

GERTRUDE & LOUISE

GERTRUDE
(From above.)

I've been listening, Louise.

LOUISE

Then you know about my little accident?

GERTRUDE

(Coming down the stairs.)

I heard some gossip on the street.

LOUISE

How much did you hear?

GERTRUDE

Should I come down?

LOUISE

Please.

(Gertrude enters immediately. She's been listening at the door.)

What did you hear?

GERTRUDE

I heard it wasn't so bad . . . They were clean cotton, neat and perfectly ironed.

Well, of course.

LOUISE

GERTRUDE
And very few people know the story.

LOUISE

Where did you hear it?

GERTRUDE

It was announced at the train station. How did it happen?

LOUISE

I was trying to see the King. I was on a bench, up on tiptoes.

(Louise illustrates.)

GERTRUDE

It slims the waist.

(They begin to giggle. Gertrude joins in, running her hands along

her own waist.)

LOUISE

Suddenly I felt my underpants around my ankles.

GERTRUDE

A welcome breeze in the netherworld.

LOUISE

Gertrude!

GERTRUDE
They say you looked lovely. I heard a couple of men turned their heads quite a lot.

LOUISE
I kept my dignity. I stepped out of them, bent down and swooped them under my shawl. Like lightning.

GERTRUDE
Tomorrow, everyone will say the whole thing was a perfectly planned piece of coquetry.

LOUISE
Oh God. My husband can't stand it when people talk.

GERTRUDE
Well, he'll just have to get used to a lot of things. Like where the sun shines is where people want to walk.

LOUISE
What do you mean?

GERTRUDE
Like a pretty girl turns heads and there's nothing he can do about it.

LOUISE
He's just being a man.

GERTRUDE
He's not all men. There are better ones.

LOUISE
(Sternly changing the subject.)

Please, Gertrude. Do you have any whipped cream?

GERTRUDE
I do. I'll get it. I heard him.

(Cautious.)
Louise, haven't you been married about a year?

LOUISE
A year this Sunday.

GERTRUDE
And?

LOUISE
And?

GERTRUDE
The patter of little feet?

LOUISE
Oh.

GERTRUDE
Can that be just chance? Or is it your husband is not doing his job?