

*Steel Magnolias*

Robert Harling

**SHELBY**

**M'LYNN**

*A drama-comedy play about the bond between a group of Southern Women. In this scene, Shelby is telling her mother she is pregnant. Her mother is very worried because Shelby is too sick to safely carry a child.*

M'LYNN. Shelby?

SHELBY. Mama? Where is everybody?

M'LYNN. I thought you weren't coming to town until after lunch.

SHELBY. We got an early start because of traffic. Are Tommy and Jonathan home yet?

M'LYNN. Yes. Jonathan got home yesterday morning. Tommy arrived last night. It's nice having the family home for Christmas.

SHELBY. Some things never change.

M'LYNN. And how are you, honey?

SHELBY. I'm so good, Mama. Just great.

M'LYNN. You're looking well.

SHELBY. Uh, Jackson and I have something to tell you. We wanted to tell you when you and Daddy were together, but you're never together, so it's every man for yourself. I'm pregnant.

M'LYNN. Shelby?!

SHELBY. I'm going to have a baby.

M'LYNN. I realize that.

SHELBY. Well . . . is that it? Is that all you're going to say?

M'LYNN. I . . . what do you expect me to say?

SHELBY. Something along the lines of congratulations.

M'LYNN. . . . Congratulations.

SHELBY. Would it be too much to ask for a little excitement? Not too much, I wouldn't want you to have to break a sweat or anything.

M'LYNN. I'm in a state of shock! I didn't think . . .

SHELBY. In June. Oh, Mama! You have to help me plan.

M'LYNN. What does Jackson say about this?

SHELBY. Oh. He's very excited. He says he doesn't care whether it's a boy or girl . . . but I know he really wants a son so bad he can taste it.

M'LYNN. But does he ever listen? I mean when doctors and specialists give you advice. I know you never listen, but does he? I guess since he doesn't have to carry the abby, it doesn't really concern him.

SHELBY. Mama. Don't be mad. I couldn't bear it if you were. It's Christmas.

M'LYNN. I'm not mad, Shelby. This is just . . . hard. I thought that . . . I don't know.

SHELBY. Mama. I want a child.

M'LYNN. But what about the adoption proceedings? You have filed so many applications.

SHELBY. Mama. It didn't take long to see the writing on the wall. No judge is going to give a baby to someone with my medical track record. I want a child of my own.

M'LYNN. I see.

SHELBY. Mama, I know. I know. Don't think I haven't thought this through. You can't live a life if all you do is worry. Jackson and I have given this a lot of thought.

M'LYNN. Has he really? There's a first time for everything.

SHELBY. Don't start on Jackson.

M'LYNN. Shelby. Your poor body has been through so much. Why do you deliberately want to . . .

SHELBY. Mama. Diabetics have healthy babies all the time.

M'LYNN. You are special. There are limits to what you can do.

SHELBY. Mama . . . listen. I have it all planned. I'm going to be very careful. And this time next year, I'm going to be bringing your big healthy grabby to the Christmas Festival. No one is going to be hurt or disappointed, or even inconvenienced.

M'LYNN. Least of all Jackson, I'm sure.

SHELBY. You are jealous because you no longer have any say-so in what I do. And that drives you up the wall. You're ready to spit nails because you can't call the shots.

M'LYNN. I did not raise my daughter to talk to me this way.

SHELBY. Yes you did. Whenever any of us asked you what you wanted us to be when we grew up, what did you say?

M'LYNN. Shelby, I am not in the mood for games.

SHELBY. What did you say? Just tell me what you said. Answer me.

M'LYNN. I said all I wanted was for you to be happy.

SHELBY. O.K. The thing that would make me happy is to have a baby. If I could adopt one I would, but I can't. I'm going to have a baby. I wish you would be happy, too.

M'LYNN. I wish I . . . I don't know what I wish.

SHELBY. Mama. I don't know why you have to make everything so difficult. I look at having this baby as the opportunity of a lifetime. Sure, there may be some risk involved. That's true for anybody. Mama, please. I need your support. I would rather have thirty minutes of wonder than a lifetime of nothing special.