The Sweet Delilah Swim Club

SHEREE
LEXIE
DINAH

START→ LEXIE. Yeah, that's what my second ex-husband said, but it was the look of surprise on his assistant's face that got me the big divorce settlement, wasn't it?

SHEREE. *(Laughs.)* Oh, hush. *(Gives Lexie a hug.)* It's so good to see you.

LEXIE. You, too, Sheree. Lord, I just *live* for these weekends. *(Walks to the "picture window" that looks out onto the ocean, i.e., out toward the audience.)* Oh, look. Isn't that the most gorgeous thing you've ever seen?

SHEREE. *(Joins her.)* Yeah, there's nothing more beautiful than afternoon sun sparkling on the Atlantic Ocean.

LEXIE. Actually, I was talkin' about me. I just caught my reflection in the window and these highlights in my hair are divine.

SHEREE. What took you so long to get here? There wasn't any traffic coming in from Raleigh.

LEXIE. Well, there was this very attractive young man selling blueberries at the stoplight. So, I rolled down my window and told him, "If you can show me a cute tattoo, I'll buy a pint of blueberries."

SHEREE. Yeah. And…?

LEXIE. Well, I am here to tell you… *(Leans out the screen door and brings in two large bags filled with berries.)* It's surprising all the places you can put a tattoo. *(Hands Sheree the bags.)*

SHEREE. So, I guess we'll be having these on…everything.

LEXIE. Y'all can. I've never been a big fan of blueberries. *(Puts roses into a vase.)*

SHEREE. Lexie, those roses! You always bring such beautiful flowers.

LEXIE. I can't help myself. I thrive on the lovely things in life: flowers in sterling vases, hand-lettered place cards and flickering candlelight. Blame my refined and genteel Southern nature for the— *(Drops all pretension.)* Ooh, iced tea! I'm drier than a cow chip in a dust storm. *(Pours herself a glass of tea.)*

SHEREE. Did you bring the propane lighter for the grill?

LEXIE. Uh, sorry, I forgot it.

SHEREE. You forgot it last year, too. Not to worry. I've got it.

LEXIE. Well, if you were gonna bring it, why did you ask me to?

SHEREE. Same reason I buy every gadget that promises painless underarm hair removal: I keep hoping for a miracle. *(Picks up a note pad.)* I was just about to go over my list when you drove up: Turn in rental contract for cottage, check. Confirm Sweet Delilah for next year, check. Emergency kits...oh, shoot! I forgot the nori.

LEXIE. Nori? What do you need seaweed for?

SHEREE. My hors d'oeuvres.

LEXIE. For your—? *(Covering her alarm.)* Why, Sheree Hollinger, after you whipped up all those...delightful snacks last year, we agreed the rest of us would bring them this year. You shouldn't have to do everything.

SHEREE. Hey, once team captain, always team captain. Besides, y'all know I'm all about good nutrition. At least this way you girls eat healthy *once* a year. *(Pulls a Tupperware out of the ice chest.)* Let me just put these in the fridge. Ooh, this is fabulous: mung bean paste with goji berries and herring oil. Try it.

LEXIE. No, I don't think I— *(Sheree pops one into Lexie's mouth and exits into the kitchen with grocery bags. Disgusted, Lexie spits the snack into a potted plant.)*

SHEREE. *(Calls from offstage.)* What do you think?

LEXIE. *(Loudly.)* I think you've outdone yourself. Hey, are we going to Colonel Shad's Flounder Palace for supper tonight?

SHEREE. *(Reenters.)* You mean, the place they asked us to leave last year because every time the waiter leaned down, you licked his ear?

LEXIE. Sheree, he'd recently arrived from Honduras. I was merely showing him how hospitable we North Carolinians can be. *(Reacts to Sheree's look.)* Oh, don't worry, I no longer behave like that in public.

SHEREE. Today's tattooed blueberry boy notwithstanding.

LEXIE. Temporary lapse. Won't happen again.

SHEREE. Until you spot the first guy on the beach with tight abs.

LEXIE. Well, I am strong, but I'm not made of stone. *(Dinah Grayson, mid-forties, steps into the cottage dressed in executive chic.*

She brings in a shoulder tote bag, a suitcase on wheels and a portable bar in a case.)

DINAH. Out of the way, girls. I've got a martini shaker and I'm not afraid to use it.

SHEREE. Dinah! *(They hug.)* How was the drive from Atlanta?

DINAH. It took forever. Then some idiot buying blueberries had traffic backed up all the way to the bridge. *(Sheree gives Lexie a look, as Dinah gives Lexie a hug.)* I had no idea it would take this long to— *(Pulls back and looks at Lexie.)* Oh, my God, Lexie, you had your eyes done.

LEXIE. Why, yes I did. *(For Sheree's benefit.)* It's so nice when *someone* appreciates personal improvement.

SHEREE. Okay, Dinah. I missed it. How did you notice that right off?

DINAH. Please, I'm a lawyer. The second thing they teach you in the shark pool is "developing an eye for detail." It comes right after "negotiating top dollar for your soul."

SHEREE. Don't you think it's a bit early to opt for cosmetic surgery, Lex?

LEXIE. Well, don't look now, sugar, but we are forty-four. We've got to stay on top of gravity from here on out. I mean, just look what it's already done to Dinah's chest.

DINAH. I'll remember that remark. Especially when you beg me to file suit after your next eye job turns you into a Siamese cat. *(Sets her portable bar up on the table and starts mixing.)* Now, excuse me while I slip into something chilled.

SHEREE. Oh, eat this first, Dinah. You probably didn't have a thing for lunch.

DINAH. No, I actually had a—

SHEREE. *(Pops an hors d'oeuvre into Dinah's mouth.)* I'll get the ice. *(Grabs the ice bucket and exits into the kitchen. Dinah is frozen with the hors d'oeuvre in her mouth.)*

LEXIE. I share your pain. *(Holds the potted plant up.)* Fire away.

DINAH. *(Spits into the plant.)* That tastes like moldy grout. What is it?

LEXIE. Go with the grout. The truth is worse. *(Eyes Dinah's bag.)* That bag looks suspiciously like a briefcase to me. I think someone's

forgotten the "special weekend" rules: No men, no kids, no work. Just us girls. Sheree's going to be mighty sore if she finds out.

DINAH. *(Low.)* Okay, look, I've got a case that's turned into a real bear. I had no choice but to bring some things I've got to tie up. Give me a break, it's the first time I've breached the rules in twenty-two years. Just don't mention it to her. — STOP

LEXIE. Okay, but this is going to cost you.

DINAH. Like how?

SHEREE. *(Reenters with another tray.)* There are plenty more snacks. I know how much you girls love these.

LEXIE. Well, no one loves them more than Dinah. Here you go, Hon. *(Pops an hors d'oeuvre in Dinah's mouth.)* You can have my share. *(Dinah shoots Lexie a look just as Vernadette Simms, mid-forties, flies through the screen door toward the hall that leads to the bathroom. Vernadette, in baggy pants and an oversized Hawaiian shirt, has one arm in a sling. She rolls her suitcase in behind her.)*

VERNADETTE. Hi, y'all! Everyone's lookin' great. Ooooh, Lord! I don't know if I can make it! Eeeekkkk! *(Exits to bathroom.)*

DINAH. I'd say Vernadette has arrived.

SHEREE. I swear that woman's bladder gets smaller every year.

LEXIE. *(Looks out the screen door.)* Wow. How did a pickup that old actually make it all the way to the Outer Banks?

DINAH. *(Glances over Lexie's shoulder.)* It does look like she's had some repairs. I'm positive that's brand-new duct tape holding the bumper on.

LEXIE. Bless her heart, a dark cloud's been following that girl since the day she was born.

SHEREE. Did y'all hear Burl lost another job?

LEXIE. Great. An unemployed husband. That'll put the spring back in her step.

SHEREE. Wonder how Vernadette hurt her arm.

DINAH. I know the answer: When that tree crushed their roof and knocked the deer head off the wall, she thought she was strong enough to catch it. Turns out, she was wrong.