

The ~~Four~~ <sup>Five</sup> Mrs. Buchanans

Pilot

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MRS. BUCHANAN

"Pilot"

ACT ONE

Scene 1

(FADE IN:)

INT. 'ANGELS OF MERCY' THRIFT STORE - DAY.

(WE ARE IN A MODEST STOREFRONT IN THE TOWN OF MERCY, INDIANA, A MEDIUM-SIZED DISTANT SUBURB OF INDIANAPOLIS. IT IS A SHOP FILLED WITH A VARIETY OF INTERESTING MERCHANDISE, FROM CLOTHING AND CERAMIC FIGURINES TO SMALL FURNITURE AND A GRANDFATHER CLOCK. CUSTOMERS ARE BROWSING IN THE AISLES. ALEX BUCHANAN, AN AUTHORITATIVE-LOOKING NEW YORKER IN HER MID-FORTIES, IS OUT ON THE FLOOR RESTOCKING A SHELF. SEATED AT THE COUNTER IS DELILAH BUCHANAN, A SWEET, SEXY, BORDERLINE-TACKY SOUTHERNER IN HER EARLY FORTIES. DELILAH IS ALEX'S SISTER-IN-LAW AND BUSINESS PARTNER. SHE IS BUSY PAINTING HER FINGERNAILS)

SFX: TELEPHONE RINGING (TWICE)

ALEX

Delilah, could you get that?

(ALEX LOOKS OVER AT DELILAH, WHO SHOWS HER HER WET FINGERNAILS. ALEX REACTS AND QUICKLY STARTS TO CROSS STORE TO PHONE)

SFX: TELEPHONE RINGING

(AN OLDER FEMALE CUSTOMER STOPS ALEX)

WOMAN

Excuse me. Is this bracelet real jade?

ALEX

Ma'am, this is a thrift store. The tag on that bracelet says \$1.50. It comes with a matching mood ring. What do you think?

WOMAN

I don't know.

ALEX

Yes, it's real.

(THE WOMAN REACTS EXCITEDLY AND CROSSES AWAY)

SFX: TELEPHONE RINGING

(ALEX CROSSES TO COUNTER AND ANSWERS PHONE)

ALEX

Angels of Mercy Thrift Store. This is Alex Buchanan... Just a moment.

(TO DELILAH)

It's for you.

(DELILAH INDICATES HER NAILS STILL AREN'T DRY AND THEN MOTIONS FOR ALEX TO HOLD THE PHONE UP TO HER EAR, WHICH ALEX RELUCTANTLY DOES)

DELILAH

Delilah Buchanan speaking... What is it now, Mrs. Kern?... No. No, we're not having this conversation again...

(MORE)

DELILAH (CONT'D)

What I wear to church is my business. Oh, and I checked the Bible. First Corinthians doesn't say a word about fishnet stockings... Fine, Mrs. Kern. I'll pray for all of you, too.

(TO ALEX)

Slam that down.

(ALEX SLAMS THE RECEIVER DOWN)

ALEX

Ladies Auxiliary on your back again?

DELILAH

Yes, and it's always the same old song. "Stop wearing short skirts," "Refrain from showing excessive cleavage," "Please wear underwear." How come I have to set an example in church?

ALEX

Well, you are the preacher's wife. And your outfits have crossed the line sometimes.

DELILAH

Oh, like I'm the only person who's ever worn a boa to Sunday School.

(ALEX REACTS. SUDDENLY, THE BACK DOOR SLAMS, AND VIVIAN BUCHANAN, A SMARTLY DRESSED, SUPERIOR-MINDED WOMAN IN HER EARLY FORTIES ENTERS)

VIVIAN

Thank God, you're both here. I've got news. Big news.

ALEX

Vivian, why can't you come through the front door like everybody else?

VIVIAN

Alex, why must you always force me to say things that are going to hurt your feelings? The truth is I would rather die than have people think I actually shop at a thrift store.

ALEX

(TO DELILAH)

Did I force her to say that?

VIVIAN

Alex, do you mind? I'm trying to be the harbinger of news here. You'll never guess what's happened!

ALEX

Ed left you for another woman.

VIVIAN

No.

DELILAH

For another man?

VIVIAN

No.

ALEX

For the heck of it.

VIVIAN

This has nothing to do with Ed! And why would you think he would leave me?

ALEX

Vivian, why must you always force me to say things that are going to hurt your feelings?

VIVIAN

(IGNORING HER)

The news is this: Jesse Buchanan, our brother-in-law, is finally getting married.

(ALEX AND DELILAH ARE STUNNED)

DELILAH

To who? That girl he met in California? They've only known each other six weeks.

VIVIAN

Maybe so, but the wedding is Saturday.

ALEX

But that's in two days!

VIVIAN

You think that's quick? Jesse's expecting you to throw a bridal shower for this girl at your house tomorrow night.

ALEX

Why would he expect that?

VIVIAN

I told him you wouldn't mind. Boy, did you score points.

ALEX

Vivian, all you ever do is brag about how nice your house is and how nice your furniture is. How come we never have parties over there?

VIVIAN

How do you think I keep my house and furniture looking so nice?

DELILAH

We've never even met this girl. Now she's going to be part of the family. What if we don't like her?

ALEX

I'm sure we'll like her just fine.

VIVIAN

Wait a minute. Delilah's right.  
I've always considered it a minor  
miracle that the three of us get  
along so well. Let's face it. We  
never would have been friends if we  
hadn't married brothers.

DELILAH

It's true. I love Vivian like a  
sister, but we have nothing in  
common. I'm an ex-cocktail waitress  
from Corpus Christie and she's a  
stuck-up prude from Indiana.

(TO VIVIAN)

No offense, sweetie.

VIVIAN

None taken.

(SOTTO)

Redneck.

ALEX

I still like to think we would have  
been friends regardless.

VIVIAN

Alex, get serious. You're my best  
friend and you're a Jew from New  
York. Do you know how amazing that  
is? You're a Jew. I never thought  
I'd be friends with an honest-to-  
God Jew.



ALEX

I gathered that the first time we met.

VIVIAN

How?

ALEX

You screamed.

DELILAH

I just wish I understood why Jesse was rushing into this marriage. There's no reason for it.

VIVIAN

People, please. There is only one explanation for them getting married so quickly.

ALEX

And what is that?

(VIVIAN PANTOMIMES A PREGNANT STOMACH)

DELILAH

Oh, no. His fiancee is a mime?

VIVIAN

No, you Texas twit. She's pregnant.

DELILAH

You think?

VIVIAN

The only reason anyone ever rushes into marriage is pregnancy.

ALEX

Well, you should know.

(VIVIAN TURNS SLOWLY TO ALEX. BEAT)

VIVIAN

Excuse me. It is a well-documented fact that I was a virgin when I married Ed.

ALEX

It's also a well-documented fact that your twins were born seven months to the day after your wedding.

VIVIAN

They were premature.

ALEX

They weighed ten pounds apiece!

VIVIAN

I was a virgin and that's the truth!

ALEX

Why do you feel the need to lie to us? We're your best friends. I would never lie to you. I would never lie to anybody.

(THE OLDER FEMALE CUSTOMER WALKS UP, HER ARMS FULL WITH "JADE" JEWELRY)

WOMAN

Look at all the jade I found! I'm rich!

(VIVIAN AND DELILAH SLOWLY TURN TO ALEX. ON ALEX'S REACTION, WE:)

(DISSOLVE TO:)

ACT ONE

Scene 2

INT. ALEX'S KITCHEN - THE NEXT EVENING

(A TYPICAL SUBURBAN TRACT HOME KITCHEN. ALEX IS THERE PREPARING FOOD FOR THE BRIDAL SHOWER, WHILE CONSTANTLY LOOKING OUTSIDE THE WINDOW AT SOMETHING AND REACTING. VIVIAN ENTERS)

VIVIAN

Alex, I wanted to thank you again for letting me bring the twins over here tonight. It's so hard finding a sitter on such short notice. If you ever need a favor, just ask.

ALEX

Actually, I do. Could you ask the twins not to play on my brand new patio furniture?

(VIVIAN CROSSES TO THE WINDOW, OPENS IT AND YELLS:)

VIVIAN

Lyndon! P.J.! You stop jumping on that chaise lounge right now! You're gonna break it! And you know your Aunt Alex doesn't have a lot of nice things!

(ALEX REACTS)

ALEX

Thank you.

VIVIAN

No problem. Hey, what time is Jesse bringing the girl by?

ALEX

They should be here soon. I'm really anxious to meet her, too.

VIVIAN

I just hope she fits in. God only knows what that Mama's boy Jesse's going to be dragging home. I bet he hasn't even told her about Mother Buchanan yet.

ALEX

No, and we're not going to mention that either. She'll find out about Mother Buchanan soon enough.

(SUDDENLY VIVIAN SEES SOMETHING OUT THE WINDOW)

VIVIAN

Oh, my lord, Alex, the twins have gotten hold of your cat.

(ALEX JOINS HER LOOKING OUT WINDOW)

ALEX

Why do they have her blindfolded?

VIVIAN

They're playing 'International Terrorist' again. It's a little game they made up.

(MORE)

(VIVIAN LEANS OUT THE WINDOW AND YELLS:)

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

Lyndon! P.J.! What have I told you about taking animals hostage?! Let her go!... What?... I don't care if your demands haven't been met yet, let that kitty go!!!

(VIVIAN TURNS TO ALEX)

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

One of these days, those boys are gonna realize there's two of them and only one of me, and when that day comes, my life isn't worth spit.

ALEX

Vivian, I know the twins' behavior bothers you, and I hate to suggest it, but maybe drugs could help ease the situation.

VIVIAN

I've already taken everything I can get my hands on. Nothing works.

(ALEX REACTS. DELILAH POPS HER HEAD IN THE DOOR)

DELILAH

They're here! They're here! Hurry up!

(AS DELILAH, ALEX AND VIVIAN EXIT QUICKLY INTO THE LIVING ROOM, WE:)

(CUT TO:)

ACT ONE

Scene 3

INT. ALEX'S LIVING ROOM -CONTINUOUS

(THE LADIES ENTER FROM THE KITCHEN.  
DELILAH AND VIVIAN RUN TO THE WINDOW AND  
PEEK THROUGH THE CURTAINS)

DELILAH

Oh! Look at her!

VIVIAN

She's so pretty!

DELILAH

(TO ALEX)

Don't you want to come look?

ALEX

Unlike the two of you, I have too  
much dignity to spy out a window  
like some gossipy old busy-body.

VIVIAN

(PEERING OUT WINDOW)

Oh, my lord, she is pregnant!

ALEX

What? Let me see.

(ALEX RUSHES TO THE WINDOW AND LOOKS  
OUT, PUSHING DELILAH OUT OF THE WAY)

ALEX (CONT'D)

Hold it. She doesn't look pregnant.

VIVIAN

I know. But you certainly high-  
tailed it over here to get a look,  
didn't you, Miss Dignity?

ALEX

This is ridiculous. Get away from  
that window, you two.

(ALEX MOTIONS FOR DELILAH AND VIVIAN TO  
FOLLOW HER TO A SPOT IN FRONT OF THE  
DOOR. THEY DO SO)

ALEX (CONT'D)

Now, remember, it's our job to make  
this girl feel welcome. We've got to  
show her the same kind of warmth,  
love, and acceptance we got when we  
first joined the family.

(DELILAH AND VIVIAN BOTH NOD. BEAT)

DELILAH

Wait a minute. I was treated like  
dirt when I first joined this  
family.

VIVIAN

So was I.

ALEX

Me, too. Let's get her.

SFX: KNOCK AT DOOR

(ALEX OPENS DOOR. JESSE BUCHANAN, A  
HANDSOME 29 YEAR OLD, AND BREE LARSON, A  
VERY ATTRACTIVE, ENERGETIC, 22 YEAR OLD  
BLONDE ENTER)

JESSE

Hey, everybody.

(THE LADIES AD-LIB HELLO'S)

(MORE)

JESSE (CONT'D)

Everybody, this is Bree Larson, my fiancée. Bree, these are my sisters-in-law: Alex, she's married to my oldest brother, Roy; Delilah, she's married to my brother, Charles; and this is Vivian, she's my brother Ed's wife.

ALEX

It's wonderful to meet you, Bree. I know you've probably been a little nervous about tonight, but there's no need to be. I guess what I'm really trying to say is...

(SUDDENLY, BREE CROSSES TO ALEX AND EXCITEDLY GIVES HER A HUGE BEAR HUG, ALMOST TAKING THE BREATH OUT OF HER)

ALEX (CONT'D)

...don't be shy.

BREE

(VERY BUBBLY)

I'm sorry I couldn't help myself because I'm just so darned excited to be here and I just know that the four of us are going to be best friends and I'm not just saying that. I'm not psychic or anything but I can tell and not to change the subject but I could really go for a coke right now in a big way.



(BREE LOOKS EXPECTANTLY AT ALEX. BEAT)

ALEX

Oh, sweetheart, I really think the  
last thing you need is caffeine.

(JESSE PUTS HIS ARM AROUND BREE)

JESSE

Isn't she great? I met her on  
vacation last month at Disneyland.  
She worked there.

VIVIAN

Somehow I sensed that.

BREE

Actually, I worked at Disneyland  
for over seven years.

DELILAH

No surprise there either.

VIVIAN

Jesse, why don't you run along now?  
We can't very well have a wedding  
shower with a man hovering about.

BREE

Wait! Wait! I gotta have my goodbye  
kiss.

(JESSE TAKES BREE IN HIS ARMS AND THEY  
SHARE THE LONGEST, MOST PASSIONATE KISS  
THE LADIES HAVE EVER SEEN)

VIVIAN

Oh, for God's sake. They're french-  
kissing.

ALEX

I can't even remember the last time  
Roy kissed me like that.

DELILAH

Charles hasn't let me french-kiss  
him in years. Last time, I sucked  
one of his fillings clean out of  
his tooth.

(VIVIAN AND ALEX GIVE DELILAH A LOOK)

DELILAH (CONT'D)

I was very popular in high school.

(JESSE AND BREE CONTINUE KISSING. ALEX  
LEANS INTO THEM)

ALEX

If you don't stop kissing soon, we  
won't have time to give Bree her  
shower gifts.

(BREE INSTANTLY PULLS AWAY FROM JESSE)

BREE

You can go now, sweetie.

(JESSE SMILES AT BREE, THEN EXITS. BREE  
TURNS TO ALEX)

BREE (CONT'D)

So Alex, is this your house? It is  
so-o-o-o cute!

ALEX

Yeah, well, that was the look I was  
going for.

(A BEAT OF AWKWARD SILENCE. THEN:)

VIVIAN

So... you used to work at  
Disneyland. What did you do there?

BREE

Well, most recently, I was in the  
Go-Go Goofy Parade. I was the head  
cartwheel girl. I can do a one-  
handed cartwheel on either side.  
Want to see?

ALEX

No, that's okay. I'm sure your  
cartwheels are very...

(BREE DOES A CARTWHEEL)

ALEX (CONT'D)

...impressive, but I would really  
prefer if you didn't do them in...

(BREE DOES ANOTHER CARTWHEEL)

ALEX (CONT'D)

...my living room.

BREE

And watch. I can also do splits.

(BREE DOES THE SPLITS. VIVIAN LEANS INTO  
ALEX)

VIVIAN

(SOTTO)

And to think, I was worried she  
wasn't going to fit in.

(AS ALEX REACTS, WE:)

(DISSOLVE TO:)

ACT ONE

Scene 4

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT EVENING

(ALL FOUR WOMEN ARE SEATED. IT'S OBVIOUS BY THE LAUGHTER ALL THE WOMEN ARE ACTUALLY HAVING A GOOD TIME)

BREE

...But I think the silliest tradition is throwing the bouquet. I mean, does anybody really think catching it will help them get married?

DELILAH

Well, at my wedding, I made it a point to throw the bouquet to this real uptight, desperate wall-flower who looked like she'd never find anyone to marry, much less have sex with. And if memory serves me, she was married about two months later.

(BEAT)

VIVIAN

Delilah, I caught the bouquet at your wedding.

DELILAH

(CAUGHT)

Well, it worked then, didn't it?

Coffee?

(VIVIAN REACTS)

BREE

Guys, this has all really helped. I don't mind telling you, I'm a little nervous about tomorrow.

ALEX

Everyone's nervous about their wedding day.

BREE

Well... actually, it's tomorrow night I'm nervous about. You see, Jesse and I have never... you know.

(ALEX, DELILAH, AND VIVIAN LEAN IN)

ALEX

Never? Never ever?

BREE

Not once.

VIVIAN

(TO DELILAH)

Now this is what I call a good bridal shower.

BREE

I'm just afraid it won't go well.

ALEX

Bree, all that matters is that you and Jesse truly love each other.

BREE

And we do. Very much.

DELILAH

I remember my wedding night. It was so difficult for me. I had sort of lied to Charles. I told him I was a virgin.

BREE

And you weren't?

(ALEX AND VIVIAN BOTH LAUGH. DELILAH GIVES THEM A LOOK)

DELILAH

I married a preacher. I had to pretend. And let me tell you, Meryl Streep has never given such a great performance. I think I even managed to blush at one point.

BREE

So did he fall for it?

DELILAH

He would have. If only I hadn't brought out that dog collar.

VIVIAN

On my wedding night, I was so exhausted from the reception that by the time we finally got to our hotel room, sex was the last thing on my mind. So I told Ed, "I'm going to sleep now. Do whatever you want to me, just don't mess up my hair." He didn't and that's pretty much been our sex life ever since.

ALEX

Roy and I had a wonderful time on our wedding night. That is, up until he threw his back out.

BREE

How did he do that?

ALEX

How did he do that? Let me think.

(ALEX THINKS FOR A MOMENT. SLOWLY A SMILE SPREADS ACROSS HER FACE. SHE LAUGHS, THEN COMPOSES HERSELF AND LOOKS BACK AT BREE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

None of your business.

BREE

I have to be honest. I didn't know what to expect, meeting you guys tonight. But it's been great.

DELILAH

I think we've enjoyed it as much as you have. Although we didn't know what to think at first, what with those cartwheels and all.

BREE

(INSTANTLY JUMPING UP)

Wanna see another one?

ALEX

(PULLING HER BACK DOWN)

That won't be necessary, sweetheart. Ever again.

VIVIAN

You know, Bree, since you'll be marrying a Buchanan man, the three of us are going to have to share some survival tips with you.

DELILAH

That's right. We'll teach you how to coax one out of a bad mood, when to be honest with him and when to lie your butt off, and we'll even tell you the exact age your husband-to-be will start his mid-life crisis.

BREE

You can't possibly know that.

ALEX

It will be exactly two months before his forty-second birthday. That's exactly five years after he's started using monoxydil and two weeks after he discovers he can stick his finger in his belly button all the way up to the knuckle.

BREE

I can tell I'm going to have a lot of fun being in this family.



VIVIAN

This is just a hunch but... you haven't met your new mother-in-law yet, have you?

(ALEX SHOOTS VIVIAN A LOOK)

BREE

Jesse's mom? Well, I've talked to her on the phone. She seemed very sweet.

(THE WOMEN GIVE EACH OTHER GLANCES AND THEN RETURN TO WHAT THEY WERE DOING)

BREE (CONT'D)

What is it? Did I say something wrong?

ALEX

No. No, of course not.

BREE

Don't you like her?

ALEX

Mother Buchanan? What a silly question. Of course, we like her.

(TO VIVIAN AND DELILAH)

Don't we guys?

(BEAT. THEN, OFF ALEX'S LOOK, VIVIAN AND DELILAH EMPHATICALLY AD-LIB "OH, YES", "LIKE HER? WE LOVE HER!", ETC.)

BREE

Oh good. 'Cause when I talked to Mother Buchanan on the phone, I mentioned that you were throwing me a wedding shower and I invited her to come join us. I hope you don't mind.

(VIVIAN CRUSHES THE GLASS SHE'S HOLDING.  
BREE REACTS)

DELILAH

You what?! You invited her here?

BREE

Wait a minute. You guys just said you liked her.

VIVIAN

We lied.

ALEX

We avoid that woman at all costs. The last time she was in my house, she was so hateful to all of us, I had to ask her to leave.

DELILAH

It was Alex's finest moment.

ALEX

How would you know? You hid in the other room.

DELILAH

I never stopped supporting you.

BREE

I don't understand. Jesse said  
people love his mother.

VIVIAN

He meant as a target!

ALEX

Wait a minute. What are we all  
worried about? Mother Buchanan  
wouldn't show up here after what  
happened last time. I'd stake my  
life on it.

SFX: DOORBELL

ALEX (CONT'D)

I'm a dead woman.

DELILAH

Alex, there's nothing to be afraid  
of. You're just as strong as she is.

SFX: DOORBELL

DELILAH (CONT'D)

But since I'm not, I'm going to  
hide in the next room.

(DELILAH STARTS TO EXIT. ALEX STOPS HER)

ALEX

You get back here. You're not  
leaving me alone with that woman.

BREE

I don't understand why you're all  
acting this way. What could be so  
threatening about a little old lady?

(ALEX CROSSES TO THE FRONT DOOR AND  
OPENS IT TO REVEAL MOTHER BUCHANAN, A  
VERY IMPOSING, VERY FRIGHTENING FIGURE)

MOTHER BUCHANAN

Hello.

(AS THE WOMEN REACT, WE:)

(FADE OUT:)

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

Scene 1

(FADE IN:)

INT. ALEX'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

(EVERYONE IS IN THE SAME PLACE)

ALEX

This is what I get for not asking,  
"Who is it?".

MOTHER BUCHANAN

(ENTERING)

Oh, there's that delightful semitic  
sense of humor I've grown to love.

(ALEX REACTS. MOTHER BUCHANAN NOTICES  
DELILAH)

MOTHER BUCHANAN (CONT'D)

Oh, my stars. Delilah, is that you?

DELILAH

Of course, it's me.

MOTHER BUCHANAN

I'm sorry. I could hardly recognize  
you under all that make-up.

(DELILAH REACTS)

MOTHER BUCHANAN (CONT'D)

And Vivian. Dear sweet Vivian. You  
look wonderful.

VIVIAN

(SURPRISED)

Thank you, Mother Buchanan.

MOTHER BUCHANAN

That extra weight agrees with you.

(VIVIAN REACTS)

And who do we have here?

(AS MOTHER BUCHANAN TURNS TO BREE,  
VIVIAN GOES AFTER HER. DELILAH HOLDS HER  
BACK)

ALEX

Mother Buchanan, I'd like to  
introduce you to Bree Larson. Bree,  
this is Emma Valentine Buchanan.  
Your soon-to-be new mother-in-law.

(MOTHER BUCHANAN BRUSHES ALEX ASIDE AND  
TAKES BREE'S HANDS)

MOTHER BUCHANAN

Finally, we get to meet face to  
face. Jesse had told me you were  
lovely, but seeing you now in  
person, it seems he didn't do you  
justice. You're just...exquisite.  
That's what you are. You're a  
positively exquisite child.

BREE

(COMPLETELY CHARMED)

Thank you.

(ALEX, DELILAH, AND VIVIAN LOOK AT ONE  
ANOTHER DUMBFOUNDED)

MOTHER BUCHANAN

Now, if you'll excuse me for a moment, I'm going to the little girl's room. Alexandria, I trust you have tissue in there?

(TO BREE)

I only ask her that because once she neglected to buy any and I was left quite stranded.

ALEX

That happened nine years ago.

MOTHER BUCHANAN

Really? How odd. The pain and humiliation of that moment still seem so fresh.

(MOTHER BUCHANAN EXITS. ALEX, DELILAH, AND VIVIAN TURN TO LOOK AT BREE. BEAT)

BREE

I like her.

VIVIAN

You've got to be joking.

BREE

She said I was exquisite.

VIVIAN

I don't care if she said you were "finger-licking good". She called me fat!

DELILAH

And she implied that I wear too  
much make-up.

VIVIAN

Actually, Delilah, you do pile on  
base like there's no tomorrow.

DELILAH

You think so, Chubbo?

ALEX

Stop it, you two. There's nothing  
that woman would love more than to  
see the three of us fighting.

BREE

I'm sorry, but I think you're all  
acting silly. You're reading more  
into her comments than you should.  
She's a nice woman who's just  
trying to compliment you.

(MOTHER BUCHANAN RE-ENTERS)

MOTHER BUCHANAN

Alex, I adore how you've re-done  
your bathroom. I can honestly say  
I've never seen mildew used as a  
decorating scheme before.

BREE

(SOTTO, TO OTHERS)

See?

(THE LADIES REACT)



DELILAH

(COVERING)

Okay... Well, why don't we move  
this along and open the gifts?

ALEX

Good idea.

(EVERYONE GATHERS AROUND THE COFFEE  
TABLE WHERE THE GIFTS ARE LAID OUT.  
VIVIAN HANDS BREE AN ELABORATELY WRAPPED  
GIFT)

VIVIAN

This is from Alex and me.

ALEX

If you hate it, you can exchange it.

BREE

I'm sure I'll love it.

MOTHER BUCHANAN

Or maybe not.

(ALEX AND VIVIAN REACT)

VIVIAN

(TO BREE)

I just wanted you to know that I  
wrapped your gift myself. I chose  
to use a Victorian motif. See the  
delicate Belgian lace inlaid with  
tiny faux pearls? And note how  
fragile the...

(WITHOUT HESITATION, BREE RIPS INTO THE  
GIFT, DESTROYING AND DISCARDING THE  
WRAPPING. VIVIAN REACTS)

(MORE)

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

(SOTTO, TO HERSELF)

I'm surrounded by Philistines.

BREE

Oh, my gosh! A microwave! Oh, you guys, this is way too expensive!

ALEX

Hey, nothing's too good for our new sister-in-law.

MOTHER BUCHANAN

Wasn't that in the window at Hempel's department store?

ALEX

Yes. Why do you ask?

MOTHER BUCHANAN

I thought I recognized it. After all those months of them marking that down, it's nice to know it finally found a home.

(VIVIAN AND ALEX REACT. BREE STARTS TO UNWRAP ANOTHER GIFT)

DELILAH

I sure hope you like this one. It's from me.

MOTHER BUCHANAN

This should be interesting.

ALEX

Mother Buchanan, may I speak to you for a moment?

MOTHER BUCHANAN

Well, actually, dear, Bree was  
about to...

(ALEX GRABS MOTHER BUCHANAN BY THE ARM  
AND TAKES HER ASIDE)

ALEX

(SOTTO)

Now, you listen to me, old woman,  
and you listen good. There's a real  
big chance at some point in the  
future, you're gonna get sick.  
Possibly very sick. And while  
you're lying in the hospital kept  
alive only by a machine, the doctor  
will come to my husband and say,  
"Her chances don't look good.  
Should I pull the plug or not?"  
Roy, of course, will be too grief-  
stricken to make that decision. So  
it will fall upon me to decide  
whether you live or die. How you  
act as Bree is opening Delilah's  
shower gift will influence greatly  
what I say to that doctor. Got it?

(MOTHER BUCHANAN, TAKEN ABACK, NODS.  
THEY CROSS BACK OVER. BREE OPENS GIFT)

BREE

Ooh, a salad shooter!!

(ALEX LOOKS AT MOTHER BUCHANAN)

MOTHER BUCHANAN

(HALF-HEARTEDLY)

I wish I had one like that.

ALEX

(SMILING)

Don't worry, Mother Buchanan.

You'll get yours.

BREE

Thank you so much, Delilah.

DELILAH

You're welcome, sugar.

MOTHER BUCHANAN

Ah, now it's time for my gift.

Before you open this, I just want you to know that it's a small token to indicate my happiness at your joining our family, and I only hope you're not too disappointed with it.

(BREE OPENS THE GIFT)

BREE

Oh, my gosh! It's a ruby brooch.

It's beautiful.

MOTHER BUCHANAN

It's a family heirloom. It once belonged to my husband's great-grandmother.

(ANGLE ON VIVIAN, DELILAH AND ALEX AS  
THEY REACT)

VIVIAN

(SOTTO TO DELILAH AND ALEX)

Mother Buchanan promised she would  
give that to me someday.

DELILAH

(SOTTO)

She promised me the same thing.

(VIVIAN AND DELILAH LOOK AT ALEX. BEAT)

ALEX

(SOTTO)

That did it. I'm pulling the plug.

(ANGLE ON BREE AS SHE HUGS MOTHER  
BUCHANAN)

BREE

This is the most beautiful gift  
I've ever gotten. I don't know how  
to thank you, Mother Buchanan.

MOTHER BUCHANAN

Well, you can start by just calling  
me 'Mother'.

(BREE AND MOTHER BUCHANAN HUG. AS THE  
OTHER WOMEN LOOK ON WITH A COMBINATION  
OF WORRY AND DISMAY, WE:)

(DISSOLVE TO:)

ACT TWO

Scene 2

INT. KITCHEN - LATER THAT EVENING

(VIVIAN AND DELILAH ARE PREPARING  
COFFEE. ALEX ENTERS)

ALEX

Now Mother Buchanan's talked Bree  
into giving her a back rub.

VIVIAN

I would never touch that woman.

DELILAH

Me, neither. Unless I was rubbing  
her hump for luck.

ALEX

I know why she's being so nice to  
Bree. She thinks she's finally got  
a daughter-in-law she can control.  
She thinks Bree is weak.

DELILAH

Why would she think that?

VIVIAN

The girl made a living doing  
cartwheels. Why do you think?

DELILAH

So you're saying if Bree ever  
stands up to her...

VIVIAN

She'll have Bree for lunch and use  
her bones as toothpicks.

DELILAH

Alex, why don't you just throw  
Mother Buchanan out of your house  
again?

ALEX

Are you kidding? Roy still hasn't  
forgiven me for last time. Besides,  
tonight is for Bree and she's  
enjoying her. She'll learn the  
truth about Mother Buchanan soon  
enough. The best thing we can do  
for now is just be pleasant until  
that woman leaves. For Bree's sake.

DELILAH

You're right. I guess we should  
just consider it another one of her  
shower gifts.

VIVIAN

Well, it's only fair. We spent so  
little on the others...

(AS THE WOMEN ALL EXIT WITH COFFEE INTO  
THE LIVING ROOM, WE:)

(CUT TO:)

ACT TWO

Scene 3

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

(BREE IS STILL MASSAGING MOTHER BUCHANAN'S SHOULDERS WHILE MOTHER BUCHANAN SHOWS HER PHOTOGRAPHS. ALEX, DELILAH, AND VIVIAN ENTER)

ALEX

What are you two up to?

MOTHER BUCHANAN

I was just showing Bree some old family pictures. Oh, here's one when the boys were little. See, Jesse was still in diapers.

BREE

You look like a very happy family.

MOTHER BUCHANAN

We were. It wasn't until the boys grew up that there were...

(MOTHER BUCHANAN LOOKS AT ALEX, DELILAH, AND VIVIAN)

MOTHER BUCHANAN (CONT'D)

...problems.

BREE

(RE: PICTURE)

What's this?

MOTHER BUCHANAN

That's a picture of me when I was young.



BREE

Why is it so blurry?

VIVIAN

They had just invented film.

(MOTHER BUCHANAN GIVES VIVIAN A LOOK,  
THEN TURNS BACK TO WEDDING ALBUM)

MOTHER BUCHANAN

This was taken on my wedding day.

BREE

Really?

MOTHER BUCHANAN

Yes. I don't think I've ever been  
so proud as the day I became Mrs.  
John Buchanan.

(TO BREE)

And just think, starting tomorrow,  
you'll be the newest Mrs. Buchanan.

BREE

Well, actually, I've decided I'm  
going to keep my maiden name.

(MOTHER BUCHANAN STARES AT HER FOR A  
LONG TIME. FINALLY)

MOTHER BUCHANAN

Oh?

BREE

Yeah, I've just always liked my  
name and I want to keep it. It's  
kind of like my identity. You know?

(MOTHER BUCHANAN CONTINUES TO STARE)

DELILAH

(SENSING THE TENSION)

So... would anyone care for some  
dessert?

MOTHER BUCHANAN

My dear, you'll pardon me for  
saying so, but when a woman marries  
a man, she takes his name, and in  
this case that name is "Buchanan".  
You're making a mistake and I think  
you should reconsider.

BREE

I don't think so. And even if I am  
making a mistake, well, it is my  
decision, isn't it?

(ALEX, DELILAH, AND VIVIAN SLOWLY LOOK  
OVER AT MOTHER BUCHANAN. SHE DOESN'T  
REACT. BEAT. THEN MOTHER BUCHANAN LOOKS  
AT HER WATCH AND RISES)

MOTHER BUCHANAN

Well, I really must be going. I had  
a lovely time, Alexandria. And it  
was nice to see you again, Delilah.  
You too, Vivian.

(MOTHER BUCHANAN TURNS TO BREE AND JUST  
SMILES)

BREE

Well, then I guess I'll see you at  
the wedding tomorrow, huh?

MOTHER BUCHANAN

I'm sure we'll...bump into one  
another. Goodbye.

(MOTHER BUCHANAN EXITS. BEAT. ALEX,  
DELILAH, AND VIVIAN TURN TO BREE. THEY  
ALL START APPLAUDING. BREE REACTS,  
CONFUSED)

VIVIAN

You were amazing.

ALEX

I've never seen such bravery.

DELILAH

Please, be our leader.

BREE

What are you talking about?

VIVIAN

You stood up to her. You disagreed  
with Mother Buchanan!

BREE

Oh, that was no big deal.

DELILAH

But you didn't back down!

ALEX

And, she didn't say...

(ALEX REALIZES)

...anything.

(SUDDENLY THE WOMEN REALIZE WHAT HAS  
HAPPENED)

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

Oh, lord. Are you thinking what I'm thinking?

DELILAH

Absolutely. Vivian?

VIVIAN

I'm way ahead of you.

(VIVIAN RUSHES TO THE PHONE, PICKS IT UP AND DIALS HURRIEDLY)

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

Damn, it's busy.

DELILAH

Oh, no. Charles gave her a car phone for Christmas.

ALEX

That's it. We're sunk.

BREE

What is going on?!

ALEX

Bree, if we know Mother Buchanan, and the premature gray in our hair says that we do, right now that vicious old woman is on the phone to Jesse reading him the riot act because you're not changing your name.

DELILAH

And as soon as he hangs up with her, Jesse will then call here demanding to know why you upset his mother.

BREE

Oh, that's ridiculous. First of all, I don't believe Mother Buchanan left here upset. Second of all, I know Jesse. He would never get angry about something like this.

(ALL THE WOMEN LOOK AT BREE SYMPATHETICALLY)

BREE (CONT'D)

I'm telling you you're wrong.  
Jesse's not gonna call here.  
Everything's fine.

SFX: PHONE RINGING

(BREE JUMPS, STARTLED BY THE RING. ALEX SLOWLY CROSSES AND PICKS UP THE PHONE)

ALEX

Hello? Yes, she is.

(TO BREE)

Guess who?

(BREE CROSSES TO THE PHONE AND TAKES IT)

BREE

Hi, sweetie. What's up?

(DELILAH, VIVIAN AND ALEX ALL TRY TO  
MOVE CLOSER WITHOUT BEING CONSPICUOUS)

BREE (CONT'D)

Well, yes, I did. But... Well, I  
didn't think... But that's not... I  
see...

(BREE'S EYES WELL UP WITH TEARS)

BREE (CONT'D)

Well, I'm sorry. I didn't do it on  
purpose... Okay. Okay. I'll see you  
later.

(BREE HANGS UP THE PHONE, OBVIOUSLY  
UPSET)

BREE (CONT'D)

Could you all excuse me?

(BREE EXITS UPSTAIRS. THE LADIES REACT.  
AS ALEX EXITS UPSTAIRS AFTER BREE, WE:)

(CUT TO:)

ACT TWO

Scene 4

INT. ALEX'S GUEST BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

(BREE IS ON THE BED, CRYING. ALEX ENTERS, CROSSES, AND SITS NEXT TO HER)

ALEX

That was your first fight with  
Jesse, wasn't it?

(WITHOUT LOOKING UP, BREE NODS "YES")

ALEX

You know, this is part of being  
married, too. It'll be alright.

BREE

You didn't hear the way he spoke to  
me. He actually yelled at me.

ALEX

Sweetheart, Jesse didn't mean to  
yell at you. What he really wanted  
to do was yell at his mother.

BREE

Then why did you give the phone to  
me?

(BEAT)

ALEX

Okay. Let's try this again. Bree,  
did Jesse ever tell you about his  
father?

BREE

No. Why?

ALEX

When the boys were young, their father ran off with another woman. He completely abandoned the family, and they were left with nothing. So Mother Buchanan had to raise her sons alone, working two jobs, three at Christmas, whatever she had to do to keep the family going. She even managed to put them all through college. And from what Roy tells me, she never complained. Not even once.

BREE

Wow.

ALEX

Wow is right. The woman would qualify for sainthood if it weren't for one tiny little thing.

BREE

What's that?

ALEX

She's a bitch.

(BREE REACTS. ALEX PUTS HER ARM AROUND HER)

(MORE)



ALEX (CONT'D)

Look, I just wanted you to understand why she has such a hold over our husbands. The bond between mothers and sons is always strong, but in this case, it's unbreakable. Unfortunately, she knows it. When it comes to guilt, the woman's a professional. And I come from a long line of Jewish mothers. I should know.

BREE

(CONFUSED)

You sound like you respect her.

ALEX

Oh, I do. I also have respect for poisonous snakes. But that doesn't mean I want them in my home.

BREE

So what do I do about Jesse?

ALEX

Nothing. I guarantee he already feels terrible about what happened. So when he comes crawling back, begging for forgiveness, gently take his head in your hands, sweetly look into his eyes, and tenderly say, "Oh, darling. I forgive you. Give me jewelry."

BREE

I can do that.

ALEX

Now I'm not going to lie to you,  
Bree. Marriage isn't always easy.  
But the best thing about this  
family is you never have to go  
through the tough times alone.  
Despite our differences, Delilah,  
Vivian, and I have always been  
there for each other. And now the  
three of us will be there for you,  
too.

BREE

Thank you.

(THEY HUG)

ALEX

C'mon, let's go get some dessert.

(THEY BEGIN TO CROSS TO THE DOOR)

BREE

Alex, do you think the day will  
ever come when we actually enjoy  
spending time with Mother Buchanan?

ALEX

Absolutely. Assuming we don't mind  
that long trip out to the cemetery.

(THEY EXIT. AND WE:)

(DISSOLVE TO:)

ACT TWOScene 5

INT. ANTEROOM OF SMALL CHURCH - THE NEXT DAY

(ALEX AND DELILAH ARE THERE. DELILAH IS LOOKING AT HERSELF IN THE MIRROR. VIVIAN ENTERS, BACKING INTO THE ROOM)

VIVIAN

Lyndon! P.J.! Stop it. I'm warning you. If you misbehave in church, Jesus won't love you anymore.

(OFF DELILAH STARING)

Please don't tell anyone I said that.

DELILAH

You know, Vivian, I used to cry myself to sleep at night because I couldn't have children.

(DELILAH PEEKS OUT THE DOOR AT THE TWINS AND THEN TURNS BACK TO VIVIAN)

DELILAH (CONT'D)

I don't anymore.

(JUST THEN BREE ENTERS, DRESSED IN A BEAUTIFUL BUT RATHER LOW-CUT WEDDING GOWN. AN APPROPRIATE FUSS IS MADE OVER HER BY THE LADIES)

ALEX

Oh, Bree, you're just...

BREE

Exquisite?

ALEX

I was going to say 'perky'.

BREE

Ooh. Even better. You guys, I totally forgot to buy a garter. Do you think we could borrow one from somebody?

ALEX

Oh, sweetie, I doubt it. It's not like there's a lot of women walking around wearing...

DELILAH

Here. You can have mine.

(DELILAH TAKES OFF HER GARTER AND HANDS IT TO BREE. ALEX REACTS)

VIVIAN

So...is everything okay now between you and Jesse?

BREE

Absolutely. He came over early this morning and begged my forgiveness. And then I told him I didn't care what my name was as long as I got to be with him. And then he said I was the most wonderful girl in the world. And then I asked for jewelry.

ALEX

You learn quickly, grasshopper.

(MR. JENKINS, A PHOTOGRAPHER, ENTERS, CARRYING A CAMERA)

MR. JENKINS

Excuse me, Ma'am. Is this where you wanted to take the picture?

BREE

Oh, yes. This is perfect.

DELILAH

Bree, what's going on?

BREE

I wanted to get an informal picture of us girls before the wedding. You know, just the sisters-in-law.

(THE WOMEN SMILE AT ONE ANOTHER AND START TO CROSS INTO PLACE)

DELILAH

What a sweet idea.

VIVIAN

I can't wait to get a copy. I know I'll treasure this picture forever.

(SUDDENLY MOTHER BUCHANAN ENTERS)

MOTHER BUCHANAN

So, where do you want me to stand?

VIVIAN

Or maybe I'll just use it to line my bird cage.

(AWKWARD BEAT OF SILENCE. THEN:)

DELILAH

Well, actually, Mother Buchanan,  
this was going to be a picture of  
just the four of us.

ALEX

I hope you don't mind.

MOTHER BUCHANAN

I see. Well, I suppose I should  
have expected as much from this  
cozy little group.

(SHE STARTS TO EXIT)

BREE

Wait.

(ALEX, DELILAH, AND VIVIAN LOOK AT BREE.  
SHE SHRUGS APOLOGETICALLY)

BREE (CONT'D)

Come to think of it, it would be  
nice to get a picture of all the  
Mrs. Buchanans. Mother Buchanan,  
why don't you come stand by me?

(MOTHER BUCHANAN, APPEASED, CROSSES TO  
THE GROUP AND STANDS ON THE END NEXT TO  
BREE. THE PHOTOGRAPHER GETS IN PLACE,  
READY TO SHOOT)

DELILAH

(SOTTO, TO VIVIAN)

I can't believe she caved in.

VIVIAN

(SOTTO, TO DELILAH)

She's never going to be one of us  
if she gives in that easily.

MR. JENKINS

Alright, ladies. Give me a big smile. This is for posterity.

MOTHER BUCHANAN

You look beautiful, Bree.

BREE

Thank you.

MOTHER BUCHANAN

Although I'm shocked that the tramp who stole my baby would have the gall to wear white.

(INSTANTLY, AND WITHOUT BREAKING HER SMILE OR EVEN LOOKING, BREE FORCEFULLY SHOVES MOTHER BUCHANAN AWAY FROM HER AND OUT OF THE PICTURE JUST AS THE PHOTOGRAPHER SHOTS. WE FREEZE FRAME ON THE PHOTO OF "THE FOUR MRS. BUCHANANS", AS WE HEAR THE FINAL LINE:)

ALEX (V.O.)

Oh, I think Bree's going to fit in just fine.

(AS WE STARE AT THE PICTURE OF OUR LADIES, WE:)

(FADE OUT:)

END OF ACT TWO