L.*) Say! I think I've got it! That fellow she's so crazy about over in England—what's his name again?—Lord Fanny or whatever it is. Bottomley—that's it! Bottomley!

WHITESIDE. (*With a pained expression.*) No, Banjo. No.

BANJO. Wait a minute—you don't catch on. We send Lorraine a cablegram from Lord Bottomley—

WHITESIDE. I catch on, Banjo. Lorraine caught on too. It's been tried.

BANJO. (*Crosses R.*) Oh! . . . I told you she was no dope . . . (*He sits in wheelchair.*) Well, we've got a tough proposition on your hands.

WHITESIDE. The trouble is there's so damned little time. Get out of