

*(She points off left and whispers:)*

**EADDY.** On "the dark side."

*(All three turn their heads in unison and stare stage left.)*

**IMOGENE.** *(Worried.)* Oh girls...I never had these memory problems before I moved here...well...not that I'm aware of anyway. I'm taking all my meds like I'm supposed to -

**BEATRICE.** Well something ain't working looney tunes.

**EADDY.** *(Scolding.)* Beatrice!

**BEATRICE.** OH come on...she knows I'm joking. Don't ya crazy pants?

**IMOGENE.** Of course I do...ya old toothless bat.

**EADDY.** Imogene honey

**IMOGENE.** *(Anxious.)* I'm really worried girls... I don't want to end up over on the dark side. Why does everyone call it the dark side anyway?

**BEATRICE.** Because...there are a bunch of pitiful old people over there sitting around in the dark...alone...drooling on themselves.

**IMOGENE.** *(Shivering.)* How awful.

**EADDY.** You know...it seems like there are more moving over there every day. I saw Minnie Roberts last week...she was fluttering about and being a social butterfly. Two days later...I saw them rolling her down the breezeway to the dark side...she was babbling like a wacko and her eyes were rolling back in her head.

**BEATRICE.** *(Realization.)* Yes...you're right...something with Joe Porter and Mable Dupree.

**IMOGENE.** *(Panicked and pacing.)* Oh my God girls...they are going to take me over there and dump me in a padded room.

*(Beat.)*

I'm gonna be a drooling vegetable -

**EADDY.** Ima honey...don't worry...we won't let that happen. Will we Beatty?

**BEATRICE.** Of course not sugar...we'll disguise you and put you on a bus up to Canada before that happens.

**EADDY.** Beatrice...get serious!

**BEATRICE.** *(Adamant.)* I am serious.

**IMOGENE.** Ohmygod -

**BEATRICE.** OK...good...so it's settled...if they come to take Ima off to the dark side...we will throw her in the trunk of your Lincoln and haul her off to the Greyhound station. Now...while you are at least mildly lucid Sybil... can we get back to our vacation plans?

*(IMOGENE sits.)*

**EADDY.** Beatrice...Imogene needs our help.

**BEATRICE.** And like I said...I will be happy to help her...but can we *please* finalize this trip first? Imogene may want one last happy hoorah before we put her on a bus to Nova Scotia. Now, listen...I want to plan our cruise... OK?

**IMOGENE.** Fine -

**EADDY.** OK...whatever -

**BEATRICE.** Now who else can we invite? We need a fourth.

*(EADDY begins to pray. BEATRICE is disgusted. IMOGENE is bewildered.)*

**EADDY.** Dear Lord *please* forgive this heathen woman for only caring about herself and the carnal desires of her burning loins. Please do not do anything horrible to her...such as striking her down with burning hemorrhoids. She may be a selfish sinner Lord...but she is my friend and I love her. Amen.

**IMOGENE.** *(Confused.)* Uh...Amen?

**BEATRICE.** Listen to me! I want to go on a cruise! I want to wine and dine and dance the night away.

*(Beginning to fantasize, she rises.)*

I want to run on the beach and get my hair braided like Bo Derek. But most of all I want to meet a Silver Fox and get a little pickle tickle while I still can...without needing a nebulizer treatment afterwards.

**EADDY.** Beatty you really are a floozy.

**IMOGENE.** I can't believe you are into those one-night stands.

**BEATRICE.** Oh honey...I don't stand.

**EADDY.** Beatrice Shelton...just because you have a scandalous past *does not* mean you can't change your future.

**IMOGENE.** A scandalous past?

**BEATRICE.** Eaddy...look what you have done! Imogene was the one person besides you in this place who will speak to me like I am a human being -

**IMOGENE.** What are you talking about?

**EADDY.** Well she was going to find out sooner or later -

**BEATRICE.** Well it's not like I'm ashamed -

**IMOGENE.** (*Apprehensive.*) Ashamed...of what?

**EADDY.** (*Gently.*) Imogene...Beatrice here has a little secret...it's not a big deal...it's just that some people don't under-

**BEATRICE.** Well...it's not exactly a secret -

**EADDY.** Imogene it's not a big deal... Beatrice was -

**IMOGENE.** (*Throwing her hands up.*) Wait wait wait... I knew it... I knew it I knew it.

(*Beat, and then, pointing at BEATRICE:*)

YOU'RE REALLY A MAN!... I should have known with those big ole feet of yours...and that awful wig is a dead giveaway.

**BEATRICE.** (*Appalled.*) WHAT?! Oh Good Lord Imogene... I am not a man... I was a stripper...and this is *MY HAIR!*

**EADDY.** Beatty...you were not a stripper...you were a -

(*Grandly:*)

Lady of Burlesque.

**BEATRICE.** Oh hell Eaddy...I was a stripper...and I am not ashamed.

**IMOGENE.** (*Disappointed.*) Oh...well poo...I have to admit I'm a little disappointed...I thought it was going to be something more exciting.

**EADDY.** Actually Imogene...it *is* quite exciting. Our little old Beatrice here once strutted her stuff at the world-famous Minsky's Burlesque in New York City.

**BEATRICE.** That is until my *stuff*...strutted on off without me.

**EADDY.** (*With real pride.*) Our Beatrice was known as Miss Bang Bang la-Dish..."The Best Guns in the West." 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.** (*Sincerely.*) Well...now that's very impressive.

**BEATRICE.** (*Taken aback.*) Really?

**IMOGENE.** Sure...the most adventurous thing that ever happened to me...was this one time when I accidentally took too many aspirin and took my blouse off...and showed everyone my...uh...ninnies.

(*Distant memory as she covers her chest as if bare.*)

Luckily...Mama's funeral was over and most of the people had already left the graveside.

**BEATRICE.** (*Puzzled.*) Your ninnies? Are you talking about your tits?

**EADDY.** Beatrice...can you please say (*Whispers.*) breasts? You are so vulgar.

**BEATRICE.** Tits tits tits -

**EADDY.** (*Not really upset.*) Stop it you old tramp.

**BEATRICE.** So Imogene...you don't think I'm trashy?

**IMOGENE.** Well sure I think you're trashy honey...but I love ya for it.

(*BEATRICE and IMOGENE giggle.*)

**EADDY.** (*Praying.*) Dear Lord...please forgive these evil sinners before me...and forgive me for continuing to associate with them as I am weak and easily misled. AMEN.