

MRS. ALMOND. Well, Austin, who's ill? Who's dead? Whom have you been cutting up lately?

DR. SLOPER. (*Amused.*) Ah, I see you are in good health, Liz. You're more respectful to me when you gout's troubling you.

MRS. ALMOND. (*Goes to CATHERINE and embraces her.*) Well, Catherine, dear. . . . (*A young man, ARTHUR TOWNSEND, appears in archway. MRS. ALMOND beckons him into room and we see that he is a stolid young business man.*) Arthur, this is my brother, Doctor Sloper. (*ARTHUR bows.*) And this is Marian's cousin Catherine.

ARTHUR. How do you do, Miss Sloper. (*MARIAN ALMOND enters. She is a pretty, vivacious girl in her early twenties. CATHERINE crosses to DR. SLOPER and takes his arm.*)

MARIAN. Good evening, Uncle Austin.

DR. SLOPER. Marian, my dear. How nice to see you.

MARIAN. (*Crossing to CATHERINE and embracing her.*) Hello, Cathie! (*Another young man, MORRIS TOWNSEND, appears in archway next to ARTHUR. He is a handsome, lively man in his late twenties.*)

CATHERINE. Good evening, Marian.

ARTHUR. How do you do, Doctor? I have taken the liberty of bringing my cousin. I thought that since you were meeting me, you wouldn't mind meeting him. (*He turns to MORRIS in archway.*) Morris, meet Doctor Sloper. Doctor Sloper, Morris Townsend.

MRS. PENNIMAN. (*As she enters room and passes MORRIS at archway.*) And I am the Doctor's other sister. (*She sits on settee at back wall where MRS. ALMOND joins her.*)

MORRIS. How do you do, ma'am. (*As he advances towards DR. SLOPER.*) I hope you will pardon my intrusion on a family party, Doctor and Miss Sloper. I am newly returned from Europe and feel somewhat lost.

DR. SLOPER. I am delighted to meet you, sir. (*To ARTHUR.*) You did quite right to bring your cousin.

MARIAN. Oh, how grand you look, Catherine! I told Morris he should find you very grand, and then he was determined to come! (*She sits on settee at back wall.*)

CATHERINE. (*Shyly, and holding on to DR. SLOPER's arm with both hands.*) Thank you, Marian. (*To ARTHUR.*) How do you do, sir. (*To MORRIS, with an identical bow.*) How do you do, sir.

DR. SLOPER. Uh . . . Catherine . . . (*He loosens one of her*

hands from his arm.) the young gentlemen cannot take chairs until you do.

CATHERINE. I'm sorry, Father. *(She sits down at C. table. MORRIS sits across from her at same table. ARTHUR sits next to MARIAN.)*

MARIAN. Uncle Austin, Arthur says that a house in Washington Square is the best investment in the city.

DR. SLOPER. *(To ARTHUR.)* Well, sir, I am happy to see that we think alike. *(DR. SLOPER stands at the archway C.)*

ARTHUR. Er . . . yes . . . the counting house with which I am associated thinks very highly of the Square. We have funds available for mortgages at all times.

DR. SLOPER. Well . . . that's most reassuring.

MRS. PENNIMAN. When is the marriage to be, Marian?

MARIAN. The twentieth of November, Aunt Lavinia. Arthur wanted to hold me off till spring, but I wouldn't have it!

MORRIS. Arthur will have the truest cause of his life to celebrate Thanksgiving!

MRS. PENNIMAN. How charmingly expressed, Mr. Townsend.

MORRIS. *(To CATHERINE.)* I hear from Miss Almond that you are to be a bridesmaid, Miss Sloper?

MARIAN. Bridesmaid! Why, Cathie's to be my maid of honor!

MRS. PENNIMAN. Perhaps Catherine will catch the bride's bouquet!

MRS. ALMOND. Of course she will. Marian will aim it at Catherine. They can practice with a bean bag. *(There is some polite laughter, CATHERINE is nervously twisting her handkerchief. DR. SLOPER crosses to her.)*

DR. SLOPER. *(Picking handkerchief out of her hand and putting it in his pocket, he gives CATHERINE a cue.)* Mr. Morris Townsend has just come from Europe, Catherine.

CATHERINE. Have you been away long, sir?

MORRIS. Yes, I have, to my disadvantage, as I now see.

CATHERINE. Why?

MORRIS. Because I find that I have missed some lovely things at home.

CATHERINE. *(Faintly.)* Oh.

MORRIS. Besides, people forget you.

MARIAN. *(Teasing.)* He wants us to say that we would never forget him, don't you, Morris?

CATHERINE. *(Protesting.)* Oh, Marian . . .

MORRIS. *(Smiling.)* There is nothing I would rather hear. *(To*