

BEV, RUSS

BEV. Oh. Now: Francine: I was wondering about this chafing dish, which we have practically never used.

FRANCINE. Yes, ma'am.

BEV. Do you own one of these yourself?

FRANCINE. No, I sure don't.

BEV. Because I do love to entertain though for the life of me I can't remember the last time we did. But still, it does seem a shame to give it away because it's just such a nice thing, isn't it?

FRANCINE. Oh, yes it is.

BEV. And it just looks so lonely sitting there in the cupboard so: I was wondering if this might be the sort of thing that would be useful to you?

FRANCINE. Ohhhh, thank you, I couldn't take that.

BEV. (Re: chafing dish.) See how sad he looks?

FRANCINE. You don't want to be giving that to me.

BEV. Well, nonetheless I'm offering.

FRANCINE. No, I don't think I should.

BEV. Well, you think about it.

FRANCINE. But thank you for offering.

BEV. You think about it and let me know.

FRANCINE. Yes, ma'am.

BEV. And do put some paper around those.

FRANCINE. Yes, ma'am. (Francine goes into kitchen. Bev returns with more to pack, passing Russ.)

BEV. That's a funny word, isn't it? Neapolitan.

RUSS. (Turns off radio.) Funny what way?

BEV. What do you suppose is the origin of that?

RUSS. Uhhh ... Naples, I imagine.

BEV. Naples?

RUSS. City of Naples?

BEV. Noooo.

RUSS. Of or pertaining to.

BEV. That would not be my first guess.

RUSS. Yup.

BEV. I would think it had something to do with *neo*, as in something new, and then there's the *-politan* part which to me would suggest a city, like *metropolitan*.

RUSS. Could be.

BEV. Meaning *new city* or something to that effect.

RUSS. (Shrugs.) Told you what I think.

BEV. Because a person from Naples, I mean they wouldn't be called, well, not *Napoleon*, obviously. I guess that was already taken! (Laughs, then serious.) On the other hand, you *do* say *Italian*. But *cities*, though, and specifically ones that end in *S*, because there must be a rule of some sort, don't you think? Help me think of a city other than *Naples* that also ends in *S*? (Pause.)

RUSS. Uhhh —

BEV. Oh fiddle. Um.

RUSS. Des Moines.

BEV. Not a *silent S*.

RUSS. Brussels.

BEV. All right. There you go. And how do we refer to them?

RUSS. Belgians.

BEV. But, the people from the *city*.

RUSS. Never *met* anyone from Brussels.

BEV. But there has to be a word.

RUSS. Look it up.

BEV. Where?

RUSS. Dictionary?

BEV. But it's not going to say this is the capital of Belgium and by the way the people who live there are called —

RUSS. Give Sally a call.

BEV. She won't know that.

RUSS. She and Ray went to Paris.

BEV. So?

RUSS. *Close* to Brussels.

BEV. Sally never knows those sorts of things.

RUSS. Oh. Oh.

BEV. What?

RUSS. Parisians.

BEV. What about them? (Francine returns with more packing.)

RUSS. Paris ends in *S*.

BEV. But — It's not *Brusselsians*.

RUSS. Or *Nice*.

BEV. I'm serious.

RUSS. Got the "*S*" sound.

BEV. But not *Nicians*. Like *Grecians*.

RUSS. No, no. *Niçoise*.

BEV. I know that, but —

RUSS. Know that salad your sister makes?

BEV. But that's *French*.  
RUSS. It's a French *city*.  
BEV. I understand, but, I'm saying how would we say, in *Eng* — ?  
Well, now I don't remember the original question.  
RUSS. Brussels.  
BEV. No no.  
RUSS. Des Moines?  
BEV. *No*.  
RUSS. Naples.  
BEV. *Naples*. And I don't think *Neapolitan*. How would that become *Neapolitan*?  
RUSS. Muscovites.  
BEV. What?  
RUSS. People from Moscow.  
BEV. Well, I give up, because that's just *peculiar*.  
RUSS. (*Chuckles at the word.*) Muscovites.  
BEV. (*The same.*) I wonder if they're musky.  
RUSS. (*Savoring the sound.*) Muscovites.  
BEV. (*Coming up with one.*) Cairenes!  
RUSS. *That* is a strange one.  
BEV. I'm telling you, that's what they're called!  
RUSS. I'm not disputing.  
BEV. But why *Cairenes*?  
RUSS. (*Shrugs.*) Dated a girl named *Irene*. (*Francine exits again.*)  
BEV. Or *Congolese*?  
RUSS. That, too, is correct.  
BEV. So why don't we say *Tongalese*?  
RUSS. Or *Mongolese*.  
BEV. No, *Mongol-oid*.  
RUSS. No no, that's different.  
BEV. Oh, you're right.  
RUSS. That's uhhh, you know, that's —  
BEV. No, I know.  
RUSS. (*Tapping his finger on his temple.*) The thing with the —  
BEV. (*Doing the same.*) Like the Wheeler boy.  
RUSS. Right. The one who —  
BEV. Bags the groceries.  
RUSS. Right.  
BEV. (*Beat, then.*) But that's nice, isn't it, in a way? To know we all have our place.

RUSS. There but for the grace of god.  
BEV. Exactly. (*Pause. Russ breaks it with:*)  
RUSS. (*Pronouncing grandly, with a sweep of his hand.*) Ulan Bator!  
BEV. What?  
RUSS. (*An exact repeat.*) Ulan Bator!  
BEV. What are you doing?  
RUSS. (*Once again.*) Ulan — !  
BEV. Stop it. Tell me what you're doing.  
RUSS. Capital of Mongolia.  
BEV. Well, why would I know that?  
RUSS. (*Shrugs.*) *National Geographic*.  
BEV. Oh oh. Did you change the address like I asked you?  
RUSS. What do you mean?  
BEV. For the *National Geographic*.  
RUSS. The address?  
BEV. Oh, *Russ*!  
RUSS. Me?  
BEV. I *asked* you.  
RUSS. You did?  
BEV. I asked you *fifteen times*.  
RUSS. When?  
BEV. I said don't forget the change of address for the magazine and you promised me that you would, you promised me *specifically* —  
RUSS. (*Overlapping.*) I did it last week.  
BEV. (*Continuous.*) — that you would see to it so I — Oh.  
RUSS. Pulling your leg.  
BEV. I see.  
RUSS. (*A gentle imitation.*) Oh *Russ*!!  
BEV. Maybe people don't *like* having their leg pulled.  
RUSS. I was just — I was — Okay. (*Pause.*)  
BEV. And are you going to bring that trunk down from upstairs?  
RUSS. Yup.  
BEV. Thought you said after lunch.  
RUSS. Sort a two-person job.  
BEV. And you really want to wear those clothes all day?  
RUSS. Hadn't really thought about it. (*A silence passes between them. Russ scratches his elbow.*)  
BEV. But you know, you *are* a funny person. I was telling Francine — I ran into Barbara Buckley at Lewis and Coker's and Barbara said that Newland told her a funny joke that you told at Rotary last year.