

**Lynn's Zen**  
**By C. Lynn Perry**

**Flawless**

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"*Hag!*" I screeched over the phone, using one of The Girls' favorite terms of endearment. "You *hag!*" For those of you that have ever heard my normal voice, you know that it is already at a decibel and octave strictly reserved for ambulance and tornado sirens, so when I screech, I tend to get attention.

Barb had already spewed the secret, so I was having to act all surprised and stuff when Monica called to tell me her Big News. After watching all of Us Girls, one-by-one, become single again due to divorce, death or anti-freeze poisoning (just kidding), it was nice to know that one of us was finally getting re-married. And not only was she getting re-married, but they were buying a house! It *almost* gave a cynical, crusty old girl like myself the Warm Fuzzies Of Hope, you know? Almost.

"You've got to come see the ring!" Monica giggled into the phone like a school girl. "And the house! Chris and I are going over right now! Do ya'll want to come over and meet us there? I can't *wait* to show it to you."

"Sure. We'll be there." I said. We got directions, and Barb, Leigh, and I jumped in the car and headed straight over.

"I gotta warn you," Leigh told me, "she's really disappointed with the ring. The diamond's so small you practically need the Hubble Telescope to see it."

"How come I was the last one she told?" I whined from the backseat, because everybody *knows* the one thing I hate is to be the last one to know something.

"I wonder what this house is gonna look like if he was so cheap with the ring?" Barb mused aloud, ignoring me.

Well, it didn't take long to find our answer to that one. We pulled into a lovely wooded lot with a house on it that looked like the fire marshal had condemned it just last week. In fact, I think it was the yellow tape barrier that gave it that particular ambiance! I, for one, was frightened, and immediately started scoping out the area around the front deck (which was rotten) for the chalk outline of a body.

"Looks like a fixer-upper," Barb smiled ruefully.

"Oh, this is scary, girl! While I love Chris to death, he is the poster child for procrastination. From the looks of the outside, it'll take her ten years to get it presentable. Let's just pray the inside looks better," I said. "Does anybody know why I was the last one she told?" I asked again.

"Be nice," Barb hissed, as we walked into the house for the grand tour. Only three words could describe this house: Former Meth Lab.

I tried to "ohh" and "ahh" at all the appropriate times as Monica showed us around, telling us what color she was going to paint the various rooms, how she was going to decorate, and what all they planned on doing to fix it up. I tried to visualize it my mind, I really did. But all I could see was a sofa that looked like several litters of feral creatures had been birthed on it, and a bathtub so

black it needed to be hauled off instead of cleaned; because I knew that I could never get in it knowing how it looked now, no matter how much bleach got poured into it and stuff. I don't even want to think about the smell, or the fact that there were numbers painted on the doors! I mean, what was *that* all about? Chris obviously spent about half as much on this house as he did his car.

How could she even think about beginning a life in this place, much less a family? What was she thinking? I had to stop this!

So, after the tour, while Leigh was prying Barb out of the middle of the front porch where her left leg had fallen through, Monica and I were alone, and I knew I had my chance!

She turned to me and said, "Oh, you didn't see the ring!" and held out her left hand. Sure enough, I think somewhere in there was a tiny fragment of a diamond. "What do you think? About the ring and the house and all?" she asked me hopefully.

When I looked up into her eyes, I saw something that I'd never seen in her before: happiness, love, hope, and dreams. And in that moment, I knew why I was the last one she told. Sometimes, I have trouble seeing possibilities and believing in dreams, because I see life in tiny fragments.

I tried to choose my words carefully, because I wanted to tell her the truth. So, being a friend, I did.

"It's flawless," I told her, smiling. And, I meant it.