

**CLAIREE, OUISER, TRUVY,
SHELBY, ANNELLE**

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

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

TRUVY. 'Morning, Ouiser!

OUISER. What's so funny?

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

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

CLAIREE. Since when do you have track lighting?

OUISER. About three weeks. It's in my foyer and up the stairs. It was my grandson's idea.

SHELBY. I haven't seen him in ages. How is he?

OUISER. Steve's fine. I brought you all some tomatoes. First of the season. I didn't expect to see you in town, Shelby.

SHELBY. Well, I'm here.

OUISER. Take some tomatoes back home with you. There's plenty. Boy! Your hair's short. Looks good!

SHELBY. Thank you, Miss Ouiser. Jack Jr. loves tomatoes . . . he smears them on the cafe curtains in the kitchen.

TRUVY. Your mama says you have become an incredible gourmet cook.

SHELBY. I try. When we first married all Jackson wanted was meat and potatoes and vegetables just the way his mama made them . . . cooked to mush. But I've broken him of that. I even got some pâté down him last week. He swore it was dog food. Jack Jr. loved it, though.

OUISER. Clairee. How many tomatoes do you want? Tomatoes have no calories and are full of . . . *(She throws away a wormy rotten one.)* . . . things.

CLAIREE. Ouiser, you're almost chipper today. Why are you in such a good mood? Did you run over a small child or something?

OUISER. Do you or do you not want tomatoes?

CLAIREE. Don't give me all of 'em.

OUISER. Somebody's got to take them. I hate 'em. I try not to eat healthy food if I can help it. The sooner this body wears out the better off I'll be. I have trouble getting enough grease into my diet.

ANNELLE. Then why do you grow them?

OUISER. I am an old Southern woman. We're supposed to put on funny looking hats and ugly old dresses and grow vegetables in the dirt. Don't ask me why. I don't make the rules.

CLAIREE. You should get some gloves. Your hands look like a couple of T-bone steaks.

SHELBY. Health is the most important thing, Miss Ouiser. Trust me on this.

OUISER. And. While I have everyone's attention. This morning I went to my mailbox and found that some-one . . . *(Directed at Annelle.)* has put me on the mailing list for the Riverview Baptist Church. Lucky me. I am now receiving chain letters for Christ.