

FLORENCE. [*From beyond the flats*] You can come out now, Clyde, they've gone. [*Hossefrosse yanks the right door open, causing the wood-wing at the right to topple and fall forward.*] [138]

TWILLER. [*Leaping to catch it, before it hits Mrs. Fell*] Hold it! [*Mrs. Fell hunches her arms and shoulders and screams.*]

MRS. PAMPINELLI. [*Rushing over from the left*] What is it?

TWILLER. [*Struggling to set the wing up in place again*] This thing nearly fell! Just got it in time! [*Mrs. Fell moves out of the way, over to the left, and Mrs. Pampinelli tries to assist Twiller.*]

MRS. PAMPINELLI. Is it all right now?

TWILLER. [*Brushing his hands and clothes, and coming forward at the right*] Yes, it's all right now. Just got it in time.

MRS. FELL. [*Rushing up to Mrs. Ritter, who is coming towards her from the left, and shaking her by the arms*] Oh, you were marvelous, darling! [*Mrs. Ritter giggles foolishly.*] I could just hug you!

MRS. RITTER. I forgot my umbrella.

MRS. FELL. Wonderful performance! [*She steps to the right door and opens her manuscript. Mrs. Ritter moves a little to the right and stands looking at the wood-wing.*]

MRS. PAMPINELLI. [*Turning from a more precise adjustment of the wood-wing*] Oh, Mr. Twiller!

TWILLER. Yes?

MRS. PAMPINELLI. How did you and Paula get wedged in that door that way, over there a moment ago? [139]

TWILLER. [*On Mrs. Pampinelli's right*] Oh, I'm awfully sorry about that! I got a little twisted on— [*Mrs. Ritter comes to Mrs. Pampinelli's left.*]

MRS. PAMPINELLI. [*Turning to Mrs. Ritter*] I was just asking Mr. Twiller about that business in the door.

MRS. PAMPINELLI, MRS. RITTER and TWILLER, together.

MRS. PAMPINELLI. Of course, it really didn't matter very much.

MRS. RITTER. Oh, my dear, wasn't that just too dreadful! But I didn't know what to do! I knew there was something wrong, but I didn't know what it was!

TWILLER. It was *my* fault. I got a little twisted there in my business-cues. I got up to the door a couple of speeches too soon.

MRS. PAMPINELLI. I don't think the audience noticed it.

MRS. FELL. [*Frantically searching in the manuscript*] Shush!

MRS. RITTER. Don't you think they did, Betty?

MRS. FELL. Shush! [*They all turn and look at her. Mrs. Pampinelli steps towards her.*]

MRS. PAMPINELLI. Is somebody up? [*Nelly simply silences her with a gesture, and opens the door slightly.*]

MRS. FELL. [*Prompting through the door*] You've all been listening to a lot of damned, cheap gossip! [140]