



Eddie McPherson

Norman Maine Publishing

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To Logan, Evan and Alex.

*The world is a better place
because you guys are in it.*

THE LAST RESORT was first presented by the CAC Dinner Theatre in Fort Payne, AL in February 2006: Eddie McPherson, director; Stephanie McFall and Elizabeth Wheatley, set design; Patricia Flory, costume design; Ledon Twilley, lighting design; Brian Wheatley, sound design; Brittany Flory, properties director; Darrell Collins, Jr., production stage manager.

ARMEN STRAIGHTS: Eddie McPherson

DIXIE: Kim Collins

TRUCK: Jeremy Taylor

LINDA JEAN: Amy Jo Hill

MRS. HOBBS: Sandra Lea

MR. HOBBS: Tony Dobbs

MR. STRAIGHTS: Rod Walters

GRANNY ROSE: *Sandra Ellis Lafferty

CHARLIE: Brian Baine

NANCY: Stephanie Mcfall

WIDOW SNIPES: Lori Lumsden

MR. CRUM: Tom Westmoreland

CORA LYNN: Nina Haney

ITSY: Jacy McPherson

BITSY: Kelly Vizzinia

MR. BIG: Matthew Taheri

MRS. BIG: Meta Lusk

*Appearing courtesy of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

THE LAST RESORT was subsequently presented by the Little Flock Theatre in Louisville, KY in March 2006: Cathy Marcum and Chinaka Njoku, directors; Ronnie Hill, sets and properties; Dave Conn, lighting and sound; Tina Hill and Erica Nally, costumes and hair.

ARMEN STRAIGHTS: Andy Davis

DIXIE STRAIGHTS: Jenny Estepp

TRUCK: George Patrick Kornegay

LINDA JEAN: Jessie Davis

MRS. HOBBS: Cathy Marcum

MR. HOBBS: Bob Hamilton

MR. STRAIGHTS: Brian Foster

GRANNY ROSE: Angela Davis

CHARLIE: Jake Allen

NANCY: Brittany Hagan

WIDOW SNIPES: Marlene Austin

MR. CRUM: Dave Richerson

CORA LYNN: Dorothy Arnold

ITSY: Jim Austin

BITSY: Warren Stanley

MR. BIG: Tim Shifflett

MRS. BIG: Amy Craddock

CUSTOMER: Maria Smith

THE LAST RESORT

FARCE. Grab yourself a can of Aqua Net hairspray! There's a hot new beauty craze that's driving the men of Lost Creek mad. It's the beehive hairdo, and the higher the hair, the better. Dixie, a beauty shop owner and a master of beehives, has been inundated with customers who are desperate for high hair. Eager to win the heart of Avis Crum—a 90-year-old womanizer who happens to be the only available bachelor in Lost Creek—Granny Rose and Wider Snipes decide to get themselves a beehive since "There ain't nothin' more sexy to a man than a woman with high air." Determined to become a beehive master herself, Linda Jean sets out to learn the art of the beehive by practicing on neighborhood scarecrows. In the meantime, a couple of city slickers arrive in Lost Creek looking to sign up organ donors. The hospitable folk of Lost Creek are more than willing to oblige. You see, they've been wanting to get rid of their organs for years in order to make way for the hottest "new" instrument to hit the region, the harmonica. This richly entertaining character-driven farce will charm audiences with its down-home humor and its eccentric and lovable cast of characters.

Performance Time: Approximately 100 minutes.

CHARACTERS

(7 m, 11 f, optional extras)

ARMEN STRAIGHTS: Runs The Last Resort, a cabin rental business.

DIXIE STRAIGHTS: Armen's wife; owns Dixie's Beauty Shop; wears a beehive hairdo

TRUCK WINCHESTER: Friend of the family; big-hearted and in love with a stray cat.

LINDA JEAN HOBBS: Truck's fiancée and Dixie's sister; practices doing beehives on scarecrows.

MAMA HOBBS: Dixie's mother; wears a beehive.

ELMER HOBBS: Dixie's father; infatuated with country/western singer Patsy Carter.

HUDSON STRAIGHTS: Armen's father; enemy of yellow jackets everywhere.

CORA LYNN: Dixie's cousin; wears a beehive hairdo.

ITSY: Cora Lynn's niece from Calhoun; obese (can wear a fat suit).

BITSY: Itsy's twin sister; obese (can wear a fat suit); non-speaking.

GRANNY ROSE: Armen's grandma; has her heart set on marrying Mr. Crum.

MAGNOLIA "WIDER" SNIPES: Has her eyes on Mr. Crum; Granny Rose's mortal enemy.

AVIS CRUM: 90, bachelor and womanizer; walks with a walker and likes to toot his own horn; always speaks rather loudly.

CHARLIE MANN: Works for a non-profit organization whose goal is to sign up organ donors; stays at The Last Resort.

NANCY: Charlie's co-worker.

CUSTOMER: One of Dixie's customers; wears a beehive hairdo; female.

RALF BIG: President of the non-profit organization; high-brow.

MRS. BIG: Mr. Big's high-society wife; has been know to take a tranquilizer or two; dressed to the hilt.

EXTRAS (Optional): Other folks in Lost Creek and/or the city.

SETTING

Present. The small town of Lost Creek. A fancy banquet room in the city.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

Scene 1: Lost Creek, outside The Last Resort and Dixie's Beauty Shop.

Scene 2: Lost Creek.

Scene 3: Lost Creek.

Intermission

ACT II

Scene 1: Banquet room in the city.

Scene 2: On a dirt road in Lost Creek.

Scene 3: Banquet room in the city and on a dirt road in Lost Creek.

SETS

Storefronts of The Last Resort and Dixie's Beauty Shop: The storefront is one continuous facade across the stage. A porch stretches all the way across two entrance ways. Separate doors go into each of the businesses. A door right goes into the cabin rental office. A door left into Dixie's beauty shop. A homemade sign above the beauty shop door reads: "Dixie's Beauty Shop." A sign beside the door reads: "We Specialize In Beehives" with still another sign reads, "No hair cut below the neck." A sign over the SR door reads: "The Last Resort" with a smaller sign that reads, "Rental Cabins \$15 per day. Running Water, Add \$5.00." An old barrel and a couple of non-matching wooden chairs sit between the doors on the porch. A checkerboard sits on top of the barrel. An old worn lawn chair sits on the main stage somewhere downstage left.

Fancy Banquet Room in the City: The set is decorated eloquently. There are a few small round tables covered with white tablecloths scattered about. A larger table for food sits upstage left. There is a small platform against the upstage wall center where all of the speeches are given.

Dirt Road in Lost Creek: All that is needed for a backdrop is a batch of pine trees. Undecorated Christmas trees will work well. Of course a neatly painted flat would work fine too. If possible, this scene should have its own separated stage space. In the original production, this small 8 x 8 platform was completely detached from the main stage SR. Only a modest amount of space is needed.

NOTE: The set will need to be changed quickly from the storefronts in Act I to a fancy banquet room in Act II to prevent a lengthy intermission. The original production accomplished this with a rotating stage. Another production achieved the desired result by detaching the porch and flipping the flats around. Remember that simple is okay.

PROPS

Sign that reads, "We Specialize in Beehives"	Men's handkerchief
Sign that reads, "\$15 per day, Running Water, add \$5"	\$5 bill
2 "Open/Closed" signs	Coin
White bed sheet	Basket of vegetables
Piece of wood for whittling	Hair ribbon
Pocketknife	2 Clipboards
Cardboard box with 'Miracle' written on the side	Bright red sunglasses
Portable 8-track player	Portable sun reflector
Checkerboard and checkers	Lawn chair
Beehive wigs	Hat with bee/hornet screen attached, for Mr. Straights
Bag of jerky	Old vacuum cleaner
Dollar bill	2 Small pouches with pull strings
Yellow rubber gloves, for Mr. Straights	Old-fashioned bulb horn
Large can of insect spray	Walker
Purse, for Dixie	Scarecrow with a wig of yarn hair
Large women's hair scarf	Country music fan paraphernalia
Picnic basket	Blank record-keeping book
Sandwiches	Three small blankets
Small folding table	Eyeglasses, for Mr. Crum
Can of gasoline	Magazine
Small paper bag	Fireman's jacket with helmet, for Mr. Straights
Burlap sack	Water hose
Rolled-up posters	Stool
Headphones	Old-fashioned country-western clothing, for Mama Hobbs
Beauty supplies in a plastic carrying case	Large blonde bouffant wig, for Mama Hobbs
2 Suitcases	Fancy divan
Large orange cone	Toga, for Mr. Hobbs
Water bucket with dipper	Sprig of leaves
Old butter churn	Toga, for Nancy
Small pad of paper	Toga, for Cora Lynn
Work rag	
Last Resort "pamphlet"	

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Large hand fan	Compact mirror
Grapes	Purse, for Granny Rose
Large banner that reads, "Organ Donors Save Lives"	Purse, for Wider Snipes
Binoculars	Indian costume, for Armen
Women's fancy handkerchief	Pocahontas costume, for Dixie
Money (bills)	Fake spear
Large polka-dot dress, for Cora Lynn	Small towel or cloth
Hat with fruit, for Cora Lynn	Lectern
Banquet table	Small quilt
Finger foods, assorted	Note cards
Brown paper bag	Pair of shoes, for scarecrow
Flashlight	Baby blanket and bottle
Band-Aids	Stick of "dynamite"
Navy dress, for Granny Rose	School bus (2-dimensional that moves from one side of the stage to another and has windows that cast members can peer through.)
Navy dress, for Wider Snipes	
2 Fake pearl necklaces	
Large shopping bag that reads, "The Costume Shop"	

SOUND EFFECTS

"Red River Valley"	Upbeat bluegrass music
Upbeat country music	Fast-paced country song
Sad country love song in style of Patsy Cline	

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

This play is written as a fun spoof of small-town southern life. As a born and bred southern boy myself, I love and respect the southern underdog who is genuine and, yes, on occasion, naïve. That's what the characters in this play are like—sincere and a little wet behind the ears. They shouldn't be played as hillbillies, but it is okay to play them over the top. The bottom line for performing this play is to have fun. Keep the momentum moving. There's nothing worse than a farce that drags along. Exits and entrances should almost be on top of one another. Pacing is very important. Break a leg!

**"There ain't nothin'
more sexy to a man
than a woman
with high hair."**

—Armen

ACT I

SCENE 1

(AT RISE: Lost Creek [the middle of nowhere]. The front of The Last Resort, a cabin rental office, SR and the front of Dixie's Beauty Shop SL. A harmonica and guitar play "Red River Valley" while the following unfolds in pantomime. NOTE: Though it looks long, the opening shouldn't take more than three minutes. You may delete this opening and go straight to Scene 2, if desired.)

(Armen and Dixie enter from SL, kiss one another as if to say, "Have a nice day." Armen climbs the steps to his door while Dixie climbs her own set of steps. They both turn their signs over to "Open." Dixie enters her shop and brings out a white sheet and flaps it into the wind. Armen stretches and pulls out a piece of wood and pocketknife. He sits on the top step and begins to whittle. Mama Hobbs enters from SL and climbs the steps to Dixie. She "explains" to Dixie how she would like her hair cut as Dixie looks it over. Dixie smiles and invites Mama Hobbs into her shop and shuts the door. Truck enters from SR carrying a cardboard box that has "Miracle" written on the side. Armen greets Truck with a wave. Truck rushes to Armen and shows Armen the kitten inside the box [unseen to audience]. Armen pets the kitten, pats Truck on the back, then sits and whittles again. Mr. Hobbs enters from SL carrying an old portable 8-track player, which he's holding up to his ear. Armen and Truck greet him as Truck rushes over and shows Mr. Hobbs his kitten. Mr. Hobbs sets the 8-track player down. He and Truck sit down to a game of checkers in the center of the porch. Mama Hobbs exits Dixie's beauty shop sporting her brand new beehive. She sees her husband, Mr. Hobbs, sitting with his back to her. She's excited to see what he will say about her new hairdo. She crosses to him and taps him on the shoulder. He waves her off as though he thinks a fly is bothering him. She taps again—he waves it off again. Finally, she moves to where he can see her, but he won't look up from his checkers game. She poses, but nothing. She gets down on her knees so he can see it. She bats her eyes at him. Still nothing. She becomes frustrated and folds up the checkerboard. Mr. Hobbs stands with his hands on his hips and looks at his wife. She strikes a pose and bats her eyes. He angrily points to the checkerboard and shames her with his fingers. He shoos her away and sits again. She becomes angry and storms down Armen's side of the porch. Armen stands to greet her. She points to her husband who is reorganizing the checkerboard and makes a fist and shakes it as if to say, "One of these days...pow!" She

storms out. Cora Lynn enters as Dixie comes back out and waves her white sheet. Dixie greets Cora Lynn. Cora Lynn points to the "We specialize In Beehives" sign and points to her head. Dixie invites her into her shop and closes the door. Granny Rose pushes a wheelbarrow in which Mr. Crum is sitting. Granny Rose stops and wipes her brow. Armen rises and greets them. She takes a bag of jerky that Mr. Crum is holding and hands it to Armen. Armen reaches into his pocket and hands Granny Rose a dollar bill. Mr. Crum holds out his hand for the dollar, which Granny Rose gladly gives him. She picks up the wheelbarrow and rolls Mr. Crum out and Armen waves. At that moment, Cora Lynn exits Dixie's shop sporting the identical beehive hairdo that Mama Hobbs had before. Dixie follows her out. Cora Lynn hands Dixie a couple of dollars. Mr. Straights crosses the stage wearing yellow rubber gloves and carrying a large can of insect spray. He stops at Armen, points to the can, and then points offstage as if he were after something. He exits and Armen seems to want to start after him, but then stops as if to say, "There's no use." Dixie exits her shop with her purse as Armen stands and puts his stick and pocketknife away. They turn their signs back around so that they read "Closed." He waits on her at the bottom of her steps. She meets them as they slowly exit SR as the lights fade to a slow blackout.)

SCENE 2

(AT RISE: Armen and Truck are playing checkers on the porch. Dixie follows a Customer out of her beauty shop. The Customer sports a tall beehive hairdo. The Customer slips Dixie a couple of bills.)

CUSTOMER: Thank you, Dixie—I just love it.

DIXIE: I'm glad you do. Tell that sister of yours to get over here and I'll give her her very own beehive.

(Customer puts an extra large scarf on her new hairdo.)

CUSTOMER: You know Thelma. She wouldn't know high fashion if it bit her in her pantaloons. But I'll tell her just the same. Tell your mama and them I said hey!

DIXIE: I will. Take care now! (Dixie enters her shop.)

ARMEN: (Aside.) Welcome to the Last Resort, folks. Just another peaceful day out in the middle of nowhere USA. Why don't you stay awhile and you can watch me beat my best friend Truck here in another game of checkers. (End aside. Referring to the checker game.) Truck, would you hurry up and make your move?

TRUCK: Don't rush me, Armen. I'm a thinkin'.

ARMEN: (Aside, sarcastically.) He's thinkin'. I smell hair burnin'.

TRUCK: (Concentrating on the board.) Wait a minute, Armen; I just had a thought pop in my head.

ARMEN: (To Truck, frustrated.) It must be lonely in there all by itself.

TRUCK: (Pointing to the board.) If I move here, you can jump me this way. If I move here, you can jump me that way—and you get a double jump if I move to this spot.

ARMEN: (Becoming impatient.) Truck!

TRUCK: So, I'm goin' to play it smart and move riiiiight here. (He does, rubs his hands together, and laughs.) I got you trapped now, smarty pants.

ARMEN: Not too fast there Mr. I'm-so-sure-about-myself. I'll just move here, and here, and here, and here, and here. (Laughs a wicked laugh.) I win again, sucker!

TRUCK: How in the world? Armen, I didn't even see that comin'.

ARMEN: Of course not—that's 'cause I'm the checker champ of Bullet County. You want to play again?

TRUCK: Nah. I know when I've been whapped. I'm goin' to go see if Miracle is ready over at Doc Walker's.

(Both cross to the steps in front of Armen's business then SR.)

ARMEN: You and that dumb ally cat. I still can't believe you paid that much money to get its mangy leg fixed.

TRUCK: I couldn't help it, Armen. When I saw that poor helpless cat layin' there on that lonely dirt road, somethin' just come over me.

ARMEN: You got a big heart, Truck. Still, that's a lot of money to pay on a stray cat.

TRUCK: Armen, you got to promise me you won't tell Linda Jean how much I spent to get Miracle's broke leg fixed.

ARMEN: Why would Linda Jean care how much you spent at the vet?

TRUCK: 'Cause I won't be able to afford to take her out on a date until next pay day. If she finds out I spent our courtin' money on Miracle—she'd never forgive me. You know how she feels about me and my critters.

ARMEN: Well, won't she get a mite suspicious when you don't take her nowhere for three whole weeks?

TRUCK: I just told her I was a little short on cash this month. I don't dare tell her the truth.

ARMEN: Okay, Truck, my lips are soiled. Go get your \$100 miracle cat.

(Truck crosses quickly back to Armen and looks around.)

TRUCK: Shhhhhh, not so loud. You never know when Linda Jean might be hidin' around the corner. *(Says loudly.)* That's real funny what you said about spendin' 100 dollars to get little Miracle's broke leg fixed, Armen! You sure are the jokester.

ARMEN: *(Playing along.)* Oh...I was just joshin', Truck! Ever'body knows you would never spend all your courtin' money on a homeless cat!

(They stand for a minute looking around. Truck throws Armen the "okay" sign.)

TRUCK: Bye, Armen. *(Exits SR.)*

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ARMEN: See you later, Dr. Doolittle.

(Dixie exits her shop and crosses Armen's way SR. She carries a small picnic basket.)

DIXIE: Who's doin' all that hollerin' out here?

ARMEN: *(Trying to cover.)* Uh, hollerin'? I didn't hear nobody hollerin' anything about a 100-dollar cat.

DIXIE: *(Shrugs.)* You ready for lunch, sugar pie?

ARMEN: I sure am, graham cracker. I'm so hungry I could eat a horse and chase the rider.

(He takes a small folding table and sets it down SR in front of his shop as Dixie places the basket on it. They unpack the basket and nibble on their food throughout the following scene. It's best if they keep standing.)

DIXIE: Have you rented any cabins today?

ARMEN: Not a one.

DIXIE: Don't worry, Armen...you're just in a little slump, that's all.

ARMEN: If it wasn't for your beauty shop doin' such good business, I might have to give up this dream of runnin' The Last Resort.

DIXIE: It's this new beehive craze. It's keepin' me busier than a one-armed paper hanger.

ARMEN: Maybe I should do more advertisin'.

DIXIE: How much advertisin' are you doin'?

ARMEN: None.

DIXIE: Yeah...you probably could do more.

(Armen crosses SL.)

ARMEN: *(Referring to the invisible dirt road that runs in front of their business.)* At least you don't have to worry about such things. Ever' time one of your satisfied customers walks down the road with an original Dixie Straights beehive, they come runnin' from all directions.

DIXIE: I can't understand why these beehives ain't caught on ever'where else.

(Armen heads back to the table.)

ARMEN: What do you mean?

DIXIE: I looked at a recent copy of one of them there Hollywood magazines and not one of them glitzy female movie stars was wearin' a beehive.

ARMEN: I find that a little hard to believe. There ain't nothin' more sexy to a man than a woman with high hair.

DIXIE: You remember the first time you ever saw me in a beehive, Armen?

ARMEN: Do I ever. Rrrrrrrrrr...it sure got my spark plugs spittin' fire. You had just got home from gettin' your hair done at Bea's Beauty Shop and Taxidermy Service. And I came over to pick you up and take you over to the two-for-one night at Denny's. And there you was—smellin' of Old Spice for women—that hair just barely clearin' the ceilin' fan and you looked at me with them bright cherry lips and you said...

(Dixie plays along. She nibbles her sandwich and slowly crosses SL.)

DIXIE: Do you like my beehive, Armen?

ARMEN: I says, "Do I like your beehive? Let me put it to you this way... *(He crosses behind her then quickly peeps around her.)* ...buzzzzzzzz. Buzzzzzzzz. *(He "flies" SL as Dixie giggles like a school girl.)* I'm lookin' to get me some honey. Buzzzzzzzz. I wonder where there might be some honey. Buzzzzzzzz. *(He grabs her.)* Oh, look, here's my honey...right here underneath this here beautiful beehive. *(Nuzzles her neck.)* Buzzzzzzzz. Buzzzzzzzzzz...

DIXIE: *(Giggling through the whole thing.)* Oh, Armen...

(Granny Rose enters and stares at Armen and Dixie.)

GRANNY ROSE: Thank the good Lord in heaven I ain't that young and foolish no more. You two need to behave yourself out here, actin' all silly in broad daylight that way. *(She stands between them now, looking at Armen.)* My daughter went and gave birth to a loony bird named Armen who grew up... *(Turns to Dixie.)* ...and married hisself a coo coo.

DIXIE: We're talking about the new beehive hairdo, Granny Rose. I could give you one if you wanted me to.

GRANNY ROSE: I'm afraid my hair has got so thin in the last few years; the best you could get out of mine is a spider web.

ARMEN: Granny Rose, Dixie could fix you up good, and you'd have to fight ol' Mr. Crum off with a two by four.

(Granny Rose crosses SL in front of Dixie's shop.)

GRANNY ROSE: I wouldn't bet on it. He's been courtin' me for a whole year now, and he still ain't popped the big question.

ARMEN: *(Eating his sandwich.)* What question is that, Granny Rose?

GRANNY ROSE: *(Sarcastic.)* If I would share my jar of Bengay. What question do you think I'm talkin' about?

DIXIE: Maybe he don't want to rush into anything.

GRANNY ROSE: Dixie, at our age, you can't wait for too long or one of us will be marryin' a corpse.

(Armen crosses to Granny Rose.)

ARMEN: Well, I didn't want to say anything, Granny Rose...but it has seemed lately that Mr. Crum has been takin' advantage of you and your generosity, what with you pushin' him around in that wheelbar and ever'thing.

GRANNY ROSE: Oh, that man has me wrapped around his finger tighter than last year's swimsuit.

DIXIE: Maybe you should try playin' hard to get.

(Armen crosses back to the table.)

GRANNY ROSE: I tried that, Dixie. When he called me one time for me to bring the wheelbar over so we could deliver his beef jerky, I stood right up and told him I had other plans.

ARMEN: Good for you, Granny Rose. I bet that made him stand up and take notice.

GRANNY ROSE: Nope. You know what he done? He called up 'ol Wider Snipes and had her push him around makin' his deliveries.

DIXIE: He did not!

(Granny Rose crosses back to the right of the table.)

GRANNY ROSE: So I knew then I had a fight on my hands. The day I give Mr. Crum up to a wrinkled-up prune like Magnolia Snipes, is the day you can just put me in my pine box for good.

ARMEN: You can't make somebody fall in love with you, Granny Rose. You just ain't as lucky as Dixie here to have the man of your dreams love you back. *(To Dixie.)* Ain't that right, darlin'?

DIXIE: *(Chewing her sandwich.)* The man of my dreams ran off with the head cheerleader when I was in high school.

(Armen thinks on this a moment.)

ARMEN: I never ran off with a cheerleader.

DIXIE: I never said you did.

ARMEN: *(Sad.)* Oh...

(Dixie notices his frown and puts her arm around him.)

DIXIE: The important thing is I learned to love you. And I don't regret a day of it, except for that Sunday at church when you forgot your suspenders and your pants fell to your ankles.

ARMEN: You promised me you would never bring that up again. *(Granny Rose starts crying. Armen rushes SR and puts his arm around her shoulder.)* Granny, don't cry, I was wearin' clean underwear.

GRANNY ROSE: That ain't why I'm cryin', younguns. It's Mr. Crum. I'm afraid I'm about to lose him to that no account Wider Snipes.

(Dixie crosses to the left of Armen and Granny Rose.)

DIXIE: Don't be silly, Granny Rose, that woman's got wrinkles in places you ain't seen in years.

(Granny Rose stares a moment at Dixie.)

GRANNY ROSE: I have no idea what that means, but you can't blind yourself to the truth, child. *(Crosses back to SL as she gets excited again.)* Don't you fret over your ol' granny, though. I have decided I am goin' to fight fire with fire.

DIXIE: You ain't goin' to beat up Wider Snipes, are you, Granny?

GRANNY ROSE: Even better than that. That's why I'm here. I was wonderin' if either of you had some iron root I could borrow.

ARMEN: *(As he and Dixie stand behind their table.)* Iron root? Iron root can only mean one thing.

DIXIE: Granny Rose is goin' to concoct herself a luuuuve charm.

GRANNY ROSE: And there ain't a thing Crum or the Wider can do about it. *(Laughs wickedly.)*

DIXIE: I think Mama brought some Iron Root by the other day to clean up them grass stains. I'll get it.

(Excited, Dixie runs and exits into her shop. Armen crosses to Granny Rose.)

ARMEN: I still say a good beehive hairdo wouldn't hurt, Granny Rose. Might be a good way to put the perk back in ol' Crum, if you know what I'm sayin'. *(Elbows her.)*

GRANNY ROSE: *(Giggles.)* Oh, Armen...I'm afraid a hairdo won't be enough. This love charm and a new blue dress should do the trick. Crum does like a woman in a blue dress, you know.

ARMEN: That'll knock him dead, Granny Rose. Except for your pantyhose bein' a little wrinkled, you're the sharpest dresser in Lost Creek.

GRANNY ROSE: *(Looking hard at Armen.)* I ain't wearin' pantyhose, Armen.

(Mr. Straights enters SL.)

ARMEN: *(Embarrassed.)* Oh, look. There comes Daddy just in time to take my foot out of my mouth. *(Mr. Straights is carrying a can of gasoline. Armen crosses SL and puts his arm around his father's shoulder.)* Hey, Daddy, it sure is good to see you!

MR. STRAIGHTS: Not now, Son, I'm on a mission.

ARMEN: What you doin' with that gas can, Daddy?

MR. STRAIGHTS: Still tryin' to get rid of that yeller jackets' nest out back for you, Armen.

ARMEN: Daddy, I thought Mama didn't allow you to play with gasoline after that dangerous fire you started last year.

MR. STRAIGHTS: Your mama ain't the boss of me. I do what I want and there ain't no naggin' wife goin' to tell me what I can and can't do!

ARMEN: Oh yeah...she's out of town.

MR. STRAIGHTS: Exactly! And if you tell her what I'm doin', I'll take a hickory switch to you quicker than you can say "scat."

(Armen crosses back to the table for more nibbling.)

ARMEN: Daddy, I'm a growd and married man...you cannot whup me with no hickory switch.

(Granny Rose gets right in Mr. Straights' face.)

GRANNY ROSE: *(To Mr. Straights.)* There's a reason my daughter don't want you playin' with gasoline, dummy.

MR. STRAIGHTS: Hush up, ol' woman. If I want your opinion, I'll stuff my ears with cotton and ask for it.

ARMEN: Be nice to Granny Rose, Daddy. She's havin' a hard day.

(Dixie exits her shop, carrying a small paper bag.)

DIXIE: *(To Granny Rose.)* Here you go, Granny Rose. Here's your —

GRANNY ROSE: Thank you, Dixie, for the hairpins. I appreciate it.
(Quickly crosses SR.) Well, I'll see you kids later.

(Armen follows her.)

ARMEN: Bye, Granny. Good luck with the... *(She turns quickly and gives Armen a warning stare. This stops Armen in his tracks.)* ...uh... hairpin ordeal.

(Granny Rose holds the bag up to Armen and sings as she exits.)

GRANNY ROSE: *(Sings to the tune of "On Top of Old Smoky.")*

"I'll conjure a potion,

And trap me that man.

He'll tell me he loves me —

He'll ask for my hand..." *(She exits, giddily.)*

DIXIE: Afternoon, Daddy Straights. What you doin' with that can of gasoline? Goin' to finally cut the grass over at your place?

MR. STRAIGHTS: Of course not. I'm goin' to let Armen's mama do that when she gets back from visitin' that ugly sister of hers.

(Armen goes back to the table for more food.)

ARMEN: Aunt Polly ain't ugly, Daddy...she's just a little...plain.
Bless her heart.

(Dixie also goes back to the table.)

DIXIE: She is a little ugly, Armen.

ARMEN/DIXIE: Bless her heart.

MR. STRAIGHTS: You can bless her heart till the cows come home,
but that woman fell out of the ugly tree and hit every branch on the
way down.

ARMEN: *(To Dixie.)* He says he's goin' to get rid of that yellow
jackets nest out back behind the shop.

DIXIE: As long as he don't try and strike a match to it I guess it will
be safe enough.

MR. STRAIGHTS: Don't worry, younguns. Now that I'm retired,
I've got plenty of time to take care of these kinds of things for you.
You can just set your minds to rest. *(He crosses and exits SR with his
gasoline can.)*

ARMEN: *(Shouts after him.)* As long as that gas can is in your hand,
my mind won't get a wink of sleep.

DIXIE: *(To Armen.)* Honey, I wish you could get your daddy a job.
Ever since he retired from the chicken plant, he just wanders
around lookin' for things to get into.

ARMEN: Bless his heart, it's like my mama always said: "That man
couldn't hit sand if he fell off a camel."

DIXIE: *(Checking her watch.)* We'd better put up, Armen. It's about
time for my next appointment.

(Armen helps Dixie place their picnic supplies back inside the basket.)

ARMEN: I need to run and check cabin 3 and ½.

DIXIE: How can there be a cabin 3 and ½?

ARMEN: That sinkhole out there's gettin' bigger.

*(Mama Hobbs rushes in SL carrying a burlap sack with a few rolled-up
posters sticking from the top. She's upset. Mama Hobbs stops CS.)*

MAMA HOBBS: Dixie, Armen, have ya'll seen that husband of mine
today?

ARMEN: *(Folding up the table.)* No ma'am, not yet. But he usually don't come by for his game of checkers till three o'clock.

(Dixie has set the basket on the porch and crosses to Mama Hobbs.)

DIXIE: What you got there, Mama?

(Mama Hobbs holds the bag out.)

MAMA HOBBS: Just look for yourself.

(Dixie peeps inside it.)

DIXIE: Patsy Carter 8-track tapes?

(Armen crosses to the checker table and organizes his checkers but still listens in on the conversation.)

MAMA HOBBS: And Patsy Carter posters...Patsy Carter postcards.

DIXIE: I didn't know you was such a Patsy Carter fan, Mama.

MAMA HOBBS: That's just it, Dixie, I ain't. *(Crosses SR.)* I mean I like Patsy and all, and I love to go to Patsy's birthplace whenever we get a little extra money saved up, but this stuff don't belong to me. It belongs to your daddy.

(Dixie crosses to her mother.)

DIXIE: But what's strange about that? Daddy's always been a Patsy Carter fan.

MAMA HOBBS: I realize that, honey. But here lately, he's gettin' plumb ridiculous about it. He's got her pictures hangin' all over the garage wall, and he's always playin' her 8-tracks day and night! I'm about to go crazy, that's all.

DIXIE: Daddy's always been a fan, but I didn't know he was goin' off the deep end that way.

MAMA HOBBS: Deep end is right. It started when he took me to see her in concert down in Atlanta. On the way back home on the Greyhound, that's all he wanted to talk about. He kept sayin', "Did you see Patsy in that dress?" "Did you see Patsy look at me when she sung 'Lovin' You's as Easy as Nailin' Jell-o to the Wall'?"

And ever' little thing makes him think of Patsy. Ever' time he sees Doris Watson in her blonde bouffant wig, he brings up Patsy...

(Armen crosses and stands beside Dixie.)

ARMEN: I didn't know Doris Watson wore a wig...

DIXIE: *(Scolding.)* Armen!

MAMA HOBBS: And the other day, I was holdin' up two big cantaloupes from the garden like this... *(Demonstrates.)* ...and it made him think of Patsy Carter all over again.

DIXIE: Mama, you're soundin' like you might be jealous of Patsy Carter.

MAMA HOBBS: It's not that I mind him likin' Patsy, hun. She's one of the greatest country-western singers of our time. But lately I feel like he's startin' to compare me with...well...with her.

DIXIE: That's just silly. What does Patsy Carter have that you don't have?

MAMA HOBBS: Well, there's a couple of things.

DIXIE: Like what?

MAMA HOBBS: What I mean is your daddy has always liked healthy-lookin' women.

(Armen stands between Dixie and Mama Hobbs.)

ARMEN: Then you ain't got a thing to worry about, Mama Hobbs. Has he not noticed lately how you can handle a chainsaw like it's a butter knife, or carry firewood to the house five sticks at a time... *(Reading her face cues.)* ...and that ain't the kind of healthy you're talkin' about, is it?

MAMA HOBBS: No, Armen, it ain't.

DIXIE: Mama, I've never known you to be self-conscious about your appearance before.

MAMA HOBBS: I've never had to compete with the likes of a big legend like Patsy Carter before.

(Mr. Hobbs enters SL wearing headphones and carrying the portable 8-track player. He sits in a lawn chair.)

DIXIE: There's Daddy now. *(Starts to cross to him.)* I'm goin' to get to the bottom of all this silly talk.

(Mama Hobbs stops Dixie.)

MAMA HOBBS: No, Dixie. Don't say notin' to your daddy. I don't want to give him the satisfaction of thinkin' I might be jealous.

DIXIE: *(Sighs.)* Okay, Mama, I won't. But I still think you're wrong.

ARMEN: While you girls work out your problems, I'm goin' to go check on cabin 3 and ½. *(Aside.)* Like I said before, just another quiet day here at The Last Resort. Yeah right, and if that's true, my name is Truman Capoot... *[Rhymes with coat.]* ...and it ain't.

(Armen exits SR. Dixie crosses to Mr. Hobbs.)

DIXIE: Hey there, Daddy.

MR. HOBBS: Hi, little girl. You got time to give your daddy a haircut?

DIXIE: I'm afraid I can't today, Daddy. My appointment book is full up with all these beehives.

(Mama Hobbs crosses to her husband.)

MAMA HOBBS: Elmer Hobbs, you needin' a haircut is like the devil needin' ice trays in hell.

MR. HOBBS: The only thing I can think of that's more useless is you gettin' that dumb-lookin' hornet's nest.

MAMA HOBBS: Beehive! And to think I wasted all that money on a new hairstyle to get you to notice me. *(Picks up the burlap sack and throws it at him.)* Here, take all your stuff back before I throw it in the trash. By the way... *(Pats her beehive.)* ...you need to cut a sunroof in the pickup so I can ride without stickin' my hair out the window.

MR. HOBBS: Cut your own roof, Marge Simpson. And what you doin' with all my Patsy Carter paraphenail...parafa...par...Patsy Carter stuff?

(Mr. Hobbs stands. Dixie puts an arm around her mother.)

DIXIE: Daddy, since when have you become so insensitive to Mama's feelin's?

MR. HOBBS: I ain't insensitive. Your mama has been houndin' me for years to take up a hobby. Now that I found one, all she does is

gripe, gripe, gripe! There ain't no such thing as makin' a woman happy.

MAMA HOBBS: I know a way, but it's against the law.

(Magnolia enters SL and throws up a wave to Dixie.)

MAGNOLIA: Yoo-hoo, Dixie. I'm here for my appointment.

DIXIE: Go on in, Mrs. Snipes. Linda Jean should be here any minute.

(Linda Jean runs in SR. She's out of breath and holding her beauty supplies in a plastic carrying case.)

MAGNOLIA: Okay. *(She enters Dixie's shop.)*

LINDA JEAN: Oh, Dixie, I'm sorry I'm late, but I was at home practicin' cuttin' my scarecrow's hair and time just plumb snuck up on me.

DIXIE: Don't fret none, Linda Jean, your client just got here.

LINDA JEAN: Don't call her my client, she's your client. You're just bein' nice enough to let me practice a beehive on her.

DIXIE: Don't let Mrs. Snipes know the only hair you've ever cut is a wad of yarn on top of a scarecrow's head. Besides, I'll be right there with you ever' step of the way.

LINDA JEAN: What if I mess up, Dixie?

DIXIE: If you want to help me in my shop, you've got to start somewhere.

LINDA JEAN: Are you comin' too?

DIXIE: I'm right behind you.

(They climb the steps and enter Dixie's shop. Mama Hobbs tries to be romantic and stands behind her husband.)

MAMA HOBBS: Elmer, what you say me and you take the pickup out to Buck's Pocket and eat some crab legs tonight?

(She puts her finger through his hair.)

MR. HOBBS: Stop, woman. You're messin' up my hairs.

MAMA HOBBS: Elmer Hobbs, you're as romantic as a rock. *(She crosses and sits on Armen's side of the porch.)* With a head to match.

(He puts his headphones back on.)

MR. HOBBS: Oh, here's my favorite Patsy song. *(Sings in a made-up country/western style as he stands and exits SL.)* "Southern women don't sweat, they glistennnnnnn..." *(He's gone.)*

MAMA HOBBS: *(Shouts to him.)* You just keep listenin' to your 8-tracks! Don't worry about me! Don't worry about your dear, poor faithful wife who has cooked and cleaned for your no-account butt for 30 years.

(Charlie and Nancy enter SR, each carrying a suitcase. Charlie notices Mama Hobbs.)

CHARLIE: Excuse me.

(Mama Hobbs turns quickly.)

MAMA HOBBS: *(Snaps.)* What do you want?

CHARLIE: I'm sorry. Was I interrupting something?

(Mama Hobbs crosses to them SR.)

MAMA HOBBS: Oh, I do apologize for snappin' at you that way. It's just that I'm a little bit upset.

CHARLIE: That's all right. I understand. Do you own this place?

MAMA HOBBS: The Last Resort? Oh no. My son-in-law does, though. His name is Armen.

NANCY: We were interested in renting a couple of cabins for the night.

MAMA HOBBS: He will be plumb tickled to death. Business has been a little slow, you know, with peak season hittin' and ever'thing.

(Charlie and Nancy stand on either side of Mama Hobbs, staring up at her beehive.)

CHARLIE: I see.

MAMA HOBBS: Oh, you've noticed my new hairdo. It's the latest craze in Hollywood. *(Turns to Nancy.)* You might want to think

about one for yourself. There's a discount for people who stay at The Last Resort. Thirty percent off and a free bottle of Aqua Net.

NANCY: *(Trying to be polite.)* That's an awfully good deal.

MAMA HOBBS: Let me call Armen on the intercom. *(She crosses to Armen's side of the porch and picks up a rather large orange cone and yells into it toward SR.)* Armen, you got a customer!

CHARLIE: Thank you very much. May we wait here?

(Mama Hobbs comes back to them.)

MAMA HOBBS: Oh sure. Would you like somethin' to drink?

NANCY: That would be wonderful. It has been a long drive.

(Mama Hobbs crosses to a bucket and dipper sitting in the center of the porch.)

MAMA HOBBS: Don't mention it. They change the water ever' mornin' so that it stays fresh. I just hope Max didn't get in it this mornin'.

(Mama Hobbs hands Charlie a dipper full of water as he takes in a mouth full.)

NANCY: Max?

MAMA HOBBS: Hudson's bird dog. *(Charlie spits the water out.)* Sometimes he comes in and laps up half the bucket.

(Nancy notices an old butter churn sitting on the extreme left side of the porch and crosses to it.)

NANCY: Look at this ancient artifact. It looks as if it were hand made back in the colonial days: a vignette from the past...a tableau from another era...

(Mama Hobbs crosses to Nancy.)

MAMA HOBBS: A butter churn from Lost River. Why, it's probably something Armen bought on sale over at the hardware store.

(Nancy pulls out a small book and flips through it.)

NANCY: Maybe so, but this buyer's guide says it could be worth a lot of money.

(Charlie stretches after all that time in the car.)

CHARLIE: Nancy, here, is a serious collector of fine antiques. If she says it's worth something, it probably is.

MAMA HOBBS: Oh, I know all about antiques...you see, I married one. Now, is there anything else I can get you while you wait?

CHARLIE: *(Speaks to Mama Hobbs as Nancy gives the churn a good looking over.)* You wouldn't happen to have any fresh vegetables, would you? You see, when I was a little boy growing up in the city, we would always visit my grandma and grandpa on their farm. *(Crosses to SR as he remembers.)* They harvested all sorts of delicious vegetables there. Carrots, tomatoes, cucumbers.

(Mama Hobbs crosses to Charlie.)

MAMA HOBBS: We grow all kinds of delicious vegetables out here in the country. I'll go fetch you some right now.

CHARLIE: I didn't mean for you to go to any trouble.

MAMA HOBBS: Ah, no trouble. I'll just take the bush hog off Elmer's John Deer and drive over to the garden. Lord knows that tractor ain't been used in months. *(She crosses quickly to SL.)*

CHARLIE: You have a kind heart.

(This stops Mama Hobbs in her tracks. She slowly turns back to Charlie.)

MAMA HOBBS: Would you mind sayin' that again?

CHARLIE: You have a kind heart?

(Mama Hobbs slowly starts moving back to him.)

MAMA HOBBS: One more time.

NANCY: *(Still looking over the butter churn.)* Poor woman, must be hard of hearing.

MAMA HOBBS: No ma'am, I heard him. It's just that it's been so long since a man has said kind words to me... *(In Charlie's face.)* ...I just wanted to savor the moment.

CHARLIE: *(A little taken aback.)* Well, uh, it's true. And I appreciate your hospitality.

(He takes her hand and pats it.)

MAMA HOBBS: You're more than welcome. *(Removes her hand from his.)* So you and your wife just make yourself comfortable.

CHARLIE: Oh, we're not married. *(Mama Hobbs puts her hand in his again.)* We only work for the same company.

MAMA HOBBS: Oh, I see. Well, ain't that nice. I'll go get them vegetables for you. *(Starts slowly moving away from Charlie with her hand still held out toward him.)* Don't you go nowhere. I'll be riiiiight back...

(She slowly exits, staring at Charlie the whole time with her hand still extended. She exits. Nancy looks around, crossing CS.)

NANCY: What a quaint little place they have here. So nice and quiet.

(Charlie joins Nancy CS.)

CHARLIE: Enjoy it while you can; we head back to the city tomorrow.

NANCY: Speaking of heading back, how many donors have we signed up?

(Charlie pulls out a small pad of paper from his shirt pocket.)

CHARLIE: Let's see. Counting you and me, we have a grand total of two.

NANCY: That's what I was afraid of. *(She sits on the porch, removes a shoe and rubs her foot.)*

CHARLIE: Let's face it. The Big's will surly fire us as soon as we return. They've spent lots of money to send us on this quest for organ donors. Is it our fault that people want to be buried with everything intact?

NANCY: Well, it's only noon. We still have the rest of the day to drum up somebody willing to give up an organ.

CHARLIE: How? *(Looks around.)* We're in the middle of nowhere.
While you were napping, I took a wrong turn.
(Nancy looks around as she puts her book away.)

NANCY: Looks like you took more than one wrong turn.

CHARLIE: By the time we get back to the main highway and to any semblance of civilization, it will be dark. *(With a thought as he moves to Nancy.)* Hey, maybe we can find some donors out here in...what's this place called? Lost River?

NANCY: Lost Creek, and I doubt it. They're still pretty old-fashioned when it comes to burying their loved ones out in the country. *(Armen enters. Nancy stands.)* This must be Armen.

(Wiping his hands on a work rag, Armen approaches Nancy and Charlie CS.)

ARMEN: Howdy, folks. You take this dirt road here and go about six miles till you come to an abandoned chicken house—

CHARLIE: Wait a moment. Where are you sending us?

ARMEN: Back out to the main highway. You're lost, ain't you?

CHARLIE: No, we're interested in renting a couple of cabins for the night.

ARMEN: Once you come to the chicken house... *(Turns back to them.)*
You are?

CHARLIE: That's right. Do you have any vacancies?

ARMEN: No sir...all I got is cabins. But I promise, they're real nice.
There's two cabins side by side just down this trail here... *(Points SR.)* ...both complete with runnin' water.

CHARLIE: That sounds fine.

(Armen pulls a "pamphlet" from his back pocket.)

ARMEN: Here's a pamphlet.

(Dixie exits her shop and stops SL.)

DIXIE: *(Shouts back to Linda Jean.)* Okay, I'll be out here if you need me.

(Armen runs to her.)

ARMEN: Dixie, look! Customers!

DIXIE: Two at one time? I'll get the camera!

(Dixie starts back to her shop, but Armen stops her.)

ARMEN: We'll get a picture later, dumplin'.

DIXIE: Linda Jean said I was makin' her nervous watchin' over her shoulder.

(Looking over the "pamphlet," Charlie crosses to Armen and Dixie.)

CHARLIE: Excuse me, but it doesn't say anything here about satellite.

(Armen thinks.)

ARMEN: Sat-e-llite? Oh, don't worry, that's standard here at The Last Resort. It's in the bedroom.

CHARLIE: Oh, good.

ARMEN: Yes sir, I sat a light in there myself just yesterday. A real pretty one—bright orange with little dangly things all around it.

NANCY: I don't understand.

CHARLIE: *(Explaining.)* He sat a light in there yesterday. Get it? He's making a joke.

NANCY: Oh, satellite. That was a good one. *(Charlie and Nancy begin to laugh.)* You are quite funny, Armen. Satellite.

(Armen and Dixie join in on the laughter.)

ARMEN: *(Laughter building.)* Yes ma'am, I sat a light right in there!

(They all bend over with laughter.)

DIXIE: Bright orange!

(They laugh bigger than ever. Charlie and Nancy continue to laugh, but Armen and Dixie stop, staring at their two city customers.)

DIXIE: *(Once it quiets a bit.)* What are we laughing at, Armen?

ARMEN: Ain't got no idea.

(Charlie wipes his eyes with a handkerchief after his laughing spell.)

CHARLIE: I forgot how funny country humor can be.

(Dixie crosses past Armen and stands between Armen and Charlie.)

DIXIE: So, what brings you two city slickers all the way out here to Lost Creek?

CHARLIE: We work for the research department of a large medical conglomerate that acts as a first-rate advocate to non-profit organizations nationwide.

(Armen and Dixie stand and stare at Charlie.)

ARMEN: I see. *(Pause.)* So, what brings you two city slickers all the way out here to Lost Creek?

CHARLIE: Let me explain. You see, part of our job is to travel around two times a year seeking out people who are interested in donating their organs.

NANCY: But we haven't been too successful again this go around, I'm afraid.

DIXIE: What happens if you don't find people who want to donate organs?

CHARLIE: It could mean our jobs. This is the second time they've sent us out without any success.

(Nancy crosses to SR.)

NANCY: The worst part is that we have to head back to the city tomorrow morning and break the news to the president of the company, Mrs. Big. She's already warned us that if we aren't successful this go around, it could mean our jobs.

DIXIE: You mean this Mrs. Big would fire you just 'cause you can't find a donor?

CHARLIE: It's a long, complicated story...but that's pretty much the bottom line.

(Nancy crosses back to Charlie.)

NANCY: At any rate, as we were out on our quest for organ donors, we made a wrong turn and wound up here.

CHARLIE: *(Turns to Armen.)* Would there happen to be a good restaurant where we could grab some dinner after we're settled in?

ARMEN: Yes sir...but by the time you get there, I'm afraid it will be time to eat breakfast.

CHARLIE: Really? That's too bad.

DIXIE: Why, we can fix that. I'm cookin' some fried chicken liver for supper tonight, and I always make way too much for me and Armen. I'll just slip some in a picnic basket and bring it over to ya'll later.

NANCY: We can't put you out that way.

DIXIE: It will be fun. We don't get many strangers out this way. Just leave ever'thing to me.

CHARLIE: There you go again with that country hospitality.

(Armen crosses and picks up Nancy's suitcase.)

ARMEN: So, don't you two fret over a thing. Go get settled in and we'll bring your supper just as soon as it's ready. *(Hands Charlie his luggage.)* You ain't lived till you've tasted Dixie's liver. *(To Charlie in secret.)* But if you don't like it, don't say so. It will hurt her feelins something powerful.

CHARLIE: Got it. *(Aloud.)* Well, okay...if you insist.

NANCY: That really is very kind of you.

CHARLIE: Oh, before I forget...there's a nice lady who is bringing us some vegetables from her garden. Would you be so kind as to ask her to leave them on the porch and we'll pick them up later?

ARMEN: Will do. Now you two go on and start relaxin'. You've had a hard, long day. *(They exit SR as Armen shouts after them.)* You'll be so took care of, you'll think you're stayin' at the Motel 6. Go on, now!

(Charlie and Nancy exit.)

DIXIE: Ain't they nice people, Armen?

ARMEN: They sure are, Dixie. *(Pulls Dixie downstage center.)* I didn't want to say anything in front of our guests, but I sure would hate

to have their jobs. Goin' around tryin' to talk folks out of their organs can't be an easy thing to do.

DIXIE: I wish there was a way we could help them out so they wouldn't lose their jobs.

(Thinking, Armen slowly crosses SL.)

ARMEN: Wait a minute, Dixie. Didn't somebody say somethin' a couple of weeks back that Emma Barns was lookin' to get rid of that old organ of hers?

DIXIE: Now that you mention it, I believe so. She says it's just sittin' there collectin' dust in her parlor. There's even a few keys missin'. I bet you she would give that thing up for a good cause.

(Armen thinks deeply.)

ARMEN: And I was just thinkin'...Preacher Simms over at the Baptist church mentioned recently they'd been talkin' about gettin' a brand new pipe organ this year.

(Dixie meets Armen CS.)

DIXIE: You know what, Armen, I bet if we got the word out we could find these nice people a handful of organs and maybe even save their jobs.

ARMEN: *(Excited about the idea.)* That's the least we could do for them, what with them stayin' at The Last Resort and ever'thing.

(Linda Jean quickly exits Dixie's Beauty Shop, slams the door, and leans up against it with a terrified look on her face.)

LINDA JEAN: Dixie, I think we need to talk.

(Dixie crosses to Linda Jean.)

DIXIE: What's the matter, Linda Jean? Have you finished with the Wider's hair already?

LINDA JEAN: Well, yes...and no.

(Magnolia exits Dixie's shop. Her beehive is leaning drastically to one side.)

MAGNOLIA: Linda Jean, is somethin' the matter?
(Dixie pulls Linda Jean downstage and speaks to her secretly.)

DIXIE: Linda Jean, what in the world happened?

LINDA JEAN: I don't know, Dixie. I was almost done with her beehive, and it just up and fell over.

MAGNOLIA: (Still from the porch.) Are you finished? Do you have a mirror so I can see my pretty new do?

(Dixie stalls as she crosses back to Wider Snipes.)

DIXIE: Well, Ms. Snipes...you see, our mirrors are out bein' cleaned.

MAGNOLIA: Oh, shoot, and I wanted to see how it turned out.

ARMEN: (Has been staring this whole time.) She looks like a boomerang.

(Dixie turns sharply to her husband.)

DIXIE: Armen, hush up. You don't know nothin' about hair fashion.

ARMEN: (Leans in to his wife.) I know a beehive ain't supposed to look like the leanin' tower of pizza.

(Dixie rushes to Ms. Snipes.)

DIXIE: Ms. Snipes, don't worry about nothin'...it will be just fine.

MAGNOLIA: Well, I've got to run. (Steps off the porch and stumbles slightly to the side her beehive leans.) I've got a senior citizen meetin' tonight over at the pool hall and I'm the main speaker. I'm givin' a talk on "Is There Beauty Over Eighty?" Won't the ladies just flip over my brand new hairdo?

DIXIE: (Scolding.) Armen!

ARMEN: I didn't say nothin'!

DIXIE: You was thinkin' it.

(Magnolia hands Linda Jean a five.)

MAGNOLIA: Here you go, Linda Jean.

LINDA JEAN: I can't take your money after—

DIXIE: After all, Linda Jean is still trainin', so we don't make a charge for the hair she does.

MAGNOLIA: All right. I can't wait to get home and see it. Bye, now.
(She exits quickly.)

LINDA JEAN: Bye! *(Once the Widow is gone, Linda Jean turns quickly to Dixie.)* Dixie, I'm so sorry...I don't know what went wrong.

(Magnolia enters.)

MAGNOLIA: Oh, one more thing...

(Armen takes a look at a stick he's been whittling on.)

ARMEN: *(To Dixie.)* See, the boomerang came back.

MAGNOLIA: *(To Linda Jean.)* Here, at least take this for a tip. *(Hands Linda Jean a coin.)* Thanks again. *(She exits.)*

DIXIE: *(To Linda Jean, consoling.)* That's okay, Linda Jean, no use cryin' over spilt milk and crooked hair. We'll make it right.

(Truck enters carrying Miracle's box. He stops CS and sees Linda Jean. He's startled at first, then regains his composure.)

TRUCK: Hey ever'body!

ARMEN/DIXIE: Hey, Truck!

LINDA JEAN: Howdy, Truck.

TRUCK: Why the long face, Linda Jean?

(Linda Jean crosses to him.)

LINDA JEAN: I'm havin' a bad hair day, Truck.

TRUCK: Don't worry, Linda Jean...I'm used to the way your hair looks.

LINDA JEAN: Not mine, dummy. The Wider Snipes'.

(Armen crosses to Truck's right.)

ARMEN: Did you pick up Miracle, Truck?

TRUCK: Yep, just got him.

(Dixie crosses to Linda Jean's left.)

DIXIE: That's wonderful, Truck. *(All huddle around Truck.)* Let's look at the patient. *(Truck holds up the box and everyone pets the cat inside.)* Oh, poor thing. At least his cast is off.

TRUCK: Yep, but Doc Walker said he's still got to take it easy for a few more days.

LINDA JEAN: Poor little Miracle. The name you gave him sure fits, Truck. That cat is lucky to be alive. You have a big heart, my angel.

TRUCK: Ah, it was nothin'. I couldn't just leave him out there on that lonely dirt road after gettin' hit by a dump truck that way.

LINDA JEAN: How much did the vet put you back, Truck?

TRUCK: *(Taken aback.)* Put me back?

LINDA JEAN: Yeah, how much did you have to pay him?

TRUCK: How much did I have to pay him?

LINDA JEAN: To get Miracle's leg fixed.

TRUCK: To get Miracle's leg fixed?

LINDA JEAN: Truck, would you quit repeatin' ever' thing I say?

TRUCK: Would I quit repeatin' ever' thing...?

LINDA JEAN: Truck!

ARMEN: It wasn't all that bad, Linda Jean. Doc Walker gave Truck a real good deal, ain't that right, Truck?

TRUCK: Sure did, and what he charged me don't have a thing to do with me not takin' you out on our date tonight.

LINDA JEAN: What do you mean you ain't takin' me out on a Friday night?

DIXIE: Yeah, it's the first Friday night, which means us four always do somethin' together.

ARMEN: *(Frustrated with his best friend.)* You sure dropped your sucker in the sand that time, Truck!

TRUCK: *(To Linda Jean.)* Well... *(Swallows a gulp.)* ...you see...the fact of the matter is...

(Armen pushes Truck aside and stands between Linda Jean and Truck.)

ARMEN: The fact of the matter is, Truck, looks like there goes your surprise!

TRUCK: What surprise?

(Armen punches Truck in the ribs with his elbow.)

ARMEN: You know...your great idea for us four to drive over to Hoke's Bluff and see that drive-in movie where it's only two dollars per car load.

TRUCK: Ohhhhh, *that* surprise. Armen, why did you have to ruin the surprise?

(Dixie crosses past Linda Jean to Armen and slaps him on his shoulder.)

DIXIE: Yeah, Armen, can't you ever keep that trap of yours closed?

(Linda Jean moves past Armen and Dixie to Truck.)

LINDA JEAN: *(To Truck.)* The drive-in movie does sound romantic. Just you and me in the backseat of Armen's '69 Chevrolet Impala.

ARMEN: Better known as the luuuve mobile.

DIXIE: Better known as the I-sure-hope-nobody-sees-me-in-this-wreck mobile. *(Aside.)* It's the color of earwax.

TRUCK: That's right, Linda Jean...just you, me, and Miracle.

LINDA JEAN: You takin' that mangy cat with us on our romantic rondaview? He'll just be in the way.

DIXIE: He is a crippled cat, Linda Jean. It ain't like he'll be able to run around in the car.

LINDA JEAN: Well, okay...but he'll have to sit up front with ya'll, Dixie.

ARMEN: Fine, then it's all set. *(Throws his arms around everyone and pulls them into a tight huddle.)* The four of us off to the drive-in for a full night of entertainment and fellowship.

(Mama Hobbs runs in with a basket of vegetables. She has applied tons of makeup to her face and a fresh ribbon dons her beehive.)

MAMA HOBBS: Sorry it took so long, but I wanted to pick only the best. *(Looks around.)* Where did he go?

DIXIE: Where did who go, Mama?

MAMA HOBBS: That nice feller from the city. *(Crosses SR.)* He wanted some fresh vegetables.

(Armen slowly crosses to her right, as they all stare in awe at Mama Hobbs' makeover.)

ARMEN: Oh, that. He told you to just leave them on the porch, and he'll be back to get them later on.

MAMA HOBBS: *(Disappointed.)* Oh. Well, all right.

(Armen and Truck are on her right and Dixie and Linda Jean on her left.)

DIXIE: *(Getting a closer look.)* Mama, is that lipstick you're wearin'?

LINDA JEAN: And blue eye shadow with sparkles?

ARMEN: Gosh, Mama Hobbs...I think this is the first time I've ever saw you with makeup on.

MAMA HOBBS: You silly younguns, I don't know what in the world you're talkin' about. I always wear makeup. *(They all stare at her in disbelief.)* Why are ya'll lookin' at me that way?

LINDA JEAN: Now that you mention it, that eye shadow does bring out your eyes.

TRUCK: And with that lipstick on, you hardly notice your extreme overbite.

MAMA HOBBS: Ya'll are just tryin' to make an old wrinkled homely woman feel good.

ARMEN: Don't be silly...you ain't old.

DIXIE: *(Taking hold of the basket.)* Here, Mama, let me take the basket for you.

(Mama Hobbs pulls the basket back to her.)

MAMA HOBBS: Maybe I need to deliver them myself. You know, make sure he gets them while they're still fresh.

DIXIE: You'll have to wait till later. He said somethin' about takin' a nap.

MAMA HOBBS: *(Trying to hide her disappointment.)* Well, all right.

(Cora Lynn enters SL, holding the hands of Itsy and Bitsy. Armen crosses behind Itsy and Bitsy who are on the left of Cora Lynn.)

ARMEN: Oh look, it's Cora Lynn and her twin nieces visitin' from Calhoun.

(Dixie crosses to the right of Cora Lynn.)

DIXIE: Hey there, Cousin Cora. My, but your two nieces sure have...grown.

(Armen puts his arms around the twins.)

ARMEN: And grown, and grown, and grown.

DIXIE: Armen.

ARMEN: *(He's just trying to be friendly.)* Like two big vine-ripe watermelons.

DIXIE: Armen!

ARMEN: I mean like two humpback whales at Sea World.

LINDA JEAN: We ain't seen them since they was little whales...babies...baby whales...

TRUCK: *(Laughing at his sweetheart.)* You sure dropped your sucker in the sand that time. *(Laughs again.)*

CORA LYNN: Ever'body, you remember my two beautiful nieces, Itsy and Bitsy.

DIXIE: *(Stands behind the twins.)* Hey there, Itsy.

CORA LYNN: That's Bitsy. She's Itsy. *(To the twins.)* This is my cousin Dixie I was tellin' ya'll about. She's the one that will be fixin' ya'll's hair today.

(Itsy and Bitsy clap. Armen crosses SR to Truck.)

ARMEN: Truck, what you doin' over here by yourself?! Come meet Cora Lynn's nieces, Teeny and Weeny.

CORA LYNN: Itsy and Bitsy!

ARMEN: They're identical twins.

(Truck stares at Itsy and Bitsy.)

TRUCK: *(Shocked.)* You mean they had to be cut apart at birth?

DIXIE: *(Playing with Itsy's hair.)* Truck, I can't believe so much dumb could be stuffed into one person. You're thinkin' of Chinese twins.

LINDA JEAN: *(Pushing Truck SR.)* C'mon, Truck...let's put Miracle in his new shoebox house and let him recoup.

DIXIE: *(From SL.)* Linda Jean, remind me tonight at the drive-in to ask you about people who might have organs they don't use no more.

LINDA JEAN: Okay, and I'm sorry again for the Wider Snipes' crooked hair.

TRUCK: Remember what you promised, Armen? *(Holds up Miracle's box.)* Plumb's the word?

ARMEN: Plumb's the word, Truck.

(Truck and Linda Jean exit SR.)

DIXIE: C'mon, let's go get that new hairdo for Roley and Poley.

ARMEN: Teeny, Weeny!

CORA LYNN: Itsy, Bitsy!

DIXIE: I'm havin' a special on beehives, you know.

CORA LYNN: They're so excited! They ain't had real fashion on their heads for years!

DIXIE: Well, good! *(They all four walk to the door of Dixie's shop. Itsy and Bitsy try to enter the shop at the same time and become stuck. Dixie sizes up the situation.)* Armen, I think we're goin' to need some of your monkey grease.

(She pushes the twins through the door, as country music plays and the lights quickly fade to blackout.)

Scene 3

(AT RISE: Excited, Armen rushes from The Last Resort, crosses downstage center, and speaks to the audience. He holds a clipboard.)

ARMEN: *(Aside.)* I couldn't believe how receptive the fine folks of Lost Creek was to our organ donation cause. People come out of the woodwork to help us out. *(Holding up his clipboard.)* I started me a list right here. Wait till I tell Dixie the great news!

(Dixie runs out of her beauty shop holding her own clipboard and crosses quickly to Armen.)

DIXIE: Armen, you'll never guess what! Just look at this list of people I got to sign up.

(Armen looks at her list.)

ARMEN: You mean all of these people said they would make a donation?

DIXIE: It took some doin' talkin' old Wider Snipes out of her old organ...especially after that beehive fiasco. She said her friends laughed at her for two hours last night.

ARMEN: It's just that sweet nature of yours, Dixie. All you have to do is smile and show them gapped teeth of yours and people will do whatever you ask.

DIXIE: Well, when I told them that Mr. Charlie and Ms. Nancy might lose their jobs, ever'body really pulled together! Won't they be surprised when I give them the good news? How many did you sign up?

ARMEN: Not as many as you, but I did all right. I didn't realize there was so many old organs in Lost Creek.

(Mama Hobbs enters SL, crosses to SR, and sits on Armen's side of the porch. She wears bright red sunglasses and carries a sun reflector.)

DIXIE: Organs ain't as popular as they used to be ever since Jerry Crotchet started playin' the harmonica over at the Methodist church last year.

ARMEN: *(In awe.)* Harmonicas. Them Methodists sure are some brave souls.

(Mama Hobbs is sitting properly on the front porch and strikes a pose as though she is trying to act natural. She places the sun reflector underneath her chin. Dixie crosses to her mama's left.)

DIXIE: Mama, what in the world are you doin'?

MAMA HOBBS: Just tryin' to get a little sun on my face, that's all, honey.

(Armen stands to the right of Mama Hobbs.)

ARMEN: But the sun is still behind the trees.

MAMA HOBBS: *(Annoyed.)* Then I'll wait! Now, you younguns just go ahead and do whatever it is you was doin' and just leave me be.

ARMEN: Let's look back over our list, Dixie, before Mr. Charlie and Ms. Nancy come to check out.

(Armen and Dixie cross and sit on Dixie's side of the porch.)

MAMA HOBBS: Oh, have them city folk not left yet? I figured they'd be long gone by now.

(An upbeat country song is heard. Mr. Hobbs enters SL carrying his 8-track player and takes a seat in the lawn chair SL. He leans back and closes his eyes. Mama Hobbs rises and crosses to Mr. Hobbs and switches off the player. The music stops abruptly.)

MR. HOBBS: What did you do that for?

MAMA HOBBS: I'm tryin' to find a place to relax on a peaceful Saturday mornin', do you mind?

MR. HOBBS: Why can't you relax with a good Patsy Carter song on the 8-track?

(He turns it on again. The music plays. She turns it off.)

MAMA HOBBS: I left the house to get *away* from your 8-track music.

(Dixie stands and crosses between her mama and daddy.)

DIXIE: Would you two stop fussin'? It's gettin' old. Daddy, use your earphones, then ever'body will be happy.

MR.HOBBS: Thanks, Daughter. I'm sure glad you got your common sense from me.

MAMA HOBBS: You don't know a thing about common sense.

DIXIE: *(Scolding.)* Mama!

MAMA HOBBS: Well, it's true. I can't even tell him a decent knock-knock joke. Ever'time I say "knock-knock," he gets up to see who's at the door.

MR. HOBBS: I bet Patsy Carter wouldn't put me down that way.

MAMA HOBBS: Patsy Carter don't have to live with you ever'day. *(He has put his earphones back on.)* And another thing!

MR. HOBBS: *(Shouts.)* I can't hear a word you're sayin'! My ears is plugged!

MAMA HOBBS: Good, maybe it'll keep the rest of your brains from oozin' out!

DIXIE: Mama, I know it ain't none of my business, but —

MAMA HOBBS: You're right, Dixie...it ain't.

(She crosses back to the porch and sits again. This time she's too upset to use the reflector. Armen rises and pulls Dixie CS.)

ARMEN: Gosh, Dixie. Your mama sure is upset.

DIXIE: I've never saw her like this, Armen. It's got me a mite worried.

ARMEN: I wouldn't fret over it, Dixie. You know she never tells us when she's worried about somethin'. She's always keepin' ever'thing inside.

DIXIE: That woman, I swear she's too poor to paint and too proud to whitewash.

(Mr. Straights enters SR with a makeshift bee/hornet screen attached to his hat and covering his face. He carries a vacuum cleaner.)

DIXIE: *(Points to Mr. Straights.)* Armen, look.

(Mr. Straights tries to walk past them. Armen steps in front of his daddy, who is now CS.)

ARMEN: Daddy, are you still after that yellow jacket's nest out back?

MR. STRAIGHTS: Yes sir-ree. Them varmints ain't never come up against the likes of Hudson Straights.

ARMEN: Daddy, you *cannot* use Mama's good vacuum cleaner outside!

DIXIE: *(To Mr. Straights.)* What you goin' to do...vacuum up the dirt back there?

MR. STRAIGHTS: What do I look like? A fool? A buffoon? A nitwit? *(Pause.)* Well, do I?

ARMEN: I'm still ponderin' fool.

MR. STRAIGHTS: Well, while you ponder, I'm goin' after the rest of them yellin' jackets, suck them things right out of that nest. *(He rushes off SL.)*

ARMEN: *(Shouts after him.)* But Daddy! *(Rushes back to Dixie.)* We have got to find that man a job, and quick!

(Granny Rose quickly enters SR.)

GRANNY ROSE: Well, I got it! It took me all night, but I finally got it!

(Dixie crosses and stands left of Granny Rose.)

DIXIE: What did you get, Granny Rose?

(Granny Rose holds up a small pouch with pull strings at the top.)

GRANNY ROSE: Just see for yourself. It's my very own special-made, triple-punch love charm.

(Armen crosses to Dixie's left.)

ARMEN: This is a love charm?

GRANNY ROSE: It ain't just a love charm. It's a luuuuuv charm! The most powerful batch I ever brewed. If this don't make Crum pucker up, nothin' will. I made too much, so I wrapped up the extra. Be careful, though, it's an awful powerful batch.

(Mama Hobbs comes up from behind everyone and snatches the extra charm from Dixie's hand.)

MAMA HOBBS: Here, Granny Rose...I'll take that off your hands.

DIXIE: Mama, you'd better be careful. Granny Rose said that's potent stuff.

GRANNY ROSE: *(To Mama Hobbs.)* It don't work on spouses, you old mare.

MAMA HOBBS: I know what I'm a doin'. It's the perfect solution. When that nice city feller comes out, gets under the spell of this here charm and flirts with me, Elmer will turn into the green-eyed monster and pay me the attention I deserve. That will fix my problem once and for all.

ARMEN: I just can't go for that at all! It's just too underhanded to me. Plumb sneaky, dishonest, deceitful...and hurry up and hide it. Here he comes!

(Charlie enters holding his suitcase in one hand and the empty vegetable basket in the other. He sets them both down and crosses straight to Mama Hobbs as everyone else backs up and watches. Charlie holds his arms out.)

CHARLIE: There she is. I was hoping I would get to see you this mornin'. Dear Mrs. Hobbs, you are a woman after my own heart.

GRANNY ROSE: *(Stands on the porch.)* Good heavens, I made it way too strong!

MAMA HOBBS: Oh, Mr. Charlie, you are such a tease. *(Says this loudly so Mr. Hobbs will hear.)* You shouldn't say such romantic things to a lady.

DIXIE: Good mornin', Mr. Charlie, did you sleep good?

CHARLIE: *(Not taking his eyes off Mama Hobbs.)* I slept like an angel, and it was your kind generosity that did it.

GRANNY ROSE: *(With excitement.)* Oooooooooo, I can't wait to use this batch on that old geezer!

MAMA HOBBS: But Mr. Charlie...I'm a... *(Loudly.)* ...married woman! You must behave yourself or my husband might get jealous!

(Dixie crosses to Mr. Hobbs.)

DIXIE: Mama, he can't hear a word you're sayin' 'cause of the earphones. *(Hits him on the shoulder.)* Daddy!

MR. HOBBS: What? *(Takes the earphones off.)* What's goin' on?

(Mama Hobbs crosses CS.)

MAMA HOBBS: Life, Elmer. Liiiiiiiife! Don't you even care that a total stranger is over here flirtin' with me behind your back?

MR. HOBBS: If he's flirtin' with you, he *is* strange.

(Mr. Hobbs puts his headphones back on. Armen rushes SR to Charlie.)

ARMEN: Uh, Mr. Charlie, maybe you should come and let's settle your bill and give you a map so you can get out of here while the family settles things over here.

CHARLIE: All right.

(They head to The Last Resort followed by Dixie.)

DIXIE: Then after that, me and Armen's got a big surprise to share with you.

CHARLIE: Surprise?

ARMEN: *(Giggling.)* Shhhhh... not yet, Dixie.

(They enter The Last Resort.)

MAMA HOBBS: *(Hands on hips.)* Elmer Hobbs, I can't believe you just don't care enough about me to rescue me from the arms of another man.

MR. HOBBS: I don't know what you're ramblin' about, but I'm goin' to go down to the depot and find me some peace and quiet.

(Mr. Hobbs heads SR. Mama Hobbs stops him and stuffs the charm in his pocket.)

MAMA HOBBS: Well, here...maybe some old woman will get a whiff of this charm and get you out of my hair for good.

(Entering SR, Nancy crosses past Mr. Hobbs, but then stops and turns quickly back to him. She catches a glimpse of the 8-track player.)

NANCY: Wait one minute! Stop right where you are! Please, don't take another step until I have had a chance to behold this beautiful vision.

MR. HOBBS: *(Taken aback.)* You talkin' to me?

NANCY: I'm sorry...I didn't mean to sound so rude, but I just couldn't allow you to get away.

MR. HOBBS: *(Complete shock.)* You couldn't?

(Mama Hobbs crosses to Nancy CS.)

MAMA HOBBS: *(To Nancy.)* May I ask what in the heck you're talkin' about?

NANCY: *(Staring at Mr. Hobbs.)* I'm talkin' about this classic and priceless relic before me. To be so old, but yet in such wonderful condition, is amazing.

(Mr. Hobbs sets the 8-track player on the ground and hikes his pants.)

MR. HOBBS: Well, yeah, I have lost a few pounds...

MAMA HOBBS: *(To Nancy.)* Now see here. I'd have you know that relic belongs to me!

MR. HOBBS: Would you please be quiet and let the nice city lady talk?

(Mama Hobbs crosses to Granny Rose, who is still on the porch in front of the beauty shop.)

MAMA HOBBS: Granny Rose, look what you've done with that love tonic of yours.

GRANNY ROSE: I knewed I should have diluted it with creek water.
(Laughs a wicked laugh.)

NANCY: Ms. Hobbs, I'm sorry to be so emphatic...but I must have this rare beauty. Just name your price.

MAMA HOBBS: If I had a lick of sense, I'd give you the rare beauty. But the fact of the matter is, I'm just too much in love.

NANCY: Then would it be possible to at least get a closer look?

(Nancy holds her arms out toward the 8-track player. Mr. Hobbs places the player in his chair and crosses to Nancy.)

MR. HOBBS: Sure you can. But, please, be gentle.

(Nancy passes Mr. Hobbs, crosses SR, and picks up the 8-track player as Mama Hobbs crosses to Granny Rose and places her head on Granny Rose's shoulder. Mama Hobbs just can't look.)

MAMA HOBBS: *(Crying.)* Ohhhhh, she wants to get a closer look.

GRANNY ROSE: Remember, honey...it's just the love charm talkin'. She can't help herself. No, it's best if you don't look.

NANCY: Would you look at that strong and sturdy exterior? They just don't make them like this anymore.

MR. HOBBS: *(Confused.)* Huh?

MAMA HOBBS: That does it! I will not stand around while a strange woman flirts with my hus... *(Turns around.)* ...bands 8-track player?

NANCY: It's like a piece of art. I'd give anything to have it. But if you're not interested in selling it, I guess I can't force you.

(We hear an old-fashioned bulb horn honk offstage.)

MAMA HOBBS: *(Pulling on his ear.)* Come on, Elmer, and I'll fix you some ham and eggs.

MR. HOBBS: I ain't through listenin' to Patsy! *(Pause.)* Did you say ham and eggs?

(He offers his ear, which she grabs and pulls him offstage.)

GRANNY ROSE: *(To Nancy.)* What you doin' hangin' around? Don't you see I need to be alone with my special charm?

NANCY: I'm sorry, it's just—

GRANNY ROSE: Git! *(Nancy quickly enters The Last Resort. Granny Rose holds tightly to her charm and recites an incantation.)* Stir his heart inside out. Oh charm, oh charm—don't fail me now! *(We hear the honk again. Granny Rose looks off SR as she takes the lawn chair and sets it CS.)* I'm over here, Crum.

(Mr. Crum enters slowly SR with his walker. There's a bulb horn attached to the front of his walker. As he enters, he honks the horn again.)

MR. CRUM: Here I come! *(Honk, honk.)* Better clear the way! *(Honk, honk.)* Mr. Crum is on his way! *(Honk, honk.)*

GRNDMA: Oh, Crum. Let me help you with your walker.

CRUM: All right. *(He stands up straight, hands her the walker, and crosses rather quickly to CS.)*

GRANNY ROSE: I'll just put it right over— *(Realizes.)* Wait a minute. How can you walk?

CRUM: I don't need that thing. I just use it as a chick magnet.

(Leaving the walker SR, Granny Rose crosses behind the chair CS.)

GRANNY ROSE: Would you like to sit a spell?

CRUM: *(He always speaks rather loudly.)* No, thank ye, but I sure wouldn't mind sittin' for a spell. *(He sits.)*

GRANNY ROSE: There we go. What time do we want to start deliverin' your jerky on Monday?

CRUM: Just be at my house at five in the mornin'. If I'm still asleep, cook me some breakfast and wait on me.

(Granny Rose brings out the charm and secretly waves it around in the air as she stands close to him.)

GRANNY ROSE: Crum, ain't you startin' to feel somethin'?

(Crum quickly sits up straight.)

CRUM: I sure am.

GRANNY ROSE: Somethin' that makes you tingle when I stand this close to you?

CRUM: More like somethin' painful. You're a standin' on my foot!

(Granny Rose backs off.)

GRANNY ROSE: Sorry, Crum. I bet you're tired after that long walk from your place.

CRUM: Once I rest up, I'll be ready for another lap.

GRANNY ROSE: What did you say?

CRUM: *(Almost shouting.)* Another lap!

GRANNY ROSE: I thought you'd never ask. *(She sits on his lap and throws her arms around him.)* Now, ain't this niiiice? *(She plays with a button on his shirt.)* You've got to be feelin' somethin' now...

CRUM: Not a thing. You put my leg to sleep.

(Granny Rose stands.)

GRANNY ROSE: Sorry, Crum. *(She stands and shakes her charm. Aside.)* Here goes...one last shot. *(To Mr. Crum.)* Crum, are you sure you ain't feelin' somethin' rumblin' deep down inside your gut?

CRUM: Not yet, but my prunes ain't had time to work. Would you mind doin' me a little favor, Rosy?

GRANNY ROSE: Anything, Crum...just name it.

CRUM: Give a couple of squeezes on the bulb of my horn. I sure like the way it sounds.

GRANNY ROSE: You mean like this? *(She squeezes it, causing it to make a toot-toot sound.)*

CRUM: That's it. Ain't that a beautiful sound? Toot-toot! *(Granny Rose squeezes the bulb again. Toot-toot.)* Toot-toot! Do it again! *(She does.)* Toot-toot!

GRANNY ROSE: *(Aside.)* I done went and fell in love with a loony bird.

CRUM: Do it again! *(She does.)* Toot-toot!

GRANNY ROSE: Crum, I hoped one day we would play beautiful music together, but this ain't quite what I had in mind.

CRUM: Do it again.

GRANNY ROSE: No! Now, that's enough. Ain't you got nothin' to say to me, Avis Crum? About somethin' you're feelin' deep inside your soul?

(Crum slowly rises and slowly turns to her.)

CRUM: Now that you mention it, there is. It hit me all of a sudden.

GRANNY ROSE: Glory be! Don't you want to get down on one knee first?

CRUM: Can't. My prunes just kicked in. *(He exits quickly SR, leaving his walker behind.)* Toot! Toot! Clear the way! Prunes can't wait another day!

(Crum exits. Granny Rose looks at her charm.)

GRANNY ROSE: Petunia, you done lost your touch, child. If this didn't get Crum's attention, nothin' will. I might as well face it, I'm goin' to die a lonely old woman.

(Granny Rose exits SR. Linda Jean enters SL carrying a scarecrow with a wig of yarn on its head and sets it in the chair Mr. Crum vacated.)

LINDA JEAN: *(To Scarecrow.)* Now, you just sit there real still-like, and I'll give you the most beautiful beehive you ever saw. I've got to prove to Dixie once and for all that I'm the best student she has ever trained. *(Truck enters SR with Miracle's box.)* Hey, Truck, come over here and watch me cut this dummy's hair.

(Truck acts quite nervous. He looks around as though he is trying to find something.)

TRUCK: Oh, Linda Jean...it's just awful!

LINDA JEAN: Well, I ain't done nothin' with it yet. Ain't that Miracle's box?

TRUCK: It's Miracle's *empty* box.

LINDA JEAN: *(Combing through the scarecrow's yarn.)* That's wonderful, Truck...so Miracle is already walkin'? Where is the little rascal?

TRUCK: *(Drops his head pitifully.)* Gone.

LINDA JEAN: What do you mean "gone"?

TRUCK: I mean disappeared, vanished, ain't nowhere to be found.

LINDA JEAN: I don't understand, Truck.

(Truck crosses to Linda Jean.)

TRUCK: Linda Jean, how could he do this to me? I fed him, I gave him a home, and spent 100 dollars of my hard-earned money to get his broke leg fixed. I stayed beside him day and night while he recuperated; I even read "Three Blind Mice" over and over 'cause that was his favorite story. After ever'thing I did, why did he do it? Why? Why?

LINDA JEAN: Why did he do what, Truck?

TRUCK: *(Acts it out as he tells his story.)* When he first got his cast off and tried to walk, he wobbled a lot at first. Then he started walkin'—then a little faster and a little faster—then he was able to run and climb trees. And I was like a proud parent sayin', "Go, little Miracle! You can do it! Go!" And he ran, and ran, and ran! And then...he just kept runnin', Linda Jean. Farther and farther down that dirt road. "Wait, Miracle! I'm right here! Come back,

Miracle! Come back!" *(Truck is SL. He calms down.)* But he didn't come back. He just kept runnin'. I waited and waited...all night I waited. But he didn't come back. *(Somberly staring off into the distance SL.)* Miracle ran away from home on his brand new 100-dollar leg. *(Turns and crosses to Linda Jean.)* Why did he do that, Linda Jean? After ever'thing I've done for him, why did he do it?

(He puts his head on her shoulder as she consoles him.)

LINDA JEAN: Oh, Truck. It'll be all right. You know the sayin' that goes, "If you love somethin', let it go. If he comes back, he's yours. If he don't, he probably fell off a rocky cliff somewhere."

(Truck falls to his knees and wails.)

TRUCK: Oh, Miracle!

(She pats his back. She really is trying to console him.)

LINDA JEAN: Or got run over by an even bigger truck like an 18-wheeler.

TRUCK: It hurts bad, Linda Jean. It hurts real baaaaad!

(Linda Jean sighs as she looks over and then crosses to the scarecrow.)

LINDA JEAN: I tell you what, Truck, why don't you help me practice cuttin' Mr. Scarcrow's hair...that'll make you feel better.

TRUCK: Maybe I didn't wait long enough by the dirt road. I gotta go back. *(He runs out SR.)*

LINDA JEAN: Truck! He ain't goin' to... *(Stops herself.)* One-hundred dollars? What do you mean 100 dollars? Truck? You get back here right now!

(She runs out after him. Dixie, Armen, Charlie, and Nancy exit The Last Resort. Charlie runs down the steps to downstage.)

CHARLIE: I still can't believe it.

(Armen follows Charlie, patting him on the back.)

ARMEN: You can believe it, Mr. Charlie! *(Shows him his clipboard.)*
There it is in black and white. A whole list of names of people who
have promised to donate their organs.

DIXIE: And when people promise to do somethin' in Lost Creek,
they never go back on their word.

CHARLIE: There must be 35 names on this list.

ARMEN: Yes, sir. There was 34, but Mr. Jackson forgot to tell us his
organ just don't work no more.

CHARLIE: Poor thing, I sure hope he has a good doctor.

*(Dixie and Armen look at him strangely after this last remark. Nancy looks
over the list again.)*

NANCY: How can we ever thank you kind people for what you have
done for us?

CHARLIE: This could save our careers.

ARMEN: Ah, glad to do it. We just hope our organs can put a little
joy in somebody's life.

DIXIE: I even made up a little motto for you to use at your company:
"Look deep down inside yourself and give up a organ."

ARMEN: I made up one, too: "People ever'where is just dyin' for a
good organ."

(Charlie and Nancy look uneasily at one another.)

CHARLIE: That's very thoughtful of you, but I really don't think we
need a motto.

NANCY: You know, I just had the most wonderful idea. *(To Armen
and Dixie.)* Will you excuse us, please?

*(Nancy pulls Charlie over to SL as Mr. Straights enters SR with a vacuum
cleaner. Mr. Straights' clothes and face are covered in dirt. Armen crosses
quickly to Mr. Straights.)*

ARMEN: Daddy, what happened?

DIXIE: *(To Mr. Straights.)* Good gravy, what in the world have you
been into?

MR. STRAIGHTS: I finally got them rascals!

ARMEN: The yeller jackets?

MR. STRAIGHTS: Sucked 'em right out of that there yellor jackets' nest! Them rascals probably thought a tornado hit their dirty little home! *(Laughs.)*

DIXIE: *(Concerned.)* Armen, he's vacuuming the dirt.

MR. STRAIGHTS: *(To the vacuum cleaner.)* You didn't think I could get you, did you? But I did all right! I got ever'one of you little devils!

ARMEN: *(Attempting to calm him down.)* Okay, okay, big fella. Just take the vacuum cleaner home and put it up. Maybe Mama won't find out you sucked up half of Lost Creek in her brand new Hoover.

MR. STRAIGHTS: *(As he crosses SL.)* Yeller jackets, yellor jackets, buzz, buzz, buzz! Yeller jackets, now you're dust, dust, dust! *(Laughs and exits SL.)*

DIXIE: Armen, if you turn out like your daddy, I'll leave you.

(Excited, Charlie crosses to Armen and Dixie.)

CHARLIE: Armen, Dixie...now it's our turn to treat you to a surprise.

ARMEN: A surprise for us?

NANCY: Yes, and here it is: We want you to be our guests in the city.

DIXIE: *(With wide eyes.)* The city? Golllee. But why in the world would you want us to come all the way out to the big city?

CHARLIE: You see, next month is Organ Donor Month and our company is hosting a formal banquet in order to bring about awareness to the importance of the cause.

NANCY: Right, and we thought it would surly encourage others to start thinking about giving if they heard what you people have done by encouraging the fine folks here in Lost Creek —

CHARLIE: Everyone you signed up to be a donor could come as guests of honor and you two could give speeches. The press would be there and everyone would read about the story in the newspaper and be encouraged to rush out and sign their own donor cards.

ARMEN: Us? Speak to a group of high-class city people?

DIXIE: But we ain't never done nothin' important like that in our lives.

NANCY: Once everyone sees what you have done for a good cause,
it's sure to ignite a spark of benevolence in others.

(Armen and Dixie stare at the city folks for a few seconds.)

ARMEN: It's sure to what?

CHARLIE: It's sure to stir an enthusiastic spirit of liberality!

(Armen and Dixie just stare.)

NANCY: It's sure to crank other people's tractors.

(Armen and Dixie understand.)

ARMEN: Ohhhhhhh! If you think us goin' to the city will help make
other people give up their organs, we'll do it!

NANCY: Wonderful!

CHARLIE: And don't forget to round up as many of the donors that
you can to bring with you.

DIXIE: Good gracious, what in the world will I wear?

NANCY: *(Laughs.)* Don't worry, Dixie. Just be your charming self.

(Charlie turns to Armen.)

CHARLIE: The banquet is two weeks away. Just as soon as the final
preps are made, I'll give you a call.

(Armen crosses and picks up one of the suitcases.)

ARMEN: Sounds good. C'mon, Dixie...we'll help these fine people
get their things to the car.

(Charlie takes the suitcase from Armen.)

CHARLIE: We'll do that. You just take care of these nice organ
donors out here, and we'll see you in the city in two weeks. Bye
now.

(Charlie and Nancy exit.)

(Armen rushes downstage center.)

ARMEN: *(Aside.)* Me and Dixie didn't waste no time! We got the word out that day for ever'body to get over to The Last Resort as soon as possible, for we had somethin' real excitin' to tell them.

(Everyone has entered and has spread across the stage. Dixie stands on the porch in front of The Last Resort.)

DIXIE: *(Speaks through an orange cone.)* So, get ready to put on your fanciest Sunday-go-to-meetin' suits and dresses, 'cause we're all headin' to the city. *(Applause.)* And let us not forget that if it wasn't for all your generous organ donations, we wouldn't be able to go to the city at all!

(Everyone applauds.)

CORA LYNN: But how will we all get there, Dixie?

DIXIE: Ms. Magnolia Snipes who, as you know, drives for the Lost Creek school system said she would be glad to take us on the school bus so we can all travel together and tell redneck jokes on the way.

(All cheer. Armen takes the orange cone from Dixie.)

ARMEN: *(Speaks through the cone.)* We'll let ever'body know more details just as soon as Mr. Charlie phones us with the particulars. *(Everyone celebrates.)* You're all dismissed!

(Excited, everyone groups up.)

LINDA JEAN: Truck, ain't it wonderful? We've always dreamed of makin' a trip like this.

TRUCK: Linda Jean, I can't go to the city. I've got to stay here and wait for Miracle to come back home.

LINDA JEAN: You mean you're goin' to let me go to a wild and sinful place like the city with a hairdo that drives men wild?

TRUCK: I'll wait until the cows come home, Linda Jean. Don't you see? It's my last resort!

(He runs off SR as she follows him. Mama Hobbs pulls Dixie downstage.)

MAMA HOBBS: Dixie, I got an idea, and I need your help real bad. I want you to give me the hairdo of all hairdos. The one that that will get my husband back. This here trip to the city will be the perfect excuse to do it.

DIXIE: But you just got a brand new beehive.

MAMA HOBBS: I know this is goin' to sound crazy, Dixie...but I'm goin' all-out this time. I want you to make me look like this.
(Opens up a magazine.)

DIXIE: But that's—

MAMA HOBBS: It's the only way to save my marriage. A complete makeover is my last resort. Will you help me, Dixie?

DIXIE: Come by my shop tomorrow and we'll talk.

(Mama Hobbs rushes off SR.)

CORA LYNN: *(From SL.)* Did you hear that, Itsy and Bitsy? We're takin' a trip so we can show off our new beehives! Ain't that excitin'?

(Itsy and Bitsy clap. Granny Rose crosses downstage center.)

GRANNY ROSE: *(To audience.)* This trip is my last chance to snag Avis Crum before that black wider gets her fangs in him. But how? Before we get back to Lost Creek, I'll need to have him bound, hogtied, and brainwashed for good.

(From inside his wheelbarrow, Crum honks his horn.)

CRUM: *(Calls.)* Rosy!

(Honk, honk.)

GRANNY ROSE: Comin', my little Crum!

(She takes the wheelbarrow and pushes Crum off SR. Mr. Straights enters quickly SL, wearing a fireman's jacket and helmet and carrying a rolled up water hose on his shoulder.)

ARMEN: Daddy, what are you doin' in that get up?

MR. STRAIGHTS: In case I missed any of them pests with the tornado, I'll flood the nest with old-fashioned well water.

ARMEN: Daddy, you're only askin' for trouble! Them yellor jackets is probably havin' a town meetin' right now plannin' on how they're goin' to get you back!

MR. STRAIGHTS: *(With hand on Armen's shoulder.)* Armen, it's somethin' that's gotta be done. It's my last resort.

(He exits. Armen turns to Dixie and crosses to her.)

ARMEN: We've got to take that man to the city with us. Without Mama around, he'll have our little business destroyed with hell and high water. *(He turns and crosses to his porch.)*

DIXIE: Look at that! Linda Jean left her dummy behind again.

ARMEN: I thought Truck left.

DIXIE: I meant her scarecrow. She uses it to practice cuttin' hair.

(Granny Rose enters, pushing the empty wheelbarrow.)

GRANNY ROSE: Wider Snipes, Wider Snipes, Wider Snipes! That's all I hear! If I hear that Jezebel's name one more time, I'm goin' to scream like a banshee!

(Granny Rose stops downstage center. Armen and Dixie cross to Granny Rose.)

DIXIE: Granny Rose, you need to find a man to make Mr. Crum jealous with. That would show that Crum once and for all.

GRANNY ROSE: I'm afraid that would never work, sugar. All the men I know is dead.

DIXIE: As long as Mr. Crum knows there ain't no competition, he won't never treat you the way he's supposed to.

ARMEN: Dixie's right, Granny. What you need is a mysterious stranger to take with you to the city. That would show that snob, Crum. C'mon, Dixie. Let's go organize our donation list.

(They exit into The Last Resort.)

GRANNY ROSE: *(To herself, mocking Armen.)* "Find a mysterious stranger to take to the city with you, Granny Rose." *(Sarcastically.)* Oh yeah, that should be a piece of cake. And while I'm at it, why don't I call up Bob Barker and tell him to take me out on a date tonight? *(She sees the scarecrow, crosses, and stands behind it. She rubs its shoulders.)* You ever been to the city, big fella? You know, if you got rid of that wig, you'd be quite the handsome thing. Hmmm, it might just work at that. Well, it's either you or Bob Barker, and I sure don't hear anybody tellin' me to, "Come on down!" *(She grabs the scarecrow.)* I hate to do this to you, Mr. Scarecrow, but it looks like you're my last resort. *(She hugs the scarecrow then slow dances with it as she sings to the tune of "Home on the Range.")* "Oh, give me a man who can crawl, sit or stand. Who will love me more than his prunes." *(She throws the scarecrow into the wheelbarrow and wheels it SR as she continues her song.)* "If Wider Snipes steals my man, I'll beat her up, 'cause I can. And they won't find her body till nooooooooooon!"

(She exits SR as the lights fade to a slow blackout. Intermission.)

[End of Freeview]

