

**WITHERSPOON , MORTIMER, ROONEY,
TEDDY, ABBY & MARTHA**

[Upon a door knock, Mortimer admits Mr. WITHERSPOON, an elderly, tight-lipped disciplinarian. He is carrying a briefcase]

MORTIMER: *[Eagerly]* Oh, come right in! I'm glad you're here, Super, because you're taking him back with you today!

WITHERSPOON: Today! I had no idea. I didn't realize it was this immediate.

ROONEY: The papers are all signed. He goes today. *[TEDDY enters]*

TEDDY: It's insubordination! I'm no mollycoddle. When the President of the United States is treated that way, what's this country coming to?

ROONEY: There's your man, Super. I'm sorry, Miss Brewster, but the papers are all signed and he's going along with the Superintendent.

ABBY: We won't permit it! If he goes, we're going too!

MARTHA: Yes, you'll have to take us with him!

WITHERSPOON: It's sweet of you to want to, but it's impossible. You see, we can't take *sane* people at Happy Dale.

MARTHA: Mr. Witherspoon, if you'll let us live there with Teddy, we'll see that Happy Dale is in our will and for a very generous amount.

WITHERSPOON: The Lord knows we could use the money, but I'm afraid . . .

ROONEY: Now, let's be sensible about this. Here I am wasting my morning when I've got serious work to do. You know there are still *murders* to be solved in Brooklyn. Superintendent—don't you think you can find room for these ladies?

WITHERSPOON: Well, I . . .

ROONEY: I'm a busy man. How about it, Super?

WITHERSPOON: They'd have to be committed.

MORTIMER: Teddy committed himself. Can't they do that? Can't they sign the papers?

WITHERSPOON: Certainly.

MARTHA: Oh, if we can go with Teddy we'll sign the papers. Where are they?

ABBY: Yes, where are they?

WITHERSPOON: [*produces the papers from his briefcase*] If you'll sign right here, Miss Martha. And you here, Miss Abby.

WITHERSPOON: Oh—we're overlooking something.

MARTHA: What?

WITHERSPOON: Well, we're going to need the signature of a physician.

MORTIMER: [*sees* EINSTEIN *slipping out the door*] Oh, Dr. Einstein! Will you come over here and sign some papers?

[ROONEY WATCHES EINSTEIN *sign the papers*]

WITHERSPOON: It's all right now, Lieutenant. The doctor here has just completed the signatures.

WITHERSPOON: [*To* MORTIMER] Mr. Brewster, you sign now as next of kin.

MORTIMER: Oh, yes, of course. Right here? [*He signs the papers*]

WITHERSPOON: Yes. . . . That's fine.

MORTIMER: That makes everything complete? Everything legal?

WITHERSPOON: Oh, yes. [*To the aunts*] When do you think you'll be ready to start?

ABBY: [*Nervously*] Well, Mr. Witherspoon, why don't you go up and tell Teddy what he can take along?

WITHERSPOON: Upstairs?

MORTIMER: Just up the stairs and turn left.

ABBY: Ah... Mr. Witherspoon, does your family live with you at Happy Dale?

WITHERSPOON: I have no family.

ABBY: Oh. . . .

MARTHA: Well, I suppose you consider everyone at Happy Dale your family?

WITHERSPOON: I'm afraid you don't understand. As head of the institution, I have to keep quite aloof.

ABBY: That must make it very lonely for you.

WITHERSPOON: It does. But my duty is my duty.

ABBY: Well, Martha. . . If Mr. Witherspoon won't have breakfast with us, I think at least we should offer him a glass of elderberry wine.

WITHERSPOON: Elderberry wine?

MARTHA: We make it ourselves. *[She uncorks the fresh bottle]*

WITHERSPOON: Why, yes! Of course, at Happy Dale our relationship will be more formal, but here... Well, you don't see much elderberry wine nowadays. I thought I'd had my last glass of it.

ABBY: *[Handing it to him]* Here it is!

Witherspoon *bows to the ladies and lifts the glass to his lips...*