

MOTHER ABBESS: I think we should be pleased with our efforts. Out of twenty-eight postulants, sixteen or seventeen are ready to enter the novitiate. Let's consider the doubtful ones again. There's Irmagard. . .

BERTHE: Reverend Mother, there's no doubt about Irmagard—the religious life is no place for the pious.

MOTHER ABBESS: You mean the pretentiously pious, Sister Berthe. There's Christina—and there's Maria.

BERTHE: Well, after last night I don't think there can be any doubt in the Reverend Mother's mind about Maria.

MOTHER ABBESS: I gave her permission to leave the Abbey for the day.

MARGARETTA: *(R. of BERTHE)* I told you, Sister Berthe—
(There is a knock on the door.)

MOTHER ABBESS: Ave!

(SISTER SOPHIA enters, comes to above desk.)

SOPHIA: Reverend Mother, I've brought Maria. She's waiting.

MOTHER ABBESS: Sister Sophia, the Mistress of the Postulants and the Mistress of the Novices do not see eye to eye about Maria. How do you feel about her?

SOPHIA: I love her very dearly. But she always seems to be in trouble, doesn't she?