

OFFSTAGE SECRETS Excerpt By Laurie Lamson

INT. FORTUNE APT. - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Terry comes in the living room, bracing himself before speaking to Joyce.

TERRY

We're not getting married yet.

With pursed lips, Joyce hands him a glass of iced tea.

TERRY (CONT'D)

I know how much you want this for me, and I love her. She's just not ready. I am so sorry. I tried-

JOYCE

I told you I'd accept a foreigner. She's beautiful and charming. What's the problem?

TERRY

Mama, please. I said "yet." Give us some more time.

JOYCE

What exactly did you say? It's inconceivable she turned you down.

TERRY

Only for the time being.

JOYCE

She's not getting any younger.

TERRY

What's all the rush, really?

JOYCE

You know.

TERRY

You can't die happy-? You never admit it, but you're still young-

JOYCE

You fool. Don't you realize, the longer you wait, and put it off, and put it off, the more rumors-

TERRY

What rumors?

JOYCE

Are you going to make me say it?  
Dark hints, sordid whispers. I know  
it's all lies of course, but once  
the public starts to believe-

She shudders in horror and her own glass of iced tea spills.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Now look what you made me do!

Terry runs in to the kitchen and returns with a wet cloth.  
He drops to his knees and scrubs at the spill on the carpet.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Don't bother. It's going to leave a  
stain. Just like the permanent blot  
on your reputation if you don't-

TERRY

No, look, it's coming out.

JOYCE

Propose, today, and we'll never need  
to speak of this again.

TERRY

I told you, I did!

JOYCE

Apparently you weren't very  
convincing.

He looks distressed. Joyce caresses his back.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Trust me, every woman wants to be  
married. Especially to you! Do it  
right. Go down on one knee.

TERRY

Okay.

JOYCE

That's my boy.

She tickles his arm and gets a smile out of him.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

I'm going to get something special  
for dinner, to celebrate. Lobster!

She gets up and grabs her purse. Terry watches her leave.