

CONTINUED: (6)

THOMAS

→ Hope it's not a white tux with a frilly front shirt.
 (Off Charlene's look)
 Oh, hell. It is, isn't it?

CHARLENE

He's not like you, Thomas. Never was.
 (Hiccups)
 Oh, excuse me again! I don't know where that's comin' from!

THOMAS

Charlene, I just want to say, well, you do know that in this day and age... when people find themselves in a... position they don't want to be in, they're not *required* to get married. Other solutions can be worked out.

CHARLENE

(Blank stare)
 I don't have any idea what you're talking about.

THOMAS

I think you do. I think you're at least smart enough to know that.

CHARLENE

"At least smart enough?" My Lord, you sure know how to make people feel good, don't you?

THOMAS

I'm just trying to-- (figure out)

CHARLENE

You know, smart people can be too smart for their own good. Not ever'body wants to run off to college first chance they get!

THOMAS

What's that supposed to mean?

CHARLENE

Nothin'. I didn't mean to say that.

THOMAS

Why is everybody around here so hell-bent against education? Education is what changes the world. Certainly changed mine.

CHARLENE

Maybe some people don't want to change the world. Maybe some people just want to make do in the world. Maybe some people's just not blessed with book smarts. An' maybe some people just gotta work with what God gives 'em.

THOMAS

That's a very percipient thought.

(CONTINUED)

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CHARLENE

I don't know what that means but if you're makin' fun of me again I'll just pray for you.

THOMAS

I was actually giving you a compliment.

CHARLENE

Oh. Well. Oughta raise your hand or something, so people know.

THOMAS

I'm sorry, Charlene. I didn't mean to upset you. Let's just take a step back, okay?

CHARLENE

Or two, or three.

THOMAS

So, what do you think you'll name the baby?

CHARLENE

What?!

THOMAS

When you have a baby, I mean. Just pretend.

CHARLENE

I don't like to play pretend.

THOMAS

Oh, come on, everybody likes to play pretend sometimes.

CHARLENE

Well, when I have a girl I sure won't name her Charlene.

THOMAS

Oh? Why not?

CHARLENE

There's a Facebook group called "My Parents Named Me Charlene 'Cause They Really Wanted a Boy." Has almost 50 members.

(Sighs)

I don't know why I told you that. It's just-- Well, OK. Okay, *if* I was pregnant, an' *if* we had a baby we'd name it Nevaeh. (Neh VAY uh)

THOMAS

Nevaeh?

CHARLENE

It's Heaven, backwards.

(CONTINUED)

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THOMAS

Isn't everything around here?

CHARLENE

There you go again. You think that's stupid, don't you?

THOMAS

There's a child walking the earth whose parents named her Aryan Nation, so nothing surprises me.

CHARLENE

I like Esther, too, 'cause next to Jesus, Esther's my favorite in the Bible.

THOMAS

Oh? Why Esther?

CHARLENE

'Cause she was hot.

THOMAS

You like Esther because she was hot?!

CHARLENE

So beautiful the King chose her to be his wife over a hundred virgins. She was the most beautiful woman in all the world. What a feeling that must be.

This gives Thomas pause.

THOMAS

You're a pretty girl, Charlene.

CHARLENE

Lyin's a sin, you know.

THOMAS

May God strike me dead if I'm lying.

CHARLENE

You don't b'lieve in God.

THOMAS

Charlene, my belief or disbelief is irrelevant to the fact that you're a pretty girl and I'm sure you'll have a beautiful child. And that child, seriously, will have a much better chance in this world if you name her something like Esther.

CHARLENE

Oh, I wouldn't name her Esther. Esther's an old lady's name now. Like Opal and... and Prudence. I can't see her bein' called Esther without people makin' fun of her.

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THOMAS

Wait'll she has to explain Nevaeh.

CHARLENE

If and when I have a baby I'll name her what I want!

THOMAS

So, we know it's a girl? Or is Nevaeh a unisex thing, like Leslie?

CHARLENE

You know, your Mama picked the perfect name for you, 'cause you're nothing but a doubting Thomas.

(She holds her stomach)

Oh, Lord!

END

She rushes out to the bathroom.

LIGHTS DOWN

~~ACT 2, SCENE 2~~~~LIGHTS UP ON: MARTHA'S BEDROOM~~~~Martha in a slip, scratches her arm as Lucille applies cream.~~~~LUCILLE~~~~Martha, stop scratchin' b'fore you draw blood. Now, you sure you don't want me to call you a doctor?~~~~MARTHA~~~~No, I see so many doctors I can't stand it. I just wait til ever'thing passes.~~~~LUCILLE~~~~That ain't no kinda health plan if you ask me.~~~~MARTHA~~~~God don't give people a bigger cross'n they can bear.~~~~LUCILLE~~~~Well, he come damn close with you, but I ain't lettin' you feel sorry for yourself.~~~~MARTHA~~~~It's my nerves, is all. Ever since you drug J.D. back from Memphis. I could shoot you for that! 'Cept I don't have my gun.~~

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