

AGGIE. (*seeing the room for the first time*) Holy smoke!

SIMON. This is where God would live if he could afford it...

AGGIE. Mrs. Gillette?

MARTHA. Aggie Wheeler, after all this time. I can't believe we haven't met before.

AGGIE. Neither can I.

MARTHA. I've heard all about you from Willie, of course. He simply raves about you.

AGGIE. He's wonderful.

SIMON. Oh doggone it, you've finished dressing!

MARTHA. You wicked creature, get over here.

(*They embrace affectionately.*)

SIMON. Marry me now. Before the baby arrives.

MARTHA. Oh, you...I've known this young man since he was an extra in *Pride and Prejudice*. I played Mrs. Bennett.

AGGIE. (*taking SIMON's hand*) I wish I'd seen it.

MARTHA. I pretended I was a little dotty and not all there, you know.

SIMON. It was quite a stretch.

MARTHA. Oh, be quiet.

SIMON. Did you make me a Christmas present? I *love* your presents.

(*to AGGIE*) Last year she made me her famous peach preserves. I was doubled over with joy for three days.

AGGIE. (*handing MARTHA a beautifully-wrapped present*) This is for you. Merry Christmas.

MARTHA. Oh, thank you. It looks *beautiful*.

(*She puts it under the tree.*)

SIMON. This house is amazing! It must have cost the earth.

MARTHA. Oh you know Willie. It's never by halves.

SIMON. When did you move in?

MARTHA. About three months ago now.

AGGIE. And how is he feeling?

MARTHA. Well, he scared me to death getting shot like that, and now he insists he's going to catch the culprit all by himself. I say to him, "*Willie, you're not a policeman!*" But he locks himself up for hours in his laboratory.

SIMON. You have a laboratory?

MARTHA. My dear this house has *everything*. Watch this.

*(She pulls a lever and a floor-to-ceiling portion of the bookcase swivels around to create a bar complete with two bar stools and a bar-table. In other words, it's a sort of hidden room within the room that is only revealed when the lever is pulled.)*

SIMON. Good Lord.

MARTHA. That's one of his favorites – along with the miniature railroad, the electric snow shovel and the exploding monkey.

*(The door bell buzzes.)*

That'll be Madge and Felix. I'll be right back.

*(She exits, leaving AGGIE and SIMON alone in the room. AGGIE takes a deep breath.)*

SIMON. Are you holding up all right?

AGGIE. I think so.

SIMON. He'll be fine with it, just trust me.

AGGIE. Right.

SIMON. Good egg.

AGGIE. ...You're sure?

SIMON. Absolutely. I want to see their faces when we give them the news. They'll say, "What?! What?!"