

THE GLITTER GIRLS

A southern comedy in two acts

by Mark Dunn

DIRECTOR PREVIEW
NOT LICENSED

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PLACE AND TIME

The play takes place in the fictional north Georgia town of Hickman Hills in late May of this year. Hickman Hills is like most southern small towns: Mayberry on the outside, Peyton Place on the inside. It's the kind of American hamlet where people generally try to mind their own business ... and generally fail. Over the last decade or so, the town has seen a marked increase in commercial and residential development, as either welcoming recipient or victim (depending on how one feels about such a thing) of ineluctable Atlanta suburban sprawl.

Hickman Hills has watched its long abandoned burlap factory turned into a successful concern for the weaving and marketing of fashionable woolen snoods*, eventually earning itself the proud moniker: "Snood Capital of the World." This is no stray fact of local trivia. A sudden caprice on the part of the woman who almost single-handedly put the town on the international fashion map, does, in fact, serve as chief catalyst for this play.

The Glitter Girls takes place on the back porch and adjoining back yard of one Trudy Tromaine, Hickman Hills' richest and most illustrious resident.

* **snood** (snōōd) *n.* 1. a net-like hat or part of a hat or fabric that holds or covers the back of a woman's hair. 2. the pendulous skin over the beak of a turkey.

**CAST OF CHARACTERS
IN ORDER OF THEIR APPEARANCE**

ARPEGE LACROIX a.k.a ARNOLD CROSS: Of indeterminate age. Arpege is Trudy Tromaine's maid, and was born *Arnold Cross*. Arpege considers himself "as feminine as is required" (this requirement to be revealed in the script). Because Arpege is basically a slob, he* doesn't go to great lengths to convince others of his chosen gender. A wig, a smear of lipstick, a dress and high heel shoes is representative of his best effort along these lines. (* Given that Arpege's gender choice is one of expediency born of circumstance, and the character is not an organic transgendered individual, he will be referred to throughout the script by use of male pronouns. Toward the end of the play, he will revert to Arnold, his remaining lines of dialogue assigned to ARNOLD, rather than to ARPEGE.)

TRUDY TROMAINE: sixty, rich as all-get-out (as they say in the South) and eccentric with a capital E. Trudy is president and founder of "The Glitter Girls," a woman's social club and, sometimes, charitable organization. Trudy understands that she has a town reputation for color and flamboyance and wears that reputation with pride.

PATTY WESLEY: twenty-two, the youngest Glitter Girl, but quite comfortable in the company of her older G.G. sisters. Patty is a work-in-progress, smart and analytical, feisty but only occasionally confrontational. Patty is pursuing her Masters Degree in social work at a local university.

CHARLIE SEABURN: twenty-two, son and "representative" of the absent Barbara Seaburn. Charlie is studying to become a lawyer like his mother. He defaults to bashfulness and is not nearly as assertive as he would like to be, the result, some would say, of having lived most of his life under the thumb of a domineering, single parent. But he's working hard to overcome his deficiencies.

VALERIE FAIRHOPE: forty-five, a former exotic dancer whose face, though hardened and furrowed with the years, still maintains a youthful beauty and vibrancy. As a Zumba fitness instructor, Val also boasts a shapely figure she's not shy about showing off through the somewhat revealing clothing she wears. Val has been beaten up by life but has refused to stay down for the count.

FLOSSIE PRICE: fifty-eight, grew up in rural poverty but won her personal sweepstakes when she was swept off her feet and put into both a dental chair and a wedding dress by a local dentist, the unfortunately named Vincent Price. Flossie has come far, but maintains a hillbilly sensibility and manner of speaking.

The Glitter Girls

MAYVONNE RAUSCH: at seventy-four, the oldest Glitter Girl, but by no means the archetypal "little old lady." Mayvonne's disposition is sweet and mothering, but she won't be pushed around. Mayvonne was a junior high school teacher, long married but now widowed. It is very hard not to like this lovely, well-groomed, well-disposed, and very smart (though occasionally marmish) woman.

MAMIE EWING: sixty-four, the wife of a town councilman (and soon-to-be candidate for mayor), and owner of her own dress shop; a handsome, exquisitely-dressed woman, with a sophisticated air about her (or as close to sophistication as one gets in Hickman Hills). Mamie can't help it that she's abrasive and puts people off; it just comes naturally.

CORINNE CULVERT: thirty-six, pretty, nice-figured, but going through one hell of a bad time right now, and it shows in her bedraggled expression and in the laggard, plodding way she carries herself about. Corinne's husband is the bane of her existence, though she can't help loving him. A familiar trope.

DOWD FOSTER: fifty-five, a recent widower. His late wife Mary Katherine was a Glitter Girl and he has joined the others to honor her memory and to show respect for all of the women who had been her friends. Dowd is a good ol' boy if there ever was one. He has been a good provider and a loving father to his son and daughter. Dowd owns a tire store.

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ACT ONE

Scene One

LIGHTS come up on Trudy Tromaine's back porch and adjoining back lawn and herb garden. This being the American South, the porch ought to be screened in, but since so much of the action of the play takes place here, accommodations should be made for audience accessibility. The porch is decked out in matching white wicker furniture and potted plants.

ARPEGE LACROIX steps out onto the porch from inside the house. He is dressed casually (perhaps a tied-off blouse and Capri pants) and carries a tray containing a pitcher and several glasses. He sets it on a wicker roll-cart. He goes to a table and tidies up a spread of assorted fruit slices and finger foods. A moment later he is joined by TRUDY TROMAINE, who also emerges from the house. She's carrying several throw-pillows. These she distributes thoughtfully among the various chairs and loveseats. She steps back and gives the porch a good looking-over.

TRUDY (to Arpege)
Okay. What else?

ARPEGE
(also studying the porch arrangement)
'Looks fine to me.

TRUDY
And how do *I* look?

ARPEGE
Lovely as always.

TRUDY
That was sweet, but I'm supposed to be dying.

ARPEGE

Who says a dying woman can't be beautiful?

TRUDY

The point, Arpege, is that I have to be convincing. I have weeks – possibly only days – to live. Death is clawing at my door.

ARPEGE

(after thinking this over for
a moment)

Maybe if you sucked in your cheeks a little more.

(which he does to show how this
would look)

Okay. Now squeeze your eyes and make a mouth that looks like it's covered in painful cold sores. See?

(Arpege shows Trudy how this
would look, as well.)

TRUDY

You look constipated.

ARPEGE

Excuse me for living, but I'm trying to help.

TRUDY

Tell me if these smudges I put under my eyes make them look sunken. The effect I'm going for is something just this side of cadaverous.

(Arpege crosses to Trudy and
gives her eyes a close inspec-
tion. He shakes his head,
chews his lips.)

ARPEGE

Not really seeing it.

(responding to Trudy's unhappy
reaction)

Look, I told you last night that you might want to rethink those two bowls of Rocky Road. Try this: frown.

(Trudy obligingly frowns. Arpege
shakes his head disapprovingly.
Trudy plops down in one of the
chairs. She half-groans/half-
sighs.)

TRUDY

I'm *supposed* to be a woman benighted by the shadow of death.

ARPEGE

And yet: are you not still planning to come skipping out here like the "hostess with the mostest"?

TRUDY

I wasn't going to *skip*, Arpege. I was going to *hobble*.

ARPEGE

Maybe you should just keep to your bed.

TRUDY

And let *you* be the one to make the presentation to my Glitter Girls? No, sir. There are far too many working parts to my plan to leave any of this up to you.

(beat)

Anything else?

ARPEGE

(after a moment's thought)

After you sit down, don't try to get up without my help, okay? And don't forget to moan and flinch every now and then - you know - on account of all the pain from whatever that disease is you haven't told anybody about yet.

TRUDY

Okay. Is that it?

ARPEGE (shrugging)

I guess.

TRUDY

(getting up)

Very well then.

(looking around)

Something's missing.

ARPEGE

There's a second tray of canapés. I'll get it.

(Something about Arpege's nose suddenly captures her attention.)

ARPEGE

(cont., self-conscious)

What?

TRUDY (pointing)

Darling, you have a very large hardened mucous ball positioned right on the edge of your left-

ARPEGE (translating)

I have a booger.

(ARPEGE gets rid of it.)

It isn't a hard word to say. You might be worth some ungodly fortune, but you and I both know you're still a country girl at heart. Which means you still know words like - oh, if only I could think of one. I know! "Booger."

TRUDY

(studying Arpege's nose)

It does now appear to be gone.

ARPEGE

Is this how you treated all the people who worked in your snood factory? Belittling their appearance whenever you got the notion?

TRUDY

No. As a matter of fact, I treated my employees far worse than that. Because I expect only the best from the people whom I employ. Unfortunately, they were forever disappointing me. People disappoint me, Arpege, or haven't you noticed? My employees... My family - that is: what little family I have left...

ARPEGE

(adding himself to the list)

... Your poor maid Arpege. But what about your blessed "Glitter Girls"? Do they disappoint you too?

TRUDY

Of course they do.

ARPEGE

And yet you're getting ready to give one of them a ton of money.

TRUDY

Under certain conditions. Run along now. Oh, and bring out the other pitcher of lemonade. Tick-tock, tick-tock!

(Arpege starts for the door,
stops.)

ARPEGE

Ma'am?

TRUDY

Yes?

ARPEGE (turning)

Just what *is* it you're supposed to be dying of? If you're going to tell your guests, don't I have a right to know too?

TRUDY

Well, of course you do. And I wasn't deliberately withholding it from you. It's just that I haven't made up my mind yet. This is no easy task. I require a terminal illness that is very rare and hopefully ungooglable. I narrowed it down to either "Degenerative Hypoplasia" or "Progressive Inversion of the Spleen."

ARPEGE

I have no idea what either of those are.

TRUDY

That's because I made them up. I'm hoping that whichever one I pick will sound sufficiently convincing to all my Glitter Girls.

(Something else about Arpege's face distracts her.)

Did you shave this morning?

ARPEGE

By habit I shave only every *other* morning.

TRUDY

I'd rethink that habit.

ARPEGE

(sniffing his armpits)

Do you think I should shower?

TRUDY

When were your last ablutions?

ARPEGE

Sunday.

TRUDY

You're incorrigible. No, no, there isn't time. Go powder yourself and get into your maid's uniform.

ARPEGE

Yes ma'am.

(Again, Arpege starts inside. He stops and turns, staring at Trudy, apparently wanting to say something to her, but not seeming to know how.)

TRUDY

Is there something you wish to say, Arpege? You have that *look*.

ARPEGE

(after taking a deep breath to
steel himself)

I don't think what we're doing is right.

TRUDY

Did I ask for your opinion?

ARPEGE

You ask for my opinion twenty times a day, Ms. Tromaine - usually
when it comes to things that don't matter a flip. But the
important stuff -

TRUDY

Like deciding who I'm going to give my money to?

ARPEGE

I just don't think you're going about this the right way.

TRUDY

Yes, I was starting to get that feeling from you.

ARPEGE

I know it isn't my place to talk you out of this. But I guess I
couldn't live with myself if I didn't at least try.

TRUDY

Well, let's consider that you *did* try and you failed.

(Arpege sighs noisily. Trudy
sits down. She points to the
chair directly across from her,
and indicates that Arpege
should do the same.)

TRUDY (cont.)

Arpege.

ARPEGE

Yes?

TRUDY

Do you know how much money I made from the sale of my snood
factory last month?

ARPEGE

Are you finally going to tell me?

TRUDY

Yes, I'm going to tell you. Fifty - well, closer to fifty-one
million dollars.

(Arpege whistles.)

TRUDY (cont.)

It turns out that I have a real talent for making money. Now, here's the question of the day: do you think I should give some of that money to one of my Glitter Girl Sisters of the Gleam and Sparkle?

ARPEGE

Which, hopefully, she'll divide with all the others? Yes, it's a very nice gesture.

(beat)

Um, are you going to do something nice for your Girl Friday too?

TRUDY

Of course I am! Contingent, of course, on her finally telling me why she had to go undercover.

ARPEGE

I have to tell you that before you leave me any money?

TRUDY

Yes, Arpege. The word of the day is trust. I have put enormous trust in you over the last three years. And you want to know *why*, Arpege? Because you have proven to me your worth and your goodness time and time again. You proved your goodness that day on Highway 27 when you pulled me from my burning Mercedes and dragged me to safety. You risked your own life to save mine, and I remain forever in your debt.

ARPEGE

(suddenly abashed)

Thank you, but it wasn't all me. Part of it was pure adrenalin from those eight cans of Red Bull. But to be honest, I *have* grown a little attached to you.

TRUDY

As I have you.

ARPEGE

But you're having doubts about your Glitter sisters?

TRUDY

Doubts. Yes, that's a good way to put it. Since we all came together sixteen years ago, I've grown fond of them, I'll admit it. And they seem to *adore* me. But is their adoration and devotion - is it genuine, Arpege? Or is it based on the fact that I, say, fly them all to Bermuda once a year for getaway weekends, or get their husbands luxury suites at the Georgia Dome, or pay to send their kids to exclusive boarding schools and prep schools? Do they love me for *me*, Arpege, or are all eight of them -

(She interrupts herself.)

TRUDY (cont.)

Oh, there aren't eight of them anymore, are there? Poor Mary Katherine. Are all seven of them just waiting to see how big a chunk of money I might leave them and their families when I kick that ol' bucket? That's what this experiment will prove, in spite of how much you may object to it.

ARPEGE

I promise from now on to keep my objections to myself.

TRUDY

Thank you.

(Arpege stands up.)

ARPEGE

Should we run another check on the listening devices?

TRUDY

I did that already. It was while you were down here straightening the porch. You were humming that Beatles song, weren't you? "Eleanor Rigby."

ARPEGE

Yes, ma'am. And I wasn't humming it very loud, either.

TRUDY

The man at that Atlanta spy store said I was buying the very best bugs on the market. Oh, and I do not like that song. It's so bleak.

ARPEGE

I'm trying to put myself in a bleak mood. Isn't this what you want?

TRUDY

Yes, I suppose it is.

ARPEGE

So how much money are you giving to the winner of your game?

TRUDY

I thought sixteen million would be fair. One million for each of the years the Glitter Girls have been glittering. As for the rest of my money, you needn't worry; I plan to be very generous with my maid, chauffeur, cook, and general all-around factotum. In other words, I plan to be very generous with my dear Arpege.

(Arpege smiles obscenely.)

TRUDY

But most will go to the various charities I support. My four ex-husbands can go fly a kite ... which they'll have to buy with their own money.

ARPEGE

Not to throw a wrench in your plans, Ms. Tromaine, but is there any chance that you could do for me what you're doing for the winner of your "Glitter Girl Challenge"? Give me my money *before* you check out?

TRUDY

Well, that depends on what kind of naughty business turned you into a fugitive from justice. I certainly don't want to reward criminal behavior.

ARPEGE

Yes, I understand.

TRUDY

Are you ever going to tell me?

ARPEGE

Someday I'll tell you.

TRUDY

But for now we'll just leave things the way they are. Is that what you're saying?

(Arpege nods.)

TRUDY

So you like things right where they are: you and me - our happy little life together?

ARPEGE

It's okay, I guess.

TRUDY

Didn't you once tell me that you've been a woman for so long, it's just a part of who you are now?

ARPEGE

Did I say that? Was I high? Ms. Tromaine, to be honest, I kind of liked being a man. There were certain advantages I really enjoyed.

TRUDY

Well for Heaven's sake, don't tell me those advantages. Considering how hard I had to work as a *woman* to achieve success in the specialized apparel industry, I'd rather not listen to what things were just *handed* to you as part of your male birthright.

ARPEGE

(thoroughly chastened)

Okay. But I was mostly thinking of the convenience of peeing standing up.

(Now Trudy stands up.)

TRUDY

I'm glad we had this talk.

ARPEGE

Me too.

TRUDY

(looking at her watch)

Hurry up, now. Go get changed. Check on the bacon puffs. And take the caviar out of the fridge and put it on ice.

ARPEGE

Your guests are having caviar *and* bacon puffs?

TRUDY

Why not? It represents the two epochs of my life. Both the lean years of my hill 'n' holler youth, and the flush years of my late adulthood. Besides, I feel that beluga roe and bacon bits happen to go quite well together.

(Arpege goes inside. Trudy finds her tiara and puts it on. She sits down, looking regal and really quite pleased with herself. LIGHTS fade to black.)

End of Scene One

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Scene Two

Twenty-five minutes later.

LIGHTS come up on the porch and back yard. PATTY WESLEY and CHARLIE SEABURN are standing in the herb garden.

PATTY

Me too - always the very first. Sometimes I get to parties so early I end up helping the host and hostess put all the food out. Sometimes they send me for ice. But I really can't help myself. My mother says it's because I was born one month premature. There's an irony here, which would be funny if it wasn't so sad.

CHARLIE

You mean the fact that you were born premature and your mother *died* premature?

PATTY (aghast)

No!

CHARLIE (mortified)

I can't believe I said that. Sometimes things just fly out of my mouth and I don't know why.

PATTY

Don't worry about it. I remember when we were in high school you hardly let *anything* fly out of your mouth.

CHARLIE

You actually *remember* me from high school?

PATTY

Of course I do. You sat right in front of me in Mr. Higgins' English class and - confession time: sometimes when I'd get bored, I'd study the swirly way the hair grows on the back of your neck.

(CHARLIE slaps his hand over his neck, self-conscious.)

CHARLIE

Are my swirls, um, *weird*?

PATTY

Not at all. They're *interesting*. They remind me of the swirly sky in that painting, *Starry Night*. Do you know it?

CHARLIE

I'm not sure.

(PATTY pulls out her phone.)

PATTY

No, what I meant by ironic is that my two brothers were both born *late* and throughout their lives they've always *been* late - I mean for *everything*. Brad was so late for his wedding that Jill - she would have been his first wife - she walked right out on him. He steps inside the church and she's *gone*. I mean *forever*.

CHARLIE

You don't think she was just looking for an excuse not to marry him?

PATTY

Maybe. But he should have called her bluff by showing up on time.

CHARLIE

(with gentle sarcasm)

That would have made for a long and happy marriage.

PATTY

(showing him the picture she's pulled up on her phone)

Here it is. Now don't tell me you don't know this painting.

CHARLIE

I *do* know this painting. You should have told me it was by Van Gogh. Van Gogh is my mother's favorite painter. She likes him so much she pronounces his name *Van Gahhck*.

PATTY

I think I knew that about your mother. I know a lot about her, you know. I've been an honorary Glitter Girl since my mom died, and then back in December they officially "legacied" me in. I'm very well informed about *all* the Glitter Girls.

(with undisguised affection)

It was really sweet of you to come in her place.

CHARLIE

Actually, it was Ms. Tomaine who asked me. She knew that Mama would be in Italy this week. Her Atlanta law firm is opening a branch in Rome.

PATTY

Rome, Italy? Not Rome, Georgia?

CHARLIE

No, I'm pretty sure it's Rome, Italy. Ms. Tomaine said this was going to be an important meeting, so I'm here as Mama's proxy.

(glancing at the porch)

Where is everybody?

PATTY

They'll be here. It's still a little early.

(She bends over, rubs her fingers across the needles of a rosemary bush and sniffs her hand.)

I just love this smell. It's so pungent.

(She holds her hand out for him to smell, which he does.)

CHARLIE (nodding)

So you really liked looking at the back of my neck when we were in high school?

PATTY

(teasingly flirty)

Along with other parts of your anatomy. I have another confession: I love muscular legs on a man. And you always had the nicest legs.

CHARLIE

I guess they were kind of sinewy. I ran track.

PATTY

I think I remember that.

(because Charlie is wearing long pants:)

And I'll bet you *still* have beautiful, sinewy legs. I hope I'm not making you blush.

CHARLIE

I don't blush. Thank you for compliment. I think you have nice boobs.

PATTY

(caught off guard)

Did you just say what I think you just said?

CHARLIE

(mortified again)

Oh man. I can't believe I -

PATTY

You don't have a filter, do you? Some men don't.

CHARLIE

Oh God. Oh God.

PATTY (disarmingly)

I'll take it as the compliment you intended.

CHARLIE

Thank you. Let's change the subject. Better yet - I think I just heard a car door slam. Maybe we should go back to the porch.

(Charlie and Patty cross to the porch and climb the stairs. Patty goes to her bag, takes out her tiara, and puts it on.)

CHARLIE

That looks nice.

PATTY

It's my "legacy" tiara. It belonged to my mother. Where's your mother's?

CHARLIE

In my backpack. But I have no plans to wear my mother's tiara, no matter how funny she thought it might be.

PATTY

That's a shame. It would have been fun to see what you'd look like as a Glitter Girl.

CHARLIE

Sorry to disappoint you, but that ain't happening.

(VALERIE FAIRHOPE and FLOSSIE PRICE are led out onto the porch by Arpege, who is now wearing an over-the-top French maid's outfit. Both Valerie and Flossie wear their tiaras.)

FLOSSIE

Hey, Patty-cake!

PATTY

Hi, Flossie.

(Flossie gives Patty a big hug.)

VALERIE

(to Patty, indicating Charlie)
Nobody said we could bring dates.

PATTY

Are you getting senile, Valerie? This is Barbara's son: Charlie.

VALERIE

(squinting at Charlie)
Not Charlie Seaburn!

(She takes out her glasses, gives Charlie a look, then puts them away. Note: this will be a habit of Valerie's which the actor playing her should feel free to have fun with throughout the play. Think: Marilyn Monroe in *How To Marry a Millionaire*.)

Of course I know Charlie.

(to Charlie)

Although I might have recognized you sooner if you'd been wearing your track shorts. Where's your mom?

CHARLIE

She's in Rome, Ms. Fairhope.

FLOSSIE

Is that Rome, Georgia - or the other one where spaghetti comes from?

CHARLIE

Rome, Italy, Ms. Price.

VALERIE

Your mom's gotten to be the real globe trotter, hasn't she?

CHARLIE

Her firm is going international. They're exploring the possibility of a big merger, but I'm not supposed to talk about it.

VALERIE

Then why are you talking about it?

PATTY (having fun)

Charlie has no filter. He opens his mouth and things just pop out.

FLOSSIE

Are you gonna be a lawyer like your ma?

CHARLIE

That's the plan.

FLOSSIE

Well that ain't gonna be too good dontcha think - standin' in front of a jury and things just poppin' out?

CHARLIE

(good naturedly)

No, I suppose that could be a problem. Which is why I don't plan on being a litigator.

VALERIE

(looking him up and down)

I'm not happy being the one to break it to you, Charlie-o, but this meeting is supposed to be just for us Glitter Girls. At least that's what I was told. I thought we were only making one exception and that was for Mary Katherine's husband Dowd. I think it's because poor M.K. is still warm in the ground, and Trudy wanted to be nice.

FLOSSIE (chiding)

That was just plumb rude, Val!

VALERIE

How would you have said it, Flossie? Do you mountain people have some better way to speak of the recently dead?

FLOSSIE

Well, we don't *disrespect* 'em.

PATTY

(lightheartedly)

That's okay, Flossie. Valerie disrespects everyone.

(to Valerie)

It just so happens, Val, that Charlie is *supposed* to be here.

FLOSSIE (to Valerie)

In other words, sugar-cake: why don't mind your own cotton-pickin' business?

(turning to Arpege)

Arpege, are we gonna get to see Trudy down here on the porch, or will we be takin' turns visiting her up in her sick room?

ARPEGE

She'd *prefer* to come down. I mean, if she's feeling up to it.

(We hear the sound of a DOORBELL from off.)

More Glitter Girls. Excuse me.

(He exits into the house.)

PATTY (to Flossie)

Is Trudy pretty bad off?

FLOSSIE (nodding)

The last time I talked to her she said she'd gotten some discouragin' news from her doctor.

VALERIE

How discouraging?

FLOSSIE

Whatever it is she's got, I think it's gettin' worse.

VALERIE

What do you mean: *whatever it is she's got*? Didn't she tell you what's wrong with her?

FLOSSIE

Everybody knows Trudy's a private person. She don't go tellin' people things lessin' she's got a good reason.

VALERIE

But reading between the lines, do you think it's *terminal*?

FLOSSIE

I'm guessin' if it's gotten worse, then there's that possibility, y'all.

PATTY

I'll bet that's why she summoned us all here. She wants to give everybody the bad news at the same time.

FLOSSIE

I just don't understand it. Trudy was the picture of health when we all got together around the holidays.

VALERIE

Sometimes these things can sneak up on you. Back when I was a dancer -

FLOSSIE

Now don't you go tellin' us one of your gross stripper stories, Valerie.

VALERIE

(ignoring this)

One of the dancers, see - she found out she had worms.

FLOSSIE

Oh sweet Jesus, Valerie, you hush up!

VALERIE

And it wasn't the kind of worms you can get rid of very easily.

FLOSSIE

Could you please shut your dad-burned pie hole, Valerie?

(MAYVONNE RAUSCH steps out onto
the porch.)

MAYVONNE

Why does Valerie have to shut her pie hole?

PATTY

Hi, Mayvonne. You don't want to know.

MAYVONNE

(just noticing Charlie)

Why, look what the cat dragged in! I spy with my little eye:
little Charlie Seaburn, looking healthy and spry!

CHARLIE

'Afternoon, Ms. Rausch.

MAYVONNE

Oh please call me Mayvonne. I'm not your seventh grade teacher
anymore. And just look at you! Barbara Seaburn's little boy all
grown up.

VALERIE

(mock confidential to Mayvonne)

He looks even better in shorts and a muscle-tee.

MAYVONNE

Would you listen to yourself, Valerie? You're old enough to be
the boy's mother.

FLOSSIE

(confidentially to Patty)

There's a story that's been goin' around for years that Valerie
is Charlie's mother. That she had him out of wedlock and Barbara
asked if she could adopt him because she wanted a baby, but
unfortunately her womb wouldn't fix.

CHARLIE

Ms. Price, I actually heard every word of that. And there's no
truth to that story at all.

MAYVONNE

I don't know how rumors like that get started.

FLOSSIE

I do. Valerie makes it purdy easy. She's a big ol' slut.

VALERIE

Flossie Price, if you don't watch your mouth I could start a

rumor right now - all about your dentist husband and that chesty new hygienist of his.

FLOSSIE

I'm sorry, Val. I didn't mean to call you a big ol' slut. You did, after all, lose some of that pig fat of yours with all that Zumba-ing you've been doin'. Now you're more like a *Size Six* slut.

MAYVONNE

Ladies, please! Show some decorum. We have gathered at the home of a woman who probably isn't long for this earth. Please try to be respectful.

PATTY (to Mayvonne)

So, do you think that's why she called this meeting?

(Mayvonne nods sadly.)

CHARLIE

Mama wonders if all this might have something to do with the will Ms. Tromaine's drawing up.

MAYVONNE

Your mother isn't handling Trudy's will?

CHARLIE

(shaking his head)

She's using Mama's law firm, but there's actually a different partner taking care of the will.

VALERIE

I'd take that as a good sign.

MAYVONNE

What do you mean?

VALERIE

That Trudy might be planning on leaving something to Charlie's mother. I'll bet she's trying to avoid a conflict of interest. And if something's coming to Barbara, then more than likely, something's coming to all the rest of us too.

FLOSSIE

With all that circlin' and circlin', Valerie, don't your vulture wings ever get tired?

VALERIE (defensive)

I am only making a logical observation. Do you want me to just sit here and not make a peep?

FLOSSIE

You mean I don't have to pray on that anymore?

(MAMIE EWING now appears at the

door, unaccompanied and unnoticed by those on the porch. She stands on the threshold, listening. Mamie wears her tiara.)

VALERIE

(dropping her voice and speaking "entre nous")

Do you think I'm being - what's the word, Mayvonne?

MAYVONNE

Ghoulish?

VALERIE

That's right. Do you think it's ghoulish just to get some kind of idea as to what Trudy's plans might be?

MAMIE

(overhearing the question and jumping in)

Well, I don't think you're being ghoulish at all. I've been wondering the very same thing.

(Everyone turns to Mamie, who greets her fellow Glitter Girls with a big smile.)

FLOSSIE

Hello, Mamie. It's right nice to see you.

MAMIE

But you just saw me at my dress shop on Friday.

FLOSSIE

That don't count. You were tied up with a customer. I had to be waited on by that flibbertigibbet girl with the crossed eyes.

VALERIE

I have a problem with that girl myself. I'm always thinking: is she looking at me or is she checking the weather out the window?

MAMIE

It so happens that Carolee is my best sales clerk. She can't help the fact that her eyes go off in two different directions.

VALERIE (to Mamie)

You know something else I have a problem with when it comes to that store of yours?

MAMIE

Oh please, Valerie, must we? Whatever it is, I'm sure you've mentioned it before.

VALERIE

Maybe Charlie doesn't know.