

Abby, Martha, Jonathan, Einstein

MARTHA. Wait a minute, I'll look. [*She turns to landing window and peeks out the curtains.*] It's two men—and I've never seen them before.

ABBY. Are you sure?

MARTHA. There's a car at the curb—they must have come in that.

ABBY. Let me look! [*She hurries up stairs. There is a knock on door. ABBY peeks out the curtains.*]

MARTHA. Do you recognize them?

ABBY. They're strangers to me.

MARTHA. We'll just have to pretend we're not at home. [*The two of them huddle back in corner of landing.*]

[*Another knock at the door R., the knob is turned, and door swings slowly open. A tall MAN walks to C., looking about the room. He walks in with assurance and ease as though the room were familiar to him—in every direction but that of the stairs. There is something sinister about the man—something that brings a slight chill in his presence. It is in his walk, his bearing, and his strange resemblance to Boris Karloff. From stair-landing ABBY and MARTHA watch him, almost afraid to speak. Having completed his survey of the room, the MAN turns and addresses someone outside the front door.*]

JONATHAN. Come in, Doctor. [*DR. EINSTEIN enters R. He is somewhat ratty in appearance. His face wears the benevolent smirk of a man who lives in a pleasant haze of alcohol. There is something about him that suggests the unfrocked priest. He stands just inside the door, timid but expectant.*] This is the home of my youth. As a boy I couldn't wait to escape from this place—now I'm glad to escape back into it.

EINSTEIN. [*Shutting door. His back to AUNTS.*] Yah, Chonny, it's a fine hideout.

JONATHAN. The family must still live here. There's something so unmistakably Brewster about the Brewsters. I hope there's a fatted calf awaiting the return of the prodigal.

EINSTEIN. Yah, I'm hungry. [*He suddenly sees the fatted calf in the form of the 2 glasses of wine on table.*] Look, Chonny, drinks! [*He runs over below to table. JONATHAN crosses to above side.*]

JONATHAN. As though we were expected. A good omen.

[*They raise glasses to their lips as ABBY steps down a couple of stairs and speaks.*]

ABBY. Who are you? What are you doing here?

[*They both put glasses down. EINSTEIN picks up his hat from armchair, ready to run for it. JONATHAN turns to ABBY.*]

JONATHAN. Why, Aunt Abby! Aunt Martha! It's Jonathan.

MARTHA. [*Frightened.*] You get out of here.

JONATHAN. [*Crossing to AUNTS.*] I'm Jonathan—your nephew, Jonathan.

ABBY. Oh, no, you're not. You're nothing like Jonathan, so don't pretend you are! You just get out of here!

JONATHAN. [*Crossing closer.*] But I am Jonathan. And this [*Indicating EINSTEIN.*] is Dr. Einstein.

ABBY. And he's not Dr. Einstein either.

JONATHAN. Not Dr. Albert Einstein—Dr. Herman Einstein.

ABBY. [*Down another step.*] Who are you? You're not our nephew, Jonathan.

JONATHAN. [*Peering at ABBY'S outstretched hand.*] I see you're still wearing the lovely garnet ring that Grandma Brewster bought in England. [*ABBY gasps, looks at ring.*] And you, Aunt Martha, still the high collar—to hide the scar where Grandfather's acid burned you.

[*MARTHA'S hand goes to her throat. The AUNTS look at JONATHAN. MARTHA comes down a few steps to behind ABBY. EINSTEIN gets to C.*]

MARTHA. His voice is like Jonathan's.

ABBY. [*Stepping down to stage floor.*] Have you been in an accident?

JONATHAN. [*Hi, hand goes to side of his face.*] No—[*He clouds.*—my face—Dr. Einstein is responsible for that. He's a plastic surgeon. He changes people's faces.

MARTHA. [*Comes down to ABBY.*] But I've seen that face before. [*To ABBY.*] Abby, remember when we took the little Schultz boy to the movies and I was so frightened? It was that face!

[*JONATHAN grows tense and looks toward EINSTEIN. EINSTEIN crosses to C. and addresses AUNTS.*]

EINSTEIN. Easy, Chonny—easy! [*To AUNTS.*] Don't worry, ladies. The last five years I give Chonny three new faces. I give him another one right away. This last face—well, I saw that picture too—just before I operate. And I was intoxicated.

JONATHAN. [*With a growing and dangerous intensity as he walks toward EINSTEIN, who backs D. S.*] You see, Doctor—you see what you've done to me. Even my own family —

EINSTEIN. [*To calm him, as he is forced around R. stage.*] Chonny—you're home—in this lovely house — [*To AUNTS.*] How often he tells me about Brooklyn—about this house—about his aunts that he loves so much. [*To JONATHAN.*] They know you, Chonny. [*To ABBY as he leads her toward JONATHAN.*] You know it's Jonathan. Speak to him. Tell him so. [*He drifts above table to D. L. of it.*]

ABBY. Well—Jonathan—it's been a long time—what have you been doing all these years?

MARTHA. [*Has come to far D. R.*] Yes, Jonathan, where have you been?

JONATHAN. [*Recovering his composure.*] Oh, England, South Africa, Australia,—the last five years Chicago. Dr. Einstein and I were in business there together.

ABBY. Oh, we were in Chicago for the World's Fair.

MARTHA. [*For want of something to say.*] Yes—we found Chicago awfully warm.

EINSTEIN. [*He has wandered above U. L. and down to below table.*] Yah—it got hot for us too.

JONATHAN. [*Turning on the charm as he crosses above ABBY, placing himself between the AUNTS.*] Well, it's wonderful to be in Brooklyn again. And you—Abby—Martha you don't look a day older. Just as I remembered you—sweet—charming—hospitable. [*The AUNTS don't react too well to this charm.*] And dear Teddy—[*He indicates with his hand a lad of eight or ten.*]—did he get into politics? [*He turns to EINSTEIN.*] My little brother, Doctor, was determined to become President.

ABBY. Oh, Teddy's fine! Just fine! And Mortimer's well too.

JONATHAN. [*A bit of a sneer.*] I know about Mortimer. I've seen his picture at the head of his column. He's evidently fulfilled all the promise of his early nasty nature.

ABBY. [*Defensively.*] We're very fond of Mortimer.

[*There is a slight pause. Then MARTHA speaks uneasily as she gestures toward R. door.*]

MARTHA. Well, Jonathan, it's very nice to have seen you again.