

Maggie All I can tell you is that it's not the battery. I got a new one yesterday.

Gerry Let me check the aerial first. Very often that's where the trouble lies. Then I'll have a look at the ignition and sparking plugs. Leave it to Gerry.

He winks at Chris as he goes out the front door and off right.

Maggie He sounds very knowledgeable.

Chris It may be something he can't fix.

Kate I know you're not responsible for Gerry's decisions, Christina. But it would be on my conscience if I didn't tell you how strongly I disapprove of this International Brigade caper. It's a sorry day for Ireland when we send young men off to Spain to fight for godless Communism.

Chris For democracy, Kate.

Kate I'm not going to argue. I just want to clear my conscience.

Chris That's the important thing, of course. And now you've cleared it.

Gerry runs on and calls through the window:

Gerry Turn the radio on, Chrissie, would you?

Maggie It's on.

Gerry Right. *(He runs off again.)*

Chris Just as we were coming out of the town we met Vera McLaughlin, the knitting agent. *(softly)* Agnes and Rose aren't back yet?

Maggie They'll be here soon.

Chris She says she'll call in tomorrow and tell them

herself. The poor woman was very distressed.

Kate Tell them what?

Chris She's not buying any more hand-made gloves.

Maggie Why not?

Chris Too dear, she says.

Kate Too dear! She pays them a pittance!

Chris There's a new factory started up in Donegal Town. They make machine gloves more quickly there and far more cheaply. The people Vera used to supply buy their gloves direct from the factory now.

Maggie That's awful news, Chrissie.

Chris She says they're organizing buses to bring the workers to the factory and back every day. Most of the people who used to work at home have signed on. She tried to get a job there herself. They told her she was too old. She's forty-one. The poor woman could hardly speak.

Maggie Oh God . . . poor Aggie . . . poor Rose . . . what'll they do?

Agnes enters the garden. Kate sees her.

Kate Shhh. They're back. Let them have their tea in peace. Tell them later.

They busy themselves with their tasks. Agnes is carrying two small pails of blackberries which she leaves outside the door of the house. Just as she is about to enter the kitchen a voice off calls her:

Gerry *(off)* Who is that beautiful woman!

She looks around, puzzled.

Agnes Gerry?