

Beauty, Brains and Personality

By Emmett Loverde

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BEAUTY, BRAINS, AND PERSONALITY

By Emmett Loverde

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 women)

- LYNETTE PRICE.....33, an attractive, intelligent woman with a good figure. She is a bit on the tall side. (551 lines)
- BONNIE MARSHALL30, a strikingly beautiful woman who dresses to impress and titillate. (435 lines)
- CANDACE WATERMAN.....24, an attractive blonde girl. (425 lines)

SYNOPSIS: Three girlfriends meet for their monthly dinner party at which one traumatizes the other two by claiming, “Together we make up the perfect woman: you’re the brains, you’re the personality, and I’m the beauty.” Chaos ensues. Six months later the three are separated at a time when they need each other most. One is about to have a baby. One is making career and life changes that include posing for nude photographs right after earning her PhD. The other is struggling to be more than simply “the beauty”...and failing miserably. Ultimately, the three women define themselves and their friendships beyond beauty, brains, and personality. They are women, after all, and reserve the right to change their minds any time they feel like it.

Place: The living room/dining alcove of LYNETTE’S very-cute one-bedroom apartment in the Westwood section of Los Angeles.

Time: The present.

Note: The author suggests that if the play is being performed more than once, and if the actors are willing, that they alternate roles for different performances, perhaps even by drawing character names out of a hat.

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

SCENE: About a quarter to eight on a Friday evening in September. This is the living room/dining alcove of LYNETTE PRICE's very-cute one-bedroom apartment in the Westwood section of Los Angeles. Clearly visible is the front door. A short hallway leads to a bedroom, bathroom, and closet. There is a doorway to a small kitchen.

AT RISE: The stage is empty, but from the hallway LYNETTE can be heard arguing with someone.

LYNETTE: *(Offstage:)* No. No! How can you—what? Don't look at me with those big gorgeous eyes and beg me to untie you! *(Softens:)* Oh, don't cry, honey. You were bad and you must be punished. If you're really good, I may let you sleep with me later. Here—give me a kiss. *(The BARK of a tiny dog is heard.)* Get away from that! I know it's pretty and green and gooey. I know it smells like almonds. I know they're your favorite. I know, honey, but it'll make you sick. *(The doorbell RINGS.)* Stay. Stay... *(LYNETTE emerges from the hallway. She is a very attractive, intelligent woman with a good figure that she dresses to hide, for some unfathomable reason. She is a bit on the tall side.)* Com-ing!

LYNETTE opens the front door to admit BONNIE MARSHALL, a very striking woman of 30. BONNIE dresses to impress and titillate. They hug.

BONNIE: Careful—careful...my face hurts.

LYNETTE: Good heavens—what happened?

BONNIE: I think I'm allergic to my makeup.

LYNETTE: Why don't you take it off?

BONNIE: You want me to go without makeup??

LYNETTE: If your face hurts.

BONNIE: I'll be okay if I don't smile.

LYNETTE: *(A mental note:)* Nothing to make you smile.

BONNIE: Or frown.

LYNETTE: Gotcha.

BONNIE: God, it's like it's on fire!

LYNETTE: Why don't you use my cold cream?

BONNIE: After we take pictures.

LYNETTE: Honey, it's on fire!

BONNIE: No makeup, no pictures.

LYNETTE: We always take pictures! Every month for five years.

BONNIE: And I refuse to ruin this month's.

LYNETTE: I know what you look like without makeup. So does Candy.

BONNIE: I can just see you with your grandkids... (*Mimes showing a scrapbook.*) "And here's us in July...and here's us in August...here's September—" (*Gasps.*) "Grammy, how did that lady suddenly get so *old*?"

LYNETTE: If I ever have kids at all.

BONNIE: I've been putting on less makeup each day but it hurts just as much.

LYNETTE: Wait—how many days has your face been hurting?

BONNIE: Since Monday.

LYNETTE: Have you been to a doctor?

BONNIE: Yeah—he gave me some goop.

LYNETTE: Did it help?

BONNIE: Haven't tried it.

LYNETTE: Why not?

BONNIE: It dries your skin. If I dry out my skin I'll look old!

LYNETTE: But—

BONNIE: I am not going to walk around looking old.

LYNETTE: People do it every day. (*BONNIE glares at her.*) Can I get you anything? Ice?

BONNIE: Just don't make me laugh or smile or frown or wince.

LYNETTE: In other words just be myself.

BONNIE: You're making me laugh!

LYNETTE: God—I've got such great news to tell you two—

BONNIE: Mine's better!

LYNETTE: It couldn't be. I just—

BONNIE: (*Interrupting:*) I just had my third date with this cool guy!

LYNETTE: Third date. Tremendous. Now my news—

BONNIE: He's totally cute, spends money on me like, like he's got a lot of money, and he thinks I'm the best!

LYNETTE: Wait—is this the guy we met at that party last weekend?

BONNIE: Which one?

LYNETTE: The tall one.

BONNIE: No—which party?

LYNETTE: The only one I went to. There was this really tall guy—

BONNIE: Since, unlike you, I am a *normal* height for a female, they were all tall to me.

LYNETTE: No, but the one I met—

BONNIE: Poor thing—you only met one?

LYNETTE: Only one that I liked.

BONNIE: You're so picky. (*Thinks.*) I remember who you're talking about—the photog.

LYNETTE: Was he a photographer? (*Airily:*) Perhaps it said on his card.

BONNIE: He gave you his card? That's so cheesy. I *always* make a man write out his number. He's gotta work for it.

LYNETTE: I thought he was really nice. He came across very... professional.

BONNIE: Professional? Not to *me*. He kept staring at me with bridal lust!

LYNETTE: You mean "unbridled lust"?

BONNIE: Whatever. I almost slapped him.

LYNETTE: (*A tad jealous:*) Fine. So you and he had your third date—

BONNIE: Date? That loser? No way.

LYNETTE: Did he ask for your number?

BONNIE: Of course. Why? Didn't he ask for yours?

LYNETTE: Did you give him your number?

BONNIE: Absolutely not.

LYNETTE: Then why did you flirt with him?

BONNIE: I flirt. (*Shrugs.*) I finally let him give me his little card.

LYNETTE: Did you call him?

BONNIE: Absolutely not. Calling a man makes him think you know he exists.

LYNETTE: Oh. That one seemed nice.

BONNIE: Then you call him.

LYNETTE: He wasn't flirting with me. According to you.

BONNIE: You guys talked for forty-five minutes!

LYNETTE: Forty-eight.

BONNIE: If you count the intro. *I* never do.

LYNETTE: Were you keeping track of us?

BONNIE: I keep track. (*LYNETTE is shocked.*) I want my friends to get laid, too! I'm tired of being the only one.

LYNETTE: You know I'm not about that right now.

BONNIE: Right—study, study, study!

LYNETTE: That's what my news is about! I just finished my dissert—

BONNIE: (*Cutting her off:*) Wait! I haven't finished *my* news!

LYNETTE: Can't let *that* happen.

BONNIE: I just had my third date—

LYNETTE: I know.

BONNIE: You don't know who with!

LYNETTE: Fine. With whom? (*Before BONNIE can speak, the doorbell RINGS.*) Hello-hello!

LYNETTE opens the front door to reveal CANDACE WATERMAN, a very attractive blonde girl of 24.

CANDACE: Hello-hello! (*Hugs LYNETTE.*) Hi, Bon-Bon!

BONNIE: (*Gives CANDACE a perfunctory hug.*) Yes, yes, don't squeeze.

CANDACE: What's the matter?

LYNETTE: Her face is too tight.

BONNIE: (*To CANDACE*) I'm in *agony!*

LYNETTE: (*To CANDACE*) Too much makeup.

BONNIE: Anyway, enough about my tremendous pain. Let's talk about me.

LYNETTE: (*To CANDACE*) Bonnie just had a third date with the same man.

CANDACE: *Congratulations!*

BONNIE: Ow.

CANDACE: No but you just... I mean you always say... Third dates seem so hard for you—

LYNETTE: Ow.

CANDACE: It's not that men don't want to go out with you—

LYNETTE: (*To BONNIE:*) I think she means that you seem easily bored.

CANDACE: (*Correcting her:*) Distracted.

LYNETTE: (*Correcting her:*) Bored.

BONNIE: Like you two never get bored?

LYNETTE: Men don't bore me because I never actually meet any. Candy, on the other hand, has guys all over her constantly—

CANDACE: Not "constantly"!

LYNETTE: —so she probably can't tell one from the next.

CANDACE: (*To LYNETTE:*) Not constantly!

BONNIE: (*To LYNETTE:*) Not *constantly!*

LYNETTE: (*To CANDACE:*) But isn't that why you quit Curvees?

CANDACE: It was interfering with school.

BONNIE: So switch shifts.

CANDACE: You don't make as much on the lunch shift.

LYNETTE: Do weekends.

CANDACE: Okay, yes—I quit because I was sick of guys drooling, trying to cop a feel, asking for my number, and me having to play along to get a nice tip. And I got sick of worrying about my weight.

BONNIE: You do look a little...puffy...

LYNETTE: (*To BONNIE:*) She does not! (*To CANDACE:*) You do not.

CANDACE: Yes I do.

LYNETTE: Just a tad. Maybe. Not even.

CANDACE: (*No thanks:*) Thanks. But, for the record, they did not fire me because of my weight.

BONNIE: Did you slap somebody?

CANDACE: Of course not!

BONNIE: You do that, you know.

CANDACE: I did that *once!* And he deserved it!

BONNIE: (To **LYNETTE:**) And now my brother won't speak to me.

LYNETTE: (To **CANDACE:**) You slapped *her brother??*

CANDACE: (To **LYNETTE:**) Well come on—you met him!

LYNETTE: (Carefully:) He seemed nice...

BONNIE: Don't worry—I slapped him many times.

LYNETTE: Eiw.

BONNIE: Not because he tried to...not because he was...come on, he's my *brother!* (Pouting:) You guys...my *news!*

LYNETTE: So your third date was with neither your brother nor the very handsome photographer from the party.

BONNIE: It's a guy in our office.

CANDACE: Oooh—the one on the twenty-first floor?

BONNIE: I'm so over him.

LYNETTE: Eighteenth floor?

BONNIE: Like kissing Scooby-Doo.

CANDACE: The hunk from the mail room?

BONNIE: Like *I* would do the *mail room.*

LYNETTE: But—

BONNIE: (Cutting her off:) We agreed that never happened.

CANDACE: So who is it?

LYNETTE: Oh no—not your boss!

BONNIE: Close. It's my boss's *partner!*

LYNETTE: Watch the smiling.

CANDACE: A partner...is that good?

LYNETTE: Is he rich enough?

BONNIE: Not quite, but he's cute! For me old fashioned values still count.

LYNETTE: (Unimpressed:) Congratulations. Yay.

BONNIE: Don't think I don't see that cynical sound in your eyes!

LYNETTE: What?

BONNIE: (To **CANDACE:**) She *totally* thinks I'm sleazy!

CANDACE: Well... Do you like this guy?

BONNIE: It's not about that!

LYNETTE: It's not?

CANDACE: Is this the guy you called one night and just announced "Come over—I need sex"?

BONNIE: (To **LYNETTE:**) You told her about that?

CANDACE: Bonnie, *you* called me that night. While he was there! While he was...*there!*

LYNETTE: (To **BONNIE:**) You made a phone call while a guy was..? (Makes a sexual gesture.)

BONNIE: I had a free moment.

LYNETTE: Back to this partner guy. How many times have you slept with him?

BONNIE: (*Counting on fingers:*) Four.

LYNETTE: In *three* dates?

BONNIE: We did it once at the office. Look, we all agree that I'm active...

CANDACE: You're having fun. That's what counts.

BONNIE: I think this guy could be the one. (*No one says anything.*) Wait—back off!

LYNETTE: Nobody said a word!

BONNIE: Exactly.

LYNETTE: Candy pointed out how great it is that you're having fun.

BONNIE: It's not about "having fun"!

LYNETTE: It's not about liking him, it's not about having fun...

BONNIE: It's about my future.

CANDACE: Can we change the subject? I think I have vertigo.

LYNETTE: I think it's contagious. Better change the subject.

BONNIE: Fine. Lynnie, tell her about your little book report thing. See? I was listening.

CANDACE: (*To LYNETTE, delighted:*) You finished your dissertation!

LYNETTE: I wanted to say it myself, but yes! (*They hug.*) Now all I have to do is defend it and I'll have my three letters...

CANDACE: P! H! D!

CANDACE and LYNETTE hug again, giggling.

BONNIE: (*Annoyed:*) Now I'm catching vertigo!

LYNETTE: Do you even know what "vertigo" is?

BONNIE: It's a dance club. Somewhat prior, not quite passé, too soon to be retro.

LYNETTE: "Vertigo" is a sensation of dizziness, almost like spinning around—

BONNIE: Is that what your dissertation is about?

CANDACE: (*To BONNIE:*) No dear, that's what being with you is about.

LYNETTE: —or staring straight downward into an empty abyss of vacuumed nothingness.

CANDACE: (*Impressed:*) Wow. Poetry.

BONNIE: (*To LYNETTE:*) Are you saying I don't vacuum? (*LYNETTE playfully sticks her tongue out at BONNIE.*) My face is burning again...

CANDACE: You guys, we should celebrate! Lynnie's now even more smart than the rest of us, Bonnie's finally held onto a man for more than three dates—

BONNIE: And you lost your job for being too heavy.

CANDACE: I didn't. Lose. My job.

LYNETTE: (*Retreats toward kitchen.*) I have three kinds of dressing!

BONNIE: Hope one's fat-free! (*The other two glare at her, annoyed.*)
I'm watching *my* weight, too.

LYNETTE: Fine. But we aren't.

CANDACE: I'm starving!

LYNETTE: (*Brings out salads and bottles of dressing.*) I have Light Italian, honey-mustard, and strawberry-pistachio.

CANDACE: Oooh—strawberry-pistachio? Is that a recipe?

LYNETTE: It's an accident. But it's not bad.

BONNIE: I'm going to abstain. You two pig out.

LYNETTE: (*Hurt:*) Oh...it's really a neat combination...

BONNIE: I just don't feel like salad.

CANDACE: I'll take hers. I could eat enough for two.

LYNETTE and CANDACE start eating.

LYNETTE: Wait—why don't we take pictures before we eat so Bonnie can take off her makeup?

CANDACE: Yeah! (*Fishes in her purse for a camera.*)

BONNIE: I can wait.

LYNETTE: But you said you were hurting—

BONNIE: I am. But you two enjoy your little salads.

CANDACE: Okay...

LYNETTE: If you're sure.

LYNETTE and CANDACE eat while BONNIE stares at them. A pause.

BONNIE: It kind of feels like sunburn.

CANDACE: Your face?

BONNIE: Yeah. (*LYNETTE and CANDACE eat.*) It's warm and prickly. But if I hold my neck straight and pick a spot on the wall to stare at, I'm fine.

LYNETTE: If that's what you have to do...

LYNETTE and CANDACE try to eat.

BONNIE: But then my neck gets tired.

LYNETTE: Would you like to lie down?

BONNIE: If you have some acid I could just burn all my skin off.

LYNETTE and CANDACE cease chewing.

LYNETTE: I'm not hungry anymore.

BONNIE: No—you guys go ahead.

CANDACE resumes eating voraciously.

CANDACE: I'm so sorry you're not feeling good, honey. (To *LYNETTE:*) This accidental dressing is wonderful!

LYNETTE: Strange combo, but it's got some sass.

CANDACE: Could you make it again if you wanted to?

LYNETTE: I suppose...

BONNIE: Linnie, could I get some ice out of your freezer? And a plastic bag?

LYNETTE: Help yourself, sweetie. (To *CANDACE:*) You think I should write down the recipe?

BONNIE wanders into the kitchen.

CANDACE: Absolutely! It would also make great pie filling!

LYNETTE: Pie filling?

BONNIE: (From kitchen:) Lynette? I don't think your ice is cold enough!

LYNETTE: Blow on it—that cools it off!

CANDACE: (Whispers to *LYNETTE:*) It does?

BONNIE: (From kitchen:) Ow!

LYNETTE: What's wrong, honey?

BONNIE: (From kitchen:) My face hurts when I blow!

CANDACE: I'm not gonna touch that.

LYNETTE: I think the ice is about as cold as it's going to get, Bon.

BONNIE: (From kitchen:) My freezer has colder ice.

CANDACE: Why don't you just stick your whole head in?

LYNETTE: (Whispers to *CANDACE:*) We should ease up.

CANDACE: (To *LYNETTE:*) No—that's what I do on hot days.

LYNETTE resumes eating.

LYNETTE: Pie filling...

CANDACE: Maybe if you made it with jello or pudding.

LYNETTE: I could see that.

BONNIE: (From kitchen, muffled:) I think I'm stuck.

LYNETTE: Stuck how, Bon-Bon?

BONNIE: Stuck to your freezer.

CANDACE: (Dashes into kitchen.) My goodness!

BONNIE: (From kitchen:) Careful... careful...

CANDACE: (From kitchen:) Hold still...

BONNIE: (From kitchen, terrified:) Is that a *steak knife*??

CANDACE: (From kitchen:) Lynette, have you got a straight razor?

BONNIE: (From kitchen:) A wha—OWW!!!

LYNETTE: (Calmly:) Try some warm water on a dish towel, Candy.

A pause.

BONNIE: (From kitchen:) Eek!

CANDACE: *(From kitchen:)* That worked.

LYNETTE: Hey could you check on the chicken?

BONNIE: *(Re-enters with a bag of ice to her face.)* I heard that.

LYNETTE: It's for dinner.

CANDACE: *(Re-enters with plate of chicken.)* Yum-yum-yum!

LYNETTE: *(Serves chicken.)* How many pieces, Bonnie?

BONNIE: I can't eat. I'm in shock.

CANDACE: I'll take one of hers if that's okay.

LYNETTE: No problem. *(Serves CANDACE chicken.)*

CANDACE: *(Sits. To LYNETTE:)* So are you going into private practice or something?

BONNIE: That's not a bad idea. I never thought about it.

LYNETTE: *(To CANDACE:)* That's a ways off, sweetie.

BONNIE: I don't think so.

LYNETTE: Building up a clientele can take years.

BONNIE: Don't be silly. I'll just go through my little black book and tell them, "Boys, I'm afraid from now on it's gonna cost you!"

LYNETTE and CANDACE: *(Together:)* What???

BONNIE: It's not like they haven't offered to pay before.

LYNETTE: What are you talking about?

BONNIE: Going into private practice.

LYNETTE: You?

BONNIE: Me. Of course me. We're talking about me.

CANDACE: We are?

LYNETTE: What would you be practicing privately?

BONNIE: Oh...this and that.

CANDACE: No, *Lynnie's* the one going into private practice!

BONNIE: You? For what?

LYNETTE: Psychology.

BONNIE: Perfect. You and I could team up. Mind and body. A one-stop shop.

LYNETTE: What would you do with our *female* clients?

BONNIE: Outsource 'em.

LYNETTE: Anyway Candy, I don't earn the degree until I get the revisions back from my professor and then I have to defend it—

CANDACE: Defend what? Your dissertation?

LYNETTE: This panel of professors rakes me over the coals for a couple of hours...

BONNIE: Speaking of burning coals, *my face* is burning!

CANDACE: *(To LYNETTE, ignoring CANDACE:)* Do they attack you?

LYNETTE: They try to help me scrape away the B.S.

BONNIE: I sure wish I could scrape the pain off my skin!

CANDACE: When do you graduate?

LYNETTE: December, hopefully. I already bought a whole bunch of graduation invites. If I'm not graduating, my face is going to be—

CANDACE: Don't say it!

BONNIE: If anyone's face is red, it's *mine*!! It's like the sun! And it burns—

CANDACE: (*Pulls out camera.*) I brought my new camera, Bon! (*To LYNETTE:*) Let's just shoot the monthly picture now so she can clean up.

LYNETTE sits next to BONNIE as CANDACE places the camera on a chair and points it at them.

CANDACE: Great! You two stay there and I'll aim this thing. (*Squints through viewfinder.*) Perfect... (*Sets the camera's self-timer.*) I'll set the self-timer...

LYNETTE: How long does this one give you?

CANDACE: About two seconds.

BONNIE: Is that enough?

CANDACE presses the self-timer button, then dashes to join them. The camera FLASHES before she reaches them.

CANDACE: Oops! Try again! (*CANDACE tries again. She gets a little closer, but the FLASH catches her backside.*) Nice picture of my rear. Once more. (*She jumps toward them and the FLASH catches her in mid-air.*)

LYNETTE: Why don't you move the camera closer?

BONNIE: Where's my ice?

LYNETTE: Hold on another moment, hon.

CANDACE moves the camera a few feet closer, presses the button, makes it to her seat...but nothing happens.

CANDACE: (*Checking camera:*) The batteries died.

LYNETTE: (*To BONNIE:*) Now you can take off that god-awful makeup.

BONNIE: You hate my makeup?

LYNETTE: No, but—

BONNIE: (*To CANDACE:*) Do you hate my makeup?

CANDACE: No, but sometimes makeup is not your friend so you need to just hug it and say good-bye.

BONNIE: Omigod—you're in therapy! (*To LYNETTE:*) Did you hear? She just spoke Therapese!

LYNETTE: Why not go wash it off and end the pain?

CANDACE: God, Bonnie—does it really hurt that much?

LYNETTE: Not *her* pain! *My* pain.

BONNIE scampers off to the bathroom.

LYNETTE: Cold cream's under the sink! (To CANDACE:) Are you really in therapy?

CANDACE: Of course not!

LYNETTE: Oh. If you were, there's nothing wrong with that, you know.

CANDACE: Are *you* in therapy?

LYNETTE: No...but if I were that would be okay.

CANDACE: You sound like you're in therapy.

LYNETTE: Why, because I'm addressing my issues and working through my pain without trying to clean up everyone else's side of the street?

CANDACE: You do talk like a bestseller.

LYNETTE: There is a certain amount of therapy that I have to go through to earn a degree, of course. The idea being that a therapist must know what it's like to be *in* therapy.

CANDACE: So you're in therapy.

LYNETTE: Yes but no.

BONNIE: (*Offstage:*) Lynette, your water's too hot!

CANDACE: The cold tap is on the right, hon!

LYNETTE: Just blow on it!

CANDACE: (TO LYNETTE:) I'm in therapy, too.

LYNETTE: You just said—

CANDACE: For my bug issues.

LYNETTE: You have bug issues?

CANDACE: Spiders are okay. Eight legs, no problem. Four legs—I love them. Puppies and kitties. Furry things. "Furry-'n'-four, good so far"—that's my motto. But six legs...

LYNETTE: "Furry-'n'-four, good so far"?

CANDACE: My therapist and I came up with that.

LYNETTE: Is there more to it?

CANDACE: Not yet.

LYNETTE: It doesn't even rhyme.

CANDACE: True, but I've worked through that.

LYNETTE: Instead of working through it, why don't you just find a rhyme?

CANDACE: The rhyme wasn't the issue. The issue was that I'm not good at rhyming things. And I need to face that. And...and I'm facing it.

BONNIE: (*Offstage:*) I turned on the cold water and now the water's too cold!

LYNETTE: Add some hot water, Sweetie!

CANDACE: Sure, I could have gotten a rhyming dictionary or looked on the Internet or something but I needed to try it myself. I had to make a rhyme...and I failed. I failed. *(Smiles wanly.)* But my therapist was there to support me, so I was able to accept my failure and move on.

LYNETTE: And now you're stuck with a sucky rhyme.

CANDACE: The rhyme is good enough.

LYNETTE: You're in therapy for bug issues and bad rhyming?

CANDACE: And failure.

LYNETTE: Everyone fails.

CANDACE: But no one deals with it as badly as me.

LYNETTE: So you're a success at failing.

CANDACE: I couldn't even take our picture! We're never ever going to have a picture for this month all because of me. For the rest of our lives.

BONNIE returns, her face covered with a strange green gel.

LYNETTE: *(To BONNIE:)* Feel better?

BONNIE: No. This stuff hurts!

CANDACE: What is it?

BONNIE: Some face stuff. I found it under the sink. *(To LYNETTE, impressed:)* It smells pricey.

LYNETTE: Smells "pricey"?

BONNIE: Mm-hm. Like almonds.

LYNETTE: Omigod! *(LYNETTE drags BONNIE back toward the bathroom.)*

BONNIE: *(Offstage:)* Dog shampoo???

The sound of water being splashed in a sink. CANDACE gathers up the dinner dishes.

LYNETTE: *(Offstage:)* There's some in your ears, honey—

BONNIE: *(Offstage:)* IN MY EARS???

LYNETTE: *(Offstage:)* When we're done you're going to have a fluffy, shiny coat!

BONNIE: *(Offstage:)* And no fleas?

LYNETTE: *(Offstage:)* It's for worms.

BONNIE: *(Offstage:)* WORMS???

LYNETTE: *(Offstage:)* Just dunk your whole head.

A DUNKING sound. LYNETTE re-enters wiping her hands dry with a towel.

LYNETTE: I think she'll be okay.

CANDACE: Lynette, are you empowered?

LYNETTE: I didn't actually dunk her, Candy—she put her own head under.

CANDACE: I don't mean "Are you powerful?" Are you an empowered woman?

LYNETTE: I don't...uh...I'm embarrassed to say that I don't even know what that is.

CANDACE: You don't?

LYNETTE: I've come across the term a few times, of course, but...

CANDACE: I think you're empowered.

LYNETTE: I survive. I get through the day. I got good grades as a little girl. I'm getting them as a big girl. Banks give me loans. If that's power then I suppose that's me. (*Shrugs.*)

CANDACE: If you're empowered, can you still be sexy?

LYNETTE: Sex appeal is a whole different matter. Then we're no longer talking about me. (*Thinks.*) But isn't sexiness a type of power?

CANDACE: I wouldn't know.

LYNETTE: Not true. You worked at—

CANDACE: I know, I worked at Curvees. Do you even know how I got that job?

LYNETTE: Because you're adorable and sexy and look cute in short-shorts?

CANDACE: Oz.

LYNETTE: The prison TV show? With all those sweaty half-naked convicts pumping iron, taut muscles glistening, the very atmosphere a pressure-cooker of pent-up desire...

CANDACE: Snap out of it. I'm talking about The Wizard.

LYNETTE: What wizard?

CANDACE: Of Oz.

LYNETTE: On the show? Oh—is he the guy with the huge bulging—

CANDACE: Dorothy? Tin Man? Scarecrow? Cowardly Lion?

LYNETTE: Was that from the first season?

CANDACE: *The Wizard of Oz* is an old movie with Judy Garland.

LYNETTE: Oh I think I remember that.

CANDACE: It's the first book in a whole series. Most people only know about the first one but there's a whole bunch more and a lot more wonderful characters like the Patchwork Girl and the Sawhorse and Jack Pumpkinhead and—

LYNETTE: Wasn't that a horror movie?

CANDACE: Oh you're hopeless. You probably read Nancy Drew.

LYNETTE: I watched her TV show. Do you know she posed nude in *Playboy*?

CANDACE: Judy Garland?

LYNETTE: Pamela Sue Martin. She played Nancy Drew on the show. My mom was shocked but I always thought it was cool.

CANDACE: *Anyway...* when the guy was interviewing me he made a reference to some obscure creatures in one of the later Oz books—*Li-Mon-Eags*—

LYNETTE: Li-Mon-whats?

CANDACE: Li-Mon-Eags. They're part lion, part monkey, and part eagle, and their tails have balls of gold at the tips and...

LYNETTE: Did you guys share a joint?

CANDACE: The point is you need to have read the books and I did. Pretty soon we're talking about all sorts of Oz stuff and I tell him that I own an entire set of first editions of the original series and he gets really jealous—

LYNETTE: Jealous because you own some old children's books?

CANDACE: Anyway, we had so much fun during the interview that he said there's no way I'm not hiring you!

LYNETTE: That's the only reason you were hired? Some old books?

CANDACE: Uh-huh.

LYNETTE: And the fact that you're pretty and sexy and have a great personality had nothing to do with it?

CANDACE: Absolutely nothing.

LYNETTE: Okaysure.

CANDACE: You don't understand—the Oz books are like a cult—it's as though I knew the secret handshake or something! He *had* to give me the job!

LYNETTE: He had to. Of course. And the fact that you got hit on twice an hour every time you worked—all those guys liked these old books, too?

CANDACE: Have you ever been inside the restaurant? Of course you haven't, who am I kidding? You stepping inside that place would be a renunciation of every feminist ideal you worship.

LYNETTE: I'm not militant. Am I?

CANDACE: Curvees girls are gorgeous, let's just leave it at that. We all got hit on. Guys just want to be able to say they went out with a Curvees girl.

LYNETTE: Curvees girls are gorgeous, you're a Curvees girl, so you must be gorgeous.

CANDACE: All except me.

LYNETTE: So the other girls got hit on because they're gorgeous, but for you it was only because you happened to work there?

CANDACE: It's just like when I was a cheerleader.

LYNETTE: The only reason you went to four proms your senior year is because you wore the same uniform as the pretty cheerleaders?

CANDACE: Every guy wants to take a cheerleader to the prom.

LYNETTE: Even if she's ugly.

CANDACE: It's the uniform!

LYNETTE: If you were so ugly why did they make you a cheerleader?

CANDACE: My brother was on the football team.

LYNETTE: Making you a cheerleader helped your brother play better football?

CANDACE: And my mom was vice president of the PTA.

LYNETTE: Have you every achieved anything solely on your own merit?

CANDACE: *(Thinks.)* No.

LYNETTE: It's good you're in therapy.

BONNIE enters wearing a bathrobe, slippers, and a towel on her hair.

LYNETTE: Oh lovely—you found my bathrobe.

BONNIE: Also one of your nightgowns. You should get new slippers. I think your dog did something to these.

LYNETTE: Comfy?

BONNIE: My face is still hot.

CANDACE: I'm sure there's nothing in that shampoo that can hurt you, Bon.

BONNIE: It was an honest mistake. It did smell like almonds!

LYNETTE: I know, honey—and the words "Dog Shampoo" on the bottle could have meant anything.

BONNIE: I thought it was a cheapie brand.

LYNETTE: And of course a cheapie brand under *my* sink is no surprise.

BONNIE: You call yourself the "coupon queen"!

LYNETTE: I buy cheap brands but at least I buy things for myself!

BONNIE: I do my own shopping.

LYNETTE: Only when you can't get some poor slob to buy you dinner.

CANDACE: *(Waves a magazine.)* Hey you guys, try this quiz!

BONNIE: What?

CANDACE: It's a quiz!

LYNETTE: We're in the middle of a catfight. Besides, that magazine looks like *Malesmitten*. *(To BONNIE:)* Did you bring that over?

BONNIE: What's wrong with *Malesmitten*?

LYNETTE: Nothing that a lobotomy wouldn't fix.

CANDACE: I brought it. *(Reads:)* "You try everything under the sun to make him stay, yet still his eyes *wander!* Take this simple quiz to find out what you're doing *wrong!*"

LYNETTE: Because *he's* obviously doing nothing wrong.

BONNIE: I don't think *MaleSmitten* is that bad. They've got great dieting tips.

LYNETTE: (*Takes magazine, flips pages, reads:*) “*Malesmitten* magazine is devoted exclusively to urging a woman to make the most of her assets while there’s still time.”

BONNIE: Exactly. What’s the first question?

LYNETTE: (*Reads:*) “Your man cancels a date with you three times in a row. How do you react?”

CANDACE: Uh...assume he’s not interested?

LYNETTE: That’s not a choice. (*Reads:*) “Do you A: Hire an arsonist to erase him from existence?”

CANDACE: (*Frowns.*) That sounds too...

LYNETTE: Expensive? (*Reads:*) “B: Offer to reschedule?”

BONNIE: What’s “C”?

LYNETTE: (*Reads:*) “C: Lather your naked body in whipped cream and appear on his doorstep with a bottle of Dom P. and a box of condoms?” (*To herself:*) Studies show that six out of five *Malesmitten* readers choose “C”.

BONNIE: Let me read.

LYNETTE: I was doing fine.

BONNIE: You’re too sarcastic. (*Takes magazine.*) I can’t tell whether you’re making stuff up or not. (*Reads:*) “Your man says he prefers women with larger breasts. Do you A: Remind him of his own *shortcomings*? B: Secretly switch his glasses for ones that make things appear larger than they are? Or C: Have the operation?”

LYNETTE: Or D: Hire the arsonist.

CANDACE: What operation?

BONNIE: Next question. (*Reads:*) “Your man complains that you’re the wrong sex. Do you A: Get him into therapy for curing homosexuality? B: Get therapy yourself? C: Have the operation?”

CANDACE: A breast enlargement? That would make you *even more* the wrong sex!

LYNETTE: Maybe sex is just wrong.

CANDACE: Speaking of which, I dated a gay man for seven months.

LYNETTE: My god—didn’t you figure it out?

CANDACE: I saw signs. But he knew all these cute little restaurants.

BONNIE: So what happened?

CANDACE: I gained ten pounds.

BONNIE: The cute restaurants gave it away?

CANDACE: No. But when I gained ten pounds and he didn’t mind...

LYNETTE: Tells you something.

CANDACE: My therapist and I concluded that I saw him as a viable partner because he’d never want me.

LYNETTE: Sure. Who’d want a husband who keeps bothering you for sex?

BONNIE: Okay—back to this! (*Reads:*) “Your man announces he’d sooner marry a Shetland pony. Do you A: Let him ride you around the yard a few times? B: Introduce him to some Shetland ponies and wait for him to come to his senses? C: Have the operation?”

CANDACE: Wait—is that really *Malesmitten*?

LYNETTE: Gimme. (*Takes magazine; reads:*) “Your man complains you’re not smart enough. Do you A: Eat more fish, take night classes, and stand on your head? B: Hire a tutor? Or C: Secretly give him a lobotomy?”

CANDACE: It has to be a joke. How is standing on your head going to make you smarter?

BONNIE: Did it really say that lobotomy thing or did you just make that up?

LYNETTE: (*Shows magazine.*) I kid you not.

BONNIE: You talk about lobotomies a lot. Did you have one or something?

LYNETTE: I tried but they only got my tonsils.

CANDACE: Are the tonsils near the lobotomy? (*LYNETTE stares at her in shock.*) Kidding, sweetie.

LYNETTE: How about some dessert? Cookies ‘n’ Cream cheesecake? (*CANDACE squeals in delight.*)

BONNIE: I’m going to take a pass.

CANDACE: You’re passing on *cheesecake*?

BONNIE: I had a big lunch.

CANDACE: (*To LYNETTE:*) Can I have her share?

BONNIE: (*To CANDACE:*) Let me know when you’re ready to go home, Candy—I’ll call the piano movers.

LYNETTE: Have as much as you like, Candy. (*Exits to kitchen.*)

BONNIE: Can we get back to the quiz? I think I’m winning.

CANDACE: It’s just for fun.

BONNIE: I’m good at these things.

LYNETTE: (*Brings in cheesecake and begins serving it.*) No one’s keeping score. How could you be winning?

BONNIE: The stuff you guys are saying.

LYNETTE: Like what?

CANDACE: Come on—it’s just for *fun!*

LYNETTE: I wasn’t having fun.

BONNIE: How can you? You take everything too seriously.

LYNETTE: *You’re* the one who’s trying to win!

CANDACE: (*Reads:*) “Your man wonders how you’d look as a blonde. You A: Wonder how *he’d* look as a pot roast. B: Dye your hair blonde. C: Dye *all* your hair blonde.”

BONNIE: Ooh. (*Shakes head.*) Burns.

LYNETTE: I keep going back to the arson.

BONNIE: See? That's why I'm winning.

LYNETTE: You're not "winning"!

BONNIE: You two aren't even trying. I always pick the best answers.

LYNETTE: What's your answer to this?

BONNIE: Dye it blonde.

LYNETTE: (*Grossed out:*) "C"?

BONNIE: No! "B".

CANDACE: But my hair is already blonde.

BONNIE: Exactly. So your answer is "B" whether you like it or not.

CANDACE: But what if I'm a blonde and he still treats me like a dog?

BONNIE: He won't.

CANDACE: You mean men are currently treating me *well*??

LYNETTE: (*To BONNIE:*) You seem to think blonde hair is simply better.¹

BONNIE: Have you ever tried being blonde?

LYNETTE: Once.

BONNIE: Wasn't it better?

LYNETTE: You mean "did I get laid?"

BONNIE: Duh!

LYNETTE: I don't remember.

CANDACE: If my man wanted me to change my hair color, I'd think "pot roast".

LYNETTE: "My man." "Your man."

BONNIE: Here we go: "Why can't we all be *partners*?"

LYNETTE: It's not that gooey a concept.

CANDACE: I don't know about "partners"—

LYNETTE: Bonnie needs her man to be a *corporate* partner.

BONNIE: (*To LYNETTE:*) Where's *your* partner?

CANDACE: Bonnie don't...

LYNETTE: No, Bonnie, *do*. I have nothing to be ashamed of.

BONNIE: You haven't had a boyfriend since I've known you!

LYNETTE: You think I'm doing something wrong?

BONNIE: Yes.

LYNETTE: What?

BONNIE: That PhD thing.

LYNETTE: And?

BONNIE: Come on!

LYNETTE: Education makes me undatable?

BONNIE: You bring up your degree every chance you get!

LYNETTE: It's been my whole life for three years!

¹ If the actress portraying LYNETTE has hair of a color other than blonde, the lines should be spoken as is. If the actress portraying LYNETTE is blonde then the lines beginning with "Have you ever tried being blonde?" and ending with "I don't remember" should be deleted and in their place should be the following line spoken by BONNIE: "It is—for *most* people."

BONNIE: It's been *ours*, too!

LYNETTE: I don't talk about it that often.

BONNIE: Now I know so much about...whatever it is you study that I could write a desecration of my own!

CANDACE: Let's just go back to the quiz.

LYNETTE: That's what started all this!

BONNIE: Lynnie, don't you want to get married?

LYNETTE: A little bit.

CANDACE: (*Reads:*) "Your man calls you the wrong name during sex. Your reaction: A: You try out your new Home Castration Kit. B: You answer to whatever name he calls you. C: You change your name."

BONNIE: I already know what Lynette would do.

LYNETTE: What I'd do isn't on there.

BONNIE: You'd just shoot him?

LYNETTE: My tears would mess up my aim.

CANDACE: I think you're both taking this too seriously.

LYNETTE: I wish I could be angry at a moment like that, but I already know I'd be devastated.

CANDACE: Omigod...

LYNETTE says nothing.

BONNIE: Oh, did some guy call you by the wrong name? (*No response.*) I had a guy *forget* my name once, but I just laughed at him.

CANDACE: During sex?

BONNIE: Yes—during sex! When else would I bother with names?

LYNETTE: Who was it?

BONNIE: Something foreign...I think. Or he just had bad posture. (*Shrugs.*) It doesn't matter. I only knew him an hour and a half.

LYNETTE: I'm going to vomit.

BONNIE: Like you've never had a one-night-stand?

LYNETTE: Can't we three have a conversation that doesn't involve men?

BONNIE: (*To CANDACE:*) She had a one-night-stand.

LYNETTE: Does that make me more adventurous? More interesting?

BONNIE: Less perfect.

LYNETTE: *You're* the one who's always at the mirror!

CANDACE: Lynette how can you say that?

BONNIE: She's right. I am always at the mirror—to improve! To build on what I already have.

CANDACE: Hey, you two are both beautiful women—

LYNETTE: I hate to tell you this, Candy, but you're the prettiest one of all!

CANDACE: No I'm not!

BONNIE: (*Appalled:*) No she's not!

CANDACE: (*To LYNETTE:*) I mean—thank you—but no I'm not! (*To BONNIE:*) Ow.

BONNIE: (*To CANDACE:*) I didn't mean you're not pretty...

LYNETTE: What *did* you mean?

BONNIE: I just mean she's not the prettiest.

LYNETTE: And you are?

BONNIE: I go out more than you guys.

LYNETTE: Ever work at Curvees?

BONNIE: Is that an accomplishment?

CANDACE: It kind of was for me.

LYNETTE: You have to be cute to work there. Or be from Oz.

BONNIE: I hear that's not all you have to be. (*An ugly silence.*) I'm not saying that she...I didn't mean like she was sleazy or anything.

CANDACE: Where I grew up, Curvees was a family restaurant.

LYNETTE: With girls on roller skates in skin-tight shorts and clingy T-shirts.

CANDACE: Of course, I grew up in Las Vegas.

BONNIE: I hear Curvees has great Buffalo wings.

LYNETTE: We are arguing about which of us is prettier. How stupid is that?

BONNIE: Beauty is important! There's no denying it. Prettier people make more money!

LYNETTE: Ah—another valid yardstick: earning power.

BONNIE: Money equals happiness!

CANDACE: My uncle had money and he was mean.

BONNIE: To be nice you have to have *all* the money. If I can just hold onto this job someday I'll be *very* nice.

LYNETTE: Bon, what's your company called?

BONNIE: Barking Parrot.

LYNETTE: Barking Parrot. What do they do?

BONNIE: Uh...development.

CANDACE: Of what?

BONNIE: Properties.

CANDACE: Real estate?

BONNIE: Some. I think.

LYNETTE: Real estate? Really? You never mentioned that before.

CANDACE: I thought your company did stuff for the movies or something.

BONNIE: Oh, they develop *literary* properties. TV shows and stuff. I think.

LYNETTE: They write scripts?

BONNIE: They don't write them—they *develop* them. I think.

CANDACE: Bonnie, what do *you* do?

BONNIE: (*Proudly:*) I'm an Executive Assistant.

LYNETTE: What do the executives do that you assist?

BONNIE: They come to the office every day and fax things and send letters out and make phone calls...office stuff. I help them. I'm very busy.

LYNETTE: What are the letters about? And the phone calls? And the faxes?

BONNIE: Development.

LYNETTE: Are you planning to become an executive there some day?

BONNIE: I don't know.

CANDACE: Don't you want to?

BONNIE: I don't care. (*Thinks.*) Wait—I know what we do! We develop *film!*

LYNETTE: Right—the movies.

BONNIE: No—not films. *Film!* We actually *develop* actual *film!* With chemicals! Our motto is "We develop your *film properly*," not "your *film property!*" (*Claps.*)

CANDACE: Honey, that's so great!

BONNIE: This might help me do my job better.

CANDACE: (*Suddenly clutches her mouth as though about to vomit and bolts toward the bathroom.*) Omigod!

Sounds of CANDACE throwing up offstage. LYNETTE and BONNIE stare at each other. WATER RUNNING offstage. LYNETTE dashes offstage to assist CANDACE. She and CANDACE wobble back in moments later.

BONNIE: Should we lay out a tarp or something?

CANDACE: No, I feel ten times better! (*Thinks.*) Five. (*Thinks.*) One-point-seven-five...

LYNETTE: Can I get you anything? Water?

CANDACE: I'll be fine in a second. (*Sits and catches her breath.*)

LYNETTE rubs CANDACE'S shoulders comfortingly. Finally BONNIE can wait no longer.

BONNIE: Now back to me. I'm an Executive Assistant and I'm really sick of people calling me a "secretary"! I'm totally *not* a secretary!

LYNETTE: Can we focus on Candy for a bit, Bon-Bon?

BONNIE: I can do that. (*Pause.*) So. Candy. Your weight.

LYNETTE: Bonnie!

BONNIE: (*To LYNETTE:*) It's not about *me*.

LYNETTE: But no one wants to talk about their weight! Anyway there's nothing wrong with her weight!

BONNIE: She just said she got fired because of it!

LYNETTE: No she didn't! (To **CANDACE:**) Did you get fired?

CANDACE: I quit...

LYNETTE: (To **BONNIE:**) See? (To **CANDACE:**) Why?

CANDACE: Because of my weight.

BONNIE: (To **CANDACE:**) Well don't worry—I found this great new diet—

LYNETTE: There is nothing wrong with her weight!

CANDACE: (Little smile.) There will be.

LYNETTE: Omigod—you're pregnant!

BONNIE: She's not pregnant, silly. She just has an eating disorder.

(To **CANDACE:**) I know this great therapist—

CANDACE: (Happy:) No, you guys—I'm pregnant!

BONNIE: Pregnant? Nobody gets pregnant anymore.

LYNETTE: Who's the father?

CANDACE: The father?

LYNETTE: Usually there is one.

CANDACE: Usually...

BONNIE: (To **LYNETTE:**) Oh, give her a break. Obviously she forgot.

CANDACE: I didn't forget!

BONNIE: Have you at least narrowed it down?

CANDACE: Eiw!

LYNETTE: But who is it?

BONNIE: Someone we know? Is he cute?

CANDACE: You guys—

LYNETTE: My god—he's married!

BONNIE: (To **LYNETTE:**) What's wrong with a married man?

LYNETTE: Wait a minute...was this a result of...R-A-P-E?

CANDACE: My god, I wasn't raped! I'm just pregnant!

BONNIE: I know, honey—I'm so sorry!

CANDACE: Sorry? It cost me a bunch of money!

BONNIE: And you're *still* pregnant? You should have gone to *my* abortionist—

LYNETTE: It's a test-tube baby!

CANDACE: It will be. Hopefully.

BONNIE: You got insinuated?

CANDACE: What are you trying to say?

LYNETTE: *Inseminated*. I hear that's expensive.

CANDACE: Tell me about it. I was saving up since forever.

BONNIE: You went to a sperm bank?? You know what kind of perverts go to those places??

LYNETTE: Yes, healthy, genetically-ideal, college-educated, in-need-of-extra-money perverts. I hear some of them are actually homo sapiens and there's even a few practicing heterosexuals!

BONNIE: (To CANDACE:) You want one of those fathering your baby??

LYNETTE: (To CANDACE:) It occurs to me that there are cheaper ways.

CANDACE: No. I'm not going to ask a guy to do that. There'd have to be more. And right now I really want a baby. I don't think it would be fair of me to date a guy while I'm so baby-crazy.

LYNETTE: (With difficulty:) I think it's wonderful.

CANDACE: You do?

BONNIE: (Disgusted:) You do?

LYNETTE: (To BONNIE:) Don't you?

CANDACE: I haven't been meeting any men lately—any decent men—and I was watching some dreams that I've been nursing all my life just dwindle down to...nothing. And one of the dreams was to be a mommy.

LYNETTE: I know a little about that.

CANDACE: I'm not that good a waitress. Not that good a girlfriend. I doubt I'd be a good wife. Maybe I'll be good with kids.

BONNIE: You sound like a country song. Buy a dog.

LYNETTE: (To CANDACE:) When are you due?

CANDACE: Not for six months.

BONNIE: Six months to live. You'd better make the most of it.

LYNETTE: That's hardly any time to get stuff ready!

CANDACE: It's practically ready now.

LYNETTE: Crib and diaper pail and bottle warmer and everything?

CANDACE: My sister's had four so she gave me all her paraphernalia.

LYNETTE: We have to throw you a shower, honey!

CANDACE: Please don't. That would make me really uncomfortable.

LYNETTE: We gotta celebrate!

CANDACE: People won't understand. They'll just feel sorry for me.

BONNIE: I sure feel sorry for you.

LYNETTE: (To CANDACE:) They're jealous.

BONNIE: No jealousy here.

CANDACE: I know what *jealous* looks like. I go by myself to the fertility clinic and look around at all these anxious couples, all hoping... Do you know people make me offers?

LYNETTE: On your *baby*??

CANDACE: (Nods.) Uh-huh. Or they want me to be their surrogate or something. Meanwhile my relatives are all pulling out shotguns. "Where is that bastard??" I tell them I'm doing it on my own and they think I'm covering for somebody or I'm just insane!

BONNIE: Maybe we could put on the invitation "Please note that this baby is actually *wanted*."

LYNETTE: That's not a bad idea.

CANDACE: I don't want a shower. Who am I to get a shower and have people buy me baby things that I can't buy for myself because I spent all my money on *sperm*?

BONNIE: You should have asked me. I could have gotten you all you wanted for free. Or at least for cheap.

CANDACE: Baby things?

In response, LYNETTE shakes her head.

BONNIE: Well, your life is over.

LYNETTE: Bonnie...

BONNIE: (*To CANDACE:*) No more free time. Forget about having a penny to spend on yourself ever again. Men won't get near you...

CANDACE: You think I haven't thought of all that?

BONNIE: Are you ready for it?

CANDACE: No.

LYNETTE: Will you be?

BONNIE: In six months?

CANDACE: Probably not.

LYNETTE: Then what business do you have doing it?

CANDACE: None! It's not a business! A baby's not an investment! If I waited till I was financially and emotionally ready to have one, I'd never do it!

LYNETTE: The world has enough neglected children...

CANDACE: Do you really think I would neglect my own child?

BONNIE: I sure would.

LYNETTE and CANDACE both gape at BONNIE.

BONNIE: You two are making way too much out of this. Candy, the way I see it, your problem is financial. You either need to find a fantastic job that pays enough for you to stick the kid with a nurse or find a man who'll do that for you. Of course there is one way to cut your losses—maybe even make a profit.

LYNETTE: Put it up for adoption?

BONNIE: I bet you could get back what you paid for the sperm.

LYNETTE: (*To CANDACE:*) I just think your attitude is a little haphazard, that's all.

CANDACE: Haphazard?? I've been wishing and hoping and planning and scrimping and saving for three years!

BONNIE: Why didn't you just poke a hole in a rubber?

LYNETTE: Why didn't you just get married?

CANDACE: No. You two are not going to do this. You are not going to make me feel bad about it. This is a good decision, and...and I'm going to have a good baby! (*Thinks.*) Did I say that right?

LYNETTE: (*Hugs her.*) Oooh—you're so adorable!

Feeling a little left out, BONNIE joins the hug.

BONNIE: I could babysit. (*Shock from the other two.*) What? I know how to babysit.

LYNETTE: (*To CANDACE:*) Keep her walking around while I call 911.

BONNIE: Of course Friday, Saturday, or Sunday nights are out of the question.

LYNETTE: (*To CANDACE:*) She's coming out of it.

BONNIE: (*To LYNETTE:*) I don't hear *you* offering to babysit!

LYNETTE: I...could...

CANDACE: Really? You two want to do that for me? (*LYNETTE and BONNIE nod.*) Thank you so much!

BONNIE: I think the three of us could raise a child better than any couple.

LYNETTE: (*To CANDACE:*) Whoa—I'm just offering to babysit!

BONNIE: I mean the three of us contradict each other pretty well.

LYNETTE: No we don't!

CANDACE: You mean we *complement* each other?

BONNIE: Don't go overboard.

CANDACE: Each of our strengths fills in a weakness of the others?

BONNIE: I just mean together we make a pretty good woman.

LYNETTE: Separately we make good women.

BONNIE: But together—the three of us—make the *ideal* woman!

LYNETTE: Why does it take three?

CANDACE: I think I get what she means. We're sort of like the witches in *MacBeth*—

BONNIE: I don't see foreign films. Anyway, what's ideal about a witch?

CANDACE: They're strong, smart, in control of their own destiny...

BONNIE: The perfect woman has three things—beauty, brains, and personality.

CANDACE: Are those "ideal"?

LYNETTE: There's only three?

BONNIE: Between us we have all three.

CANDACE: Honey, that's so sweet!

LYNETTE: We do have a lot of fun together.

BONNIE: Lynette is the brains, Candy's the personality, and I'm the beauty! (*You couldn't even carve through the tension with a chainsaw.*) Don't you think?

CANDACE: Linnie, you need help with the dishes?

LYNETTE: (*To CANDACE, while staring at BONNIE in shock.*) I'm sorry, what?

CANDACE: Dishes? Or maybe your dog needs walking?

LYNETTE: Dog?

CANDACE: How about I just run to the store for cigarettes?

LYNETTE: Don't leave me alone with her.

BONNIE: It's not like I'm saying something bad! Come on! Candy has personality! Everybody loves her! And you—your school thing! You're all smart! And me...I get a lot of attention.

LYNETTE: Candy gets attention. I get attention.

BONNIE: I mean *from men*.

CANDACE: Maybe we should change the subject.

LYNETTE: I'm just so upset I don't know what say.

BONNIE: You're too sensitive.

CANDACE: You don't really mean all this, do you, Bon-Bon?

BONNIE: Sure I do.

LYNETTE: It's like a monkey playing with dynamite.

BONNIE: It's a compliment!

LYNETTE: That you think you're prettier than us? That's a compliment?

BONNIE: No, that I think *you're* smarter than us! And Candy's got more personality! Than us.

LYNETTE: But you don't care about brains or personality.

BONNIE: I clearly don't need them. But where would you two be?

LYNETTE: "Need them" to what?

BONNIE: I don't know. Get a guy?

LYNETTE: But you said men don't want me because I'm too educated and they won't want her because she's got a baby.

BONNIE: You'll find someone. You both will. Some day. I'm sure of it.

LYNETTE: *You're* only on your third date.

BONNIE: So we're all works-in-progress. I'm just farther along.

LYNETTE: Farther along *The Road To A Man*? A man would make us *The Perfect Woman*?

BONNIE: Not just any man! Don't try to tell me a man wouldn't make you feel more complete.

LYNETTE: All your men don't complete *you*!

BONNIE: I know, I know. I'm just saying I'm *closer* to completion. You know you're both looking for men. And right now you are simply making yourselves into the type of women you think your ideal men want.

CANDACE: I'm just living my life!

BONNIE: You're looking for a guy who wants children. What better way to find him than to show him a baby and see what he does? This way you'll have a baby right there whenever you need one. *(To LYNETTE:)* You want a smart guy. Where else are you going to meet him but at a college for smart people?

LYNETTE: I go to school to learn, not meet smart guys. I'd like a decent man...at some point. He doesn't have to be smart.

BONNIE: Then why didn't you marry that one from the hardware store?

LYNETTE: I didn't want to!

BONNIE: Because he only worked in a hardware store!

LYNETTE: Because he styled his hair with a toilet brush!

CANDACE: The bristles *are* stiffer.

LYNETTE: (*To BONNIE:*) What kind of man do *you* want?

BONNIE: Rich.

LYNETTE: Then why do you pursue gorgeous men?

BONNIE: The gorgeous are more likely to be rich. Ask Darwin.

CANDACE: I actually heard that on the news.

BONNIE: And of course more of us are famous, too.

LYNETTE: "Us"? "Us" gorgeous people?

BONNIE: Okay, *we* gorgeous people. Satisfied?

LYNETTE: Not till you apologize.

BONNIE: For what?

CANDACE: Saying we're ugly.

The yapping of a dog is heard offstage.

LYNETTE: Oh—I forgot to feed Prince. This isn't over! (*Runs toward bedroom.*)

BONNIE: I'm not even going to comment on the fact that her dog is named "Prince".

CANDACE gathers up her things to leave.

BONNIE: What are you doing?

CANDACE: I'm going to go.

BONNIE: But I haven't even told you guys what happened on my date!

CANDACE: I need to go.

BONNIE: She'll be right back—can you hold on a second?

CANDACE: Yeah...no. (*Opens front door.*) Tell her I'm sorry. I just...I need to go. Tell her to call me later. (*Exits.*)

LYNETTE: (*Re-enters.*) He was starving, poor thing. Where's Candy?

BONNIE: She left. What did you say to her?

LYNETTE: Was she upset?

BONNIE: Very.

LYNETTE: Did she say why?

BONNIE: She just wanted to leave before you got back.

LYNETTE: Oh God, she's furious at me! Should I call her?

BONNIE: I don't know if that's a good idea. You can be really harsh sometimes. (*Gathers her clothing and purse.*) I think I'm going to call it a night, too.

LYNETTE: I feel like I ruined the party!

BONNIE: Well...when you say something like "I'm so upset I don't know what to say," that does put a damper on it. (*Exits.*)

LYNETTE closes the door after her, disappointed, as the curtain falls.

End of Act One

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