

crosses to back of a table.) Yes, all right. Like the man upstairs, then. (She looks out of window, then draws back a step, so as not to be seen.) There he is, coming in now. Did you do that? Why don't I ever meet people like that? . . . What's the matter? Want to go out? (She opens swing door to kitchen.) All right, then, Pycwacket. There you are. (She sets cat down in kitchen, returns and lights the liquor console lamp. There is a knock on the door.) Who's there? (She switches on the hall light and opens door. SHEPHERDSON is standing outside. He is a man of anywhere from thirty-five up, masculine and attractive. He wears day clothes, a topcoat and carries his hat. He also carries a couple of Christmas-wrapped packages.)

GILLIAN. Oh . . .

SHEP. (Steps down to r. of her.) Miss Holroyd?

GILLIAN. Yes.

SHEP. My name's Shepherd Henderson. I live on the floor above. Are you my landlady?

GILLIAN. Yes. How do you do?

SHEP. Are you busy, or could I see you for a moment?

GILLIAN. Certainly. Come in, won't you? (She closes door.)

SHEP. Thanks. (He does so, steps down r. c.)

GILLIAN. Take off your coat. (She crosses to sofa table, L. and puts on lamp.)

SHEP. (Doing so—he crosses to back of a table—puts his hat and packages on it.) Thanks. I won't keep you long. I imagine you're going out. I am, too. (Showing packages.) I've just been getting some last-minute presents I forgot. Well, now . . . (He steps L. GILLIAN crosses to L. c.)

GILLIAN. (Interrupting.) Would you like a drink?

SHEP. I don't think I ought to take time for that. And . . . I don't know that this is an altogether friendly visit . . .

GILLIAN. Oh?

SHEP. You've been away ever since I moved in . . .

GILLIAN. (Steps toward him.) Is anything wrong? You should have called the agents.

SHEP. I did. But—well, I'm afraid it doesn't seem to have done much good.

GILLIAN. What's the trouble?

SHEP. The lady on the floor above me. I think she's your aunt.

GILLIAN. Yes?

SHEP. Did you ever give her a key to my apartment?

GILLIAN. (Astonished.) No, of course not. Why?

SHEP. Well, she's been in it a couple of times. I found her there. And I'm afraid I don't awfully like it.

GILLIAN. No. Naturally. But how did she get in?

SHEP. She said she found the door open. That may have been true the first time, though I don't think so. I know it wasn't true, the second. And—even if it were . . .

GILLIAN. (Shutting up somewhat; something almost guisly about her, as though she knows more than she is saying.) Oh, I'm sorry. (She sits on ottoman.)

SHEP. (Crossing to back of a chair. Picks up his packages.) Yes, well, I thought I'd better tell you, now that you're back.

GILLIAN. (Worried.) Yes, of course. Is that all?

SHEP. Isn't it enough?

GILLIAN. (Laughing, but uncomfortably.) I didn't mean that. (GILLIAN gestures to him to sit. SHEP puts his packages down, his coat on back of a chair, and sits.)

SHEP. Thank you. As a matter of fact, it's not really all. I—er—I think your aunt is rather a peculiar lady.

GILLIAN. (Still worried, and not giving at all.) Oh?

SHEP. Is she by any chance studying dramatics?

GILLIAN. Dramatics?

SHEP. Well, I can hear her at night through the ceiling, and it sounds as if she were reciting—or something.

GILLIAN. (With obviously embarrassed knowledge.) Oh.

SHEP. Oh, you know about that? What is it that she's doing—or shouldn't I ask?

GILLIAN. Well, it is a kind of dramatics. You can't hear what she says?

SHEP. No. And I'm sorry, but there's another thing. Her cooking. At least, again I guess that's what it is. Unless she's an amateur chemist. It doesn't smell like anything I'd be willing to eat.

GILLIAN. It's not cooking. She—she makes things. Perfumes and—lotions, and things.

SHEP. It's not my idea of perfume. (Rises, steps to back of chair.)

GILLIAN. (Smiles, but still uneasily. Then:) And that is all?

SHEP. (Half-amused.) You sound as if you were expecting something worse.

GILLIAN. (Unconvincingly.) Oh—No. No. (She rises, steps to above ottoman.)