



Little Theatre of Owatonna

AUDITION FORM

Show: _____
Dates: _____

Full Name: _____
Age: _____ Height: _____ Gender: ☐ MALE ☐ FEMALE
Phone (s): _____ Email: _____

Recent Theatre Experience or Roles: (Attach separate sheet if needed)

_____	Theatre _____	Year _____
_____	Theatre _____	Year _____
_____	Theatre _____	Year _____
_____	Theatre _____	Year _____
_____	Theatre _____	Year _____

Role you're auditioning for: _____

2nd Choice: _____ 3rd Choice: _____

Would you consider other roles? YES NO

Anything else you'd like us to know?

Other opportunities with us:

If not cast as a performer, are you interested in helping with the production in another area? YES NO

Which area are you interested? _____

Other Theatre Skills – Circle any that apply:

SET PAINTING	ARTISTISTIC EFFECTS	MAKEUP	HAIR	SPECIAL EFFECTS	PROPS
SEWING/COSTUMES	SET BUILDING	FRONT OF HOUSE	PHOTOGRAPHY	MUSIC	
LIGHTBOARD	SPOTLIGHT	SOUND BOARD	LIGHT/SOUND DESIGN		
STAGE CREW	GENERAL AWESOMENESS				

Your preferred contact info:

Full Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Text: YES NO

Email Address: _____

Potential medical or other conditions to note:

Are you currently performing/ rehearsing anything now? (State theatre and production time or rehearsals that may conflict)

Are there any potential scheduling conflicts you are currently aware of?

How did you hear about our auditions?

NEWSPAPER FACEBOOK LTO WEBSITE INSTAGRAM FRIEND OTHER

EMERGENCY CONTACT:

Name: _____

Parent or Guardian info (If under 18): _____

Phone: _____

Relationship: _____

Thank you for auditioning!



Little Theatre of Owatonna

Website, Social Media, and Marketing Release Form

I, the undersigned, do hereby grant permission to the Little Theatre of Owatonna (LTO) to post my and/or my child's name, and photo(s), to LTO's website, Twitter, Instagram, and/or Facebook accounts.

I, the undersigned, do hereby grant permission to LTO to use my and/or my child's name, and photo(s) in advertising for the upcoming performance. i.e. newspaper and radio, etc.

I hereby release you, LTO from all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with any use of said materials, including, without limitations, all claims for invasion of privacy, infringement of my right of publicity, defamation, and any other personal and/or property rights.

I acknowledge and agree that no sums whatsoever will be due to me as a result of the use and/or exploitation of the materials or any rights therein.

X

Signature

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

Child's Name: _____

I acknowledge that my child is under 18 years old and lacks the legal capacity to enter into binding agreements. Accordingly, I have read this release and consent to my child's materials to be used as described above. _____ **Parent/Guardian Initial**

Audition Packet Little Theatre of Owatonna

Steel Magnolias

Auditions:

December 3rd & 4th 6:30 P.M. Sharon Stark Auditorium, West Hills.

Read Through:

Read through Thursday December 7th 6:00 P.M.

Rehearsals Begin:

January 3rd 6:30-8:30 P.M @ Sharon Stark Auditorium, West Hills. When the show is cast I will

distribute a schedule so you will have dates and times of rehearsal for your role. This schedule will also include Dry Run and Full TECH rehearsal for the production.

Show Dates:

February 16-18 & February 23-25 Friday and Saturday performances 7:30 P.M. curtain. Matinee on Sunday dates 18th & 25 . Curtain is at 2:00 P.M.

Synopsis:

The action is set in Truvy's beauty salon in Chinquapin, Louisiana, where all the ladies who are "anybody" come to have their hair done. Helped by her eager new assistant, Annelle (who is not sure whether or not she is still married), the outspoken, wise cracking Truvy dispenses shampoos and free advice to the town's rich curmudgeon, Ouiser, ("I'm not crazy, I've just been in a bad mood for forty years"); an eccentric millionaire, Miss Clairee, who has a raging sweet tooth; and the local social leader, M'Lynn, whose daughter, Shelby (the prettiest girl in town), is about to marry a "good ole boy."

Filled with hilarious repartee and not a few acerbic but humorously revealing verbal collisions, the play moves toward tragedy when, in the second act, the spunky Shelby (who is a diabetic) risks pregnancy and forfeits her life. The sudden realization of their mortality affects the others, but also draws on the underlying strength—and love—which give the play, and its characters, the special quality to make them truly touching, funny and marvelously amiable company in good times and bad.

Presented by special arrangement with Broadway Licensing, LLC, servicing the Dramatists Play Service collection. (www.dramatists.com)

Attached:

Pages 7-9 Truvy, Annelle

Pages 9-12 Truvy, Annelle, Claree

Pages 28-33 Annelle, Ouiser, M'Lynn, Clairee, Shelby, Truvy

Pages 40-45 Anelle, Shelby, Clairee, Truvy, Ouiser M'Lynn

Pages 48- 50 Truvy, Clairee

Page 68 Annelle, M'Lynn

STEEL MAGNOLIAS

ACT ONE

SCENE I

The curtain rises on Truvy's beauty shop. There are the sounds of gunshots and a dog barking. Annelle is spraying Truvy's hair with more hair spray than necessary.

ANNELLE. Oops! I see a hole.

TRUVY. I was hoping you'd catch that.

ANNELLE. It's a little poofier than I would normally do, but I'm nervous.

TRUVY. I'm not real concerned about that. When I go to bed I wrap my entire head with toilet tissue so it usually gets a little smushed down anyway in that process.

ANNELLE. In my class at the trade school, I was number one when it came to frosting and streaking. I did my own.

TRUVY. Really? I wouldn't have known. And I can spot a bottle job at twenty paces. (*Studying her hairdo.*) Well...your technique is good, and your form and content will improve with experience. So, you're hired.

ANNELLE. (*Overcome.*) Oh!!

TRUVY. And not a moment too soon! This morning we're going to be as busy as a one-armed paper hanger.

ANNELLE. Thank you, Miss Truvy! Thank you...

TRUVY. No time. Now. You know where the coffee stuff is. Everything else is on a tray next to the stove. (*Truvy removes her smock.*)

ANNELLE. Here. Let me help you. (*Dusts her off.*) You've got little tiny hairs and fuzzies all over you.

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.

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.

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?

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

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!

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 the lights are on in the shop. When the lights eventually come back on, we see the subtle changes. The radio Shelby has given Truvy, a small but festive Christmas tree, and several grotesque handicrafts. At curtain, M'Lynn is sitting under a dead hairdryer. Shelby enters, mystified by the lack of light and the lack of activity.

M'LYNN. Shelby!

SHELBY. Mama? Where is everybody?

M'LYNN. I thought you weren't coming to town until after lunch.

SHELBY. We got an early start because of the traffic. We wanted to drop in on Jackson's parents on the way down here.

CLAIREE. Hello, darling!

SHELBY. Can I get you some tea?

CLAIREE. Yes, that would be nice. I'm sorry I'm late. I overslept. We didn't get back into town until one o'clock. It was a dazzling victory over Dry Prong.

ANNELLE. I heard you on the radio last night. You were wonderful.

SHELBY. What were you doing on the radio?

CLAIREE. They let me be the color announcer for the Devils. I was fabulous. I was too colorful for words.

SHELBY. That was nice of them to let you talk on the radio.

CLAIREE. Nice nothing. I own the radio station.

SHELBY. Oh! You bought it?

CLAIREE. Yes!! KPPD. The station of choice in Chinquapin Parish!

TRUVY. Shelby? How do you like Clairee's new short and sassy look?

SHELBY. I love it.

TRUVY. Just wait 'til I jack it up.

SHELBY. It makes you look younger, Miss Clairee.

CLAIREE. My hair looks younger. My face looks just as old.

ANNELLE. There is so much going on! The state championship last night, the Christmas festival today, the Messiah sing-along tomorrow...

TRUVY. Life in the big city will spoil you.

SHELBY. Who's Miss Merry Christmas this year?

CLAIREE. My niece, Nancy Beth, of course.

TRUVY. She was here at seven this morning. I had to position her tiara properly on her head so it wouldn't slip around during the parade. I sprayed her hair within an inch of its life.

SHELBY. Why did I have to ask? I should have known. All you Marmillions are gorgeous. Beauty is genetic in your family.

CLAIREE. Nancy Beth is a pretty girl. Do you know she is Miss Merry Christmas, Miss Soybean, and Miss Watermelon?

TRUVY. But dumb as a post.

CLAIREE. Empty is the head that wears the crown.

TRUVY. You have to admit God did a little dance around that family. Drew is so successful. Belle does her own hair. Their children are perfect. They're like a family on TV. They don't have a care in the world. M'LYNN. That's not necessarily true.

TRUVY. Oh?

M'LYNN. That's all I'm saying.

TRUVY. Oh.

SHELBY. I should've won Miss Merry Christmas the year I ran. My talent was very showy.

CLAIREE. We told you at the time, Shelby. Fire batons are not everyone's cup of tea.

SHELBY. Mama didn't approve of my twirling fire batons.

M'LYNN. I just don't approve when you insist on doing dangerous things.

SHELBY. Mama hated those fire batons.

M'LYNN. I have never hated anything, Shelby. I supported you, but I just couldn't watch you. Your father, on the other hand, had a field day. He got so much pleasure out of standing in the backyard for hours watching you practice, holding the garden hose so he could put you out when you caught fire.

SHELBY. My entire pageant ensemble was coordinated in shades of pink...soup to nuts. I twirled to the music from *Hawaii 5-0*. It was my theme song.

M'LYNN. But we were proud of her.

TRUVY. The year I competed, the swimsuit competition was my downfall. Most women look for a swimsuit that will lift and separate; I look for one that will divide and conquer. I've always been built for comfort, not for speed.

SHELBY. Who got the title your year, Miss Clairee?

CLAIREE. Oh, child. Nobody. There wasn't even a Christmas festival when I was in high school. Why Jesus wasn't even born until I was a junior in college. I remember it distinctly. My friends and I were all out watching our flocks by night...

TRUVY. Get over here, Clairee. Annelle's gotta gift wrap your head.

OUISER. (*Entering in a huff.*) I could just spit.

TRUVY. 'Morning Ouiser.

OUISER. The parade doesn't even start for four hours and already people are parking on my lawn. It will flatten my grass.

CLAIREE. (*Mock sincerity.*) Here. Let me hold you.

OUISER. I hate out-of-town tourists.

SHELBY. Hello!

OUISER. Shelby! What are you doing here?

SHELBY. Being a tourist, I guess. But I won't flatten your grass, I promise.

OUISER. Good God. You've had the good sense to move away from this festival madness. I can't understand why you'd drag yourself back for a couple of firecrackers and drunk teenagers earping on your shoes.

SHELBY. I like it.

ANNELLE. Miss Ouiser. I think you need a healthy dose of Christmas spirit. (*Annelle interrupts conditioning Clairee to get a present from the tree.*)

OUISER. I have so much Christmas spirit I could scream.

ANNELLE. (*Handing her a present.*) Merry Christmas!

OUISER. (*Opening present.*) I just finished putting out my yard decorations.

CLAIREE. Ouiser. Keep off the grass signs are not Christmas decorations.

OUISER. They are bordered in holly. (*Pulls out poinsettia earrings.*) You made them, didn't you?

ANNELLE. With my own two hands.

OUISER. Your present is...uh...back at the house. I haven't wrapped it yet.

SHELBY. How's Rhett?

OUISER. He's getting along. As a matter of fact, he's the poster dog for the Christmas festival. (*Ouiser points to a poster on the wall with a picture on it.*)

TRUVY. That is Rhett! I didn't recognize him.

CLAIREE. It's nice to see Rhett with some hair again.

SHELBY. I have to run some errands, but before I go...Miss Ouiser. I have met an old friend of yours.

OUISER. Oh?

SHELBY. Owen Jenkins.

OUISER. Oh.

CLAIREE. Owen? Now there's a blast from the past.

SHELBY. Do you remember him? He remembers you.

OUISER. Of course I remember him. He had the longest nose hair in the free world.

SHELBY. He doesn't now. He hardly has any hair anywhere.

CLAIREE. Owen's been gone from Chinquapin since God was a boy. I'd forgotten he'd ever existed.

SHELBY. Well now Owen lives in Monroe and goes to First Presbyterian. He sings in the choir. One night at choir practice we were doing an especially beautiful Mozart thing and I was moved to tears. He offered me his handkerchief and we got to talking. When he found out where I was from he asked me if I knew you. I said not only did I know you, but you were a neighbor and your dog has almost killed my father on numerous occasions. He's had a very interesting life. He lived in Ohio somewhere. His wife just died recently and he moved back down here.

OUISER. Does this story have a point?

SHELBY. No, not really. He just remembers you fondly, I think.

OUISER. Can't imagine why. He wasn't a bad fellow. But I managed to run him off and marry the first of two total deadbeats.

TRUVY. Unrequited love. My favorite.

SHELBY. Maybe sometime I could arrange for us all to get together.

OUISER. Maybe not.

SHELBY. Why not?

OUISER. Shelby, I managed in just a few decades to marry the two most worthless men in the universe and proceed to have the three most ungrateful children ever conceived. The only reason people

are nice to me is because I have more money than God. I am not about to open a new can of worms.

CLAIREE. Do I detect a negativity in your tone?

M'LYNN. If this is really the way you feel, Ouiser, it isn't healthy. Maybe you should think about coming down and talking to someone at the Guidance Center. We're there to help.

OUISER. I'm not crazy. I've just been in a very bad mood for forty years.

SHELBY. Well. Annelle? What do you want me to do with these old clothes? I need to get them out of the back seat.

ANNELLE. Just bring 'em in.

SHELBY. OK. Then I'll go finish my Christmas shopping, Mama.

TRUVY. I could shoot you. I haven't even started.

CLAIREE. Please. I haven't even washed the dishes from Thanksgiving.

ANNELLE. What did you get your mama?

SHELBY. I told her this morning what part of it was.

TRUVY. Well, let's hear it, missy.

M'LYNN. I think it's a secret.

OUISER. Obviously there's no such thing in this room.

M'LYNN. It's up to you, honey.

SHELBY. I'm going to have a baby. (*Whoops and joy all around. Except for M'Lynn.*)

TRUVY. Congratulations! No wonder you haven't said much this morning, M'Lynn. (*Taunts.*) Grandma! Aren't you excited? Smile! It increases your face value!

SHELBY. June 21.

TRUVY. And those doctors said you couldn't have children. What do they know? I guess you showed them.

M'LYNN. The doctor said Shelby *shouldn't* have children. There's a big difference. I guess you showed us all, Shelby.

SHELBY. I've got to get the clothes. Miss Ouiser? Are you bringing your shrimp meat pies to our open house tonight?

OUISER. Don't I always? They'll be there.

SHELBY. Good. So will Owen Jenkins. I opened the worms for you. *(Shelby exits.)*

OUISER. I can't believe she did that. Owen? After all these years? I'm not sure I can be gracious under pressure.

M'LYNN. Shelby, Shelby. Her heart does get the best of her sometimes.

TRUVY. This baby. That's not exactly great news, is it?

M'LYNN. She wants this so badly. I just don't know...

CLAIREE. Oh boy...

TRUVY. Oh, honey. I wish I had some words of wisdom...but I don't. So I will focus on the joy of the situation. Congratulations.

OUISER. Absolutely.

M'LYNN. Diabetics have healthy babies all the time.

ANNELLE. It will all be fine.

CLAIREE. Of course it will.

M'LYNN. Thank you, ladies. You're right. We'll make it through this just fine. You know what they say. That which does not kill us makes us stronger.

OUISER. *(Looking out window.)* What is that girl up to?

ANNELLE. Shelby's donating some clothes to the poor.

OUISER. *(Opening door for Shelby.)* I hope poor people like pink.

TRUVY. *(To Shelby.)* Just dump 'em on the couch.

ANNELLE. Miss M'Lynn, you sure you don't mind me taking them? If your patients need them...

M'LYNN. No, no. Shelby said you could have 'em. And what she says goes.

SHELBY. That's not true, Mama.

M'LYNN. Shelby, you always insist on having the last word.

SHELBY. *(At the door.)* I do not. *(She slams the door and runs off. Lights out and the bombastic sounds of Handel's Messiah fill the air as we have...)*

CURTAIN.

have time to spend hours fussing with your hair. You need something you can just run your fingers through and go.

CLAIREE. It's totally adorable. Your mother's going to love it.

SHELBY. Mama's going to freak out. She just thinks I'm getting a trim. I wasn't up to a big debate with her this morning. Now! Truvy! Let's do my nails!

TRUVY. This is a treat! No one around here ever wants a manicure. I don't even know what to charge for a full day of beauty.

SHELBY. I want the works. I want to feel completely pampered today. Mama's gonna want a manicure, too.

TRUVY. I am going to paint my front door red and change my name to Elizabeth Arden.

CLAIREE. Manicures, saucy new hairdos. What's going on?

SHELBY. We're always up to something...you know that. (*Changing subject.*) But I want to get back to this Drew and Belle nonsense. I hope they reconcile with Marshall. Speaking as a parent, they better get their act together. I do not approve of friction between parents and children.

CLAIREE. Oh, I think it'll all blow over. I have to admit. He did go about it the wrong way.

TRUVY. What did he do?

CLAIREE. He marched in unexpected from Los Angeles while Drew and Belle were preparing for the annual Marmillion shrimp boil. Marshall without so much as a hello says, "Mama and Daddy. I have something to tell you. I have a brain tumor. I have three months to live." Well, naturally Drew and Belle became hysterical. Then Marshall says, "Hey folks, I'm just kidding. I'm only gay."

SHELBY. That was his idea of breaking the news gently?

CLAIREE. Drew became incredibly distraught and started throwing wet shrimp at him, screaming at him to get out of his sight, so Marshall came to my house, smelling like a can of cat food.

TRUVY. What do you think Drew and Belle are feeling right now?

CLAIREE. I don't know. They just considered themselves to be a model family for so long. First with Nancy Beth dethroned from her Miss Merry Christmas title after that unfortunate motel thing...

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SHELBY. What motel thing? I don't live here anymore, remember?

TRUVY. Nancy Beth was discovered in a nearby motel with a high political official.

CLAIREE. They were both high. They'd been smoking everything but their shoes.

TRUVY. To be the only Miss Merry Christmas in history caught with her tinsel down around her knees was a very humiliating experience for the Marmillion family.

SHELBY. How do you feel about Marshall?

CLAIREE. Haven't really thought about it. But I want you to know he's always welcome at my house. I'm very proud of him. He built up that chain of sportswear stores all by himself without a penny of family money. He says, "I am a self-made man. I pulled myself up by my own jockstraps."

TRUVY. He could always turn a phrase. *(Truvy is about to use a bottle of something for Shelby's manicure, but she realizes the bottle is empty. She turns to ask Annelle for some, but Annelle is in silent prayer. Uncomfortable, Truvy waits for Annelle to finish. The others also notice Annelle.)*

ANNELLE. Amen.

TRUVY. Amen. Annelle? I'm out of uh... *(Holds up the bottle.)*

ANNELLE. Is it still next to...?

TRUVY. No. It's over the...

ANNELLE. OK. *(Annelle exits.)*

SHELBY. Was she praying?

TRUVY. Yes.

SHELBY. Why?

TRUVY. Got me. Maybe she was praying for Marshall and Drew and Belle. Maybe she was praying for us because we were gossiping. Maybe she was praying because the elastic is shot in her pantyhose. Who knows? She prays at the drop of a hat these days.

SHELBY. How long has she been this way?

TRUVY. Ever since Mardi Gras. She had her choice of going to a Bible weekend with her Sunday School class or to New Orleans

with me and two other sinners. She left that Friday a pleasant, well-adjusted young lady and she returned on Tuesday a Christian.

SHELBY. What does her boyfriend say?

TRUVY. Sammy's so confused he doesn't know whether to scratch his watch or wind his butt. He's crazy about her. He says he could deal with another man in her life, but he has trouble with the father, the son, and the Holy Ghost.

SHELBY. Well, I'm pretty religious, but that stuff makes me feel kind of creepy.

TRUVY. Well, I'm torn. I've got two sons that I'm afraid are going to hell in a handcart and a semi-daughter that strives to be the kind of girl Jesus would bring home to Mama. I don't know what to think. I don't understand those people...but they sometimes seem to have a peace about things that I've never had. Maybe I'm just jealous. (*Annelle enters, smacks the radio to make it play. Clairee changes subject.*)

CLAIREE. And Marshall is so thoughtful. He brought me this pin. (*Clairee reveals a piece of jewelry under her beauty smock.*) It's gold and enamel.

TRUVY. It's a bug.

CLAIREE. It's fine jewelry. Its little eyes are rubies, my birthstone.

SHELBY. Does Marshall have a...uh...you know...friends?

CLAIREE. We talked a little bit about that. I'm such a nosy old thing. I asked him how he...met people. 'Cause in my day you could tell by a man's carriage and demeanor which side his bread was buttered on. But today? In this day and age? Who knows? I asked Marshall, "How can you tell?" and he said, "All gay men have track lighting. And all gay men are named Mark, Rick, or Steve." He is such a nut...track lighting. (*Everyone laughs.*)

OUISE. (*Enters carrying a sack.*) 'Morning.

TRUVY. 'Morning, Ouiser!

OUISE. What's so funny?

SHELBY. Miss Clairee was just telling us the true story of track lighting.

OUISE. I love mine. It highlights my new artwork.

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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.

CLAIRREE. 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.