

front you some cash.

DOT. Yes, surely she would. This is an emergency and you're *family*.

RANDA. *My grandmother, Cruella de Vil?* Not a chance. However, if Alden asked for a surfboard, she'd gladly buy him a yacht. No, asking her for a loan would only lower her opinion of me, *if that's possible*. In fact, she's coming to town next week to celebrate her ninety-first birthday and I'm just going to stay safely out of sight and avoid the usual demoralizing encounter.

JINX. That's it! I am on fire with ideas here! Am I perfect for this job, or what?! *(To Randa.)* I may know a way you can get back on track with your family. *(Off their looks.)* We're throwing Granny Covington a birthday party that will win her over to your side!

RANDA. Are you out of your ever-lovin' mind?! It's one thing to push us into going swimming and salsa dancing, now you want me to bake a cake for *Satan*?!

JINX. Remember how I said now's the time to be fearless? Well, you've got to gamble big to win big. This one little gesture could change your whole life

MARLAFAYE. She's right, Randa! 'Cause, girl, your life's so pitiful right now, the only way you can go is up!

DOT. Marlafaye, dear, no one really likes to be reminded her life is in the crapper. *(Randa slumps in exasperation.)*

JINX. *(Puts one arm around each, Marlafaye and Dot.)* Okay, *this* would be a good example of why *I* get to be the life coach and you two *don't*. *(Lights crossfade as Randa, Dot, and Marlafaye quickly exit into the kitchen with shoes, purses, mojito glasses, as downstage left pin spotlight comes up. Jinx walks into the light.)* Randa continued to be a little doubtful about my idea of the birthday party. But eventually, she got on board and we threw ourselves into it, spent the week getting ready for the *big do* in Randa's elegant dining room — we laid in caviar, the finest oysters, salmon mousse, all of her old granny's faves. Oh, and champagne, of course — doesn't hurt knowing a certain Texan who gets a steep discount. And I've got a great feeling about this. We'll have a ball and maybe, just maybe, Randa can *finally* win the old girl over. Look, I'm not kidding myself, it's a serious responsibility when someone puts her trust in you, but I was born for this! And it's a fantastic feeling that I might actually be able to help change people's lives for the better ... which is topped only by the thrill of getting good liquor on the cheap! Woo-hoo! *(Left pin spotlight fades, then Jinx exits into kitchen.)*

JINX. (*Snatches the blouse.*) Well, you can't go half-naked! (*Marlafaye lunges for the blouse. Jinx wads it up, runs it to Dot, calls.*) I'll block the kitchen door! (*Passes blouse to Dot, who grabs it, runs the other way. Marlafaye chases Dot.*) Here Dot! Here! (*Dot throws the blouse into the air. Marlafaye jumps up, snatches it.*)

MARLAFAYE. Ha, ha! Can't stop me now! (*Exits down side stairs. Dot starts to follow.*)

DOT. Hurry, Jinx! We've got to catch her!

JINX. Wait Dot, let her go! She's a hard-headed Texan and she's going to do what she's going to do.

DOT. (*Sighs.*) You're right, dear. I suppose there *are* worse things than spending Valentine's Day with your lying, cheating ex-husband who took all your money and ran off with a twenty-three-year-old. (*They look at each other a beat, then.*)

DOT/JINX. Naaaah!! (*Dot exits side stairs. Light crossfades to black as a slow, sexy love song plays. The downstage right pin spotlight comes up. Jinx takes a couple of dance steps into it.*)

JINX. I can truthfully say I'm a sucker for a lot of things — baby panda videos, drinks with tropical fruit and umbrellas in them, bobble-head dolls of former First Ladies ... and Valentine's Day. I take one look at the cut-out hearts and tubby little cupids and ads with lovers kissing on the beach, and in spite of myself, I fall for it hook, line, and sinker every single year. Maybe it's one of those hope-springs-eternal things. And yet, never *once* have I ever had a decent date on Valentine's Day. And as low as that bar is set, I think I achieved a new record with this one tonight. Turns out, Mr. God's-Gift-To-Spandex is a world-class narcissist! We'd just been seated at a great table, and I said, "What a gorgeous view, right?" He agreed with such gusto I whipped my head around and saw he was admiring his own reflection in the back of a spoon! And all the guy could talk about were *bicycles*. He spent the entire meal quoting stats on competition bicycle construction right down to the carbon-fiber disc wheels. By the time he extolled the virtues of shaving his legs to achieve more aerodynamic flow, I wanted to beat him to death with a tire pump. But now I realize the lesson I was supposed to learn from this — *never* date a guy whose calves are better-looking than *yours*! (*The pin spotlight fades to black as lights come up on the verandah. later that night. Dot is at the bar as Jinx walks into the light.*)

DOT. I'm pouring you some of this nice Madeira I brought.