

romantic made me and my brothers sick to our stomachs, but it's actually very sweet. It's been a lovely week.

M'LYNN. Every now and then Drum and I seem to find these moments of magic. I don't know. I don't know if I'm lucky to have what I have . . . or lucky to know what I have.

CLAIREE. That's too deep for me. I have to go get my tires rotated.

ANNELLE. *(She's ready to shampoo Ouiser.)* Miss Ouiser . . . ?

TRUVY. M'Lynn. Maybe you should write a romance novel based on your recent experiences. I could help you with the dirty parts.

M'LYNN. No one would believe it. Shelby. You look a little pale.

SHELBY. *(Gently)* I'm fine, Mama. How are you? *(Clairee takes off smock, tips Annelle, leaves money on counter.)*

CLAIREE. Well, ladies. If you're out and about this afternoon, stop by the Dixie Plaza Shopping Center. The radio station is sponsoring a summer fiesta with lots of prizes and a live band. They call themselves "Single Bullet Theory."

*(Truvy is working on Shelby's nails. Truvy pushes Shelby's sleeves back to get them out of the way and sees Shelby's bruised arms . . .)*

TRUVY. Shelby?! What have you done to yourself?

SHELBY. Oh. It doesn't hurt.

TRUVY. What have you been doing? Have you seen this, M'Lynn?

M'LYNN. Yes, I have.

SHELBY. The doctor's just been trying to strengthen my veins. They're in terrible shape.

CLAIREE. *(Crosses to Shelby and examines her arms.)* It looks like you've been driving nails into your arms. What's going on here?

SHELBY. Shall we tell them, Mama?

M'LYNN. I guess so. No point in keeping it a secret any longer. Shelby's been driving nails into her arms.

EVERYONE. M'Lynn?!/Stop that./Be serious./What's going on?

SHELBY. It's my dialysis. *(Except for M'Lynn, the room is in shock.)*

ANNELLE & OUISER. What?

SHELBY. Dialysis. It's when . . .

ANNELLE. I know what it is.

TRUVY. Please tell us what's going on, honey!

SHELBY. It's not any big thing. No big thing. Don't look at me like that.

OUISER. How long have you been doing this dialysis?

SHELBY. A couple of months.

CLAIREE. Mary Lynn Eatenton! I am without words! Why haven't I been told?

SHELBY. We, uh . . . there was no point. Sometimes you don't want to talk about things.

M'LYNN. What would have been the point? There's nothing you could do.

ANNELLE. We could have done something.

CLAIREE. I can't believe you didn't say anything. This is selfish. This is very selfish of you.

SHELBY. Hold it. You're all talking like this is something.

TRUVY. This isn't something?

SHELBY. Having Jack Jr. put too much strain on my kidneys and now they're kaput. That's all. The doctors said this would probably happen.

TRUVY. That's all? That's all, she says . . .

SHELBY. I'm responding beautifully to dialysis. Do I look bad?

TRUVY. You look beautiful, but . . .

CLAIREE. Well? Maybe you'll let us in on what's going to happen?

OUISER. Do you do this dialysis forever?

SHELBY. I could I suppose. But that's not real convenient when you are trying to keep up with a fifteen month old ball of fire. So. I'll just have a kidney transplant and I'll be fine.

OUISER. Is it that easy?

SHELBY. Sure. They do them all the time in Shreveport. Three or four a week.

ANNELLE. They do. Our Sunday school class was praying for one just the other day.

OUISER. But the hard part is finding the kidney, isn't it?

CLAIREE. I saw something about it on the news. It's so dramatic. These medical teams fly all over the place taking

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hearts and kidneys and who knows what else. And you know the thing that impressed me the most? They carry those organs in beer coolers.

TRUVY. Stop.

CLAIREE. I would not lie in a moment as serious as this. Those doctors take out their six-packs, throw in some dry ice and a heart and get on the plane.

SHELBY. She's right.

ANNELLE. But you never know when one will pop up, do you?

SHELBY. No. I'm registered on the nationwide transplant computer.

TRUVY. How long do you have to wait?

SHELBY. There are people at dialysis that have been waiting for years.

TRUVY. That must be agony.

SHELBY. I suppose. But I'm lucky. I don't have to wait anymore. Mama's going to give me one of her kidneys. (*More shock all around.*)

EVERYONE. What?/M'Lynn!/You're not serious!/No! /Etc.

CLAIREE. When?

SHELBY. We check in tomorrow morning.

CLAIREE. You're giving Shelby a kidney tomorrow and you haven't even mentioned it?

M'LYNN. Truvy. Please do my hair. I'm in a bit of a rush.

TRUVY. I never thought there'd ever be a time that words would fail me . . . but I think this is it.

OUISER. Why didn't you tell us?

M'LYNN. We just told you. We haven't known that long.

We were all just tested last week. I'm the closest match.

ANNELLE. What do you mean, match?

M'LYNN. There are four categories for an organ match. I matched the best.

ANNELLE. Categories?

SHELBY. Swimsuit, evening gown, talent, and personality interview.

CLAIREE. I'm going to yank you bald-headed, smarty.

OUISER. We are very upset here.

TRUVY. I passed upset a long time ago . . .

SHELBY. I'm sorry. That's Tommy's joke. I think it's very funny.

TRUVY. No wonder your whole family's in town.

M'LYNN. I'm just so relieved it was me. The boys are young. I would never want them to go through it. And who would want one of Drum's mean old organs? But! The best thing about all this is that with all the tests and stuff, I have discovered I have the constitution of someone ten years younger.

How about that? *End*

OUISER. It must be so painful

SHELBY. Not really for me. My operation's simple. Mama's is awful. They basically have to saw her in half to get the kidney. It's major, *major* surgery for her.

TRUVY. They have to saw you in half?

M'LYNN. They do it on Circus of the Stars all the time.

CLAIREE. This is no laughing matter!

SHELBY. Trust me, Miss Clairee. There have been more than enough tears.

M'LYNN. It'll make my waist smaller because they take out my bottom ribs to get my kidney out.

TRUVY. Cher had her ribs taken out to have a smaller waist.

CLAIREE. Please. That woman's out of her mind.

OUISER. Look. Shelby. Earlier this morning I said I'd be better off when my body wears out. I didn't mean that. You know better than to pay any attention to anything I say.

SHELBY. Miss Ouiser. Forget it.

OUISER. Well, uh . . . I'm a terrible person.

CLAIREE. No you're not, Ouiser. You'd give your dog a kidney if he needed one.

OUISER. Absolutely.

TRUVY. But you two seem so calm and collected . . .

M'LYNN. I'm happy. Look at the opportunity I have. Most mothers only get the chance to give their child life once. I get a chance to do it twice. I think it's neat. And Shelby needs her health to chase after that rambunctious kid of hers. I've got two kidneys and I only need one. I'm just glad we can get it over with before it gets too hot.

SHELBY. Ain't that the truth.