

**CHRISTIE SIDES -**

BETSY - You still ride her, Mom?

ELIZABETH - I will once the farrier puts shoes back on her.

BETSY - Are you sure you should?

ELIZABETH - If she's game to carry me, I'm game to ride her. She does all the work, you know. I just have to sit there.

(Elizabeth takes the carrots.)

ELIZABETH - As Winston Churchill said, "The best thing for the inside of a man is the outside of a horse."

Elizabeth exits.

BETSY - (calling after her) I hope you're not still driving that tractor!

CHRISTIE - Don't worry, Betsy. I'll leg the mare up in the ring first, before she gets on her. And I always ride out with her if she wants to leave the property.

BETSY - We are going to need a new home for those two horses, Christie. If you can think of anywhere, a rescue or somewhere. We probably don't want to pay anything, but, you know, maybe a nice farm family with kids who would want a gentle older mare...

CHRISTIE - (shocked) I don't know anywhere like that.

BETSY - (confidentially) Christie, I need your help with Mom. She has to move. There's no discussion. Too much could go wrong up here, and I can't take care of her properly from this distance...

CHRISTIE - You figure Florida's closer?

BETSY - Well, no, of course not, but there is a total care facility there, one that can meet an older person's changing needs.

CHRISTIE - Pardon me, Betsy, but it seems a shame. Your mom doesn't seem near ready for a retirement home.

BETSY - I know, but we have to be strong and look to the future for her. Can I count on you, Christie, to be on my side in this?

CHRISTIE - I work for your mom, Betsy.

BETSY - Well, maybe 'side' isn't the right word...

CHRISTIE - Yes it is. You know, I met your mom right after you left for New York. I was a teenager, well, twelve, and my folks split up and my mom and I had to move into the single wide down near the sheep farm?

BETSY - That dilapidated wreck in the crook of the road under the power lines?

(Christie nods. Betsy shivers.)

BETSY - Eww...

CHRISTIE - It was pretty grim inside, too. So I spent a lot of my time walking up and down the road between this farm and our place. One day, your mom asked if I wanted a job mucking out the stalls for Belle and Shameless. They'd just retired from the show ring, and needed a lot of TLC. They really didn't know how to be horses. So they spent a lot of time in their stalls.

Betsy is getting antsy.

BETSY - Yea, she always needed extra help. So, anyway...

CHRISTIE - She taught me to ride. She and those horses gave me something here besides drugs and sex, which is about all there is for kids to do here in the summer. (Christie pauses.) I owe her, that's all, I'm saying. As long as she wants me, I'm here to work with her in the house and in the barn. I'll take care of her.

Betsy is stunned.

CHRISTIE -(not unkindly) So you don't have to.

BETSY - She's my mother, Christie. You've had her long enough.

Christie leaves the basket of eggs and exits as  
Liz comes down the stairs with a box of photos.

LIZ - Mom! I found the most amazing photos of how this farmstead looked before the big barn burned down. And before the driveway was changed to come down from the dirt road. And, you may think I'm crazy, but I think I look a lot like Grampa's mom, Grace Gladstone.

Liz shows her mom two photos.