

1 **HADLEY:** In the time it takes to repair that face, you could build a pyramid.

**DESMOND:** Hadley, that is not the way to Auntie's heart.

**HADLEY:** I'm sorry, Desi, you're right. A knife would be much quicker.

5 (DESMOND gives a disapproving look.) Kidding.

**NICK:** We have a spot reserved for the three of you. Desmond, you'll sit here (*Indicates seat one.*), Hadley here (*Indicates seat two.*) and Mrs. VanHeusen here. (*Indicates seat three.*)

**HADLEY:** You said this second seat is mine? I need a drink. (*Drinks from the second glass.*)

10 **DESMOND:** Hadley, promise me you won't lose control in front of Auntie tonight.

**HADLEY:** Can't promise that.

**DESMOND:** Please, Hadley, Auntie Eleanor is an angel.

15 **HADLEY:** So was Lucifer.

**ELEANOR:** (*ENTERS with a big flourish.*) Hello, hello.

**HADLEY:** Speak of the devil. (*ELEANOR should work the room, stopping at a couple of tables, identifying people by name and making various remarks, such as, "Congratulations, on your fifth marriage," or "Did you have that plastic surgery?" While she's doing that, DESMOND takes his seat at seat one, and HADLEY sits next to him at seat two.*)

20 **NICK:** Ladies and gentlemen, Eleanor VanHeusen. (*Applause.*)

**ELEANOR:** (*Goes to the head table.*) No, really, you shouldn't.

**HADLEY:** I tried not to, but I was overruled.

25 **NICK:** Mrs. VanHeusen, at last.

**ELEANOR:** (*Very friendly to NICK.*) Hello, Nick, lovely to see you again.

**NICK:** We were so worried there might have been an accident.

**HADLEY:** Could we have been so lucky?

**NICK:** We have a place all prepared for you. You'll sit here. (*Indicates seat three.*)

30 **ELEANOR:** Oh, no, I'll just plop down next to Desi. (*Forces HADLEY to move from seat two to seat three. Once HADLEY has sat down in her new seat...*) Oh, look, Hadley, that lady is wearing the same color outfit as you. (*ELEANOR leans forward and points with her left hand as she places her right hand over glass three in front of HADLEY. This move must be subtle, yet something the AUDIENCE will recall later.*)

35 **DARBY:** (*Runs to ELEANOR.*) Grandma, Grandma! (*TOMMY follows DARBY to the head table.*)



1 **ELEANOR:** Darby. My darling Darby, how's my favorite granddaughter?  
(As ELEANOR'S attention is directed toward DARBY, HADLEY  
switches glasses with ELEANOR, since the one in front of ELEANOR  
is the one she had previously been drinking from. ELEANOR does  
5 not notice the switch.)

**DARBY:** I'm your only granddaughter, Grandma. Your only young and  
cute living heir to your obscenely large fortune.

**ELEANOR:** Darby, what are you doing here, dressed like a boarding  
school runaway?

10 **DARBY:** Remember how you once said it was important to see how  
the other half lives? Well, I'm seeing what it's like to cross the  
tracks, to wallow in the mire, to see what the simple folk do. I just  
want to be worthy of your vast generosity.

**ELEANOR:** How utterly charming. And who might this little street  
15 urchin be? (Takes a drink.)

**DARBY:** My boyfriend.

**ELEANOR:** (Chokes on drink.) Excuse me?

**DARBY:** You're so funny. You remember Tommy.

**ELEANOR:** Of course. I feel a sudden need for some Pepto Bismol.

20 **TOMMY:** Pleased to meet you again, Mrs. VanHeusen. (He butchers  
her last name.)

**ELEANOR:** Yes, of course you are. Well, look, why don't you two run on  
to the kitchen and bring me something special. (As they EXIT to the  
kitchen, she turns to MAGGIE.) Cross off the Tupperware.

25 **NICK:** Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your patience. Once again,  
please give a big hand to our founder, our benefactor and patron  
saint of the theatre guild. (Beckons her to stand.) Mrs. Eleanor  
VanHeusen. Celebrating 20 years as the founder and producer. I  
promise this will be a special night that none of us will forget.

30 **ELEANOR:** Thank you, Nicky darling, and to each and every one of  
my adoring fans, thank you for supporting the theatre. As you  
know, theatre has always been near and dear to my heart. For  
as someone famous once said, "Without the theatre, you don't  
have... you don't have..." Well, there's something you don't have.  
35 Anyway, I'd like to introduce a special guest this evening, my  
nephew Desmond Kennedy, who's visiting all the way from New  
England. Desi. (DESMOND stands to be recognized.) And now,  
without further ado—

**DESMOND:** Auntie.

40 **ELEANOR:** Yes?

**DESMOND:** You forgot Hadley.



1 **ELEANOR:** Who? (*DESMOND points to HADLEY.*) Oh, yes, of course, how thoughtful of me. My nephew's new bride, Hadley Frankenstein.

**DESMOND:** Franklin, Auntie, Franklin.

**ELEANOR:** I beg your pardon, Hadley Franklin—stein—Kennedy. Now,  
5 please sit back and enjoy theatre at its finest. (*DARBY and TOMMY RE-ENTER. TOMMY carries two plates of spaghetti and sets them in front of HADLEY and DESMOND. DARBY carries ELEANOR'S plate of spaghetti with plenty of spaghetti sauce.*)

**DARBY:** Here you go, Grandma, something prepared especially for  
10 you with extra sauce just the way you like it. (*EXITS back to the kitchen.*)

**ELEANOR:** Thank you, dear.

**TOMMY:** Enjoy your meal, Mrs. VanHeusen. (*Again butchers her last name. He remains in the dining room.*)

15 **ELEANOR:** I'll try.

**NICK:** Cue lights, music. The theatre guild presents *Dinner at Eight, Dead by Nine*. (*The LIGHTS GO DOWN. BACKGROUND MUSIC plays. Suddenly we hear a thump from the head table and a horrible scream from HADLEY.*) Lights up! Lights up! (*As the LIGHTS come back UP, HADLEY has spaghetti sauce all over her, and ELEANOR is slumped over the table, her face planted in the plate of spaghetti. [NOTE: The more sauce ELEANOR has on her face, the funnier this scene will be.]*)

**HADLEY:** (*Looking at the sauce all over her.*) I've been shot! (*ALL gather around HADLEY, paying no attention to ELEANOR.*)

25 **DESMOND:** Hadley, Hadley! (*To AUDIENCE.*) Someone call for help.

**TOMMY:** Help, help!

**NICK:** (*To TOMMY.*) Do you have a phone?

**TOMMY:** Yes, I do, thank you.

30 **NICK:** Is she all right?

**DESMOND:** Hadley, are you all right?

**HADLEY:** I think so.

**MAGGIE:** What happened?

**HADLEY:** I don't know. The lights went out and suddenly I felt all wet.

35 **DESMOND:** Did anyone see anything? Nick?

**NICK:** Well, no, I was on my way to help with the lights and sound.

**DESMOND:** Maggie?

**MAGGIE:** No, I was right next to Nick, helping with the lights.

**DESMOND:** Someone must have seen something. How else to explain  
40 this spaghetti sauce all over Hadley's dress? (*Looks to ELEANOR,*