

SAMUEL FRENCH SAMPLE PERUSAL

This sample is an excerpt - an appetiser, if you will - from a full Samuel French title.

This sample is just for you to try out, and it can't be used for performance, downloaded, printed or distributed in any way.

Take it for a whirl and see if it tickles your fancy!

For more information about licensing this or other shows, or to browse thousands more plays and theatre books to buy please visit our website.

www.samuelfrench.co.uk
or, in the US www.samuelfrench.com

STEEL MAGNOLIAS

A Play

by Robert Harling

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

samuelfrench.co.uk

Copyright © 1987 by Robert Harling
All Rights Reserved

STEEL MAGNOLIAS is fully protected under the copyright laws of the British Commonwealth, including Canada, the United States of America, and all other countries of the Copyright Union. All rights, including professional and amateur stage productions, recitation, lecturing, public reading, motion picture, radio broadcasting, television and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

ISBN 978-0-573-13010-6

www.samuelfrench.co.uk

www.samuelfrench.com

FOR AMATEUR PRODUCTION ENQUIRIES

UNITED KINGDOM AND WORLD
EXCLUDING NORTH AMERICA

plays@samuelfrench.co.uk

020 7255 4302/01

Each title is subject to availability from Samuel French,
depending upon country of performance.

CAUTION: Professional and amateur producers are hereby warned that *STEEL MAGNOLIAS* is subject to a licensing fee. Publication of this play does not imply availability for performance. Both amateurs and professionals considering a production are strongly advised to apply to the appropriate agent before starting rehearsals, advertising, or booking a theatre. A licensing fee must be paid whether the title is presented for charity or gain and whether or not admission is charged.

The professional rights in this play are controlled by Samuel French Ltd, 24-32 Stephenson Way, London NW1 2HD.

No one shall make any changes in this title for the purpose of production. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means, now known or yet to be invented, including mechanical, electronic, photocopying, recording, videotaping, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher. No one shall upload this title, or part of this title, to any social media websites.

The right of Robert Harling to be identified as author of this work has been asserted in accordance with Section 77 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

THINKING ABOUT PERFORMING A SHOW?

There are thousands of plays and musicals available to perform from Samuel French right now, and applying for a licence is easier and more affordable than you might think

From classic plays to brand new musicals, from monologues to epic dramas, there are shows for everyone.

Plays and musicals are protected by copyright law, so if you want to perform them, the first thing you'll need is a licence. This simple process helps support the playwright by ensuring they get paid for their work and means that you'll have the documents you need to stage the show in public.

Not all our shows are available to perform all the time, so it's important to check and apply for a licence before you start rehearsals or commit to doing the show.

LEARN MORE & FIND THOUSANDS OF SHOWS

Browse our full range of plays and musicals, and find out more about how to license a show

www.samuel french.co.uk/perform

Talk to the friendly experts in our Licensing team for advice on choosing a show and help with licensing

plays@samuel french.co.uk 020 7387 9373

Acting Editions

BORN TO PERFORM

**Playscripts designed from the ground up
to work the way you do in rehearsal,
performance and study**

Larger, clearer text for easier reading



Wider margins for notes



Performance features such as character and props lists, sound and lighting cues, and more

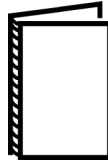


+ CHOOSE A SIZE AND STYLE TO SUIT YOU



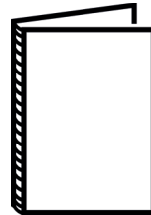
STANDARD EDITION

Our regular
paperback book at
our regular size



SPIRAL-BOUND EDITION

The same size
as the Standard
Edition, but with a
sturdy, easy-to-fold,
easy-to-hold
spiral-bound spine



LARGE EDITION

A4 size and spiral
bound, with larger text
and a blank page for
notes opposite every
page of text – perfect
for technical and
directing use

LEARN MORE

samuelfrench.co.uk/actingeditions

FIND PERFECT PLAYS TO PERFORM AT
www.samuelfrench.co.uk/perform

STEEL MAGNOLIAS

Originally produced on the New York stage by the WPA Theatre (Kyle Renick, Artistic Director) on 22nd March, 1987, with the following cast of actors:

TRUVY	Margo Martindale
ANNELLE	Constance Shulman
CLAIREE	Kate Wilkinson
SHELBY	Blanche Baker
M'LYNN	Rosemary Prinz
OUISER	Mary Fogarty

Directed by Pamela Berlin

First presented in London at the Lyric Theatre, on 7th March, 1989, with the following cast of characters:

TRUVY	Maggie Steed
ANNELLE	Janine Duvitski
CLAIREE	Stephanie Cole
SHELBY	Joely Richardson
M'LYNN	Rosemary Harris
OUISER	Jean Boht

Directed by Julia McKenzie

The action of the play takes place in Truvy's beauty shop in Chinquapin, Louisiana

Time—1980s

ACT I Scene One April
 Scene Two December

ACT II Scene One June, eighteen months later
 Scene Two November

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.

In memory of
Susan Harling Robinson.
Dedicated by her son,
Robert.

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.

More gunfire and barking.

You'll be happier if you just ignore it like the rest of the neighbourhood.

CLAIREE *enters.*

CLAIREE (*entering*) Knock, knock!

TRUVY Morning, Clairee!

CLAIREE Morning, Truvy.

TRUVY I tried to call you and tell you I was running late. No answer.

CLAIREE I was at the high school. I was out at the crack of dawn.

TRUVY Annelle, I want you to meet the former first lady of Chinquapin, Mrs Belcher. Clairee, this is Annelle. She's taking Judy's place.

ANNELLE Pleased to meet you.

CLAIREE I'm a little embarrassed. If I had known I was meeting new people, I would have taken a little more pride in my appearance. I have been at the dedication of our new football field. I am not always this windblown.

TRUVY Annelle. They named the stadium after her late husband... Lloyd Belcher Memorial Coliseum. The team has voted her all sorts of special titles.

CLAIREE I have the pom-poms to prove it. What is your name, dear?

ANNELLE Oh. My married name's Dupuy.

CLAIREE I don't think I know any Dupuys.

ANNELLE I just moved here. I'm originally from Zwolle.

CLAIREE That explains it. Truvy? I thought I brought you those recipes. (*She fumbles with her shirt that has no pockets*)

TRUVY Clairee. The reason I called is, do you mind if I do Shelby first?

CLAIREE That's fine. I'll amuse myself. Shelby's the most important one today.

A gunshot.

That man! I'll swanee... I think the situation is worse than ever.

TRUVY Annelle? We're going to need more towels. They're stacked up next to the washing machine.

ANNELLE *exits.*

CLAIREE Sweet girl. Where'd you find her?

TRUVY She heard I had a position open and she just walked in. I think there's a story here.

CLAIREE What makes you say that?

TRUVY For starters. She's married...but she lives at Ruth Robeline's.

CLAIREE *reacts.*

Alone.

CLAIREE I'd get to the bottom of this, if I were you. You have some nice silverware you'd like to keep.

TRUVY Oh, I'm not worried about that. She's very nice. I just love the idea of hiring someone with a past.

CLAIREE She can't be more than eighteen. She hasn't had time to have a past.

TRUVY Honey. It's the eighties. If you can achieve puberty, you can achieve a past.

ANNELLE *enters, carrying some towels.*

CLAIREE *sips her coffee and grimaces.*

CLAIREE Yuck!

TRUVY, *concerned, takes a sip.*

TRUVY Annelle? How did you make this coffee?

ANNELLE Like you said. I poured hot water through the thing.

TRUVY Where'd you get the water?

ANNELLE It was boiling on the stove.

TRUVY Did you notice the hot dogs in the bottom of the pot?

ANNELLE No.

TRUVY Make some more, please.

ANNELLE I'm so sorry.

CLAIREE Don't worry. I love a good hot dog. Just not with cream and sugar.

ANNELLE *exits.*

TRUVY She's probably not an international spy. But! If she works out, I may let her rent the garage apartment.

CLAIREE I thought the twins were going to live there while they go to the college.

TRUVY Recent developments. Louie's going away to LSU now. And Poot has decided to work for my cousin in Baltimore. He doesn't want to be called Poot anymore. My babies are growing up.

CLAIREE I can't believe your kids are old enough to leave the nest.

TRUVY You know I was a child bride. Well. I look at the bright side. I have some places to visit now. I've always wanted to go to Baltimore. I'm told it's the hair-do capital of the world.

CLAIREE (*finding the recipes in her pocket*) Here they are! I'm so fat I couldn't feel them.

TRUVY The recipes? Let me see... (*She takes the recipe cards and pores over them*)

CLAIREE *reads over her shoulder.*

Um...this sounds delicious.

CLAIREE It is. And the Bisquick makes it so simple. (*She pulls another card*) And this is from my daughter-in-law. She says you can't attend a function in Tickfaw where this is not served.

TRUVY Yum. (*Reading*) Now are these chocolate chips semi-sweet or milk?

CLAIREE Milk.

TRUVY Is the Karo syrup light or dark?

CLAIREE Matter of taste.

TRUVY Where's that other one you were telling me about...
Cuppa, cuppa, cuppa?

CLAIREE That's so easy you don't have to write it down. Cup of flour, cup of sugar, cup of fruit cocktail with the juice. Mix it up and bake at three hundred and fifty 'til gold and bubbly.

TRUVY Sounds awfully rich.

CLAIREE It is. So I serve it over ice-cream to cut the sweetness.
Give me some paper, I'll copy them down for you.

TRUVY (*calling*) Annelle? Get Miss Clairee some paper. I believe there's some stuck on the frigidaire under the crawfish. (*To CLAIREE*) Oh...and here's that article on Princess Di.

There are gunshots and frenzied barking.

Sometimes I wonder if Drum Eatenton's brain gets enough oxygen. That is so annoying.

CLAIREE Try living next door to him.

SHELBY *enters. Her hair is in rollers. She carries a plastic bag and a picture torn out of a magazine. She is a blushing bride in the first stages of completion.*

SHELBY Hi, everybody!

TRUVY There she is! There's my girl! Come break my neck.

SHELBY's fingernails are wet, so she is careful when she hugs.

SHELBY Truvy. It's so good to see you! Morning, Miss Clairee!
It's not that I'm unfriendly, I'm just worried about my nails.

TRUVY What a pretty colour.

SHELBY I hope this doesn't dry too dark. If it's too dark, it will never do. You know the colours are never the same on the bottle.

TRUVY You will always find that to be true.

SHELBY This is drying way too dark. "Practically Pink" my foot!
Truvy? Do you have any of those nail polish remover things?

TRUVY (*handing her some*) Here. Where's your Mama?

SHELBY Right behind me, I thought.

ANNELLE enters with fresh coffee and some papers.

Hi! I'm Shelby Eatenton...soon to be Latcherie.

ANNELLE Hi. I'm Annelle. I'm new.

TRUVY Today's Annelle's first day.

SHELBY Well, Annelle. You're working with the best. Anyone who's anybody gets their hair done at Truvy's.

TRUVY Absolutely.

A loud series of gunshots.

Shelby...uh you know I would walk on my lips to avoid criticizing anyone but your father is about to make us all pull our hair out. And that is bad for my business.

SHELBY Well, he should be finished with his yard work soon.

TRUVY I hope so.

SHELBY You're not the only one concerned. Mama's about to have a fit. She and Daddy are fighting like cats and dogs.

CLAIREE They're just anxious with so much going on.

SHELBY No they're not. They just try to create as much tension as possible in any given situation. It's a creed they live by.

TRUVY You know. I was just reading an article in *Glamour* about tension during family occasions. It seems there can be a lot of stress and trauma. The thing I found most interesting is that stressful times can unleash deep dark hostilities that make your hair fall out.

SHELBY They're fighting about patio furniture. Jackson and I will never fight about silly things. Are you married, Annelle?

ANNELLE (*changing subject*) Oh. I hope that coffee's better.

CLAIREE It smells right.

ANNELLE (*looking at the picture SHELBY brought*) How pretty...

SHELBY Princess Grace...

TRUVY Did you bring me the picture of that hair-do like I asked?

SHELBY Here you go. Study it carefully. (*She pulls out a plastic bag*) Here's the baby's breath.

TRUVY This is so exciting. I feel like I am present at the creation. There is something so wondrous about the way a bride looks. I feel it is beauty in its purest form. (*Studying the picture and the bag of baby's breath*) Where are you going to put this stuff? There's no baby's breath in this picture.

SHELBY You just stick it in. It's meant to frame my face. Baby's breath is part of my whole decoration concept. For a total romantic look. (*She notices CLAIREE's shoes*) Miss Clairee! What cute shoes!

CLAIREE You think so? I'm not so sure. I think they're a little racy for me. I'll probably give them away.

TRUVY Ooo. Those are too cha-cha for words. If you decide to get rid of them, I'll buy 'em from you.

CLAIREE What size do you wear?

TRUVY Well. In a good shoe, I wear a size six, but sevens feel so good, I buy a size eight.

CLAIREE They're eight and a halves.

TRUVY Perfect.

M'LYNN enters carrying a large tote bag.

SHELBY Hi, Mama. Look at Miss Clairee's shoes.

TRUVY Ah, ah, ah! They're mine!

M'LYNN Is this a riddle?

SHELBY Annelle. This is my mama. How're things at the house?

M'LYNN Fine. Ouiser Boudreaux just this second dropped by to talk to your father. One or both of them is probably lying in a pool of blood by now. *(To ANNELLE)* Hello. Did you say Annelle? What a pretty name. Unusual. I'm M'Lynn.

TRUVY How's the mother of the bride?

M'LYNN Don't ask.

TRUVY What's the matter?

M'LYNN Nothing a handful of prescription drugs couldn't take care of.

ANNELLE I'll take this for you. *(She takes M'LYNN's bag)*

M'LYNN Just put it over there, please.

ANNELLE puts it near CLAIREE.

TRUVY Annelle. Why don't you go on and shampoo Mrs Eatenton? These girls have mountains to move today.

M'LYNN Ain't that the truth.

TRUVY Her coiffure card is right on top.

ANNELLE *(looking at the card)* Oh. Piece of cake.

SHELBY Mama. This colour is all wrong. It looks like a stuck pig bled all over my hands.

M'LYNN I'm sure I have something at the house that'll do.

SHELBY But do you have pink?

M'LYNN Of course I have pink.

SHELBY It has to be delicate.

M'LYNN If I don't have something, we'll send one of the boys to get you some delicate pink nail polish.

SHELBY Great idea, Mama. I'd love to see what Tommy'd pick out.

CLAIREE Anything I can do to help out last minute?

M'LYNN You've done plenty, Clairee. I think we've got everything situated. We've just finished borrowing every fern in North Louisiana. The boys got in last night and they're taking care of the odds and ends.

CLAIREE I hope the rain holds off. I'm sorry it's not a prettier day.

SHELBY This is perfect weather for me. I don't function well when it's hot. I love cloudy days. On cloudy days I feel God's not trying very hard, so I don't have to either.

M'LYNN She does sweat profusely.

SHELBY Thank you, Mama.

TRUVY Heat never bothers me. I love it. But spicy foods make me sweat. Especially on the top of my head. My hair gets wet.

The telephone rings.

CLAIREE I'll get it.

M'LYNN I'll bet that's for me. It's probably my mind trying to locate my body.

CLAIREE (*answering*) Hello? ...Yessir, she is. Hold on a minute. M'Lynn. It's your husband.

M'LYNN (*on the phone*) Yes Drum? ...I don't know. I haven't got it. I don't have it. Drum, if you're trying to drive me crazy,

you're too late. For the last time... I don't have it. Ask the boys. Goodbye. (*She hangs up*)

SHELBY What did Daddy want?

M'LYNN Nothing.

TRUVY (*looking at the picture and at SHELBY's hair*) So...we want to sweep it up, but leave some softness around your ears...

M'LYNN Sweep it up?

SHELBY Yes, Mama. Up. Like Princess Grace.

M'LYNN Did you bring Truvy the picture of Jaclyn Smith?

SHELBY No. I brought the picture of Princess Grace. I destroyed the picture of Jaclyn Smith.

M'LYNN But I thought I had made you understand the advantages of the Jaclyn Smith hair-do...

SHELBY No, Mama.

M'LYNN Well. At least I talked her out of that stupid idea of sticking that baby's breath all in her hair.

SHELBY Keep your head in the sink, please.

ANNELLE *accidentally squirts* M'LYNN.

ANNELLE (*bringing M'LYNN up*) I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

M'LYNN That's all right. I find cold water refreshing. It startled me a little, that's all.

CLAIREE Truvy? Could I copy your recipe for strawberry pie?

TRUVY Sure. (*She starts to work on SHELBY's hair*)

CLAIREE *gets the recipe box.*

Your mother doesn't tell us much, Shelby. What's Jackson like?

SHELBY He's pretty swell. I thought he was a pest at first, but then he kind of grew on me. And now I love him.

TRUVY Where'd you meet him?

SHELBY At a party at the Petroleum Club in Shreveport. I had no idea who he was, but I was getting a big kick out of watching him on the dance floor. It was painfully obvious he had never taken the time to dance in front of a mirror. There was something so attractive about how stupid he looked.

TRUVY Is he real romantic?

SHELBY No. But he does give me flowers. And little presents if I bug him enough. He has promised to give me a red rose on every anniversary corresponding to the number of that anniversary. I think that's so sweet.

TRUVY Well, now. That's a pretty romantic idea, isn't it?

SHELBY Yes. I wish it had been his.

CLAIREE Lloyd and I missed it to fifty years by three months. That stinks. Bless his heart. He tried. He just couldn't make it.

SHELBY You remember your wedding?

CLAIREE Of course I do. I remember everything. The flowers, the food. Ouiser was my maid of honour. Shelby, I hope you and Jackson will be as happy as Lloyd and I were. We had such a good time. Until last November...at least he hung on through the state playoffs.

SHELBY Miss Clairee. There are still good times to be had.

CLAIREE Oh sure. But I miss the whirlwind of being a mayor's wife. It's not easy being just one. I don't like going to things by myself. If I go with another couple, I'm a third wheel. If I go with a friend, we're just a couple of old biddies.

SHELBY Somebody like you should be able to find something to occupy your time.

CLAIREE Well. I really do love football. But it's hard to parlay that into a reason to live.

TRUVY Let's just face it, Clairee. You're a woman coming to terms with her grips. You and I are in the same boat. My kids are leaving town and I've got a husband that hasn't moved from in front of the TV set in fifteen years. It's up to us to figure out why we were put on this earth. That's today's sermon. So, Shelby. Are you and Jackson going to live in West Monroe or Monroe proper?

SHELBY Monroe, of course. His law practice is there.

CLAIREE You are so lucky, Shelby. Louisiana lawyers do well whether they want to or not.

SHELBY I don't really care. Don't get me wrong. The money's real nice...but I just like the idea of growing old with somebody. My dream is to get old and sit on the back porch covered with grandchildren and say, "No!" and "Stop that!"

TRUVY Are you going to quit nursing?

SHELBY Never! I love it. I love being around all those babies... Last week we had this poor little fellow, two and a half months premature. He looked like a big rat. I kept talking to him and holding him. But I knew he wasn't going to make it.

TRUVY That's so sad.

SHELBY It happens all the time.

M'LYNN Drum and I feel that Shelby should not work anymore after she gets married.

SHELBY I'm so anxious to discuss this topic for the nine hundredth time this week...

M'LYNN You should not be on your feet all day. You should be kinder to your circulatory system.

SHELBY (*changing subject*) Annelle? I know you're new and all, but don't let that stop you. Anytime you have anything to say, you just let 'er rip.

ANNELLE I don't have anything to say.

TRUVY Well, M'Lynn. It looks like you're ready to roll. I think we can trust Annelle to roll you up, don't you? Do you think you can roll up Mrs Eatenton, Annelle?

ANNELLE I don't know. Today is very special. And my work tends to be too poofy when I'm nervous. Does your dress have to go over your head?

SHELBY You can't screw up her hair. You just tease it and make it look like a blond football helmet.

M'LYNN I must have missed the passage in Emily Post that said all abuse must be heaped on the mother of the bride. Go ahead, Annelle. I'm sure you'll do a beautiful job. It doesn't matter what I look like anyway.

TRUVY Hush girls. Shelby. Tell me things about the wedding. How many bridesmaids?

SHELBY Nine.

TRUVY Good Lord!

SHELBY Exactly.

TRUVY I hope that photographer brings a wide-angle lens.

SHELBY I think it's embarrassing and awful. But Mama made me have my cousins, and Margi St Maurice.

M'LYNN Shelby. There was no way around it and you know it.

SHELBY It will be pretentious. Daddy always says, "An ounce of pretension is worth a pound of manure."

M'LYNN The poet laureate of Dogwood Lane...

SHELBY Mama. I wish you would get off Daddy's back. He gets enough hassle from Miss Ouiser.

TRUVY (*the peacemaker*) What are your colours, Shelby?

SHELBY Blush and bashful.

M'LYNN Her colours are pink and pink.

SHELBY Blush and bashful.

M'LYNN I ask you. How precious is this wedding going to get?

SHELBY My colours are blush and bashful. I have chosen two shades of pink. One is much deeper than the other.

M'LYNN The bridesmaids' dresses are beautiful...

SHELBY And the ceremony will be too. All the walls are banked with sprays of flowers in the two shades of blush and bashful. There's a pink carpet specially laid for the service. And pink silk bunting draped over anything that would stand still.

M'LYNN That sanctuary looks like it's been hosed down with Pepto-Bismol.

SHELBY I like pink.

M'LYNN I tried to talk her into using peaches and cream. That would be so lovely this time of year. All the azaleas in our yard are peach-coloured. Peach is so flattering to every skin tone.

SHELBY No way. Pink is my signature colour.

TRUVY What colour is your dress, M'Lynn?

M'LYNN Peach and cream.

TRUVY Clairee?

CLAIREE Beige lace to the knee.

TRUVY I am wearing a sexy blue chiffon, Shelby. Jackson's gonna take one look at me and leave you behind in the dust.

SHELBY Mama's dress is gorgeous. It cost more than my wedding-dress.

M'LYNN It did not. It was on sale.

SHELBY That's what she told Daddy. What she actually meant is that it was "for sale" not "on sale".

The telephone rings.

TRUVY I'll get it. (*Answering*) Hello... Hi, Janice... Yes, I heard. I know it's an emergency...but today I'm dealing with Shelby...

But tomorrow's Sunday—but... (*Just to get off the phone*)
...Sure, fine...come by after church. (*She hangs up in disgust*)

CLAIREE Truvy, you shouldn't give up your Sundays.

TRUVY Well, you know how neurotic Janice van Meter is about her appearance.

CLAIREE (*to ANNELLE*) Janice is the current mayor's wife. (*Sweetly*) We hate her.

TRUVY Now Shelby...fill me in on the reception.

SHELBY There's going to be ferns and twinkly lights. There'll be magnolias in the pool.

M'LYNN I just hope your father doesn't get any magnolias from Ouiser's side of the tree. We'll never hear the end of it.

SHELBY The wedding-cake will be by the pool. The groom's cake will be hidden in the carport.

M'LYNN Shelby and I agree on one thing.

SHELBY The groom's cake. It's awful! It's in the shape of a giant armadillo.

TRUVY An armadillo?

SHELBY Jackson wanted a cake in the shape of an armadillo. He has an aunt that makes them.

CLAIREE It's unusual.

M'LYNN It's repulsive. It has grey icing. I can't even think of how you would make grey icing.

SHELBY Worse! The cake part is red velvet cake. Blood red! People are going to be hacking into this animal that looks like it's bleeding to death.

M'LYNN The rehearsal supper was an experience.

SHELBY It wasn't that bad. It was out at Jackson's uncle's place on the river.

M'LYNN They served steak and baked potatoes. They went to a lot of trouble.

SHELBY His family loves to barbecue.

M'LYNN For dessert they served an original creation called "Dago" pie. I think that says it all. Jackson is from a good old Southern family with good old Southern values. You either shoot it, stuff it, or marry it.

SHELBY They are simply outdoorsy, that's all.

TRUVY Did you all do anything especially romantic?

SHELBY We drove down to Frenchman's Point and went parking.

M'LYNN Shelby, really.

TRUVY Oh, boy. The romantic part. This is what really melts my butter.

SHELBY Then we went skinnydipping and did things that frightened the fish.

M'LYNN Shelby.

CLAIREE It's been a long time since we've had a youngster in this place, hasn't it?

SHELBY We talked, and talked, and talked...

TRUVY I love those kinds of talks...in the arms of the man you love.

SHELBY Actually we fought most of the time.

TRUVY What?

SHELBY Because I told him I couldn't marry him.

Shock all around.

M'LYNN What?

CLAIREE Why would you go and do a thing like that?

SHELBY It's OK now. We worked it all out.

TRUVY Oh. It was just one of those last-minute jitter things.

SHELBY No. But the wedding's still on.

TRUVY Thank goodness. (*Pointing to SHELBY's hair-style*) 'Cause this is going to be in the hair-do hall of fame.

CLAIREE You scared us, Shelby. That wasn't a nice thing to do to your mama. You should never say something like that to a woman who's marinating fifty pounds of crab claws.

TRUVY Oooo. Making up can be extremely romantic. I'm jealous. I miss romance so much.

CLAIREE Truvy. It can't be that bad.

TRUVY The last romantic thing my husband did was in nineteen seventy-two. He enclosed this carport so I could support him! Very nice, Annelle. I think you know what you're doing.

ANNELLE Thank you. Mrs Eatenton, you have great hair. And your scalp's clean as a whistle.

M'LYNN I try.

TRUVY Must run in the family. Shelby. You have such pretty hair...so thick...

SHELBY's head is beginning to drop forward. She resists TRUVY's touch.

Hold your head up, darling.

SHELBY Stop it.

TRUVY Shelby? Shelby? M'Lynn!

Upon realization, M'LYNN springs into action. There is no alarm, just efficient action.

M'LYNN Oh honey.

CLAIREE (*also aware*) I'll get some juice.

CLAIREE exits into the kitchen.

M'LYNN Truvy. There's some candy in my purse.

TRUVY I got a peppermint right here. *(She slips the candy into SHELBY's mouth)*

SHELBY *spits out the candy.*

M'LYNN *(attending to SHELBY)* Shelby? We're getting you some juice.

TRUVY Should I get her a cookie?

CLAIREE *returns with some orange juice.*

CLAIREE Here's the juice.

M'LYNN Shelby? You need some juice. *(She tries to get SHELBY to drink)*

SHELBY Leave me alone.

M'LYNN Drink, honey. Drink some juice.

TRUVY Drink the juice, honey.

SHELBY *(pushing away the juice spilling it)* No!

CLAIREE *(refilling the glass)* Who can blame her. Juice after a peppermint?

SHELBY Mama. Stop it. I have candy in my purse.

M'LYNN You didn't bring your purse, honey. Here. Have another sip.

SHELBY No... *(She drinks a sip)*

M'LYNN It's not any wonder. With all this wedding nonsense and running around.

ANNELLE Excuse me. Should I call the doctor or something?

TRUVY No, no.

CLAIREE Shelby's a diabetic.

M'LYNN She's got a little too much insulin, that's all. She'll be fine if we can get something in her. Drink some more, Shelby.

SHELBY I'm going to leave if you don't leave me alone.

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

Please visit our website to buy the full script, apply for a license to perform this show (if it's available), or to explore hundreds of similar titles.

www.samuelfrench.co.uk

or, in the US www.samuelfrench.com

To be the first to know about new books, licensing releases, and enjoy other theatre-related larks, do follow us on our spangley social media channels.



Samuel French London



SamuelFrenchLtd