

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?

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.

All side 2

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

Start

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 alone tonight. And if you feel yourself start getting sad, just watch my husband dance. It's very funny.

ANNELLE. You're all so nice.

TRUVY. We enjoy being nice to each other. There's not much else to do in this town.

ANNELLE. But I don't have anything to wear . . .

SHELBY. No problem. I'll bet I have something that'll do. I'll call the house. *(Shelby dials the phone.)*

TRUVY. Now. If you're interested, my garage apartment will be available soon. My son is living there now. Give me a day to straighten it up and sweep out the bed, then come look at it. I'm sure we can work out some arrangement with the rent.

ANNELLE. *(Overcome.)* Oh. . . .

SHELBY. *(On phone.)* Good! Jonathan. You have to do me a favor. Yes, now! Go in my closet and bring me two or three of

my Sunday things. Just anything. Use your judgement. Very well. Bring the pink dress with the white collar, the pink suit with the cherries pinned on the jacket and the pink and white polka dot. No, Jonathan. Mama doesn't have Daddy's gun. Don't you have better things to do? What? Well stop him! Now! *(She hangs up. She is nervous.)*

CLAIREE. Is something the matter?

SHELBY. We'll see. *(There is a huge explosion.)* Yes.

OUISER. What in the hell!!!! *(They all go to the window. The dog begins to bark uncontrollably.)*

M'LYNN. What happened?

SHELBY. Daddy tied explosives to Jonathan's GI Joe bow and arrow and shot them into the trees.

OUISER. Shut up Rhett!

M'LYNN. I hope nobody was hurt!

TRUVY. Well, the birds are flying every which-a-way. And there's white smoke billowing up from your backyard.

CLAIREE. Looks like Drum has set his trees on fire or he's just elected a new pope.

ANNELLE. I guess it worked. All the birds are leaving. *(They all come away from the window except Annelle.)*

OUISER. This is all she wrote. I am going to let that man have it.

ANNELLE. *(Still at window.)* Oh no! Your dog broke his chain! And he's heading toward the smoke!

M'LYNN. Oh, no! That dog will eat Drum alive. And Drum is unarmed!

CLAIREE. Ouiser! Do something!

TRUVY. Ouiser! Call your dog! He'll listen to you!

SHELBY. Miss Ouiser! Please! It's my wedding day. Say something to your dog! End

OUISER. *(Flings open the door and screams:)* Kill, Rhett! Kill! *(Everyone rushes out the door.)*

CURTAIN.

SCENE II

*It is later in the year. The Saturday before Christmas, to be exact. Not much in the shop has changed. Only half of*