

TRUVY, SHELBY, CLAIREE, ANNELLE

START

getting a trim. I wasn't up to a big debate with her this morning. Now! Truvy! Let's do my nails!

TRUVY. This is a treat! No one around here ever wants a manicure. I don't even know what to charge for a full day of beauty.

SHELBY. I want the works. I want to feel completely pampered today. Mama's gonna want a manicure, too.

TRUVY. I am going to paint my front door red and change my name to Elizabeth Arden.

CLAIREE. Manicures, saucy new hairdos. What's going on?

SHELBY. We're always up to something . . . you know that. (*Changing subject.*) But I want to get back to this Drew and Belle nonsense. I hope they reconcile with Marshall. Speaking as a parent, they better get their act together. I do not approve of friction between parents and children.

CLAIREE. Oh, I think it'll all blow over. I have to admit. He did go about it the wrong way.

TRUVY. What did he do?

CLAIREE. He marched in unexpected from Los Angeles while Drew and Belle were preparing for the annual Marmillion shrimp boil. Marshall without so much as a hello says, "Mama and Daddy. I have something to tell you. I have a brain tumor. I have three months to live." Well, naturally Drew and Belle became hysterical. Then Marshall says, "Hey folks, I'm just kidding. I'm only gay."

SHELBY. That was his idea of breaking the news gently?

CLAIREE. Drew became incredibly distraught and started throwing wet shrimp at him, screaming at him to get out of his sight, so Marshall came to my house, smelling like a can of cat food.

TRUVY. What do you think Drew and Belle are feeling right now?

CLAIREE. I don't know. They just considered themselves to be a model family for so long. First with Nancy Beth dethroned from her Miss Merry Christmas title after that unfortunate motel thing. . . .

SHELBY. What motel thing? I don't live here anymore, remember?

TRUVY. Nancy Beth was discovered in a nearby motel with a high political official.

CLAIREE. They were both high. They'd been smoking everything but their shoes.

TRUVY. To be the only Miss Merry Christmas in history caught with her tinsel down around her knees was a very humiliating experience for the Marmillion family.

SHELBY. How do you feel about Marshall?

CLAIREE. Haven't really thought about it. But I want you to know he's always welcome at my house. I'm very proud of him. He built up that chain of sportswear stores all by himself without a penny of family money. He says, "I am a self-made man. I pulled myself up by my own jockstraps."

TRUVY. He could always turn a phrase. (*Truvy is about to use a bottle of something for Shelby's manicure, but she realizes the bottle is empty. She turns to ask Annelle for some, but Annelle is in silent prayer. Uncomfortable, Truvy waits for Annelle to finish. The others also notice Annelle.*)

ANNELLE. Amen.

TRUVY. Amen. Annelle? I'm out of uh . . . (*Holds up the bottle.*)

ANNELLE. Is it still next to . . . ?

TRUVY. No. It's over the . . .

ANNELLE. O.K. (*Annelle exits.*)

SHELBY. Was she praying?

TRUVY. Yes.

SHELBY. Why?

TRUVY. Got me. Maybe she was praying for Marshall and Drew and Belle. Maybe she was praying for us because we were gossiping. Maybe she was praying because the elastic is shot in her pantyhose. Who knows? She prays at the drop of a hat these days.

SHELBY. How long has she been this way?

TRUVY. Ever since Mardi Gras. She had her choice of going to a Bible weekend with her Sunday School class or to New Orleans with me and two other sinners. She left that Friday a pleasant, well-adjusted young lady and she returned on Tuesday a Christian.

SHELBY. What does her boyfriend say?

TRUVY. Sammy's so confused he doesn't know whether to scratch his watch or wind his butt. He's crazy about her. He says he could deal with another man in her life, but he has

trouble with the father, the son, and the Holy Ghost