

2-2-5
72ACT TWOScene 2

SCENE:

The Beekman Place apartment. Six months later. VERA and LINDSAY wait amid packing boxes and covered furniture.

LINDSAY is greying nicely. VERA has aged about ten minutes. She is in mourning black, including a heavy veil, and playing the tragedy to the hilt.

LINDSAY

Vera, I'm a coward.

(Music cue to stop)

I should've gone down to the boat to meet her.

VERA

Patrick wanted to be alone with her.

(Pointing to a dictaphone and a typewriter)

Lindsay, what is all this?

LINDSAY

I got her a dictaphone and a typewriter. Mame's always got to have a project.

VERA

How can Mame write a book? She can't even sit still long enough to write a post-card.

(She uncovers a monstrosity of a dragon chair from the Orient and quickly covers it again)

LINDSAY

Well, she's going to have help.

VERA

What Mame needs is a friend,

(Takes cover off chair and replaces)

a bosom friend. And I'm going to be better than a friend -- a sister!

(The doorbell chimes. LINDSAY goes to answer it)

START →

Vera

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LINDSAY

She won't recognize you.

(VERA strikes a tragic pose and
throws open her arms)

VERA

Mame, you poor tragic darling. Sister is here!

(AGNES GOOCH schlumps in, wearing
a shapeless overcoat and clutching
a shorthand pad)

My God, she can't have changed that much.

AGNES

I've been going to Speed-o.

LINDSAY

I sent her to this secretarial school, so she could master
shorthand. Agnes, do you think you can take down every
word Mrs. Burnside says?

AGNES

Oh, Speed-o won't let anybody out who can't do at least a
hundred words a minute.

(To VERA)

I'm over two hundred.

VERA

You're not!

(AGNES takes off her coat and flips
her shorthand pad ready to begin)

PATRICK'S VOICE

(Off)

Welcome home, Auntie Mame.

MAME

(From off)

Beekman Place! Dear, loyal Beekman Place.

VERA

Everybody smile.

MAME

(From off)

Just sitting here, waiting for me.

VERA

Nobody cry!

(MAME sweeps in, all in white. The
Ivy-League PATRICK follows. ITO
follows with luggage.

Vera

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VERA bursts into sobs)

VERA (Cont'd)

Mame darling. You look awful!

MAME

Vera, my old, old, old friend.

(They kiss)

And Lindsay, how distinguished you look.

LINDSAY

Welcome home.

(They kiss)

MAME

And Agnes!

(AGNES dutifully mouths and
scribbles "And Agnes.")

MAME notices the dictaphone and
typewriter)

What's all this?

LINDSAY

These are the tools of your new trade. You're going to write
a book, Mame, and I'm going to publish it. Your memoirs.

PATRICK

Nobody's had a more exciting life than you, Auntie Mame. I
think it'd be terrific.

VERA

And think of all the fascinating people you've known. Like
me.

LINDSAY

And it would take your mind off yourself.

MAME

(Suspiciously)

Oh, I see -- this is some kind of trumped-up occupational
therapy.

LINDSAY

No, no --

MAME

Like hooking rugs.

(Dismissing the idea)

My memoirs.

(Suddenly changing her mind and
getting up)

What a marvelous idea. I'll dedicate my book to Beau and
all the glorious times we had together.

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LINDSAY

Writing isn't easy, Mame -- it takes months of grueling concentration.

MAME

(Eyes lighting up)

Let me see, let me see.

(AGNES follows her, pencil scribbling furiously every word MAME says)

"Chapter One, Page One"

(AGNES writes)

Well, I'll be damned, Lindsay. This isn't so difficult after all.

(Wheeling on AGNES)

What are you writing, Agnes?

AGNES

(Reading her shorthand by rote)

"Chapter One, Page One, well, I'll be damned, Lindsay, this isn't so difficult after all, what are you writing, Agnes?"

VERA

She is fast.

PATRICK

Auntie Mame, you're off and running.

MAME

Oh, Patrick, do you really think I should? You heard Lindsay. It'll take up all my time, and I really came home just to be with you.

PATRICK

You can't exactly be with me, Auntie Mame, no women allowed in the dorm.

MAME

You're all grown up. You don't need me anymore.

(AGNES is at MAME's elbow taking down every word in frantic shorthand)

Agnes, how do we turn you off?

LINDSAY

I'm going right over and announce your book to my publishing house.

(LINDSAY exits)

PATRICK

Goodbye for now, Charlotte Bronte.
(PATRICK goes off)

Vera

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MAME

(Dreaming)

Literature! Literature! You know, Vera, I may even let myself go prematurely grey.

(MAME takes off her furs and gloves)

VERA

(Tragically)

Mame. Mame do you forgive me?

MAME

For what, darling?

VERA

Oh, I've had regrets. I tell you I've lost many a beauty-sleep, tossing and turning, because I was so cruel to you -- that terrible time in New Haven.

MAME

Vera dear, you've lost beauty sleep. It hardly shows.

VERA

Well, the point is -- we forgive each other, Mame. Let's have a drink to celebrate our reconciliation.

MAME

Oh, I've sworn off.

VERA

Good idea.

MAME

It's such a good idea, let's drink to it.

(They cross to the bar. VERA pours two huge glasses full)

Agnes, do you care for a drink?

AGNES

Oh, thank you no. I think I'll just go fix myself a Dr. Pepper.

(She backs out of the room, fascinated by these TWO WOMEN of the world.)

MAME and VERA clink glasses)

VERA

It's like old times.

MAME

Friendship like ours is very rare.

(They drink, start getting pleasantly tipsy)

Vera

2-2-10

77

VERA

What's the female equivalent to Damon and Pythias?

MAME

Daphnis and Chloe?

VERA

I think one of 'em was a fella.

MAME

The wonderful thing is that you and I, Vera, can say anything to each other.

VERA

STOP → Absolutely anything. Just be careful what you say.

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BOSOM BUDDIES

MAME & VERA

(BOTH sing)

WE'LL ALWAYS BE BOSOM BUDDIES
FRIENDS, SISTERS AND PALS
WE'LL ALWAYS BE BOSOM BUDDIES
IF LIFE SHOULD REJECT YOU
THERE'S ME TO PROTECT YOU

VERA

IF I SAY THAT YOUR TONGUE IS VICIOUS

MAME

IF I CALL YOU UNCOUTH

BOTH

IT'S SIMPLY THAT
WHO ELSE BUT A BOSOM BUDDY
WILL SIT DOWN AND TELL YOU THE TRUTH!

VERA

THO' NOW AND AGAIN I'M AWARE THAT MY CANDID OPINION
MAY STING

MAME

THO' OFTEN MY FRANK OBSERVATION MIGHT SCALD
I'VE BEEN MEANING TO TELL YOU FOR YEARS ... YOU
SHOULD KEEP YOUR HAIR NATURAL LIKE MINE

VERA

IF I KEPT MY HAIR NATURAL LIKE YOURS ... I'D BE BALD!
BUT DARLING

BOTH

WE'LL ALWAYS BE DEAR COMPANIONS
MY CRONY, MY MATE
WE'LL ALWAYS BE HARMONIZING
ORPHAN ANNIE AND SANDY
LIKE AMOS 'N ANDY