

CHARACTERS

TRUVY JONES, owner of the beauty shop; 40ish

ANNELLE DUPUY-DESOTO, beauty shop assistant; 19

CLAIREE BELCHER, widow of former mayor, grande dame; 66ish

SHELBY EATENTON-LATCHERIE, prettiest girl in town; 25

M'LYNN EATENTON, Shelby's mother, socially prominent career woman; 50ish

OUISER (pronounced "Weezer") **BOUDREAUX**, wealthy curmudgeon, acerbic but lovable; 66ish

Note: The women in this play are witty, intelligent, and above all, real characters. They in no way, shape or form are meant to be portrayed as cartoons or caricatures.

ACT I

Scene One

A beauty shop in Chinquapin, Louisiana. April.

When the curtain rises, ANNELLE is spraying TRUVY's hair with more hairspray than necessary.

There are the sounds of gunshots and a dog barking.

ANNELLE Oops! I see a hole.

TRUVY I was hoping you'd catch that.

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

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

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

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

ANNELLE *(overcome)* Oh!

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

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

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

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

TRUVY Honey, there's so much static electricity in here I pick up everything except boys and money. *(She points ANNELLE towards the kitchen)* Be a treasure.

ANNELLE *exits into the kitchen.*

TRUVY *immediately starts redoing her hair-do.*

Annelle? This is the most successful shop in town. Wanna know why?

ANNELLE *(offstage)* Why?

TRUVY Because I have a strict philosophy that I have stuck to for fifteen years... "There is no such thing as natural beauty." That's why I've never lost a client to the Kut and Kurl or the Beauty Box. And remember! My ladies get only the best. Do not scrimp on anything. Feel free to use as much hairspray as you want.

ANNELLE *returns with a tray of coffee. The sound of gunshots make her jump, but she recovers.*

Just shove that stuff to one side, it goes right there. *(Pointing out the room)* Manicure station here...

ANNELLE There's no such thing as natural beauty...

TRUVY Remember that, or we're all out of a job. Just look at me, Annelle. It takes some effort to look like this.

ANNELLE I can see that. How many ladies do we have this morning?

TRUVY I restrict myself to the ladies of the neighbourhood on Saturday mornings. Normally that would be just three, but today we've got Shelby Eatenton. She's not a regular, she's

the daughter of a regular. I have to do something special with her hair. She's getting married this afternoon. Now. How long have you been here in town?

ANNELLE A few weeks...

TRUVY New in town! It must be exciting being in a new place. I wouldn't know. I've lived here all my life.

ANNELLE It's a little scary.

TRUVY I can imagine. Well...tell me things about yourself.

ANNELLE There's nothing to tell. I live here. I've got a job now. That's it. Could I borrow a few of these back issues of *Southern Hair*?

TRUVY Uh...sure. It's essential to keep abreast of the latest styles. I'm glad to see your interest. I get *McCall's*, *Family Circle*, *Glamour*, *Mademoiselle*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, every magazine known to man. You must live close by. Within walking distance, I mean. I didn't see a car.

ANNELLE My car's... I don't have a car. I've been staying across the river at Robeline's Boarding House.

TRUVY That's quite a walk. Ruth Robeline...now there's a story. She's a twisted, troubled soul. Her life has been an experiment in terror. Husband killed in World War Two. Her son was killed in Vietnam. I have to tell you, when it comes to suffering, she's right up there with Elizabeth Taylor.

ANNELLE I had no idea.

There is a loud gunshot and barking.

Is that a gunshot?

TRUVY Yes, dear. I believe it is. Plug in the hotplate, please.

ANNELLE But why is someone firing a gun in a nice neighbourhood like this?

TRUVY It's a long story. It has to do with Shelby's wedding and her father.