

Hot Pursuit

Cynthia MacGregor



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HOT PURSUIT

By Cynthia MacGregor

CAST

HELEN: A divorced South Florida retiree.

LARRY: Helen's widowed brother, visiting from New Jersey.

JOANNE: A neighbor and friend of Helen's.

ELLIE: A neighbor and friend of Helen's.

RACHEL: A neighbor and friend of Helen's.

LISA: Offstage voice (can be played by one of the other actresses).

SHARON: Offstage voice (can be played by one of the other actresses).

Time:

The present.

Place:

HELEN's South Florida condo living room.

Production notes: This is a show requiring minimal production values. The costumes are all everyday clothes. No scenery is required other than a typical living room set-up: a few chairs, or a sofa and a couple of chairs, and perhaps a table or whatever other realistic touches are available. The entire play takes place in Helen's South Florida apartment. Props: Two coffee cups/mugs, three large plastic containers or covered plates such as might hold food, newspapers, cellphone.

Setting: *HELEN's living room.*

At rise: *HELEN and LARRY are sitting in chairs, sipping coffee.*

HELEN: Well, this is it—South Florida. I'm glad you finally got a chance to come down and visit me.

LARRY: Now that I'm retired, I can come and visit you often. If I like it, I may even move down here. Since Ann died, it's kinda lonely up in New Jersey.

HELEN: I realize you just got in late last night, but how do you like South Florida so far?

LARRY: So far, so good. The sunrise view from your terrace is magnificent, the airline didn't lose my luggage, and I seem to have gotten good weather for my visit.

HELEN: Wait. It's early in the day. Down here you never know when a sudden storm will pop up.

(there is a loud series of knocks at the door)

HELEN: *(drily)* I think I hear a storm brewing now. *(She gets up and leisurely walks to the door. The urgent knocking occurs again.)*

LARRY: Sounds like an emergency.

HELEN: Sounds like my friend Ellie. With her, everything is an emergency.

(HELEN opens the door. ELLIE enters.)

ELLIE: I thought you weren't home! And I brought you over one of my delicious sour cream chocolate chip pound cakes. *(She is carrying a container, or a draped plate. We don't have to literally see the cake. HELEN peeks at the cake.)*

HELEN: Was Sara Lee having a fire sale?

ELLIE: It's just one corner! My phone rang right before the cake was ready to come out, and I was a few minutes late getting it out of the oven.

HELEN: Well, thank you, but what's the occasion?

ELLIE: Don't I always bring you goodies?

HELEN: No.

ELLIE: Well...I always think about you. But you're watching your figure. What kind of a friend would I be if I brought you all kinds of fattening goodies?

HELEN: So what's the occasion now?

ELLIE: *(appears to notice LARRY for the first time and acts surprised)* Oh...I didn't know you had company.

HELEN: No, I've only been talking about my brother's visit for weeks now.

ELLIE: Well, I forgot he was coming *today*.

HELEN: But you remembered to bring a cake.

ELLIE: *(to LARRY)* I'm Ellie, one of Helen's dearest friends. It's a pleasure to meet you. *(She takes his hand to shake it and forgets to let go. There is another knock at the door. ELLIE looks annoyed. HELEN looks amused but gets up again and goes to the door.)* Now, who could that be?

HELEN: Another of my divorce or widowed friends, I'm sure. *(She opens the door. JOANNE walks in, also carrying a package. ELLIE scowls.)*

JOANNE: Helen, honey, I brought you a little something. I was fooling around in the kitchen, this morning...you know how I love to cook... *(this last is said deliberately loudly to be sure of catching LARRY's ear, though they haven't been introduced yet)* and I made some boeuf bourguignon for my tonight's dinner. But I made way too much. So I brought you some.

HELEN: *(peeking into the container)* Me and what army?

JOANNE: Well, if you want to share it with someone.

ELLIE: Like her widowed brother who just happens to be visiting from New Jersey this weekend?

JOANNE: *(pretends to notice LARRY for the first time)* Oh, hello! I'm Joanne. I'm one of Helen's dearest friends!

LARRY: It's good to know Helen has so many dear friends. I used to worry that my sister was all alone down here, but now I see that she'll never be lonely. This place is like Grand Central Station.

(There is another series of discreet knocks at the door. HELEN gets up and slowly walks to the door.)

LARRY: Is it always like this?

ELLIE: So how do you like South Florida?

JOANNE: *(at the same time)* Do you like boeuf bourguignon?

(HELEN opens the door. RACHEL enters, carrying a container.)

RACHEL: Helen, honey! I stopped by to see if you want to go down to the pool and get some exercise. I know you like to keep in shape like I do. Besides, you'll need to work off the banana nut loaf I brought you. I baked it myself this morning. I made two—one for me and one for you.

HELEN: Larry, you should visit me more often. At this rate, I won't have to cook for a week!

LARRY: What does my being here have to do with your friends bringing you food?

HELEN: Wake up and smell the coffee, Mr. Recent Widower.

ELLIE: Did you say 'coffee?' I'd love a cup. We could have some of my sour cream loaf with it. I'll bet Larry would love to taste it.

RACHEL: Banana nut loaf goes marvelously with coffee.

HELEN: This sounds like the outbreak of World War III. Calm down everyone! Now, who wants what?

LARRY: I'm coffee-ed out. I don't want anything, ladies. But thanks.

JOANNE: I'm watching my figure. Nothing for me. I want to stay nice and trim.

RACHEL: I'm good. But thanks.

ELLIE: Well, don't bother making more coffee just for me.

RACHEL: You still didn't answer me about the pool. Want to go downstairs and get some exercise? Your brother could join us too. Larry? I'm sure you brought a swimsuit, didn't you?

END OF FREEVIEW

You'll want to read and perform this show!