

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?

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.