

DAD: I now call this meeting to order. *[Explaining]* That means – quiet. *[Formally]* You'll notice I'm installed here as your chairman. I assume there are no objections. The chair, hearing no objections, will ----

ANNE: Mr. Chairman.

DAD: Out of order.

ANNE *[quickly]*: Since this is going to be a democratic council, I think the chairman should represent the common people.

DAD: You're very much out of order. The chair has the floor.

ANNE: But you said you heard no objections, and I want to object.

DAD *[flaring up]*: Out of order means you're not of order and sit down. *[Glares at Anne]* The first job of the council is to apportion the necessary work about the house. Does the chair hear any suggestions? *[There is silence. He forces a smile]* Come, come, fellow members. How do you want to divide the work? *[Silence. He looks helplessly to Mother.]*

MOTHER *[amused]*: I don't think anyone wants to divide the work or otherwise be associated with it in any way, shape, or form.

DAD *[turning back, sharply]*: In a democracy, everybody speaks. So start speaking. Dan, I recognize you. What do you think about it? I'm warning you – *speak!*

DAN: I think Mrs. Fitzgerald and Tom should do the work. They get paid for it.

DAD *[shouting]*: Sit down. You're no longer recognized. Bill, I recognize you.

BILL: I think Tom and Mrs. Fitzgerald have enough to do. *[Dad beams at him. Bill takes a deep breath.]* So I think we should hire more people to help with the work.

DAD: You're out of order too. *[Turns to Mother.]* Boss, now what?

MOTHER *[to children]*: Of course, we *could* hire more help. But that means saving somewhere else. If we cut out all allowances, moving pictures, new clothes, and so forth ----

CHILDREN: Hey, Mother! No! Wait a minute!

DAD: Ahh! Do I hear a motion to that effect? Who wants to stop allowances? Moving pictures?

MOTHER: Seriously, we'll all have to help.

FRANK: I move the boys cut the grass and rake leaves.

ERNESTINE: And I move the girls sweep, dust, and do supper dishes.

MOTHER: And everyone makes his own bed.

DAD *[quickly]*: Except the chairman.

MOTHER: Except the chairman.

DAD: Second the motion. All those in favor?

CHILDREN *[softly]*: Aye.

DAD: Opposed? Motion carried. There being no other business ----

FRED: Mr. Chairman, I understand the purchase of a new rug is intended.

MOTHER [*surprised*]: Yes – it is.

FRED: Can the budget afford such a rug?

DAD [*surprised*]: Well – I don't know. Sounds to me as if they have a good point, Boss.

MOTHER: I planned to spend a hundred dollars.

FRED: I move no more than ninety-five dollars be spent.

DAD: I second the motion, too. All those in favor?

CHILDREN: Aye!

DAD: I'm afraid you lose on that one, Boss. Now, if there's no further business ----

DAN: Mr. Chairman, I move we spend the five dollars we just saved to buy a collie puppy.

DAD: Hey, wait a minute!

MOTHER: Second the motion.

DAD: Out of order. Very much out of order.

JACKIE: A dog would be a pet. Everyone could pat him, and I would be his master.

BILL: A dog would sleep at the foot of my bed, and I would wash him when he was dirty.

DAD [*mimicking*]: A dog would be an accursed nuisance. He would be our master. Nobody would wash his filthy, flea-bitten carcass. He'd positively sleep on the foot of *my* bed.

DAN: Let's vote.

DAD: Any pet that doesn't lay eggs is an extravagance.

CHILDREN: Vote! Vote!

DAD: This council is adjourned! Meeting adjourned! That's all!

DAN: All those in favor?

CHILDREN: Aye!

DAD: No!

MOTHER: I'm afraid *you* lose on that one, Boss.

ERNESTINE: I think this council is a very good idea.

MARTHA: There're lots of things we should take up.

DAD: I suppose next you want ponies, roadsters, trips to Hawaii – *silk stockings!*

ANNE: Mr. Chairman?

DAD: What is it?

ANNE: There is still further business I wish to place before the council.

ERNESTINE: And it's important.

ANNE: I'll – I'll show you. [*Turns and takes a package from the desk drawer.*] I'm not hiding anything. I want the entire family to see.

DAD [*half smiling*]: Shall I bring down the babies?

ERNESTINE: Be serious.

DAD: What is it?

ANNE: To begin with – these underthings – these teddies. I'm going to wear them.

DAD [*horrified*]: You will not! Put them back in the box. It embarrasses me even to look at them.

ANNE: I bought them with my own money.

DAD: You'll take this right back to the store.

ERNESTINE: There's only one other girl in school besides us who doesn't wear teddies.

MARTHA: If you don't believe us, come to school and see for yourself.

DAD: That won't be necessary.

MOTHER: I'm glad there's one other sensible girl in school besides you.

ERNESTINE: But *she* doesn't even wear a teddy.

MARTHA: And if you don't believe us ----

DAD: It still won't be necessary.

FRED: They're getting boy-crazy, Dad.

BILL: That's all they talk about.

FRANK: You should see them eyeing the boys in the hall at school, or in the lunchroom ----

MARTHA: You little snakes!

LILLIAN [*to boys*]: Shame on you.

ANNE: You might as well know – it isn't just teddies. I bought – silk stockings.

DAD: *No!*

MOTHER: Anne! You didn't!

DAD: You might as well go barelegged as wear these! You can see right through them! They're like the last of the seven veils!

ANNE [*with a sigh of relief*]: Now you know.