

Chapter 12 Text Selection for Highlighted Reading

1

It was so sudden: the earsplitting bangs, the screams, the confusion. Theo and Doug ran into the kitchen; Mrs. Theodorakis ran out. Her hair, her face, her apron were splattered with dark dripping red.

“Blood,” Sydelle Pulaski cried, clutching her heart.

“Don’t just sit there,” Catherine Theodorakis shouted, “somebody call the fire department.”

2

Angela hurried to the pay phone on the wall and stood there trembling, not knowing whether to call or not. They were snowbound, the fire engines could not reach Sunset Towers.

3

Theo leaned through the kitchen doorway. “Everything’s okay. There’s no fire.”

4

“Chris, honey, it’s all right,” Mrs. Theodorakis said, kneeling before the wheelchair. “It’s all right, Chris, look! It’s just tomato sauce.”

Tomato sauce! Mrs. Theodorakis was covered with tomato sauce, not blood. The curious heirs now piled into the kitchen, except for Sydelle Pulaski, who slumped to the counter. She could have a heart attack and no one would notice.

5

Mr. Hoo surveyed the scene, trying to conceal his delight. “What a mess,” he said. “That row of cans must have exploded from the heat of the stove.” The entire kitchen was splattered with tomato sauce and soaked in foam from the fire extinguishers. “What a mess.”

6

George Theodorakis regarded him with suspicion. “It was a bomb.”

Catherine Theodorakis thought so, too. “There was a hissing, then bang, bang, sparks flying all over the kitchen, red sparks, purple sparks.”

“Cans of tomato sauce exploded,” Doug Hoo said, defending his father. The others agreed. Mrs. Theodorakis was understandably hysterical. A bomb? Ridiculous. Sam Westing certainly did not appear to have been killed by a bomb.

7

Judge Ford suggested that the accident be reported to the police immediately in order to collect on the insurance.

“You might as well redecorate the entire kitchen,” Grace Wexler, decorator, proposed. “It should be functional yet attractive, with lots of copper pots hanging from the ceiling.”

“I don’t think there’s any real damage,” Catherine Theodorakis replied, “but we’ll have to close for a few days to clean up.”

Mr. Hoo smiled. Angela offered to help.

“Angela, dear, you have a fitting this afternoon,” Grace reminded her, “and we have so much to do for the wedding shower on Saturday.”

In thumped Sydelle Pulaski. “I’m fine now, just a bit woozy. Goodness, what a nasty turn.”