

~~MARTHA. (cont.) Dear little Fordia. I love that dog. I wonder how she'd look above the mantelpiece...~~

~~(BZZZZZZ! The doorbell buzzes, which sets the dog barking again.)~~

~~Now Fordia, stop it! Be quiet! Willie! Could you get the door, please, I'm having trouble with my corsage!~~

(GILLETTE enters from his study. Now that we get to see him properly, we realize that he's a strikingly handsome man, smartly dressed, good-humored, full of irony and life. A sort of modern-day Ulysses. At the moment, he wears an elegant robe, and his arm is in a sling. He carries a beautifully wrapped Christmas present, which he places under the tree.)

GILLETTE. Sorry, Mother, I'm still in my robe. I simply can't do things as quickly with this damn sling on my arm!

MARTHA. Well then you shouldn't have invited your friends for the weekend. And on Christmas Eve!

GILLETTE. But that makes it festive. Besides, none of them has any other family to speak of.

MARTHA. Oh, *balderdash*. I find this very odd. You were shot just *two weeks ago* and you need to *recover*.

GILLETTE. I am recovered. I'm simply lame at the moment. Like Richard the Third, "*I am not shaped for sportive tricks nor made to court an amorous looking glass.*"

MARTHA. Willie, please don't start on one of your –

GILLETTE. "*I am rudely stamped and want love's majesty to strut before a wanton, ambling nymph.*"

MARTHA. Willie, this is not the time with people waiting at the –

GILLETTE. "*And that so lamely and unfashionable that dogs bark at me as I halt by them!*"

(BZZZZZ!)

MARTHA. Willie, will you stop it and get the door!

GILLETTE. I can't go to the door in my bathrobe, Mother. I'm not eccentric.

(He disappears jauntily up the stairs.)

MARTHA. (calling up the stairs) You're a big help!

(BZZZZZ! BZZZZZ!)

I'm coming! It's like living in a madhouse while the gate-keeper is on holiday.

(BZZZZZ! BZZZZZ!)

(She goes to the desk, where she pushes an electric button and speaks into a microphone.)

Hello, who is it?

(We hear SIMON and AGGIE through the speaker until they enter on the next page.)

SIMON. It's Simon!

AGGIE. And Aggie!

SIMON. And oh my gosh, is there a speaker in the door or something?

MARTHA. Yes, dear. It's called a speaker-phone and it's one of Willie's hair-brained ideas.

AGGIE. Mrs. Gillette?

MARTHA. Hello, Aggie. How nice to meet you, dear.

SIMON. This is *amazing*. It's like Flash Gordon or something.

AGGIE. Where are you, then?

MARTHA. I'm in the drawing room but I'm still getting dressed.

SIMON. You're getting dressed in the drawing room?! Does it have a window so I can watch?

MARTHA. Oh stop it, you terrible boy.

AGGIE. The door seems to be unlocked. Shall we come straight in?

MARTHA. Yes, please. And bring the delinquent with you.

(MARTHA gets her shoe on and checks her makeup, at which point SIMON and AGGIE enter. AGGIE, who played Alice in the play in Scene One, is a real product of her age: 25, beautiful, bright-eyed and full of spunk.)

START

END