

# Truvy / Annelle

TRUVY. Honey, there's so much static electricity in here I pick up everything except boys and money. (*Points Annelle toward the kitchen.*) Be a treasure. (*Annelle exits into the kitchen. Truvy immediately starts redoing her hairdo.*) Annelle? This is the most successful shop in town. Wanna know why?

ANNELLE. (*Offstage.*) Why?

TRUVY. Because I have a strict philosophy that I have stuck to for fifteen years... "There is no such thing as natural beauty." That's why I've never lost a client to the Kut and Kurt or the Beauty Box. And remember! My ladies get only the best. Do not scrimp on anything. Feel free to use as much hair spray as you want. (*Annelle returns with the tray. The sound of a gunshot makes her jump, but she recovers.*) Just shove that stuff to one side, it goes right there. (*Pointing out the room.*) Manicure station here...

ANNELLE. There's no such thing as natural beauty...

TRUVY. Remember that, or we're all out of a job. Just look at me, Annelle. It takes some effort to look like this.

ANNELLE. I can see that. How many ladies do we have this morning?

TRUVY. I restrict myself to the ladies of the neighborhood on Saturday mornings. Normally that would be just three, but today we've got Shelby Eatenton. She's not a regular, she's the daughter of a regular. I have to do something special with her hair. She's getting married this afternoon. Now. How long have you been here in town?

ANNELLE. A few weeks...

TRUVY. New in town! It must be exciting being in a new place. I wouldn't know. I've lived here all my life.

ANNELLE. It's a little scary.

TRUVY. I can imagine. Well...tell me things about yourself.

ANNELLE. There's nothing to tell. I live here. I've got a job now. That's it. Could I borrow a few of these back issues of *Southern Hair*?

TRUVY. Uh...sure. It's essential to keep abreast of the latest styles. I'm glad to see your interest. I get *McCall's*, *Family Circle*, *Glamour*, *Mademoiselle*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, every magazine known to man. You must live close by. Within walking distance, I mean. I didn't see a car.

ANNELLE. My car's... I don't have a car. I've been staying across the river at Robeline's Boarding House.

TRUVY. That's quite a walk. Ruth Robeline...now there's a story. She's a twisted, troubled soul. Her life has been an experiment in terror. Husband killed in World War II. Her son was killed in Vietnam. I have to tell you, when it comes to suffering, she's right up there with Elizabeth Taylor.

ANNELLE. I had no idea. (*There is a loud gunshot and barking.*) Is that a gunshot?

TRUVY. Yes, dear. I believe it is. Plug in the hotplate, please.

ANNELLE. But why is someone firing a gun in a nice neighborhood like this?

TRUVY. It's a long story. It has to do with Shelby's wedding and her father. (*More gunfire and barking.*) You'll be happier if you just ignore it like the rest of the neighborhood.

CLAIREE. (*Entering.*) Knock, knock!

TRUVY. Morning, Clairee!

CLAIREE. Morning, Truvy.

TRUVY. I tried to call you and tell you I was running late. No answer.

CLAIREE. I was at the high school. I was out at the crack of dawn.

TRUVY. Annelle, I want you to meet the former first lady of Chinquapin, Mrs. Belcher. Clairee, this is Annelle. She's taking Judy's place.

ANNELLE. Pleased to meet you.

CLAIREE. I'm a little embarrassed. If I had known I was meeting new people, I would have taken a little more pride in my appearance. I have been at the dedication of our new football field. I am not always this windblown.

TRUVY. Annelle. They named the stadium after her late husband... Lloyd Belcher Memorial Coliseum. The team has voted her all sorts of special titles.

CLAIREE. I have the pom-poms to prove it. What is your name, dear?

ANNELLE. Oh. My married name's Dupuy.

# Truvy / Annelle / Clairee \*

CLAIREE. I don't think I know any Dupuys.

ANNELLE. I just moved here. I'm originally from Zwolle.

CLAIREE. That explains it. Truvy? I thought I brought you those recipes. *(She fumbles with her shirt that has no pockets.)*

TRUVY. Clairee. The reason I called is, do you mind if I do Shelby first?

CLAIREE. That's fine. I'll amuse myself. Shelby's the most important one today. *(A gunshot.)* That man! I'll swanee... I think the situation is worse than ever.

TRUVY. Annelle? We're going to need more towels. They're stacked up next to the washing machine. *(Annelle exits.)*

CLAIREE. Sweet girl. Where'd you find her?

TRUVY. She heard I had a position open and she just walked in. I think there's a story here.

CLAIREE. What makes you say that?

TRUVY. For starters. She's married... but she lives at Ruth Robeline's. *(Clairee reacts.)* Alone.

CLAIREE. I'd get to the bottom of this, if I were you. You have some nice silverware you'd like to keep.

TRUVY. Oh, I'm not worried about that. She's very nice. I just love the idea of hiring someone with a past.

CLAIREE. She can't be more than eighteen. She hasn't had time to have a past.

TRUVY. Honey. It's the eighties. If you can achieve puberty, you can achieve a past.

CLAIREE. *(Annelle enters, carrying towels. Clairee sips her coffee and grimaces.)* Yuck! *(Truvy, concerned, takes a sip.)*

TRUVY. Annelle? How did you make this coffee?

ANNELLE. Like you said. I poured hot water through the thing.

TRUVY. Where'd you get the water?

ANNELLE. It was boiling on the stove.

TRUVY. Did you notice the hot dogs in the bottom of the pot?

ANNELLE. No.

TRUVY. Make some more, please.

ANNELLE. I'm so sorry.

CLAIREE. Don't worry. I love a good hot dog. Just not with cream and sugar. *(Annelle exits.)*

TRUVY. She's probably not an international spy. But! If she works out, I may let her rent the garage apartment.

CLAIREE. I thought the twins were going to live there while they go to the college.

TRUVY. Recent developments. Louie's going away to LSU now. And Poot has decided to work for my cousin in Baltimore. He doesn't want to be called Poot anymore. My babies are growing up.

CLAIREE. I can't believe your kids are old enough to leave the nest.

TRUVY. You know I was a child bride. Well, I look at the bright side. I have some places to visit now. I've always wanted to go to Baltimore. I'm told it's the hand do capital of the world.

CLAIREE. *(Finding the recipes in her pocket.)* Here they are! I'm so fat I couldn't feel them.

TRUVY. The recipes? Let me see... *(Truvy takes the recipe cards and pores over them. Clairee reads over her shoulder.)* Um...this sounds delicious.

CLAIREE. It is. And the Bisquick makes it so simple. *(Pulls another card.)* And this is from my daughter-in-law. She says you can't attend a function in Tickfaw where this is not served.

TRUVY. Yum. *(Reading.)* Now are these chocolate chips semi-sweet or milk?

CLAIREE. Milk.

TRUVY. Is the Karo syrup light or dark?

CLAIREE. Matter of taste.

TRUVY. Where's that other one you were telling me about... Cuppa, cuppa, cuppa?

CLAIREE. That's so easy you don't have to write it down. Cup of flour, cup of sugar, cup of fruit cocktail with the juice. Mix it up and bake at 350 til gold and bubbly.

TRUVY. Sounds awfully rich.

# Truvy, Annelie, Clairee, Shelby\*

CLAIREE. It is. So I serve it over ice cream to cut the sweetness. Give me some paper, I'll copy them down for you.

TRUVY. (*Calling.*) Annelie? Get Miss Clairee some paper. I believe there's some stuck on the Frigidaire under the crawfish. (*To Clairee.*) Oh...and here's that article on Princess Di. (*There are gunshots and frenzied barking.*) Sometimes I wonder if Drum Eatenton's brain gets enough oxygen. That is so annoying.

CLAIREE. Try living next door to him. (*Enter Shelby. Her hair is in rollers. She carries a picture torn out of a magazine. She is a blushing bride in the first stages of completion.*)

SHELBY. Hi, everybody!

TRUVY. There she is! There's my girl! Come break my neck. (*Shelby's fingernails are wet, so she is careful when she hugs.*)

SHELBY. Truvy. It's so good to see you! Morning, Miss Clairee! It's not that I'm unfriendly, I'm just worried about my nails.

TRUVY. What a pretty color.

SHELBY. I hope this doesn't dry too dark. If it's too dark, it will never do. You know the colors are never the same on the bottle.

TRUVY. You will always find that to be true.

SHELBY. (*Her nails.*) This is drying way too dark. "Practically Pink" my foot! Truvy? Do you have any of those nail polish remover things?

TRUVY. (*Handing her some.*) Here. Where's your mama?

SHELBY. Right behind me, I thought. (*Annelie enters with fresh coffee.*) Hi! I'm Shelby Eatenton...soon to be Latcherie.

ANNELLE. Hi. I'm Annelie. I'm new.

TRUVY. Today's Annelie's first day.

SHELBY. Well, Annelie. You're working with the best. Anyone who's anybody gets their hair done at Truvy's.

TRUVY. Absolutely. (*A loud series of gunshots.*) Shelby...uh you know I would walk on my lips to avoid criticizing anyone but your father is about to make us all pull our hair out. And that is bad for my business.

SHELBY. Well, he should be finished with his yard work soon.

TRUVY. I hope so.

SHELBY. You're not the only one concerned. Mama's about to have a fit. She and Daddy are fighting like cats and dogs.

CLAIREE. They're just anxious with so much going on.

SHELBY. No they're not. They just try to create as much tension as possible in any given situation. It's a creed they live by.

TRUVY. You know. I was just reading an article in *Glamour* about tension during family occasions. It seems there can be a lot of stress and trauma. The thing I found most interesting is that stressful times can unleash deep dark hostilities that make your hair fall out.

SHELBY. They're fighting about patio furniture. Jackson and I will never fight about silly things. Are you married, Annelie?

ANNELLE. (*Changing subject.*) Oh. I hope that coffee's better.

CLAIREE. It smells right.

ANNELLE. (*Looking at the picture Shelby brought.*) How pretty...

SHELBY. Princess Grace...

TRUVY. Did you bring me the picture of that hairdo like I asked?

SHELBY. Here you go. Study it carefully. (*Pulls out a plastic bag.*) Here's the baby's breath.

TRUVY. This is so exciting. I feel like I am present at the creation. There is something so wondrous about the way a bride looks. I feel it is beauty in its purest form. (*Studying the picture and the bag of baby's breath.*) Where are you going to put this stuff? There's no baby's breath in this picture.

SHELBY. You just stick it in. It's meant to frame my face. Baby's breath is part of my whole decoration concept. For a total romantic look. (*Notices Clairee's shoes.*) Miss Clairee! What cute shoes!

CLAIREE. You think so? I'm not so sure. I think they're a little too racy for me. I'll probably give them away.

TRUVY. Ooo. Those are too cha-cha for words. If you decide to get rid of them, I'll buy 'em from you.

CLAIREE. What size do you wear?

TRUVY. Well. In a good shoe, I wear a size six, but sevens feel so good, I buy a size eight.

CLAIREE. They're eight and a half.

Truvy  
Annelle  
Clairee  
Shelby  
M'Lynn

TRUVY. Perfect. (*M'Lynn enters carrying a large tote bag.*)

SHELBY. Hi, Mama. Look at Miss Clairee's shoes.

TRUVY. Ah, ah, ah! They're mine!

M'LYNN. Is this a riddle?

SHELBY. Annelle. This is my mama. How're things at the house?

M'LYNN. Fine. Ouiser Boudreaux just this second dropped by to talk to your father. One or both of them is probably lying in a pool of blood by now. (*To Annelle.*) Hello. Did you say Annelle? What a pretty name. Unusual. I'm M'Lynn.

TRUVY. How's the mother of the bride?

M'LYNN. Don't ask.

TRUVY. What's the matter?

M'LYNN. Nothing a handful of prescription drugs couldn't take care of.

ANNELLE. I'll take this for you. (*Annelle takes M'Lynn's bag.*)

M'LYNN. Just put it over there, please. (*Annelle puts it near Clairee.*)

TRUVY. Annelle. Why don't you go on and shampoo Mrs. Eaton? These girls have mountains to move today.

M'LYNN. Ain't that the truth.

TRUVY. Her coiffure card is right on top.

ANNELLE. (*Looking at the card.*) Oh. Piece of cake.

SHELBY. Mama. This color is all wrong. It looks like a stuck pig bled all over my hands.

M'LYNN. I'm sure I have something at the house that'll do.

SHELBY. But do you have pink?

M'LYNN. Of course I have pink.

SHELBY. It has to be delicate.

M'LYNN. If I don't have something, we'll send one of the boys to get you some delicate pink nail polish.

SHELBY. Great idea, Mama. I'd love to see what Tommy'd pick out.

CLAIREE. Anything I can do to help out last minute?

M'LYNN. You've done plenty, Clairee. I think we've got everything situated. We've just finished borrowing every fern in North

Louisiana. The boys got in last night and they're taking care of the odds and ends.

CLAIREE. I hope the rain holds off. I'm sorry it's not a prettier day.

SHELBY. This is perfect weather for me. I don't function well when it's hot. I love cloudy days. On cloudy days I feel God's not trying very hard, so I don't have to either.

M'LYNN. She does sweat profusely.

SHELBY. Thank you, Mama.

TRUVY. Heat never bothers me. I love it. But spicy foods make me sweat. Especially on the top of my head. My hair gets wet. (*The phone rings.*)

CLAIREE. I'll get it.

M'LYNN. I'll bet that's for me. It's probably my mind trying to locate my body.

CLAIREE. (*Answering.*) Hello? Yessir, she is. Hold on a minute. M'Lynn. It's your husband.

M'LYNN. (*Takes phone.*) Yes Drum? I don't know. I haven't got it. I don't have it. Drum, if you're trying to drive me crazy, you're too late. For the last time...I don't have it. Ask the boys. Goodbye. (*She hangs up.*)

SHELBY. What did Daddy want?

M'LYNN. Nothing.

TRUVY. (*Looking at the picture and at Shelby's hair...*) So...we want to sweep it up, but leave some softness around your ears...

M'LYNN. Sweep it up?

SHELBY. Yes, Mama. Up. Like Princess Grace.


M'LYNN. Did you bring Truvy the picture of Jaclyn Smith?

SHELBY. No. I brought the picture of Princess Grace. I destroyed the picture of Jaclyn Smith.

M'LYNN. But I thought I had made you understand the advantages of the Jaclyn Smith hairdo...

SHELBY. No, Mama.

M'LYNN. Well. At least I talked her out of that stupid idea of sticking that baby's breath all in her hair.

Ouiser   
Truvy  
M'Lynn  
Annelle  
Clairee

TRUVY. Taking the gun was a stroke of genius, M'Lynn.  
M'LYNN. I know.  
ANNELLE. What if he comes over here and tries to get his gun back?  
M'LYNN. Drum would never set foot in a beauty shop. This is women's territory. He probably thinks we all run around naked or something.  
ANNELLE. *(Catching a glimpse out of the window.)* There's somebody coming! A strange lady with a strange dog!  
CLAIREE. That would be Ouiser.  
ANNELLE. That is one ugly dog. What kind of dog is that?  
CLAIREE. If Rhett had hair, he would be a collie.  
TRUVY. Lord. Give us strength. *(The door bursts open. It's Ouiser, very upset.)*  
OUISER. This is it. I've found it. I am in hell!  
TRUVY. 'Morning, Ouiser.  
OUISER. Don't try to get on my good side. I no longer have one.  
TRUVY. You're a little early. You're not expected 'til elevenish.  
OUISER. That's precisely why I'm here. I have to cancel. *(The phone rings. Ouiser picks it up and hangs up on the caller.)* I have to take my poor dog to the vet before he has a nervous breakdown. My dog I mean. The vet is perfectly healthy. *(To Annelle.)* You must be the new girl.  
ANNELLE. Hi.  
OUISER. May I have a glass of water? I have been screaming this morning. *(Exit Annelle.)*  
M'LYNN. I'm sorry this whole thing has gotten out of hand, Ouiser...  
OUISER. It's not your fault, M'Lynn. I used to think that you were crazy for marrying that man. Then I thought for a few years that you were just a glutton for punishment. Now I realize that you must be on some mission from God. I have not slept in days. I look like a dog's dinner. However, when I got up this morning, I decided I would try to rise above it. I would start anew. Whatever that man has done, I would overlook it in honor of your wedding day, Shelby. I thought I would make myself a little presentable and floss up the

house in case somebody wanted to drop in...it being a big day in the neighborhood and all. So I go out to cut some fresh flowers for the living room. I go down to my magnolia tree and there is not a bloom on it!

M'LYNN. Ouiser. The judge has not decided whose tree that is exactly.

OUISER. It's mine! *(Enter Annelle with glass of water.)* Be that as it may...it would not be too much to ask for me to have one blossom to brighten my home. I am all alone except for my dog.

CLAIREE. You need something in your life besides that dumb animal...

OUISER. Put a lid on it, Clairee. I was standing there looking at my...my naked magnolia tree when I saw Drum across the way loading what appeared to be a cannon. I asked him what happened to all those magnolia blossoms. He said the wind probably blew them off during the night. Then I asked him how the wind managed to blow them all off into your pool. Then he fired at me! Is that rude or what?

M'LYNN. They're blanks. And Drum would never aim a gun at a lady.

OUISER. He's a real gentleman. I'll bet he takes the dishes out of the sink before he pees in it.

M'LYNN. That's uncalled for.

OUISER. All I know is my poor animal has to be sedated. He has a condition.

SHELBY. Are you sure that's true? Rhett is a very old dog.

OUISER. I am simply going on what the vet tells me.

CLAIREE. Which vet?

OUISER. Whitey Black.

CLAIREE. That's your first mistake. Whitey Black is a moron. I'm not even sure he has opposable thumbs.

SHELBY. Miss Ouiser, Daddy is not trying to drive you crazy. He's just trying to make my reception nice. His heart's in the right place.

OUISER. But he cannot do this to my dog! My dog is on his last legs! What am I going to do with the poor animal?

# Ouiser Cont.

CLAIREE. (*Holding up the recipe box.*) I've got a lot of good recipes here.

OUISER. (*To Annelle.*) Darling...whatever your name is...would you look out the window and check on my dog while I smack Clairee on her smart mouth? You may not believe this, but these are the dearest friends I have in this town.

ANNELLE. His color's good. His skin is real pink.

SHELBY. I know for a fact there will be no more gunshots. So why don't you relax, Miss Ouiser? Have some coffee.

TRUVY. Ladies. This is going to work out beautifully. I'm almost through with Shelby. Annelle can shampoo Ouiser. See. Life can be wonderful.

OUISER. All right. As long as there's no more gunshots, I'll stay. (*To Annelle.*) What is your name? Did you tell me?

ANNELLE. Annelle.

OUISER. Fine. Are you new in town? I know everyone. I don't recall ever seeing you before.

ANNELLE. I just moved to town not too long ago.

OUISER. With your family?

ANNELLE. No'm. I don't have any family to speak of.

OUISER. With your husband?

ANNELLE. Uh...my husband? That's hard to say...I...uh...I don't know.

OUISER. You don't know?

ANNELLE. I'm not sure.

OUISER. I'm intrigued. Are you married or not? These are not difficult questions.

ANNELLE. Uh...we're not...he's not...I can't talk about it.

CLAIREE & TRUVY. Of course you can.

ANNELLE. I'm not sure if I'm married or not...he's gone!

OUISER. Honey. Men are the most horrible creatures.

ANNELLE. Everything is horrible. Bunkie...that's my husband. He left. We only moved here a month ago. He just vanished last week.

CLAIREE. No idea where he went?

ANNELLE. Nobody knows. He took all the money, my jewelry, the car. Most of my clothes were in the trunk.

TRUVY. There might have been foul play. Have you been to the police?

ANNELLE. No...but they've been to me. He's in big trouble with the law. Drugs or something. He never paid the rent so I got thrown out of our house and had to move in at crazy old Mrs. Robeline's. The police keep questioning me. But I don't know anything. They say my marriage may not be legal...

TRUVY. You should've said something.

ANNELLE. I was scared to. I need a job in the worst way and I didn't know if you'd hire someone who may or may not be married to someone who might be a dangerous criminal. But I swear to you that my personal tragedy will not interfere with my ability to do good hair.

TRUVY. Of course it won't...

ANNELLE. I really don't think things could get any worse.

OUISER. Of course they can.

SHELBY. You are so brave.

TRUVY. You must be made of courage.

ANNELLE. I'm totally alone. Checks are bouncing everywhere. Everything is going wrong. I keep asking myself...why me?

SHELBY. We are awful. We are all hateful, awful people. Here all we've been talking about is weddings and psychotic animals. We've been tearing you up inside, haven't we? I can't tell you how sorry I am. And you've had such a terrible time. Sometimes we don't know how lucky we are.

CLAIREE. What can we do to help?

SHELBY. I know one thing I can do. Tonight, you are going to drop by my house and have some bleeding armadillo groom's cake. It's going to be a great party.

ANNELLE. Oh, I couldn't. I still get real emotional sometimes...

SHELBY. I can't stand the thought of someone being unhappy or

# M'Lynn / Shelby

M'LYNN. What a treat!

SHELBY. And you have to catch them early. On Saturdays they leave the house at the crack of dawn to start hunting furry little creatures.

M'LYNN. You must not have visited long.

SHELBY. We didn't. I could tell they were anxious to start killing things. We stopped by the house first. Nobody was there. Where's Truvy?

M'LYNN. She and Annelle are out back sticking pennies in the fuse box. They decorated that little tree and when I plugged it in all the lights blew.

SHELBY. *(Pointing to a pair of tacky earrings.)* What are those things?

M'LYNN. Red plastic poinsettia earrings. They are a gift from Annelle. She has discovered the wonderful world of Arts and Crafts.

SHELBY. Are Tommy and Jonathan home yet?

M'LYNN. Yes. Jonathan got home yesterday morning. He loves his classes. It's all he can talk about. I think the main thing architecture school has taught him is how much he should hate his parents' house. Tommy arrived last night and immediately started terrorizing your father. It's nice having the family home for Christmas.

SHELBY. Some things never change.

M'LYNN. And how are you, honey?

SHELBY. I'm so good, Mama. Just great.

M'LYNN. You're looking well. Is Jackson at the house?

SHELBY. No. You know how twitchy he gets. I sent him to look for stocking stuffers.

M'LYNN. Good thinking.

SHELBY. Uh. Jackson and I have something to tell you. We wanted to tell you when you and Daddy were together, but you're never together, so it's every man for himself. I'm pregnant.

M'LYNN. Shelby?!

SHELBY. I'm going to have a baby.

M'LYNN. I realize that.

SHELBY. Well...is that it? Is that all you're going to say?

M'LYNN. I...what do you expect me to say?

SHELBY. Something along the lines of congratulations.

M'LYNN. ...Congratulations.

SHELBY. Would it be too much to ask for a little excitement? Not too much, I wouldn't want you to break a sweat or anything.

M'LYNN. I'm in a state of shock! I didn't think...

SHELBY. In June. Oh, Mama. You have to help me plan. We're going to get a new house. Jackson and I are going house hunting next week. Jackson loves to hunt for anything.

M'LYNN. What does Jackson say about this?

SHELBY. Oh. He's very excited. He says he doesn't care whether it's a boy or girl...but I know he really wants a son so bad he can taste it. He's so cute about the whole thing. It's all he can talk about... Jackson Lacherie Junior.

M'LYNN. But does he ever listen? I mean when doctors and specialists give you advice. I know you never listen, but does he? I guess since he doesn't have to carry the baby, it doesn't really concern him.

SHELBY. Mama. Don't be mad. I couldn't bear it if you were. It's Christmas.

M'LYNN. I'm not mad, Shelby. This is just...hard. I thought that... I don't know.

SHELBY. Mama. I want a child.

M'LYNN. But what about the adoption proceedings? You have filed so many applications.

SHELBY. Mama. It didn't take us long to see the handwriting on the wall. No judge is going to give a baby to someone with my medical track record. Jackson even put out some feelers about buying one.

M'LYNN. People do it all the time.

SHELBY. Listen to me. I want a child of my own. I think it would help things a lot.

M'LYNN. I see.

SHELBY. Mama. I know. I know. Don't think I haven't thought this

Start here →

# M'Lynn / Shelby Cont.

through. You can't live a life if all you do is worry. And you worry too much. In some ways it's a comfort to me. I never worry because I know you're worrying enough for the both of us. Jackson and I have given this a lot of thought.

M'LYNN. Has he really? There's a first time for everything.

SHELBY. Don't start on Jackson.

M'LYNN. Shelby. Your poor body has been through so much. Why do you deliberately want to...

SHELBY. Mama. Diabetics have healthy babies all the time.

M'LYNN. You are special. There are limits to what you can do.

SHELBY. Mama...listen. I have it all planned. I'm going to be very careful. And this time next year, I'm going to be bringing your big healthy grandbaby to the Christmas festival. No one is going to be hurt or disappointed, or even inconvenienced.

M'LYNN. Least of all Jackson, I'm sure.

SHELBY. You are jealous because you no longer have any say-so in what I do. And that drives you up the wall. You're ready to spit nails because you can't call the shots.

M'LYNN. I did not raise my daughter to talk to me this way.

SHELBY. Yes you did. Whenever any of us asked you what you wanted us to be when we grew up, what did you say?

M'LYNN. Shelby, I am not in the mood for games.

SHELBY. What did you say? Just tell me what you said. Answer me.

M'LYNN. I said all I wanted was for you to be happy.

SHELBY. OK. The thing that would make me happy is to have a baby. If I could adopt one I would, but I can't. I'm going to have a baby. I wish you would be happy, too.

M'LYNN. I wish I... I don't know what I wish.

SHELBY. Mama. I don't know why you have to make everything so difficult. I look at having this baby as the opportunity of a lifetime. Sure, there may be some risk involved. That's true for anybody. But you get through it and life goes on. And when it's all said and done there'll be a little piece of immortality with Jackson's looks and my sense of style...I hope. Mama, please. I need your support. I would

rather have thirty minutes of wonderful than a lifetime of nothing special. *(The lights come up. The radio is blaring.)*

M'LYNN. They're on, Truvy!

SHELBY. Please. Don't tell anybody yet. I want to tell Daddy first.

M'LYNN. I never tell anyone anything. *(M'Lynn goes to turn the radio volume down.)*

TRUVY. *(Enters, carrying Christmas decorations.)* Well! Look who's here! Give me a hug right here and now!

SHELBY. Hi, Truvy! Merry Christmas!

TRUVY. Ho, ho, ho. *(Calling through the door.)* Annelle! We have a special mystery guest! *(To Shelby.)* You're just in time. You can have the honor of lighting the tree of beauty.

SHELBY. How precious. What a novel idea to trim it with hair things.

TRUVY. *(Annelle enters.)* It's all Annelle's idea. She has quite an eye for the unusual.

ANNELLE. Hi there! *(Hugs Shelby.)*

SHELBY. *(The tree and the decorations.)* Annelle, you did all this?

ANNELLE. Guilty. Truvy just turned over the decoration responsibility to me. I like themes. And I despise the commercialization of Christmas, always have. So I went to the fire sale at the Baptist Book Store in Shreveport last month. They had mismatched Manger scenes at incredibly low prices. I cleaned them out of Baby Jesuses, which Truvy's husband helped me modify into ornaments. Very simple. Tiny white lights, Baby Jesuses, and spoolies.

TRUVY. My husband has redone Poot's old room so Annelle can have a workshop for her handicrafts. That little garage apartment is so cramped. *(Truvy places grotesque handmade treetop ornament on tree.)*

SHELBY. Isn't that nice. Are your boys coming home for Christmas?

TRUVY. No. Louie brought home his girlfriend at Thanksgiving. The nicest thing I can say about her is that all her tattoos are spelled correctly. Guess it's just me, the old man...and Annelle. *(Offers Shelby the plug for the lights.)* Do the honors, missy. And hope it doesn't blow up again. *(Shelby lights the tree. Applause all around.)*

SHELBY. *(Triumphantly to M'Lynn.)* See. I know what I'm doing.

for a moment. Annelle is listening to the weather report.)

ANNELLE. Thirty-nine degrees! You were right, Truvy. TRUVY. It's too cold for this time of year, I'm gonna write a letter.

OUISER. I don't like it one bit. I turn blue when it's this cold. And blue is not in my palette.

Baton Rouge and a year's supply of plywood from Mar-million Mills...the finest plywood money can buy. If you're going out today, bundle up. We'll be doing good to get up to thirty-nine degrees. Last night was the coldest Halloween since 1948. I'm not used to this arctic weather. *(Music plays.)*

CLAIREE. Anne Boleyn had six fingers.

OUISER. Who's Anne Berlin?

CLAIREE. Anne *Boleyn*. She was one of the six wives of Henry VIII.

OUISER. I never watch public television.

CLAIREE. She had six fingers.

OUISER. What happened to the other four?

CLAIREE. She had eleven total.

OUISER. Are you trying to confuse me? What are you talking about?

CLAIREE. This article says that she had six fingers on one hand. So she had all her dresses made so the sleeves hung down to her fingertips so she wouldn't look weird.

OUISER. *Reader's Digest* is a font of useful information. *(They lapse into thoughtful silence.)*

TRUVY. *(Her scarf is tied around her neck.)* Clairee. I just love my scarf. You are so thoughtful. It really jazzes up this outfit.

CLAIREE. The only thing that separates us from the animals is our ability to accessorize.

ANNELLE. I want to spray just a little more of my French perfume. I love it so much. I love it when the smell just fills the air. *(She sprays a mist and walks through it.)*

TRUVY. Don't waste it! That stuff ain't cheap.

OUISER. Save it, honey. We're going to have to burn our clothes as it is.

Truvy  
Annette  
Clairee  
Ouiser

Truvy  
Annelle  
Clairee  
Ouiser  
Cont.

TRUVY. I'm just so touched that you remembered us.

CLAIREE. I had a ball shopping. I don't care what anyone says, the French people are very friendly. And most of them had the courtesy to speak English.

TRUVY. (*Ouiser has pulled her scarf out from under her smock. It is a wild print. As Ouiser examines it:*) And I love Ouiser's, too. I may want to borrow that sometime.

OUISER. You're welcome to it.

CLAIREE. You don't like it, do you?

OUISER. It's perfect for me. A print this busy'll never show dog hair.

ANNELLE. My feet are like two blocks of ice.

OUISER. (*Sips coffee.*) This tastes like it was made in a rubber tire.

TRUVY. Annelle, remember to get that new thing for the Mr. Coffee.

ANNELLE. (*After a beat.*) Have any of you seen her this morning?

CLAIREE. I haven't. I went directly to the house when I got in. Only the boys were there.

ANNELLE. Do you think she'll come by?

OUISER. I doubt it. I'm sure her hair is the farthest thing from her mind.

TRUVY. Who knows what's on her mind. But she might need something and I just wanted to be here for her.

CLAIREE. I'm glad you decided to stay open today.

OUISER. How are the boys?

CLAIREE. As well as can be expected...

TRUVY. My husband and I are taking some barbecue over there later.

CLAIREE. I have never seen so much food.

ANNELLE. You can never have enough at times like these. My husband's back at the apartment cooking up a storm. He's convinced that his red beans and rice will make everyone feel better.

TRUVY. Maybe he's right. That's why we call it soul food. I'm gonna have to get his recipe.

ANNELLE. You'll have to ask him. Sammy runs me off whenever he starts cooking. That kitchen is so tiny he's scared he'll hit me in the stomach with a spatula.

CLAIREE. When are you moving, Annelle?

ANNELLE. Next month.

TRUVY. You had to bring it up. I can't stand it that she's moving away now that I'm about to be a semi-grandmother.

ANNELLE. It's just down the street, Truvy. A hop, skip, and a jump. That apartment is so squunched Sammy and I have to step outside to change our minds. You're toying with me, aren't you?

TRUVY. A little bit. Not a lot. Guess it's just me and the old man.

CLAIREE. Truvy. Be thankful. You'd miss him if he were gone.

TRUVY. (*Chuckles.*) You know? Last night, he actually got up off the couch and said, "Let's go out to eat." Well...after I came to, I asked him, "What's the matter?" I thought Deputy Dawg had been preempted. Then he said he's got a good shot at doing the electrical contracting for the new college library! I'm not supposed to tell anybody! (*Everyone is excited. M'Lynn enters. No one knows what to say. M'Lynn is very together.*)

M'LYNN. Hello everybody. (*They all hug her.*) Welcome home, Clairee. How was Paris?

CLAIREE. Perfectly beautiful. I ate too much. I brought you something pretty.

M'LYNN. You shouldn't have. (*The radio is playing something inappropriate. Truvy goes to turn it off:*) Don't turn off Shelby's radio. I like the noise.

CLAIREE. There's special programming today. I had Jonathan go down to the station and pull music that Shelby would have liked and they're going to play it until noon.

M'LYNN. He told me. I think you're going to be surprised at some of the stuff you hear.

CLAIREE. That's OK. It's for Shelby.

OUISER. M'Lynn. Just tell us. What can we do?

M'LYNN. Thank you. Truvy? Do you think you could work a little magic? I know I look like ten miles of dirt road.

Annelle  
M'Lynn  
Truvy

TRUVY. Let me get my wand and my fairy dust! (*M'Lynn sits.*) How are you doing honey?

M'LYNN. I'm fine. I am a little worried about Drum. The boys got in last night. I really don't know how they're doing. Jackson is... Jackson. And he has his hands full with Jack Jr. I will admit it's hard to be somber with a baby running around.

CLAIREE. M'Lynn. I'm beside myself. Wasn't Shelby fine when I left? Can you talk about it?

M'LYNN. Oh, sure. Basically...after the transplant failed, she went back on dialysis...you knew that. She'd been doing fine the last few months. But last Monday, everything went wrong. It was like dominoes. They thought they could correct things with a little surgery. As they wheeled her down, she said, "Mama. I'm going to feel so good when this is over." They gave her the anesthetic...

ANNELLE. In a way she was right. Maybe she knew she was going to be with her king.

M'LYNN. (*A little shaken.*) Yes, Annelle. Maybe so.

ANNELLE. We should be rejoicing.

M'LYNN. You go ahead. I wish I could feel that way. I guess I'm a little selfish. I'd rather have her here.

ANNELLE. Miss M'Lynn. I don't mean to upset you by saying that. You see. When something like this happens, I pray very hard to make heads or tails of it. I think in Shelby's case, she wanted to take care of that baby, of you, of everybody she knew...and her poor body was just worn out. It wouldn't let her do everything she wanted to do. So she went on to a place where she could be a guardian angel. She will always be young. She will always be beautiful. And I personally feel much safer knowing she's up there on my side. I know some people might think that sounds real simple and stupid... and maybe I am. But that's how I get through things like this.

M'LYNN. (*Gentler.*) Thank you, Annelle. I appreciate that. And that's a very good idea. Shelby, as you know, would not want us to get all mired down and wallow in this. She would look on it as just one of life's occurrences. We should deal with it the best way we know how...and get on with it. That's what my mind says. I wish somebody would explain that to my heart.

TRUVY. Tommy said you didn't leave her side.

M'LYNN. Well. I wasn't in the mood to play bridge. (*Beat.*) No. I couldn't leave my Shelby. It's interesting. Both the boys were very difficult births. I almost died when Jonathan was born. Very difficult births. Shelby was a breeze. I could've gone home that afternoon I had her. I was thinking about that as I sat next to Shelby while she was in the coma. I would work her legs and arms to keep the circulation going. I told the ICU nurse we were doing our Jane Fonda. I stayed there. I kept on pushing...just like I always have where Shelby was concerned...hoping she'd sit up and argue with me. But finally we all realized there was no hope. At that point I panicked. I was very afraid that I would not survive the next few minutes while they turned off the machines. Drum couldn't take it. He left. Jackson couldn't take it. He left. It struck me as amusing. Men are supposed to be made of steel or something. But I could not leave. I just sat there...holding Shelby's hand while the sounds got softer and the beeps got farther apart until all was quiet. There was no noise, no tremble...just peace. I realized as a woman how lucky I was. I was there when this wonderful person drifted into my world and I was there when she drifted out. It was the most precious moment of my life thus far.

TRUVY. (*Putting the finishing flourishes on M'Lynn's hair.*) Well I don't know how your insides are doing. But your hair is holding up beautifully. All it needs is a lick and a promise. Did you have it done in Shreveport?

M'LYNN. No. I did it myself...

TRUVY. Hold it, Missy. I don't want to hear that kind of talk.

M'LYNN. Doing my own hair was so odd. I had no idea about the back...

TRUVY. You did a lovely job. I just smoothed out the rough spots. In fact. I'm going to be looking for temporary help when Annelle goes on maternity leave...interested?

M'LYNN. (*Struggling for control.*) It was just with so much going on, I didn't know if I would have time...would feel like coming here. But this morning I wanted to come here more than anything. Isn't that silly?

Annelle  
M'Lynn  
Truvy

TRUVY. Let me get my wand and my fairy dust! (*M'Lynn sits.*)  
How are you doing honey?

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