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Acting Edition

The Miss Magnolia Senior Citizen Beauty Pageant

by Leslie Kimbell

SAMUEL FRENCH

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ISBN 978-0-573-71019-3

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THE MISS MAGNOLIA SENIOR CITIZEN BEAUTY PAGEANT received its World Premiere Production at Winder Barrow Community Theatre in Winder, Georgia on October 8, 2021. It was directed by Léland Downs Karas and assistant director Kim Jones. The scenic design was by Leslie Kimbell and Léland Downs Karas. The lighting and sound were by Pamela Veader. Costume and Little Peanut design was by Eddie Nadeau. The cast was as follows:

BEATRICE SHELTON. . . . . Billie Nye-Muller
EADDY MAE CLAYTON . . . . . Elinor Hasty
IMOGENE FLETCHER. . . . . Candace Stoffel
MAUDE JENKINS . . . . . Ann Mitchell
SAM SMITH. . . . . Thomas Manley
LURLEEN DUPREE . . . . . Andrea Fife
CLOVIS CROWN . . . . . David Sullivan
MARTHA PARCELL . . . . . Beverly Rutledge
HAZEL DILLARD . . . . . Lynn Mulvey
A NURSE . . . . . Wendy Blessing-Toney

Voice-over work was provided by Carol Phillpotts and Scott Jones.

CHARACTERS

BEATRICE SHELTON – Sassy and salty senior citizen…retired Burlesque dancer.

EADDY MAE CLAYTON – Desperately religious Senior Citizen.

IMOGENE FLETCHER – Snarky senior citizen and wife to Sam.

MAUDE JENKINS – Dingy and pageant obsessed senior citizen.

SAM SMITH – Senior citizen. Reformed Casanova and husband to Imogene.

LURLEEN DUPREE – Thirties/fifties, Worn out and weary pageant coordinator.

CLOVIS CROWN – Awkward and nerdy senior citizen.

MARTHA PARCELL – A snooty senior citizen. The villain.

HAZEL DILLARD – Christmas obsessed and squirrel loving octogenarian.

SETTING

Magnolia Place Assisted Living Facility in Petula, Georgia – Various locations.

TIME

Spring 1999.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

Imogene is: EYE-MO-JEAN

Eaddy is: Ee-dee

Beatrice is: Bee-uh-triss

The ladies' evening gowns and talent are written to give the actors, director and costume designer the freedom to be creative and have fun. However, the talent for each contestant should never be over two minutes thirty seconds.

These are real people and should not be portrayed as caricatures.

Lurleen's cell phone should be a 1990's flip phone.

It is not important that Imogene or Eaddy be good singers. A bad singer just adds to the fun.

The squirrel that attacks Hazel should be flat on her face…perhaps using a pair of glasses to have his arms clinging to the sides of the face. Have fun making this prop.

The inflatable date doll should be a fun and silly prop and not crude.

The pageant contestants should wear their number on a gold disc for gown and talent on the front of their costume. Martha's talent number should be on her back.

Orange hairspray works great for the "spray tanning incident."

It is my desire to create roles for senior actors, who are often overlooked for theatrical roles. However, the senior roles can be portrayed by any actor with the magic of theatrical makeup.

For Billie Nye-Muller
I too, would have taken my kitty to a different vet!

ACT I

Scene One

(Lights up stage left. In a pool of light **EADDY MAE CLAYTON** *stands in front of a door which serves as a backdrop and tries to adjust a sign displayed with the show title* "Senior Moments – Cable Access 14." *The sign slips and swings down on one corner to reveal a sign that reads "Janitor's Closet" underneath.* **EADDY** *gives up and leaves the sign hanging. There are two chairs on either side of a small table which holds a simple floral arrangement. A mop bucket, mop and broom sit beside the stage left chair.* **MARTHA PARCELL** *enters as* **EADDY** *shoves the mop bucket and broom out of the way. They sit. From the forced and sugar-coated way they speak to one another, we can tell that they do not like each other.* **EADDY** *reviews her cue cards.)*

EADDY. Martha…just as soon as the camera guy is ready… we'll get started.

MARTHA. It smells like bleach cleaner in here.

EADDY. Uh…huh…now did you have a chance to look over the questions I gave you?

MARTHA. Yes, and I rewrote all of them properly…you know…grammar…spelling…punctuation…

*(**MARTHA** gives **EADDY** a piece of paper. **EADDY** balls up the paper and tosses it.)*

EADDY. Now honey…I don't want to get into your personal business…but remind me…how many times have you entered the Miss Magnolia Pageant? Fifteen…twenty?

MARTHA. *(Miffed.)* Three times. Just. Three.

EADDY. *(Sweetly.)* Well…I think it's so brave of you to enter, year after year…and *lose* again and again so gracefully. It must be difficult to always be first runner up…or as I call it…the first loser.

MARTHA. I *WAS* Miss Magnolia two years ago –

EADDY. Oh…no…no ma'am…*you* were the first runner up…and were only given the title after the real winner, Janette Simmons slipped and broke her hip in the jacuzzi room under *very* mysterious circumstances. I have it all right here on paper Martha.

*(**EADDY** gives an all-knowing look.)*

MARTHA. I hope you're not insinuating that I had anything to do with Janette's fall…and besides…*THAT* is just a technicality.

EADDY. Well…*technically*…that still means you lost. Anyway…I am just *thrilled* you could be on the show today.

MARTHA. Uh-huh…well… I am just so *thrilled* you asked me.

VOICE-OVER. OK everyone…please settle…and just watch for the red light…we're going *LIVE* in TEN.

MARTHA. *(Panic.)* Wait…LIVE…THIS IS LIVE!? I thought we were taping this.

EADDY. Oh no sugar…this is a live show. I must have forgotten to tell you…oh well…SMILE!

MARTHA. *(Extreme panic.)* OH, MY WORD! LIVE?

VOICE-OVER. We're live in Three...Two...One

(A peppy instrumental intro plays.[*] **MARTHA** *stares into the camera panicked.)*

Hey lady...we're live...you're on...you're on!!!

EADDY. Oh... Oh...sorry...yeah... Hey y'all and welcome to *Senior Moments* on your local Petula cable access Channel 14...coming to you LIVE from Magnolia Place Assisted Living and proudly sponsored by Judy's Beauty Shop and Small Engine Repair. I'm your host Eaddy Mae Clayton. Unfortunately, our original guest, Lurleen Dupree, could not be here today...and so...we're talking to Magnolia Place resident, Martha Parcell, about the upcoming Miss Magnolia Senior Citizen Pageant...and her *sad* and *desperate* attempt to win over the last four years. Now, Martha...tell the viewers...what do we have to look forward to this year?

*(***MARTHA** *is frozen.)*

Martha? *(Beat.)* Martha?

*(***EADDY** *smiles into the camera as she tries to nonchalantly poke* **MARTHA**.*)*

Martha honey...a little birdie told me you *might* be singing. *(Beat.)* Why don't you tell us what you'll be wearing?

MARTHA. *(Blankly.)* I'm uh...Martha...hello...what...who?

EADDY. *(Grasping.)* I uh...believe you were going to tell us something about this year's *Miss Magnolia Senior Citizen Beauty Pageant* sugar.

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MARTHA. *(Blankly.)* Hi…I'm Martha…uh…I…uh…I dance… I twirl… I dance –

EADDY. Uh-huh… *(Beat.)* Well…it sounds like we can count on something…just…*really* special.

*(***MARTHA** *is overcome with anxiety and reaches out toward the camera.)*

MARTHA. LIVE…LIVE TELEVISION! Ahhhhhhh –

*(***MARTHA** *faints.* **EADDY** *leaps to her feet and attempts to block* **MARTHA** *from the camera.)*

VOICE-OVER. DO SOMETHING! HEY LADY…GO TO COMMERCIAL!!

EADDY. What? OH…yes…well that sounds like it's going to be a pageant that no one will want to miss…doesn't it? So…um…we'll be back after this commercial from Judy's Beauty Shop and Small Engine Repair…for all your cutting, curling and lawn mower repair needs… Stay Tuned.

(Blackout.)

Scene Two

(We are in the day room of Magnolia Place, an upscale assisted living home in Petula, Georgia. The room is decorated beautifully in a 1980's motif of country blue and mauve. A sofa and coffee table flanked by a pair of chairs is center. Stage right is an open arch leading to the resident's apartments. Upstage center is the double open archway leading to the medical offices and dining room. A sign with arrows indicates that the dining room is stage right and the offices are stage left. Downstage left is the breezeway to the convalescent wing of the facility. On either side of the upstage center archway are another set of matching wingback chairs and side tables with cloisonné lamps. Period appropriate artwork adorns the walls. There is a bulletin board on the stage right wall. A poster advertising the upcoming Miss Magnolia Senior Citizen Beauty Pageant is tacked on. There is a low bookcase containing games, puzzles, and books under the bulletin board.)

(There is a window stage left with curtains and sheers. There is a small console table downstage of the window. **MAUDE**, **BEATRICE**, *and* **IMOGENE** *are seated on the sofa, center, gathered around the television watching the end of* "Senior Moments"*...mouths agape.* **MAUDE** *wears a "MISS MAGNOLIA" sash and a rhinestone crown.* **IMOGENE** *is wearing an oxygen cannula connected to a rolling oxygen tank. We hear* **EADDY***'s voice coming from the television.)*

EADDY. "So…um…we'll be back after this commercial from Judy's Beauty Shop and Small Engine Repair…for all your cutting, curling and lawn mower repair needs… stay tuned."

*(***MAUDE** *turns off the television with a remote. There is stunned silence and then they all burst into laughter.)*

BEATRICE. *(Mocking.)* I'm uh…Martha… I'm Martha… I dance…uh uh…I twirl –

MAUDE. Bless her heart –

IMOGENE. Poor thing looked like a deer in headlights.

BEATRICE. I think this is the best episode…since Vera Mumford ate all those bourbon balls and flashed everyone during the Senior Gals on the Go Christmas Carol Sing-Along.

OH YEAH…that was great!

IMOGENE. Everyone in Petula saw her boobs.

MAUDE. I was sure they would cancel the show after that.

BEATRICE. And I'm sure that all four viewers would have been devastated.

(Enter **EADDY MAE CLAYTON** *left. She has just come from the basement where she does the show.)*

EADDY. Hey y'all.

IMOGENE. Why didn't you go back on the air?

EADDY. I just told them to throw on an old episode. Are y'all talking about Vera's flashing incident again?

IMOGENE. Yes.

MAUDE. Uh-huh.

BEATRICE. Why is it that we always seem to be talkin' about tits?

EADDY. Beatrice…I have asked you on more than one occasion to call them… *(Whisper.) breasts*.

BEATRICE. TITS TITS TITS.

EADDY. RUDE!

BEATRICE. PRUDE!

EADDY. WITCH!

BEATRICE. BITCH!

IMOGENE. Y'all give me *serious* anxiety.

*(***IMOGENE** *cranks up her oxygen and takes a deep breath.)*

BEATRICE. Whatever

*(***EADDY** *suddenly begins to pray loudly.)*

EADDY. Dear Lord…please forgive me for my association with this pack of hell bound sinners. I know they are a blight on my otherwise saintly life. But I am weak Lord…and easily mislead down that rocky path…of sin…sin…sin. AMEN

BEATRICE. Thank you Miss Holy Roller 1998!

EADDY. Thank *you*…Mary Magdalene.

*(***MAUDE** *rises and crosses to the bulletin board and points at the Miss Magnolia Pageant poster.)*

MAUDE. Would you look at this? I cannot believe Lurleen didn't put my name or my picture on this poster. After all, I *am* the current reigning Miss Magnolia.

IMOGENE. They don't need to Maude…you never take off the crown.

MAUDE. I take if off when I get in the shower…*sometimes.*

EADDY. You probably sleep in it.

MAUDE. *(Defensive.)* Not *every* night.

BEATRICE. Maude Jenkins…you are ridiculous and –

MAUDE. Don't be jealous Beatrice. We can't all be queen… someone has to clap as I walk by.

BEATRICE. Will somebody hit that button?

IMOGENE. What button?

BEATRICE. You know…the button you press that makes the floor open…and then she falls into a big hole.

EADDY. Even *I* would press that button. *(Then.)* Forgive me Lord.

BEATRICE. I think *anyone* who needs to enter a beauty pageant for attention…is just pitiful and needy.

IMOGENE. Says the former *burlesque queen* of New York.

BEATRICE. *Excuse me*…I was not looking for attention… I was an *entertainer*…it was my job. You wouldn't catch me *dead* in an old lady beauty pageant.

EADDY. I don't want to get into your personal business… but I hardly think that swinging tassels on your breasts, qualifies you as an *(Air quotes.) entertainer*, Beatrice.

IMOGENE. Oh, now I think that would be *real* entertaining.

MAUDE. I agree…glamorous and exciting. Remind me… what was your stripper name Beatrice?

BEATRICE. *(Striking a sexy pose.)* Miss Bang Bang LaDish…The Best Guns in the West.

EADDY. She could do a striptease, twirl a lasso, and swing both of her bullet pasties in two different directions… all at the same time.

IMOGENE. How on earth did you learn to twirl things with your boobs?

BEATRICE. I went to the Pink Pussycat College of Striptease. *(Then.)* But…I taught *myself* how to twirl my tassels…because the tassel twirling professor they had was terrible.

EADDY. Tassel twirling *professor*?

MAUDE. You taught yourself?

BEATRICE. Yeah…sure…it's easy really…just watch this –

EADDY. OH NO Beatrice…not again –

IMOGENE. You're gonna do it now?

EADDY. This will not end well…you may as well go ahead and call 911 now.

*(***BEATRICE** *moves center and the others surround her. She begins to shimmy her right shoulder back and forth…rocking forward and back, thrusting her bosom up and down.)*

BEATRICE. You just have to know how to work your shoulders to get your tassels twirling. *(Beat.)* Now…just pretend I'm topless.

*(***EADDY** *covers her eyes and moans.)*

EADDY. Noooo –

MAUDE. What's wrong?

EADDY. I've seen this before…it's not pretty. *(Then.)* You might want to rethink this Beatrice…you know what happened last time.

BEATRICE. OK…now…once ya get the right one going good…you get started on the left one.

*(***BEATRICE** *begins to alternate shoulder movements.)*

EADDY. She tried showing me this once…and ended up in the emergency room with a slipped disc and two black eyes.

IMOGENE. *(To* **EADDY.***)* Black eyes?

EADDY. She was *actually* topless –

*(***EADDY** *mimics two sagging boobs flying up and hitting her in the face.)*

Boom Boom…get it?

BEATRICE. OK…now here comes the left –

*(***BEATRICE** *continues to shimmy her right shoulder and then alternates with her left shoulder.)*

It's easy…c'mon…y'all try it. Just close your eyes…and pretend you've got some tassels on your tits. *(She looks at* **EADDY.***)* Sorry…*Breasts*.

*(***IMOGENE** *and* **MAUDE** *close their eyes and begin to grunt and strain as they shimmy and roll their shoulders awkwardly.* **MAUDE** *is particularly animated as she prances about holding her bosoms.* **EADDY** *watches them, frowning.)*

IMOGENE. Is it supposed to hurt like this?

BEATRICE. *(Grunting.)* Not once you get the hang of it.

MAUDE. *(Getting excited.)* OH YEAH…SHAKE IT… WORK IT…HOW YA LIKE ME NOW BOYS? WOO HOO!

IMOGENE. I can't believe I'm doing this… I feel like something is gonna fall off.

EADDY. I think we need to pray. Dear Lord…please forgive my terrible and sinful lack of judgement with the people I associate with. I am so ashamed of my –

(Unnoticed, **SAM SMITH** *and* **CLOVIS CROWN** *enter stage right.* **SAM** *wears a polyester leisure suit, loud shirt, gold chains and white patent loafers.* **CLOVIS** *is the nerd type with high waisted pants and, mismatched shirt, dark socks, and thick eyeglasses. He has a slight limp. He is stunned, mouth open and head spinning.)*

SAM. HUBBA HUBBA...

(The ladies scream.)

I would ask you what's shakin'... but I can see.

IMOGENE. Sam Smith...you scared the daylights out of us!

*(***CLOVIS***'s head continues to spin.* **BEATRICE** *snaps her fingers in his face...his mouth still agape.)*

BEATRICE. Who's this idiot?

SAM. Ladies...I would like to introduce you to my new friend Clovis Crown. He just moved in today.

CLOVIS. *(Awkward.)* Good afternoon ladies.

*(***SAM** *crosses to* **IMOGENE** *and pulls her in for a kiss and a smack on the bottom.)*

SAM. Hey there sexy mama...did you miss me?

IMOGENE. You know I did daddy.

SAM. Clovis...this is my sexy wife Imogene.

CLOVIS. Nice to meet you Imogene.

SAM. Ain't she foxy?

CLOVIS. *(Timid.)* Oh yes...very...um...foxy.

*(***SAM** *turns to* **CLOVIS** *and whispers.)*

SAM. Stand there like a stud and I'll get you a date.

*(***CLOVIS** *steps forward and makes a comically awkward attempt to strike a studly pose.)*

SAM. Uh…so ladies…Clovis here is single and ready to mingle. Who wants to be the first lucky lady to show him around town?

*(***CLOVIS** *adjusts his glasses and smiles.* **MAUDE, BEATRICE** *and* **EADDY** *look nervously at each other.)*

MAUDE. Um… I'm sorry…but I'm pretty sure I have an appointment to wash my hair today.

EADDY. *(Looks at watch.)* Oh…would you look at that… I'm late for my prayer meeting.

BEATRICE. *(Dry.)* I'd rather eat dirt.

*(***CLOVIS** *is crestfallen.)*

CLOVIS. Well…I guess I'll be going… I've got things to unpack and so forth and so on and what have you… nice meeting you ladies. I'm sure I'll see you around sometime.

*(***CLOVIS** *exits right.)*

BEATRICE. What a geek.

SAM. That was awful mean of you ladies. Why couldn't one of you take him out and show him the town?

BEATRICE. Excuse me? I can't be seen in public with an old nerd like that. I have a reputation to protect.

SAM. It's more likely that we need to protect everyone from *your* reputation.

BEATRICE. Imogene…are you gonna let your husband talk to me like that?

IMOGENE. If the shoe fits darlin' –

EADDY. Amen sister!