

CONTINUED: (3)

THOMAS  
Seriously, I don't see why you don't-

JOHN  
Just let it go, Thomas, I ain't in the mood to start on this right now.

THOMAS  
All right, all right. Uncle.

JOHN  
Damn hard to get your mind set on sump'm when ever'body in the worl's tryin' to talk you out of it.

CHARLENE (O.S.)  
Ding dong! Avon calling!

JOHN  
Ever'body 'cept her.

ENTER CHARLENE PRUITT, 18, with a nice-sized suitcase and a garment bag. She is smiling, open, always with a glass half-full approach.

→ CHARLENE  
Hey, y'all!

JOHN  
Hey, Charlene! Come on in here.

John gives her a peck on the cheek and helps with the suitcase and bag.

CHARLENE  
Well, look who's here! I only know it's you 'cause I've seen your picture 'bout a hundred times.  
(Shakes with him)  
I'm Charlene Pruitt.

THOMAS  
Thomas Fields. Nice to meet you.

CHARLENE  
This is just perfect how things work out, we were just studying the *brother's keeper* passage in Youth and here you are. Where's that from, John David?

JOHN  
Where's what from?

CHARLENE  
"I am my brother's keeper."

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JOHN

From the Bible's all I know.

CHARLENE

John David, now come on, you can do better'n that.

JOHN

I don't know... Genesis?

CHARLENE

That's right! Genesis four, verse nine. I am my brother's keeper. I love that phrase. What it's saying is look out for others, keep an eye on one another. What do you think, Thomas?

THOMAS

Well, since you asked, the phrase is not "I am my brother's keeper." It's "Am I my brother's keeper?" It was a question, and Cain was actually lying right to God's face with it.

CHARLENE

That's not true!

THOMAS

Being a smart ass about it, too. One of those..."Why are you asking me, it's not my day to watch him" kind of things. So what he meant was, I'm not my brother's keeper and get off my case, 'cause I just became history's first murderer and I don't have a lawyer because, well, there's nobody else on earth yet!

(Awkward moment)

Just sayin'.

CHARLENE

Well. I never thought of it that way. It's just, well, I don't know what that is. Just not the way I was taught.

JOHN

Didn't I tell you not to get into it with Thomas?

CHARLENE

Guess I'll have to be on my toes in the future.

JOHN

Gotta live on your toes 'roun' Thomas.

THOMAS

Now what the hell does that mean?

JOHN

Nothin', I just--

CHARLENE

(Heading off a confrontation)

John David, did you go by an' pick up that button?

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JOHN

Yeh.

CHARLENE

We gotta start gettin' her used to it.

She grabs her suitcase.

JOHN

I know we do but it don't have to be now.

THOMAS

What button are we talking about here? **END**

Charlene accidentally pops open the suitcase, spilling everything on the floor: make up, moisture creams, eyeliners, lipsticks, costume jewelry.

CHARLENE

Oh, my Lord, that's all of this month's orders! I wanted to get 'em sorted out.

Thomas and John help her pick up as Martha comes in from the kitchen.

MARTHA

What in the worl's that mess all over the floor?

CHARLENE

Hey, Martha. Your son here got me so flustered I spilled all my products. Oh, I think your order's here somewhere... yeh, here it is. Value Pack of brand new makeup for the wedding.

MARTHA

Is ever'body in the worl' gone deaf? How many times do I have to tell y'all I ain't goin' to no weddin'?!

JOHN

Mom, be nice now.

CHARLENE

John David, can you match what to who with all that stuff? List is right there.

JOHN

(Embarrassed)

Guess I'm workin' for Avon now, too.

CHARLENE

Thank you, sweetie. Now, Martha, I got you some things that'll get you all prettied up.

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