

HURRICANE DIANE by Madeleine George

RENEE SHAPIRO-EPPS

(Renee, smart, creative, and professional, is looking out her back door onto her newly designed backyard. She is talking to her girlfriends. Renee is beginning to see the world through Diane's eyes. She has been working as an editor for HGTV, showcasing traditional gardens and backyards, but Diane's seduction has, in a way, awakened Renee to a new approach for creating landscapes and appreciating the biodiversity of nature.)

Wait, no, before you rip anything out – I just wish you could see what I see out there. Look at the way the crabapple shelters the wild carrot. And see how the comfrey clusters around the base of the chestnut? It's so intertwined, it's so satisfying, it's -. (Off their blank looks.) I mean, you can't get the full effect just looking out a window; why don't we all go out there together and walk around a little? I could give you a little garden tour. Maybe Diane didn't take the time to explain it all to you, but she and I actually worked pretty closely together on the plant guild. You've got serviceberry out there, you've got sunchoke – and you're not going to believe how low-maintenance it all is. No mowing, no watering – it's like hiring Mother Nature to do your yardwork for you – for free! (To herself.) That's my next headline. I thought I'd start out personal, you know, ground it in specifics? So I was showing her pictures of our yards on my phone, I was doing my impression of Pam yelling about sticks and brambles, and she's laughing her ass off, she's like, Renee, I just love hearing stories about you out there on that cul-de-sac! (Microbeat). And I had to be like, No Lisette, I mean I want us to consider this for Outdoor Living. And she was like, This? But I kept it rolling, super positive; I was like: Permaculture: Yard of the Future! Heal your Garden, Heal the Planet! I was all, wait until you meet Diane in person; the way she talks about these ideas, she makes you want to run outside and rip out your lawn with your bare hands! And she was like, Woah, okay, I'm just trying to find the smile factor in all this. You know our reader, Renee! You know what kind of content she comes to us for! And I wanted to be like, (Super crisp.) Yes, Lisette, I know our reader, I have looked her in the fucking eye, and frankly, I think we're failing her. Permaculture is good! People should do it! And if they think it's ugly, they need their eyes opened. And who better to open their eyes than us? Four point eight million Americans read us like holy scripture each month. If even one out of a thousand of them gave this a try, think of what that could do for the soil integrity of the entire North American continent! What do you want your legacy to be, Lisette? Don't you want to do something real in this world? For once?