

MISS DEE SIDE 1

MISS DEE. Yes.

OLLIE. You can't take it back?

MISS DEE. No.

OLLIE. Not ever? We can pass it on to our children?

MISS DEE. No. Yes.

OLLIE. And if we sell it?

MISS DEE. Clause Two.

OLLIE. ...We keep all the money.

MISS DEE. Every penny.

JILL. Oh, Ollie, it's too good to be true.

OLLIE. Dad used to say if something's too good to be true it usually is.

JILL. You're determined to see problems.

OLLIE. I'm determined we make the right decision.

JILL. And I'm *not*?!

**MISS
DEE**

MISS DEE. Children, children, please. Listen to your Miss Dee. This house is a wonderful chance for you both. It's one of those moments that—if you let it slip through your fingers—you'll always be wondering “what if?” And believe me there's nothing worse than life's “what if”s. So please, I *beg* of you. Accept this house. Because I tell you—as God is my witness—no two people are more deserving.

JILL. Oh, surely...surely not—Ollie?

OLLIE. We're nothing special.

MISS DEE. “Nothing special”?!... Jillian! Your mother! Those afternoon church tea parties she organized for slobbering geriatrics. Who was it made the sandwiches and cakes? Who set out the tables with all those folded napkins so delicate and delightful? Who did all that, child?

JILL. ...I did.

MISS DEE. And when your mum's arthritis got so bad her hands swelled up like rubber gloves full of golf balls—Who was it washed her? Who was it dressed her, fed her, and—forgive any inappropriate language—took her to the toilet and cleaned her where the sun don't shine? Who did that?

JILL. *Any* daughter would have done the same.

MISS DEE. No, child. They would not—And you, Oliver! Living with your dad's alcoholism wasn't easy, was it? All hugs and kisses one second, then a Babycham too many and—Bahm!

OLLIE. Dad was *never* violent.

MISS DEE. Not physically. But verbally? His words would slap you and lash you. Yet you never retaliated. Not once—Your husband's a good man, Jill. You're *both* good people.

OLLIE. Yes, yes, all very flattering I'm sure but—

MISS DEE. You want to know what the *government* gets out of all this.

OLLIE. Yes.

MISS DEE. How to explain—?... Tell me, have you ever heard about the Amazonian jungle plant *Lux lucis atrum nex nemus*, commonly known as the The Shimmering Glimmering Tree?

JILL. Er...no—Ollie?

OLLIE. Never.

MISS DEE. Oh, it's very rare. I myself have only seen one example. An old woman I knew when I was a child—indeed the woman who taught me most of what I know today—*she* had one. "I want to show you the most beautiful tree in the world," she said to me one day. She took me into her garden. "There!" I have to admit, what I saw did not impress. Its leaves were dark green—black almost—and it was covered with dull fruits the size of a baby's eyeball. But then the woman took the hem of her apron and polished one of the fruits. Polished till it sparkled. The next thing I see...the fruit next to it starts to sparkle. All by itself. No polishing needed. And then the fruit next to that. And the fruit next to that. Until the whole tree—oh, it sparkles like treasure!

OLLIE. So you're saying...if we renovate this house—

MISS DEE. Other people will see it and think...?

JILL. I can do the same to the house next door!

MISS DEE. And the house next to that.

JILL. Until the whole Close sparkles.

MISS DEE. Oh, more! The streets all round!

JILL. The whole area?

MISS DEE. Of course! Regeneration Through—

JILL. The Creation of Dream Homes.

MISS DEE. All it needs is for one house to sparkle.

JILL. Oh, it makes sense, Ollie.

OLLIE. It makes sense if it *works*.

MISS DEE. It *always* works.

OLLIE. You've done this before?

MISS DEE. Many times.

OLLIE. And it's always successful?

MISS DEE. If I've chosen the clients correctly, yes.

END

JILL. Give me that contract!

Snatches contract from Miss Dee.

OLLIE. What the—?

Jill signs contract.

Jill! Jesus! Wh-what've you done?!

JILL. I want this house.

OLLIE. I'm *part* of this equation too, you know.

MISS DEE. The contract needs *both* your signatures.

OLLIE. There! We *both* need to...to—

MISS DEE. Consult!

OLLIE. Exactly! We need to *consult* about things.

Takes contract from Jill.

JILL. *What* things?

MISS DEE. He's worried about all the red tape involved—Right?

OLLIE. That's on my mind, yes.

MISS DEE. Fear not. Clause Four. You see? We will arrange all the legals. We will transfer all utility bills on your behalf. You will have no forms to fill in or phone calls to make.

OLLIE. But what about—?

MISS DEE. We will arrange for a delivery van. And workmen. And before you ask—Clause Five, Subsection B—it won't cost you a penny. You see?