

CLAIRE...

TRUVY. Ouiser! Call your dog! He'll listen to you!

SHELBY. Miss Ouiser! Please! It's my wedding day. Say something to your dog!

OUISER. *(Flings open the door and screams:)* Kill, Rhett! Kill!
(Everyone rushes out the door.)

CURTAIN.

SCENE II

It is later in the year. The Saturday before Christmas, to be exact. Not much in the shop has changed. Only half of the lights are on in the shop. When the lights eventually come back on, we see the subtle changes. The radio Shelby has given Truvy, a small but festive Christmas tree, and several grotesque handicrafts. At curtain, M'Lynn is sitting under a dead hairdryer. Shelby enters, mystified by the lack of light and the lack of activity.

START

M'LYNN. Shelby!

SHELBY. Mama? Where is everybody?

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

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

M'LYNN. What a treat!

SHELBY. And you have to catch them early. On Saturdays they leave the house at the crack of dawn to start hunting furry little creatures.

M'LYNN. You must not have visited long.

SHELBY. We didn't. I could tell they were anxious to start killing things. We stopped by the house first. Nobody was there. Where's Truvy?

M'LYNN. She and Annelle are out back sticking pennies in the fuse box. They decorated that little tree and when I plugged it in all the lights blew.

SHELBY. (*Pointing to a pair of tacky earrings.*) What are those things?

M'LYNN. Red plastic poinsettia earrings. They are a gift from Annelle. She has discovered the wonderful world of Arts and Crafts.

SHELBY. Are Tommy and Jonathan home yet?

M'LYNN. Yes. Jonathan got home yesterday morning. He loves his classes. It's all he can talk about. I think the main thing architecture school has taught him is how much he should hate his parents' house. Tommy arrived last night and immediately started terrorizing your father. It's nice having the family home for Christmas.

SHELBY. Some things never change.

M'LYNN. And how are you, honey?

SHELBY. I'm so good, Mama. Just great.

M'LYNN. You're looking well. Is Jackson at the house?

SHELBY. No. You know how twitchy he gets. I sent him to look for stocking stuffers.

M'LYNN. Good thinking.

SHELBY. Uh. Jackson and I have something to tell you. We wanted to tell you when you and Daddy were together, but you're never together, so it's every man for himself. I'm pregnant.

M'LYNN. Shelby?!

SHELBY. I'm going to have a baby.

M'LYNN. I realize that.

SHELBY.

M'LYNN

SHELBY.

M'LYNN

SHELBY.

too much

M'LYNN

SHELBY

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next week

M'LYNN

SHELBY

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M'LYNN

SHELBY

SHELBY. Well...is that it? Is that all you're going to say?

M'LYNN. I...what do you expect me to say?

SHELBY. Something along the lines of congratulations.

M'LYNN. ...Congratulations.

SHELBY. Would it be too much to ask for a little excitement? Not too much, I wouldn't want you to break a sweat or anything.

M'LYNN. I'm in a state of shock! I didn't think...

SHELBY. In June. Oh, Mama. You have to help me plan. We're going to get a new house. Jackson and I are going house hunting next week. Jackson loves to hunt for anything.

M'LYNN. What does Jackson say about this?

SHELBY. Oh. He's very excited. He says he doesn't care whether it's a boy or girl...but I know he really wants a son so bad he can taste it. He's so cute about the whole thing. It's all he can talk about... Jackson Latcherie Junior.

M'LYNN. But does he ever listen? I mean when doctors and specialists give you advice. I know you never listen, but does he? I guess since he doesn't have to carry the baby, it doesn't really concern him.

SHELBY. Mama. Don't be mad. I couldn't bear it if you were. It's Christmas.

M'LYNN. I'm not mad, Shelby. This is just...hard. I thought that... I don't know.

SHELBY. Mama. I want a child. *end*

M'LYNN. But what about the adoption proceedings? You have filed so many applications.

SHELBY. Mama. It didn't take us long to see the handwriting on the wall. No judge is going to give a baby to someone with my medical track record. Jackson even put out some feelers about buying one.

M'LYNN. People do it all the time.

SHELBY. Listen to me. I want a child of my own. I think it would help things a lot.