

JEB

ELZBETH

40

Two Witches, No Waiting

ACT I

JEB (*cont'd*). Miz Arlene, it's me agin, Jeb. (*Crosses to the kitchen door.*) You cookin' up somethin', Miz Arlene? (*Opens the door and looks in.*) I jist wanted to stop by and have a little talk.

(*Unseen by the sheriff, ELZBETH enters down the stairs.*)

ELZBETH (*happily*). Sheriff Jeb!

JEB (*wincing as he sees her*). Oh no, the other one. (*Puts up his hands.*) Jist passin' through, Miz Elzbeth.

ELZBETH (*crosses to him*). Why, what a lovely surprise.

JEB (*backing away*). Surprise is right. (*Backs around the dining table.*)

ELZBETH (*following him*). We just don't see enough of you these days. Well, I don't anyways.

JEB. And you think that's a coincidence, do ye? Is Miz Arlene around somewhere, somewhere close?

ELZBETH. Oh, I guess so, but don't tell me you came all the way out here just to see her? (*Pulls out a chair and keeps following JEB.*)

JEB. That was my fervent hope and prayer, yes'sum.

ELZBETH. Why, I was just saying to Arlene yesterday what we need around this house is a good man.

JEB. Well, we're going around the house right now, ain't we?

ELZBETH (*laughs*). Hee hee hee, you sure know how to talk to a lady.

JEB (*watching ELZBETH*). I didn't mean to.

(*Not watching, he falls into the chair ELZBETH had pulled out.*)

ELZBETH. My my, SO glad you can sit awhile.

JEB (*looking at the chair*). I didn't mean to do this neither.

ELZBETH (*flops into his lap and looks at him*). My, my!

JEB. My back!

ELZBETH. Well, just look how we ended up. Now just what would somebody say if they were to come in now?

JEB. I lost a bet?

ELZBETH. Oh you! (*Playfully shoves on his chest.*) Don't you be coy with me. You KNOW I just LOVE a man in uniform.

JEB. I do now. (*To himself.*) Next time I come out, I'll wear camouflage.

(*At that moment, BONNIE enters from the kitchen. She is carrying a laundry basket filled with folded clothes.*)

BONNIE. Oh, excuse me!

ELZBETH (*jumps to her feet*). Why, Sheriff Abercrombie, the very idea. (*Now the southern belle, she fans herself.*)

JEB. Huh?

ELZBETH. How dare you take advantage of a young maiden like myself, my my.

JEB (*gets to his feet*). I ... I ... I ... (*Looks at BONNIE.*) She jumped me! Anyways, Miz Bonnie, I need to ask you a few more questions, if you has the time.

BONNIE (*places the basket on the dining table*). Question me?

ELZBETH (*nudging JEB*). Ooh, good cover story, Jeb. Nobody will know your REAL reason for being here, huh?

JEB. Does your balloon ever land?

BONNIE. Is it about that other housekeeper? The one that left in the middle of the night?

JEB. Matter of fact. You can see how odd it looks, cain't ye? I mean Opal Dunn ups and vanishes and then you show up, jist like 'at.

BONNIE. Well, what have you found out about her?

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