

Comin' Up A Storm

Synopsis:

The third of the Mud Creek trilogy, this story is set six years after the close of *The Other Side of the Mountain*. Evelyn Thacker has returned to Mud Creek to help establish an experimental winery as part of the University's Agricultural program. When Evelyn proposes a change in the law that would allow the winery to sell its own wine in this "dry" community, chaos ensues. Evelyn's lover questions her real motive, an alcohol-hating Baptist minister tries to close her down and her sister Faye reinvents herself as Daisy Duke. Then a young woman from New Jersey with a penchant for the obnoxious shows up seeking answers from Faye's strangely silent husband Vernon Cobb. Even *more* fireworks erupt – or they would, if there wasn't so much *rain*...

Setting: The Cobb home in Mud Creek, KY. The present.

Set: The exterior of a "pre-fab" set high on a mountain. Unit set.

Cast Size: 7 (four women, three men.)

Cast: (in order of appearance)

Faye Thacker – a forty-four year old mountain woman with a big heart and a tongue that seldom rests. Faye's dream of marrying Vernon Cobb has finally come true and with a brand new pre-fab she calls home, she's looking forward to a honeymoon that includes Dollywood and a brand new pair of Daisy Duke's...

Vernon Cobb – fiftyish, a strangely silent mountain man. Or is he? With his marriage to long-time fiancée Faye Thacker and new job at the winery, Vernon's life should be smooth sailing... then a stranger arrives carrying enough gunpowder to blow his ship out of the water.

Evelyn Thacker – Faye's thirty - two year old sister. Evelyn left the mountain six years ago for good. Or so she thought. Now as a biologist working for the University, she has helped establish an experimental winery in Mud Creek which may prove to be more of a headache than a merlot hangover...

Siobhan O'Malley – Evelyn's forty-year old lover and an English professor, O'Malley has taken sabbatical to write her first novel. A native New Yorker, she's working hard to conquer her fear of "nature" – if only it would stop storming!

Fr. Timothy Ryan – the priest who runs St. Mary's mission. Fr. Timothy's can match any Baptist bible-quote for bible-quote and would do anything for a good Irish coffee...

Elray Slaughter – the fifty year old pastor of First Light Baptist Church and the sworn enemy of anything alcoholic, Elray is determined to nip this up-and-coming "wet" vote in the bud – one bottle of beer at a time...

Sarah Pierce – a twenty-two year old college student from New Jersey posing as a reporter, Sarah has come to Mud Creek searching for her past. What she finds instead is a place fraught with poor oral hygiene and an intolerance for "Bridge and Tunnel" people...

ACT I

Scene 1

SETTING: *The exterior of a brand new trailer set high on a hill in the mountain hamlet of Mud Creek, Kentucky. The trailer has a fairly large deck off the front door that holds a couple of lawn chairs and various other deck “accoutrement”. A satellite dish is on the roof. A portable radio sits on a windowsill. Late morning of an August day, the present.*

AT RISE: *A Dolly Parton song is playing on the radio. From behind the trailer comes the sound of a pounding hammer. FAYE THACKER enters from the front door of the trailer carrying a long pink ribbon with a huge bow, which she tries to affix to the deck railing to no avail. After a moment or two...*

FAYE

Vernon?

(She reaches over and turns off the radio.)

Vernon!

(The hammering stops and VERNON COBB enters from around the trailer carrying a hammer and a piece of trailer underpinning.)

Oh. There you are. You done hangin’ up that underpinnin’ yet?

(VERNON looks at the underpinning in his hand then holds it up for her to see.)

Well, lay it down a minute and help me get this darn bow put on...

(VERNON leans the underpinning against the trailer and crosses to help her.)

They’re gonna be here any minute and I want it just right. Won’t O’Malley be all kinds of surprised when she sees this... *dang it!*

(The bow/ribbon slips off again.)

FAYE (cont.)

Ain't nothin' I tried is workin'! And Evelyn said she wanted this place to look gift-wrapped...

(VERNON takes a nail out of his pocket and proceeds to nail the ribbon in place.)

Well, look at that. You're a downright genius, Vernon...

(We hear a car honking from the foot of the driveway, way down the hill.)

Oh! They're here! Quick, hon – hide that underpinnin' round back! I don't want nothin' takin' away from the “gift-wrapped” effect. Hurry!

(VERNON carries the underpinning off behind the trailer.)

Now what we need to do is, we need to act natural. We gotta pretend that this here trailer ain't no big deal...

(She looks at the trailer eagerly.)

Lord, it's gonna be hard.

(VERNON returns and stands next to her.)

Okay, hon – remember now, act natural.

(They look down the hill and wave.)

Hey, you all!

(Long beat.)

They sure is takin' their time, ain't they? What's Evelyn doin'? Lord, she's pickin' flowers. She sure does love them wildflowers. Always has... Hey, Evelyn!

EVELYN (O.S.)

Hey...

(A moment passes then EVELYN THACKER enters, breathing hard and carrying a small bouquet of wildflowers. She bends over to catch her breath. FAYE holds out her arms to hug her.)

FAYE

Come here, girl...

EVELYN

Hold on...

(She stands back up.)

Whew! Okay. Hey, Faye...

(They hug.)

Hey, Vern.

(VERNON raises a hand in greeting. FAYE looks back down the hill.)

FAYE

What's takin' O'Malley so long to get up here?

EVELYN

I don't think she's used to climbing mountains before lunch.

FAYE

Hell, this ain't no mountain. It's just a little bitty hill.

(She gestures to the trailer.)

So...?

EVELYN

Wow.

FAYE

It's got everythin' you asked for – two bedrooms, two bathrooms, kitchen – and everythin's top of the line, just like you said. Vernon here picked out the location. I reckon it's his favorite spot in all of Mud Creek. Just about everywhere you look you can see the trees spreadin' out below you...

EVELYN

It really is beautiful... Thanks, Vern.

FAYE

'Course the truck had a helluva time haulin' it up that hill, what with all the rain we've been havin' lately. Remember that, Vern? All that mud? It sure has been a wet summer... Oh! And how do you like the deck? Vernon done built it hisself. Thought O'Malley might like to come out here in the evenin's and rest awhile after she's worked all day on her book writin'...

EVELYN

You two have outdone yourselves.

FAYE

So you reckon O'Malley will like it all right, her bein' from New York City and all? You know how she feels about *nature*...

EVELYN

She'll *love* it! Thank you.

FAYE

Oh, wait! Here she comes finally... hey, O'Malley!

(SIOBHAN O'MALLEY *staggers on, completely winded.*)

O'MALLEY

Oh my god! Oh my god...

(*She rests her hands on her knees, breathing hard.*)

EVELYN

What's the matter?

O'MALLEY

Oh... nothing. I just can't breathe...

FAYE

She sounds just like Mommy did right before the lung cancer kilt her... You ain't took up smokin', have you, O'Malley?

EVELYN

No, she's not smoking. She's just *old*...

O'MALLEY

Shut up, Ev.

(She takes a deep breath then stands upright.)

That's one helluva mountain you have there, Faye.

FAYE

Hell, girl, that ain't no mountain. It's just a little bitty hill.

O'MALLEY

Little bitty hill, my ass. I know planes that fly at a lower altitude...

(She hugs FAYE.)

It's good to see you. Hey, Vernon.

(Once again VERNON raises his hand in greeting.)

So... what brings us all to the top of Mt. Everest this morning? Ev said you had something to show us.

FAYE

I sure do... Ta-da!

(FAYE gestures to the trailer.)

O'MALLEY

Oh my. What's this?

EVELYN

It's a trailer, dummy.

FAYE

Now, Evelyn, this ain't no trailer. This is what they call a "pre-fab" home. The dealer said they're the latest thing in house-buildin'. They come with all the modern conveniences like indoor plumbin' and electric heat and... oh, Evelyn, I plumb forgot to tell you! It's got a *dishwasher* what not only washes the dishes but dries 'em, too! And it's got a Frigidaire and a stove and one of them *microwave* ovens what I can't at all understand and, and... well, *everythin'!*

(She turns to O'MALLEY)

Do you like it?

O'MALLEY

Sure. I mean, it's great, I guess...

FAYE

Oh, and just look at the view. Vernon picked the location...

O'MALLEY

Yes, well... we're certainly up high, aren't we?

FAYE

And he done built this deck hisself and... oh! How do you like the ribbon? Evelyn said she wanted the place to look gift-wrapped.

O'MALLEY

"Gift-wrapped"? Why?

FAYE

Because it's a gift!

O'MALLEY

For who?

FAYE

For you!

(O'MALLEY *turns to* EVELYN.)

EVELYN

Surprise!

O'MALLEY

You bought me a *trailer*?

EVELYN

It's not a trailer. It's a pre-fab!

O'MALLEY

Why?

EVELYN

Because you're getting ready to write your first book and you need a quiet place to work...

O'MALLEY

So you picked the top of *Pike's Peak*?!

EVELYN

I thought it was Mt. Everest.

FAYE

Actually, I believe this here hill is in Mud Creek...

EVELYN

You don't like it.

O'MALLEY

No, no – it's not that! It's just... it's just *too much*.

EVELYN

Too much what?

O'MALLEY

Too much... *nature*.

FAYE

I told you, Evelyn! O'Malley, don't you be fooled none by these here mountains and trees. Like I said, this pre-fab home has all the modern conveniences. Why, you ain't even got to come outside at all if you don't want to. Although Vernon *did* build that deck for you.

O'MALLEY

Faye, it's not that I don't appreciate...

FAYE

And looky there! You see that round thingamajig up on top of the roof? That there is a satellite dish! That means you can watch all the television you want and actually see the picture! Vernon and I tried it out. It's *wonderful*!

O'MALLEY

That's *great*, really, but...

FAYE

And I done told you 'bout the indoor plumbin', right? We had to dig a well and everythin' and let me tell you that ain't no easy thing to do up here with all this rock...

(O'MALLEY *turns to* EVELYN.)

O'MALLEY

Help me.

EVELYN

At least with indoor plumbing you won't pee on your shoe.

FAYE

What?

EVELYN

The first time O'Malley came to Mud Creek she didn't want to use the outhouse so she peed outside. On a hill. Sideways.

FAYE

But you ain't never s'posed to pee sideways on a hill.

EVELYN

I know.

FAYE

You'll end up with pee on your shoe. Everybody knows that.

EVELYN

O'Malley didn't.

O'MALLEY

Well, I do *now*...

FAYE

Lord, girl. No wonder you hate nature.

(O'MALLEY *laughs and turns to* EVELYN.)

O'MALLEY

I can't do this. We gotta tell her.

FAYE

Tell me what...? Evelyn, what's goin' on? Does O'Malley like this place or not?

EVELYN

It doesn't matter.

FAYE

It does too matter! After all the trouble we took to find the perfect trailer...

EVELYN/O'MALLEY

It's not a trailer!

EVELYN

Faye, the only thing that matters is that *you* like it.

O'MALLEY

Yeah, you. You and Vernon.

EVELYN

I lied, Faye. About wanting this place for O'Malley. It was the only way we could get you to pick the top of the line. You'd never do it for yourself.

O'MALLEY

And that's why we had *Vernon* pick out the location. We want you two to have it as a wedding present.

FAYE

What?!

EVELYN

I know, I know – you're not married. We're thinking maybe it's time you were. Mommy's gone now. You don't have to take care of her anymore. And Vernon's got a good job at the winery...

O'MALLEY

Not to mention you've already been engaged for nineteen years...

EVELYN

Yeah, it's time. As Mommy would say "Shit or get off the pot."

(She turns to VERNON.)

Well, Vernon? Are you finally gonna make an honest woman out of my sister or am I gonna have to pull out the shotgun?

FAYE

Uh, Evelyn, there's somethin' maybe you should know. The thing is... me and Vern...

(She looks at VERNON then....)

We cain't take this place! It wouldn't be right. And I ain't never even used a dishwasher before! What if I break it? Or blow up that there microwave...

EVELYN

We'll teach you how to use everything. You'll be fine. You have to take it, Faye. It's bad manners to turn down a gift.

O'MALLEY

She's right.

EVELYN

Besides, I'd love to help plan your wedding. Wouldn't that be fun?

FAYE

Well...sure, Evelyn, it'd be a whole lotta fun, but see...

(She is interrupted by the sound of a car honking from the bottom of the hill. Everyone looks.)

EVELYN

Who is that?

FAYE

Fr. Timothy, up from the mission church.

EVELYN

He's driving a new car.

FAYE

Yeah. Had to get hisself one after Juanita Jenkins run him off the road last month...

(She waves.)

Hey there, Father Timothy...

RYAN (O.S.)

Hello there!

FAYE

Now what am I s'posed to do, Evelyn? I asked Fr. Timothy to come up here and bless the prefab – y'know, on account of O'Malley here bein' raised up Catholic and all – and now O'Malley don't even want to live in it!

O'MALLEY

It's okay, Faye. I'm sure Fr. Timothy won't mind blessing it for you and Vern.