

JONATHON. Hello? *off stage*

RITA. Hello. Are you lost? - *open door*

JONATHON. *(Lost.)* Hello? *off stage*

RITA. *(Waving.)* Over here. Bessie, please!!! *(Bessie turns down the music and slips into the hallway to eavesdrop.)*

JONATHON. Is this the Chevalier d'Eon? - *(R) take (D) had pull in*

RITA. What a strong speaking voice. You have to be a teacher.

JONATHON. The sign at the front office read, "Come to the kitchen."

RITA. And you did as told. Good boy.

JONATHON. Am I the only one here? I can wait outside.

RITA. Don't be silly. Please join me. The door's not locked and my husband's not home.

JONATHON. *(More confused.)* Oh.

pull in
RITA. *(Opens the door.)* Come in. I like company. Which, as it turns out, is a plus for an innkeeper. "Welcome to the Chevalier d'Eon Resort, where you may live your innermost truth in an environment of peace and friendship." No, that's last year's brochure.

JONATHON. I have it here. *(Producing it from his pocket.)* "You'll think you're in heaven staying at our haven."

RITA. My husband, George, writes those. Loyalty allows me to overlook them.

JONATHON. You're not Rita.

RITA. Why not?

JONATHON. Yes, you are. You look just as I imagined. Sorry. It's not every day I meet someone I've read about in magazines.

RITA. Magazines are easy. To get into newspapers you've got to be dead. Jonathon.

JONATHON. Oh. You know my name.

RITA. You're one of only two first-time guests and I already know what the other one looks like. How was the drive?

JONATHON. A little under three hours with two stops. One for coffee. One ... not. Terrific directions until the road sign for "Silver Springs Bungalow Colony ..."

RITA. Every season we swear we'll change the sign. But no matter how little we do, people keep finding us. So, can you cook?

JONATHON. Sorry.

RITA. There's a wedding at one of the tonier hotels in town and they've hired away our help for the weekend. If I'd known I would have dragged one of the other wives up. Your wife isn't coming?

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JONATHON. She's gone to her mother's and I snuck out.

RITA. Well, we have the essentials. (*Indicating a full bar.*) And I can get us through dinner. After that, I'm afraid I'll need to send the girls off to the woods to kill something. Or maybe just to the market.

JONATHON. The market? You mean we actually go to town? Dressed?

RITA. Well, if you'd like you can go naked. There's a nudist camp across the road and they shop in town as well. We still get more stares. Would you like to go to your room? You must be anxious to begin your vacation.

JONATHON. The first since my honeymoon. Lord, I sound like a yokel.

RITA. Welcome to the Catskills. You'll fit right in. But wait. We should toast your escape from routine.

JONATHON. May I help? I can make a drink. (*Goes about making drinks, over-pouring.*)

RITA. Help to your heart's content. There's ice over there. Believe it or not most of our guests like doing housework. They find it completes the experience. So I say, grab a dish towel and make your dreams come true. You're a friend of Michael's, yes?

JONATHON. We met fairly recently. Both shopping for wide-width shoes. He says he spotted me right off. He said, "Rabbits knows rabbits' habits."

RITA. (*Seeing him flustered.*) Are you all right?

JONATHON. I'm ... I'm not sure I belong.

RITA. Well, while you think about it, why don't you and I have our drinks and a nice sit-down. Then, when you are sure, we can figure out what's next.

JONATHON. No wonder Michael raves about you.

RITA. There is no trick to being popular with men. Just never say no.

JONATHON. (*Handing her a drink.*) He says they look to you ...

RITA. Most look nowhere past themselves. (*Seeing liquor to the top of the glass.*) More ice in mine, please?

JONATHON. Am I the first?

RITA. One guest is upstairs dressing and another is in the Wig-Wam, rehearsing. The Wig-Wam is our own little night club. You'll see. Most Fridays find everyone rushing to ready for dinner. Sometimes we're pushing bodies into beds like clowns in a circus car. And sometimes not. But this is going to be a quiet weekend, with the inner circle holding a business meeting.

JONATHON. Michael said it would be all right for me to be here.

RITA. Of course.

JONATHON. *(Lifts his glass in a toast.)* Cheers.

RITA. Cheers. *(Bessie enters in her housecoat, mules, and turban.)*

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