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Beauty secrets

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BEAUTY SECRETS

A Creative Project

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of English and Comparative Literature

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Masters of Fine Arts

by

Shaquana Mitchell

August 2008

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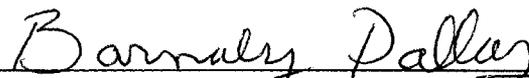
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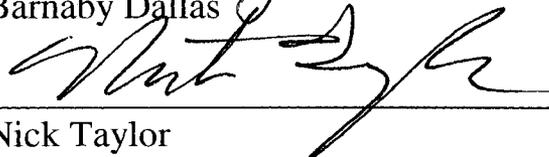
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Scott Sublett

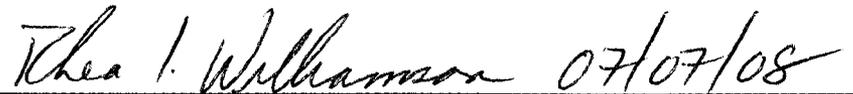


Barnaby Dallas



Nick Taylor

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ABSTRACT

BEAUTY SECRETS

by Shaquana Mitchell

This thesis illustrates one of the most constant themes of classical, renaissance, and modern comedy, the theme of identity and disguise, by presenting a self conscious protagonist who mistakenly believes that she needs a wig in order to feel beautiful.

Through the use of three act structure, the protagonist transitions from an individual who fears that the discovery of her beauty secret will ruin her chance at love, to an individual who realizes that the disguise based on an insecurity is unnecessary, silly, and a mistake.

Also driving the story are strong willed female protagonists who completely dominate the climax, and also, who defy traditional gender roles in some sense.

Preface: Creative Influences

One of the biggest influences on my thesis would be the highly acclaimed sitcom, *The Golden Girls*, which ran on NBC from 1985-1992. The series chronicles the lives of four very funny women (three nearing retirement and one elderly) who live together and always have some problem that needs solving.

Every time that show was on, I watched it, completely unaware that I was learning about timing, pacing, or the construction of a laugh line. I took what I learned unconsciously from that show and fused it with every bit of funny dialogue that I had ever heard uttered from the lips of my mother or grandmother while sitting on the porch drinking a cup of coffee while the train passed and nothing else happened like it never did in my hometown of New Iberia, Louisiana.

My mother, my brother, my grandmother, my Uncle Cookie, my Aunt Peggy, and everyone else who has shaped who I am--none of them have ever picked up a pen with the intention of writing anything remotely similar to drama or fiction, and yet they have all managed to be the biggest influence on my writing. I believe that everything that they have ever said is tucked away somewhere in a corner of my mind, because when I start to write, I hear them so clearly it's as if they're in the very same room with me.

They are what I write. In fact, all I have to do is shut off everything around me and I'm back on my grandmother's porch listening to my mother and grandmother talk about so and so's no good husband who couldn't keep a job but found all the time in the

world to “run women,” or some other poor soul who couldn’t pay her bills but always seemed to find money to play spades or go to the casino.

And then they would cackle and say, “Lord hammercy,” and drink more coffee and swat at mosquitoes while another train passed, and then my grandmother would suddenly decide that she needed to go to Winn Dixie because somebody ate all the eggs, and then my mother would cuss about gas money but would take my grandmother to the store anyway (because really, we had nothing else to do), and I didn’t realize how fabulously rich this would all be for *me*, the adult me later on in life, as a writer who would never run out of funny dialogue as long as I never ran out of funny family. I laugh when I write these characters in my script and when I hear them talk because I never imagined back then on my grandmother’s porch that a single cup of coffee on a hot day would later mean so much.

I would also like to acknowledge all of my writing peers (you know who you are!) for your words of encouragement that always kept me motivated, and also, Scott Sublett, for teaching me how to write a screenplay.

FADE IN:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

JACKIE, 29, sits on the couch.

Though she is a striking beauty, there is a humility about her that suggests she doesn't know it.

She yawns, stretches like a cat, then points the remote at the television.

She flips through the channels and stops at a cruise commercial.

INSERT - MONTAGE

- A man and woman dance the night away.
- They run on a beach.
- They laugh.
- They embrace.
- They're so in love they make you sick.

BACK TO SCENE

Jackie sighs like she knows she'll never be that lucky, and flips through the channels again.

She looks over her shoulder.

JACKIE
Momo, you ready?

MARY (O.S.)
Yeah!

Jackie yawns again.

MARY, 75, adorable, shuffles into the room holding a pot. She's plump but not fat, and looks at Jackie with warmth in her eyes.

MARY

Let's go. Dot's been callin' all mornin', cussin' about this pot.

JACKIE

Does she think you're gonna run off with it?

MARY

Yeah. She's crazy like that.

Jackie shakes her head and slides on her flip flops.

INSERT SHOT:

On the TV, a middle aged, gorgeous, heavy set woman appears on the screen. She looks vivacious, flirty, and sassy.

This is SHIRLEY.

Jackie grabs the remote like she's going to turn off the television.

SHIRLEY

I used to sit at home night after night, just like you.

Jackie pauses with the remote in the air.

JACKIE

Just like me?

SHIRLEY

Um hmm. Just like you, girl. I was lonely, I felt insecure, and you know what else?

Shirley leans into the camera, almost whispering.

Jackie leans forward.

JACKIE

What?

SHIRLEY

Chile, I couldn't even get a man.

Jackie gasps.

Mary sits next to her and makes the sign of the cross.

JACKIE

So what did you do?

SHIRLEY

So you know what I did?

MARY

Turn it up, Jackie, she can't hear you.

SHIRLEY

I got myself a new attitude, sugar.

JACKIE

How? What did you do?

SHIRLEY

And I'll tell you just how I did it.

Mary throws her hands up. She takes the remote and turns up the volume.

SHIRLEY (Cont'd)

I got me a new do. And honey, ever since then...

Two extremely buff men appear on both sides of Shirley, each vying for her attention. Shirley smiles and looks back and forth between the men like she can't choose.

SHIRLEY (Cont'd)

I can't keep 'em away. So, for a sexy new do, for a sexy new you: sugar, come on down to Shirley's.

Jackie looks at Mary.

JACKIE

Can we stop off real quick?

EXT. MICHAEL'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

TERRY, 27, boyishly handsome, leans against a black Mercedes SL.

The car sits in the driveway of a very nice house.

Terry looks at his watch then reaches through the window and blows the horn.

A blue bird flies overhead and lands in a nest. Terry shudders at the sight of it.

He looks back at his watch then blows the horn again, this time longer than necessary.

The bird drops a worm for three hungry babies then stands there protectively.

MICHAEL, 30, handsome, modest, walks out of his house and casts a concerned look at the nest.

He sees they're all right and chuckles.

INT. MICHAEL'S CAR - DAY

Michael drives.

Terry drinks from a bottle of soda.

TERRY

Why don't you get rid of that thing?

MICHAEL

What? The nest?

TERRY

No; the tree. Of course the nest!
Are you crazy, keepin' that thing
around like that? Haven't you ever
seen that movie?

MICHAEL

The Hitchcock one with the birds?

Terry takes a sip from his drink.

TERRY

No, the one with the stalker lady.

MICHAEL

Psycho?

TERRY

No. It's the one where this lady
meets this guy, and she goes around
town askin' everybody who he is,
what he does, who does he bank with
and stuff like that, so she finds
out about the guy and she goes to
his hometown, but the only thing is
that he lives on this island so she
has to buy a boat to get to his
house.

Michael looks at Terry, confused.

MICHAEL

Are you sure this isn't *The Birds*?

TERRY

I'm positive. So, she gets to the island, and out of nowhere, this seagull attacks her, I mean, bam! Elbow right to the head, and she's like 'Hey, man! Cut that out!' And the seagull's like, 'I ain't gotta do shit but eat worms and die!' And she's like, 'Well, screw you then!' And he's like, 'Well, screw you too!' and keeps goin'.

MICHAEL

What movie is this again?

TERRY

Will you just be quiet and let me finish? So anyway, the seagull's flyin' around, and he's so mad that the lady cussed him, you can see it all over his face. So he's hangin' around with some of his bird buddies, and they're like, 'Ronoldo, what's wrong?' And he's like, 'This friggin' human lady pissed me off, man.' And they all band together and kick the bananas out of everybody.

MICHAEL

Bananas?

TERRY

Yeah. It's a great movie. One guy even gets his eyes pecked out. I'm surprised you haven't seen it.

MICHAEL

And you're positive this isn't *The Birds*?

Terry drinks his soda. He puts up one finger to Michael as if to say "hang on a sec," and downs the rest. He burps and puts the bottle down.

TERRY

What do I look like? An idiot? But I'm tellin' you, Mike; get rid of that thing.

MICHAEL

You need help, you know that?

INT. WIG SHOP - DAY

Jackie and Mary stand in awe of the huge selection. They walk up to the counter and find Shirley eating a bag of Cheetos and intently watching a soap opera.

Shirley smiles when she sees them.

SHIRLEY

How you ladies doin'?

MARY

All right. Lil arthur-rydiss here, lil tendonitis there, but other than that, we can't complain.

SHIRLEY

I'm sure glad to hear that.

She holds out the bag of chips.

SHIRLEY (Cont'd)

Cheeto?

Jackie and Mary both take some.

Shirley puts down the bag, wipes her fingers on her jeans, and comes from around the counter.

Her pants have two cheesy hand prints.

SHIRLEY (Cont'd)

Now, what can I get for you ladies today?

MARY

We came to get one of them new attitudes we saw on your commercial. Well, not me, but Jackie. I'm fine with the one I got.

Shirley gives Jackie the once over. She stands there patting her lips with her index finger and squinting. She smiles suddenly, like she's just had an epiphany.

SHIRLEY

I know just what you need. Come on, sugar. Follow me.

Jackie and Mary follow Shirley through the labyrinth of wigs. Shirley suddenly stops.

She reaches for a short, brown wig that looks like a crouching animal. It rests on a mannequin that looks horrified.

Shirley puts it on Jackie's head. Jackie looks in the mirror on the wall.

JACKIE

I don't like it.

SHIRLEY

Why not?

JACKIE

Aside from what it did to that poor mannequin, I won't know whether to wear it or kill it for dinner.

Jackie puts the wig back and Shirley goes to the next one. It's black, curled tight, and looks rather damp. It rests on a mannequin that looks surprised.

SHIRLEY

This one.

JACKIE
I don't think so.

SHIRLEY
And why not?

JACKIE
I don't know. It just doesn't do it
for me. I need something
that screams, 'Jackie!'

SHIRLEY
(offended)
And what does this one scream?

JACKIE
The cat peed on me again.

SHIRLEY
Now, I resent that! I sold a wig
just like this to a girl a couple
months ago, and last time I talked
to her, she was engaged, honey.

MARY
See that Jackie? If you get this
one, maybe you'll find somebody.
After all these years.

Jackie scowls.

MARY (Cont'd)
So did they ever get married?

SHIRLEY
No.

JACKIE
Why not?

SHIRLEY
She shot him. You know what? I
think I know what you're lookin'
for. Excuse me for just a second.

Shirley walks to the end of the aisle, then comes back with a longer, fuller, honey brown wig.

She puts it on Jackie's head and messes with it for a while then guides Jackie to a full length mirror.

Jackie covers her mouth like she can't believe it's her. She puts her face close to the mirror, examining her features.

She smiles. She flips the hair over her shoulder. She throws her head back. She giggles. She extends a dainty hand to the mirror: a diva is born.

JACKIE

Why, yes, darling. That's Jackie. What's that? Oh, no, it's spelled with a "J," darling. What's your name? Pierre? Ah! *Tu es Francaise, Qui?* That's brilliant, darling, simply brilliant....

She kisses the air on both cheeks. She puts out her hand as though holding a glass of champagne that needs filling. She flips the hair over her shoulder again.

JACKIE

My number? Why, of course. *Tu aime quoi tu veux, Qui?* I'm really not surprised, darling, I'm really not. But you must call before Tuesday, darling, you simply must. Oh? What's that? But, of course! Seven on Friday sounds superb. Just superb....

SHIRLEY

I think she likes it.

MARY

How can you tell?

Jackie looks at Shirley and smiles.

JACKIE
(to Shirley)
Sold!

Shirley smiles proudly like she's fulfilling her mission in life.

MARY
Good. Now, where are those two men that are supposed to come and fight for her?

SHIRLEY
From the commercial?

MARY
Yeah.

SHIRLEY
Honey, they've got the day off.

Mary snatches the wig from Jackie's head and throws it on the floor.

MARY
Forget about it. Come on, Jackie. Let's go.

She grabs Jackie by the arm and walks towards the door.

SHIRLEY
Wait! How about ten percent off?

Mary turns around.

MARY
Make it fifteen and the rest of those Cheetos, and you've got yourself a deal.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Jackie walks wearing the wig and eating the bag of Cheetos while licking her fingers.

Mary walks beside her, dipping into the bag as well.

Mary squints at something in the distance.

MARY

Hey, Jackie; isn't that Dot's nephew?

Jackie looks across the parking lot and sees Michael walking with Terry.

She stops dead in her tracks with one finger in her mouth. Michael spots her then looks away, but turns right back again as though he recognizes her.

He looks stunned and pleasantly surprised. He waves.

Terry looks between the two of them, smirks, and then walks into one of the stores.

MARY (Cont'd)

Let's go say hi.

JACKIE

I can't.

MARY

Why not?

JACKIE

My hands are cheesy.

MARY

Wipe 'em. And go say hello. If you don't, I'll never hear the end of it. He'll say, 'I saw Ms. Mary downtown,' and she'll say, 'Did she say hello?' And he'll say, 'No, she was too busy lickin' her doggone fingers' and she'll say, 'Oh? Is that so? Her fingers, huh?' and then I'll never have a ride to Bingo on Wednesday nights. Come on, Jackie. Do it for me.

JACKIE

Fine.

They walk over to Michael. Both Michael and Jackie seem hesitant to look at each other.

MICHAEL

Hi, Ms. Mary.

MARY

Hey, sugar!

They hug.

MARY

You look more and more like your daddy every day. Now, is he still livin' with that man in San Francisco?

Michael seems completely flustered.

MARY

Well, is he?

MICHAEL

Yes; he and Turner are very happy.

MARY

You see that, Jackie? It's never too late to find love.

She turns to Michael.

MARY (CONT'D)

Now, how did things turn out with you and that girl?

MICHAEL

What girl?

MARY

The one with the big behind that
tried to pin those twins on you.
You know the one. You didn't marry
her, did you?

MICHAEL

No, Ms. Mary, I didn't.

MARY

Good. I didn't like her anyhow.
Wait...so you're not married at
all?

MICHAEL

No.

Mary grabs Jackie by the elbow and positions her right next
to Michael, so that they're almost touching.

MARY

Well, aren't you gonna say hello to
Jackie?

MICHAEL

Of course.

He hugs Jackie.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Hi, stranger.

JACKIE

Hi.

They pull away awkwardly and then look anywhere but at each
other.

MARY

She just moved back from
California.

(to Jackie)

Did you ever run into Michael's
daddy and his beau?

JACKIE

No, Momo. I didn't.

MARY

Well, anyway, she stayed in one of them cities where they make you push a button to cross the street. And if you don't, they give you a ticket. Can you believe that? Anything for a dime. But Jackie, give me the keys so I can go rest my legs. It was nice seein' you, Michael.

MICHAEL

It was nice seein' you too.

Jackie gives her the keys and Mary goes to the car. There's an awkward moment of silence.

JACKIE

I'm sorry about that.

MICHAEL

About what?

JACKIE

My grandmother. She says whatever comes to her mind. She means well, but it never occurs to her that she shouldn't say certain things out loud.

MICHAEL

Your grandmother's sweet. Don't apologize. When'd you get back?

JACKIE

It'll be three weeks on Monday.

MICHAEL

Fast life wore you out? Or did you just miss the bayou?

JACKIE

No, the food. I wasn't even off the plane before I ran over to Bon Creole and got the biggest shrimp po boy I could get my hands on. I couldn't even finish it. It was great.

Michael laughs.

MICHAEL

Well, I'm glad to hear that. You know, I almost didn't recognize you.

JACKIE

Really?

MICHAEL

Yeah. That city life must have been somethin' else, cause I swear, you look fantastic.

She flips her hair over her shoulders like a girly girl and waves the comment away.

MICHAEL (Cont'd)

No, I'm serious. I don't know what you've been doin', but whatever it is, it's workin'.

JACKIE

Thank you. You don't look too bad yourself.

MICHAEL

Well, I do what I can do. Whenever I can do it. If I decide to do it, that is.

Jackie looks confused.

Michael looks at his watch.

MICHAEL

I better get goin'. I've got this thing tonight and I ran out of socks.

JACKIE

How do you run out of socks?

MICHAEL

I've always wondered about that. But I better get goin'.

JACKIE

Me too. We're headin' over to Antie Dot's. Momo borrowed her gumbo pot.

MICHAEL

Ya'll better hurry before she puts out an APB.

They laugh.

Another awkward moment of silence.

JACKIE

I better go. You take care.

MICHAEL

You too.

Jackie struts toward the car.

Michael watches her behind. He seems transfixed.

Jackie looks over her shoulder and catches him.

Michael doesn't notice her noticing.

She smirks.

JACKIE

Are you watchin' my behind?

MICHAEL

Yes.

He shakes his head, obviously flustered.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I mean, no! I was just admiring
your jeans.

Jackie stands there, amused.

MICHAEL

I better go. It was really good
seeing you.

JACKIE

It was good seeing you too.

MICHAEL

We should hang out sometime.

Jackie pauses for a moment and flips her new hair back
again.

JACKIE

Yeah. That would be nice.

Jackie turns around and struts her stuff even more.

Michael gazes for a moment, then turns around and walks
toward the store.

A car almost hits him.

The DRIVER, an elderly man with glasses, blows the horn and
shakes his fist.

DRIVER

Hey, man! Watch it!

MICHAEL

Sorry!

Michael goes around the car and jogs the rest of the way to
the store.

INT. JACKIE'S CAR - DAY

Jackie sighs contently over and over and smiles like today the happiest day of her life.

Mary eats from the bag of Cheetos and licks her fingers.

INT. MICHAEL'S CAR - DAY

Michael drives.

Terry bobs his head to the music and plays the drums on the dashboard.

He turns the music down.

TERRY

So who was that?

MICHAEL

Who was who?

TERRY

Don't play crazy. Pretty girl that almost made you swallow your tongue, that's who.

MICHAEL

She's an old friend.

Terry gives Michael a look: *Yeah. Right.*

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Serious. Her aunt Dot married my Uncle Bean when we were like twelve. Our families have been close ever since.

TERRY

And there's never been *anything* between you?

Michael doesn't say anything.

Terry hits him on the back to help the words come.

MICHAEL

It's a long story, Terry!

TERRY

I've got no life. Tell.

MICHAEL

Fine. We were really good friends back in the day. We hung out so much everybody thought we were boyfriend/girlfriend but it was never like that. Well, one night, we were hangin' out at her house--

TERRY

And you got butt naked and smacked that ass.

MICHAEL

No! It was right when we graduated high school, and she wrote me this letter sayin' how she had always liked me but thought I wouldn't be interested in her and how she was embarrassed to tell me at all so can we please not talk about it.

TERRY

And then you got butt naked and smacked that ass.

MICHAEL

No!

TERRY

Well, when did you smack it?

MICHAEL

I didn't Terry! But that night....

Terry rubs his hands together eagerly in anticipation.

MICHAEL
We almost kissed.

Michael blushes.

Terry pops him on the head.

TERRY
Michael, you slut.

MICHAEL
Shut up, Terry. But that was it;
she went to college out of state, I
went to L.S.U., and the next time I
saw her, she was lickin' her
fingers.

TERRY
That's quite a metaphor.

Michael ignores him.

TERRY
Look, Bubba, I've been knowin' you
for quite some time now, and I've
gotta tell you; you've got this
thing all wrong.

MICHAEL
What's that supposed to mean? And,
don't call me Bubba. I hate it.

TERRY
It means, Bubba, that she's your
type.

MICHAEL
So, now I have a type?

TERRY
Oh, please; pretty, long hair, big
behind. You're so predictable,
Bubba.

MICHAEL

Be quiet and play your drums.

INT. FRONT DOOR OF ANTIE DOT'S - DAY

Mary carries the pot, and Jackie walks in right behind her.

ANTIE DOT, 80 and sprightly, frowns at Mary.

Jackie gives Antie Dot a kiss on the cheek.

JACKIE

Hey, Antie Dot.

ANTIE DOT

Hey, there, *cher*.

(to Mary)

Well, it's about time.

She takes the pot.

MARY

Look, Dot. Don't start with me about this raggedy pot.

ANTIE DOT

Who you callin' raggedy?

MARY

Your pot, that's who. And how come you're still in your bed clothes?

ANTIE DOT

My bed clothes ain't none of your business. For all you know, I might have me a man back there.

MARY

Oh, hush.

ANTIE DOT

Hush nothin'. Do I go to your house all times of the day tryna get in your business?

MARY

All the time.

Antie Dot opens her mouth like she's going to respond, but something about Jackie seems to suddenly confuse her.

JACKIE

What?

ANTIE DOT

There's somethin' different about you.

JACKIE

Oh? I hadn't noticed. Different how?

Jackie toys with her locks and stands there innocently batting her eyes.

ANTIE DOT

You're glowin'. Did you get some?

JACKIE

Antie Dot!

ANTIE DOT

Did you?

JACKIE

I'm not telling you that!

MARY

She didn't get none, Dot. She's just been doin' them Hip Hop aerobics in the livin'room at all hours of the night, and makin' them low fat smoothies for breakfast that uses up all the milk that she doesn't buy in the first place. And she doesn't use sugar anymore. She uses up all my Sweet-n-Low, and won't buy no more when it runs out cause she's too busy watchin' her stories.

ANTIE DOT

No. That ain't it. It's somethin'
else....

Antie Dot thinks for a moment.

Jackie tries to be nonchalant.

Antie Dot snaps her finger.

ANTIE DOT (Cont'd)

I know what it is! It's your hair!

Antie Dot looks at Jackie in amazement.

ANTIE DOT (Cont'd)

Girl, since when you went and grew
all that hair?

MARY

You just haven't seen her in a
while, Dot.

ANTIE DOT

Bullshit. I seen her plenty since
she been back. But she always had
one of them things wrapped around
her head. One of them do-rags or
whatever you call 'em.

Antie Dot squints at Jackie.

ANTIE DOT (Cont'd)

You sure that's your hair?

JACKIE

Of course I'm sure!

ANTIE DOT

I don't believe you. All of it?

JACKIE

Yes!

ANTIE DOT

Let me see.

Antie Dot begins to walk over to Jackie.

Jackie looks at Mary like she needs a life jacket.

MARY

Say, Dot, you mind if I borrow your
butter bean pot?

Antie Dot stops cold and turns to face Mary.

ANTIE DOT

You sniffin' bingo chips?

Mary waves the comment away.

ANTIE DOT

Why you so hot to make butter beans
all of a sudden?

MARY

I got a taste, that's all.

ANTIE DOT

A taste? Well, suppose you wake up
in the mornin' and decide never
mind them butter beans? Suppose you
wake up and decide you want white
beans instead? Then what you gon'
do? Take all the pots I own?

Mary folds her arm and stands there indignant.

MARY

I might.

ANTIE DOT

Why don't you just buy you some
pots so you can leave mine alone?

MARY

Why should I have to when I can just borrow yours? It don't make a lick of sense, Dot. You're so selfish.

ANTIE DOT

And you're so tight, you squeak when you walk.

Jackie laughs.

Mary gives her a look that shuts her up.

ANTIE DOT (Cont'd)

I've had enough of you. That's why I ain't puttin' your name on Tiffany's gift. With your cheap self.

Mary puts a hand on her chest and stumbles back like she's having a heart attack.

MARY

I pitched in for that gift!

ANTIE DOT

A dollar can't buy water these days. I'll put Jackie's name before I put yours.

She turns to Jackie.

ANTIE DOT (Cont'd)

You comin', ain't you?

JACKIE

Where?

ANTIE DOT

Tiff is havin' a lil gatherin' tonight to get more weddin' gifts.

JACKIE

When's the wedding?

ANTIE DOT

Next week. Michael's gonna be there.

Antie Dot wiggles her eyebrows.

ANTIE DOT

He's in the weddin' party. You should come. 'Cause if you spend one more night in that house, we won't be able to tell you from that sofa.

JAKIE

I'd love to but I can't.

ANTIE DOT

Why not? Oh. I get it.

She jabs Mary playfully on her side.

ANTIE DOT (Cont'd)

You're too gorgeous now to mingle with the common folk. That's okay. Your grandmother and I, we'll find *somebody* to love us.

Jackie laughs.

JACKIE

It's not that, Antie Dot. I don't have anything to wear.

ANTIE DOT

Oh, please, chile. I got bathin' suits for days. You can just borrow one of mine.

MARY

How come you never let me borrow your suits?

ANTIE DOT

Cause you're all titty.

MARY

Your foot.

ANTIE DOT

Your behind. But ya'll just be ready for 7:30. And don't be late, cause then they'll be talkin' bout us. And cute as I am, I don't need to be out there fightin' and carryin' on.

(to Mary)

My butter bean pot. You must be smokin' sherm.

Mary scowls.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT

A bunch of people drink and mingle.

Michael and Terry stand drinking and watching the crowd.

RUTH, a voluptuous middle aged woman, eases in between Michael and Terry.

She slaps Terry on the butt.

TERRY

Hey!

RUTH

Oh, hush.

She turns to Michael.

RUTH

Didn't anybody ever tell you drinkin' is bad for you?

She takes the drink from him, downs it, and gives him back the empty glass.

MICHAEL

I thought you said drinkin' was bad for me?

RUTH

For you. I didn't say nothin' 'bout me. And fix your face. I need you to go to the store.

MICHAEL

Why?

RUTH

They forgot to buy more ice. You know Uncle Thed don't know nothin' 'bout throwin' a party. Here.

She takes a twenty dollar bill out of her bosom and gives it to Michael.

TERRY

You know, I don't get it.

MICHAEL

What?

TERRY

I only have one first cousin. Your family confuses me with all these uncles and cousins and aunts. I can never remember who's related to who.

RUTH

Sugar, that's simple; You see Uncle Thed and Uncle Bean are brothers. Mable, that's my Mama, God rest her, was the only girl. Thed married Lily, and Bean, God rest his soul, married Antie Dot. Thed and Lily had Peanut, Baby, and Natalie. Natalie married Cole, but divorced him cause he was good for nothin' and never kept a job, then married Uncle Steve.

TERRY

Cole married Uncle Steve?

RUTH

No, Natalie. They had Tiffany, their only child, and we all know how that turned out cause she so spoiled can't nothin' save her but the Lord. Does that clear things up?

Terry massages his temples.

TERRY

I should have never asked.

RUTH

(to Michael)

And I invited Patrice.

MICHAEL

Why'd you do that?

RUTH

Why shouldn't I invite her? Are you suddenly not interested in women anymore?

She looks at Terry, then back at Michael.

RUTH (Cont'd)

Is there somethin' goin' on between you two that I should know about?

Terry puts his hands up in defense.

TERRY

Don't look at me! Even if I were gay, he's not my type.

Michael looks hurt and surprised.

MICHAEL

What? Why not?

TERRY

Have you seen you eat spaghetti?

MICHAEL

What's wrong with the way I eat spaghetti?

TERRY

You get it all over the place! And you slurp!

MICHAEL

No, I don't!

TERRY

Yes, you do! Noodle by friggin' noodle! It's the most disgusting, time consuming thing I've ever seen in my life!

Ruth puts a hand to her forehead like she feels faint.

RUTH

Oh, God. I knew it.

MICHAEL

I'm not gay, Ma. Geez.

RUTH

Yeah. Your father said the same thing. Next thing I know, he's sendin' me pictures from his honeymoon in my good red dress. And my Jimmy Choos, that bastard.

MICHAEL

I didn't know Dad could fit a nine.

RUTH

Don't remind me. Now, swear to me you're not gay.

MICHAEL

I'm not gay!

RUTH

Good. And don't throw away what you and Patrice have because of a silly little argument. Promise me you'll at least try and work it out.

Michael doesn't say anything.

Ruth pulls his ear.

RUTH

Promise me.

MICHAEL

All right!

RUTH

Good. Now hurry up and go to the store.

Michael postures femininely and looks at Terry.

MICHAEL

Come on, boo. Let's go get that ice.

Ruth looks horrified as several people stop to listen.

Terry snaps his fingers in a "Z" formation and looks Michael up and down.

TERRY

Don't rush me, Latisha. You know I hate it when you rush.

MICHAEL

That's not what you said last night.

Terry smiles and covers his mouth as though embarrassed.

Michael slaps him on the butt.

Terry yelps as though he likes it.

They both turn and do horrible imitations of a woman's walk.

Ruth tries to appear unfazed.

She walks away and stops to talk to a TALL WOMAN in a pink dress. She smiles.

RUTH

Like that dress, girl.

TALL WOMAN

Thank you!

She leans over to Ruth.

TALL WOMAN

I didn't know your son was gay.

Ruth opens her mouth like she's going to say something but doesn't.

With the smile still frozen on her face, she spins around and hurries away.

INT. DEN - NIGHT

Ruth mingles. She spots Mary, Antie Dot, and Jackie walking into the room and waves.

She goes over and gives Antie Dot and Mary a hug.

She looks at Jackie like she knows her but can't really place her. She snaps her finger like she remembers.

RUTH

Well, I'll be damned! Girl, I haven't seen you in so long! How are you?

JACKIE

Fine, thank you.

RUTH

You look so good I almost didn't recognize you! And that *hair!*

Ruth touches Jackie's locks and stares in amazement.

RUTH (Cont'd)

It's just *fabulous!* Do you style it yourself?

JACKIE

Yeah.

RUTH

Hell, I should have got you to do this head since that no good stylist of mine acted like she couldn't fit me in this mornin'.

ANTIE DOT

She's in labor!

RUTH

So?

(to Jackie)

But seriously, what do you use on it?

Other women gather around Jackie to listen.

JACKIE

Just home remedies.

RUTH

Tell us.

MARY

Yeah, Jackie. We wanna know.

Jackie scowls at Mary.

JACKIE

I take some oil, you see.

RUTH

Go on.

JACKIE

And I sprinkle some cayenne pepper, oregano, and basil leaves, and mix it real good. Then I--

ANTIE DOT

Season your chicken and cook it on 375?

JACKIE

No. Then I rub it on my hair and put on a plastic cap and sit under the dryer for twenty minutes. Then I wash it out and style it like normal.

All the women nod.

A PRETTY WOMAN takes notes.

RUTH

Well, I'll be damned. Everything I need is right there in my kitchen. I'll try it this weekend. Thank you.

JACKIE

You're welcome.

Mary slides away from Jackie.

JACKIE (Cont'd)

What?

MARY

Tryna get to you, the Lord might strike me accidentally. I didn't raise you to lie.

JACKIE

I lied to bill collectors all the time, sayin' you weren't home when you were!

MARY

That's different.

JACKIE

How?

MARY

Anybody who calls durin' Wheel of Fortune deserves to be lied to.

Jackie just shakes her head.

EXT. PATIO - NIGHT

Mary and Jackie stand with the other guests, sipping on drinks.

Antie Dot pokes her head in between them.

ANTIE DOT

Come on, ya'll. They're about to get in the pool.

Jackie looks hesitant.

JACKIE

Antie Dot, about that swimsuit....

ANTIE DOT

What? You don't like it?

JACKIE

It's not that. I'm just worried that it might be a bit too much. And I don't wanna cause a stir.

Antie Dot rolls her eyes.

ANTIE DOT

No offense, but if I were you, I'd be prayin' for a stir.

MARY

She's right, Jackie. You need all the stirs you can get.

ANTIE DOT

We can switch if you want, but I don't see why; some of them women won't have on nothin' but a shoe string and high heels. You'll look like a nun compared to the rest of 'em.

JACKIE

Are you sure?

ANTIE DOT

Positive. Let's go change.

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

Antie Dot and Mary walk into the backyard where everyone has on fairly modest swimsuits.

Jackie follows. Her swimsuit is fire engine red and would make a bikini blush. She looks straight off the cover of *Maxim*.

A hush goes through the crowd when they see her and Jackie freezes. She then flips her hair back and continues to walk nonchalantly.

Michael and Terry stand by. Michael tries not to stare.

Terry ogles.

Ruth passes by and closes his mouth then keeps going.

MARY

(to Jackie)

I think that man's callin' you.

JACKIE

What man?

MARY

The one with no teeth.

Jackie looks where Mary's pointing and sees an OLD MAN smiling and wiggling his eyebrows while waving a five dollar bill.

Jackie looks at Antie Dot.

JACKIE

This is all your fault.

Antie Dot laughs.

ANTIE DOT

Please. This is the most excitement you've ever had. You should get down on your knees and thank me.

MARY

She's right, Jackie.

LATER

BY THE POOL

Jackie looks at the water hesitantly.

Antie Dot looks like she can't wait to get in.

ANTIE DOT

Come on, slow poke.

JACKIE

I'm not gonna get in.

ANTIE DOT

What?

JACKIE

I think I'll just sit at the edge and put my feet in.

ANTIE DOT

You done lost your mind, girl?

JACKIE

I don't wanna get in the water.

ANTIE DOT

You mean to tell me I let you borrow my good bathin' suit and all you wanna do is waste it?

JACKIE

I'm not wasting it!

ANTIE DOT

Yes you are! If I'd have known that, I would have worn it myself! You too cute to swim?

JACKIE

No.

ANTIE DOT

Good.

She shoves Jackie into the pool.

Jackie looks completely miffed as she comes up for air.

JACKIE

Antie Dot!

ANTIE DOT

Hush.

Antie Dot goes to the diving board and looks like a champion swimmer as she jack knifes into the water.

Jackie swims to the edge of the pool.

Unknown to her, her wig has come off and is floating in the water.

A WOMAN IN A PINK BIKINI, 20s, picks it up and frowns at it. She shrugs and puts it on the edge of the pool where Mary and Michael sit.

When Mary spots the wig her eyes grow wide. She looks at Michael, back at the wig, then back at Michael.

MARY

Sugar, why don't you get me
somethin' to drink?

Michael looks hesitant.

MICHAEL

I don't think that's a good idea.

MARY

Why not?

MICHAEL

Remember the last time you got
drunk?

MARY

What about it?

MICHAEL

The burlesque dance on the piano?

MARY

I was good!

MICHAEL

That's not the point.

Jackie still hasn't noticed her wig is off and comes up for air by the edge of the pool.

Mary uses her foot to push Jackie's head back down.

MARY

Come on, Michael. My arthur-rydiss is really actin' up and a lil Rum and Coke normally loosens the bones.

She holds out her hand in an awful claw shape. It looks severely disfigured.

MARY (Cont'd)

See? I can't even straighten my fingers.

MICHAEL

Oh, God; that looks awful. I'll be right back.

Michael goes to get the drink.

Mary takes her foot off Jackie's head.

Jackie comes up, gasping.

JACKIE

Are you trying to kill me?

Mary nods to the wig.

Jackie looks as though her eyes are gonna pop out. She puts the wig back on and swims to the other end of the pool near Antie Dot.

Michael comes back with the drink.

Mary smiles.

MARY

Well, what do you know?

She flexes her fingers.

MARY (Cont'd)

Isn't that somethin'? I guess I won't need that drink after all.

She pats him on the shoulder and gets up.

MICHAEL

What happened?

She thinks about it.

MARY

Power of prayer.

Michael looks perplexed as he watches her walk away.

EXT. POOLSIDE - NIGHT

Jackie, Mary, and Antie Dot mingle with the other guests.

Someone begins crying hysterically and everyone looks to see who it is: it's TIFFANY, 23, cute as a button.

Consoling her is PATRICE, 30s, gorgeous and sophisticated.

All the guests are quiet and seem uncomfortable as Tiffany bawls her eyes out.

Ruth rushes up to Tiffany with her arms extended.

RUTH

Tiffany, darlin', what's the matter?

Tiffany tries to respond but she's completely incoherent. She looks at Patrice for help.

PATRICE

Naray bailed.

Tiffany's sobs become gut wrenching.

Everyone cringes.

RUTH

What the hell you mean bailed?

PATRICE

Said she can't walk in the wedding because Larry's the love of her life. She packed up, bought a bus ticket to Jersey, and said adios, suckers.

Ruth comforts Tiffany.

RUTH

Don't cry, darlin'. Everything's gonna be just fine. We'll replace that cockeyed heifer, okay? Don't you worry.

Tiffany nods and sniffs.

ANTIE DOT

Who was she supposed to walk with?

RUTH

Michael.

ANTIE DOT

What's the big deal? It ain't like Naray's the only bridesmaid in America. Hell, Jackie can take her place. They're about the same size. Marble won't hardly have to alter that dress.

Tiffany looks at Jackie with hope in her eyes.

Patrice looks at Jackie like if she says yes she'll whup her ass.

TIFFANY

Would you?

JACKIE

Of course I'll do it.

Patrice looks at Tiffany.

PATRICE

Can I talk to you for a second?

Tiffany nods and they walk towards an oak tree.

JACKIE
(to Ruth)
Who's that?

RUTH
Michael's girlfriend.

Jackie looks around and finds Michael across the yard.
He's about to eat a meatball but drops it on his shirt.
Jackie smiles like she's just fallen in love.
Patrice and Tiffany return from their stroll.

PATRICE
It's settled, everyone. Tiffany's
decided that I should be the one to
walk with Michael.

JACKIE
But I already said that I would do
it.

PATRICE
I realize that, but you see, due to
certain circumstances, we thought
it would be better for all involved
if I walked instead.

JACKIE
Why?

PATRICE
Cause I didn't wanna have to cut
nobody. You understand, don't you?
And love that hair, by the way.

Patrice turns her head around so quickly that her hair
slaps Jackie in the face.

Jackie lunges forward but Mary holds her back.

MARY

I'll get her, Jackie. Don't worry.

A SERVER, mid 20s, walks by with a tray of food.

MARY (Cont'd)

Are those deviled eggs?

She shuffles in step behind him.

Antie Dot looks at Jackie.

ANTIE DOT

You want me to get her?

JACKIE

Don't worry. I'll handle this.

Jackie taps Patrice on the shoulder.

Patrice turns around and looks at Jackie like she's a nuisance.

PATRICE

What?

Jackie flips her hair, catching Patrice right in the eye.

PATRICE (Cont'd)

Hey!

Jackie ignores her and begins to strut as though she's on a Victoria Secret fashion show run way.

Jackie prances over to Michael.

She links her arm through his.

Michael smiles.

JACKIE

I've been thinkin'.

MICHAEL

About?

JACKIE

Since I've been back in town, I haven't done anything fun. Can you believe that?

MICHAEL

I'm surprised. With all the festivals and stuff going on.

JACKIE

I know. I really need to get out of the house.

She sighs.

JACKIE (Cont'd)

Especially with my condition.

Michael looks concerned.

MICHAEL

What condition?

JACKIE

I don't wanna bore you....

MICHAEL

Please do.

JACKIE

I have this thing, you see. I've been to a bunch of doctors and none of them can figure it out.

MICHAEL

What is it?

JACKIE

If I stay in the house too long without any social activity, my left eye starts to twitch.

MICHAEL
Are you serious?

JACKIE
Yeah.

MICHAEL
That's pretty damn freaky. Why your
left?

JACKIE
That's what they can't figure out.
And they're worried that if I don't
get out soon, it could be
permanent.

MICHAEL
That's awful! What are you gonna
do?

JACKIE
I was actually thinking about going
on one of those African Safaris?
But since I can't afford it, I was
hoping maybe we could go to dinner
tomorrow night.

MICHAEL
Tomorrow won't work.

JACKIE
Why?

MICHAEL
Play-offs. Do you think it'll hold
up until the next morning? We can
do an early lunch.

JACKIE
No good.

MICHAEL
Why not?

JACKIE

Young and the Restless. What about the day after? We can go to Country Pete's. I think it's all you can eat ribs.

MICHAEL

Can't. Fifty cent wing night at Hucklebees. Me and the guys always go.

Jackie's eye starts to twitch terribly.

Michael looks worried.

MICHAEL

I'll call and cancel.

JACKIE

If you insist.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Wheel of Fortune is on the TV.

Jackie wears a sultry red dress. She puts the finishing touches on her makeup in a mirror mounted on the wall.

She blows herself a kiss.

Mary sits on the sofa in a Hawaiian shirt. She rolls her eyes at Jackie then goes back to her show.

MARY

(to the screen)

An "S," you idiot! Ask for an "S"!

CONTESTANT

I'd like to get an "R," Pat.

Vanna White doesn't move. She tucks in her lips and shakes her head apologetically.

PAT

I'm sorry, Berniece. There is no
"R".

Mary throws her hands up in despair.

She turns off the television.

A horn blows outside.

MARY

That must be Dot.

JACKIE

Antie Dot is going to Bingo? No
wonder it rained.

MARY

No. She's gotta get her roasting
pan from Ruth and she's gonna drop
me since it's on the way.

JACKIE

Her roasting pan?

MARY

I know. Ruth gets a taste for
chicken and everything's fine and
dandy, I get a taste for butter
beans and that's just my foot.
She's got her people picked. Oh.
And before I forget....

Mary reaches into her purse and pulls out a roll of
condoms.

She hands them to Jackie.

MARY (Cont'd)

Have a good time.

She shuffles to the door.

Jackie looks stunned but puts the condoms in her purse
anyway.

INT. RUTH'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Antie Dot sits at the table drinking what looks like lemonade.

Ruth stands over the stove stirring something. She wears a very provocative cat suit.

ANTIE DOT

Is that what you wear to make a roux?

Ruth winks.

RUTH

You should see what I wear when I bake quiche.

She puts the spoon down and a clock sounds the hour. Ruth looks at the time then snaps her finger like she forgot something.

RUTH (Cont'd)

Shoots.

ANTIE DOT

What?

RUTH

I forgot to tell Patrice and Michael to pick up my prescription.

ANTIE DOT

Your crazy pills? Wait--what do you mean Patrice and Michael?

RUTH

They're on their way to Country Pete's to meet Jackie.

ANTIE DOT

I thought they were mad with each other!

RUTH

They were. Oh; and before I forget.

Ruth reaches inside a cabinet and pulls out a pan. She walks it over to Antie Dot.

RUTH (Cont'd)

Thank you.

Antie Dot nods and sips her lemonade.

ANTIE DOT

When did they patch things up? Last time I talked to Michael, he said she tore her last pair of drawers with him. I thought he was gonna end things for good.

RUTH

I fixed that.

ANTIE DOT

How?

Ruth sits at the table.

RUTH

Patrice came cryin' to me yesterday, sayin' how she thought she might lose Michael for good this time. I said, 'Just tell the boy how you feel.' Hell, she took my advice and then some.

ANTIE DOT

What do you mean?

RUTH

Honey, the girl proposed, you hear me? Got down on one knee and did the damn thing. Bought herself a real nice ring.

ANTIE DOT

What did Michael say?

RUTH

He was hesitant at first, but I pulled him by his ear and gave him a good talkin' to. He said yes.

ANTIE DOT

You were there?

RUTH

Happened right here in this kitchen. I took pictures and everything.

Antie Dot finishes her lemonade and gets up.

ANTIE DOT

I gotta go.

RUTH

Why?

ANTIE DOT

I think I left my beans on the fire. Thanks for the lemonade.

Antie Dot rushes out.

Ruth goes back to her pot.

A few seconds later, Antie Dot rushes back in, takes the roasting pan, and leaves in a hurry.

Ruth just stands there looking.

INT. BINGO HALL - NIGHT

The place is packed mostly with women dressed in Hawaiian shirts.

Mary sits drinking from a Styrofoam cup.

She looks at her card and smiles smugly: all she needs to win is I-24.

The ANNOUNCER, 70s, is bald and wears a jacket that looks like a multicolored rug.

ANNOUNCER

O-67!

Antie Dot rushes into the place and makes a beeline for Mary.

Mary looks up.

MARY

What are you doin' here?

Antie Dot breaths heavily. She takes Mary's cup and drinks from it. She puts it down.

ANTIE DOT

I got here as fast as I could. We gotta go. I just came from Ruth's and she said that Michael and Patrice are engaged!

ANNOUNCER

B-12!

There are groans throughout the place.

ANTIE DOT

Didn't you hear me? I said Michael and Patrice are engaged!

MARY

I heard you. But what's that gotta do with me?

ANTIE DOT

Are you crazy? This thing has disaster written all over it! If Jackie shows up alone in that sexy dress, she's gonna embarrass the hell outta herself!

MARY

So?

ANTIE DOT

What do you mean so? Then that ratty girl's gonna know that Jackie wants her man!

MARY

The truth ain't never hurt nobody.

ANNOUNCER

I-19!

More groans.

ANTIE DOT

But as soon as she realizes that Jackie wants Michael, she's gonna cause a scene! Then I'm gonna have to go up there and whup her ass old school style! And you know I can't get arrested again!

MARY

Why don't you just call her on her cell phone?

ANTIE DOT

I tried! But she's got that cheap service and it keeps sayin' 'The caller you are trying to reach is unavailable.' Come on, Mary!

Mary ignores her so Antie Dot grabs her and tries to pick her up.

A BIG WOMAN, 70s, sits right next to Mary. She is one mean looking sucker who could easily have been a linebacker.

She looks at Mary's almost winning card and shoots daggers with her eyes.

Everyone, including the announcer, stops to stare at Antie Dot trying to wrangle Mary from her seat.

ANNOUNCER

Looks like we got a tussle over there!

BIG WOMAN

(to announcer)

On with it, bozo!

ANNOUNCER

Keep your panties on, lady! 0-79!

MARY

(to Antie Dot)

You're embarrassin' me!

ANTIE DOT

Good!

MARY

All right already!

Mary stands up and they walk towards the exit.

MARY (Cont'd)

And thanks to you, I didn't even get to order any hot wings. We'll have to stop and get somethin' on the way. I want chicken.

ANTIE DOT

You out your finger lickin' mind? We've gotta get to the restaurant and save that child!

Mary blows a raspberry.

ANNOUNCER

B-3!

MARY

How come you always get what you want, but I never get what I want?

ANTIE DOT

What do you want?

Mary thinks about it.

MARY

Your butter bean pot.

ANTIE DOT

You still on that?

MARY

Why shouldn't I be? If it were mine, I'd gladly give it to you. But I guess I'm just kind-hearted. Unlike some sisters.

Antie Dot rolls her eyes.

MARY

And if they call my number, I'll hunt you down, heifer.

ANTIE DOT

They're not gonna call anything! Now, hurry up!

Antie Dot pulls Mary by the arm.

ANNOUNCER

I-24!

Mary's hands circle Antie Dot's neck.

The Big Woman sees Mary's card and realizes that it's a winner. She dives over it, stands up, and throws her hands in the air.

BIG WOMAN

Bingo, you shmucks!

Antie Dot's head moves like a bobble doll as Mary throttles her.

INT. COUNTRY PETE'S - NIGHT

All the servers have on cowboy hats and boots and a live band plays what sounds like Country Hip-Hop.

There is also a dance floor. Several couples dance the night away.

The MAITRE D', early 20s, is dressed like a sheriff.

He has a gun in his holster, and you don't know if he's going to seat you or shoot you.

Patrice and Michael sit at a table that has a cactus in the center. Michael rubs his hands together eagerly while looking at the menu.

Patrice looks around as though the place is beneath her.

PATRICE

This place is...interesting.

MICHAEL

I know. Isn't it great?

PATRICE

That's not the word I had in mind.

Michael looks up and spots Antie Dot. He looks pleasantly surprised as she sits at the table.

ANTIE DOT

Hey, ya'll. Sorry I'm late.

MICHAEL

Antie Dot!

He gives her a kiss on the cheek.

MICHAEL (Cont'd)

I didn't know you were coming.

ANTIE DOT

Jackie didn't mention it?

MICHAEL

No.

ANTIE DOT

That's strange. Her and Mary are on their way. They must be stuck in traffic.

She gives Patrice a big, fake smile.

ANTIE DOT (Cont'd)

It's good to see you, Patreecy.

Patrice gives a tight-lipped smile.

PATRICE

Please; call me Patrice. And it's nice to see you too, Antie.

ANTIE DOT

Please; call me Mrs. Calloway.

INT. COUNTRY PETE'S LOBBY - NIGHT

Jackie walks in and seems surprised to see Mary.

JACKIE

Momo--what are you doin' here?

MARY

I've got some bad news about Michael.

JACKIE

Is he dead?

MARY

No. That high saddity heifer proposed, and now she's in there eatin' ribs with your man. And probably garlic bread, too.

Jackie gasps.

JACKIE
How did you find out?

MARY
Dot.

JACKIE
That miserable little skank!

Mary takes a menu and pops Jackie on the head.

MARY
Don't talk about your Antie like
that!

JACKIE
Not Antie Dot! Patrice!

MARY
Oh.

Jackie puts her face in her hands.

JACKIE
I'm so embarrassed.

MARY
Why?

JACKIE
Look at me; I got all dressed up to
come to a place where they greet
customers by slapping their thighs
and yelling, "Hee-Dawgy!" If I go
in there like this, Patrice is
gonna think that I want her man.

MARY
But you do.

JACKIE
But she can't *know* that!

MARY
Why not?

JACKIE

Because as soon as she sees how devastatingly beautiful I am in this dress, she's gonna feel threatened!

MARY

And?

JACKIE

And then she's gonna get smart! And then I'm gonna get smart back, and then Antie Dot's gonna get smart, and then you're gonna steal the fries off my plate cause you'll think I'm not looking, and then we'll all end up in jail because I decided to show a little cleavage. And you know Antie Dot can't get arrested again!

MARY

What should we do?

Jackie thinks about it.

JACKIE

Follow me.

She drags Mary by the arm.

INT. COUNTRY PETE'S - NIGHT

Michael and Antie Dot sit swaying to the music.

A song comes on that makes people shout. Several people go to the dance floor and do a line dance.

Patrice sits frowning.

A WAITRESS, early 20s, clad in cowgirl attire, passes by the table.

PATRICE

Excuse me?

WAITRESS

Yeah?

PATRICE

Can you please move this cactus?

The Waitress removes the cactus as Jackie and Mary come to the table.

All eyes are on them because they look like an odd couple; Jackie wears a Hawaiian shirt that's too big, jeans that that might be long shorts, and a pair of sexy, open-toe heels.

Mary wears a sultry red dress and a pair of white and blue Nikes.

She walks with dignity, however, and sits as though she were the queen of England.

She gives a Miss America wave to onlookers.

Jackie sits down.

JACKIE

Sorry we're late. Momo couldn't decide what to wear. She tried on at least ten gowns before I said, 'You look fine. Now, can we just go already?'

Jackie laughs a little too long.

MARY

You know me. Picky, picky, picky.

MICHAEL

That's okay. You look great.

He turns to Jackie.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

How's your eye?

JACKIE

My eye? Oh! It's fine. It only twitched four times today.

MICHAEL

I'm happy to hear that. Jackie, this is my fiancé, Patrice. Patrice, Jackie.

Patrice makes a big show of the ring on her finger.

PATRICE

I understand you knew Michael when you were a little girl?

JACKIE

Yeah.

PATRICE

Sounds dreamy. And I must apologize for the other night.

JACKIE

What for?

PATRICE

You see, I didn't recognize you; I've seen a few pictures of you and in every single one of them you were really really fat.

Jackie almost chokes on her water.

Mary pats her on the back.

PATRICE (CONT'D)

You were so big, I couldn't tell sometimes if you were sitting down standing up, or lying down in some cases. So, you can *imagine* my surprise when I saw you at Tiffany's party. Pardon me if I seemed aloof. It's just that I was surprised by your...transformation.

MARY

(whispering, to Jackie)

She'll be more surprised by my foot
up her ass.

PATRICE

(to Mary)

I beg your pardon?

MARY

I said you'll be more surprised by
my foot up your ass.

JACKIE

You'll have to excuse my
grandmother. She's been watching
The Sopranos.

Patrice nods as though she understands.

PATRICE

And I must say that I just can't
get over that hair. It's so lovely.
I hate to admit it but I'm jealous.

JACKIE

You shouldn't be.

PATRICE

No, I am. It just looks so gorgeous
and shiny. I don't know how you
manage to keep it so nice.
Especially with this humidity.

Jackie shrugs.

JACKIE

You know what they say; a happy
head is a healthy head.

PATRICE

True indeed. You see, Ms. Ruth
shared your hair remedy with me and
I tried that.

JACKIE
Did it work?

INT. PATRICE'S BATHROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Patrice looks into a mirror and sees rebellious, frizzy hair. It looks like the caption above her should read: When Hot Combs Attack.

She screams.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

BACK TO PATRICE

PATRICE
Not exactly. You'll have to write
it down for me.

The WAITER, cute, mid 20s, walks up to the table.

He looks at Jackie and Mary.

WAITER
Are you ladies ready to order?

JACKIE
Yeah. I'll have the baby back ribs.

WAITER
All righty.

He turns to Mary.

WAITER (CONT'D)
And for you, ma'am?

MARY
A fried pork chop sandwich. And
tell 'em don't put me no mustard.

She hands him back the menu.

WAITER

I'm sorry, ma'am. We don't serve fried pork chops. Would you like to try something else?

ANTIE DOT

They have excellent burgers, Mary.

MARY

I'm not talkin' to you.

She looks at the Waiter.

MARY (CONT'D)

If you knew I had a taste for butter beans, would you let me borrow your pot?

WAITER

Sure I would.

MARY

I'd give you mine, too. But not everybody's like that.

She nods to Antie Dot.

Antie Dot rolls her eyes.

MARY (CONT'D)

Anyhow, just bring me a cheeseburger with bacon.

WAITER

And how would you like that?

MARY

Damned good.

He writes that down.

WAITER

All right. I have a rack of ribs and one damned good burger. I'll get that out to you in no time.

LATER

Everyone seems to be enjoying a hearty meal except Patrice, who sits picking at a salad.

A couple with a BABY waits to be seated at the table next to them.

The baby is so cute you want to squeeze her cheeks and give her a lollipop.

The YOUNG WIFE, 20s, frowns at the table and whispers something to the YOUNG HUSBAND, 20s.

The Young Husband flags down the Waiter.

YOUNG HUSBAND

Excuse me--can you wipe this table?

WAITER

Yeah. Just a sec.

Patrice frowns at the baby and continues picking at her salad.

The Baby suddenly takes great interest in Jackie's hair. She seems to think that it might be some sort of toy.

She smiles as she leans over and plays drums on Jackie's head.

Jackie smiles at the baby and continues with her meal.

The Baby leans forward again, this time grabbing a fistful of Jackie's wig with such force that Jackie seems pinned to the chair.

The Young Wife and Husband play kissyface and don't seem to notice.

Jackie wiggles free from the Baby's grip and shoots straight up like she just sat on a tack.

The Baby claps.

MICHAEL
What's the matter?

JACKIE
I really like this song. Let's go
dance.

She grabs him by the arm.

ON THE DANCE FLOOR

Michael and Jackie get down with their bad selves.

Jackie gets funky and the crowd goes wild.

Patrice stands frowning, watching them with her arms
crossed.

The Maitre D' stands right next to her.

Jackie does a move that makes the crowd go crazy again.

Patrice looks as though she's going to spit nails.

She shakes the Maitre D' by the shoulder and points to
Jackie.

PATRICE
Don't just stand there! Shoot her!

He pulls the gun from his holster and shrugs.

MAITRE D'
It's plastic.

PATRICE
For Christ's sake!

She shoves him out of the way and goes to the dance floor
next to Michael and Jackie. She begins to dance but seems
to have no clue how to move her body.

Jackie watches amused as Patrice does what looks like robot
voguing.

The crowd boos.

Patrice looks nervous. She tries a Michael Jackson like spin but the look on her face lets everyone know that it didn't go so well.

The song ends, and Patrice is heard screaming in agony. She hops on one foot.

PATRICE (Cont'd)

My ankle! Oh, God, My ankle!

Jackie looks at Michael.

JACKIE

Do you think she's hurt?

Patrice glares at Jackie. She tries to walk but can't, so Michael picks her up. She clings protectively to his neck.

PATRICE

Take me to a hospital. Please. I can't bear it. I need something strong for this pain.

Patrice cries.

MICHAEL

Sorry, Jackie. I'll catch up with you later.

He carries Patrice to the table to get her purse.

Mary and Antie Dot walk over.

Mary puts her arms lovingly around Jackie.

MARY

Don't worry. I know lots of women who never marry, and never have children, and they're not as miserable as you'd think. Some of them even come to Bingo.

Jackie gives her a dirty look.

MARY

Let me tell you somethin' that my mother used to say. It always gave me comfort; it goes: 'Life is like a raggedy vacuum; sometimes it sucks, and sometimes it doesn't.'

JACKIE

Wasn't Na-nan an alcoholic?

MARY

Yes. But the point is that you won't always get what you want.

ANTIE DOT

She's right. You wake up, feelin' like the world's against you, but the next mornin', you realize, 'hey--this ain't so bad. I'm alive.' Then you just scramble your eggs and keep goin'. Don't let losin' a man keep you from scramblin' your eggs, Jackie. It ain't worth it.

JACKIE

But she doesn't deserve him, Antie Dot! It's not fair!

ANTIE DOT

Deserve him or not, she's got him, and that's all that matters. They love each other. Plain and simple.

JACKIE

She's not *right* for him! I'm telling you; there's something fishy about that Patrice. I can't put my finger on it but I feel it in my gut.

MARY

The fries were too greasy.

JACKIE

It's not gas, Momo; it's intuition.
Telling me that girl is no good.

ANTIE DOT

How can you say that for sure?

JACKIE

Cause she's fake, she's
condescending, and she ate all the
rolls!

ANTIE DOT

Let it go, Jackie! Trust me; the
last thing you wanna do is go after
somebody else's man. Take my word
for it.

JACKIE

I can't let it go!

ANTIE DOT

Why not?

JACKIE

Because I love him! That's why! And
And if she thinks she's gonna marry
him then she's out of her mind
because I'm gonna break them up!

MARY

What?

JACKIE

You heard me.

MARY

You don't mean that.

Jackie just looks at Mary.

She goes back to the table to get her purse and then leaves.

Antie Dot and Mary just look at each other.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jackie sits on the couch, remote in hand.

She yawns and flips through the channels.

INSERT SHOT - THE FAIR COMMERCIAL

- Children laugh and eat cotton candy.

- A man and woman ride the Ferris wheel.

- A man gets an ice cream cone smashed in his face. He laughs.

BACK TO SCENE

Jackie's eyes light up.

JACKIE

Momo!

MARY (O.S.)

What?

JACKIE

Let's go to the fair!

MARY (O.S.)

Can't!

JACKIE

Why not?

Mary shuffles into the room. She has on a fancy black dress and looks fabulous.

MARY

I have a date.

Jackie spins around so fast she might have whiplash.

JACKIE

With who?

MARY

You don't know him. I would have fixed you up with his youngest son, but I didn't think you'd like him.

JACKIE

Why not?

MARY

He's sixty. Are you gonna sit here all night?

JACKIE

Looks like it.

A horn blows outside and Mary grabs her purse.

MARY

That's him.

Mary walks towards the door then turns back.

MARY

And let me get those condoms since you probably won't need 'em.

Jackie gets up from the sofa and leaves the room.

There's a knock on the door.

Mary goes to answer it and finds Michael grinning like an idiot.

He has a dress draped over his arms.

MARY

We don't need no stinkin' 'cyclopedias.

She shuts the door in his face. He knocks again and Mary opens it.

MARY (Cont'd)

What?

MICHAEL

I came to see Jackie. Is she here?

MARY

That depends.

MICHAEL

On what?

MARY

Those twenty dollars you owe me.

MICHAEL

What twenty dollars?

Jackie comes into the room.

Mary nods to Michael.

MARY

You got company.

Jackie gives the condoms to Mary.

MARY (Cont'd)

Thank you. And have fun with George and Weasie.

JACKIE

I'll try.

Mary clears her throat.

Michael reaches into his pocket and gives her twenty bucks.

MARY

Have a good night.

She shuffles towards the door.

JACKIE

What was that about?

MICHAEL

Apparently I owed her twenty dollars.

JACKIE

For what?

MICHAEL

She didn't say.

Jackie nods to the dress.

JACKIE

Who's that for?

MICHAEL

You.

Jackie looks confused.

MICHAEL (Cont'd)

Remember the other night at the restaurant how Patrice was howling about her ankle?

JACKIE

Yeah.

MICHAEL

Turns out she sprained it and can't be in the wedding. And Tiffany's hysterical. She told me to ask you since you already said you'd do it.

JACKIE

Why didn't she ask me herself?

MICHAEL

She tried. But you have that cheap cell phone service and it keeps sayin' 'The caller you're trying to reach is unavailable.' So she asked me to stop by.

JACKIE

Oh? Is that so? Good ole Jackie, the backup plan?

MICHAEL

Pretty much. Please say you'll do it. She was inconsolable. She told me I'd better convince you. Or off with my head.

JACKIE

What's in it for me?

MICHAEL

What do you mean?

JACKIE

Tiffany gets what she wants, you get to keep your head, and what do I get?

MICHAEL

What do you want?

The commercial for the fair plays again.

Jackie smiles.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS- NIGHT

Jackie and Michael walk amidst the crowd.

Jackie smiles sweetly.

JACKIE

Michael?

MICHAEL

Hmm?

JACKIE

Would you be a doll and buy me some
cotton candy?

She flips her hair back and bats her eyes.

MICHAEL

You're somethin, you know that?

JACKIE

What?

MICHAEL

Blackmailin' a black male. You
should be ashamed.

Jackie smirks as Michael goes to the vendor and buys the
candy.

He hands it to her.

JACKIE

Thank you.

She eats the candy.

JACKIE (Cont'd)

And it's not blackmail. It's
bribery.

MICHAEL

Is that what it is?

He shakes his head and they share a laugh.

The two walk around and Jackie seems to be in ecstasy.

They round a corner and come face to face with Shirley.

Jackie freezes.

Shirley smiles big.

SHIRLEY

Hey, girl! I see that new attitude
is workin out just fine! Now, tell
me, has the wig--

Jackie stuffs a handful of cotton candy into Shirley's
mouth.

Shirley is so stunned she can't move.

Jackie grabs Michael by the arm. He looks like a rag doll
as Jackie drags him to the line for the nearest ride.

She doesn't even look to see what it is.

MICHAEL

Who was that?

JACKIE

Nobody. Let's go on this thing.

Jackie looks up and sees flashing lights bearing the name
of the ride: "The Drop of Death."

A loud speaker blasts scary organ music and laughter that
sounds like the Grim Reaper taunting his victims.

They get in line.

Michael looks up and sees an INCREDIBLY BUFF MAN, 40s,
limping through the exit line of the ride. The man is
sweating and visibly shaken.

A SHORT WOMAN, 40s, holds him up like he weighs nothing.

He weeps. She rubs his back and they walk away.

Michael gulps and looks at Jackie.

MICHAEL

Are you sure you wanna go on this
thing?

Jackie looks back and sees Shirley coming her way.

JACKIE

Positive.

They get on the ride.

INT. DROP OF DEATH - NIGHT

Michael and Jackie plummet to the earth, screaming at the top of their lungs.

The wind seems to want Jackie's wig. She holds on to it for dear life.

EXT. DROP OF DEATH - NIGHT

Somehow, Jackie's wig is now backwards. She looks like Cousin It.

She and Michael are so dizzy they walk like drunk people.

Jackie reaches a hand out as though trying to feel her way.

JACKIE

Michael? Where are we? I can't see anything.

Michael laughs.

MICHAEL

Are you okay in there?

He parts her hair like a curtain to find her face.

Jackie puts a hand on her hair and seems to realize what happened to her wig.

She points.

JACKIE

Look! It's Michael Jackson!

Michael doesn't seem interested.

JACKIE (Cont'd)
And he's wearing his old nose
again!

Michael's head whips around.

MICHAEL
Where?

Jackie fixes her wig.

Michael turns back around, disappointed.

MICHAEL (Cont'd)
I didn't see him.

Jackie shrugs.

JACKIE
Sucks to be you.

EXT. VENDOR BOOTH - NIGHT

Michael hands Jackie a candy apple.

Jackie bats her eyes and smiles sweetly.

JACKIE
Thank you. You know what?

MICHAEL
What?

JACKIE
I'm havin' a great time.

MICHAEL
I can tell. That's your fourth
candy apple.

She swats him playfully on the arm.

Jackie unwraps the candy apple and sighs like she's in
heaven.

They come face to face with Shirley again. She looks pissed.

SHIRLEY

Hey!

Jackie stuffs the candy apple into Shirley's mouth and runs.

Michael chases after her.

MICHAEL

Hey! Wait!

He catches up with her.

MICHAEL (Cont'd)

What's the matter?

Jackie hops on one foot.

JACKIE

Charlie Horse.

MICHAEL

But who's that woman?

JACKIE

I don't know, but I wish she'd stop eating my food.

BY THE FERRIS WHEEL

Shirley eats the candy apple and stands with GEORGETTE, skinny as a rail, mid 30s, who stands chewing gum obnoxiously.

Shirley takes another bite of the candy and squints into the distance at Michael.

A glimmer of recognition flickers across her face.

She smiles mischievously.

SHIRLEY
Well I'll be damned.

She laughs and reaches into her purse for her cell phone.

She dials.

Georgette files her nails.

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION

Patrice sits on a Lazy-Boy with her bandaged ankle propped up. She watches television.

PATRICE
Hello?

SHIRLEY
Mooky?

Patrice looks around as though afraid someone might overhear.

PATRICE
Don't *call* me that!

SHIRLEY
Like your country behind is
sophisticated all of a sudden.

PATRICE
What do you want, Shirley?

SHIRLEY
Dang, Mooky! Why I always gotta
want somethin'? Why can't I just
call to see how you're doin'?

PATRICE
Cause you hate my guts.

SHIRLEY
So? I might wanna come over and
have tea and crumpets. Watch
Guiding Light or somethin'.

PATRICE

Shirley?

SHIRLEY

Yes?

PATRICE

Cut the crap and tell me what you want.

SHIRLEY

Fine. Are you still tryna marry that rich, goofy lookin fellow with the head like a yield sign?

Patrice turns the volume down on the television.

PATRICE

Who told you that?

SHIRLEY

Seen it in the paper.
Everybody's buzzin' about it.

PATRICE

Look, Shirley, what do you want?

SHIRLEY

Just answer my question--are you still tryna marry him?

PATRICE

Yes. Why?

SHIRLEY

Seen him with a gorgeous, big booty heifer with spectacular hair. And they look good together. I mean *real* good.

Shirley sighs.

SHIRLEY (Cont'd)

Too bad you're all laid up with that ankle and can't do a darn thing about it. I don't know what I'd do if I were in the house all alone while my man was out galavantin' with every Shanequa, Janequa, and Bonquesha there was.

PATRICE

Did you call just to taunt me?

SHIRLEY

Of course.

PATRICE

You're miserable, you know that?

SHIRLEY

No; you're miserable. And the next time you decide to sleep with somebody's man, you better rest one eye up.

PATRICE

You're an idiot, you know that? Jamie was never your man, and even if he was, why was he spending all his money on me? Now, why don't you just go back to your pathetic little wig shop, eat some Twinkies, and forget about it?

SHIRLEY

It's funny you say that because the more I forget, the more I remember, and the more I remember, the more I forget.

PATRICE

What?

Georgette looks at Shirley and shakes her head. She blows a gigantic bubble.

PATRICE (Cont'd)
I don't have time for this.

SHIRLEY
Wait!

PATRICE
What?

SHIRLEY
If I see you at the family reunion,
I'm gonna take my foot and write my
name up and down the crack of your
behind. Now, have a good night.

Shirley hangs up the phone.

She smiles.

SHIRLEY (Cont'd)
That was delightful.

Georgette looks up from filing her nails.

GEORGETTE
Are you ever gonna let that go?

SHIRLEY
Not as long as that heifer is
breathin'.

They walk.

They pass the vendor booth where Michael is buying an ice
cream cone for Jackie.

Michael gives Jackie the cone.

Shirley goes up to Jackie and taps on her shoulder.

Jackie turns around and looks caught.

Shirley stands tapping her foot as though expecting
something.

Shirley clears her throat and extends a hand.

Jackie pouts as she surrenders the cone to Shirley.

Shirley happily licks the cone as she and Georgette walk.

Jackie watches the cone longingly.

INT. FERRIS WHEEL - NIGHT

Jackie eats Popcorn.

Michael watches her, amused.

JACKIE

What?

MICHAEL

Your stomach's a bottomless pit.

JACKIE

What can I say?

MICHAEL

How can you eat like that and not gain any weight?

JACKIE

It's really quite effortless. All I have to do is think myself thin.

Michael laughs.

MICHAEL

Is that how you lost all that weight?

JACKIE

Not exactly.

MICHAEL

How long did it take you?

JACKIE

About a year, year and a half.

Michael looks over at Jackie hesitantly.

MICHAEL

Can I ask you somethin'?

JACKIE

Sure.

MICHAEL

What made you decide to lose the weight?

JACKIE

Besides the fact that I was fat?

MICHAEL

That's not what I mean.

Jackie looks confused.

MICHAEL

I mean, what made you finally decide that the size you were wasn't good enough anymore? Cause I'll say for the record that I never thought you were fat.

Jackie seems uncomfortable.

MICHAEL

If you don't wanna talk about, it's okay.

JACKIE

No, it's fine.

Jackie gathers her thoughts.

JACKIE

One night, I was in my dorm room alone. It was Friday, all my roommates were on dates, and there I was, home alone, watching TV, and eating ice cream. And it got to me.

MICHAEL

It had never bothered you before?

JACKIE

Not really. But that night it nagged at me, and I got up the next morning, looked in the mirror and cried. I couldn't stop. I just kept thinking: 'I am so gross.' Over and over.

Jackie fights back tears.

JACKIE

After that I was depressed. My roommates noticed how withdrawn I was and they asked me what was going on. So I told them.

MICHAEL

What did they say?

JACKIE

It was really crazy, because after I started confessing, they all did. And I was shocked; even my friends who seemed to have it all, at least to me, they all had something about themselves that they hated. I just couldn't believe it. So, we all banded together and formed a support system. We'd meet every Thursday and just talk.

MICHAEL

Like group therapy.

JACKIE

Something like that. But it helped, and before I knew it, I was in the gym every day. It took some time, but the weight came off. Slowly but surely.

MICHAEL

Sounds like you were really determined.

JACKIE

I was. It was a personal thing, you know? Me against me. And I won.

MICHAEL

I had no idea you felt that way about yourself. I'm proud of you.

Jackie smiles.

JACKIE

So am I.

Michael grabs her hand.

Jackie rests her head on his shoulder.

They ride in silence.

INT. MICHAEL'S CAR - NIGHT

Michael puts on his seatbelt.

Jackie stares into space.

Something seems to be bothering her.

MICHAEL

What's the matter?

JACKIE

I just keep wondering how things would have been different if I had stayed and gone to college here.

MICHAEL
What do you mean?

JACKIE
Things between us.

Michael doesn't respond for a while.

MICHAEL
I guess we'll never know.

Jackie turns to look at him.

JACKIE
Says who?

There's an awkward moment of silence.

Jackie leans forward.

Her lips are almost touching Michael's.

Michael's cell phone rings, and he looks around as though confused.

He searches to see where the noise is coming from, and feels around on the floor of the backseat.

He finds the phone.

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION.

Patrice looks mad enough to split a brick.

MICHAEL
Hello?

PATRICE
I've been calling you like crazy
for the last half hour!

MICHAEL
I'm sorry. I left my phone in my
car. I didn't realize it.

PATRICE
Who are you with?

Michael doesn't say anything.

PATRICE (Cont'd)
I said who are you with?

MICHAEL
You're breaking up; I can't hear
you.

PATRICE
I said who are you with?

MICHAEL
Sorry. I'm gonna have to call you
back. I'm not getting any
reception.

He hangs up the phone and looks at Jackie.

MICHAEL (Cont'd)
We better go.

JACKIE
Yeah. I guess we better.

He starts the car.

Jackie sits back with her arms folded.

She looks out the window.

EXT. JACKIE'S DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Michael turns off the car.

He and Jackie sit in silence.

JACKIE
I had a good time.

MICHAEL

Me too. I'll see you at the rehearsal tomorrow. Have a good night.

Michael's phone rings again.

He looks at it to see who's calling.

He exhales and silences it.

Jackie gives a tight lipped smile and gets out the car.

Michael watches her walk away.

INT. JACKIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jackie closes the bedroom door.

She leans against it.

She cries.

INT. MICHAEL'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Patrice and Michael sit at opposite ends of the sofa.

They both seem upset.

PATRICE

I don't believe you.

MICHAEL

I'm telling you that nothing happened!

PATRICE

Ha! I see the way she looks at you! All dreamy-eyed! I'm surprised she doesn't start salivating at the mouth like one of Pavlov's dogs!

Michael looks at Patrice like he can't believe what he just heard.

MICHAEL

That was mean, Patrice. And you know it's not true.

PATRICE

Why can't it be true? Why can't there ever be anything negative to say about your sweet little darling Jackie-Pie?

Patrice makes kissing sounds with her mouth.

PATRICE (Cont'd)

She makes me sick.

MICHAEL

That's not fair. She doesn't deserve that and you know it. She hasn't done anything to you.

PATRICE

Hasn't *done* anything to me?

Patrice looks as though she's going to cry.

PATRICE

Do you know how it makes me *feel*? To know that you're out frolicking with another woman after all we've been through? Well, you know what? I've had enough. I don't care *who* she is. I don't want you being friends with her. I don't like it one bit.

MICHAEL

Patrice; I'm committed to you. I'm going to marry you. But I'll be damned if I let you tell me who I can and can't be friends with.

Patrice seems taken aback.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Jackie is a good friend of mine.
Always has been, always will be and
if you can't understand that, I'm
sorry.

PATRICE

I don't like her, Michael! She
tries to pretend that she's
perfect! And she's a liar!

MICHAEL

She's not a liar!

PATRICE

Yes, she is; she lies about how she
feels about you, and about her
stupid hair treatments, and I bet
you she even lies about her behind!

MICHAEL

She wouldn't do that.

PATRICE

Why not? You think a behind that
beautiful is real? Wake up and
smell the butt pads, Mikey.

MICHAEL

I think you're going a little too
far.

PATRICE

Why? Because she's so perfect she'd
never tell a lie? Who is she? Abe
Lincoln?

MICHAEL

I think you mean George Washington.

PATRICE

Whatever.

Patrice gets up and limps toward the door.

MICHAEL

Patrice!

She ignores him.

MICHAEL (Cont'd)

Where are you going?

PATRICE

Outside. It's getting a bit stuffy
in here.

Michael follows Patrice as she opens the door.

EXT. MICHAEL'S YARD - DAY

A blue bird lands on the nest outside of Michael's house.

Patrice looks at the nest and seems to become more enraged.

She looks back at Michael.

PATRICE

And would you please, for the love
of God, get *rid* of that thing?

The bird flies directly over her head and poops on her
shirt.

She freezes.

She turns around and glares at Michael.

The bird poops on the other side of her shirt.

INT. CHURCH DINING HALL - DAY

People are seated at tables, eating and drinking.

Tiffany is all smiles. She sits with DAVID, mid 20s. They
play kissyface.

Patrice and Michael sit together.

Jackie sits with a group of women. She seems uncomfortable, and keeps having to scratch her hair.

She gets up and walks toward the door.

Patrice watches her.

PATRICE

I'm gonna go to the restroom.

Michael nods and sips his drink.

INT. CHURCH HALL - DAY

Lots of people walk about, eating and drinking.

Jackie keeps scratching her hair and seems to be looking for refuge.

She spots an empty room and goes inside.

Patrice follows her.

INT. EMPTY ROOM - DAY

Jackie takes off her wig and scratches her hair.

She exhales and seems relieved.

PATRICE

Well, what do you know?

Jackie freezes. She puts the wig back on and turns around to find Patrice smiling.

Jackie rushes out of the room.

Patrice follows.

INT. CHURCH HALL - DAY

Patrice accosts Jackie.

PATRICE

Had a good time last night?

JACKIE

Look, Patrice; it's not what you think.

PATRICE

It's exactly what I think. But let me tell you something; Michael is *mine*.

JACKIE

I never said he wasn't!

PATRICE

But you'd sure like it!

People start to gather around them.

Antie Dot comes to see what all the commotion is about.

PATRICE (Cont'd)

You must be proud of yourself.

JACKIE

What's that supposed to mean?

PATRICE

I don't know what kind of hold you think you have on my *fiancé*.

Patrice waves the ring in Jackie's face.

PATRICE (CONT'D)

But I don't like it!

She turns to an ELDERLY WOMAN.

PATRICE (CONT'D)

He *defended* her. Can you believe that? And he was *curt* with me!

The Elderly Woman just shrugs.

Patrice turns back to Jackie.

PATRICE (CONT'D)

But let me tell you something; it's not gonna work. So whatever little fantasies you've got going on in that simple little brain of yours, forget it!

JACKIE

Can we please talk about this another time?

PATRICE

Why?

(loudly)

You don't want everybody to know what a wig wearing, fake booty having, conniving little tramp you are? Is that what it is?

Several people gasp.

An ELDERLY MAN spots the crowd and goes up to the Elderly Woman.

ELDERLY MAN

Say, Ida, what's goin' on?

ELDERLY WOMAN

I don't know all the details, but from what I can make of it, that girl's a tramp in a wig.

ELDERLY MAN

Which one?

She points to Jackie.

ELDERLY WOMAN

And she's got a fake behind.

He looks at Jackie's butt.

ELDERLY MAN

It looks real to me.

ELDERLY WOMAN

That's what I said.

The Elderly Man shakes his head sadly.

They watch.

JACKIE

(to Patrice)

I think this conversation is over.

Jackie begins to walk away.

Patrice grabs her by the arm but Jackie jerks loose.

Antie Dot gets between them.

PATRICE

This has nothing to do with you.

ANTIE DOT

Like hell it don't.

JACKIE

It's all right, Antie Dot. I've got it.

ANTIE DOT

Well, tag I'm it.

Antie Dot turns to Patrice.

ANTIE DOT (CONT'D)

I've been wantin' to whup your ass since I met you. Don't give me an excuse.

PATRICE

Is that supposed to scare me?

ANTIE DOT

No. This is.

Antie Dot puts up her dukes and shuffles like a boxer.

Patrice scoffs.

PATRICE

Why don't you go over there and
mind your own damn business?

ANTIE DOT

How about I stay right where I am,
and you get to keep your face?

ELDERLY MAN

(to Elderly Woman)
Sounds like a deal I'd take.

Antie Dot bobs and weaves.

PATRICE

I don't have time for this.

Patrice looks at Jackie.

PATRICE (CONT'D)

This isn't over.

She limps away.

ANTIE DOT

Yeah! You better run!

She turns to Jackie.

ANTIE DOT (CONT'D)

Are you all right?

JACKIE

Yes. And you didn't have to do
that, Antie Dot. I can stand up for
myself.

ANTIE DOT

I know that. But you're too sweet to have somebody talk to you that way. I just got upset, that's all.

JACKIE

I think I should just leave.

ANTIE DOT

Why? Don't let that thing run you out of here! That's what she wants! If anybody goes, it should be her crazy behind.

JACKIE

Thanks, Antie Dot.

Antie Dot doesn't say anything for a while.

ANTIE DOT

Say, Jackie?

JACKIE

Yeah?

ANTIE DOT

Is that true what she said?

JACKIE

About what?

ANTIE DOT

You wearin' a wig.

Jackie nods.

ANTIE DOT (Cont'd)

I can't believe it. You pulled one over on me. *Me*. Good ole Dotty-Dot. What about the fake behind?

JACKIE

Not so true.

Antie Dot smirks like she doesn't believe her.

ANTIE DOT
Right. Whatever you say.

INT. CHURCH BATHROOM - DAY

Patrice washes her hands.

A woman, KAREN, 30s, stands next to her, doing the same.

Karen seems to recognize Patrice. She stares at her for a moment.

KAREN
Excuse me.

PATRICE
What?

KAREN
Don't I know you from somewhere?

PATRICE
I don't know. I know lots of people.

Karen dries her hands.

KAREN
Did you ever drive a black Lincoln?

PATRICE
I may have. Why?

KAREN
You look familiar. Did you have a little brown dog that liked to do his business anywhere he pleased?

Patrice seems to realize this woman may be after something.

PATRICE
No. I never had a dog.

KAREN

Does the name Percy Roberts ring a bell?

PATRICE

Never heard of him. Now, if you'll excuse me, I'll be moving along.

She tries to leave the restroom but Karen blocks her.

Karen glares at Patrice.

KAREN

I know who you are.

PATRICE

Excuse me?

KAREN

Don't play dumb with me you no count money-hungry wench! I should scratch your eyes out for what you did to poor Mr. Percy!

PATRICE

I don't know what you're talking about!

KAREN

Sure you don't. How do you sleep at night?

PATRICE

In Chanel sheets! What's it to you?

KAREN

God as my witness, I will not rest until you get what you deserve. You'll see! How would you like it if someone took advantage of you?

PATRICE

I have no idea what you're talking about.

Patrice spins around on her heels and storms off.

Karen stands there fuming.

IN THE STALL

Mary listens. She covers her mouth.

She reaches for the toilet paper and realizes the roll is empty.

Her eyes flood with terror.

EXT. CHURCH BATHROOM DAY

Mary and Jackie stand near the bathroom door.

JACKIE

So what did you do?

MARY

Dripped dry.

JACKIE

Not that! Did you talk to her?

MARY

I didn't get a chance. Look; that's her right there. I recognize those cheap shoes.

They watch Karen walk towards the church exit.

Jackie follows her.

JACKIE

Excuse me. Ma'am?

Karen turns around.

KAREN

Yes?

JACKIE

Can I ask you something?

KAREN

Sure.

JACKIE

That woman you were just arguing with in the restroom--what did she do?

Karen takes Jackie by the arm and guides her to where they'll have more privacy.

KAREN

You mean that leech? I get mad just thinking about it!

JACKIE

What happened?

KAREN

She took advantage of someone very dear to me in the worst way possible. A neighbor of mine. Sweet Mr. Percy.

JACKIE

How?

KAREN

Broke his heart. We all told him she was just after his money, but all he saw was a pretty face and a smile. She even *proposed* to him!

Jackie puts a hand over her mouth.

KAREN (Cont'd)

He accepted, of course, and after a while, he was spending all of his money on *her*. Well, one night, he went home and everything was gone. She cleaned him *out*, you hear me? Didn't even leave the man a towel.

JACKIE

You're kidding!

KAREN

Nope. We found out later it's what she does; proposes to men, cleans them out, then dumps them. She's a gold digger.

JACKIE

And you're sure it was Patrice?

KAREN

Who?

JACKIE

Patrice.

KAREN

No. This woman went by Desiree. Desiree La'More. That's her over there in the red shirt.

Karen points to the opposite end of the Church Hall.

It's Patrice.

JACKIE

I'm sorry, I didn't get your name.

KAREN

Karen.

JACKIE

Karen, I'm Jackie. Now, I can't say this for sure, but I think she's trying to do it again.

KAREN

Someone you know?

JACKIE

Yeah.

KAREN

Unbelievable. That woman has got to be stopped.

INT. PERCY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

PERCY, 90s, sits on the couch between Jackie and Karen.

He coughs uncontrollably.

Pictures of him and Patrice are splayed out on the coffee table.

PERCY

And this is the engagement announcement.

He shows Jackie a newspaper clipping.

Jackie looks like she can't believe what she's seeing.

PERCY (Cont'd)

And you say she's engaged to a friend of yours?

JACKIE

Yeah.

PERCY

Better tell that boy to run. I'm surprised I still got my teeth. You know that girl didn't even leave me a pair of drawers?

JACKIE
I'm so sorry, Mr. Percy.

PERCY
That's all right. God don't sleep.
She'll get hers.

KAREN
(to Jackie)
What are you gonna do?

JACKIE
I have no choice. I have to tell
him.

She picks up the newspaper clipping and looks at Percy.

JACKIE (Cont'd)
Do you think I can borrow this?
I'll bring it back.

He shrugs.

PERCY
Take all of it. I got no use for
it. But can you do me a favor? When
you see Desiree?

JACKIE
Sure.

PERCY
Slap her for me, would you? And not
no regular slap; I want you to cock
back with all your might and hit
her so hard her mama feels it,
okay?

JACKIE
Mr. Percy, I don't know if I can do
that.

PERCY
At least promise me you'll try.

Jackie thinks about it.

JACKIE

Okay. I'll see what I can do.

INT. MARY'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mary and Antie Dot sit at the table, drinking coffee.

ANTIE DOT

I was gonna make some butter beans today.

MARY

Yeah? Why didn't you?

ANTIE DOT

My pot's missin'.

Mary looks shocked.

MARY

Really? I wonder what in the world happened to it.

She eyes Mary suspiciously.

ANTIE DOT

Yeah. Me too.

They both look up as Jackie walks into the room with an envelope.

She looks as though something heavy is on her mind.

MARY

What's wrong?

Jackie puts the envelope on the table.

Mary and Antie Dot look through it.

LATER

ANTIE DOT

I don't think you should be the one to tell him, Jackie. Let me do it.

JACKIE

Why?

ANTIE DOT

Because I'm related to him. Might be through my husband, God rest him, but at least he won't end up resentin' me.

MARY

She's right. He might think you're doin' it for selfish reasons.

JACKIE

What selfish reasons?

Antie Dot and Mary both give her a look: *Don't play stupid.*

JACKIE (Cont'd)

Look, regardless of how I feel about him, I'm doing this because I don't want to see him hurt. My feelings have nothing to do with it.

MARY

I don't know, Jackie. This might turn out bad. It could ruin your friendship.

JACKIE

I'm telling you; everything is gonna be just fine. Trust me. I know what I'm doing.

EXT. MICHAEL'S YARD - DAY

It's a beautiful morning.

Jackie, clad in all black Ninja attire, skulks around Michael's yard with a mysterious package.

She hears a noise.

She dives behind a bush.

She crawls on her belly, army style.

She gets to the welcome mat and slides the package on top of it.

She rings Michael's doorbell then runs behind a tree.

A few seconds later, Michael comes to the door. He looks around and seems confused.

He's about to close the door when he notices the package.

He picks it up.

Jackie leans against the tree and notices the blue bird's nest.

She doesn't think anything of it until a bird starts flying around her head.

She tries to shoo it away, but it keeps squawking and pecking at her wig.

Michael looks in the direction of the noise, then back at the package.

He opens it and looks inside.

The bird pecks and pecks at Jackie's wig until it pecks it right off her head.

Jackie screams.

Michael looks up.

The bird flies away with the wig.

Jackie runs after it.

Michael squints.

Jackie's hair sticks straight up.

MICHAEL
Jackie? Is that you?

EXT. STREET - DAY

Jackie runs after the bird in vain.

A dog joins the chase.

The bird drops the wig and before Jackie can get it, the dog does.

JACKIE
Aw, come on!

The dog runs off down the street.

Jackie chases the dog for a few seconds and then gives up.

EXT. MICHAEL'S YARD - DAY

Jackie walks into the yard panting heavily.

Michael looks at her.

JACKIE
I can explain. Just let me catch my breath.

He holds up the package.

MICHAEL
What is this?

JACKIE
I'm sorry. I was gonna tell you.
It's about Patrice.

MICHAEL

I can see that. Where did you get it?

JACKIE

From Mr. Percy.

MICHAEL

Who is he?

JACKIE

A victim.

Michael looks confused.

JACKIE

He's an elderly man who got duped by Patrice. She called herself Desiree La'more, proposed to him, and then cleaned him out; took his money, everything in his house, and left him with nothing.

MICHAEL

You spoke to him?

JACKIE

Yeah.

MICHAEL

When?

JACKIE

Yesterday. A woman at rehearsal blasted Patrice about it, and then the woman told me. She took me to Mr. Percy's and that's how I got the stuff. I'm sorry you had to find out this way, but I just don't want her to do the same thing to you. She's a con artist, Michael. It's what she does.

MICHAEL

I don't believe that.

JACKIE

You think I'm lying to you?

MICHAEL

I don't know what to believe. I come out here, find this anonymous package, and then I catch you sneaking around my yard like some kind of ninja.

JACKIE

I was gonna tell you it was me who left it. Just not today.

MICHAEL

When?

JACKIE

When the time was right. I didn't wanna tell you right away because you would think I was doing it because of how I feel about you, and not just out of the goodness of my heart.

MICHAEL

So you were gonna just leave this here and pretend like you didn't have anything to do with it? Something like this? I'm surprised, Jackie. I never knew you to be a liar.

JACKIE

I'm not a liar!

He looks at her hair.

JACKIE (Cont'd)

That's different!

MICHAEL

How?

JACKIE

It just is!

MICHAEL

You know what? Patrice may be a lot of things, but one thing I know she's not is a liar. I can trust her.

JACKIE

You can trust me, too!

MICHAEL

I'm not so sure about that.

Jackie's eyes began to tear up.

MICHAEL

I thought we were friends.

JACKIE

We are!

MICHAEL

No. Friends don't do this kind of thing. Not like this.

He walks back into his house.

Jackie just stands there, dejected.

As she's walking away, Patrice parks in the driveway.

She looks as though she's going to have a heart attack when she sees Jackie.

She gets out of the car and into Jackie's face.

PATRICE

And what the hell are you doing here?

JACKIE

None of your business.

Jackie walks away but seems to remember something.

She turns back around.

JACKIE (Cont'd)

Oh. And I talked to Mr. Percy. He asked me to give you a message.

PATRICE

What message?

Jackie rears back as though she's going to slap Patrice.

PATRICE (Cont'd)

You wouldn't dare.

Patrice scoffs and turns around.

Jackie slaps her on the behind.

JACKIE

Have a wonderful day.

Jackie walks away.

Patrice watches, completely miffed.

INT. MICHAEL'S LIVING - DAY

Michael has pictures spread out on his coffee table.

He appears to be in deep thought.

Patrice limps into the room, steaming mad.

She throws her purse on the sofa.

PATRICE

Do you know what that miserable little urchin just did?

MICHAEL

What?

PATRICE

She *spanked* me! Of all the things!
I've had enough of that girl.
Either you get rid of her, or I
will.

Michael doesn't say anything.

PATRICE

Did you hear me?

Michael still doesn't respond.

PATRICE (Cont'd)

I said did you hear me?

MICHAEL

I heard you the first time,
Desiree.

Patrice seems taken aback. She looks over her shoulder as though Michael may be talking to somebody else.

She walks over to him hesitantly, and when she sees what's on the table, she covers her mouth.

PATRICE

Where did you get this?

MICHAEL

Does it matter?

Patrice thinks about it.

PATRICE

It was that bitch, wasn't it? What
did she tell you?

Michael doesn't say anything.

Patrice gets on her knees and grabs both of Michael's hands.

PATRICE (Cont'd)

I swear, Michael, it's not what you think. It was a long time ago. I've changed, baby, I swear. Please say you believe me.

MICHAEL

Why would you do this to somebody? An innocent old man?

PATRICE

It was my life back then. But when I met you, everything changed. I've become a better person because of you. You've got to believe that.

Michael doesn't say anything.

PATRICE

Don't you?

Michael looks into her eyes.

MICHAEL

Of course, I believe you.

Patrice exhales and cries tears of joy.

PATRICE

I love you so much! We're gonna get married and put all of this behind us and I'm gonna make you so happy and cook anything you like! Oh, *Michael!*

She jumps into his arms.

PATRICE (Cont'd)

I'm so happy!

She kisses him over and over.

MICHAEL

Patrice, can I ask you something?

PATRICE

Of course, baby. What is it?

MICHAEL

If I told you right now that I was broke, would you still marry me?

Patrice's tears dry quick.

PATRICE

What exactly do you mean by broke? Like no summer house in the Hampton's broke, or having to eat dinner at Denny's broke?

MICHAEL

Dinner at Denny's.

Patrice fans herself.

PATRICE

Well, if we had to eat at Denny's occasionally, like once every two or three years, I wouldn't mind very much.

MICHAEL

Patrice?

PATRICE

Yes, darling?

MICHAEL

I have a confession to make.

Patrice looks confused.

MICHAEL

I wasn't completely honest with you when we met.

PATRICE

How do you mean?

MICHAEL

I exaggerated about some things.

PATRICE

Like?

PATRICE (Cont'd)

My job. I'm not exactly an executive like I told you I was.

PATRICE (Cont'd)

What do you do?

MICHAEL

I'm an errand boy.

Patrice chokes.

MICHAEL (Cont'd)

I get coffee, donuts, stuff like that. But there's plenty of room for upward movement. The guy who had the job before me, he works in the mail room now.

Patrice chokes again.

PATRICE

I see. And your 401 K? Did you exaggerate about that too?

MICHAEL

No.

Patrice seems relieved.

MICHAEL (Cont'd)

I flat out lied about that.

PATRICE

And your car? This house?

MICHAEL

All mama's.

Michael wipes imaginary sweat off of his brow.
He grabs Patrice's hand and kisses her forehead.

MICHAEL (Cont'd)

In a way, I'm glad this happened.
Because now, we can start our
marriage with no secrets.

PATRICE

Right. No secrets. Darling, would
you be a dear and fix me a Vodka
straight?

MICHAEL

Sure. Just a sec.

Michael walks towards the kitchen.

Patrice waits until he's out of the room and gathers her
stuff and skulks toward the door.

Michael catches her.

MICHAEL (Cont'd)

Patrice.

She turns around.

MICHAEL (Cont'd)

Where are you going?

She doesn't say anything.

MICHAEL (Cont'd)

It's true, isn't it? You were only
gonna use me and take everything I
had.

PATRICE

So?

MICHAEL

You didn't love me at all?

PATRICE

Love is overrated, Michael. Don't
flatter yourself.

MICHAEL

If you had thought for one second that I didn't have any money, you wouldn't have given me the time of day, would you?

PATRICE

And if I was fat and ugly, would you have given me the time of day?

Michael doesn't say anything.

PATRICE (Cont'd)

So how am I the villain here? You don't love me either.

MICHAEL

Of course I love you.

Patrice seems to be at a loss for words.

MICHAEL (Cont'd)

But love isn't enough.

PATRICE

What's that supposed to mean?

MICHAEL

I can't love someone that I can't trust.

PATRICE

Whatever. I'm out of here.

She walks towards the door.

MICHAEL

Patrice!

Her head whips around.

MICHAEL

I have another confession to make.

PATRICE

What?

MICHAEL

I'm not broke. This house, my car,
all *mine*. My job: six figures.

PATRICE

You, your house, your car, and your
pitiful six figures can all kiss my
ass.

MICHAEL

What ass?

She glares at him and storms off.

He slams the door and goes back to sit on the sofa. He
sighs as though he doesn't know what he's going to do next.

There's a knock on the door.

He gets up to open it.

It's Terry. He looks at Michael like he's not sure if he
should come inside or not.

MICHAEL (Cont'd)

What?

TERRY

I just saw Patrice. I told her
hello and she told me a few choice
things about you, me, and my mama.
What happened?

Michael exhales and walks back towards the sofa.
Terry follows him.

Michael shows him the stuff from the package.

Terry looks through it.

LATER

TERRY (Cont'd)

I knew there was somethin' about that girl. I just couldn't put my finger on it.

MICHAEL

How do you mean?

TERRY

Just a gut feeling. Like she was always pretending to be someone she wasn't. Like Lisa, remember? When she tried to pin those twins on you?

MICHAEL

Why didn't you say anything?

TERRY

Because they weren't my babies.

MICHAEL

I mean about Patrice!

TERRY

Because I know you.

MICHAEL

What's that supposed to mean?

TERRY

You see one good thing in a person and it'll blot out all the bad.

MICHAEL

That's not true.

TERRY

Shittin' me. What else was so good about Patrice besides the fact that she was pretty?

MICHAEL

She knew what she wanted in life.

TERRY

Yeah. Your money and everybody else's.

Michael sighs.

TERRY (Cont'd)

And sometimes, you see one bad thing in a person and it blots out all the good.

MICHAEL

What are you gettin' at?

TERRY

Jackie. So what she was being sneaky? She did you a favor. What if you had ended up *married* to Patrice?

Michael doesn't say anything.

TERRY (Cont'd)

Instead of being mad at Jackie, you need to get down on your knees and thank God for her ass.

Michael looks at him.

TERRY (Cont'd)

I mean her loyalty.

Michael just shakes his head.

INT. WIG SHOP - DAY

Jackie rushes into the shop with her hair all over the place.

Shirley scowls when she sees her.

SHIRLEY

We're closed.

JACKIE

Please, Shirley. I'm sorry about the other night. I need a wig. I'm in a wedding today and I can't show up looking like this! Please?

SHIRLEY

Sorry. There's nothin' I can do.

JACKIE

But the sign says you don't close for another hour!

SHIRLEY

That sign is lyin', sugar. We're closin' early.

JACKIE

Why?

SHIRLEY

Cause I hate cotton candy. Now have a good day.

Heartbroken, Jackie leaves the shop.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jackie sits on the sofa crying with her face in her hands.

Mary and Antie Dot watch.

ANTIE DOT

Don't cry, Jackie.

JACKIE

I can't show up looking like this! What will people say?

MARY

That girl's never seen a comb and brush in her life, but her dress sure is pretty.

This makes Jackie cry even harder.

ANTIE DOT

Look, Jackie, why don't you let Kaserra do your hair?

JACKIE

Is she licensed?

ANTIE DOT

No, but she does hair in her kitchen and she's got lots of business. If you want, I can call and see if she can squeeze you in. I'll tell her you're my niece. She'll do it for almost nothin'.

JACKIE

I don't know, Antie Dot.

ANTIE DOT

The wedding's at six, Jackie. What choice do you have?

INT. KASERRA'S KITCHEN DAY

KASERRA, 30s, pokes and prods at Jackie's hair.

KASERRA

Girl, I'm gonna hook you up.

JACKIE

You promise?

KASERRA

Promises are made to be broken. I *guarantee*.

The two share a laugh.

Jackie seems relieved.

Two adorable toddlers, BREE-BREE, 2, and SHAY-SHAY-, 3, run around the kitchen squirting chocolate syrup at each other.

KASERRA (Cont'd)

Bree-Bree! Shay-Shay! Do you want me to tell your daddy you've been bad today?

They both stop in their tracks.

KASERRA (Cont'd)

Um hmm. Just what I thought. Now why don't you go in the front and watch cartoons till Mama's done? Okay?

They both smile. They hold hands and go in the other room. Kaserra and Jackie laugh.

JACKIE

They're so cute.

KASERRA

Don't let 'em fool you, girl. They're a handful. Now, what kind of style would you like?

JACKIE

I don't know. I was thinking simple, but elegant. It's for a wedding.

KASERRA

I was thinkin' somethin' retro--you know, short, but crinkly, sexy and sassy. What do you think?

JACKIE

You're the pro. Let's do it.

LATER

Kaserra puts the finishing touches on Jackie's hair. (We can't see it).

KASERRA

Ooooh! Girl this is nice!

She takes a can of oil sheen and sprays it.

JACKIE

Can I see it?

KASERRA

Almost.

She fusses with it for a few seconds more.

KASERRA (Cont'd)

Voila!

She hands Jackie a mirror.

Jackie looks into it and finds that her hair is completely fried.

JACKIE

It's...*fried*.

Kaserra backs up like she's afraid.

KASERRA

No it ain't.

JACKIE

It's *fried*!

KASERRA

No it ain't!

JACKIE

Yes it is! It would have looked better if I had just stuck my head in a socket! Do you expect me to go anywhere looking like this?

KASERRA

Is that a rhetorical question?

Jackie gives her a don't mess with me look.

KASERRA (Cont'd)

I guess this means you don't like it.

JACKIE

I don't *like* the mole on my butt!
This hair I absolutely *detest*!

KASERRA

Well, you don't have to get fussy!
I was only trying to do you a
favor! Hmph!

JACKIE

No offense, but I'm sure Bree-Bree
and Shay-Shay could have done a
better job.

Kaserra starts crying.

JACKIE (Cont'd)

I didn't mean to make you cry. It's
just that I've had one hell of a
day. Look, I'm sorry. Here.

Jackie pays her.

Kaserra looks at the money and frowns.

KASERRA

What? No tip?

JACKIE

Tip?

Jackie looks at her incredulously.

JACKIE (Cont'd)

Yeah. Keep God first.

She gets her stuff and storms out as Kaserra watches.

Jackie sticks her head back into the room.

JACKIE (Cont'd)
And stop doing hair!

Kaserra stands there upset with her arms folded.

INT. JACKIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Mary and Antie Dot walk in and find Jackie curled up in the bed.

MARY
What's wrong?

Jackie sits up.

ANTIE DOT
It's not that bad.

Jackie makes a face.

ANTIE DOT
Okay, it *is*.

MARY
Don't listen to her, Jackie.

ANTIE DOT
And why shouldn't she listen to me?

MARY
'Cause you're not helpin'!

ANTIE DOT
Neither is the light!

JACKIE
Stop it!

Antie Dot and Mary both look at Jackie.

JACKIE (Cont'd)

I've had enough of you two and all of this bickering! Look at you! At each other's throats, and for what? A butter bean pot? You should be ashamed! Worrying about yourselves when you should be thinking about me! Now apologize!

Antie Dot sighs.

ANTIE DOT

Sorry, Mary.

MARY

You mean that?

ANTIE DOT

Yeah. I've been doin' some thinkin' about this whole pot thing, and I've figured it out.

MARY

What?

ANTIE DOT

I'm gonna buy you one.

MARY

Really?

ANTIE DOT

Yeah. Since mine mysteriously disappeared, I'll just buy you one when I get mine. Since you're too cheap to buy it yourself.

Mary gets teary-eyed.

MARY

I don't know what to say.

They hug.

MARY (Cont'd)
On second thought, I do.

Mary reaches under the bed and pulls out a pot.

MARY (Cont'd)
I guess you can have this back.

ANTIE DOT
Mary!

MARY
What?

ANTIE DOT
How could you?

MARY
Serves you right, you butter bean
bastard. Maybe next time, you'll be
more open to sharing.

Jackie clears her throat.

JACKIE
This is real cute and all, but can
we please figure out what to do
with this train wreck on my head?

ANTIE DOT
Honey, that head needs Jesus.

Jackie gives Antie Dot a look.

ANTIE DOT (Cont'd)
I'm just sayin'. What did she do to
you? Shock therapy?

JACKIE
That probably would have turned out
better. Hell, a blow torch would
have been better.

ANTIE DOT

Well, thank God your hair turned out so bad. I was actually gonna let her do *my* hair.

Jackie glares at Antie Dot.

JACKIE

You'd never gone to her before?

ANTIE DOT

Hell, no. She ain't licensed. What I look like? Boo-Boo, the fool?

JACKIE

Great. Just great. My hair looks like a hot mess, Michael's so pissed at me we'll never speak again. This day just keeps getting better.

MARY

Just don't let him see your hair like that. You might scare him away for good.

JACKIE

He's never going to see my hair. Nobody will. Because I'm not going to that stupid wedding! So there!

Jackie has a tantrum on the bed.

MARY

Why not?

JACKIE

Because I look like Little Orphan Jackie!

ANTIE DOT

I don't see the damn big deal! So what you look like Don King's stepchild? None of that matters!

Mary goes over to Jackie and puts her arms around her.

MARY

She's right, Jackie; you're gonna go to that weddin', and sure people are gonna point! Sure people are gonna laugh! Sure people are gonna ask you to put on a hat! But it doesn't matter, and you know why?

JACKIE

Why?

MARY

Because you're beautiful, inside and out!

JACKIE

Really?

MARY

You're related to me, silly! And I don't have no ugly grand children. Except for Patrick.

Jackie and Antie Dot nod in agreement.

Jackie gets up and looks into a mirror.

She puts her face as close to it as she can and examines her features.

Her face lights up.

She looks back at Antie Dot and Mary.

JACKIE

I'm stunning!

Antie Dot rolls her eyes.

MARY

Yeah. You, me, and Cleopatra. Now,
come on. Let's see if we can get
this hair into a scarf or somethin.

JACKIE

What if we can't?

MARY

I'll pretend I don't know you.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Everyone is dressed up and looks spectacular.

A PHOTOGRAPHER takes pictures.

Michael looks glum.

Ruth walks up to him.

RUTH

Are you okay?

MICHAEL

I guess.

Ruth sighs.

RUTH

I'm sorry.

MICHAEL

For what?

RUTH

I shouldn't have tried to pressure
you into marrying Patrice. I was
wrong. I just wanted everyone to
know you weren't gay. Can you ever
forgive me?

MICHAEL

Of course, Ma.

Jackie walks by and people gasp. She holds her head high.

MICHAEL (Cont'd)

Excuse me for a sec.

Michael jogs over to Jackie.

He taps her on the shoulder.

Jackie turns around.

MICHAEL (Cont'd)

Hey.

JACKIE

Oh? So we're friends again?

Michael sighs.

MICHAEL

Jackie, I'm sorry for what I said earlier. I was just shocked and confused, and if I said anything that hurt your feelings, I apologize. You forgive me?

JACKIE

I guess.

Neither says anything for a while.

MICHAEL

You look nice.

JACKIE

Please.

MICHAEL

What? You lose your wig and all of a sudden all your super powers are gone?

Jackie smiles.

MICHAEL (Cont'd)

This look really works for you.
Scary-chique. I dig it.

JACKIE

Very funny.

MICHAEL

You don't like it?

JACKIE

I hate it.

MICHAEL

Well, I'm sorry my bird stole your
wig. I'll buy you a new one.

JACKIE

No, thank you.

MICHAEL

What was the whole deal with that
anyway? Why was it supposed to be
some big secret?

JACKIE

Because you almost swallowed your
tongue when you saw me the first
time.

MICHAEL

I did not!

JACKIE

Yes you did! And I thought; 'Wow;
he's never looked at me like *that*
before!' And I liked it. And I
thought if you saw me without it
you wouldn't look at me the same.
So I lied. And I'm not sorry about
it! So there!

Jackie folds her arms.

Michael laughs.

JACKIE

Besides, every woman's got her beauty secrets. And I sure as hell won't apologize for mine.

MICHAEL

I wouldn't ask you to apologize for your wig anymore than I would ask you to apologize for your butt pads.

JACKIE

What butt pads?

Michael smirks.

MICHAEL

Right. Whatever you say.

JACKIE

But I don't wear butt pads!

MICHAEL

Sure, Jackie. But take my mom, for example.

JACKIE

What about her?

MICHAEL

Between you and me, that's a wig she wears.

JACKIE

You're kidding!

MICHAEL

Nope. She's got a ton of 'em. But she'd kill me if she knew I told you. So you didn't hear it from me.

Jackie zips her lips.

They both don't say anything for a while.

JACKIE
Where's Patrice?

Michael shrugs.

MICHAEL
I don't know.

JACKIE
She didn't come with you?

Michael shakes his head.

JACKIE (Cont'd)
Are things over between you two?

MICHAEL
Yeah.

JACKIE
Good. Because I have a confession
to make.

MICHAEL
What?

JACKIE
I didn't give you the dirt on
Patrice for totally unselfish
reasons.

MICHAEL
Wait--let me guess: you were hopin'
that I'd find out, dump Patrice,
come runnin' to you, end of story?

JACKIE
Yes.

MICHAEL
Sounds like a pretty good ending.

Jackie smiles.

They stand there gazing at each other.

Michael extends his hand.

Jackie takes it.

He pulls her in for a nice, long hug.

NEAR THE CHURCH STEPS

Antie Dot, Mary, Ruth, and Terry all watch, smiling.

RUTH

Should I tell them they're gonna miss the ceremony?

TERRY

You could, but I don't think they'd hear you.

Mary pulls the condoms out of her purse.

MARY

Should I give her these now or later?

ANTIE DOT

Why don't you wait until after the reception?

MARY

Good idea.

She puts them back into her purse.

They all go inside the church.

Jackie and Michael still embrace.

FADE OUT: