

**MRS. J SIDES**

Mrs. J runs in.

MRS J

Why on earth is everyone yelling?

TY

I'll get the money. And keep your precious farmhands on the ranch tonight. That's the last time I'm gonna warn you.

They all stand for a moment, frozen.

MRS J

Tyler?

Ty exits.

MRS J

Nathaniel? Go after him ...

JAMISON

Last thing he needs is us chasing him, Alicia. We can talk until we're raw, it's not going to change things unless he wants it. He's not a child any more, he's old enough to make his own mistakes.

MRS J

But what horrible mistakes he might make.

JAMISON

And we'll deal with that when it happens. Like we always do. Sit down, let me get you some water.

MRS J

What is going on today? Everything is topsy-turvy. Ty is storming around like a mad thing. We've got prisoners in the kitchen. And Maggie is miserable, that poor child. You must talk to your foreman, Mr. J., he follows her around with those sad puppy eyes. Actually, I think Bernice is the one Bo needs to watch out for.

JAMISON

I didn't think you kept track of the to-ing and fro-ing in the kitchen, Mrs. J. Talk to me about cows, I don't pay attention to the young folk.

MRS J

Not much, you don't. I see the way Bennie slips you extra butter at dinner, with you supposedly on a diet.

JAMISON

Why do you always think the worst of the most innocent actions? Look at me, the flesh is hanging on my bones. She worries about me.

MRS J

We all worry about you, dear. It's all anyone does.

JAMISON

And what kind of sardonic remark is that?

MRS J

Sardonic.

JAMISON

Word of the day.

MRS J

What exactly are they trying to accomplish with these "words of the day"? I mean, I could see if they were words that people actually used in conversation. What was the one last week? Lugubrious. I don't know whether that's a word or a disease one catches in the South Pacific.

JAMISON

The other night, weren't you happy I could converse with that couple from Chicago we met at the Knights of Pythias dinner?

MRS J

Yes, I was, Mr. J. Although as I recall, the dish of chopped raw beef he was talking about is called steak tartare, not steak Tortuga. Which I do believe *is* something you can catch in the South Pacific. Tell me he's going to be alright.

JAMISON

We raised a smart child, he's a little ... astray right now. Listen, what do you say we look in on those new calves before supper?

MRS J

Oh, you and your cattle. I swear if I had horns you would be beside yourself with bliss.

JAMISON

Horns don't exactly appeal to me, Mrs. J. But we do have that cowhide outside the bedroom...

MRS J

Mister J!

They exit. There's a moment of silence.

Piero stumbles into the kitchen with a giant bag of flour on his back, Margaret behind him.