

Ouiser and Clairee

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STEEL MAGNOLIAS

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.

ANNELLE *exits.*

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 honour 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 neighbourhood 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!

ANNELLE *enters with a 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...

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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 colour'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 } (together) 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 jewellery, 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. Cheques 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?