

# SOMEWHERE ELSE DREAMS

By Jeff Strausser

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(In order of appearance)*

BRENDA HARRIS: Manager of the All American Diner, 40's, no nonsense personality

JACKIE BROWN: A waitress at the All American Diner, late 20's, constantly losing money on "can't miss" money-making schemes

ASHLEE MARTIN: A waitress at the All American Diner, 21 years old, upbeat and friendly

ED GRANGER: The cook at the All American Diner, 30's, easily agitated

CARLA SUE MASON: A waitress at the All American Diner, late 20's, constantly looking for her next "gentleman caller"

LORRAINE: A customer

DEBRA: A customer

SAMANTHA: A customer

TRACY: A customer

ROB VALLONE: A corporate troubleshooter for the All American Diner

JOLENE WALKER: A waitress at the All American Diner, late 30's, saddled with a stubborn husband and an out of control son

MARY GRANGER: Ed's mother, fiercely independent

MITCH: A deliveryman

CAROL: An attendant at Mary's senior residence home

KAREN: An attendant at Mary's senior residence home

ROY STEVENS: An eccentric and Mary's beau

EARL CHILDERS: A good-hearted man and Ashlee's admirer

DAVE: A childlike man, Earl's best friend and co-worker

BETTY: A Jacksonville police officer

MIKE CHILDERS: Earl's feeble, hard of hearing grandfather

OTHER CUSTOMERS: Extras

## **SCENE**

The All American Diner is located in Jacksonville, Texas, 25 miles south of Tyler, on Highway 69.

## **TIME**

The action takes place during the spring in the present from an early Monday morning through Tuesday evening.

## **ACT I**

|                |           |                       |
|----------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| <u>SCENE 1</u> | The diner | Early Monday morning  |
| <u>SCENE 2</u> | The diner | Late Monday morning   |
| <u>SCENE 3</u> | The diner | Monday afternoon      |
| <u>SCENE 4</u> | The diner | Late Monday afternoon |
| <u>SCENE 5</u> | The diner | Late Monday evening   |

## **ACT II**

|                |           |                       |
|----------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| <u>SCENE 1</u> | The diner | Early Tuesday evening |
|----------------|-----------|-----------------------|

## **PRODUCTION NOTES**

The entire play takes place in the diner; therefore, only one set is needed. The diner needs separation between the kitchen and eating area. The diner needs a window on the same side of the stage as the front door. Characters exit to the front door or into the kitchen on the opposite side of the stage. Male actors can be substituted for any of the following characters: LORRAINE, SARAH, TRACY, CAROL, and BETTY with minimal dialogue change.

The cast and crew of the Lufkin High School theater group debuted this play in September 2008. The playwright gratefully acknowledges their acting and technical skills, and especially acknowledges their director, Ms. Cay Billingsley.

## **PROPS AND COSTUMING**

Items typically found in a diner including tables and chairs (can be mismatched), napkin holders, silverware, plates, syrup containers, glasses, cups, serving trays, coffee pots, orange juice, iced tea pitcher, pieces of pie, a hamburger, various breakfast foods, spatula, brooms, dish towels, and a mop and bucket.

Other props include a *Highlights* magazine, a New York Yankees baseball cap, a rusty lawnmower, a clipboard, a small cardboard box, a calculator, a newspaper, an engagement ring and ring box, and a cane.

Waitresses' costumes can range from uniforms to jeans with matching aprons. MITCH wears a uniform or distinctive shirt. BETTY wears a police officer's uniform. The rest of the CHARACTERS are country casual.

**SOMEWHERE ELSE DREAMS**

by  
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**ACT I**

**SCENE 1**

**SETTING:** We are in the diner. The diner consists of several sets of inexpensive tables and chairs. The décor is drab and outdated. A doorway in the back wall leads from the eating area to the kitchen. A large square opening in the back wall allows the cook to pass the food orders to the wait staff. Tables along the back wall hold the coffee maker, condiments, and silverware trays.

**AT RISE:** *BRENDA HARRIS, the manager of the All American diner, sits alone at a table adding invoices. In preparation for the upcoming Monday morning breakfast rush, JACKIE BROWN works silently setting out syrup containers. ASHLEE MARTIN awkwardly leaps into the diner ballerina style. Neither BRENDA nor JACKIE look up or greets ASHLEE.*

ASHLEE: *(awkwardly flitting about and singing offkey)* Good mornin'!  
Good mornin'! Ain't it a beautiful Monday mornin'. Good mornin'!  
Good mornin'! Ain't it gonna be a beautiful week. Good--

BRENDA: Cork it, Ashlee.

ASHLEE: *(stretching out her arms and rising onto her toes)* Ain't it just a beautiful spring morning, Brenda? *(pause)* I mean, I'm so full o' life. I declare, I'm gonna burst at my seams. Just burst! *(resumes her awkward flitting, and then attempts a pirouette, but in her clumsy jubilation spins into a table, knocking over a napkin holder.)*

*(BRENDA continues intently entering invoice amounts into her calculator, shaking her head occasionally.)*

BRENDA: *(sarcastically)* Glad to hear it 'cause Jolene ain't comin' in this mornin'. You're takin' her tables. *(checking her watch)* And goodness knows if Carla Sue is gonna grace us with her presence. *(pause)* I'm gettin' too old for this.

ASHLEE: *(quickly sitting at BRENDA's table, pulling herself close to BRENDA, and then leaning toward BRENDA)* Is Jolene sick? I'll pop

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over after the breakfast rush and check on her, the poor thing. I know just what will get her to feelin' better.

BRENDA: *(heaving a long sigh)* Ashlee--

ASHLEE: I'll bring her a nice bowl of chicken soup and a piece of apple pie.

BRENDA: Ashlee--

ASHLEE: I ain't never met a person who didn't feel jus' so much better after eatin' chicken soup and apple pie. My momma used--

BRENDA: *(holding out her flat palm just inches from ASHLEE's nose)* Ashlee, stop, please! She ain't sick. *(pause)* Although she'd probably rather have the flu.

ASHLEE: Well, why on earth would--

BRENDA: Her kid got in trouble again at school. She's got a seance with the principal this mornin'. If you ask me, that boy ain't been nothin' but trouble.

ASHLEE: Brenda! I declare! Colt, Jr., well, he's a special boy.

BRENDA: 'Specially bad.

ASHLEE: Oh, Brenda! There's good in everybody. *(standing up and pulling her hands toward herself)* You just gotta draw it outta some folks.

JACKIE: *(setting syrup containers on the tables)* Not that kid. He's the devil's child. *(absentmindedly sets a syrup container on BRENDA's stack of invoices)*

ED: *(popping his head through the kitchen opening)* Hey! That was one creepy movie, *The Devil's Child*. Saw it on TV long time ago. Yeah, Kim Delaney was in it.

*(BRENDA shoots a glance of disgust at ED. ED pops back into the kitchen.)*

ASHLEE: *(sits next to BRENDA)* Brenda ...

BRENDA: *(annoyed)* Yes.

ASHLEE: *(nervously adjusting her nametag)* I was wonderin' ... Well, I was wondering if you heard anything. *(pause)* You know, about me applyin' to be an assistant manager somewheres. I been taking classes at the college. I been doin' real good on my grades. I just--

BRENDA: *(not looking at ASHLEE while cutting her off)* I ain't heard nothin' yet. I'll let you know when I hear somethin'. *(stacks the invoices then stands up, drops the calculator into her apron pocket, and checks her watch)* Y'all finish up. I gotta call them stove people and see if they're gonna deliver those knobs sometime this century. *(exits without looking at ASHLEE or JACKIE)*

*(ASHLEE grabs a broom and begins sweeping.)*

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ASHLEE: What's Brenda all so upset about, Jackie?

JACKIE: Been that way all week.

*(JACKIE grabs a broom and dance-sweeps with ASHLEE.)*

ED: *(popping into view)* I been rackin' my brain to remember who played the devil. *(snapping his fingers)* What was his name?

JACKIE: *(leaning against her broom)* Was he good-lookin'? I bet them TV people made the devil good-lookin'.

ED: Yeah, well, he musta been 'cause Kim had his kid. I think Kim's mom made a deal with him to save Kim's life, if Kim would have his baby later on ... or somethin' like that.

JACKIE: You think Jolene made a deal with devil? Hope she got something good comim'. Cause it ain't looking like a good deal so far.

ASHLEE: *(throwing down her broom)* Jackie! Ed! I swear! Would you two just hush! Talkin' that way 'bout good people. *(picking up her broom)* Anyways, you can't get me down today with that kinda talk 'cause this week is gonna be a lucky week.

ED: *(waving dismissively)* Ah, lighten up, Ashlee. Me and Jack was just makin' some friendly conversation. *(retreats into the kitchen)*

JACKIE: *(takes a rag and begins wiping off a table)* Baby, you said that last Monday, and the Monday before. Your life ain't changed one gnat's eyelash since you started workin' here. How long's it been? *(pause)* Two years?

ASHLEE: Jackie, don't be sayin'--

JACKIE: Hey, now don't go feeling all bad, girl. Nobody 'round here got much to brag bout, 'specially yours truly. All I got to show is a string of sure-fire money-makin' schemes that bursted into flames. *(pause)* Done lost my divorce settlement and the money my parents lent me.

*(BRENDA returns carrying a mop and bucket.)*

BRENDA: Gonna be openin' in ten minutes, you two. I see ain't nobody thought to mop the entryway.

*(CARLA SUE enters the diner. SHE is wearing a party dress and carrying another on a hangar. Her uniform is slung over her arm.)*

CARLA SUE: *(making a 360 degree turn)* Whattya think, ladies? *(holding up the other dress)* How about this one? C'mon now, be honest. I gotta take one back. I'm on whattya call a limited budget.

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BRENDA: (*plunges the mop into the bucket, splattering water*) I am livin' a nightmare! Carla Sue, will you get changed! I'm openin' up in ten minutes. You shoulda been here fifteen minutes ago.

CARLA SUE: Hey, couldn't be helped. This is important. I'm goin' to the Workin' Woman's Wednesday Happy Hour at the Lufkin Sheraton. I need to be properly dressed to meet my po-ten-tial gentleman callers. (*poses*)

JACKIE: You drivin' all the way to Lufkin? That's fifty miles round trip!

CARLA SUE: Baby, I'd drive to the moon on a motor scooter if I could find me a man with a good, steady job and straight teeth.

BRENDA: Nine minutes! Go!

CARLA SUE: All right! All right! Cool your jets. I'm goin'. (*heads toward the back and then turns*) So, which one do y'all like?

BRENDA: (*pointing toward the kitchen*) Go!

JACKIE: (*looking up from wiping a table*) Calm down, sweetie. She'll be ready and waitin' to slide them plates full o' lard and grease.

BRENDA: I'm tired of her prancin' around like some kinda Paris model. Comin' in late all the time. (*turning quickly toward JACKIE and pointing at her*) And don't talk like that neither, Jackie Brown. We got high quality food here, all inspected by the U ... S ... D ... A. Speakin' of which. (*turning toward the kitchen and yelling*) Ed! You back there? You got that griddle good and hot, Ed?

ED: (*appearing at the kitchen opening*) Yeah, boss lady. *Muy caliente!*

BRENDA: Oh, you're such a Renaissance man.

ED: Hey, if I don't get some new knobs for this thing, I'm jus' gonna leave it on all the time. How'd that be?

BRENDA: I jus' called 'em. They're sendin' them today. (*turning toward JACKIE and ASHLEE*) Look y'all, I'm comin' back in five minutes. (*holding up five outstretched fingers*) Y'all get your smiles on. We need them highway boys to keep comin' back. They's all on expense accounts.

JACKIE: (*flashing a flirtatious smile and striking a pose*) How's this?

BRENDA: And push the pie. Ain't nothin' hits the spot after a short stack of pancakes like a piece of apple pie. (*exits*)

(*JACKIE makes a gagging gesture.*)

ASHLEE: Jackie, I'm as serious as a heart attack. I just know my life is gonna change in a big way. I mean, I know I ain't makin' much progress here, and I been workin' so hard, but I ain't gonna give up. I got dreams.

JACKIE: (*waving dismissively*) Girl, open your eyes and see the real world. There's two kinds of people in this world: the lucky ones and everybody else.

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ASHLEE: Oh, Jackie!

JACKIE: The lucky ones, they was born to mommas and daddies that fed and clothed them, and sent them off to school, and actually gave a flip if they done it right. *(pause)* Ashlee, baby, you're twenty-one years old and you're waitressin' here. You're *everybody else*.

ASHLEE: You know how them toads sound? Early in the mornin', right before daylight. You know, they make that sound. It was like this mornin' they was sayin' my name. *Ashlee! Ashlee!* I gotta believe it's a sign. *(looks upward)*

JACKIE: Oh, puhleese!

ASHLEE: I can jus' feel myself leavin' Jacksonville, Texas behind. I'm agoin' to meet my destiny. I know that's how my daddy musta' felt.

*(CARLA SUE enters, awkwardly tugging and fixing her uniform. JACKIE drapes her arm over CARLA SUE's shoulders.)*

JACKIE: Lady Carla, did you know that Princess Ashlee is leavin' us? Gonna be meetin' her *des-ti-nee*.

CARLA SUE: *(checking her makeup in the reflection of the napkin holder)* Ya don't say, Lady Jackie?

JACKIE: I guess that means her knight in shinin' armor is gonna be sweepin' her off her size 6's today.

ASHLEE: Now that ain't what I meant *at all*.

CARLA SUE: *(in mock surprise)* Leavin' J-Town! Why you wanna go and do that, girl? *(stretching out her arms)* Everythin' you need is right here.

ED: *(pretending to blow a horn)* Doo-do doooo. Hear ye! Hear ye! Make way for Sir Earl. Ridin' in on his steed, or is it a 1998 Ford pickup oil burner with a rusted out tailgate? *(laughs derisively)*

ASHLEE: Ed! Now that ain't very polite at all! *(crossing her arms across her chest)* Earl is just one o' my customers.

CARLA SUE: Oh, come on, Ash. We all see how your eyes get all misty-like when he comes in. And you know he done got the puppy eyes for you.

ASHLEE: Carla Sue Mason! That's personal!

CARLA SUE: If you want somethin', you go for it. That's what I do.

JACKIE: So we hear.

ASHLEE: *(embarrassed)* I wasn't talkin' about that *at all*. Besides, a lady don't talk to a gentleman about ...

CARLA SUE: Yeah, whatever. *(starts setting out silverware on the tables)*

JACKIE: *(dropping her hand onto ASHLEE's shoulder)* Baby, if you wanna leave J-Town, Earl ain't your ride. C'mon, the man welds on

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hitches at Jake's Hitch Barn. I consider myself somewhat of an expert on bad investments, and he sure looks like one.

ASHLEE: (*hands on her hips*) Stop, y'all. Y'all quit talkin' bad about people, 'specially good-hearted people. (*pause*) Why, the way Earl takes care of his granddaddy.

ED: Ain't never heard 'bout no knight who lived with his granddaddy. Carla Sue, you sweet damsel, you ever heard of a knight who lived with his granddaddy?

ASHLEE: Ed Granger, I declare, you got the couth of a pig in slop. It's his granddaddy. So, stop!

ED: Hey, I got my mamma. But I don' go livin' with her.

CARLA SUE: (*picks up a fork and points it at ED*) No, you got that poor woman locked up in jail over in Rusk.

ED: It ... ain't ... no ... jail, Carla Sue. You been listenin' to that crazy woman. That place has got lots o' grass. Got flowers. Lots o' shade trees. Why it's a downright country club.

JACKIE: Yeah, if you're a cow! Then why is she always runnin' away ... escapin'?

ED: (*throwing up his hands*) Because she's a crazy woman. I don' know why I'm talkin' to two women who listen to a crazy old woman and another who's all ga-ga for a growed man who lives with his granddaddy. Now leave me alone. I got lard to melt. (*retreats into the kitchen*)

ASHLEE: (*yelling toward the kitchen*) Ed, Earl don't live with his granddaddy no more! He got his own place now. Y'all just shush.

(*BRENDA enters, shaking her keys.*)

BRENDA: Look alive, divas. I'm gonna open up. Carla Sue and Jackie, try to keep up with Ashlee. She's takin' Jolene's tables, and I'll bet she still runs circles 'round y'all.

(*CARLA SUE and JACKIE stick out their tongues at BRENDA after she turns away. BRENDA opens the doors to the diner and the CUSTOMERS enter.*)

BRENDA: Mornin' y'all. The coffee's hot and fresh, just like my waitresses.

(*The CUSTOMERS move toward ASHLEE's tables. Only a few sit at CARLA SUE's and JACKIE's tables. LORRAINE enters the diner.*)

ASHLEE: Mornin' Lorraine. Ain't it just a beautiful mornin'?

LORRAINE: Mornin' Ashlee. Where you workin' today?

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ASHLEE: (*pointing*) I got all these tables right here. Jolene got some business to 'tend to this mornin' at the school.

(*LORRAINE sits at a table. DEBRA and SARAH enter and sit at one of ASHLEE'S tables.*)

Good mornin' Debra. Good mornin' Sarah. Debra, I jus' love that outfit! It brings out the color of your eyes. Is that new?

DEBRA: Well, thank you, Ashlee. It is. I'm glad *somebody* likes it.

SARAH: (*to DEBRA*) I didn't say I didn't like it. I just said ... (*to ASHLEE*) Ah Ash, you got me in trouble, and it ain't even seven-thirty yet.

ASHLEE: Oh darlin', you're too sweet to fuss at. (*looking at DEBRA*) Ain't that right?

DEBRA: (*waving dismissively*) Ah, I'm used to it. She never likes anything I buy. I'll have the usual: a poached egg, an English muffin, some orange juice and coffee.

ASHLEE: What about you, baby?

SARAH: I'll try some scrambled eggs, order o' sausage, toast with butter and jelly.

ASHLEE: What are you gonna wash that down with?

SARAH: Juice and coffee.

ASHLEE: Comin' right up! (*walks by some CUSTOMERS on her way to the kitchen.*) Be right with y'all. Ed, I got a deadeye and burn the British. Wreck some and throw in some zeppelins. I'll squeeze two here. (*pours two glasses of orange juice and then turns to LORRAINE*) Lorraine, you know what you want, sweetie?

LORRAINE: Sure do. A short stack o' pancakes and two eggs, over easy.

ASHLEE: You got it. (*pouring LORRAINE coffee and turning toward ED*) Short round o' blowout patches. Flip two.

ED: Echo.

ASHLEE: Short round o' blowout patches. Flip two.

ED: Got it.

(*More CUSTOMERS enter the diner and ASHLEE, BRENDA, CARLA SUE, and JACKIE serve them coffee. TRACY enters.*)

TRACY: Hi, Ashlee. Ya' got this table today?

ASHLEE: Sure do, Tracy. Be there in half a sec and wipe it off. You want the usual?

TRACY: Yes ma'am.

JACKIE: I got a clean table open here.

TRACY: Nah, I'm good. I gotta talk to my *favorite* waitress.

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JACKIE: *(mumbling under her breath)* I gotta talk to my favorite waitress.

*(ROB enters and sits at one of ASHLEE's tables. HE is in disguise.)*

ASHLEE: *(yelling)* Pigs in the blanket. Wreck three.

ED: Ash, look alive! British and wreck is up.

*(ED sets the dishes on the ledge between the eating area and kitchen. ASHLEE takes the order to DEBRA and SARAH.)*

ASHLEE: Here y'all go. Lemme know if y'all need somethin' else.  
*(stops in front of TRACY)* How's that new knitting shop workin' out, Tracy?

TRACY: Startin' to get off the ground. Think I might even make some money this month.

ASHLEE: Good for you, baby. I admire your gumption. Your order will be up in two shakes of a bunny's tail. *(turns to ROB)* What can I get you, hon? Coffee to start you off?

ROB: Coffee would be fine. I'd also like toast with jelly and some scrambled eggs. Do you think you could cook them with some ketchup?

ASHLEE: No problem, hon. We aim to please! *(yelling toward the kitchen)* Shingle with a shimmy an' shake. Wreck and paint 'em red.

ROB: You sure seem to be busy.

ASHLEE: *(smiling)* Yeah, it's like this in the mornings. Lots o' my friends stop by.

*(BLACKOUT)*

**END OF SCENE**

ACT I, SCENE 2

**SETTING:** We are in the diner. It is after the breakfast rush and all of the customers have left.

**AT RISE:** JACKIE and CARLA SUE sit at different tables and count their breakfast tips.

JACKIE: One day I'm goin' to laugh about this.

CARLA SUE: Ain't today. Well, them credit card vampires is gonna have to wait for their money. I don't know which is worse, these

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crummy tips or hearin' all morning: 'Where's Ashlee workin' today?  
Where's Ashlee workin' today?'

JACKIE: Don't get me started on that, Carla Sue. Did you see them two boys get up from my table and move to Ashlee's table? Some nerve.

(JOLENE enters.)

JOLENE: Hi, ya'all. How's things in *par-o-dice*.

CARLA SUE: (*dropping the tip money in her purse*) Same ol'. How'd it go with Colt Jr.?

(JOLENE drops her purse on a table.)

JOLENE: He's got his daddy's brains, which means he ain't got none to speak of. He's failin' three subjects and got a D in another, and I think he's done got detention until he's twenty-five. (*plops down onto a chair beside JACKIE*)

JACKIE: (*patting JOLENE'S hand*) That don't sound good, lady.

(JOLENE stands up and begins to walk around.)

JOLENE: The principal said he might not let him go to the high school next year.

CARLA SUE: It's a public school! He gotta let him in! They let Jackie in.

JACKIE: Shut up. I musta missed your valedictorian speech.

JOLENE: Things is different now. They all want him to go to some kind of therapy sessions, or they gonna send him to that alternative school in Rusk.

CARLA SUE: *Alternative school?* What in the world?

JOLENE: You know, where Tammy Martin's kid went 'til he dropped out. The school's gonna pay for some of it, but the parents gotta pay some, too. Gonna cost me *three ... hundred ... bucks*.

JACKIE: No way!

CARLA SUE: That's a dress, a bag, and shoes. I could look good in that. Mmm ... Mmm.

JOLENE: (*counting off on her fingers*) He's gotta see a psychologist, a counselor, a testing consultant, and any other warm body that they can think of to take money from me. His daddy ain't gonna go for this. So, that means, I gotta pay for it without him knowin'. I can just hear him now: (*lowering her voice to mimic her husband*) They ain't nothin' wrong with Colt Jr. Why I was just like him when I was his age. (*pause*) Which, of course, is what scares the livin' bejeebers outta me.

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*(ED appears through the kitchen opening.)*

ED: Hey Jolene, you ever been out with a good-lookin' guy with horns?  
*(laughs hysterically)*

CARLA SUE: *(pointing at ED)* Ed! Get back in your cave! We're tryin' to have an intelligent conversation, meanin' *you* can't be in it.

ED: Oh! I'm sorry I interrupted you rocket scientists. *(waves dismissively)* Ah! I'm gettin' outta here for a while. If I ain't back for lunch, start without me. *(retreats into the kitchen)*

JOLENE: What's he talkin' about? Horns?

CARLA SUE: *(waving dismissively)* Don't listen to him. He's been inhalin' them grease fumes. *(pause)* So what are ya gonna do 'bout Colt Jr.?

JOLENE: I guess I ain't got much choice. I--

*(MARY runs into the diner, drops to a crouch, looks around nervously, and then awkwardly drops down behind some chairs.)*

CARLA SUE: Mary, what in the world are you doin'?

MARY: *(holding her fingers to her lips and waving CARLA SUE away)*  
Shhh!! Don't look down. You gonna give me away. *(crawls from under one table to under another table)*

CARLA SUE: Mary--

MARY: Get away! You got rocks for brains?

JOLENE: *(walking toward MARY)* What are--

MARY: *(waving JOLENE away)* I said, don't look down. Oh no!  
Somebody's comin'! *(crawls under another table)*

JOLENE: Mary, get up! For goodness sakes, you're gonna get all stiffened up. It's just some deliveryman.

*(From under the table, MARY waves JOLENE away. MITCH enters, carrying a small box and a clipboard. MITCH is wearing a New York Yankees baseball cap.)*

MITCH: *(checking his clipboard)* Mornin', ladies. Got a hotshot delivery here for a Brenda Harris. Supposed to be here before ten. *(checks his watch)* Just made it.

JOLENE: *(taking the clipboard)* Brenda ain't here. I'll sign for it. What is it?

MITCH: *(glancing at the box)* From some stove company, looks like.

JOLENE: Oh yeah. The knobs Ed's been whinin' about. *(yelling)* Ed!

*(ASHLEE comes out of the kitchen.)*

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ASHLEE: Ed left. Do y'all need somethin'?

*(JACKIE takes the box from JOLENE and tosses it to ASHLEE.)*

JACKIE: Put that in the kitchen, sweetness and light.

*(ASHLEE catches the box, and then looks at MITCH.)*

ASHLEE: Hi there! Would you like a cup o' nice fresh coffee? I was just makin' a pot. I always like to have a cup myself this time o' day after the breakfast rush.

*(JACKIE, JOLENE, and CARLA SUE sit at the table MARY is hiding under and begin to read the newspaper.)*

MITCH: *(sitting down)* You know, that sounds good. I gotta make it real quick though. They got us on a schedule now. Grade us by how close we keep to it. *(shaking his head)* Crazy out there this morning. State troopers everywhere. Said they're lookin' for a missing person. Some woman. They stopped me and checked my truck.

ASHLEE: I'm Ashlee. I ain't seen you in here before.

MITCH: First time. I'm Mitch. Hope it's not the last.

CARLA SUE: *(under her breath)* Oh, give me a break!

*(ASHLEE leaves with the box and returns with a cup of coffee.)*

ASHLEE: I see you're wearin' a Yankees cap. New York City is my favorite place in the whole world.

MITCH: Oh, yeah. I can tell you aren't from there, so you must visit a lot.

ASHLEE: Well, actually, I ain't never been there, but that's where I wanna live some day. Some day real soon.

MITCH: I grew up there. In the Bronx. Kingsbridge Heights. I'm still a Yankees fan even though I live in Lufkin now.

ASHLEE: *(shocked)* Why on earth would you ever leave? I mean, you got Broadway, the nightlife ... *(pointing to his cap)* The Yankees. I mean, just everythin'!

MITCH: When I left P.S. 95, I wanted somethin' better. Joined the Army, got out, and moved down here.

ASHLEE: That's what I want: *somethin' better*. My daddy moved to New York City ten years ago. He wanted somethin' better too.

MITCH: Well, it's different for sure. I don't know about better. *(looking at his watch and taking a gulp of coffee)* I gotta get goin'. I'm runnin'

## **SOMEWHERE ELSE DREAMS – Page 16**

behind. Enjoyed the coffee and meeting you. (*pays the bill and gets up to leave*)

ASHLEE: Nice talkin' to you, Mitch. Be careful out on the highway. Lots o' loggin' trucks out there. (*gives MITCH a little wave*)

MITCH: Nice talkin' to you. I will. (*exits*)

(*ASHLEE grabs her purse and checks her watch.*)

ASHLEE: I'll see y'all later. I gotta class in halfa hour. (*exits*)

MARY: (*crawling out from under the table*) Whew! That was a close call! I barely kept from gettin' caught. No thanks to you nitwits.

JACKIE: Mary--

MARY: Get away! They're still lookin' for me. Go check.

CARLA SUE: Check what?

MARY: To see if that goober left. He might be callin' them right now. Now go!

JOLENE: Ain't nobody out there. (*pause*) Ed's right! You *do* act like a crazy woman.

CARLA SUE: Did you escape again?

MARY: No, I like crawlin' on my hands and knees on a filthy, sticky floor. Why don't you go shop or somethin'? Of course, I escaped, and them jailers is lookin' for me. They sent a spy deliveryman to look for me.

CARLA SUE: He weren't no spy deliveryman. He was a nice fella and kinda cute. I hope he comes back.

MARY: You say that about every man that wanders into this dump.

CARLA SUE: Hey, he's got a job, which takes care of requirement number one. I didn't get good look at his teeth. 'Course that talk about New York with Miss Personality was wearin' on my nerves. Now get up, please! Mary Granger, they gonna have your picture hangin' in the post office if you keep this up. You done got state troopers lookin' for ya'. You heard the man.

MARY: Shhh!! Ed'll hear you. My ungrateful son will turn me in. Twelve hours o' labor bringin' his sorry self into this world. I thank my lucky stars his daddy died an early death, rather than see how his son treats his mamma.

(*CARLA SUE picks up syrup containers and puts them on a tray.*)

CARLA SUE: Ed ain't here, Mary. Quit crawlin' around under there. Ain't no tellin' what's on that floor.

JACKIE: Ashlee's the only one here who does any moppin'.

## **SOMEWHERE ELSE DREAMS – Page 17**

MARY: *(looking up)* Ain't here? Brenda fire him? Wouldna blame her if she did. That boy don't think about nobody but his own sorry self. Let me tell you, he's been like that since he was knee high to a duck. *(JOLENE begins to sort silverware and wrap each setting in a paper napkin.)*

JOLENE: He's out drivin' aroun' like he does every day at this time. He just needs to get outta that hot kitchen. Will you please get up? Why are you so mean to your own son?

JACKIE: Yeah, Ed's got enough problems just bein' Ed.

*(MARY gets up very slowly because she is stiff. JOLENE and CARLA SUE help MARY straighten up.)*

MARY: 'Cause my own sweet son locked me up in old peoples jail. Course his brother, Jim, ain't no better. Moved to Houston soon as he got outta high school. *(limps around)* Don't see him but once a year. He don' care neither if I rot away in that jail. And them boys of his—my grandkids—two brats if there ever was two brats. They don't care neither.

JACKIE: *(sitting at a table reading the newspaper)* We teach people how to treat us.

MARY: What? What are you talkin' 'bout? Who tol' you that?

JACKIE: Dear Abby. She says right here you jus' need to teach Ed how you want to be treated.

MARY: There ain't no teachin' that sorry dog. He jus' wants me locked up, so's he can run around an' spend my money. That ungrateful--

JOLENE: Mary, you know Ed loves you in his own Ed way.

CARLA SUE: *(sarcastically)* I bet you was a perfect mom, right?

MARY: *(waving dismissively)* Go check and see if them jail keepers is outside. I still think that goober was one their spies. That place got spies everywhere.

JOLENE: Jail keepers? Spies? Mary, they ain't nobody around 'cept me and Carla Sue and Jackie.

MARY: *(creeping toward the window)* Ahh! *(ducks down and crawls back)* I told you three stooges! Them jail keepers is right outside! They're comin' in! *(looks frantically for a hiding place)* Don' give me up, please! I need to be free! *(starts running around the diner, waving her arms)*

JACKIE: Mary, settle! You gonna give yourself a heart attack. *(walks over and looks out the window)* Carol and Karen ain't no jail keepers. They right nice people. They're probably worried about you.

MARY: Right nice people! Ha! *(dives back under the table)*

## **SOMEWHERE ELSE DREAMS – Page 18**

JACKIE: (*looking under the table at MARY*) Will you get up! Remember what happened to you last time when you hid in Nate Archer's vegetable stand? You hunchbacked around for two days.

MARY: I hate that place. Treat me like I'm some kinda feeble fool. They're the fools. Besides that, I come here for a reason. I got news.

CARLA SUE: (*stooping down*) What kinda news?

JOLENE: Yeah, what news?

MARY: News that got somethin' to do with y'all. Now get away from me. You ain't gonna hear it if I get caught. (*hides under a table*)

(CAROL and KAREN enter the diner.)

CAROL: Good mornin', ladies. How y'all?

CARLA SUE: Mornin' Carol. Miss Karen. How are you this mornin'? (*grabs the coffee pot and pours two cups of coffee*)

(CAROL and KAREN sit at a table.)

KAREN: I'd be a whole lot better if one our residents wouldna' runned off.

CAROL: We got one o' them state inspectors comin' this afternoon, and it don' look good for us to have a missin' person. Goes right onto our permanent records.

KAREN: Them state troopers acted like we was part of it.

(*While walking to the table, CARLA SUE glances at the table where MARY is hiding under. (MARY waves her arm for CARLA SUE to turn away.)*)

CARLA SUE: (*setting down two coffee cups*) Y'all got 'nough problems without that. So where do you think she is?

CAROL: (*quickly standing up*) She! Who said it was a she? Ain't nobody said that. You know what that tells me, don' it, Carla Sue? It tells me you know where Mary is. Fact is, she's probably here right now. (*looking around*) Please, Carla Sue, help us out here! We can't take no more repro-mands.

CARLA SUE: Settle, Carol, settle. I jus' assumed it was Mary. I mean, who else you got there that runs away? It was just a guess. Honest.

CAROL: You sure, Carla Sue? We've knowed each other a long time. I know I complain about this job, but I don' wanna lose it. I gotta truck and a house payment to make.

CARLA SUE: (*crossing her heart with her finger*) I ain't seen that woman in days. You seen her, Jackie?

## **SOMEWHERE ELSE DREAMS – Page 19**

JACKIE: Can't remember the last time.

*(CAROL drops into his chair.)*

KAREN: *(raising her coffee cup, but then putting it down before drinking)*  
I ain't never come across a more ornery resident. I swear, that woman has been sent here to make our lives miserable.

CAROL: Amen.

KAREN: And our lives is gonna be more miserable if we don't bring her back before that inspector man shows up. Carla Sue, that woman got me so upset. You got any that apple pie? I know I shouldn't eat none, but that old woman got me worked up.

CARLA SUE: I got a piece with your name on it. *(walks over and gets KAREN a piece of pie)*

KAREN: I had to dye my hair for the first time in my life last night. That woman gived me gray hairs. Can you believe that? Gray hairs!

JACKIE: I thought that was a new color for you. Looks very natural.

CAROL: *(answering her cell phone)* You gotta be kiddin' me! He's comin' for lunch!

KAREN: I can't take this no more! *(shoves a big piece of pie into her mouth)*

CAROL: We'll keep headin' north on 69. Yeah, we'll call as soon as we spot her. *(hangs up and looks at KAREN)* How 'bout you and me escape? Like to the moon.

KAREN: Let's go. You sure you ain't seen Mary, Carla Sue? I don't need no more gray hairs.

CARLA SUE: This'd be the last place she'd be. You know Ed don't want her around.

CAROL: Carla Sue's right. She's probably at one of her friends right now. There ain't a soul in this town that don't know Mary.

KAREN: See you gals later. *(gives them a quick wave)*

JACKIE: Bye Karen. Bye Carol. Good luck!

*(CAROL and KAREN exit.)*

JACKIE: *(standing over MARY)* All right, Mary. I lied through my teeth for you 'cause you claimed you got news that concerns us. Ain't nothin' newsworthy to come outta here since Ed set the kitchen on fire last year.

MARY: That fool boy. Can't believe Brenda didn't run him off after that. Oughta have sent *him* to the old folks jail instead a me. Got any more of that pie?

CARLA SUE: *(throwing up her arms)* Great day in the mornin', Mary! You done got us on pins and needles. What's this news you got?

## **SOMEWHERE ELSE DREAMS – Page 20**

MARY: I ain't had nothin' to eat all mornin'. My blood sugar is sinkin'.  
You want me keelin' over? At my age, I could go any minute. You want that on your conscience?

(CARLA SUE walks over to the pie tray and brings back a piece for MARY.)

CARLA SUE: (setting the plate down loudly in front of MARY) Start talkin'.

MARY: (picking up her fork) You got any milk?

JACKIE: How 'bout I call Carol and Karen? Maybe they got some milk.

MARY: Okay! Okay! You got a nasty streak in you, Jackie Brown. All right, one of my cellmates is Francine Waters. You probably know her granddaughter, Jacey. She's a cheerleader at the high school. Sweet thing. Cuter than a speckled pup under a red wagon. Comes by 'bout once a month to see her granma. 'Cordin to Francine, she got all them young goobers slippin' on their drool.

JACKIE: (rubbing her temples) Mary, you're givin' me a migraine.

MARY: I'm jus' tellin' you 'bout my friend Francine. Anyway, her other daughter who's older, maybe two years, no, let me think, maybe three--

JACKIE: (throwing up her arms) Will you just get to the news! We don't need no life story!

MARY: I declare! That ain't no way to be with somebody who is tellin' you important news! Like I was about to say, but I keep gettin' interrupted. Her other daughter, I'm sure she's three years older is married to some Army boy stationed in Mississippi. I think her name is Jeanine or Jeanette, somethin' like that. She works at an All American near the base. Ya know, just to make the ends sorta come closer together. She told her momma that the corporate headquarters up there in one of them Okie towns is sendin' their stooges out in the afternoon to all the diners.

JACKIE: What for?

MARY: She heard they was makin' big changes. Probably cuttin' the payroll. (eats a forkful of pie) Too much overhang.

JACKIE: What?

MARY: Don't you know nuthin'? All them companies is complainin' 'bout how it's costing too much for things like medical insurance and vacation, which y'all got, right?

CARLA SUE: Overhead, not overhang.

JACKIE: I bet that's why Brenda been in such a snit? Come to think of it, she's been complainin' about all the expenses lately, like fixin' Ed's griddle.

## **SOMEWHERE ELSE DREAMS – Page 21**

CARLA SUE: (*slamming her hand on the table*) Don't that beat all? The only things worth staying here for, and now I'm gonna get fired 'cause of 'em.

JACKIE: Now how do you know you're goin' get fired?

CARLA SUE: Simple arithmetic. They ain't gonna fire Ed. He may be a jerk, but he can cook hamburgers in a hurricane. And they sure ain't gonna fire Princess Ashlee. Why she's goin' to be an assistant manager. La-de-da.

JACKIE: Girlfriends, for right now, I need this job. I got what you call a cash flow problem.

JOLENE: Another one o' your can't miss schemes miss?

JACKIE: (*plopping into a chair*) I thought this one was gonna set me free. I put the last of my savings and then some into a South American tree farm.

CARLA SUE: C'mon now, girl! You don' need no farm to grow trees. They just grow wherever.

JACKIE: You don't understand. Plantin' trees is in. The government pays you to do it, specially some o' them South American ones. You know, all this global warmin' and stuff. The trees eat up the carbon mo-noxide.

JOLENE: So what happened?

JACKIE: Trees die.

JOLENE: How much did you lose?

JACKIE: Don' wanna talk about it. Let's just say it's money I don't quite got yet.

JOLENE: Lady, you gotta discipline yourself. There ain't no get rich quick recipe. Now I think--

CARLA SUE: Save the lecture for when we ain't here. We got some serious thinkin' to do. Jolene, you need to pay Colt Jr.'s therapy 'less you want him followin' in his daddy's footsteps. (*to JACKIE*) Baby, you is highballin' your way to the poorhouse right now. And me, I already live there. I got credit card bills that look like the national debt. So, by process of *elim-o-nation*, Ashlee's gotta go.

JACKIE: (*sarcastically*) Yeah, right. Miss I-wanna-be-an-assistant-manager.

JOLENE: Miss I'm-agoin'-to-college.

CARLA SUE: Will you just listen! Mary said the headquarters man comes in the afternoon, so probably between lunch and dinner. Right?

MARY: Yeah. That's what Francine Water's daughter said. Jeanette or is it Jeanine, I think it's Jeanine.

CARLA SUE: So, who ain't here between lunch and dinner?

JACKIE: Ashlee.

CARLA SUE: And?

## **SOMEWHERE ELSE DREAMS – Page 22**

JOLENE: And Brenda. Yeah, Ashlee goes off to study or somethin'. She's always luggin' them books around. And Brenda hauls her husband's lunch over to the police station. That poor man eats Ed's leftovers--meatloaf swimmin' in half-hard grease. Gonna have the chief o' police keelin' over from a heart attack.

CARLA SUE: (*grabbing each of their wrists*) So that leaves us three chickens here when Mr. Headquarters shows up.

JOLENE: Just one thing. Ain't Mr. HQ gonna wanna talk to Brenda? She's the manager of this here fine dinin' establishment.

CARLA SUE: (*pointing*) And you're gonna be her.

JOLENE: What! You been smellin' that burnt lard?

CARLA SUE: Look, that man don't know Brenda from Eve wearin' a fig leaf. He's gonna believe you're the manager if you tell him you is. And you're gonna tell that Okie-doke that Jolene, who ain't in right now, but is always here, and Carla Sue, and Jackie are the best waitresses in the whole glorious history of the All American Diner; but Ashlee, well, Ashlee, she's another story.

JOLENE: I don' know.

CARLA SUE: You wanna be drivin' Colt Jr. to that abnormal school every day? Watch him grow up to be his daddy?

JACKIE: And I don't think them trees is gonna be springin' back to life any time soon. (*quickly raising her arms over her head*)

JOLENE: I guess y'all are right. Ashlee's young, and she ain't got no kid hangin' on her. She can take care of herself. Why she's a college girl.

(ASHLEE enters. JOLENE, JACKIE, and CARLA SUE nervously face ASHLEE.)

ASHLEE: (*smiling*) Who y'all talkin' 'bout?

JACKIE: Why you, baby.

ASHLEE: Well, isn't that sweet.

(BLACKOUT)

**END OF SCENE**

## **SOMEWHERE ELSE DREAMS – Page 23**

### **ACT I, SCENE 3**

**SETTING:** We are in the diner. It is early afternoon and only a few customers remain after the lunch rush.

**AT RISE:** *BRENDA waits on some remaining CUSTOMERS seated at a table. ASHLEE is wiping off empty tables.*

BRENDA: Y'all just let me know if you need anythin' else. *(walking back toward ASHLEE)* That lunch crowd wore me out. It's been a long time since we had a busload o' kids stop here.

*(ASHLEE puts down the rag, pulls out a book and a notebook, and sets them on the table.)*

ASHLEE: They was right nice though. So young and full 'o life. Reminded me o' me when I was in high school. Taking them bus trips to somewheres. I never cared where we was goin', just so long as it was somewhere else.

*(BRENDA walks back with a coffee pot to the CUSTOMERS and glances out the window.)*

BRENDA: I *do not* need this today.

*(ROY enters pushing a rusty lawnmower.)*

Roy Stevens! You can't be bringin' *that* in here. We got customers. For cryin' out loud, lettuce is got more sense than you!

ROY: Afternoon, ladies. Ashlee, you sure are looking wonderful today.

I, for one, am grateful to your momma and daddy for their fine work.

ASHLEE: Well, thank you, Roy. That's sweet of you.

BRENDA: Roy, I'm tellin' you. Leave that piece of junk outside!

ROY: Junk! I only sell high quality equipment.

BRENDA: When was the last time you sold one piece o' that *high quality equipment*?

ROY: No thanks to your husband and his thugs. Always abotherin' me. Scarin' away customers.

BRENDA: Roy, you got lawnmowers parked along Highway 69. Who in tarnation is gonna stop? Them people is driving seventy miles an hour. All they wanna do is get outta town. Whatya doin' with that anyway?

ROY: This is a display model.

BRENDA: Don't make me call Al. Just get that thing outta here.

## **SOMEWHERE ELSE DREAMS – Page 24**

ROY: I could sure use a piece of pie. Ya work up an appetite standing out there on the highway.

BRENDA: Fine. Just take that thing outside. Now!

ROY: It's gettin' to be so that a citizen can't even run a business no more. *(pushes the lawnmower out of the diner)*

BRENDA: Sellin' old lawnmowers in the middle of the interstate. What in the world is he thinkin'?

ASHLEE: He's sweet. He just needs somethin' to do. He ain't got nobody in his life.

*(ROY re-enters and sits at one of the tables.)*

ROY: Okay, I'm ready for that pie now.

*(BRENDA brings ROY a piece of pie.)*

BRENDA: *(loudly setting down the plate)* Here you go. Just eat up and don't cause me no trouble. *(begins wiping off some tables)*

ASHLEE: Roy, would you like some iced tea?

BRENDA: *(pointing)* Ashlee, do not encourage. He is goin' to eat this piece o' pie, and then he is goin' to leave. Right?

*(ASHLEE resumes taking notes in her notebook. After looking out the window, ASHLEE immediately stands up, smooths her uniform, and fixes her hair. EARL enters and sits at a table.)*

ASHLEE: *(smiling)* Hi, Earl. Where you been all day? *(gets EARL a cup of coffee and sets it in front of him, then sits down with EARL.)*

EARL: Jake wanted me to fix the hitch on Tommy Green's tractor first thing. Tommy was goin' to do his bailin' this mornin'. Try to beat the rain. And then I had two more jobs. Next thing I knowed, I missed breakfast and lunch.

ASHLEE: You been real busy lately. That shows Jake really needs you there.

EARL: Not really. Frank's off huntin', and Dave he ain't allowed to use the torch after what happened last week. That leaves me. *(looking over at ASHLEE'S book and notebook)* How's your classes goin'?

ASHLEE: I got an A so far in my communications class. I had to give a five-minute speech. The professor said I did real good. The title of my speech was "How to Be Customer Friendly."

EARL: I bet you're a real good speech giver. I'd be scared to stand up in front of people. Make a fool outta myself.

ASHLEE: Ah, there ain't nothin' to it. My daddy told me the secret about public speakin', you know so's you don't get all flusterated.

## **SOMEWHERE ELSE DREAMS – Page 25**

EARL: (*sipping coffee*) Oh, yeah?

ASHLEE: (*standing*) He used to say: (*lowering her voice*) Ashlee, sweetie, just imagine your audience is all sittin' out there in their underwear. (*pause*) It works, I swear. Although, some of them people is a little scary to think about.

ROY: (*speaking with a mouthful of pie*) When you're in sales like me, communications skills is important.

BRENDA: We can only imagine.

ROY: Now Brenda, when you come alookin' at my mowers, I'll just imagine you in your underwear.

(*ASHLEE giggles.*)

BRENDA: (*angry*) That's it, Roy Stevens! You done wore out what little welcome you had! I gotta go check on somethin' in the storeroom. When I get back, you better be gone or else I'm callin' Al. He'll have a squad car over here before you can blink.

ROY: You sure ain't *customer friendly*.

BRENDA: Eat and go. (*exits to the kitchen*)

ROY: That is one mean woman. No wonder her husband carries a gun.

ASHLEE: Roy, shush and eat your pie. (*looks toward the kitchen to make sure BRENDA is out of earshot. SHE speaks to EARL in a soft voice.*) Brenda keeps avoidin' answerin' me every time I ask about my assistant manager application. I been tryin' real hard to learn about runnin' a diner. I mean, I can do most everythin' aroun' here: cook, close up, take care of the bills, and orderin' the food.

EARL: Things'll work out. I'm sure there's an All American somewheres that needs your help runnin' it. They'd be lucky to get somebody as smart as you.

(*BRENDA returns.*)

BRENDA: (*looking at ROY*) You're still here.

ROY: I'm eatin' as fast as I can. You want me to get an upset stomach?

BRENDA: I want you to *leave*. You got five minutes before I call Al. (*heads to the kitchen*)

EARL: Hey! I got so busy; I forgot to check if I won the lottery. (*reaches into his back pocket and pulls out his wallet, opens it, and pulls out a piece of paper*) I wrote down my number. I got the ticket at home for safe keepin'.

ASHLEE: How ya' goin' to tell if you won?

EARL: (*pulling his cell phone from his shirt pocket and dialing it*) I'll call my granddaddy. I showed him how to look up the winnin' number on my computer. Them lottery people set up a website so's you can

## **SOMEWHERE ELSE DREAMS – Page 26**

check to see if you won. *(pause)* Hello, Grandaddy. *(louder)* Grandaddy, it's Earl. Yeah, Earl. I'm fine. I said, I'm fine, Grandaddy. No, I don't care. Whatever you wanna make. Just be careful 'round the stove. Don't forget to turn it off. Remember what happened last week.

*(ASHLEE returns to her books.)*

Hamburgers sounds good. No, nothin's wrong. I just called to see if you could read me the lottery number. You know how I showed you how to do it. My computer's turned on already. Sure, I can wait. Take your time. *(pause)* Yes, I'm still here. Did you get the number? Okay, just read the numbers slow, so's I can check 'em.

ROY: I never play that lottery. It's rigged ya' know. All the politicians' friends win.

EARL: *(annoyed)* I'm tryin' to hear my grandaddy.

ROY: *(with fork in hand, ROY gives a dismissive wave)* You're wastin' your time.

EARL: Yeah, Grandaddy, I 'm still here. No, I wasn't talkin' to you. Well, I was talkin' to Roy Stevens. I was telling him--Grandaddy says, 'Hi.'

ROY: Hi, right back at him.

EARL: Roy says, 'Hi.' Now can you read the numbers? *(louder)* Yeah, read the numbers. Okay. Six. Okay, I gotta a six. That's a good start. *(gives ASHLEE a thumbs up sign)* What's the next number, Grandaddy? Twelve. Did you say twelve? I gotta a twelve. *(looks over at ASHLEE)*

*(ASHLEE smiles and gives EARL a thumbs up.)*

ROY: See that's how they keep ya playin'. You get a coupla numbers, but you don't win 'cause you ain't no friend of none o' them Austin politicians.

EARL: No, Grandaddy, I didn't say nothin', that was Roy just blabberin' nonsense. What's the next number? Eight. I got an eight. I ain't never got three numbers before. No, Grandaddy, I didn't say there's somebody at the door. I said, I ain't never got three numbers before.

*(ASHLEE walks over and stands by EARL.)*

ROY: They's just reelin' you in, boy. Just reelin you in. *(pretends HE is reeling in a fish, hooks his finger inside his mouth as if HE is a fish getting hooked. HE flops around on his seat.)*

ASHLEE: Roy, just shush. Eat you pie.

## **SOMEWHERE ELSE DREAMS – Page 27**

EARL: OK, Granddaddy. We got three numbers left, right? Okay what's the next one? *(louder)* Read the next one. Fourteen. I got a fourteen. I think you win somethin' if you get four numbers.

ROY: Just a-reelin' you in, boy.

ASHLEE: Roy, I swear.

EARL: *(excited)* Granddaddy, read me the next number. No, Granddaddy, I ain't yellin' at you. I'm sorry. I'm just excited, that's all. Ten. The next number is ten? I gotta a ten. *(looking at ASHLEE)* Five numbers, I got five numbers! No, Granddaddy I wasn't talkin' to you. I said I wasn't talkin' to you. I was talkin' to Ashlee. Granddaddy ... all right. *(hands ASHLEE the phone)* Get him to read the last number, please!

ASHLEE: Hi, Mr. Childers. How are you today? I said, how are you today. *(pause)* I'm just fine.

*(EARL stands up and begins to pace.)*

Well, I think hamburgers would be just fine. I like mine with tomato and lettuce, too. They got some nice lookin' lettuce over at the Farmer's Market--

*(EARL grabs the phone from ASHLEE.)*

EARL: *(exasperated)* Granddaddy, please read the last number. Please. What? Two. Okay Granddaddy, read all the numbers to me. I know, but read 'em again. Six. Uh-huh. Twelve. Okay. Eight. Okay. Next one. Fourteen. All right. Ten. Good. Two. *(grabs ASHLEE around her waist, picks her up, and spins around)* I jus' won ten million dollars! *(puts ASHLEE down and starts running around the diner)* Ten million dollars! I am a *millionaire*. A *millionaire*! *(runs over to ROY and points to himself)* Hi, I'm Earl Childers, Jacksonville's newest *millionaire*. I'm sure that you're glad to make my acquaintance. *(runs around the diner)*

ASHLEE: Oh, Earl. I ain't never knew nobody that won anything at all, much less ten million dollars. 'Course this just shows what I always been sayin': Good things happen to good people.

EARL: *(pacing around the diner)* I jus' can't believe it! I got things to do. And I got phone calls to make. I guess I gotta drive to Austin. I gotta--

ASHLEE: Earl, calm down darlin'. You're gonna blow a gasket. Just sit here and settle yourself.

EARL: I'll call you. No! I'll come back in a little bit. I gotta go. *(pulls out his cell phone as HE walks out of the diner)* First, I gotta make this call. *(exits)*

## **SOMEWHERE ELSE DREAMS – Page 28**

ROY: Now don't that beat all. I didn't know ol' Earl was friends with them Austin politicians.

*(BLACKOUT)*

### **END OF SCENE**

### **ACT I, SCENE 4**

**SETTING:** We are in the diner. It is late afternoon and the diner is empty of customers.

**AT RISE:** *JOLENE, CARLA SUE, and JACKIE are setting out silverware in preparation for the dinner crowd.*

JACKIE: Can you believe Earl winnin' all that money? If he comes in for supper, I'll give him some investment tips.

CARLA SUE: Ten million dollars! I might overlook the straight teeth requirement for ten million bucks. Fact is, I wouldn't care if the man could eat a pumpkin through a chicken wire fence.

JOLENE: Look!

CARLA SUE: What?

JOLENE: Gettin' outta that Taurus. The man in the suit. I ain't never seen him before, and there ain't no funeral today. I'd say that there is our Okie HQ man.

JACKIE: He sure ain't from J-town.

CARLA SUE: He's comin' in. All right, remember what we said. Now act natural-like.

*(ROB enters and sits at a table.)*

ROB: Good afternoon, ladies. How are you this fine afternoon?

JACKIE: We all are *just fine*.

*(JOLENE moves toward ROB as CARLA SUE and JACKIE drift away.)*

JOLENE: What can I get you, hon? Would you like a piece of our world famous apple pie? Finish off the afternoon right.

ROB: Oh, no thank you. I'd like just a cup of coffee.

JOLENE: No wonder you look so fit and trim.

ROB: Well, thank you. I'm just not that hungry right now. Are you the manager?

JOLENE: Uh, well, yes I am. I'm ... Brenda Harris. *(offering her hand to ROB)*

## **SOMEWHERE ELSE DREAMS – Page 29**

ROB: (*shaking her hand*) Pleased to meet you, Brenda. My name is Rob.

JOLENE: Pleased to me you, Rob. Carla Sue, get this good-lookin' man a cup of the best coffee in Jacksonville.

CARLA SUE: Yes ma'am. Comin' right up! (*walks toward the coffee maker.*)

JOLENE: Carla Sue is such a go-getter. Why sometimes I just can't believe how fast she takes care o' her orders. And the customers just love her.

(*CARLA SUE sets the coffee cup in front of ROB.*)

ROB: (*nodding toward JACKIE*) That's great. And that young lady?

JOLENE: That's Jackie. She's such a sweetie. Jackie has lots of ideas. They is kinda in the development stage right now. Jackie, come over here dear.

(*JACKIE walks over to the table.*)

JACKIE: Sure you wouldn't like somethin' besides coffee? Ed's not here right now, but I can make anything. I used to work in the kitchen at the Holiday Inn in Tyler. Darn near made the whole breakfast buffet myself.

JOLENE: Jackie is such a blessing. She does it all around here sometimes. I jus' don't know what I'd do without her. Well, I just know I couldn't do without her.

ROB: I see. So it's just you three working here?

JOLENE: Oh no. We got our cook. His name's Ed. He breaks between lunch and dinner. And, of course, Jolene. Well, Jolene she keeps the whole thing together. She'll be back for dinner.

ROB: (*sipping his coffee*) I see.

JOLENE: She's over at the junior high. Her boy, Colt Jr., he's gettin' a special award. He's so smart that the high school might not take him.

ROB: Very impressive. No one else?

JOLENE: Well, there's Ashlee.

ROB: Ashlee, you say. Is she working today?

JOLENE: Ashlee didn't come in today. Come to think of it, she didn't come in yesterday neither.

ROB: Oh. Is she sick?

JACKIE: Sick aworkin'!

JOLENE: Now, Jackie. (*pause*) Truth is, I don't know what to do with that girl. She's just like her daddy. I guess you could say it runs in the family. He runned off, and left her and her momma and her

## **SOMEWHERE ELSE DREAMS – Page 30**

sister. All that Ashlee talks about is how she's gonna do like her daddy did and run off and see the world.

ROB: Really?

JOLENE: That ain't the worst of it, no sir. She's always sayin' how this food ain't no good for ya and how our diner is dumpy lookin'. Right in front of the customers! Now don't that beat all?

ROB: She said those things? I can't believe it!

JOLENE: Rob, I'm embarrassed by her talkin'. Most times, I gotta tell her to get back to work. That is, when she comes to work. And to quit botherin' the poor customers with her silly stories 'bout livin' in the big city. 'Course if she's yappin' about that, she ain't bad-mouthin' the food.

CARLA SUE: She'll tell anybody with ears 'bout how she's gonna run off to the big city. And I don't mean Lufkin. Goodness, no. I mean, *New York City*. You ever hear such foolishness? Shoot, they couldn't pay me enough to live with all them fast-talkin' Yankees.

ROB: I see. It doesn't sound as if Ashlee's cut out for this job.

JOLENE: Well, I'm at wit's end. She's such a dreamer. But dreamin' is for sleepin'. That's what my daddy used to say.

ROB: When do you think Ashlee will be in? *(pause)* I mean, you ladies have gotten me curious.

JOLENE: Well, I'm gonna call her and tell her if she ain't here for the dinner crowd, she's gonna be lookin' for a new job.

ROB: *(taking a big swig of coffee)* I'll be back tomorrow. Maybe I'll have a bigger appetite then. If Ashlee comes in, please don't mention anything about my being here.

JOLENE: Oh no, sir. We can keep our mouths shut, unlike some people.

*(ROB exits.)*

JOLENE: I don't know, girls.

CARLA SUE: We had to do it. We got too much to lose. Besides, leavin' here is just what Ashlee wants. I don't know why she ain't left already, instead a just talkin' 'bout it all the time. We just done her a big favor.

JACKIE: Yeah, she'll be thankin' us.

JOLENE: Absolutely!

*(BLACKOUT)*

**END OF SCENE**

## **SOMEWHERE ELSE DREAMS – Page 31**

### **ACT I, SCENE 5**

**SETTING:** It is late evening and the diner is empty of dinner customers.

**AT RISE:** *ASHLEE, CARLA SUE, and JOLENE sit at tables and count their tip money. ASHLEE's pile of money is much larger than CARLA SUE's and JOLENE's.*

ASHLEE: Whew! I am just tuckered out! Seemed like nobody wanted to cook their own dinner tonight.

CARLA SUE: Yeah, Ashlee, you sure were the busy little bee.

JOLENE: *(speaking to CARLA SUE)* You woulda thought my tables was infected with some kinda virus, the way folks was avoidin' 'em.

*(EARL enters and sits at a table.)*

CARLA SUE: Look, it's J-towns's newest millionaire. C'mon Jolene, we can count our tips later. I'm sure it'll only take a few seconds. *(scooping up her money)* I'm sure Earl needs Ashlee to tell him how to spend his millions. I mean, everybody else in town wants to talk to her.

JOLENE: Come on home with me. I gotta check on Colt Jr. His daddy is supposed to be watchin' him, makin' sure he does his homework. So that means he's playin' video games and eatin' junk food. C'mon Carla Sue, I'll give you a glimpse of my dream life.

ASHLEE: *(waving and smiling)* Bye, y'all. See you tomorrow. Have a good night.

*(JOLENE and CARLA SUE grab their purses and exit.)*

EARL: *(burying his face into his hands)* Oh, Ashlee!

ASHLEE: Earl, you sure don't look like nobody who just won hisself ten million dollars. Course, I can't say I'd know exactly what that kinda person would look like, but I would guess that he sure wouldn't look like you're lookin' right now.

EARL: This is awful. Worse than awful. It's a nightmare. I want to wake up and find out all this has been just a big dang nightmare.

*(ASHLEE sits across from EARL and holds his hands.)*

ASHLEE: Earl Childers, what in the world are you talkin' about? Lotsa folks say money don't buy no happiness, but it sure don't make you instantly miserable.

## **SOMEWHERE ELSE DREAMS – Page 32**

EARL: I really did it this time. I just can't believe it. I got egg all over my face.

*(ASHLEE leans toward him, grasps his face with her hands, and pulls it close to herself.)*

ASHLEE: You ain't got no egg on you, Earl. You got a little spot of ketchup on your shirt, right there. *(pointing)* Some cold water will take right out. Here let me go get--

EARL: Egg on your face. It's an expression. It means I made a darn fool outta myself. 'Course, that ain't nothin' new, but I really did it up big this time.

ASHLEE: Earl, darlin', how in the world can you make a fool outta yourself winnin' ten million dollars?

EARL: Because I *didn't win* no ten ... million ... dollars. I--*(stands up, pulls out his lottery ticket, and shows it to ASHLEE)* See them numbers, Ash? I thought they'd be lucky 'cause they're 'bout you an' me.

ASHLEE: Me and you? Earl, whatever are you talkin' about?

EARL: *(handing the ticket to ASHLEE)* Read the numbers.

ASHLEE: Earl?

EARL: Please, jus' read 'em.

ASHLEE: Well, okay. 6-12-8-14-10-2 *(hands the ticket back to EARL)*

EARL: 6-12, that's June 12th. Ain't that your birthday?

ASHLEE: Yes, it is! How in the world?

EARL: You said it once, and I wrote it down. I was gonna buy you a present.

ASHLEE: Earl, that's so sweet.

EARL: And 8-14, that's August 14<sup>th</sup>. That's my birthday. And 10-2, that's October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Well, that's the first day I met you. It was two years ago. I didn't have to write it down. I'll always remember.

ASHLEE: Earl! I just don't know what to say. *(covering her face with her hands)* I'm blushin'. But, I still don't understand.

EARL: I asked my granddaddy to read me the winnin' lottery number. I showed him how to look it up on my computer. *(pause)* Oh! Sometimes he don't get things straight. He won't wear his hearin' aid. He musta thought ... I dunno. I left my ticket on the kitchen table. *(pause)* Ash, he read me the number off my ticket, not the winnin' number on the computer.

ASHLEE: Oh, Earl!

EARL: *(angrily)* My granddaddy—

ASHLEE: Now don't be mad at your sweet granddaddy now. He just made a mistake. Ain't none of us is perfect.

## **SOMEWHERE ELSE DREAMS – Page 33**

EARL: (*stands up and begins to pace*) I shoulda known. I jus' shoulda known that it was too good to be true. Do you know what the odds is of winnin' the big lottery prize?

ASHLEE: Odds? I don't know what in the world you're talkin' about Earl.

EARL: Odds is the chances of winnin'. You got one chance in twenty ... five ... million. Why in the world did I think I won? I gotta be the stupidest man on the face of this Earth! (*drops into a chair and sulks*)

ASHLEE: Earl, don't be talkin' down on yourself. Why you is plenty smart. You just had a little bit of bad luck, that's all.

EARL: The only luck people like me got is bad luck.

ASHLEE: You're plenty lucky, too. Now baby, you might not be rich, but you got a good life. You got a job and a new place to live.

EARL: (*burying his face in his hands*) Oh, Ash, I really messed up. Remember, after I thought I won, I said I had a few phone calls to make? Well, when I was leavin' here, I called Jake.

ASHLEE: Uh-huh.

EARL: You know how I hate workin' there. He treats me like, I dunno, but he treats me bad. Me and Dave both. Well, I said, 'Jake, I got two things to tell ya. The first is: I'm a gosh darn millionaire, and the second is ...' Well, I told him what he could do with his job.

ASHLEE: Earl, you didn't!

EARL: My fool pride got the best of me. I'm ashamed. I guess I'm gettin' what I deserve. Acting different and treatin' people bad just 'cause I was rich ... or thought I was rich.

ASHLEE: Well, just call Jake back, and tell him it was a little misunderstanding'.

EARL: A little misunderstandin'! I don't think so. That man ain't never gonna hire me back after what came outta my mouth. Fact is, ain't nobody gonna hire me in this town. Who wants an idiot laughin' stock workin' for them?

ASHLEE: Earl--

EARL: Hey millionaire! Can you lend me a few hundred thousand 'til payday? I can hear it all now.

ASHLEE: Oh, baby. I--

EARL: I'm gonna have to move back in with my granddaddy. I can't afford no rent on my own apartment with no job.

ASHLEE: Earl, I'm sure you're makin' too much outta this. It's only temporary. My momma says we gotta work through our hard times.

EARL: You ain't heard the worst of it.

ASHLEE: You ain't no millionaire. You lost your job. You gotta move back with your granddaddy. I think you done covered everything.

(*EARL reaches into his pocket and pulls out a small box.*)

## **SOMEWHERE ELSE DREAMS – Page 34**

EARL: No, I ain't covered everythin'. I gotta apologize.

ASHLEE: Apologize?

EARL: After I called Jake, I drove over to Roy Hunter's jewelry store. I bought this. *(opens the box and shows ASHLEE a diamond ring)*

ASHLEE: Oh, Earl. What a beautiful ring! Just look how it sparkles in the light!

EARL: *(setting the box on the table)* I bought it for you, Ashlee. I was gonna ask you to marry me. I thought that now I was a millionaire, I could afford to take you to live in New York City like you always wanted to. I know you don' wanna be stuck in this little town married to a loser who welds hitches.

ASHLEE: *(touching the ring)* It's beautiful, Earl, but I don' need--

EARL: *(closing the ring box, not looking at ASHLEE)* I gotta take it back. I can't afford to buy it and I sure can't afford to live in New York City. I'm sorry, Ashlee. *(standing up)* I won't bother you no more 'cause I'm leavin' this here town for good. *(rushes out of the diner)*

ASHLEE: *(standing and running toward the door)* Earl! Earl! Wait. I'm sorry. I don' need ... *(pause)* I love you. I loved you from the moment I met you. *(softly)* Please come back. *(begins to cry, and then starts facing the audience, drops to her knees)* Oh, what have I done!

*(BLACKOUT)*

**END OF ACT I**

**INTERMISSION**

**ACT II**

**SCENE 1**

**SETTING:** We are in the diner. It is late Tuesday afternoon. The diner is empty of customers.

**AT RISE:** *BRENDA, JACKIE, CARLA SUE and JOLENE are preparing for the dinner rush. Going from table to table, JACKIE is setting out silverware wrapped in paper napkins and CARLA SUE is putting sugar packets in the bowls.*

BRENDA: Hey, y'all, I'm worried about Ashlee. It ain't like her just not to show up. She ain't even called. I called her apartment. No answer. Called her sister. She ain't heard from her neither. She's missed breakfast and lunch.

CARLA SUE: Yeah, my tips is up.

BRENDA: Carla Sue!

CARLA SUE: Oh, she'll get over it. Men are like buses--you miss one and another one comes along.

JACKIE: Can you believe that Earl? Just when you think that man couldn't get no unluckier, he goes and tops it.

JOLENE: My brother and Earl was in the same grade in high school. Said Earl was always talkin' 'bout goin' out to California. Wanted to go to one them hippie colleges out there. Can you imagine Earl at a hippie college? All he ever endin' up doin' was weldin' hitches.

CARLA SUE: Now he ain't even doin' that. Gotta move back with his feeble granddaddy after he got him into this mess.

BRENDA: Earl's a good man. He's just, well, he's small town. Ain't his fault, really. His momma and daddy got killed in a car accident when he was young. His granddaddy ended up raisin' him. And everybody knows that man got problems o' his own. His mind ain't never been right. A few years ago, he got the dumb idea to build a car that runned on cow manure. The durn thing only went ten miles an hour and you could smell him comin' a mile away. Ended up gettin' hisself in a bad accident. Got hit by a loggin' truck. Messed up his legs. Now he's losin' his hearin'. Earl just ain't had much of a chance livin' with that man.

*(JACKIE pulls out a chair and sits down.)*

JACKIE: I feel sorry for Ashlee. She done got her heart broke. That girl gets to me sometimes with her little Miss Perky routine, but nobody deserves to get their heart broke.

## **SOMEWHERE ELSE DREAMS – Page 36**

CARLA SUE: I say she got saved. You imagine her marrying that fool?  
Runnin' off to New York City.

JACKIE: True. Them two wouldn't last ten minutes with all them  
Yankees. Can't understand 'em when they talk. Even if they had the  
money, they woulda lost it to them fast talkers.

CARLA SUE: Be like two sparrows in a hurricane.

BRENDA: I wouldn't be so sure. Ashlee's got spunk. And Earl ... his  
heart's in the right place.

CARLA SUE: She's young. We all get our disappointments in life.  
(*looking out the window*) 'Course things might be lookin' up for yours  
truly. My deliveryman is back.

BRENDA: Carla Sue, you let that man alone. (*exits to the kitchen*)

(*MITCH enters.*)

CARLA SUE: Hi, Mitch. What brings you back, darling? Not that you  
need a reason. Why don' you sit right down here.

(*MITCH sits down at a table.*)

MITCH: Thought I'd come by. Had to deliver some oil filters over to the  
dealership for their new pickup trucks. They built all those trucks and  
didn't make enough oil filters for 'em.

CARLA SUE: (*putting her hand over her heart*) Well, I, for one, am glad  
they messed up. How about a big glass of iced tea and a piece of  
pie? We got apple pie and peach pie.

MITCH: (*looking at his watch*) Sure why not. I didn't have much of a  
lunch. Ended up grabbin' somethin' from the Jack-in-the-Box in  
Diboll. Is the apple pie fresh?

(*BRENDA returns from the kitchen with a broom and begins sweeping.*)

BRENDA: Fresh is a relative term, hon.

(*DAVE enters and sits down at a table. DAVE is carrying a "Highlights"  
magazine.*)

DAVE: (*waving*) Hey, y'all. Hi, Carla Sue. You sure look nice today.

(*CARLA SUE ignores DAVE and brings MITCH his iced tea and pie.*)

CARLA SUE: (*smiling*) Here you go, baby. Enjoy. Let me know if you  
need anythin' else. (*walks over to DAVE, in a flat voice*) What can I  
get you?

## **SOMEWHERE ELSE DREAMS – Page 37**

DAVE: (*reading the magazine*) Ya wanna hear a joke?

CARLA SUE: No.

DAVE: Two fish was swimmin' along in the river. One swam into a concrete wall. Ya' know what he said? (*pause*) Dam! (*long idiotic laugh*) Get it?

CARLA SUE: So what's it gonna be?

DAVE: I want a roast beef san'wich.

CARLA SUE: (*throwing her head back*) We ain't got no roast beef! We ain't never had no roast beef. I tell you that every time you order roast beef, which is every time you come in here.

DAVE: How 'bout a hamburger?

CARLA SUE: Ed ain't here. How 'bout a piece o' pie.

BRENDA: Carla Sue.

CARLA SUE: All right. I'll make ya a hamburger. (*turns to MITCH and gives him a little wave*) I'll be right back, darlin'.

DAVE: (*continues reading his magazine*) I want lotsa onions on it.

CARLA SUE: (*walking back to the kitchen*) Of course you do.

DAVE: (*yelling toward the kitchen*) Carla Sue, you wanna hear another joke?

JACKIE: (*looking over at DAVE*) You seen Earl?

BRENDA: We ain't seen him or Ashlee all day.

DAVE: (*reading his magazine*) Earl done quit his job. (*looking back at the kitchen*) I'm gettin' hungry, Carla Sue honey.

CARLA SUE: (*poking her head out of the kitchen and pointing a spatula at DAVE*) Don't press your luck.

(CARLA SUE gives MITCH a quick wave and a smile.)

JACKIE: (*looking at DAVE*) So?

DAVE: So what?

JACKIE: Good grief, Dave! Have you seen Earl? You're his friend, ain't ya?

DAVE: Well, we work together sometimes at Jake's. Earl quit there.

(JACKIE grabs her head with her hands.)

BRENDA: We know that.

DAVE: I seen him 'round ten o'clock. I was takin' my break. He came by the shop. Had his pickup full o' stuff. (*lays his magazine on the table and resumes reading it*)

(CARLA SUE brings DAVE his hamburger. CARLA SUE sets the plate on top of DAVE's magazine. DAVE takes the bun lid off and inspects the hamburger.)

## **SOMEWHERE ELSE DREAMS – Page 38**

CARLA SUE: What?

DAVE: Needs more onions.

*(CARLA SUE looks away.)*

BRENDA: Did he say anything?

*(DAVE continues looking at the hamburger.)*

DAVE: Who?

*(CARLA SUE spins around and throws up her arms.)*

CARLA SUE: Santa Claus! Who we been askin' about? *(pause)* Earl!  
Did ... Earl ... say ... anything?

DAVE: Naw. Jus' somethin' 'bout casinos.

JACKIE: Casinos?

CARLA SUE: Gotta bunch of 'em in Shreveport. Been there a few times myself. Accompanied by a gentleman caller, of course. I bring 'em luck.

JACKIE: Bad luck would be my guess.

DAVE: Said he was gonna win 'nough money so's Ashlee an' him can live in New York City.

MITCH: I did see a black pickup full of stuff headed north. Goin' real fast.

BRENDA: Oh, no! Earl in a casino! With his luck! *(leans the broom against the counter)* I gotta go. *(points at DAVE)* You come with me.

DAVE: I ain't finished--

BRENDA: *(grabbing DAVE by the arm)* Now!

*(BRENDA and DAVE are halfway toward the door.)*

DAVE: Wait! My magazine. I ain't finished readin' it. *(returns to get the magazine)*

*(BRENDA and DAVE exit.)*

MITCH: *(paying the bill)* I gotta be goin' too. Hope you find your friend.

CARLA SUE: So soon! We hardly got a chance to visit. *(pause)* You know maybe we could visit some tomorrow night. Don't you live in Lufkin? I'm goin' to be at the Sheraton for the Workin' Women's Wednesday Happy Hour.

MITCH: Yeah, maybe I'll stop by. I mean, if I get through with my deliveries in time. Wednesdays are always busy. *(waves and exits)*

## **SOMEWHERE ELSE DREAMS – Page 39**

CARLA SUE: *(turning to JACKIE)* Well, that sounded promising.

JACKIE: *(sarcastically)* Yeah, right. He could barely control himself.

CARLA SUE: He was just playin' it cool. Not that you'd be able to recognize that.

*(ED walks in. Behind ED, ROY is pushing a lawnmower that MARY is sitting on top of.)*

ED: Whatya two crows cacklin' 'bout?

JACKIE: None o' yours. Where you been anyway? *(pause)* Roy, get that mower outta here. Brenda'll have a kitten if she comes back. Ed, you know better than let him bring that in here.

ED: Who are ya', my mother? *(pause)* Sorry, that was a cheap shot.

*(MARY acts like SHE is going to punch ED.)*

ROY: Kids ain't got no respect these days. Why my--

CARLA SUE: Roy, lose the mower!

ROY: I found this on the way over here. Some fool throwed it away.

*(CARLA SUE points toward the door. ROY exits with the lawnmower.)*

ED: *(looking at MARY)* Why don' you tell them about your latest little adventure.

MARY: *(turning away from ED and crossing her arms)* Got nuthin' to say.

ED: That's gotta be a first!

*(ROY enters the diner.)*

MARY: I went for a little drive. Weren't no big deal.

ED: *(throwing up his hands)* Little drive, Momma! A little drive! You was gone for a day and a half! She stole one of the residence cars. Out there by herself at night!

MARY: It weren't like I was campin' out, fool. I stayed with Roy. He made me a fine supper. Learned a thing or two 'bout lawnmowers to boot.

ROY: Yes, sir. Made her my specialty: chicken fried steak, okra, and mashed potatoes. Made the potatoes from scratch, not outta the box like y'all make here. Ate right out on the porch. Nice cool breeze. Right, hon? *(puts his arm around MARY)*

ED: Momma, what were you thinkin'? The man is nut case!

MARY: *(pointing)* You're the nut case.

## SOMEWHERE ELSE DREAMS – Page 40

ROY: I am an *entramanure*. I own a thriving lawnmower repair and sales business.

ED: You're ... a ... nut case. You pick up junk lawnmowers and stand with 'em out on the side of the highway. How many times you been arrested? (*throwing up his hands*) Ahh! (*turning to the others*) My dear Momma, who by the way ain't got no drivers license, almost made it halfway to Tyler before the state police pulled her over for doin' thirty miles an hour on I-69. Durn near had a loggin' truck drive right over the top of her.

JACKIE: Poor thing!

ED: Poor thing! Poor thing! What about me? (*pointing to himself*) I'm the one who hadda go to the State Po-leece station and fetch her.

MARY: Oh, cry me a river!

ED: I hadda listen to some self-important civil servant tell me I need to take better care of my *poor mother*.

MARY: I tol' that sergeant 'bout how bad that place is my son got me locked up in. I tol' him how he needs to back up his jail bus to that place and arrest the whole sorry herd of 'em people that work there.

ED: I thought he was gonna arrest *me*.

ROY: You didn' have nuthin' to worry 'bout. It ain't a crime to be stupid.

ED: I don' know what I'm gonna do with her.

(*JACKIE walks over and puts her arm over MARY'S shoulders.*)

JACKIE: Mary, baby, where in thunder was you off to?

MARY: Tyler. Goin' to the mall on Broadway.

JACKIE: The mall! What in the world for?

MARY: Whatya think, Sherlock? Shoppin'.

JACKIE: For what?

MARY: You think just 'cause I'm locked up in prison. I don' need nuthin' new to wear. Woman, you're just as bad as my ungrateful son here. (*pinching ED'S arm*)

ED: Ow!

MARY: Gotta get some nice outfits. Now that I'm bein' courted, I need to update my wardrobe.

ED: (*holding his head between his hands*) You're a crazy woman who's gonna drive me crazy! I can jus' feel my mind slippin' away.

MARY: I'm gonna enjoy spendin' your inheritance, sonny boy. That's all you and that brother of yours cares about. (*poking ED in the chest with each word*) Selfish! Selfish! Selfish!

ED: (*walking around with raised hands*) Selfish! You're the one who don't care nothin' about nobody 'cept yourself. You gonna get Carol and Karen fired. You almost got me arrested. What in the world did I do to deserve this?

## **SOMEWHERE ELSE DREAMS – Page 41**

CARLA SUE: Least she didn't tell you that ya won the lottery.

MARY: Ha! They was havin' themselves a good laugh down at the police station 'bout that.

ROY: Didn't I tell you it was rigged! I knew that boy didn' win nothin'.

ED: *(turning toward MARY)* Now you gotta promise me, Momma, you won't go runnin' off no more.

MARY: *(holding up her right hand)* I promise I ain't gonna run off no more. *(turning to the WOMEN)* I ain't gonna run off no less neither. *(laughing hysterically)*

ED: Ahh! Just stay right here. Do you think you can do that?

MARY: *(holding out her hands)* Why don't you just slap the cuffs on me now?

ROY: *(holding out his hands)* Yeah, cuff me too. I'm a prisoner ... of love.

ED: Oh, please!

*(CAROL and KAREN enter.)*

CAROL: Mary Granger! You had us worried sick! Out there all by yourself.

MARY: *(hiding behind ROY)* Hah! You ain't foolin' me! Worried sick, my left foot! And besides, I weren't by myself.

ROY: You are safe with me, my love.

KAREN: Lady, you gotta stop doin' these fool things. You're gonna get yourself hurt or worse. *(looking at CARLA SUE)* Why is there a lawnmower out front? *(looking at ROY)* Who's this?

MARY: I can take care of myself. I don' need no jail keepers.

CAROL: Mary, come back with us. Your friends miss you. They was worried.

MARY: You mean my cellmates!

*(KAREN moves to take MARY'S hand. MARY ducks behind ED and then runs around the diner. KAREN and CAROL chase after MARY. ROY runs around trying to block KAREN and CAROL.)*

CAROL: Mary Granger! Now you quit actin' the fool!

*(CAROL and KAREN corner MARY.)*

KAREN: Mary, please! They gonna fire me! That inspector man was here yesterday after you runned off. He asked lots o' questions, and he didn' look too happy while he was doin' it. I'm worried about my job.

MARY: Well, get a real job. Why don' you teach school or somethin'?

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KAREN: Uh! That's worse! All them kids! Please, Mary!  
(ED moves in, grabs MARY around the waist, and picks her up.)

ROY: Hey, that's your momma!

MARY: Put me down, you big oaf! All right! All right! I'll go back. Just put me down. (softly) You're embarrassin' me in front of my gentleman.

(ED puts MARY down and releases her.)

CAROL: Okay, Mary, get in the van, and we'll take you home. I think you better come along too, Ed. I'm sure they're gonna wanna talk to you.

ROY: Hey, what about me?

CAROL: What about you?

MARY: (running behind ROY) I was just foolin'! Don't let 'em take me, Roy honey!

ROY: (assuming a martial arts stance) I'll defend you to the death, my love.

KAREN: Who is *this man*?

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