

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.

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 hairdo 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.

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.*) Annelle? 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. *(Annelle enters with fresh coffee.)* Hi! I'm Shelby Eatenton . . . soon to be Latcherie.

ANNELLE. Hi. I'm Annelle. I'm new.

TRUVY. Today's Annelle's first day.

SHELBY. Well, Annelle. 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