

ACT 1, SCENE 1

by

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Third in a trilogy following A
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ACT 1, SCENE 1

Scene opens with a crowded Tea Room. Customers (Extras) are waiting to be served. Bobbie June enters from the back door, stage right.

BOBBIE JUNE
Angela...Angela...oh, where is that girl?

MAN 1
Bobbie June?

WOMAN 1
Bobbie June, could I get some coffee?

MAN 2
I'd like a doughnut, please.

WOMAN 2
Could I get some hot tea, please, Bobbie June?

BOBBIE JUNE
Angela...where did she go?

Bobbie June calls to her husband, Ted.

BOBBIE JUNE
Ted, I need some help in here.

Ted calls from the back door.

TED
I'm coming, Bobbie June.

Ted enters from the back door. He and Bobbie June begin to serve everyone as they speak.

BOBBIE JUNE
What happened to Angela? Ted, did you see her in the back?

TED
No. If she left through the back door, she got past me.

BOBBIE JUNE
Wait a minute. Don't tell me you were downstairs playing dominoes, were you?

Ted begins to get nervous.

TED
I wasn't playing dominoes.

BOBBIE JUNE
If I went down there and looked at
the scorecard, would I see your name
written on it?

TED
Well...I was mostly just watching.

BOBBIE JUNE
I knew it was a bad idea to bring
The Domino Boys in here.

TED
Bobbie June, where else could they
go? They haven't had a place to play
since Bob and Dossie Marie sold
their antique shop.

BOBBIE JUNE
Well, I guess it's better for them
to be here and out of the way.

TED
Otherwise, they'd be playing
dominoes in the middle of Main
Street.

BOBBIE JUNE
And then Sheriff Woody would want to
join in the game. Come on, Ted,
let's get these customers taken care
of.

Ted and Bobbie June continue to wait on customers, who leave
tickets and money on tables and slowly begin to drift out
through the front door, stage left.

MAN 1
Thank you, Bobbie June.

BOBBIE JUNE
Thank you.

WOMAN 1
Thanks, Bobbie June.

BOBBIE JUNE
You're welcome.

MAN 2

I left a little something extra for you, Bobbie June.

BOBBIE JUNE

I appreciate it.

WOMAN 2

Thanks, Bobbie June. I'll see you tomorrow.

BOBBIE JUNE

Bye, now.

The last customer leaves. Ted and Bobbie June sit down for a cup of coffee at the center table.

TED

You've had a tough day today.

BOBBIE JUNE

They've been getting tougher and tougher. Now, what happened to Angela?

TED

I don't know. She must have quit and left out the back.

BOBBIE JUNE

How many does that make?

TED

Three, so far. I know that with the new folks moving in we have to keep up.

BOBBIE JUNE

That means we need to get help and keep it.

TED

Chrissy will be able to help when she gets back.

BOBBIE JUNE

Now wait a minute, Ted. Chrissy needs to study. She has the SAT coming up.

TED

I know. But she would do anything for you.

Bobbie June reaches over and holds Ted's hand.

BOBBIE JUNE

I'm so glad that you and Chrissy are back in my life again.

TED

This has been the best year of my life. Even if we've been busier than ever.

BOBBIE JUNE

I guess this means Angela quit and we're going to have to hire another girl.

TED

Speaking of a girl, Chrissy called while I was downstairs...

BOBBIE JUNE

...watching the domino game.

TED

Yes, watching the game. She and the girls are having a wonderful time in Dallas.

BOBBIE JUNE

Mary and Armando are watching them, aren't they?

TED

Mary and Armando are watching them like hawks.

BOBBIE JUNE

It's amazing that Mary and Armando have only been married for three months and they want to take a trip with three teenagers.

TED

If you were married to Armando, wouldn't you want a lot of people around you?

BOBBIE JUNE

In self-defense. Good point.

TED

Let's get ready to lock up and go home, OK.

The front door opens. George Sharp, owner of the Calico Cafe, walks in. He is all smiles.

GEORGE SHARP
Good evening, Bobbie June.

BOBBIE JUNE
Good evening, Mr. Sharp. I would have thought you would be at the Calico Cafe.

GEORGE SHARP
Oh, I'm busy enough, Bobbie June, I just had to hire a new girl this afternoon.

TED
Let me guess. Her name is Angela, right?

GEORGE SHARP
Yes, I believe that's right. She has some experience, but not quite up to my standards.

Ted ignores this.

TED
What brings you here, George?

GEORGE SHARP
I just wanted to see how things were going around here, Ted. All of the businesses on Main Street are prospering.

BOBBIE JUNE
We've had big crowds in the Tea Room nearly every day.

GEORGE SHARP
Yes, I know you have. It's hard to believe that this time last year, we all believed that Lazarus Cheatwood would give the town to Rupert Whitley.

TED
We remember it all too well, George.

GEORGE SHARP
And, we have you to thank, Bobbie June.

BOBBIE JUNE

Me?

GEORGE SHARP

Why, yes. Having Rev. Brown's wedding here in the Tea Room caused Whitley to tip his hand and reveal his plot to take over the town. A tribute to your genius, I must say, Bobbie June.

They don't quite understand, but go along.

BOBBIE JUNE

If you say so, George.

GEORGE SHARP

But that was in the past and now we must look to the future.

TED

The future?

GEORGE SHARP

Those who look to the future are able to plan for the future and can be ready for what happens. I think we fall into that group, don't we, Ted? Bobbie June?

BOBBIE JUNE

If you say so, George.

GEORGE SHARP

Then, I'll be leaving now. I've got to have a training meeting with my new employees.

George Sharp gets up to leave.

TED

Still thinking about the future.

GEORGE SHARP

Good point, Ted. Bye, now.

George Sharp leaves, still smiling, through the front door. Ted and Bobbie June sit back down at the center table.

BOBBIE JUNE

No matter how many times I talk to that man, I never understand what he's saying.

TED

In the past, present, or future.

BOBBIE JUNE

He's harmless enough, except that he hires our employees away.

TED

I'll put an ad in the paper tomorrow, Bobbie June.

BOBBIE JUNE

Good. Let's go home.

Ted locks the front door. He and Bobbie June begin to walk out the back door. There is a knock on the front door. Ted walks to the front door, unlocks, and opens it. Madeline Brown enters, looking tired and careworn.

MADELINE

Thanks, Ted. Bobbie June, I'm so glad I caught you here.

TED

Well, Madeline, we were just about to leave and go home.

MADELINE

I know. If I'm keeping you, I'll come back.

BOBBIE JUNE

No, you won't. You'll sit down right here and tell me what's on your mind.

Bobbie June leads Madeline to the center table. They sit down and Ted brings a glass of water.

MADELINE

Thanks, Bobbie June. It seems like I've been so busy lately, I haven't had time to come by.

TED

We know you're busy. The church is growing and getting ready to relocate, so you and Leroy have added responsibilities.

MADELINE

That's all I ever seem to have: added responsibilities. It's like I
(MORE)

MADELINE (CONT'D)
spend every waking moment doing
something for the church.

TED
How is Leroy handling all of this?

MADELINE
Leroy, who? I hardly ever see him. I
leave him dinner in the microwave.
Sometimes the only way I know he's
been home is when I find an empty
plate.

BOBBIE JUNE
It sounds like the two of you need
to take some time off and go on a
vacation.

MADELINE
Vacation? Fat chance of that in the
middle of moving the church.
Besides, I have too much to do.
Would you like to hear about my day?

BOBBIE JUNE
Tell us, Madeline.

MADELINE
First, I went to an early morning
Ladies Bible Study, then I had to
make a hospital visit. Mrs. Becker
was having surgery.

BOBBIE JUNE
Oh, I didn't know that.

MADELINE
Oh, she's fine. It was minor and
she'll be out in a couple of days.

BOBBIE JUNE
Good.

MADELINE
After that, I had a meeting with the
decoration committee. Have you ever
met with the decoration committee?

TED
I can't say that I have, Madeline.

MADELINE

Well, you need to sit in a room with seven women and one paint chart picking colors for the children's area. It's quite a fun experience.

BOBBIE JUNE

I can't say that I've ever wanted to do that.

MADELINE

And worst of all, the Mayor is on that committee.

BOBBIE JUNE

I didn't know that.

MADELINE

She's an expert at everything, especially decorating the church. Mayor Pendergast doesn't like any of the ideas that anyone else comes up with. Mostly, I don't think she likes me one bit.

BOBBIE JUNE

Madeline, that's probably not true.

MADELINE

Oh, yes it is. I can tell by the way she looks at me. Believe me, Bobbie June, after three and a half hours of sitting in that room, you'd be looking for the nearest two-by-four. Or a gun.

BOBBIE JUNE

Now, Madeline...

MADELINE

...I know. I have to be calm and act like the pastor's wife. But it is something to think about.

TED

I'll bet it is.

MADELINE

After three and a half hours, I made an excuse and left. I just had to see a real friend, Bobbie June.

BOBBIE JUNE

I appreciate that, Madeline.

MADELINE

I'll be going now. I'm going to run by the church office and try to see Leroy for a few minutes before the next activity.

Madeline gets up to leave through the front door, stage left. Ted locks the door behind her and moves back to the center stage.

TED

And I thought we had a bad day.

BOBBIE JUNE

I'm really concerned about Madeline, Ted.

TED

I know. What can we do?

BOBBIE JUNE

I'm not sure, but there's got to be something we can do to take the some of the load off of Madeline.

TED

You and me?

BOBBIE JUNE

Not just you and me. There's a whole lot of women that could minister and meet needs so that Madeline doesn't have to do it all.

TED

I think you're right, Bobbie June. Just because we have a pastor doesn't mean we have to have him and his wife do it all.

BOBBIE JUNE

If enough women participate, then no one person is put on the spot.

TED

I see those wheels turning up there, Bobbie June. But you can't do this by yourself. You're going to need some help.

BOBBIE JUNE

And I know just the person to call.
I'll talk to Maybellene Caskey.

TED

Or is it Maybellene Flambeaux? Or
maybe it's Maybellene Cheatwood
Flambeaux?

BOBBIE JUNE

Stop it, Ted. This is serious.

TED

I know.

BOBBIE JUNE

I can also talk to some of the women
in our Sunday School class.

TED

There are probably some women who
want to do more and take a bigger
role in ministry.

BOBBIE JUNE

Good. That's a start. I think
there's something else we can do for
Leroy and Madeline. Something to get
them together.

TED

What's that?

BOBBIE JUNE

We can plan an anniversary party for
them. They've probably been too busy
to think about it very much.

TED

From what Madeline said, I think
you're right. Sometimes people need
to know they have friends who
appreciate them.

BOBBIE JUNE

Absolutely. We can bring the entire
group together.

TED

I'll contact Bob and Dossie Marie.
We'll need them here.

BOBBIE JUNE

It's their anniversary, too. This is becoming a bigger project than I thought.

TED

Do you think we can keep this a secret from all four of them?

BOBBIE JUNE

Sure. We'll swear everyone to secrecy. It will only be a small thing.

TED

No. It's starting to sound like the biggest secret since D-Day. When do we want to do this?

BOBBIE JUNE

Let's try for Friday night. That'll give us four days to get everything together. The girls should be back by then.

TED

Who knows? We might be able to persuade Dominic to decorate the place for the party.

The Domino Boys, Buford and Earl Hensley, quietly enter from the back door carrying a box of dominoes and listen to the conversation.

BOBBIE JUNE

"Cooter" only does weddings. I don't think my flocked wallpaper from 1889 New Orleans can stand another function planned by Dominic Flambeaux.

TED

I understand. It looks like we've got a really big week ahead.

BOBBIE JUNE

Right.

Ted's tone changes.

TED

You know, Bobbie June, you are a genius.

BOBBIE JUNE

No, I'm not.

TED

Yes, you are. You're also one of the kindest and caring people I've ever met.

BOBBIE JUNE

Thank you, Ted.

TED

That's also one of the reasons I fell in love with you in the first place.

Ted and Bobbie June move closer for an embrace. But, they are interrupted by Buford Hensley loudly blowing his nose into a large red handkerchief.

BUFORD

Oh, Ted and Bobbie June, that is about the sweetest thing I ever heard in all my born days.

EARL

Me, too. I'm getting misty-eyed right now.

TED

How long have you been here?

BOBBIE JUNE

What have you heard?

EARL

Why, nothing, Miss Bobbie June. Buford doesn't know what he's talking about.

BUFORD

Yes, I do, Earl. We heard about the anniversary party for the Reverend and Miss Madeline and Bob and Miss Dossie Marie.

EARL

We also heard it was a big secret.

BOBBIE JUNE

Well, it better stay a secret, too.

BUFORD
We promise.

EARL
We swear on this box of dominoes.

Ted is impressed by this.

TED
You can't get much better than that.

BOBBIE JUNE
Good. Tell Bob and Dossie Marie that
we want them to come by tomorrow.

BUFORD
O. K.

The Domino Boys walk out the front door. Ted locks the door.

BOBBIE JUNE
Now, Ted, let's go home. We've got
things to do.

TED
We're going to need some rest.

They exit through the back door.

END OF ACT 1, SCENE 1.

ACT 1, SCENE 2

Maybellene Cheatwood-Caskey enters the Tea Room from the
front door, stage left.

MAYBELLENE
Bobbie June...Bobbie June?

Bobbie June enters from the back door.

BOBBIE JUNE
Here I am...Maybellene, it is so
good to see you.

The two women embrace.

MAYBELLENE
It's good to see you, Bobbie June.
It's been a while.

BOBBIE JUNE
I know you've been busy lately.

MAYBELLENE

You don't know the half of it.

BOBBIE JUNE

I've been hearing people say that recently. Sit down here, Maybellene, I need to discuss something with you.

Bobbie June and Maybellene sit down at the center table.

BOBBIE JUNE

Madeline came in late yesterday afternoon. She's really stressed out.

MAYBELLENE

Why?

BOBBIE JUNE

She's trying to do everything: make all the visits, lead all the groups, and sit on all the committees.

MAYBELLENE

She can't do that all by herself.

BOBBIE JUNE

Well, she thinks she has to, Maybellene.

MAYBELLENE

I didn't think that being a pastor's wife took that much out of a person.

BOBBIE JUNE

Madeline is running herself ragged trying to do everything. I'm really worried about her.

MAYBELLENE

I can see that, Bobbie June. I know that you have an idea. I can see it in your eyes.

BOBBIE JUNE

I have been thinking about it since yesterday.

MAYBELLENE

Tell me what you're thinking.

BOBBIE JUNE

I was thinking that the women of the church could get together and make the hospital visits and have the Bible studies and things like that.

MAYBELLENE

I see.

BOBBIE JUNE

And Madeline could do only those activities that are really necessary.

MAYBELLENE

You do have a point, Bobbie June. How many do you think you'll need to get going?

BOBBIE JUNE

Probably about ten ladies to start with and then more will probably want to join in.

MAYBELLENE

Once people start to see that ministry is going on rather than a social club, it'll work even better.

BOBBIE JUNE

Absolutely. What do you think so far?

MAYBELLENE

I think you've got a great idea, Bobbie June. How can I help?

BOBBIE JUNE

First of all, we need to talk to Madeline. Once she's with us, we can talk to Leroy.

MAYBELLENE

How do you think Madeline will handle all of this?

BOBBIE JUNE

What do you mean?

MAYBELLENE

If a group of women approached me and told me they wanted to help me do my job, then it might leave me
(MORE)

MAYBELLENE (CONT'D)

with the idea that I wasn't doing a good job.

BOBBIE JUNE

I see what you're getting at. I'm not sure exactly how to tell her what we're doing without hurting her feelings.

MAYBELLENE

The timing will work out, though. God will let you know when it's the right time.

BOBBIE JUNE

I just hope that it's before Madeline is in the hospital or in divorce court.

MAYBELLENE

I don't want it to come to that.

BOBBIE JUNE

It probably won't. But, all of this work they're doing is taking a lot out of them. That's why I want to do something for them.

MAYBELLENE

Like what?

BOBBIE JUNE

I want to plan an anniversary party for them and Bob and Dossie Marie.

MAYBELLENE

An anniversary party?

BOBBIE JUNE

Yes. I want to do something special for them. I also want to get everyone back together again.

MAYBELLENE

We haven't been able to be together lately. I've missed being in touch with all of you.

BOBBIE JUNE

I know. It makes no sense to me that we'd let work and the outside world prevent us from being together.

MAYBELLENE

Do you think that they have plans of their own?

BOBBIE JUNE

Bob and Dossie Marie are coming today. So I plan to tell them to be here at the right time, but, I'm not going to tell them why.

MAYBELLENE

Why don't I go to the church office and tell Leroy the same thing.

BOBBIE JUNE

Good. Now I was planning on having this shindig on Friday night. Is that all right?

MAYBELLENE

That's probably fine. But I'm not sure if Cooter will be back in town or not.

BOBBIE JUNE

Where is he?

MAYBELLENE

He is in Ireland doing an outdoor wedding for another movie star.

BOBBIE JUNE

An outdoor wedding?

MAYBELLENE

That's the only way he would do a wedding without Armando.

BOBBIE JUNE

It's kind of hard to have drapes outside.

MAYBELLENE

It's the only way that Mary and Armando could take that trip to Dallas.

BOBBIE JUNE

Ted and I heard from Chrissy last night. They are having the time of their lives in Dallas with the girls.

MAYBELLENE

Mary and Armando should be back in time for the party. Armando can do some decorating for the Tea Room.

BOBBIE JUNE

I thought Armando only did drapes.

MAYBELLENE

He does. In fact, he does weddings, parties, and bar-mitzvahs.

BOBBIE JUNE

What kind of drapes do you put up for a bar-mitzvahs?

MAYBELLENE

I don't know. It's their idea of diversity. Cooter is really interested in diversity.

BOBBIE JUNE

I'll bet he is.

MAYBELLENE

In fact, I told them they should change the name from World Wedding Headquarters to Celebration Specialists.

BOBBIE JUNE

World Wedding Headquarters?

MAYBELLENE

Now that Cooter and Armando are world famous wedding planners, they should have a bigger name.

BOBBIE JUNE

With pink flamingos on the business card.

MAYBELLENE

That's right. I don't know why he loves pink so much.

BOBBIE JUNE

I don't either.

Ted walks in the front door with Bob and Dossie Marie.

TED

Look what I found.

Bob and Dossie Marie are talking on individual cell phones.

DOSSIE MARIE

Fine. Tell the publisher to make plans for a third printing of our book.

BOB

Kathy, my advice to you is to sign the bill and get it over with. Your poll numbers are starting to drag the floor.

DOSSIE MARIE

And if he wants our next book then the advance is going to have to be bigger. (To Bob.) What do you think, dear, seven figures?

BOB

Seven is good.

DOSSIE MARIE

Seven figures. That's before the decimal point...All right, bye.

Bob and Dossie Marie close their cell phones in unison.

BOB

I'm sorry. I was speaking to the governor.

DOSSIE MARIE

I'm sorry, too. I was speaking to our publisher.

Ted, Bob, and Dossie Marie move to the center table. Greeting and hugs are exchanged.

BOB

Buford and Earl told us to come by here and see you, Bobbie June.

TED

Did they tell you anything else?

DOSSIE MARIE

Why no, Ted. "Go by the Tea Room and see Bobbie June." That's all Buford said.

BOB

And then Earl hit him on the head
with a box of dominoes. Quite
strange, even for them, I must say.

DOSSIE MARIE

Well, you know what they say, my
dear, "Strange is a strange does."

BOB

Quite right, my sweet, quite right.

Bobbie June tries to change the subject.

BOBBIE JUNE

Well, enough about them.

DOSSIE MARIE

Is something wrong, Bobbie June?

BOB

You're message from Buford sounded
urgent.

DOSSIE MARIE

He sounded more hurt to me, my dear.

BOBBIE JUNE

Urgent? Not urgent. I just needed to
see if you could come to a meeting.

DOSSIE MARIE

A meeting? When?

BOBBIE JUNE

Friday night. Ted and I are going to
bring some people together and meet
about the ministries of the church.

TED

...about getting more people
involved.

BOB

I see.

BOBBIE JUNE

We really need for you two to be
there.

TED

Especially someone who has such
great skills at organization, Bob.

BOBBIE JUNE
And someone who has been so
involved, like you, Dossie Marie.

Bob and Dossie Marie begin to warm to the idea.

BOB
I think that would be just fine.
But, we'll have to check our
schedules first.

Bob and Dossie Marie pull out their flip phones and push
buttons, checking their date books. They close their phones
again in unison.

DOSSIE MARIE
It's good with me.

BOB
It is equally good with me.

BOBBIE JUNE
Good. It's settled. Let me get some
tea then.

Ted and Bobbie June leave through the back door, stage right.
Bob, Dossie Marie, and Maybellene sit at the center table.

BOB
Maybellene, have you had time to
look at that business proposal I
sent to you?

MAYBELLENE
Yes I have, Bob. I'm not interested
in any new business ventures right
now. No offense.

BOB
No offense taken.

DOSSIE MARIE
It's quite all right, Maybellene.

BOB
We just think that this land deal
north of Bayou City will be the next
major development in town.

MAYBELLENE
I know.

DOSSIE MARIE

The North Bayou development is expected to recoup the original investment in six months.

MAYBELLENE

Frankly, Dossie Marie, I'm not really interested in making anymore money.

Bob and Dossie Marie express a mild shock.

BOB

Really?

MAYBELLENE

Really. We've got enough now, more than enough. For all his faults, my father was a good businessman. Cooter and I will be secure for the rest of our lives.

DOSSIE MARIE

That's good.

MAYBELLENE

You know, I've found that money can be a blessing and a curse.

DOSSIE MARIE

How do you mean?

MAYBELLENE

God blessed me, Dossie Marie. After I proved my identity as Lazarus Cheatwood's daughter, I was able to give the businesses back to their owners.

BOB

I know that all of those people were extremely grateful to you for that.

MAYBELLENE

That's true. But, after that, everyone seemed to want something. I helped some, but some I turned away. It was difficult to decide in some cases.

DOSSIE MARIE

It's almost like that man in the paper who won the lottery. It nearly
(MORE)

DOSSIE MARIE (CONT'D)
ruined his life.

MAYBELLENE
The two of you have been blessed
too. It's almost like you won the
lottery.

BOB
Not quite, Maybellene. We didn't
become wealthy all in one shot. We
had to work for what we've gained.

MAYBELLENE
I know that.

DOSSIE MARIE
Our book is a best seller and we do
motivational seminars every other
week.

BOB
A whole new world has been opened to
us. We plan to get as much as we can
get.

MAYBELLENE
That's good. Sometimes I wonder if
it's worth it.

DOSSIE MARIE
What's worth it?

MAYBELLENE
Don't get me wrong. Finding Cooter
and Mary and my mother is the
greatest thing that's ever happened
to me.

DOSSIE MARIE
Yes.

MAYBELLENE
Sometimes I think I'd like to be
Hattie Mae the crazy homeless bag
lady again.

BOB
What?

DOSSIE MARIE
I believe I understand, Maybellene.

MAYBELLENE

You do? Then you're the only one.

DOSSIE MARIE

People don't really notice the homeless bag lady. You, as Hattie Mae, were, as they say, "out of sight and out of mind."

MAYBELLENE

That's right. Do you know that I had an offer to make my life story into a movie on the Lifetime Movie Network? And a book offer?

BOB

Don't make a decision without checking with our publisher, Maybellene.

MAYBELLENE

Thanks, Bob. But I don't intend to sell my life story to anyone. That verse is becoming more real to me about gaining the whole world and losing one's soul.

BOB

Well, our souls are secure. We're trying for the world.

MAYBELLENE

You and Dossie Marie have a plan, do you?

DOSSIE MARIE

Nothing is going to stop us now. Right, my dear?

BOB

Absolutely, my dear sweet, Dossie Marie. Absolutely.

END OF ACT 1, SCENE 2.

ACT 1, SCENE 3

Mayor Sylvia Pendergast enters the Tea Room through the front door.

MAYOR

Bobbie June...dear Bobbie June.

The Mayor stops in front of the door when she sees Maybellene, Bob, and Dossie Marie. Bob stands at the table.

BOB
As I live and breathe, if it isn't the Mayor of Bayou City. Hello, Sylvia.

MAYOR
Hello, Bob. Still with Dossie Marie, I see.

Dossie Marie stands up.

DOSSIE MARIE
Yes, he's still with me. What about it?

MAYOR
I should think that Bob would have grown tired by now of pronouncing all of the big words in the diet books for you.

DOSSIE MARIE
I'm thinking of a few big words right now.

Dossie Marie begins to step toward the Mayor, but is held back by Bob.

BOB
Now hold on, my dear sweet Dossie Marie.

MAYOR
Yes, Dossie Marie, hold on. Perhaps I misjudged the situation.

DOSSIE MARIE
That's better.

MAYOR
Perhaps it's you, my dear, who are tired of reminding "Deacon" Bob Chamberlain that he's supposed to be an honest man.

Bob moves toward the Mayor, but this time Dossie Marie holds him back.

BOB
I'm fine, my love, perfectly fine.

MAYOR

Seems like old times, doesn't it Bob? Just like when we were on the City Council.

BOB

Yes. You're still finding ways to stab people in the back, or front, as the case may be. Why are you here, Sylvia?

MAYOR

Oh, I've always believed that I, as your Mayor, should be out among the public. The "see and be seen" thing, you know.

MAYBELLENE

I think we've seen enough.

The Mayor steps over to Maybellene.

MAYOR

And who do we have here? Oh yes, it's Hattie Mae.

MAYBELLENE

My name is Maybellene.

MAYOR

So you say. But, my how lovely you look today. I suppose it's proof positive that you can turn a sow's ear into a silk purse.

Maybellene stands up.

MAYBELLENE

If I weren't a Christian woman, Mayor, I'd...

MAYOR

You'd what? Hit me on the head with your "Will work for food" sign?

MAYBELLENE

No. I'm not going to get down in the gutter with you.

Maybellene sits back down.

MAYOR

Oh, why? You've been in the gutter so many times before.

BOB

Sylvia, you haven't changed. You've been here five minutes and managed to antagonize everyone in the room.

MAYOR

Thank you, Bob.

DOSSIE MARIE

Now, as my husband said, why are you here, Sylvia?

MAYOR

Well, now that you mention it, I'm looking for Bobbie June. Is she here?

Ted and Bobbie June enter through the back door, carrying tea.

BOBBIE JUNE

Mayor Pendergast, I'm honored.

MAYOR

Thank you, Bobbie June. It's understandable.

BOBBIE JUNE

What brings you here, Mayor?

BOB

That's what we've been trying to find out ever since she walked into the room.

MAYOR

Well, it's really on a need to know basis. And they didn't need to know.

The Mayor walks toward Bobbie June, taking her by the arm and guiding her downstage right.

BOBBIE JUNE

What is it, Mayor?

MAYOR

Bobbie June, I need a favor from you.

The Mayor continues to look around to see if anyone is listening. She acts very secretive.

BOBBIE JUNE
A favor? From me?

MAYOR
Yes. You see, I need to hold an important meeting with all the business owners in the downtown area.

BOBBIE JUNE
Yes. And...

MAYOR
Well, I have one problem. Since the City Hall is being renovated, to my personal specifications, of course, I can't hold the meeting there.

BOBBIE JUNE
So you need another place to hold this important meeting.

MAYOR
That's right. Bobbie June, you're a genius.

BOBBIE JUNE
People keep saying that.

MAYOR
I know that you and I haven't been on the same side on some issues, like the traffic lights on Main Street or when I opposed the church relocation, but we have never been uncivil to each other. Unlike those people.

The Mayor casts a snide glance at the others.

BOBBIE JUNE
Now just a minute...

MAYOR
But, that's all ancient history, Bobbie June. We have to think about the future.

BOBBIE JUNE
I've heard that before, too.

MAYOR

And that's what this meeting is about.

BOBBIE JUNE

What's this meeting about anyway, besides the future?

MAYOR

I have to keep the details of the meeting a secret for now.

BOBBIE JUNE

Is the meeting time a secret as well?

MAYOR

Oh, no. The meeting will take place tonight at 6:30.

BOBBIE JUNE

Well, that's not much time to prepare...

MAYOR

It's plenty of time. I know you can handle it.

BOBBIE JUNE

I think we can get it done.

MAYOR

Good. And we'll need some of those famous extra high-fat, deluxe delight donuts with cashews and chocolate sprinkles on top.

BOBBIE JUNE

All right.

MAYOR

Then it's settled. You'll be our gracious host and we'll cross that bridge into the future together.

BOBBIE JUNE

If you say so...

The Mayor begins walking toward the front door.

MAYOR

Then I must be off...town business and all of that. Bye, now.

Bobbie June returns to the group. Dossie Marie speaks toward the Mayor.

DOSSIE MARIE
How did she ever get elected Mayor
of Bayou City anyway?

The Mayor stops and turns to Dossie Marie.

BOB
It's easy, my dear. She told more
lies than that girdle she's wearing.

MAYOR
Oh, Bob...always the charmer. It
would be easier for you if we were
friends.

BOB
Things have been going swimmingly
without that, Sylvia. Why change
now?

MAYOR
Because I'm riding the wave of the
future, Bob.

DOSSIE MARIE
Let's hope your surfboard doesn't
wipe out.

MAYBELLENE
I thought you were leaving, Mayor.

MAYOR
You're right, I really must be
going. But, I do enjoy this gay
repartee. That reminds me, Hattie
Mae, it's too bad your husband isn't
here to join in.

Bobbie June steps up to prevent a large confrontation.

BOBBIE JUNE
We'll have everything ready for
tonight, Mayor.

MAYOR
Thank you, Bobbie June. The whole
town is counting on you. Bye, now.

The Mayor leaves through the front door.

TED

What was all that about? I've never seen so many people almost get into a fight before.

BOB

Our distinguished Mayor has a talent for bringing out the worst in people.

DOSSIE MARIE

What did she want from you, Bobbie June?

MAYBELLENE

And what was all of that about the future?

TED

The future seems to be on everyone's mind lately.

BOBBIE JUNE

The Mayor wants to have a town meeting here.

TED

In the Tea Room?

BOBBIE JUNE

She says it's a big secret.

DOSSIE MARIE

What could be so important that it has to be kept a secret?

BOB

I don't know, my sweet. But, if Sylvia Pendergast is involved, then I don't see how the future can be good.

TED

Bobbie June, what does it all mean?

BOBBIE JUNE

I don't know. I just don't know.

END OF ACT 1.

ACT 2, SCENE 1

The Domino Boys enter from the back door, carrying folding chairs. They begin to place the folding chairs in two groups

on either side of the stage. A table for refreshments is down center.

EARL
Come on, Buford, let's get these chairs into place.

BUFORD
Why are we setting up these chairs like this?

EARL
Because there's going to be an important meeting here tonight.

BUFORD
Is it going to be a wedding? I've still got my bag of rice from the last wedding.

EARL
No, Buford, the Mayor is having this meeting.

BUFORD
Who'd want to marry the Mayor?

EARL
Nobody, Buford. Nobody's getting married tonight.

BUFORD
Can I still throw rice at the Mayor?

EARL
Sure. Save me some when you open the bag.

BUFORD
You mean I've got to open the bag before I throw it?

The Domino Boys return to the task of putting out chairs. The Mayor walks in the front door carrying papers and an easel with a covered card. She looks at the arrangement and is not pleased.

MAYOR
This will not do...this will not do at all.

EARL
We like it, your royalness.

BUFORD

This is the way we set it up for the wedding.

MAYOR

Buford Hensley, this is not going to be a wedding. This is supposed to be a town meeting.

BUFORD

Now, what's the meeting about?

The Mayor is indignant.

MAYOR

It doesn't concern you.

EARL

Well, we don't want to know your secret anyway, your worship.

She begins giving directions.

MAYOR

Now, I want the chairs over there, toward the back door. I don't want them too close together. If people are too close together, they feel crowded. Claustrophobia.

EARL

Closet who?

BUFORD

Daddy put me in a closet once.

EARL

That's because we was having company. He didn't want you to scare'em away.

The Mayor looks indignant.

MAYOR

Now, boys, that's enough! Would you get those chairs moved.

EARL

Yes, your highness. Only because Bobbie June asked us to.

MAYOR

What's that table over there for?

The Mayor points to a small table near the back door.

BUFORD

Well, me and Earl here, thought we'd have us a game of dominoes going.

The Mayor is indignant and upset.

MAYOR

A domino game?

EARL

Yeah, just in case the meeting gets a little boring, your majesty.

BUFORD

Like it probably will be.

The Mayor is mad.

MAYOR

Get that table out of here and get those chairs rearranged now! I will not have domino playing anywhere near my meeting!

BUFORD

Yes, ma'am.

EARL

Yes, your queenship.

The Domino Boys return to moving chairs. They change the layout of the Tea Room until about twelve chairs on stage right near the back door. All of this is done under the stern and watchful eye of the Mayor.

BUFORD

Well?

EARL

How's this, your eminence?

They begin to look around the room. The chairs are arranged correctly. The Mayor notices that the domino table is still there.

MAYOR

You forgot something.

EARL

What, your augustness?

BUFORD
I didn't forget nothing.

The Mayor points to the domino table.

MAYOR
That table is still there.

The light dawns on Earl.

EARL
It sure is.

BUFORD
Now, since it is there, you want to
play dominoes?

EARL
We can get in a good game before
everybody gets here.

MAYOR
No! No! No! Get that table out of
here now!

BUFORD
OK, if you're sure.

EARL
We'll just take our dominoes and
play some place else, your lordship.

MAYOR
See that you do.

BUFORD
If you're sure.

MAYOR
I'm absolutely sure!

The Mayor is getting more and more angry.

EARL
You know, your majesty, if you keep
being angry, you might bust that big
blood vessel in your forehead.

Buford walks to the Mayor and points at her forehead.

BUFORD
Yeah, that one.

Mayor Pendergast slaps Buford's hand down.

MAYOR

You're going to have an even bigger problem if you keep that table here.

The Domino Boys finally get the message. They pick up the table and begin to move it.

BUFORD

OK.

MAYOR

I'm going to have an ordinance passed that outlaws domino playing in the limits of Bayou City. I'll show you.

The Domino Boys stop.

BUFORD

Now, you don't want to do that.

MAYOR

Why?

EARL

It would make a lot of us mad, your highness.

MAYOR

I think I can survive two domino players whose family tree does not fork! Now get out of here!

The Domino Boys pick up their table and leave through the back door. The Mayor continues to fume.

MAYOR

Stupid idiot domino players...

The front door opens and business owners begin to file in. The Mayor's expression suddenly changes to sweetness and light.

MAYOR

Hello, everyone...come in...nice to see you...come in...sit down...(Addressing Bobbie June like a servant.) Bobbie June, it's time for refreshments.

Ted and Bobbie June enter from the back door carrying refreshments. Bob, Dossie Marie, and Maybellene enter from

the back door and take their seats.

BOBBIE JUNE
Have some refreshments, everyone.

Bobbie June sets the refreshments on the center table and sits. The Mayor looks at the refreshments and is, again, visibly displeased.

MAYOR
Ted...Ted, come here.

TED
What is it?

She points to a tray of refreshments.

MAYOR
These are cookies. I asked Bobbie June for her famous donuts.

TED
I know...but we couldn't get everything together in time.

MAYOR
Well, excuses may work in Canada where you came from, but they don't work here. Go sit down.

TED
But...

The Mayor turns away from him. Ted gives up. With a frustrated and angry look, he sits down next to Bobbie June. The Mayor returns to being sweetness and light.

MAYOR
Thank you for coming tonight, everyone. I first want to thank Ted and Bobbie June Gibson for opening up their establishment and for being our gracious hosts.

The assembled crowd applauds.

MAYOR
I'll get right to the point, ladies and gentlemen.

Madeline enters from the front door. She is late because of a previous meeting. The Mayor turns and walks to her.

MAYOR

I'm glad you've decided to grace us
with your presence, Mrs. Brown.

MADELINE

I'm sorry...

MAYOR

But of course you are.

MADELINE

...for being late.

MAYOR

Go sit down, Madeline. Don't
embarrass yourself any further.

Madeline finds a seat. The Mayor returns to being sweetness
and light.

MAYOR

I'll continue. I believe in the
future. I believe in progress. I
believe in the betterment of Bayou
City for her citizens. That's why I
ran to be your Mayor in the first
place.

A smattering of applause from the business owners.

MAYOR

Progress must also come with
decision. And someone must be at the
helm who can take such decisions.
And yet, I feel that I need to
bring as many people on board as
possible. That is why I'm coming to
you.

Another smattering of applause.

MAYOR

The ship of progress is big enough
for all who want a place on board.
We must all work together.

Another smattering of applause.

BOB

I hope the Titanic doesn't hit an
iceberg before we get there.

The Mayor ignores him.

MAYOR

Bayou City is on the edge of a new era of progress and growth. And this is going to be the key.

The Mayor unfolds a cloth on the easel, which has been hiding a map of Bayou City.

BUSINESS OWNER 1

It's a map.

Everyone strains to look at the map.

MAYOR

Yes, it's a map of Bayou City. I'm sure that everyone has heard of the I-73 project.

BUSINESS OWNER 2

It's the highway from Alexandria.

MAYOR

It is the interstate highway from Alexandria to Memphis.

BUSINESS OWNER 1

It's been held up for years.

MAYOR

That's true. But, over the past few months, negotiations have been taking place in the halls of Congress and in the state legislatures of Louisiana, Arkansas, and Tennessee. The legislature has pressed the governor to fully fund Louisiana's portion of I-73.

BOBBIE JUNE

What does this mean for Bayou City?

MAYOR

Let me show you what this means.

The Mayor changes maps on the easel.

MAYOR

I have been successful in making the case to the Department of Transportation Development that Bayou City is the best place to locate the I-73 in its travels through our state. This is the area
(MORE)

MAYOR (CONT'D)
through which the highway can take.

The Mayor points to a circular location on the new map.

BUSINESS OWNER 2
That goes through the center of
town.

MAYOR
Yes it does. The preliminary
geological surveys indicate that
this area is the best ground in the
whole town to support construction.
Now, I'll entertain your questions.

Hands go up among all the attendees.

BUSINESS OWNER 1
It sounds like this is going to be a
major upheaval for our town, Mayor.

MAYOR
You're right. A little upheaval
never hurt anyone especially since
we are discussing the future of the
town. Things are good here now.
People are coming in. Businesses are
booming. We want it to stay that
way.

BUSINESS OWNER 1
But how will a highway make things
better?

MAYOR
Currently, the main road into town
is Highway 525. It twists and turns
through Clarks and Olla to get to
Alexandria. With Interstate 73,
there will be one direct route.

BUSINESS OWNER 2
That means we'll be able to get the
direct travelers.

MAYOR
That's right. Our restaurants and
our bed and breakfast trade will
thrive. Also our tourist attractions
and antique shops will be more
accessible.

George Sharp stands.

GEORGE SHARP

I believe, from what I've seen here tonight, that we're on the right track. We are fortunate indeed to have a Mayor in Sylvia Pendergast who is looking to the future. Let's give her a round of applause.

A smattering of applause.

MAYOR

Thank you, Mr. Sharp. Are there any other questions.

Bobbie June stands.

BOBBIE JUNE

So what you're saying, Mayor, is that the highway is coming through Bayou City.

MAYOR

Yes. It is a wonderful opportunity for the town.

BOBBIE JUNE

But what you're really saying is that the highway is coming right through the heart of downtown Bayou City.

The Mayor becomes a little hesitant.

MAYOR

Yes.

BUSINESS OWNER 2

So this new highway is going to plow through downtown?

MAYOR

Well, yes. But we have to weigh the potential cost to the town with the benefits it will bring.

BOB

Yes. People will be able to drive 65 miles per hour to get through Bayou City instead of thirty-five.

BOBBIE JUNE

It means that we won't have a
downtown area anymore.

The Mayor is more hesitant.

MAYOR

As we all know, progress comes with
change. You can't make an omelet
without breaking a few eggs.

BOBBIE JUNE

We're not talking about breakfast.

BUSINESS OWNER 2

We're talking about changing the
whole town here.

BUSINESS OWNER 1

Bayou City Baptist Church is about
to leave the downtown area for a
larger church...

MAYOR

A move that I supported. I believe
that Pastor Brown is showing us the
way.

MAYBELLENE

I thought that you opposed the
relocation of the church, Mayor.

MAYOR

Me? No, Hattie Mae, you must have
your facts confused.

A pager beeps. The Mayor looks annoyed, but continues
talking.

MAYOR

Are there any other questions?

The pager beeps again. The Mayor looks annoyed.

MAYOR

Would you answer it! Please!

Madeline answers her phone and gets up to leave.

MADELINE

I'm sorry...

MAYOR
Where are you going?

MADELINE
That was Leroy. He needs me to make
a hospital visit.

Madeline moves to the front door. The Mayor turns to her.

MAYOR
Well, thank you, Mrs. Brown, for
disturbing my meeting.

MADELINE
Mayor...I said I was sorry.

MAYOR
And I agreed with you. Now go away.

MADELINE
If I had a two-by-four...

MAYOR
I would crush both you and that
husband of yours. Now go away.

The Mayor turns away and is again all smiles. Madeline
angrily leaves through the front door.

MAYOR
Now, once again, are there any other
questions?

DOSSIE MARIE
You pointed to the area that the
highway can take through Bayou City.
Who gets to choose which route it
takes?

MAYOR
Well, after taking all points of
view under consideration, I do.

DOSSIE MARIE
Bob, that means the North Bayou
development project is going to be
ruined by the highway.

Bob stands.

BOB
Sylvia, you and I both know that the
law says that the City Council makes
(MORE)

BOB (CONT'D)
all the decisions regarding zoning
and public land development.

The Mayor smiles with a twinkle in her eye.

MAYOR
Why yes, Bob, that is true. However,
the City Council has exercised its
option, according to the law, giving
me, as your Mayor, the power to make
the decision as to where the highway
goes.

Bobbie June stands.

BOBBIE JUNE
Mayor Pendergast, we understand that
you are going to make the decision
as to the location of the highway.
But, you should consider that the
downtown area, where we are right
now, is going to be devastated by
this development. Why, it's the
downtown area that helps to make
Bayou City a nice place to live.
It's an area where you can take your
family. Part of who we are as a town
will go away when that highway comes
through.

George Sharp stands.

GEORGE SHARP
Well, Bobbie June, someone has to
make the decision. I, for one, want
this town to keep growing. This
highway is going to be a great thing
for this town. Our Mayor is to be
commended for her sense of vision.

BUSINESS OWNER 1
George Sharp is right. Let's give
our Mayor a round of applause.

There is a smattering of applause.

MAYBELLENE
I don't see what you're so happy
about, Mr. Sharp. The highway could
go right through the Calico Cafe.

BOBBIE JUNE

That's right. If it goes through the Tea Room, we'll lose everything we've worked so hard for.

MAYOR

Bobbie June, you don't understand. We may all have to make sacrifices. But, the good of the town is at stake. This is progress.

BOBBIE JUNE

If this is progress, then you can count me out.

GEORGE SHARP

Now just a minute Bobbie June...

BOBBIE JUNE

Mr. Sharp, you may be willing to give up the downtown and your Calico Cafe, but I'm not.

BOB

Sylvia, for your own good, I think you had better listen to the voice of the people here. If you don't, then you might find yourself in a bit of a bind come election time.

BUSINESS OWNER 2

That's right, Bob.

Calls of agreement come from some of the business owners.

MAYOR

I don't think I have anything to worry about from the likes of you. This is a done deal, Bob, and it can't be stopped. This meeting is over. Thank you for coming.

The Mayor gathers her papers and easel and stalks out the front door. She is followed by George Sharp and half the crowd.

BOBBIE JUNE

It sounds like now we have an interstate highway to stop. Any way we can.

END OF ACT 2, SCENE 1.

ACT 2, SCENE 2

The individuals left after the Mayor and her group leave gather around Bobbie June.

MAYBELLENE

Does the Mayor have it in for the town or what?

BUSINESS OWNER 2

I can't believe what I just heard.

DOSSIE MARIE

Does the Mayor know what she is doing?

BOB

Having known and worked with Sylvia Pendergast, she knows what she's doing at all times. She is a formidable politician.

MAYBELLENE

It seems that she's used to getting her way on everything.

BOBBIE JUNE

This is one thing she can't get her way on. I don't understand what's happening here.

Bobbie June walks off from the group downstage right.

TED

What do you mean, Bobbie June?

BOBBIE JUNE

Here we are, trying to plan a woman's ministry for the church and a big anniversary party...

DOSSIE MARIE

A woman's ministry?

BOB

An anniversary party? What are you talking about, Bobbie June?

TED

Oh, sorry, Bob, it's really nothing. Never mind.

Ted takes Bobbie June further aside.

BOBBIE JUNE

Oh, I'm sorry, Ted. I spoke too loud.

TED

It's OK. What were you saying?

BOBBIE JUNE

I'm saying we wanted to do all of these wonderful things. And now it looks like we're going to lose everything.

TED

I see what you mean.

BOBBIE JUNE

Ted, why is this happening?

TED

I don't know, Bobbie June. But, there is some purpose in all of this. God has a reason for putting this in front of us.

Maybellene quietly walks up to Ted and Bobbie June.

MAYBELLENE

Bobbie June, I think I understand what you mean?

TED

You do?

MAYBELLENE

Yes, Ted. Bobbie June, you want to do what's right for the church, for Madeline, and for everyone. And now this obstacle has been thrown into our midst.

BOBBIE JUNE

I have a pretty good idea where it came from.

MAYBELLENE

That's right. The old devil wants to throw stuff in our path in order to keep us from doing what's right.

TED

You mean to get us off the track.

BOBBIE JUNE

To get us from worrying about things.

MAYBELLENE

You're getting the idea.

BOBBIE JUNE

But we have to do something about this.

TED

Yes, it looks like this is the worst thing since Rupert Whitley wanted to take over the town.

They begin to walk back over to the crowd.

BOBBIE JUNE

But now, Mayor Pendergast is going to pick the route that goes right through the Tea Room, just because I came out against her.

MAYBELLENE

Now, she wouldn't just come out and do that...would she?

BOB

Yes, she would. The reasons she voices would be different, but the intent would be the same.

DOSSIE MARIE

And so would the outcome. One flattened Tea Room

BUSINESS OWNER 2

Well we have to do something about this, because I'm right across the street from you, Bobbie June.

TED

Don't get us wrong, we know more people than us will be affected if this highway comes through.

BUSINESS OWNER 2

That's why you, Bobbie June, should lead our efforts against the highway. You're a natural. Everybody knows you and you work really well with people.

BOBBIE JUNE

Now, wait a minute. I've never lead anything much less a movement against a highway. What am I going to do? Lay down in the path of a bulldozer?

BOB

Bobbie June, I hope it doesn't come to that.

BUSINESS OWNER 2

But, she's right. What should we do?

BOB

There's one thing we have on our side.

TED

What's that?

DOSSIE MARIE

It's time. This highway will take some time to begin construction. Even if they start construction tomorrow, it will take a long time to get from Alexandria to Bayou City.

BOB

Absolutely correct, my dear.

TED

And that's time to organize for the election next year.

BUSINESS OWNER 2

If that's the case, then, Bobbie June, you should run for Mayor in the next election.

BOBBIE JUNE

Now wait just a minute here. First you want me to lead a movement, and now run for Mayor? I don't know anything about being a Mayor. You have to work with the City Council.

BOB

Most of whom are in Sylvia Pendergast's pocket, or rather, purse.

BOBBIE JUNE

You see? It takes a certain type of person to be able to deal with people like that. I'm not that person. Why don't you run, Maybellene?

MAYBELLENE

I don't think that I could be Mayor either. Besides, can you imagine the campaign: "The Mayor versus Hattie Mae, the former crazy homeless bag lady."

TED

Then what choices do we have? We can talk to everyone in town and try to get as much opposition as possible.

MAYBELLENE

We can do that, but we still need someone to oppose Mayor Pendergast in the next election.

BOBBIE JUNE

But who?

BUSINESS OWNER 2

What about Bob Chamberlain?

All eyes turn to Bob.

TED

You're right. It would be perfect.

BOBBIE JUNE

You've already served on the City Council.

MAYBELLENE

And you're such a good speaker.

DOSSIE MARIE

Bob...

BOBBIE JUNE

With Bob running for Mayor and the rest of us getting the business owners and the residents behind us, we can't lose.

BOB

Now, my friends, I do appreciate the consideration. But, my service on the City Council was several years ago and I have since not dreamed of further political advancement.

MAYBELLENE

But, Bob, you are just the man we need at this time.

TED

Right. If anyone can get us out of this mess, it's you.

DOSSIE MARIE

Bob...

BOB

Perhaps we should all sleep on this decision. Please allow me to discuss this privately with my closest adviser, my dear sweet Dossie Marie.

Everyone begins to nod their heads. Ted and Bobbie June pick up their cookie trays and leave through the back door. The Business Owners and Maybellene file through the front door with supportive talk. Bob follows them out, leaving Dossie Marie behind and displeased.

DOSSIE MARIE

Bob...

Bob returns through the front door. He turns to speak once more to the crowd that just left.

BOB

Remember, it takes more than a few to make a groundswell. Tell your friends, everyone. The more we have, the better we'll do.

Bob continues to look out the door, but addresses Dossie Marie, who still looks at him, displeased.

BOB

Well, now what do you think about that?

DOSSIE MARIE

I have a few choice words for that little display.

Bob turns to Dossie Marie.

BOB

Why, my dear lovely Dossie Marie, I don't know what you mean.

DOSSIE MARIE

This little "political groundswell" that you are trying to stir up.

BOB

I'm not trying to stir up anything. I'm simply listening to the voice of the people.

Bob moves from the front door to a place opposite that of Dossie Marie.

DOSSIE MARIE

I don't seem to remember (Imitating Bob.) "listening to the voice of the people" and becoming Mayor of this two-bit town were in our plans for the future, my dear Bob.

BOB

Perhaps we were remiss in not building flexibility into our plans.

DOSSIE MARIE

Flexibility for what?

BOB

If there is one thing that I have learned, it is never to pass up an opportunity.

DOSSIE MARIE

What is the opportunity in this situation? As you see it.

BOB

The opportunity lies before us to finally get what we, and, in particular, you, so richly deserve from this town.

DOSSIE MARIE

I don't want anything from this town. In fact, I'd rather...

BOB

You may save that for someone who does not know you as intimately as I do, Dossie Marie, my sweet.

DOSSIE MARIE

I don't know what you're talking about. What do I want from this town?

BOB

The respect that we so richly deserve. The focus of the town has always been on Bobbie June or Madeline or Maybellene.

DOSSIE MARIE

I've never minded that.

She knows she doesn't believe what she just said. Bob walks over to her, standing behind Dossie Marie and putting his hands on her shoulders.

BOB

But think of it. If I can be elected Mayor of this town, you would always be by my side. And you, my dear, would be the First Lady of Bayou City.

She begins to warm to the idea.

DOSSIE MARIE

First Lady of Bayou City.

BOB

And then people would appreciate your true beauty and intellect, just as I do.

Dossie Marie turns to Bob.

DOSSIE MARIE

But what about the City Council? You said that they were in Sylvia's purse.

BOB

They will go where they are led, especially if someone knows enough to give them proper direction.

DOSSIE MARIE
And you're the man to do it.

BOB
Apparently so.

DOSSIE MARIE
And after you're elected Mayor?

BOB
After, let's say, four years in office, we run for reelection. Then two years after that, there'll be an election for an open seat in Baton Rouge.

DOSSIE MARIE
You mean for the state senate?

She begins to think about the implications.

DOSSIE MARIE
Senator and Mrs. Chamberlain. And after that?

BOB
Who knows how far we can go. But, there's one thing we have to do.

DOSSIE MARIE
We have to save this town.

BOB
Quite correct. And I believe I know just what to do. Come, my dear.

Bob takes Dossie Marie by the hand.

DOSSIE MARIE
Sylvia Pendergast won't like this at all.

They stop near the front door.

BOB
No, she won't. She'll be pierced.

DOSSIE MARIE
It will be like a bullet in the heart. In fact, it will be quite entertaining to see the look on her face.

BOB

It will be a veritable scream.

They both laugh and leave through the front door.

END OF ACT 2, SCENE 2.

ACT 2, SCENE 3

Ted returns through the back door and looks around the Tea Room.

TED

It looks like everyone's gone,
finally. You can come out now,
Bobbie June.

Bobbie June enters through the back door.

BOBBIE JUNE

I'm sorry if I made you come out
first. I only wanted to see if the
coast was clear.

TED

It's all right, Bobbie June. There's
no one here.

BOBBIE JUNE

Ted, I know what everyone said, but
I don't think I can lead a movement
against a highway.

TED

Frankly, Bobbie June, I don't want
to picture you lying down in front a
bulldozer.

BOBBIE JUNE

I appreciate that, Ted. But that
still doesn't help this situation.

TED

I know. I've been thinking about Bob
running for Mayor. The election is
next year.

BOBBIE JUNE

That's almost forever. Sylvia could
do almost anything before the
election.

TED

Yes. Especially if it looks like she's going to lose. She could set everything in motion and Bob might not be able to do anything about it.

BOBBIE JUNE

It's becoming more and more clear to me that we have to do something about this and do it now. No matter what it takes.

The front door opens. Ted and Bobbie June turn in shock and amazement and Mayor Sylvia Pendergast walks in.

MAYOR

Hello, Bobbie June. Ted.

TED

Hello, Mayor.

MAYOR

Where are all your supporters, Bobbie June?

BOBBIE JUNE

My supporters?

MAYOR

That mob that you were trying to incite into a riot.

BOBBIE JUNE

I don't have supporters and there wasn't going to be a riot.

TED

Speaking of which, Mayor, where are your supporters? That crowd that was falling over itself to kiss your... ring.

MAYOR

I don't need supporters, Ted. Listen, Bobbie June, I know that you're planning to go against me on this highway. I could tell that by listening to you tonight.

BOBBIE JUNE

If that's the case, why are you here again? Nothing you can say will change my mind on this.

MAYOR

I know. In fact, I wasn't even going to try to persuade you.

Bobbie June is surprised at this.

TED

You aren't?

MAYOR

Bobbie June, can we talk about this by ourselves? Girl to girl, so to speak.

TED

Bobbie June...

BOBBIE JUNE

Ted, it's OK. Everything will be fine.

Ted turns and leaves through the back door.

MAYOR

Good. Now that he's gone. Look, Bobbie June, there's no use in fighting me on this. I'll win. I have everything in my favor.

BOBBIE JUNE

Except one thing. What you're doing is wrong for this town. You're going to destroy what this town means to all of us. All for your idea of "progress." I'll stop you.

MAYOR

You'll stop me? How?

BOBBIE JUNE

I don't have to tell you what we're going to do.

MAYOR

Well you had better tell me something so I can be shaking in my boots for a reason.

Bobbie June is unsure, but trying not to look it.

BOBBIE JUNE

Well...we won't sell our property.

MAYOR

Well, I guess that throws a great big monkey wrench in my plans. I suppose I'll just have to give up...Except...

BOBBIE JUNE

Except for what?

MAYOR

The law says that the city government can take private property if it's for public use.

Bobbie June is surprised.

BOBBIE JUNE

Take? Really?

MAYOR

Really. It's called the power of eminent domain. I can simply say that these few ancient and depressed buildings are standing in the way of a public highway and economic development for our fair city. The City Council will go with me on that.

BOBBIE JUNE

Oh, my...

MAYOR

You see, Bobbie June, I have you every which way. You have no hope. If you go against me, you'll lose. Everything.

Bobbie June begins to feel quite defeated.

BOBBIE JUNE

There must be some way...

MAYOR

Actually, there is a way out of this. A way for both of us to get what we want.

BOBBIE JUNE

What is it?

MAYOR

Let's just call it a little
financial remuneration.

Bobbie June immediately understands the implication.

BOBBIE JUNE

Wait a minute. You mean you want me
to give you a bribe?

MAYOR

"Bribe" is such a strong word. I
prefer to call it a little
"insurance policy."

BOBBIE JUNE

An insurance policy?

MAYOR

Of course. If you pay the premium,
then I choose another route for the
highway. Bayou City gets a highway.
You keep your precious Tea Room.
Everyone wins.

BOBBIE JUNE

This is just plain wrong.

MAYOR

It's not wrong, Bobbie June. I like
to call it a special public service.

BOBBIE JUNE

You just wait until I go to the news
with this.

MAYOR

Fine. If you breathe a word of this
I'll just say this comes from the
ravings of a political opponent. No
one but the two of us know this
conversation is taking place.

BOBBIE JUNE

But...

MAYOR

No one will believe you, Bobbie
June. Don't you think this Tea Room
would be a lovely spot for a
highway? It could happen. You see
why my way is better? For both of
us?

BOBBIE JUNE
I don't know...

MAYOR
Tell you what. You think about this for a while. But don't say anything to anyone or the deal's off and the highway's on. Understand?

The Mayor heads for the front door.

BOBBIE JUNE
I understand.

MAYOR
Good. I'll see you later then. Let me know what you decide.

The Mayor leaves through the front door. Bobbie June is left at center stage alone.

Ted returns through the back door. Bobbie June now has an angry look on her face.

TED
Is she gone?

BOBBIE JUNE
Yes. She's gone.

TED
What happened?

BOBBIE JUNE
I'm not so sure I should tell you.

TED
Why not?

BOBBIE JUNE
She told me not to tell anyone.

TED
More secrets? I can't believe this. We've spent the last year trying to get past secrets. And now you want to keep something from me?

BOBBIE JUNE
All right, Ted. I know that I'm not supposed to keep anything from you, so here goes. Sylvia Pendergast just walked in here and asked me to give
(MORE)

BOBBIE JUNE (CONT'D)
her money to make sure the highway
doesn't come right through the Tea
Room.

Ted is shocked.

TED
That's bribery.

BOBBIE JUNE
That's right. Bribery.

TED
How can she get away with something
like that?

BOBBIE JUNE
I don't know, but if I don't give
her this bribe, she'll send the
bulldozers in.

TED
What about going to the police...or
the news media?

BOBBIE JUNE
I've already thought of that. She'll
just deny it and it'll be my word
against hers.

TED
There must be something we can do.

BOBBIE JUNE
This isn't a "we," Ted. It's about
me. I need to do something about
this.

TED
Yes, Bobbie June, there is a "we" in
all of this. God put us back
together last year after all those
years of being apart. We have to
have faith that God will take care
of this situation.

BOBBIE JUNE
Where is God, Ted? Has He been
listening to what's going on lately?
Every time we turn around things go
from bad to worse.

TED
God is still with us. He knows
what's going on.

BOBBIE JUNE
Well, what is He going to do about
it?

TED
I don't know. Sometimes we do have
to wait on Him for the answer.

BOBBIE JUNE
I'm tired of waiting. I need the
answer now. And I think I know just
what to do.

Bobbie June turns and begins walking toward the front door.

TED
Where are you going?

BOBBIE JUNE
I've decided to take matters in my
own hands. I'm going to find that
Sylvia Pendergast and give her
something that she won't soon
forget!

Bobbie June leaves through the front door, still angry. Ted
is left alone. Ted finally leaves through the back door.

A long pause. The front door opens and Mayor Sylvia
Pendergast enters. She begins to survey the empty Tea Room.

MAYOR
Now where could Bobbie June be? she
called and asked me to meet her
here.

She continues to walk around the room, stopping to examine an
object or two.

MAYOR
You know, I thought it would have
taken longer. But, I can be very
persuasive when I need to be.

She walks to the center stage. The front door opens. She has
her back to the door. A gloved hand and gun are visible, but
not the shooter. The Mayor begins to turn at the sound of
the door. The weapon is fired and the shot rings out. The
Mayor falls to the floor dead. The gun is dropped down into
the Tea Room. The front door is left open.

Another long pause. Bobbie June walks into the front door.

BOBBIE JUNE
Who left the door open?

Bobbie June picks up the gun and looks at the dead body and the gun.

BOBBIE JUNE
(Scream!)

Ted, Maybellene, Madeline, and Leroy return through the back door.

TED
I'm glad that I got in touch with
all of you. Bobbie June was upset...

The group stops at the sight of Bobbie June, the gun in her hand, and the dead Mayor.

MADELINE
Bobbie June?

END OF ACT 2.

ACT 3, SCENE 1

Bobbie June is seated at the center table, crying. The others are standing around her, trying to offer comfort. The front door remains open. Burke enters and turns to give orders to people outside the door.

BURKE
I want the autopsy results from the
coroner as soon as possible. And get
that gun dusted for prints. You have
my cell phone number. I want
results. I don't care who you have
to wake up!

Burke turns to the center table.

BURKE
Ladies and gentlemen, I'm Inspector
Burke of the State Police. I'll need
all of your names, please

Burke takes out a note pad and begins to write.

MAYBELLENE
Maybellene Cheatwood-Caskey.

MADELINE
Madeline Brown.

LEROY
And I'm Leroy Brown, Reverend Leroy
Brown.

TED
I'm Ted Gibson.

BURKE
Very well. Where were all of you
before coming here?

TED
I asked them to meet me here.

BURKE
Why?

TED
I wanted to find my wife.

Burke points to Bobbie June.

BURKE
This is Mrs. Gibson?

MADELINE
That's right.

BURKE
I'd say you found her all right.
Ladies and gentlemen, I'll be
supervising this investigation.

MADELINE
Where is Sheriff Woody?

BURKE
He is back at Police Headquarters.
I'm in charge here by special order
of the Governor and the Attorney
General.

LEROY
Well, why would the Governor want to
get involved in something like this?

BURKE
For the simple reason that we can't
have people running around shooting
government officials, now can we?

LEROY

I see.

BURKE

The officials in Baton Rouge have taken a very special interest in this case. That is why I am here.

A cell phone begins to ring.

BURKE

What is that?

Leroy begins to pick up his cell phone.

LEROY

Oh, it's just my cell phone.

BURKE

Don't answer it.

LEROY

But it probably one of my church members. There's probably someone that's sick.

BURKE

I said, don't answer it. In fact, if any of the rest of you have phones, turn them off right now.

MADELINE

Why?

BURKE

Because you are all material witnesses to a crime.

MAYBELLENE

Material witnesses?

LEROY

We never saw a crime.

TED

We walked into the room and the Mayor was lying on the floor, dead.

Burke walks to Ted.

BURKE

And now you are lying to me.

TED

I'm not lying. What are you talking about?

LEROY

Why are you calling Ted, here, a liar?

BURKE

Before I walked into this room, your Sheriff Woody reported to me you walked into this room and found the Mayor dead. Is this the case?

Heads begin to nod.

MAYBELLENE

That's right. She was right there, dead.

BURKE

You left something out.

MADELINE

What? What did we leave out?

BURKE

According to my information, you walked in here and saw the Mayor dead. But, you also saw Mrs. Gibson standing over the body with a gun. Now, isn't that the whole story?

Ted nods reluctantly.

TED

Yes, that's correct.

BURKE

I know. A sin of omission, wouldn't you say, Reverend Brown?

LEROY

Yes. You could say that.

BURKE

Let's look at this further. Mrs. Gibson, why was the Mayor here tonight?

Bobbie June does not answer.

BURKE

Mrs. Gibson, please answer my question.

MADELINE

Can't you see that Bobbie June has just been through a terrible experience, Inspector?

BURKE

I can't help that now. I need the answers to my questions. Mrs. Gibson?

Bobbie June stirs.

BOBBIE JUNE

She was here because I called her here.

BURKE

You called her here? Why?

BOBBIE JUNE

I needed to talk to her.

Burke is getting frustrated.

BURKE

Please elaborate, Mrs. Gibson. What did you want to talk to her about?

BOBBIE JUNE

I wanted to tell her that I was not going to give her a bribe to divert the highway away from the Tea Room.

The others are shocked by this revelation.

MAYBELLENE

A bribe? You mean she wanted money.

BURKE

This highway...is it the I-73 project? I've heard of it. How did you feel about it, Mrs. Gibson?

MAYBELLENE

We were all against it. Bobbie June took the lead against it.

BURKE

You say the Mayor wanted a bribe. Do you have any witnesses to this alleged extortion demand?

TED

She told me about it after the Mayor left.

BURKE

That's not what I said, Mr. Gibson. I believe I asked for witnesses.

BOBBIE JUNE

No, the Mayor and I were the only people in the room.

BURKE

So I may take from that the answer is no.

MADELINE

You may take it, Sherlock.

LEROY

Now, Madeline...

MADELINE

Don't "now, Madeline" me, Leroy. Do you know what he's saying? He's calling Bobbie June a murderer.

MAYBELLENE

Is that what you are saying, Inspector?

BURKE

I'm trying to get the facts here, Mrs. Caskey.

TED

Well, the fact is my wife is not a murderer.

BURKE

How do you know?

LEROY

We know Bobbie June, Inspector.

BURKE

Mr. Gibson, you said that your wife told you about the bribe. What would
(MORE)

BURKE (CONT'D)
you say was her state of mind?

TED
She was upset. She was also angry.
She decided to go and find the
Mayor.

BURKE
What was she going to do after she
found the Mayor?

TED
Well...

BURKE
Come on, Mr. Gibson.

TED
She said that she was going to give
the Mayor something she wouldn't
forget.

BURKE
What do you think that meant?

TED
I thought Bobbie June was going to
give the Mayor a piece of her mind.

BURKE
She could just as easily have meant
to give her a bullet...or two,
actually.

LEROY
Now just a minute...

BURKE
Let's examine some other things for
a moment. You all said that Mrs.
Gibson was against the highway
project.

MAYBELLENE
Yes, that's right. The Mayor held a
meeting about it here a few hours
ago.

TED
About half of the people in the room
were opposed to the highway.

BURKE

Did any of you support the Mayor?

Heads shake no.

TED

None of us did.

BURKE

In general, how did you feel about Mayor Pendergast?

LEROY

Inspector, you know that verse in the Bible about loving your enemies?

BURKE

Yes.

LEROY

He put that in there because of her.

Heads nod in agreement.

BURKE

I see. What was the basis for the opposition to the highway?

MAYBELLENE

The highway would come right through downtown Bayou City. It could have come right through the Tea Room.

BURKE

Interesting. How would the route be chosen?

TED

The Mayor had the final say so. She wasn't very nice about it.

BURKE

What do you mean?

MAYBELLENE

When the Mayor asked Bobbie June to have the meeting here she made it a point to insult everyone in the room.

TED

Bob and Dossie Marie said she had a talent for it.

BURKE
Who said that?

The front door opens. Bob and Dossie Marie enter.

MADELINE
They did.

BOB
Bobbie June, we have...

They both stop short.

DOSSIE MARIE
What happened here?

TED
We have a problem.

MADELINE
The Mayor was murdered just a little while ago.

DOSSIE MARIE
Murdered? Where?

Leroy points to the spot where the Mayor fell.

LEROY
Right there.

BOB
Well, I always knew Sylvia would make the wrong person mad someday.

BURKE
Murder is no joke. And you are?

DOSSIE MARIE
Dossie Marie Chamberlain. This is my husband Bob.

BURKE
I'm Inspector Burke of the State Police and this is my murder investigation.

BOB
State Police? I want you to know that we are prepared to cooperate with this investigation in every way that we can.

BURKE

That's good to hear. Now tell me,
where have you been for the past
several hours.

Bob and Dossie Marie look at each other, cagily.

DOSSIE MARIE

We've been at our house, doing some
research.

BOB

Of a personal nature. A private
matter, you see.

BURKE

Can anyone confirm your whereabouts
while you were doing this
"research?"

BOB

No. We were alone.

DOSSIE MARIE

We don't have people watching us
twenty-four hours a day.

BURKE

Then you could have been anywhere
during the time of the Mayor's
murder.

BOB

Are you accusing us of murder, sir?

BURKE

Let me ask the questions. Did you
know the Mayor?

BOB

She and I served on the City Council
some years ago.

BURKE

Were you against the Mayor's highway
project?

MAYBELLENE

In fact, we were asking Bob to run
for Mayor against her in the next
election.

Bob looks at Maybellene, gritting his teeth.

BOB

Thank you, Maybellene.

BURKE

A political rival? That is interesting.

DOSSIE MARIE

You didn't answer my husband's question, Inspector. Are you accusing us of murder?

LEROY

Are you accusing any of us of murder?

Everyone looks at Burke.

BURKE

When you look at the situation, all of you had some kind of personal animosity toward Mayor Pendergast. Since most of you were together, your one alibi is corroborated by someone who also has a motive. Therefore, you could all be a part of a conspiracy. I could be dealing with a room full of killers.

Bobbie June finally stands.

BOBBIE JUNE

But you really think I did it. Don't you, Inspector?

BURKE

As a matter of fact, Mrs. Gibson...

BOB

Don't say another thing, Bobbie June.

DOSSIE MARIE

Not until we can get a lawyer down here.

BOBBIE JUNE

Thanks, you two. But I don't need a lawyer.

MADELINE

But, Bobbie June...

BOBBIE JUNE
Because I didn't do it.

TED
Bobbie June...

Ted walks toward Bobbie June.

BOBBIE JUNE
No, Ted.

She warns him back. Burke's intensity increase with each statement.

BURKE
Mrs. Gibson, you admitted that you
had differences with the Mayor.

BOBBIE JUNE
Yes.

BURKE
You were against the highway?

BOBBIE JUNE
Yes.

Burke points to the others.

BURKE
They wanted you to lead the
opposition to the Mayor.

BOBBIE JUNE
Yes, but...

BURKE
But the Mayor came back to you.

BOBBIE JUNE
Yes.

Burke moves closer to Bobbie June.

BURKE
You say she wanted a bribe to change
the route of the highway.

BOBBIE JUNE
Yes. But...

BURKE
She left and you were angry.

BOBBIE JUNE

Yes.

BURKE

So angry you went to find her. You wanted to meet with her again.

BOBBIE JUNE

Yes. I...

Burke moves closer.

BURKE

You found her, all right, right back here in the Tea Room.

BOBBIE JUNE

No.

Burke moves next to Bobbie June.

BURKE

You found her and you shot her!

BOBBIE JUNE

No! I didn't...

BURKE

Your husband and your friends found you standing over the Mayor's body with the gun in your hand, after you shot her.

Bobbie June crumples into the chair, sobbing. Ted goes to her.

BOBBIE JUNE

No, I didn't do it.

BURKE

I'm afraid you're going to have to come with me, Mrs. Gibson.

LEROY

Now wait a minute...

MADELINE

On what charge?

BURKE

Right now, suspicion of murder.

MAYBELLENE

You have nothing to hold her on. No evidence.

BOB

That was no confession.

DOSSIE MARIE

She didn't even have a lawyer.

TED

She denied everything.

MADELINE

Are you trying to railroad Bobbie June into jail?

Leroy stands up.

LEROY

Inspector, there has got to be some way that we can prove Bobbie June's story.

BURKE

There would be. If someone could corroborate Mrs. Gibson's story about being out looking for the Mayor when she was killed.

MADELINE

Bobbie June, is there someone who saw you before you came back here?

Bobbie June shakes her head.

BOBBIE JUNE

No. No one saw me. No one at all.

BURKE

Then. I'm afraid we're at the same point as before. You all saw Mrs. Gibson standing over the body with the gun in her hand.

Maybellene stands up.

MAYBELLENE

If that's all you have, then we just might have to forget everything we saw.

Everyone stares at Maybellene.

DOSSIE MARIE
Maybellene...?

BURKE
Forget what you saw? Is that a sin
of omission or a sin of commission,
Reverend Brown?

Leroy shakes his head.

LEROY
We can't deny any of the things that
we saw. We can't, for one second,
think of telling a lie.

MADELINE
Leroy?

LEROY
No, Madeline. We're all Christians
here. We believe Bobbie June is
innocent. I believe that we have to
trust that God is faithful and He
will prove her innocence in the end.

Maybellene pauses.

MAYBELLENE
Everyone, I'm sorry I said that. I'm
just trying to think about Bobbie
June.

BOB
That's what we need to focus on. How
can we prove that Bobbie June is not
guilty?

DOSSIE MARIE
Has anyone asked why someone might
want to murder the Mayor?

MADELINE
What would someone gain by killing
the Mayor?

LEROY
People can kill out of anger and
revenge.

MAYBELLENE
Because they thought the victim did
them wrong.

BOB

Sylvia has certainly done people wrong during her career in "public service."

BURKE

Mrs. Gibson, you said that the Mayor asked you to bribe her in order to move the location of the highway.

BOBBIE JUNE

Yes.

BURKE

What if she had already asked someone for a bribe?

TED

Somebody else?

DOSSIE MARIE

If the Mayor had already promised to change the route in exchange for a bribe, then that person would have a motive.

BOB

Quite right, my dear. Sylvia was not above pulling a double cross when it suited her.

BURKE

You're trying to say that the Mayor...

LEROY

Was double-dipping at the well.

TED

Guys, all of this sounds like something from one of those detective shows on TV. This is the real world here.

MAYBELLENE

Ted's right. How do we prove this theory?

BURKE

There is one way.

Burke pulls out his own cell phone.

BURKE

Murphy, this is Burke. I want you to go to the bank and get the records for Sylvia Pendergast...Yes, everything, deposits, withdrawals, all of it...Yes, I know it's late at night...Wake the bank manager. Find out from the Sheriff who he is. Report to me when you have the information.

Burke ends his call and puts the phone away.

BURKE

If this theory is correct, then it means the Mayor's death may have been an accident.

MADELINE

An accident?

BURKE

Yes. The intended victim may have been your Bobbie June.

END OF ACT 3, SCENE 1.

ACT 3, SCENE 2

Everyone now stands.

MAYBELLENE

Bobbie June?

MADELINE

How?

BURKE

It's quite simple really.

LEROY

Do you mind telling us about it?

BURKE

Surely. Let us assume that the Mayor came in here after the meeting and tried to solicit a bribe from Mrs. Gibson. Correct?

TED

That's what we've been trying to tell you.

BURKE

All right. Suppose someone found out about it.

BOB

Someone who had already been approached to give a bribe to Sylvia.

DOSSIE MARIE

Someone who wanted the direction of the highway changed as well.

MADELINE

Who could that be?

LEROY

We don't know.

DOSSIE MARIE

Who else would have been affected by the highway?

TED

The Mayor never said what the routes were.

MAYBELLENE

She had a map, but it didn't have any of the routes marked on it, just the area around downtown.

BOB

So it could be anybody in the area.

LEROY

Someone who could have walked right up to the Mayor with a gun and shot her.

BURKE

I don't think it happened that way.

DOSSIE MARIE

Why not?

BURKE

I don't think the Mayor saw her killer.

BOB

Why not?

Burke begins to demonstrate.

BURKE

I looked at the crime scene photographs before I walked in here. They show that the Mayor fell this way. She went forward and then fell over. The autopsy will show that the shots entered her back.

BOBBIE JUNE

The front door was open when I walked in.

BURKE

If that is the case, then the killer walked in that way as well. the killer didn't get a good look at his or her victim.

DOSSIE MARIE

You're talking as if another person was the killer. Does that mean you believe Bobbie June, Inspector?

BURKE

I am withholding judgment at this time. Mind you, so long as there is another theory, I'll keep an open mind. But...

MADELINE

But what?

BURKE

Even though there is another theory and the possibility that a killer may still be out there, Mrs. Gibson, here, remains the prime suspect.

BOB

What will the phone call to the bank do for us?

BURKE

A large infusion of money into the Mayor's account or regular deposits would give credence to the theory that someone else was bribing the Mayor.

DOSSIE MARIE

Bob, would Sylvia be foolish enough to deposit bribes into her own account?

BOB

My sweet, Sylvia Pendergast was always arrogant enough to believe that our rules didn't apply to her. She obviously never thought she would be caught at it.

LEROY

It just goes to show you, your sins will find you out in the end.

TED

We could probably do with a better sermon, Leroy.

LEROY

That may be true, Ted. This whole thing may be a better object lesson in the power of prayer.

BOBBIE JUNE

That's a nice thing to say at a time like this. But, my life is on the line here.

LEROY

I know that, Bobbie June. I believe that God is still going to fix this situation.

DOSSIE MARIE

Isn't that an answer for the Sunday School class, Leroy?

MADELINE

No, it's not, Dossie Marie. It's an answer for the real world. God is not going to leave or forsake Bobbie June.

LEROY

That's right, Dossie Marie.

TED

I think, though, we could use a little bit of action to go along with our faith.

BOBBIE JUNE

I know that's what I'm looking for.

Burke's cell phone ring. He picks it up and answers it.

BURKE

This is Burke...Yes, Murphy...Did you get the bank manager...OK, what did he say?...All right, what did she say?...Yes...Yes...you saw all of this on the computer...I want hard copies of all that information brought to me immediately...That's all.

Burke closes his phone and puts it away.

DOSSIE MARIE

What did he say?

MAYBELLENE

What was in those records?

Everyone leans forward in anticipation.

BURKE

All right, everyone. The computers at the bank show regular deposits of money coming into the Mayor's account.

BOB

That means she was taking money under the table.

DOSSIE MARIE

Do the records show who gave Sylvia the money?

BURKE

No, each deposit was in cash only.

LEROY

That way, it couldn't come back to the person who gave the Mayor the bribe.

BURKE

Correct.

TED

But, it still doesn't help us.

BOB

On the contrary, Ted. It shows that Sylvia had already been taking money. She had already shaken down someone else. When Sylvia tried to get a bribe from Bobbie June, this other person would have become angry...

DOSSIE MARIE

Angry at a double-cross. Angry enough to have a motive for murder.

MAYBELLENE

And angry enough to commit the crime.

LEROY

The question is, where is the killer?

TED

The killer's not here. The killer is out there somewhere.

MADELINE

How do we find the killer?

BURKE

There is one key.

DOSSIE MARIE

What's that?

BURKE

If we're to prove this theory, we have to let the killer know that Mrs. Gibson is still alive and knows what happened.

TED

What will that prove?

BURKE

The killer intended to murder Mrs. Gibson. He or she thinks they were successful. Emergency crews got the Mayor's body out before a crowd could gather. So no one really knows what happened here.

BOB

Except for the killer.

BURKE

That's right. I expect that the killer will reveal himself once he learns that his plan failed.

MADELINE

So we have to go out and spread the word that Bobbie June is still alive and saw the killer.

TED

Where does Bobbie June go?

BURKE

She has to stay here.

LEROY

Stay here? Why? Does the killer always return to the scene of the crime?

BURKE

When the killer learns Mrs. Gibson is a witness, then he or she will want to finish the job.

MAYBELLENE

That means the killer will come back here.

BURKE

Correct.

TED

Now hold on just a minute. You're going to use my wife as bait.

BURKE

Yes, that's about it.

TED

Bait for a killer!

BURKE

That seems to be where we're going with this.

LEROY

Ted, it's going to be all right.

TED

That's easy for you to say. You're not setting up Madeline to be
(MORE)

TED (CONT'D)
killed.

BOB
We know there's going to be a risk.

TED
Risk? That risk is unacceptable!

MADELINE
We could sneak Bobbie June out.

MAYBELLENE
If that happens, the killer may just
bide his time.

DOSSIE MARIE
Or do nothing. The killer could
think we're just trying to pull a
fast one and let Bobbie June take
the fall for this thing.

BURKE
I think that the final decision
belongs to Mrs. Gibson.

DOSSIE MARIE
He's right, Ted.

TED
But why did he have to say the word
"final."

BURKE
I'm sorry for my choice of language,
Mr. Gibson...

Bobbie June stands.

BOBBIE JUNE
No, Ted, he's right. It is my
decision.

Ted moves toward Bobbie June.

TED
But, Bobbie June, this is serious.
There's a killer on the loose who's
going to be looking for you.

BOBBIE JUNE
I know. But, it's what I have to do.
Especially if I want to prove to
(MORE)

BOBBIE JUNE (CONT'D)
this policeman that I'm not a
killer.

TED
What happens when the killer shows
up?

BOBBIE JUNE
Then we'll both know who he or she
is.

Everyone gets up.

BURKE
Mrs. Gibson, I'll have officers
stationed around the building in a
few minutes.

BOBBIE JUNE
Thank you, Inspector.

Everyone gets ready to leave.

LEROY
Now, everyone, remember to tell
everyone you see that Bobbie June is
going to the police.

DOSSIE MARIE
What if the killer runs in the
opposite direction?

BOB
Good point, my dear.

BURKE
The killer won't take the chance.
Whoever it is will try to stop Mrs.
Gibson before she can reveal what
she knows.

Everyone moves uneasily to the front door.

MAYBELLENE
We won't let anything happen to you,
Bobbie June.

Ted hesitates.

MADELINE
We'll be right back, Bobbie June.

LEROY
Don't worry, Bobbie June.

DOSSIE MARIE
We'll be nearby.

The group, except for Ted, leaves through the front door.

BOBBIE JUNE
Ted, I'm frightened.

TED
So am I. I don't know what I'd do
without you.

BOBBIE JUNE
This year's been too short.

TED
Let's not talk like this. I don't
want to think about this.

BOBBIE JUNE
Someone said that we needed to put
action to our faith.

TED
I said that.

BOBBIE JUNE
You should watch what you say from
now on.

TED
I see that now.

BOBBIE JUNE
Are you going to worry until this is
over?

TED
You know I will.

BOBBIE JUNE
I love you, Ted.

They embrace.

TED
I love you too, Bobbie June.

BOBBIE JUNE
Now, go on. Start letting everyone
know I'm here.

Ted walks away slowly.

TED
I'll be nearby.

BOBBIE JUNE
I know. But, I have to do this
myself.

Ted walks out the front door. Bobbie June is left alone on
stage.

BOBBIE JUNE
Now that everyone's gone, I could
clean up a bit.

Bobbie June begins to move slowly around the room, picking up
some things and straightening a chair at the table. She then
begins to pray aloud as she moves.

BOBBIE JUNE
Lord, You know I'm actually glad
everyone's gone. Even Ted. I know I
haven't talked to You since all of
this mess began. And I'm sorry for
that.

She continues to move about the room in a thoughtful mood.

BOBBIE JUNE
You have blessed me with so much
this year. Ted and Chrissy are back
with me and I'm free of all of those
hurts from the past. Thank you for
that.

She pauses.

BOBBIE JUNE
I felt that I had peace in my life
again.

A short pause.

BOBBIE JUNE
When Madeline came in two days ago,
she needed that peace in her life.
She needed it again. I remember when
she married Leroy that day. She
(MORE)

BOBBIE JUNE (CONT'D)
looked like she was on top of the
world, with everything she ever
wanted.

A short pause.

BOBBIE JUNE
She didn't look like that two days
ago. She was all stressed and worn.
I wanted to do something for her and
find a way for the women to get
really involved in the life of our
church.

Pause.

BOBBIE JUNE
It seemed like a good idea to have
an anniversary party for Leroy and
Madeline and Bob and Dossie Marie. I
just wanted everyone to reconnect.
To get back together again.

A mid-length pause.

BOBBIE JUNE
Isn't that enough, Lord?

Another pause.

BOBBIE JUNE
Lord, You gave me those ideas and
these desires. To do something for
my friends and serve my church. And
when I act on them, look what
happens.

A short pause.

BOBBIE JUNE
I know You're looking. What a mess
this is. First, the highway and
then, a murder. I didn't want either
of those things. And, frankly, Lord,
I don't understand.

A short pause.

BOBBIE JUNE
I really don't understand why all of
this had to happen. And now I'm
accused of murdering the Mayor.

Pause.

BOBBIE JUNE
Lord, You and I both know I'm
innocent. Maybe, I should have faith
that You're going to prove it, like
Leroy said You would.

George Sharp enters, carrying a gun. He looks tense and
desperate. Bobbie June looks at him and then looks up.

BOBBIE JUNE
I didn't expect You to prove it so
soon, though.

GEORGE SHARP
Hello, Bobbie June.

BOBBIE JUNE
George?

GEORGE SHARP
Do you know why I'm here?

BOBBIE JUNE
The gun gives me a good idea. You
left one behind.

GEORGE SHARP
I was nervous. I threw the gun down
by mistake.

BOBBIE JUNE
After you killed the Mayor.

GEORGE SHARP
Yes. But, I'm always prepared for
the future.

BOBBIE JUNE
I see that. Would you mind telling
me why all this had to happen?

GEORGE SHARP
When the Mayor told me she was
coming to see you after the meeting,
I knew what she was going to do.

BOBBIE JUNE
Did you follow her?

GEORGE SHARP

I didn't have to. She told you the same thing she told me, that you had no choice, because she could take our property if she wanted.

BOBBIE JUNE

She did say that.

GEORGE SHARP

I found her after she left here. She was all smiles. She didn't think I knew what was going on. The Mayor was mocking me, especially after I supported her in public.

Bobbie June looks toward the front door, looking for help.

BOBBIE JUNE

Go on.

GEORGE SHARP

She got a phone call and left me behind. I had to do something. Don't you understand?

BOBBIE JUNE

I'm trying to understand.

George Sharp begins waving the gun, becoming more agitated.

GEORGE SHARP

No! You don't understand! You're just patronizing me. I had to do something. If you gave the Mayor money, then she would flatten my business for her highway.

BOBBIE JUNE

That's exactly what I was afraid she would do to me.

GEORGE SHARP

If you weren't in the picture, then things could go on just like I'd planned.

BOBBIE JUNE

You need to calm down, George. Could I get you some tea?

He becomes more agitated.

GEORGE SHARP

No! I don't want tea. I came here to stop you from ruining my plans. My plans for the future.

BOBBIE JUNE

Then or now?

He moves toward Bobbie June.

GEORGE SHARP

Both. I didn't get it right the first time, but I can rectify my mistakes.

BOBBIE JUNE

George, there has to be a way out of this. Surely we can talk about this.

GEORGE SHARP

There's nothing left to be said. There's no other way out of this.

BOBBIE JUNE

You'll never get away with this.

GEORGE SHARP

That's what they all say. Well, I don't have any choice.

He raises his gun.

BOBBIE JUNE

You don't have to do this, George.

Sharp points the gun at Bobbie June.

GEORGE SHARP

Don't you see? You already know too much.

BOBBIE JUNE

You're right. I can't say that I don't.

The Domino Boys quietly enter from the back door, carrying a box of dominoes.

GEORGE SHARP

I'm going to have to kill you and run off with what little money I have left and open a cafe in the Bahamas or Mexico or somewhere where
(MORE)

GEORGE SHARP (CONT'D)
they've never heard of interstate
highways!

Sharp raises his weapon unaware of the presence of the Domino Boys. Buford comes up behind Sharp and hits him with the box of dominoes. The gun goes off harmlessly. George Sharp crumples to the ground.

BUFORD
What was all that shouting about,
Miss Bobbie June?

END OF ACT 3, SCENE 2.

ACT 3, SCENE 3

Ted, Leroy, Madeline, Bob, Dossie Marie, and Maybellene are now around Bobbie June. The Domino Boys are playing dominoes by the back door, proud of themselves. Burke is leading a shaken George Sharp toward the front door.

BURKE
I'll be taking Mr. Sharp, here, to
the police station. His confession
to Mrs. Gibson will be enough to see
that he'll be put away for the rest
of his life.

LEROY
We'll be praying for you, George.

George Sharp is still angry.

GEORGE SHARP
I would have gotten away with it if
it hadn't been for those two
domino-playing idiots.

EARL
I can see why you're sore, Mr.
Sharp.

BUFORD
You never did let us play dominoes
at the Calico Cafe.

BOB
I daresay that George will have
plenty of time to take up the game,
boys.

Everyone laughs. Burke begins to take George Sharp to the front door. He turns sharply to face the group.

GEORGE SHARP
You can laugh now. But I'll have my
revenge on all of you!

DOSSIE MARIE
How? You're going to jail.

MAYBELLENE
People only make threats like that
on television.

Burke pushes George Sharp through the door.

BURKE
Come along, Mr. Sharp. You have the
right to remain silent...

They leave.

MADELINE
He probably won't exercise his right
to remain silent.

LEROY
It's sad that a man would resort to
murder just because of a highway.

MAYBELLENE
And politics.

Bob and Dossie Marie react. They just remembered something.

BOB
Oh, my...

DOSSIE MARIE
We completely forgot.

BOB
Well, it's quite understandable, my
sweet, considering the trying
circumstances.

DOSSIE MARIE
You're right, my dear.

MADELINE
What?

MAYBELLENE
What did you forget?

DOSSIE MARIE
It's quite simple, really.

BOB
You won't believe us when you hear
it.

LEROY
Tell us, why don't you.

TED
Now we're curious.

BOBBIE JUNE
Come on, Bob, what is it?

BOB
There won't be a highway.

Everyone looks in shock and amazement.

DOSSIE MARIE
If the contacts that we made tonight
work out.

TED
What are you talking about?

MAYBELLENE
What contacts?

DOSSIE MARIE
After we left this evening, we went
home and began to do some research.
What we found was very interesting.

BOBBIE JUNE
Tell us.

BOB
This entire downtown area has an
historic value.

Madeline looks skeptical.

MADELINE
What "historic value?" What are you
two trying to pull?

Bob looks at her incredulously.

BOB

Why, Madeline, we are pierced to the heart. Dossie Marie and I have done nothing but delved into the treasure trove of Bayou City's antiquity.

The group pauses at the words.

DOSSIE MARIE

Bob and I did historical research.

Everyone understands.

BOB

Once upon a time, there was no bayou in Bayou City.

LEROY

Really?

DOSSIE MARIE

The town was called East Cottonport.

MAYBELLENE

I've lived here all my life and I didn't know that.

DOSSIE MARIE

The cotton industry prospered until the war came.

BOB

The War Between The States, that is.

MADELINE

What happened to the town?

BOB

Most of the residents evacuated the town during Ulysses S. Grant's Vicksburg campaign in 1863.

DOSSIE MARIE

Grant built a canal in order to divert the Mississippi River.

BOB

In order to avoid Vicksburg's western defenses.

DOSSIE MARIE

The original plan didn't work, but the canal changed the flow of the
(MORE)

DOSSIE MARIE (CONT'D)
river slightly.

BOBBIE JUNE
And a bayou was created through East
Cottonport.

BOB
After Grant moved into Mississippi,
the townspeople returned to find a
bayou flowing through their town.

DOSSIE MARIE
After the war, they renamed the
place...

MADELINE
Bayou City.

LEROY
Quite correct, my dear...I just
thought I'd like to say it for once.

MAYBELLENE
What does this have to do with the
highway?

BOB
We were just getting to that point.

DOSSIE MARIE
While General Grant was constructing
his canal, he used this town as his
headquarters.

BOBBIE JUNE
Where would he have been?

DOSSIE MARIE
Our research showed that there are
several building in the downtown
area that are from the time of the
war.

BOB
Including this building, housing
your Tea Room.

DOSSIE MARIE
And the Calico Cafe building.

Everyone reacts with amazement.

MADELINE
The Calico Cafe?

LEROY
You mean that these buildings could
be historical landmarks?

DOSSIE MARIE
Absolutely.

TED
How did you find out all about this?

BOB
I was chairman of the Bayou City
Historical Committee, you know.

DOSSIE MARIE
All of the records are still at the
house, taking up space.

MADELINE
A testimony to the treasures of the
past. Right, Bob?

BOB
In this case, yes.

BOBBIE JUNE
How sure are the two of you about
all of this?

BOB
Some of the minor details are
sketchy at this point.

DOSSIE MARIE
But there's enough there for a
further investigation.

BOB
We've already contacted the
Louisiana Historical Society.

LEROY
This late?

DOSSIE MARIE
I spoke to the chairman myself.

BOB
My dear Dossie Marie can charm
anyone.

DOSSIE MARIE
Especially with historical
information, it seems.

MAYBELLENE
What did the chairman say?

DOSSIE MARIE
He said that they would come to
Bayou City and investigate the
records and each building.

BOBBIE JUNE
If they find the evidence from that
time?

BOB
Then it's quite probable that the
area could be declared an historical
site.

TED
Then the highway might not come
through here.

DOSSIE MARIE
There's no way a highway could be
built through an historical site.

Bobbie June puts it together.

BOBBIE JUNE
Then the Tea Room is saved!

Everyone celebrates.

BOB
Not only that, but think of the
tourist trade that will come through
the town.

DOSSIE MARIE
Things will be better than ever.

Maybellene is thoughtful.

MAYBELLENE
You know, it's too bad that the
Mayor didn't slow down and look
around her.

BOBBIE JUNE

You're right. This town has a whole lot to offer.

MADELINE

If you think about it, people would have just driven on through here on that silly highway.

MAYBELLENE

I'm sure that Sheriff Woody will try to find ways to make people stop.

Everyone laughs.

MADELINE

He'll probably set up a table on Main Street with Buford and Earl. That'll stop traffic.

Ted walks over to the Domino Boys.

TED

Speaking of which, boys, I want to thank you for saving Bobbie June's life.

Bobbie June walks over and hugs Buford.

BOBBIE JUNE

Thank you, boys.

EARL

It weren't nothing.

BUFORD

Now, we'll do it again if we need to, Miss Bobbie June.

BOB

We hope it doesn't come to that, Buford.

BOBBIE JUNE

I know what he means.

TED

You were right there where she needed you.

LEROY

Let's just say, Ted, that they were where God needed them to be.

Everyone nods in agreement. The Domino Boys return to the game.

BOBBIE JUNE
Leroy, you were right.

LEROY
Right about what, Bobbie June?

BOBBIE JUNE
Two things. One is that God was going to fix these situations.

MAYBELLENE
That's right. God used the abilities of Bob and Dossie Marie to get the highway stopped.

BOBBIE JUNE
Leroy was also right that God would never leave or forsake me. I almost forgot that.

LEROY
It's all right, Bobbie June. God doesn't forget. Satan is the one who puts up obstacles to try and make us forget.

BOBBIE JUNE
I see that now.

LEROY
There's one other thing.

BOBBIE JUNE
What's that?

LEROY
You have to have the faith that God is there and that He can help you when the obstacles come up.

BOBBIE JUNE
It seems like all the problems came up when I had a couple of ideas to help you and help out at the church.

MADELINE
What ideas?

MAYBELLENE

We were interested in forming a woman's ministry at the church.

LEROY

A woman's ministry?

BOBBIE JUNE

Something to get the women serving and ministering to people.

MAYBELLENE

A group of women that can help Madeline and relieve some of the stress.

BOBBIE JUNE

So she doesn't have to do it all.

MADELINE

I think that's a lovely idea, Bobbie June. Don't you, Leroy?

LEROY

I think that's a great idea. We need to get it going right away.

DOSSIE MARIE

What was the other idea, Bobbie June?

Bobbie June looks as though she has given away a secret.

BOBBIE JUNE

I guess I shouldn't have said anything about that.

BOB

Why not?

TED

It was just an idea to get everyone together.

DOSSIE MARIE

We certainly are together now.

BOBBIE JUNE

It was just going to be a simple get-together.

The Domino Boys look up from their game at those words.

EARL

Hey, Buford. A get-together sounds like a party.

BUFORD

Yeah, an anniversary party.

TED

Hush, Buford.

BOB

An anniversary party?

MADELINE

Buford, what are you talking about?

EARL

Why, nothing, Miss Madeline. Buford doesn't know what he's talking about.

BUFORD

Yes, I do, Earl. We both heard them planning the party for the Reverend and Miss Madeline and for Bob and Miss Dossie Marie.

LEROY

That's why Maybellene asked me if I had any plans for the end of the week.

DOSSIE MARIE

Bobbie June asked us the same thing.

MADELINE

You were going to surprise us?

TED

It was supposed to be a surprise.

BOB

Bobbie June, thank you so much.

DOSSIE MARIE

Ted, we really appreciate it.

LEROY

Thanks, Maybellene. Thank you, Bobbie June.

Handshakes and hugs are exchanged.

TED
Now that the surprise is gone...

MAYBELLENE
Can the four of you be here on
Friday night?

BOBBIE JUNE
For your one-year anniversary party?

BOB
Our schedules are wide open. Right,
my dear sweet Dossie Marie?

DOSSIE MARIE
Absolutely, my dear Bob.

LEROY
We wouldn't miss it for the world.
We'll turn our cell phones off.

MADELINE
Cell phones? We won't be bringing
them, Leroy.

Everyone laughs.

TED
It seems like now we need to get
home and get some rest.

BOBBIE JUNE
It has been a long night.

Everyone moves to leave. Leroy, Madeline, Bob, Dossie Marie,
and Maybellene go to the front door. Ted and Bobbie June go
to the back door. Ted stops at the Domino Boys.

TED
Come on, boys, you can come back and
finish tomorrow.

BOBBIE JUNE
Instead of the basement, you can
keep your table up here.

EARL
Thanks, Miss Bobbie June.

Buford holds up a score card.

BUFORD

We still have your score right here,
Ted.

BOBBIE JUNE

Ted?!

TED

We'll start a new game tomorrow.

The Domino Boys get up and leave through the back door.
Bobbie June hangs back.

TED

Coming, Bobbie June?

BOBBIE JUNE

I'll be there in a minute. I'm going
to lock the front door.

TED

All right.

Ted leaves through the back door. Bobbie June walks to the
back door and locks it. She turns and stops to look at where
the Mayor fell and then moves to the center stage.

BOBBIE JUNE

Lord, thank You for my husband and
our friends. And thank You most of
all for being my friend.

Bobbie June walks to the back door and exits.

END OF ACT 3.