

THE REVELATION OF BOBBY PRITCHARD

A play in one continuous act

Synopsis: Dreams about the late Bobby Pritchard compel Marta to return to her home town after years away to disclose the truth about Bobby's death and to marry her partner Cynthia in the church in which she grew up. Marta's brother Hank must endure the painful revelation about Bobby's death as he struggles with his own son's sexual orientation. Hank makes the choice to support his family rather than his community's traditions, and shots ring out.

Characters

MARTA, a dance professor and former dancer, a woman in her 60's.

CYN, Marta's wife, a psychologist, a woman in her 50's

HANK, Marta's brother, a business owner and church deacon, a man in his 50's

POSS, Hank's son, a star baseball player, a young man of 18

KATHY, Hank's employee and girlfriend, a woman in her late 40's

MARY CHARLES, Kathy's daughter, a strong student and videogamer, a genderqueer person of 18

BOBBY PRITCHARD, a young man, 18, played by POSS or MARY CHARLES

MARTHA, a young woman, 18, played by POSS or MARY CHARLES

CLEM, Martha's father, played by HANK

MARGARET, Martha's mother, played by KATHY

BOOZER, Clem's friend, played by CYN

The Revelation of Bobby Pritchard

We enter a church.

As the audience assembles, MARY CHARLES, wearing a smart, gender-neutral outfit, and POSS, in Sunday best, prepare the space. They might hang simple decorations, arrange some flowers, organize hymnals, etc.

CYN, wearing a nice blouse and slacks, arrives and stands near the altar. At some point MARY CHARLES may present CYN with flowers and may help her arrange a bouquet.

MARTA appears in a billowing dress, not a typical wedding dress, but something light and airy. She may also carry a bouquet. She is escorted by POSS.

MARTA and CYN begin a wordless exchange of vows. No one officiates.

HANK appears. The others notice him. They are surprised, and happily surprised, to see him. POSS is especially happy.

After some time with the wordless vows...

MARTA

I do.

A single gunshot.

MARY CHARLES

Holy crap!

POSS

What the —

CYN

My God!

MARTA

Lord Jesus!

HANK

O, Heavenly Father...

POSS

Everybody get down!

CYN

You said this wouldn't happen! Bluster!

MARY CHARLES

Who's shooting at us?

HANK

There it is. 600 feet a second headed straight for us.

We might see a single bullet, suspended. It's fine if we don't.

MARTA

Why does it look like it's barely moving?

HANK

Our minds are racing faster.

MARTA

Daddy always said "Know how to calculate your trajectory." Remember, Hank?

HANK

Can't remember that now.

MARTA

Our lives depend on your memory.

HANK

There are no real memories. Only reconstructions based on how you feel now.

MARTA

How do you feel now?

HANK

Done for.

POSS

Just get down!

MARTA

Daddy must have taught you about speeding bullets.

HANK

Lessons learned on speeding bullets are recalled differently when one is on its way.

MARTA

Is your life flashing, Brother? Mine sure as Hell is.

HANK

Galoshes. Galoshes and the snowy day.

MARY CHARLES

Where did it come from?

MARTA

I reckon that shot started on its way that fourth frigid February midnight revelation of Bobby Pritchard that finally woke me up.

CYN and MARTA reenact an earlier moment. CYN "sleeps" and MARTA looks like she's waking from a bad dream.

No! NOOOOOOOOOOOO!

CYN

Wake up! Marta, wake up!!

MARTA

NOOOOOOOOOO!

Oh.

CYN

Bobby again?

MARTA

He was meaner.

CYN

You've never said he was mean.

MARTA

He wasn't till now.

CYN

Were you still eighteen?

MARTA

He was. But I was right now.

CYN

That's new.

MARTA

He gave me an ultimatum, Cyn.

The actor playing POSS (or maybe the actor playing MARY CHARLES) has now transformed into BOBBY PRITCHARD.

BOBBY

Tell your brother.

MARTA

I can't tell –

BOBBY

Tell your brother what you saw.

MARTA

I don't even know him.

BOBBY

Water shrouds and river rocks and thorny bush and “Oh Lord, dear Lord” and “DO YOU REPENT YOUR SIN?” and thundersnow and lightning truth and (*singing*) “Go down seven times!”

MARTA

I told Cyn!

BOBBY

Tell Hank!

MARTA

It's been fifty years!

BOBBY

And you don't have much longer.

BOBBY is gone and transforms back to POSS (or MARY CHARLES).

CYN

Well, he is right about that.

MARTA

Thanks!

CYN

Did he tell you how much longer? Because we are not going to one of those high-downpayment retirement villages if you're gonna croak //on me in a couple of months.

MARTA

Especially if we get the pricey two-bedroom, which you'll insist on if I keep this up.

CYN

I told you that lemon torte would have its revenge.

MARTA

If you wouldn'ta made it so good I wouldn'ta been tempted to eat so much.

CYN

You just need to listen to Bobby, sweets.

MARTA

Stop talking about him like he's a real deal.

CYN

He was real.

MARTA

Fifty years ago!

CYN

He's been in our bedroom four nights this week.

MARTA

He's just a bad dream!

CYN

Eighteen year old boys from Boiling Springs are not welcome in our bedroom under any circumstances.

MARTA

I'll get help.

CYN

You've already got it.

MARTA

You can NOT treat your wife.

CYN

Memories are like dead bodies. You can drown them, but eventually they'll float. Traumatic amnesia, which, granted, you were a little old to have, or some global memory impairment that is just now reassociating // in the form of Bobby Pritchard

MARTA

Why is he making me tell now, I wonder?

CYN

Ask Bobby when you see him next.

MARTA

I don't believe in that ...whuddya call it...lucid dreaming?

CYN

The article got you re-electrifying long dormant neurons, stimulating sensorimotor impulses saying get your body back to Boiling Springs to say what you should have said fifty years ago. For us. Now get cracking!

MARTA

But Hank was only three then.

CYN

He's not three now.

MARTA

Sounds like another ultimatum.

CYN

One ultimatum a night is enough, I think.

MARTA

You reckon I'm dying?

CYN

Nothing I can't fix with a pumpkin roll. Let's pick a weekend to go there.

MARTA

Dead bodies sink again, eventually. Once the blowflies and the maggots and the vultures eat their way through all the rotten flesh // the bones'll just sink to the –

CYN

Pick a weekend!

MARTA

Fifty years!

CYN

And I hope we have fifty more. But profound sleep deprivation is guaranteed to make that insuperable.

MARTA

I wish you spoke English.

CYN

(in Southern) But that dawg won't hunt!

MARTA

Bless your heart!

CYN

We'll plan our trip tomorrow at ice cream.

MARTA

This is the last thing I want to talk about at ice cream.

CYN

We're going to talk about it at ice cream.

MARTA

I thought one ultimatum a night was enough.

CYN

Ice cream is tomorrow. So look forward. Rocky road.

HANK interrupts.

HANK

I think that shot started on its way the day Poss got redunked. Kathy was there.

KATHY is there in Sunday best, as she, HANK and POSS reenact an earlier moment. CYN, MARTA and MARY CHARLES can help transform the space

into a river. HANK, POSS and KATHY are waist-deep in a river.

HANK and KATHY

(singing) Lead us down by your gentle river
Wash our sins away, Oh Lord!
Goodness flows down your blessed river
Goodness knows no sin, Oh Lord.

HANK

Nice turn out, huh son?

Well friends, least the river ain't completely dried up yet, right? Although I can't recall ever having to walk out to the very middle. Little rain prayer won't hurt while we're at it. Lake's down twelve feet // since August

KATHY

It's past 3, Hank. I got the windows to clean.

HANK

And I do thank you all for coming and for your support today.

Dear Lord, we ask you today to take your servant Oren back into your fold. To lift him up on eagles' wings. And to accept his repentance.

Oren, do you repent your sin?

POSS

Yes, sir.

HANK

And do you accept the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ?

POSS

Yes, sir.

HANK

Then I baptize you, Oren, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

HANK baptizes POSS in the river by immersing him backwards, as he and KATHY hold his back for support and lift him up out of the river.

Thanks, folks. We surely do appreciate it.

KATHY

And we got a winter special at the marina, so come on by.

That was real nice, Hank. Although Reverend Wheeler says “Holy Spirit”, not “Holy Ghost.”

HANK leaves “the river” with POSS. KATHY and the others are gone.

HANK

How ya feel?

POSS

Cold.

HANK

Inside.

POSS

Same.

HANK

You tell your Mama // about this?

POSS

I want her to come back!

HANK

Blessing she missed this.

POSS

Blessing she did.

HANK

Whole thing is a blessing.

POSS

Doesn't feel like it.

HANK

For this son of mine was dead and is alive again. He was lost and now is found.

POSS

Wish I'd never met David.

HANK

Temptation is part of // growing up

POSS

They cheer when the methheads get redunked, but get caught like I did and they stand there stone-faced // because my sin

HANK

That boy was a temptation like any other, no better no worse, and they oughtn't to cherry-pick their sins and they all know it deep down.

POSS

Thought being a pitcher with a decent hanging curve and an eighty mile an hour fastball might count for something.

HANK

You get to ninety this season, that'll shut 'em up.

POSS

Shit smeared on my locker!

HANK

Christ taught us how to bear up.

POSS

I prayed to Christ on this since I was nine. Gettin' redunked one Sunday? Right.

HANK

Then what else do we do?

POSS

The Pritchard Facility.

HANK

Drought's killing the business.

POSS

Lake hasn't dried up yet.

HANK

And without your Mother's income // there's no way I can afford -

POSS

I'll pay you back // this summer after -

HANK

We'll talk after the season.

POSS

I want to go now.

HANK

Recruiters coming in two weeks.

POSS

But if I suck.... Poor choice of words.

HANK

You got the best arm in the county.

POSS

It's not my arm that needs fixing! Look, they passed the plate in church so Kathy Haggard could pay for Mary to go there, // they can do the same

HANK

Mary Haggard is a whole 'nother story. She may well be beyond prayer for what she did, but you are most definitely not. You're gonna have to let the Lord handle this one, Oren.

POSS

Why am I not a huge embarrassment to you? Or am I, and you're just too good a man to show it?

HANK

Once we get dried off, let's have a catch. Some fishing, then? In what's left of Lake Love?

POSS

Gotta finish Great Expectations.

HANK

I could sure do with a catch this afternoon, Oren.

POSS

Please ask Reverend Wheeler to pass the plate for me next Sunday, Daddy. They'll fill it. Same ones who smeared my locker, probably.

MARTA interrupts.

MARTA

This all started a lot longer ago than that. You got to go way back, Hank. Back to Daddy. Back to Bobby. Back to me when I still had my H.

POSS is gone. HANK transforms into his father, CLEM O'REGAN, who is there, fifty years earlier, baptizing.

CLEM

(sings) Go down by that river
 Go down seven times!
 Go down by that river
 Go down seven times!
 Hand of God gonna lead you down
 Hand of the Deacon won't let you drown!
 Go down by that glorious river
 Go down seven times!

*CLEM is gone, or maybe he's in the background.
 POSS and MARY CHARLES have transformed into
 BOBBY and MARTHA, who is MARTA, 50 years
 ago. BOBBY has been beaten up.*

BOBBY

And on top of that, Martha? They smeared shit on my locker.

MARTHA

Assholes.

BOBBY

My nose got so swollen I couldn't even smell it though!

MARTHA

Figures they wore masks.

BOBBY

Smelled like Clinton Truth. You know. Hay and Old Spice. Whiff o' Harry Boozer.

MARTHA

Did they say anything?

BOBBY

"This fist taste as good as Michael Brooks?"

MARTHA

I think Clinton Truth has a thingading for Harry Boozer.

BOBBY

So far they have the good sense not to get caught.

MARTHA

How about we get caught?

BOBBY

Too late for that.

MARTHA

We tell them I turned you around. We'll go to the Spring semi-formal and slow dance. Even when everyone else is doing the Mashed Potato. You're not going with Ella Fortney, right?

BOBBY

She dumped me as soon as she heard, of course.

MARTHA

So we do some nice moves. Tango! Some sexy stuff. Your hands all over me.

BOBBY

Ella says, "I shoulda known all along. You dance too good."

MARTHA

OK. Then we tell them we found each other while praying together. You were so broken up after Ella dumped you that you asked me to join you in contemplation // so that you could heal

BOBBY

Don't lie about that.

MARTHA

I do sincerely pray for you each day for you.

BOBBY

To change?

MARTHA

To be smart. So let's both be smart. We dance. The way they want. Straight down the aisle.

BOBBY

They might fall for that.

MARTHA

Their prayers are answered! On both fronts.

BOBBY

You're lucky they don't have any idea about you.

MARTHA

Girls who like to dance don't arouse suspicion. But I think Mama's starting to wonder. Not a bad life with me as your wife.

BOBBY

Not a real life.

MARTHA

But life. At least.

BOBBY

I think your father sent Clinton and Harry.

MARTHA

My Daddy's a preacher!

BOBBY

Hence the need for henchmen.

MARTHA

See, using words like "hence" ain't a smart choice.

BOBBY

You and me at the altar. Lotta head shakin'.

MARTHA

Lotta Hallelujah.

BOBBY

And after?

MARTHA

We know who we are.

BOBBY

Can't get caught.

MARTHA

We're married. Who's looking? Long as I do the cooking!

BOBBY

I imagine we wouldn't be the first ones.

MARTHA

Hardly. Hell, maybe Clinton's folks. Maybe Harry Boozer's. Seriously! You watch the way John Boozer gazes at Carl Truth at Fellowship luncheon when they put out the meatballs. God knows.

BOBBY

God knows.

MARTHA

Yes He does, Bobby Pritchard. Sure does.

BOBBY sings a made up country tune and tries to get MARTHA to sing with him.

BOBBY

(sings) God knows
 How I'll ever get out from under
 Your spell and the wonder-
 Ful Hell that your draggin' me through.
 God knows
 How I'll ever get free from the thunder
 And lightning that you're
 Frightening me with, you devilish you.

MARTHA joins in.

MARTHA and BOBBY

God knows
 How I'm drowning each day
 In a brimstony pool
 Where you made me a fool for you.
 God knows ...

MARTHA

I couldn't come up with any more.

BOBBY

We gotta finish it! We've only got three weeks until Patsy Cline's // in Atlanta.

MARTHA

It's not like anyone's gonna//seriously listen to it.

BOBBY

Her manager's not going to give us five seconds if we don't have // a finished song.

MARTHA

How are we even gonna meet her manager // anyway?

BOBBY

I wrote to her agency and I said we were coming to the Atlanta show –

MARTHA

He don't know us from // a haystack

BOBBY

I sent // a picture

MARTHA

We can't even write down the music.

BOBBY

Which is why I've got to play it for him. Look, this is my best chance to get out of here!! Maybe my only chance. And let me tell you one thing, Martha O'Regan. We might fool them for a while, but do you really want to live like that for the next fifty years?

MARTHA

We'll figure out the ending. Flash of inspiration.

BOBBY

Better. Your Daddy's looking to rebaptize me and it's a mighty cold river in February.

CLEM's voice is heard, as he transforms back into HANK, and BOBBY and MARTA transform back into POSS and MARY CHARLES.

CLEM

(sings) Go down by that river
Go down seven times!
Go down by that river
Go down seven times!
Hand of God gonna lead you down
Hand of the Deacon won't let you drown!

A second gunshot. MARY CHARLES, POSS, CYN, MARTA and HANK are now frozen at the altar as before.

POSS

Everybody get down!

CYN

You said this wouldn't happen! Bluster!

MARY CHARLES

Who's shooting at us?

MARTA

A second shot.

HANK

Traveling as slow as the first.

We might see a second bullet suspended. It's fine if we don't.

MARTA

Maybe it's all the resistance. All the friction.

HANK

This church has sadly become a place of resistance and friction.

MARY CHARLES

Where did it come from?

MARTA

I think this shot started on its way at the Valentine's night revelation of Bobby Pritchard.

MARTA and CYN reenact a scene from earlier. Again CYN sleeps and MARTA looks like she's waking from a bad dream.

MARTA

No. NO. NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO! NOOOOO! Oh. I'm sorry.

CYN

I was thinking you'd sleep through this one. You were singing there for a while.

MARTA

Singing? Oh. Not me. Bobby.

BOBBY is there, with MARTA.

BOBBY

When you go, you can't just leave it at Hank.

MARTA

Another ultimatum?

BOBBY

You've got to tell the whole town. The whole world! Interweb, twitface, linkpin, all of it!

MARTA

You really need to keep up. And what happens if I don't?

BOBBY

They're using my name. The Robert Pritchard Facility for Dejected, Rejected, Objected
Subjected, Depressed, Repressed, Suppressed, Oppressed, Doubly Bubbly, Troubly, Struggly
Youth!

MARTA

Just like Daddy said.

BOBBY

So the story goes his way for eternity? Waterwails and "Bobby struggled" and (*singing*) 'Hand
of the Deacon // won't -

MARTA

You're not a friendly ghost.

BOBBY

You saw how I became one.

MARTA

They'll run me out of the place.

BOBBY

No they won't. They're more likely to crucify you. J/K as the kids say. I keep up.

MARTA

I wouldn't be a bit surprised.

BOBBY

You're the only one left who knows.

MARTA

And I'm old as gold, thank you for reminding me.

BOBBY

Hey, remember this one? (*sings*) God knows

MARTA

Please, no.

BOBBY

(*sings*) How I'll ever get out from under
Your spell and the wonder-
Ful Hell that your draggin' me through.

You remember. Sure you do! Sing along! SING ALONG!! We got FIVE MINUTES!

(singing louder and louder) God knows
How I'll ever get free from the thunder
And lightning that you're
Frightening me with, you devilish you.

MARTA

No. NO! NOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

BOBBY

Tell them all!

MARTHA

And if I don't?

BOBBY

I'll see you in your dreams.

BOBBY is gone.

CYN

Catchy tune.

MARTA

Hopefully the singing was better than the screaming.

CYN

Pick a weekend.

MARTA

You're so busy. All those seasonal affective disorders.

CYN

I have not seen a patient on a weekend in the thirty-odd years you have known me.

MARTA

It's at least two planes and a rental car.

CYN

Sweets...Mr. Lee just left his chocolate Valentine hearts in our mailbox. I desperately want him to find the both of us here next Valentine's Day.

MARTA

It was Valentine's Day when I left Boiling Springs. Three days after Bobby. The river must have been so cold.

CYN

Tomorrow at ice cream we pick a weekend.

MARTA

April is nice. Azaleas and all.

HANK interrupts.

HANK

I think that shot came from The Pritchard Facility for Struggling Youth.

HANK and the others can help us see that we're now at The Pritchard Facility. POSS and MARY CHARLES are there, and the others are gone. MARY CHARLES now speaks in a British accent.

MARY CHARLES

I say, why so downcast, old chap? Chin, chin! I say, // why so downcast old –

POSS

Give it a rest.

MARY CHARLES

You've no cause to fret so. Surely if I can keep a stiff upper biscuit you should be able to do the same. You'll find it's all quite pleasant after the initial rounds of probing psychiatric evaluation. // "Why do you make these choices?"

POSS

What is your problem?

MARY CHARLES

I can't for the life of me figure out how I, M. Charles Haggard, 7 Belgrave Square, London, SW1, am living in the Pritchard Facility for Struggling Youth in // Boiling Springs...what state is this?

POSS

You're not British, OK?! And you're not nuts, either, so quit that.

MARY CHARLES

And perhaps you can tell me why they have issued me this rather revolting SKIRT to wear?

POSS

You're a girl!

MARY CHARLES

So unstylish! Knee-length khaki ORLON! It's quite beyond the dark side of the –

KATHY and HANK are there. HANK has a sports bag with POSS' baseball glove. KATHY has a box.

Mummy! How delightful you've come! Give us a kiss! Mwah, mwah! We've been having ever so much fun! I'm off to the cricket pitch at half past Michaelmas, but there's just time // for a spot of tea

KATHY

Mary.

MARY CHARLES

You'll absolutely love the scones they serve here, and the clotted creamsickles are just // divine.

KATHY

Mary!

MARY CHARLES

But you simply must give them your Yorkshire pudding recipe, Mummy! They can't make a Yorkshire pudding WORTH SHIT!

HANK

That's enough, Mary Haggard! You talk to your mother like a normal person.

MARY CHARLES

So now I'm a normal person?

KATHY

Mary.

MARY CHARLES

Charles!

KATHY

MARY!

MARY CHARLES

CHARLES!

KATHY

I could have killed your father for that middle name.

MARY CHARLES

Ah, but it was the gin what done 'im in!

KATHY

I drove all this way to see you, // the least

MARY CHARLES

Congratulations on getting your license back.

HANK

I was happy to drive your Mama.

MARY CHARLES

Yes, well what with your own flesh and spawn here, too, Deacon. We're thriving, as you//can see.

HANK

How are you, son?

MARY CHARLES

Aw shucks, I'm fine, Pop. I'd much rather be here addressing my disgusting flaws than back home being star pitcher for the Bruins –

HANK

That's enough out of you!

MARY CHARLES

Easy, Deacon.

KATHY

Makes me sick to see you like this.

MARY CHARLES

Then why look if I make you ill?

KATHY

I'm sick for you, not because of you.

MARY CHARLES

Must've made you near puke when Reverend Wheeler passed the plate for us. "Surely you can open up your wallets and give up your booze bucks to allow these children the chance to have the bourgeois life that you all enjoy! Dig deep, people!!"

HANK

People gave 'cause they want the best for you.

POSS

You're not even trying.

MARY CHARLES

Mummy, I've been waiting all week for you to pinch my new skirt. Do you like it? DO YOU LIKE MY SKIRT?

KATHY

It's real nice.

MARY CHARLES

How about you, Deacon? Isn't it grand? Come on and pinch it. It stretches real good!

KATHY

I wrote sixty-five handwritten thank-you notes to people who care enough about // you to

MARY CHARLES

"Let's dig deep so they can put Mary Haggard in a goddamn stretchy orlon khaki skirt so she can spread her legs real easy and take ALL your gentlemen's donations!"

POSS

Don't talk to my father // like that.

MARY CHARLES rips off the skirt.

MARY CHARLES

The next person who forces me to wear one of these things had better be prepared to die.

MARY CHARLES is gone.

KATHY

Told you she wouldn't try. Talk to her, will you, Oren? I think she respects you.

KATHY is gone.

POSS

I'm trying, Daddy.

HANK

Brought a glove. There a place we can have a catch?

POSS

They say you're supposed to hug me more. That I'm actually craving undelivered paternal masculine touch.

HANK

I told them I rebaptized you.

POSS

You're only a Deacon.

HANK

If you want me to get Reverend Wheeler...

POSS

He's been here. Twice. Mary spat on him. Don't know if he's coming back.

So I guess we should hug.

HANK

A hug? Could have done that for free.

POSS

There's a lot of hugging here. Oddly large amounts. Doctor Parker's the worst. He smells like cheese and he's got a gut.

HANK

And that's supposed to help?

POSS

Robert Pritchard was deprived of paternal masculine touch.

A hug. HANK and POSS are gone. KATHY and MARY CHARLES are there.

KATHY

Reverend Wheeler buried your Daddy for free.

MARY CHARLES

Ah, what a kind and humble old vicar he is.

KATHY

You don't spit at anyone!

MARY CHARLES

He prayed for my sanity!

KATHY

After what you did, so do I. Here. I brought you these.

MARY CHARLES opens the box and takes out a girly-frilly Easter hat. She tosses it away.

MARY CHARLES

You promised you'd watch // the video!

KATHY

You don't look like those girls. You could tell just by looking at them // there was something wrong with them.

MARY CHARLES

People, not girls.

KATHY

You put any of those girls in an Easter hat and they'd look ridiculous, whereas you'd look // so lovely

MARY CHARLES

I'd feel ridiculous.

KATHY

You used to love nothing better.

You completely missed what else is in the box.

MARY CHARLES pulls out a handheld gaming device.

Completely against the rules, of course. But now you can kill all your dragons or warlocks or whatever's on there if that makes you happy. And I knew they wouldn't look under the hat.

They say I'm to hug you more. I thought I hugged you a lot.

A hug.

MARY CHARLES

Just let me come home with you. Please. All I hear is how I'm wrong.

KATHY

We paid for the full month.

MARY CHARLES throws the gaming device.

Least you could do is apologize to Reverend Wheeler for what you did. Like a bullet right through me.

MARY CHARLES is gone. KATHY plays a game on MARY CHARLES' gaming device and sings a hymn.

(sings) The waters of Bethesda's pool
Were to the outward eye as clear
And to the outward touch as cool
Before the Visitant drew near.

During this, MARTA interrupts.

MARTA

It didn't start that day.

HANK

But the next day...

*The others can help us see that we're now at
HANK'S marina; KATHY's still playing the game.*

HANK

Mama loved that hymn. Although I doubt she ever sang it while playing Zombie Invasion.

KATHY

Doctor says it's an acceptable compulsion. And I finished the invoices. Wish there were more.
Ben Connor came by. Bought a filter he didn't need. So that was nice.

HANK

If I had a dime for every time some neighbor did a mercy purchase...well, I guess I do!

KATHY

And Sally Marshall's trying to convince her cousins in Michigan to come for a long weekend.

HANK

Bless her.

KATHY

That's all you. Thank you for driving yesterday.

HANK

She'll come around. They both will.

KATHY

I used to wish for peace and quiet in the house. After two weeks of spending the night alone I know what they mean by "careful what you wish for."

HANK

I never wished for it. Never.

KATHY

Thank God for the church. Tuesday's hymnal dusting. Six wipes on each side. That's a good hour and a half. Wednesday's window night. Two hours at least. Six wipes on each pane. From Gabriel to Balthazar, the Nativity window's thirty minutes alone. But Monday's vacuuming. Six times down the aisle's still only twenty minutes or so and then what do I do? What then?

I made a lasagna. As thanks for yesterday. I'd love it if you'd stay when you drop me off home. And don't tell me you have a lot of work to do.

HANK

It's just...Pamela. If she calls.

KATHY

When's the last time she called? When's the last time she did anything for you?

HANK

How about we swing by and pick it up and take it to my place. My car in your driveway and all...

HANK and KATHY kiss.

Yes, I do believe that was Mama's favorite hymn.

MARTA interrupts.

MARTA

It was Mama's favorite. She always sang it when she sewed.

KATHY transforms into MARGARET, HANK's mother. She is now sewing a wedding dress but singing the same hymn. HANK watches her.

MARGARET

(sings) A glimpse of glories far more bright
Than earth can give is mirrored there
And perfect purity and light
The presence of its God declared.

Oh my goodness! It's snowing! Martha! Get Hank! It's snowing!

MARTHA is there.

MARTHA

Snow! Real snow!

MARGARET

Get Hank's galoshes!

MARTHA and HANK

Martha leaves.

MARGARET and HANK

Mama stays. Mama gets angry. Mama gets sad. Mama leaves.

MARGARET is gone.

MARTHA and HANK

Martha comes back with the galoshes. Martha sings some made up tune. (*singing*) "Drowning each day...I'm drowning each day..."

HANK

What happened next??

MARTHA and HANK

Six clicks. Click click click click click click...just like Daddy's –

A third gunshot. MARY CHARLES, POSS, CYN, MARTA and HANK are frozen at the altar as before.

POSS

Everybody get down!

CYN

You said this wouldn't happen! Bluster!

MARY CHARLES

Who's shooting at us?

MARTA

A third shot.

We might see a third bullet suspended. It's fine if we don't.

Dear Lord, if we get out of this I will never ever leave clothes on the floor again and I will stop all electronics at 10 p.m. and I will stop pouring delivery boys the fine wine.

HANK

Remember I was here for my son.

MARTA

Remember there's no such thing anymore as a true memory?

HANK

Then my son will have the first one!

MARTA

Hank, I never in a million years meant for this to happen.

HANK

These shots would have been fired eventually.

MARY CHARLES

Where did it come from?

MARTA

I think that shot started on its way from my early March online message.

*MARTA and CYN and HANK and KATHY reenact
online moments that took place in their different
homes. CYN and MARTA now have ice cream.*

MARTA

Dear Hank. Or are you Henry now? I found you on the Internet. Henry O'Regan Boating and Watersports. How many others could there be, right? I know this'll hit you like a hot shot. I'm your sister Martha. And even though it's been forever, I'm hoping you'll remember me.

CYN

Not hoping. Needing. I need you to remember me.

MARTA

You can't say that in Southern.

HANK

Martha. Bless your heart.

KATHY

Maybe she thinks your Mama left you some money.

MARTA

There's something I need to tell you.

CYN

About our father.

MARTA

When we get there.

CYN

About our father!

MARTA

About Daddy.

HANK

He's twenty years gone.

MARTA

Oh, I know. Mama wrote me a birthday card every year.

KATHY

Made us some chili for when we get back.

MARTA

I missed her card this year. Did she...

HANK

We all miss her.

MARTA

I figured. Last year's handwriting looked like Daddy stumbling up the drive on the way home from McCaffrey's.

HANK

I don't recall my father ever drinking.

MARTA

Mama did say he stopped after I left. And she kept me up to date about you, your son.

KATHY

We best be on the road.

HANK

Minute.

KATHY

The Facility closes to visitors at 5:30.

HANK

This is a real stressful time for our family.

MARTA

I'm your sister.

HANK

For my family.

MARTA

I don't mean to cause you any distress.

CYN

There is no statute of limitations on this!

MARTA

We'll be there just after Easter.

KATHY

I thank God for you every second, Hank O'Regan.

HANK

You got family?

MARTA

My wife.

HANK

KATHY

But if we don't get going!

HANK

They just renovated the motel. Here's the link.

I'd best be going.

MARTA

This was our worst ice cream ever.

CYN

My fudge ripple was divine.

MARY CHARLES interrupts.

MARY CHARLES

No. The third shot came from the third week in The Pritchard Facility for Struggling Youth.

*MARY CHARLES and POSS are there; the others
are gone.*

MARY CHARLES

(sings) And did those feet in ancient times
Walk upon England's mountains green.
And was the holy lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?

What kind of a name is Oren?

POSS

What kind of a name is Mary Charles?

MARY CHARLES

Prescient. Evolving. Oren's just –

POSS

Team calls me Spice.

MARY CHARLES

'Cause they all think you're cool hot?

POSS

My name's Oren O'Regan. Now call my name like it's written on the roster.

MARY CHARLES

O'Regan, O.

POSS

The apostrophe always gets left out. Say it again.

MARY CHARLES

Oregan, O. Oh. Ha ha.

POSS

What's with the British boy aristocrat act?

MARY CHARLES

What's with the straight jock act?

POSS

I am a jock.

MARY CHARLES

And I'm a boy. And a girl. Both at once. And neither ever. Like Schrodinger's cat – one hundred percent alive and one hundred percent dead at the same time.

POSS

I didn't understand that in Physics, and I don't understand what you're talking // about now.

MARY CHARLES

I have a way out.

POSS

I don't want out.

MARY CHARLES

We pretend to have sex and let them catch us. "We're cured! We're cured!" Spy camera's right behind us, you know.

POSS

They don't buy it when people try that.

MARY CHARLES

Because they zoom in. And the boy isn't hard. But if they see how stiff you are when I'm sucking you off...

POSS

There's only two weeks left.

MARY CHARLES

Next week they make me walk around like I'm pregnant so I can feel the fulfillment of a divinely-filled uterus. God knows what they're gonna make you do. And I miss Physics. So... you pretend I'm your hot and eye-easy Calhoun Falls shortstop.

POSS

I am gonna beat the crap outta you, boy, girl, shim, sheman, whatever // you are -

MARY CHARLES

Don't you make fun of me, God damn it!

POSS

Don't take the Lord's name // in vain like that!

MARY CHARLES

Do you believe there are things God means for us to not understand?

POSS

Yes, physics.

MARY CHARLES

Be serious! Do you believe there are things God means for us to not understand?

POSS

Yes.

MARY CHARLES

Then I am one of them. And so are you. What's that longhair shortstop's name? David? How come he's not here?

POSS

His parents are hippies from Atlanta. Moved out here to be off the grid.

MARY CHARLES

I hope he's on the grid enough to have sexted you so you can get it up when we make out.

POSS

Um, they took our phones?

MARY CHARLES

Oh, so you did have some sexy pixels!

POSS

Whatever.

MARY CHARLES

And wait...you honestly gave them your real phone? See, I was smart enough to bring along my circa 2010 flip phone. "Oh yeah, sure, take it if you must. But I REALLY need it back." Idiots.

POSS

Does it not bother you that you're wasting church money? Especially after what you did.

MARY CHARLES

If they were serious they'd feed us hormones and ecstasy. Hey, what if I showed you my tits?

POSS

My Daddy says he thinks you're gonna drive your Mama crazy.

MARY CHARLES

Look at these. 'Stead of prayer sessions and hugs from Daddy they ought to prescribe an hour or two a day with these babies.

POSS

Stop.

MARY CHARLES

Touch therapy. Full immersion. Guard on camera duty is jerking off right now. What about you? Don't you want to get hard from a nice soft pair like mine?? You want to want these. Even if you don't want 'em now, you want to want these, right? Right? RIGHT??

POSS

RIGHT!

MARY CHARLES

Then have at 'em! Go to town! Get to know the pleasures of soft female fleshiness. Show the world how much you like 'em, Spice man! There we go. Now let me get to what I'm supposed to want! Let me see that Spicy stick! Point it towards the camera and show 'em how you're cured!

MARY CHARLES pulls down POSS's pants.

POSS

I don't lie!!

MARY CHARLES

Yes you do.

Pull up your pants.

POSS

It's a family name. Oren. Buried middle name for most. Not for me.

MARY CHARLES

Spice works.

POSS

A man can't be called Spice.

MARY CHARLES

Time to pick your own name.

POSS

They forgot the apostrophe in O'Regan here, too. On my door, on my charts, on my freakin' uniform. Freakin' therapist calls me Oregon, like the state. "Time for reimaging and densensitization, Oregon." "Time for recite the story of Robert Pritchard, Oregon." It's O, apostrophe, R, E, G, A, N. O APOSTROPHE!! He says, "Why are you flipping out about an apostrophe?" "Cause it's a huge part of who I am! You can't just ignore it! APOSTROPHE!!"

MARY CHARLES

Call yourself Apostrophe then. Make them acknowledge.

POSS

Poss.

Poss.

MARY CHARLES

Hey, Poss.

POSS

Hey, Marycharles.

MARY CHARLES

I'm thinking "Marychuck". Southern and all.

POSS

Hey y'all. This is my friend Marychuck! She's awesome. Oops.

MARY CHARLES

They. They're awesome. That'll do until I invent more satisfactory pronouns.

Schrodinger was uneasy with the wave-particle duality of quantum theory. To prove its absurdity he imagines a cat is trapped in a box with a decaying radioactive particle and a cyanide flask. If the atom does decay, the cyanide is released and the cat dies. But if the atom doesn't decay, the cat lives. Quantum theory says the cat can be both alive and dead at the same time.

POSS

I still don't get it.

MARY CHARLES

Schrodinger was hung up on duality. Didn't think two states could co-exist.

POSS

I still don't get it.

MARY CHARLES

Either do I. Which is why I don't want to miss any more Physics.

POSS

Why'd you poop on the church lawn?

MARY CHARLES

Because I had to go.

POSS

There are bathrooms.

MARY CHARLES

And I went down the hall and I looked at the icons on the two doors and I saw the choice that lay before me. And I struggled, as always, with a forced choice that does not reflect the way I feel. And I refused to choose.

POSS

Couldn't you have waited 'til you got home after the service?

MARY CHARLES

Couldn't you have waited till you were sure you were alone before you started kissing on the other team's shortstop?

POSS

Can I use your phone?

MARY CHARLES

They catch you texting your boyfriend –

POSS

I can smell Doctor Parker a hundred feet away.

MARY CHARLES

You wanna pray or something?

POSS

Don't make fun.

MARY CHARLES

I'm not. It's the one part of here I like.

POSS

What do you pray for?

MARY CHARLES

To be 100 percent alive when I get out of the box. And for somebody who understands.

MARY CHARLES and POSS

(singing) Lead us down by your gentle river
Wash our sins away, Oh Lord!
Goodness flows down your blessed river
Goodness knows no sin –

KATHY and HANK are there with a chess pie.

KATHY

Don't let us stop you! We just brought you this. You sound real pretty...Mary Charles.

Better hugs. MARTA interrupts.

MARTA

Why do some people think there are choices when there aren't choices? Mama knew.

KATHY and HANK transform into MARGARET and CLEM. MARGARET hands off the chess pie and sews a wedding dress.

MARGARET

Four chess pies. That'll have to do it. No time with this dress to finish.

CLEM

I could throw one together for you.

MARGARET

Clem O'Regan, the last thing I need is you in my kitchen.

CLEM

Better'n me sewin' that dress. It's real pretty, Margaret.

MARGARET

I'm worried it's gettin' too frilly. Good thing it's gotta be done in two days or it might be all lace and no Martha.

CLEM

She'll stand out. Don't worry.

MARGARET

Gotta leave myself time tomorrow to take in George's tux or Bobby'll be swimming in it. Drowning in it // he's so

CLEM

Told you not to let them run you ragged.

MARGARET

Well, Clem, what do you expect with such short notice?!!! I do apologize.

CLEM

Long engagements just leave time for the Devil to plant second thoughts.

MARGARET

They ought to at least look pretty.

CLEM

Taking Bobby down to the river tomorrow.

MARGARET

Awful cold snap.

CLEM

No choice but to do it.

MARGARET

There's always a choice, isn't there?

CLEM

And some choices are bad.

MARGARET

Grandma Kate always said, "an inconvenient truth always beats a pretty // lie in the long run

CLEM

Truth is I've never seen Martha so fired up. Boy's gonna do right by her. If any woman could set a man straight it'd be Martha.

MARGARET

I don't know how they're gonna survive. That Bobby is thin as a pin and Martha can't cook enough to fatten him up and neither of 'em knows a thing // about how to take care of

CLEM

You make sure you take some time so you can be your prettiest. Lotta eyes on you Saturday.

River gonna be like ice bullets.

MARGARET sews and sings.

MARGARET

A glimpse of glories far more bright
Than earth can give is mirrored there
And perfect purity and light
The presence of its God declared.

*A fourth gunshot. MARY CHARLES, POSS, CYN,
MARTA and HANK are frozen at the altar as
before.*

POSS

Everybody get down!

CYN

You said this wouldn't happen! Bluster!

MARY CHARLES

Who's shooting at us?

HANK

A fourth shot. Nothing more to say.

We might see a fourth bullet suspended. It's fine if we don't.

MARY CHARLES

Where did it come from?

MARTA

This shot started on its way the night of the final revelation of Bobby Pritchard.

MARTA and CYN reenact their first night in the Boiling Springs Motel. CYN "sleeps", and BOBBY is there.

BOBBY

Welcome back to Boiling Springs. Good lookin' motel, huh?

MARTA

Please don't make me scream. If I wake Cyn up again she might take off and not look back.

BOBBY

You scream, I scream, who's she going to eat ice cream with every afternoon at 4:30?

MARTA

It doesn't taste so good when you're up at 4:30 a.m. and can't get back to sleep 'cause your heart's pounding from being freaked out by a screamin' dreamin' madwoman //who's remembering her –

BOBBY

Then don't scream. Sing.

MARTA

Not again!

BOBBY

(sings) God knows
How I'm drowning each day
In a brimstony pool

Where you made me a fool for you.
God knows ...

I know you finished it that night but I can't remember how it ended.

MARTA

I don't remember either. And even if I did, I'd probably remember the song all wrong.

BOBBY

I think you remember a lot. Tap dancing at Sunday School and mint chocolate chip at McGraw's and the smell of my mother's peach cobbler and I think you remember enough to // tell your brother and this town -

MARTA

We shoulda left that night. If I'd come five minutes earlier, we'da been off to Atlanta // and met with Patsy Cline's manager -

BOBBY

Wouldn't have mattered. Patsy Cline died not long after.

MARTA

Patsy Cline was only gonna be the first step.

BOBBY

So you walked all those steps for both of us. And now you're finally back.

MARTA

Telling Hank tomorrow. Then going to the place with your name where they claim you died of shame.

BOBBY

You've got to do one more thing for me.

MARTA

One at a time with the demands, please! Or at least no more than two!

BOBBY

You were only sixteen hours from your wedding. From our wedding. But it never happened.

MARTA

I was the one willing to go through with it!

BOBBY

I never lied in church.

Remember the stained glass window.

MARTA

There were a lot of // stained glass windows –

POSS

The one with the Nativity scene.

MARTA

I don't remem...Oh. Right after your service...they're cartin' you down the aisle and I look in the stained glass window with the Nativity Scene to make sure my hair is OK.

BOBBY

Can't figure that. You never cared about your hair.

MARTA

It matters to me that I look good when we bury you. And when I look, I see Gabriel and the manger and the Virgin Mary...Balthazar...but I don't see my own reflection.

CLEM is there. MARTHA is there.

CLEM

You coming, Martha? I said, you coming?

MARTHA

I prefer to ride with the Pritchards. If they'll have me.

CLEM

Suit yourself.

CLEM and MARTHA are gone.

MARTA

I had forgotten that.

BOBBY

Get married while you're here.

MARTA

Me and Cyn are already married.

BOBBY

I was watching. Not the same as getting married in Boiling Springs.

MARTA

From the way the motel clerk looked at us I'd say we'd have an underwhelming reception.

BOBBY

And get married in the church.

MARTA

We got married in a church. One that likes us.

BOBBY

You loved our church. Get married there. Where we almost got married.

MARTA

You are the funniest man alive, Bobby Pritchard!

BOBBY

How many truths have you told in Boiling Springs?

MARTA

No you're not. You're the funniest man dead!

BOBBY

How many truths, Martha?

MARTA

You never told a lie?

BOBBY

Told my mother I just had to go see Patsy Cline because I had such a big ol' crush on her. Told Ella Fortney how much I liked it when she stuck my hand up her dress at the semi-formal. Told Michael Brooks I wasn't no queer while we were putting our pants back on.

MARTA

Why confess your lies to me now?

BOBBY

I told the truth once.

MARTA

I was there.

BOBBY

One more time than you ever told the truth in Boiling Springs.

MARTA

I am telling Hank tomorrow.

BOBBY

You're older than me.

MARTA

And I am going to the place that's misusing your name after that.

BOBBY

That's two. You're way more than three times older than me.

MARTA

Barely!

BOBBY

Eighteen times three is –

MARTA

I don't need to copy your math homework anymore! And they will never let that happen.

BOBBY

Tell the Goddamn truth!

MARTA

I never heard you swear.

BOBBY

I've never been this angry.

MARTA

Cyn says you're my brain telling me things.

BOBBY

Then your brain's never been this angry.

MARTA

Why not?

BOBBY

Because it's just waking up.

MARTA

When will you go away?

BOBBY

On the way out, in the recessional, you take a look in that same window and see your reflection.
Will you do that for me?

MARTA

If I don't?

BOBBY

Do that for me. Then I'll be gone.

BOBBY is gone.

MARTA

Cyn? Wake up. He was here.

CYN

I didn't hear you scream.

MARTA

There's something else we gotta do when we're here. We gotta get married.

CYN

We're married, sweets.

MARTA

In the church. Their church. My church.

CYN

Shall we do a little cost-benefit analysis?

MARY CHARLES interrupts.

MARY CHARLES

No. That shot started on my mother's next to last visit to the Pritchard Facility.

KATHY is there with a box.

KATHY

Thank you for apologizing to Reverend Wheeler. Even if you just texted him, it was still nice.

MARY CHARLES

I'm not trying to hurt people. That's a big chess pie.

KATHY

Now before you go getting' upset, they say you have wear this when you graduate next week.

*MARY CHARLES opens the box; it's a dress, maybe
the same one MARGARET was sewing for
MARTHA.*

They won't let you leave unless you have on a white dress. Facility rules.

MARY CHARLES

Then I'll just have to stay.

KATHY

I found it in Miss Margaret's things. I always thought you liked her.

MARY CHARLES

She never gave me a hard time about my hair, at least.

KATHY

Dress is their rules, not mine. Take it off as soon as we're in the car, I don't care. I just want you home.

MARY CHARLES

I'm not trying to drive you crazy.

KATHY

I know you're not trying.

MARY CHARLES

Mary...Mary is gone. Dress or not.

KATHY

What were you praying for last time I was here?

MARY CHARLES

Someone to understand.

KATHY

Do you like praying? Or do you do it just 'cause.

MARY CHARLES

It makes me feel better.

KATHY

Glad it's workin' for you.

HANK interrupts.

HANK

That shot started the day Marta and Cyn showed up at my house.

MARTA, CYN, KATHY and HANK reenact a scene in HANK's home.

MARTA

I don't suppose McGraw's is still there. We have an ice cream party every afternoon at 4:30.

CYN

Just a little.

MARTA

It's our thing.

KATHY

How sweet.

MARTA

I used to take Hank to McGraw's. Do you remember that?

HANK

McGraw's is gone.

KATHY

They got a nice selection at the Shop'n'Save.

MARTA

Well, we shall definitely have to check that out.

HANK

Noticed your email is Marta instead of Martha.

MARTA

Name got printed wrong in a program once. I liked "Marta". Sounds more like a dancer anyway.

CYN

I thought it was Martha, too, when I met her. It was after one of her performances and I said, "Martha, you make beautiful lines in space," and she said

MARTA

"No, it's Marta. My parents couldn't afford the "H".

KATHY

Your parents did the best they could!

HANK

Kathy.

KATHY

Your Mama never got over you running away.

CYN

How could Marta not leave?

MARTA

I'm glad she had Hank here.

KATHY

She had me, too.

MARTA

Mama and I stayed in touch best as we could. I sent her programs from my performances. Even joked about losing the "H" on my way out of Boiling Springs.

KATHY

Hank doesn't even remember her.

HANK

I remember one thing.

MARTA

What do you remember?

KATHY

Your Mama didn't leave money.

CYN

That's not why we're here.

KATHY

This is a hard patch for Hank. His wife's run out // on him

HANK

They don't need to know that.

MARTA

Oh, I thought you were // Pamela

HANK

Kathy's just helping out.

KATHY

I work for Hank at the watersports. I brought over baked ziti when Pamela left.

MARTA

I'm sorry.

KATHY

And we're both active in the church.

MARTA

So was I back then.

KATHY

I take care of it. Mondays I vacuum, Tuesdays I dust the hymnals, // Wednesdays I clean the

HANK

They don't need to // know all this.

MARTA

My, I'm sure Mama rests easy knowing her chores continue to be carefully performed. Hank, can I meet your son?

HANK

Oren is...away for a while.

KATHY

Not that we're not delighted, but why are you here?

CYN

This is about your father. And it's not easy for Marta to be here. If you want to blame someone, blame me. I insisted she come. If it were up to her -

KATHY

She'd leave it lay where Jesus flang it.

MARTA

Good lord, you knew my Mama.

KATHY

Miss Margaret was good to me.

CYN

Marta has no choice in this.

KATHY

Sounds like whatever it is you want it more than her.

MARTA

It has been fifty years.

KATHY

Then why bring it up now.

CYN

Maybe if we left Marta and Hank alone –

MARTA

We should just go.

KATHY

It was just lovely meeting you.

CYN

We are not going back now!

KATHY

We should all stay in touch. Are you on any of those // Internet things?

MARTA

Cyn, there's no point.

KATHY

That's a name. Cyn.

CYN

Bobby Pritchard in our bedroom.

HANK

Bobby Pritchard? Mama said you ran away 'cause of Bobby Pritchard. Never made sense.
(*eyeing CYN*) Now I get it.

MARTA

I never told Mama about Cyn. Never told her about me. I wrote Mama I left 'cause I was a free spirit and she wrote back "Free spirits can't live in the slave states" which I thought was very odd but was her way of telling me she understood me.

HANK

What does any of this have to do with Daddy?

MARTA

Do you remember that day it really snowed? It snowed so much one afternoon.

HANK

The day it snowed.

MARTA

I helped you with your galoshes.

HANK

I don't recall.

MARTA

I took your picture. Maybe if you // can dig it out

KATHY

Why are we reminiscing about precipitation?

CYN

Sweets...just say it.

MARTA

Later that night, after you were long asleep, I snuck out of the house and went over to Bobby Pritchard's.

BOBBY and MARTHA are there.

BOBBY

Your folks know you're here?

MARTHA

Mama's dog tired from sewing my dress and Daddy's out at McCaffrey's.

BOBBY

My mother's a light sleeper.

MARTHA

Oh, Hell, we'll tell 'em we couldn't wait, that's how hot to trot we are for each other. Hey, I think I finished the song.

BOBBY

Seriously?

MARTHA

And I didn't want to wait until tomorrow night. We probably should hold off on the singing tomorrow night. Your mama ain't gonna expect to hear guitar chords coming out of this room.

BOBBY

She's going to stay over at John and LaVerne Boozer's. "Y'all need your privacy!"

MARTHA

(sings) God knows
How I'm drowning each day
In a brimstony pool
Where you made me a fool for you.

God knows
That if you are my sin
Then I take it all in and I gladly say I do! //
There, it's finished.

BOBBY

I can't do it. I won't do it.

MARTHA

You have to. We have to.

BOBBY

I won't lie like that.

MARTHA

I don't care!

BOBBY

I do!

MARTHA

You said "I do" pretty good just then.

BOBBY

I like it in the song. Let's go to Atlanta. Tonight. One chance. Five minutes with Patsy Cline's manager. We're free.

MARTHA

Atlanta's no better.

BOBBY

It's just the first step.

MARTHA

My things.

BOBBY

There's things in Atlanta.

MARTHA

My Mama.

BOBBY

Miss Margaret loves the truth.

MARTHA

Our wedding wouldn't be a lie. Love, honor, cherish, 'til death us do part?

*CLEM is there, and CYN has transformed into
CLEM's buddy BOOZER.*

CLEM and BOOZER

(singing) Go down by that river
Go down seven times!
Go down by that river
Go down seven times!

MARTA

Then Daddy was there. With a drinking buddy. I hid under Bobby's bed.

CLEM

Bobby, Bobby, Bobby. Time to get yourself cleansed.

*MARTHA hides. CLEM and BOOZER take BOBBY
to "the river". MARTHA follows.*

CLEM and BOOZER

(singing) Hand of God gonna lead you down
Hand of the Deacon won't let you drown!
Go down by that glorious river
Go down seven times!

MARTA

I followed them down to the river.

CLEM

You cold, Bobby?

BOBBY

No sir.

CLEM

Hell, even I got cold feet night before I got married. But you a pure boy, right?

BOOZER

Let's just get on with it, Clem. I'm freezin' my ass off here.

CLEM

Easy, Boozer. This a sacred moment. The moment when Bobby Pritchard renounces his sin and agrees to live a life devoted to the Lord.

BOOZER

You said it wouldn't take five minutes.

CLEM

You'll be back on your barstool in less than ten.

BOOZER

Just start it, for Chrissake.

CLEM

Guess we better 'fore you ladies get yourselves all overwrought. Hold him, Boozer. Oh Lord, dear Lord, please take your servant Robert into your fold. Show him the way! Robert, do you now repent your sin?

BOOZER

Come on, Bobby, just say it.

CLEM

I say once again, Robert, do you now repent your sin?

BOOZER

Aw, Jesus Christ, kid, don't keep us here all fuckin' night!

CLEM

I say for the third time, Robert Pritchard, do you now repent your sin and accept the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ?

BOBBY

I accept the teachings of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

CLEM

And do you repent your sin?

BOBBY

I do not feel –

CLEM

Do you repent your sin??!

BOBBY

I do not –

BOOZER

Jesus, Bobby! Just say it!

CLEM

Do you repent your sin?!!!!

BOBBY

NO!

MARTA

NO!

MARTHA

NO!

CLEM

Oh Lord, dear Lord, please take your servant Robert into your fold. Show him the way! I baptize you, Robert, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

CLEM forces BOBBY backwards into the river. There is darkness and an enormous storm. Then there is silence. Lights rise on CLEM at an altar. BOBBY is laid out before us. MARGARET, MARTHA and BOOZER pay their respects to the body. We may be encouraged to do the same. (If there is an act break here, MARGARET should clean the space and perhaps pass a collection plate.)

MARGARET has a collection plate full of money, which she prays over and places into an envelope.

CLEM

Lord, we ask you to accept this troubled soul and give him peace. Let's not forget Bobby Pritchard. Let's make sure no young man feels the need to take his own life because he is struggling with demons he cannot subdue.

You coming, Martha? I said, you coming?

MARTHA

I prefer to ride with the Pritchards. If they'll have me.

CLEM

Suit yourself.

CLEM and BOOZER carry BOBBY away. MARTHA checks her hair in the stained glass but does not see her reflection. MARGARET and MARTHA remain.

MARGARET

Martha? I made supper. I thought it was a real nice service. He looked real handsome.

MARTHA

Mama? Today at church...I was checking my hair in the stained glass, and...

MARGARET

You haven't eaten for three days!

MARTHA

Mama, Daddy...

MARGARET

Wasn't he great? You know what he told me? He's gonna personally raise money for something to really honor Bobby. He doesn't know what yet, but something really great so that Bobby Pritchard lives on forever.

MARTHA

Mama, Daddy...

MARGARET

We already got over two thousand dollars just from passing the plate today.

MARTHA

Down by the river. In the river. Mama, // I saw -

MARGARET

It was so much money I was afraid to leave it in the church. Look at it all, Martha.

MARGARET hands MARTHA the envelope full of money.

MARTHA

Look at all that. I'll...take it to the bank if you think that's a good idea.

MARGARET

You do that, Martha. That would be the best thing, I think. The best for all concerned.

MARTHA is gone. MARGARET, CLEM and BOOZER transform back to KATHY, HANK and CYN.

HANK

My father was a good man. He tried to help a troubled boy, and that boy drowned himself. And then his daughter stole from the collection plate and ran away.

MARTA

Mama wanted me to have that money but couldn't find another way.

KATHY

Miss Margaret never forgot that.

CYN

It was that money that kept Marta from being the next one killed.

MARTA

Hush, Cyn, I never thought that.

KATHY

That's way over the top.

HANK

To her credit, Mama was never angry.

KATHY

She talked about the money her very last day!

HANK

And she talked about her chess pie and Grandma Kate's icebox cookies and the way Daddy dribbled in bed. Look, Daddy worked on the Pritchard Facility the rest of his life. Cheap vacations // used cars

KATHY

He kept his promise.

HANK

John Boozer left a helluva lot in his will and that finally got it opened.

CYN

We read about that online.

MARTA

John Boozer. That's who that was. He was there that night.

HANK

And he was mightily affected, too.

CYN

I'm sure he was.

HANK

As anyone would be who had watched a boy drown himself. Daddy told that story a hundred times. Nothing new here, sister.

MARTA

Daddy killed Bobby.

HANK

KATHY

You weren't in the river with them.

CYN

You weren't even born.

KATHY

It's a scientific fact that there are no such things as real memories. Our brain recreates images from scratch every time we conjure them up. We remember what we want to remember. And how we want.

CYN

I'm a psychologist.

KATHY

This was on the Science Channel.

MARTA

I hate saying this!

KATHY

Then why say it?

CYN

Some things have to be said.

KATHY

And what business is this of yours?

CYN

We share a bed.

KATHY

Well. Y'all have a wonderful evening. It has just been so lovely to meet you.

KATHY is gone.

HANK
I believe you should leave now.

CYN
How else could he have told the story?

MARTA
It isn't fair teams anymore.

CYN is gone.

HANK
That's not the father I remember.

MARTA
Then I'm glad of that.

HANK
Why wait till now to spring this on me?

MARTA
You'd think I was crazy.

HANK
I already do.

MARTA
"An inconvenient truth always beats a pretty lie in the long run." Do you recall Mama saying that? That place can't continue to misuse Bobby's name, saying he drowned for shame. That horrible place. Place of disgrace!

HANK
My son is in that place.

MARTA
Then I will get to meet him after all.

HANK
Don't you dare tell him // what you just told me

MARTA
I have no choice!

HANK
My Daddy was a good man! Thank you for the visit.

MARTA

That day...you said you remembered galoshes. Remember it was snowing and // I helped you -

HANK

No.

MARTA

I helped you.

HANK

I don't recall.

MARTA

You must. Please.

MARTA is gone. MARGARET is there, sewing the wedding dress.

MARGARET

(sings) A glimpse of glories far more bright
Than earth can give is mirrored there
And perfect purity and light
The presence of its God declared.

Oh my goodness! It's snowing! Martha! Get Hank! It's snowing!

MARTHA is there.

MARTHA

Snow! Real snow!

MARGARET

Get Hank's galoshes!

MARTHA and HANK

Martha leaves.

MARGARET and HANK

Mama stays.

HANK

Daddy's there.

MARGARET and HANK

Mama gets angry.

HANK

Daddy yells. Daddy rages.

MARGARET and HANK

Mama gets sad.

HANK

Daddy says “Not in my house. Not ever in my house.”

MARGARET and HANK

Mama cries.

HANK

I cry.

MARGARET and HANK

Mama leaves.

MARGARET is gone.

MARTHA and HANK

Martha comes back with the galoshes. “Drowning each day...I’m drowning each day...// I’m drowning each day” “Little H. Stop your snivelin’, Little H.” Six clicks. Click click click click click click...just like Daddy’s –

A fifth gunshot. MARY CHARLES, POSS, CYN, MARTA and HANK are frozen at the altar as before.

POSS

Everybody get down!

CYN

You said this wouldn’t happen! Bluster!

MARY CHARLES

Who’s shooting at us?

We might see a fifth bullet suspended. It’s fine if we don’t.

MARTA

We know. Five shots. One for each of us.

CYN

If I hadn't called her stupid.

HANK

If I hadn't said Poss could go with David.

MARY CHARLES

If I hadn't torn off the dress.

POSS

If I hadn't read David's text.

MARTA

If I hadn't interrupted Poss.

We are in the Pritchard Facility on "Graduation Day". MARY CHARLES wears the dress.

POSS

(mocking the speech he gave that day) We are gathered here today, our last day at the Robert Pritchard Facility, to pay our last respects to the unwanted feelings of // desire and abnormality

MARY CHARLES

That's not how you read it. You sounded like you almost believed it.

POSS

(more earnestly) We are gathered here today, our last day at the Robert Pritchard Facility, to pay our last respects to the unwanted feelings of desire and abnormality that have possessed us until now, that have paralyzed and shamed us. We will bury them and not let them suck us under like they did Robert Pritchard.

That's when you interrupted.

MARTA

(quietly) Bobby Pritchard was not ashamed. Bobby Pritchard knew who he was and that God loved him. And Bobby Pritchard was murdered.

CYN

You screamed it!

MARTA

(loudly) Bobby Pritchard was not ashamed. Bobby Pritchard knew who he was and that God loved him. And Bobby Pritchard was murdered. I'm sorry. But an inconvenient truth always beats a pretty lie in the long run.

HANK

(quietly) I told you to keep your // mouth shut

MARTA

You were furious with me!

HANK

(loudly) I told you to keep your mouth shut about that!!

POSS

That's a Grandma Margaret line. Who are you?

MARTA

And I introduced myself to you. And I introduced my wife.

MARY CHARLES

And my mother objected loudly to your use of the word "wife".

CYN

It's the proper term, Mrs. Haggard. We are legally married.

MARY CHARLES

That's not all you said.

CYN

It's the proper term, Mrs. Haggard. We are legally married, you stupid woman.

Whereupon I proceeded to describe in great detail to the crowd in the facility the ridiculous and dangerous practices their children had been subjected to, aversion treatments, forced erotification of others, discredited psychoanalytic maneuvers. Whereupon I was dragged from the room by Security.

MARTA

Whereupon, with Security otherwise engaged, I told the true story of Bobby's last hours to a surprisingly attentive audience.

(sings) God knows

How I'll ever get out from under

Your spell and the wonder-

Ful Hell that your draggin' me through.

POSS

Whereupon the crowd left, quietly. And I realized all those prayers had worked out.

MARY CHARLES

Whereupon I ripped off the dress. Whereupon my mother left in a state I had never seen her in before. Not even her.

POSS

Whereupon you got a text from David for me, and you showed it to me. I smiled. For the first time since I got caught with David.

HANK

Whereupon I said, "Let's go home, Oren. I paid your coach special to come work with you tomorrow to get your arm in shape. Lotta season left."

POSS

Whereupon I said, "I've got plans with David tomorrow. And it's Poss."

HANK

Whereupon I accepted my son's smile, and I accepted what was before me.

MARY CHARLES

Whereupon I posted Marta's story on every online social medium I could find.

POSS

Whereupon Aunt Marta and I were alone.

MARTA

I took a memory from you today. Of your grandfather. I am sorry.

POSS

I never knew him.

MARTA

But I took something.

POSS

You called her your wife like it was easy to say. Is it easy where you are?

MARTA

Easier.

POSS

Guess I'll have to go there.

MARTA

You might be able to stay here.

POSS

Right.

MARTA

Bobby Pritchard wants me to do one more thing so that someday you might be able to stay here. For which I need your help. And for which I might get killed.

I do believe that was my dress I never wore.

MARGARET is there. She cradles the remains of the dress.

MARGARET

(sings) A glimpse of glories far more bright
Than earth can give is mirrored there
And perfect purity and light
The presence of its God declared.

Dear Martha,

The card from up north was real pretty. We're all fine. I told Hank you went away to school. He's stopped asking.

I won't lie to you. Daddy is still mad.

I miss you.

I realize it will cost a lot to come back, even for a visit. So I do not expect you to. You are a free spirit, and free spirits can't live in the slave states.

No rain to speak of for months. I wonder how the river can keep going when there's no rain. People say our river has been there since creation and will flow to eternity. It is a sign of God's love for us that our river flows, no matter what.

I'm glad you said you feel safe where you are. That's the best news I could hope for.

A sixth gunshot. MARY CHARLES, POSS, CYN, MARTA and HANK are frozen at the altar as before.

POSS

Everybody get down!

CYN

You said this wouldn't happen! Bluster!

MARY CHARLES

Who's shooting at us?

MARTA

A sixth shot.

No new bullet is seen, however.

HANK

I don't see it. I heard it, but I don't see it.

MARY CHARLES

Where did it come from?

MARTA

That shot started on its way the day I made my final demand.

MARTA and CYN are there with HANK and KATHY in HANK's home.

HANK

Unlock the church and open it to you for your wedding? Stand at the altar while you and her... Are you that crazy?

MARTA

I once thought maybe I was. Now I think this is the best thing I will ever do.

KATHY

(reading from a phone/device)

"Mary Haggard is obviously very sick."

HANK

How do you know what you saw?!! It was dark, you were hiding in the bushes!

MARTA

I saw what I saw! I think...

HANK

You think?

MARTA

I know!

KATHY

(reading)

"Posting a lunatic lady's lies. And after we passed the plate to fix her!"

HANK

How do you know?

MARTA

Bobby told me!

HANK

My God you are insane.

MARTA

I remember that day! I know what I felt! I know it as well as I know anything!

KATHY

Here's a good one. "The First Amendment does NOT give you the right to make stuff up. Even on the Internet."

CYN

Maybe this is a way to atone for what happened.

HANK

Not even Daddy at his blind rage drunkest would have drowned // a kid who was

MARTA

All right. Let's just say Bobby did drown himself!

Should he have had to?

HANK

HANK

HANK

Kathy, would you get us some tea, please?

KATHY

Oh. Certainly, Hank. Certainly.

KATHY is gone.

CYN

Do I leave now, too? I don't speak Southern.

MARTA

No, you stay. And now Hank tells us what he's really thinking. Hank?

HANK

Why her? No offense.

MARTA

Cyn?

HANK

She's full of abruption, as Mama would say.

MARTA

She bakes me pumpkin rolls for no reason.

HANK

Aren't you and her already married?

CYN

Please don't talk about me like I am not here.

MARTA

Didn't you get married in the church you were raised in?

HANK

First you tell me some story about Daddy, then you get Mary posting that crap online...what in God's name possessed you to think that I would ever not only unlock the church but stand up there with the two of you and...and...

MARTA

If Mama were here I think she would tell you to do it.

HANK

HANK

What life will I have left here if I do this for you? You will go back up north to Chardonnay and chintz and I will stay here and be...I don't even want to think // about what will happen

MARTA

I think you will be a hero.

HANK

I think I will be crucified.

MARTA

To the kids in that place, probably to a lot of scared adults.

CYN

To your son.

MARTA

Brother, I've had years to reflect on my last moment in that church. And I do not believe God wants that to be my last moment in that church.

MARTHA is there.

MARTHA

I prefer to ride with the Pritchards. If they'll have me.

MARTHA is gone.

MARTA

And chintz? Chintz?

KATHY

(offstage)

Die! Die you motherfuckers!

HANK

I don't have a choice.

MARTA

Then we'll have to do it just outside. Close as possible. Public property.

HANK

Then God bless you with that. And watch where you step.

KATHY

(offstage)

Why the hell are there zombies on Level 2? There aren't supposed to be zombies until Level 4!

MARTA

I do believe Mama will be present.

KATHY

(offstage)

WHAT THE FUCK IS THE GOING ON HERE????????!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

HANK

Kathy, come say goodbye to our guests.

KATHY is there.

KATHY

Well it's been so nice to have you over.

CYN

Before we leave, we wanted to give you this. It's for the church. I think this should cover it.

CYN holds out an envelope.

KATHY

Cover what?

CYN

The money Marta took. That you said she stole.

KATHY

Huh.

CYN

I believe that should pay it back. With interest.

HANK

The full-court press.

CYN

I beg your pardon?

HANK

Look at all that. I guess I ought to take it right to the bank. Well, I've seen quite enough for one evening. Good night, ladies.

HANK is gone.

MARTA

Hank –

Let's go.

KATHY

One minute? No, just you, Miz...

CYN

Mrs. Wallace-O'Regan. But you can certainly call me Cyn.

KATHY

One minute of your time.

MARTA

Suit yourself.

MARTA is gone.

CYN

Whereupon I should have left, too. Whereupon my staying set those shots // in motion

KATHY

You must think I'm a troglodyte.

CYN

I really don't...

KATHY

It means someone who's old-fashioned, out-of-touch.

CYN

I'm aware of the definition.

KATHY

Course you are. Just as you are aware that it's a scientific fact that the amygdalas are larger in people who have Conservative beliefs.

CYN

They are more prone to fear of difference.

KATHY

We are. It is how we are born. We have no choice in the matter. And no amount of rational discourse will ever change the fact that when you two refer to sleeping in bed together it makes my intestines recoil and squirm. My amygdala activates my vagus nerve which sends waves of peristalsis through my duodenum causing their normal forward contractions to reverse until I empty their contents onto my right-wing linoleum tiling.

CYN

Bless your heart.

KATHY

You learn fast. I have learned about the brain because of my own struggles with...I clean the sanctuary. As Miss Margaret did. But when I clean I need to vacuum six times, polish six times, wipe each stained glass window six times...and I strive to understand why.

And I have learned because I want to help Mary.

Who is smart and who was perfect.

But who now feels she is a not a girl.

You are a psychologist.

Hank could drive you over to my home to see her. To talk to her.

CYN

There's nothing wrong with Mary Charles.

KATHY

Six minutes with her and you will see that she is desperately confused // and in serious need of

CYN

She needs for you to show some open-minded understanding // and to recognize

KATHY

She defecated on the church lawn!

CYN

Just give Hank the cash.

KATHY

I'm scared to death of her.

CYN

You will give Hank the cash.

KATHY

Please. If you could just take a few moments to talk to her, to help her see that she // needs help

CYN

Then use it to pay someone else who wants to brainwash her.

KATHY

Thank you so much.

Wait. Why did Mary do what she did on the church lawn?

CYN

Because it was the only choice they felt they had.

I'm no gamer, Mrs. Haggard. But the thing about Zombies? You can't kill them. You just have to learn to live with them.

Whereupon I left.

*CYN is gone. KATHY looks at the money and prays.
HANK is there.*

HANK

Whereupon I came back.

Two thousand was a lot of money back then. But if she thinks she can buy her way in // to stand up at

KATHY

It's a scientific fact that giving to others releases dopamine, giving the giver a feeling of pleasure. Why we put money in the plate each week. Same burst of pleasure you get from sex or Jack or meth or cheesecake or blowing a zombie's head off. Your brain gives you the same reward for doing something nice for someone else.

Maybe they just wanted to feel good.

I asked that Cyn to talk to Mary. Likely as a blizzard in Boiling Springs.

There's another facility in Marshalltown. I hear it's much better.

HANK

Let it go, Kath.

KATHY

It's different techniques, I asked. No hugging. Well, some, but not as much.

HANK

I said, let it go.

KATHY

This would almost cover two weeks.

HANK

HANK

You've got to be kidding.

KATHY

I prayed on this.

HANK

Are you listening to // yourself, Kathy?

KATHY

That Cyn practically told me to take it!

HANK

I will put that in the safe right now.

KATHY

Don't you see, Hank? It's a perfect circle! The original stolen money was from donors who wanted to help people like Bobby. And now God has returned it so it can help people like Mary.

HANK

Let it go!

KATHY

And Oren.

HANK

Give me the money.

KATHY

Hank, I gotta tell you something. You letting him keep on seeing that David boy? I'm not gonna tell you how to raise your son // but I just think you need to put your foot

HANK

Give me the money!

KATHY

People are starting to say things // about us

HANK grabs the money from KATHY.

HANK

I think I'd best drive you home.

I just think that would be best right now.

You got anything to say?

Whereupon Kathy said nothing.

KATHY is gone. MARY CHARLES interrupts.

MARY CHARLES

The shots came from me posting the invitation to be here today.

Create event.

Name. Martha O'Regan's better late than never church wedding to the woman she loves, Cynthia Wallace.

Details. It's a wedding, just like any other.

Where: The church she was raised in.

When: Saturday at 1.

Privacy: Public. In front of God and all assembled.

CYN

Whereupon the guns were loaded.

MARY CHARLES is gone. CYN and MARTA are there at the motel, earlier. CYN reads from a device.

"It's time we stood up to sin."... "One of them's name is Cyn. Ha ha."... "They should be shown the business end of my twelve gauge."... "I'd be happy to acquaint them with the oak branch over my back porch."

MARTA

At least that one spelled "acquaint" right. And you're being very selective, I might add. Here. *(reading)* "I think it's nice." ... "It's time Boiling Springs joined the 21st century."... "It's time Boiling Springs joined the 20th century."... "It's time for the hate to stop.".... "How can anyone deny two ladies who have an ice cream party every afternoon at 4:30 the right say their vows in church?" OK, so I posted the last one, but the others prove that not everyone hates us.

CYN

This is deadly serious.

MARTA

And to think you had to twist my arm to get me down here.

CYN

What has he done to you?

MARTA

Who?

CYN

Bobby Pritchard!

MARTA

Woke me up.

CYN

You didn't say there'd be guns.

MARTA

It's Boiling Springs, Miss Thing! Did you expect pepper spray? Whole lotta bluster. Trust me.

CYN

What if it's not?

MARTA

You saw how they spell.

CYN

I imagine they can shoot better.

MARTA

Let's say we treat ourselves to some nice new rings. Gawdy big rings! // Lotta sparkle!

CYN

Telling Hank is one thing. And so is getting Mary Charles to tell the twitterverse. But going into their church...

MARTA

It was my church.

CYN

It's their church now.

MARTA

I didn't leave willingly!

CYN

It's not ours!

MARTA

Maybe I miss it!

CYN

We've already said our vows, sweets. And you've told the truth.

You're giving Hank an impossible choice.

MARTA

His son is making him choose.

CYN

Once again, eighteen year old boys from Boiling Springs // do not belong in our -

MARTA

Bobby had to choose. I had to choose. Mama had to choose.

Bobby called me back to Boiling Springs so that someday such impossible choices will no longer have to be made. And the long march to that day begins with me and you on Saturday, in the place where I first met God, in a moment of glorious truth that may, in some way, atone for a falsehood that I would have perpetrated were it not for a snowy night “NO”.

Big-ass rings.

CYN

Are you truly prepared to die here?

MARTA

I already died here a thousand times. Every time Daddy got on a hellfire tirade. Every time Mama caught me swaying alone in my room to Patsy Cline or Connie Francis. Every time Tommy Baxter kissed me and I got through it by pretending he was Ella Fortney.

I need to do one honest thing to live in Boiling Springs before I die. One. Honest. Thing. To live. Before I die. And for that to happen...I must have you.

POSS interrupts.

POSS

It's my fault. The shots came from my ultimatum.

HANK is there praying, silently.

They're gonna have it on Saturday at 1.

They'll do it outside.

But they want to be inside.

No preacher. Just to stand at the altar.

They need your key.

They need *a* key.

I told them I could get them a key.

Aunt Marta said she wants yours.

That she wants you.

There.

I said I'd ask.

But I'm not asking.

I'm telling you.

The key. And you.

Or I leave with Aunt Marta.

Forever.

Their mailman leaves two chocolate hearts in their mailbox on Valentine's Day.

POSS is gone.

HANK

Whereupon I prayed.

*MARGARET is there, sewing a wedding dress.
HANK watches his mother sing and sew.*

MARGARET

(sings) A glimpse of glories far more bright
Than earth can give is mirrored there
And perfect purity and light
The presence of its God declared.

Oh my goodness! It's snowing! Martha! Get Hank! It's snowing!

MARTHA is there.

MARTHA

Snow! Real snow!

HANK transforms into CLEM.

CLEM

You act like you never seen snow before, girl!

MARTHA

Not like this.

MARGARET

It's Hank's first snow. Clem, where's the camera?

CLEM

It's just snow, woman.

MARTHA

It's in the hall closet.

MARGARET

Why in heaven is it in the hall closet?

MARTHA

I don't know, it just is!

MARGARET

And get Hank's galoshes, too!

MARTHA is gone, quickly.

Oh, I hope it doesn't ruin your wedding!

MARTHA

(Offstage)

Are you kidding?! It'll be beautiful. Man, I hope it'll stick around and still be pretty. I remember the last time when I was about ten and it snowed for an hour and then got all mushy and brown and then froze // at night and was so ugly. I hope it doesn't do that tonight.

MARGARET

(to us) Now hold it right there, Henry James O'Regan! Don't you even think about going outside without your galoshes!

CLEM

(to us) Get on out there boy! Ain't no telling when you'll see snow like this again.

MARGARET

It's wet. You'll catch your death!

CLEM

It'll be gone before you know it!

MARGARET

My grandfather died from influenza!

CLEM

May be your only chance!

Galoshes or else!

MARGARET

Live it up!

CLEM

Your future!

MARGARET

Great memories!

CLEM

Responsibility!

MARGARET

Joy!

CLEM

Mama pleads!

MARGARET

Daddy cusses!

CLEM

Mama shouts!

MARGARET

Daddy roars!

CLEM

Mama slaps!!

MARGARET

Daddy stares. Daddy stares. Daddy stares.

CLEM

Mama cries.

MARGARET

Daddy says, "Not in my house. Not ever in my house."

CLEM

MARTHA is there.

MARTHA

Martha says “Here’s the camera! And Hank’s galoshes.”

CLEM

Daddy throws the galoshes against the wall as hard as he can! As hard as he can!! And Hank cries.

MARGARET is gone. CLEM is gone. MARTHA talks to us.

MARTHA

Don’t cry, Little H. You might never see snow like this again! But you need galoshes.

You just click these thingies over. Click. Click. Click. Click. Click. Click.

Six clicks. Like Daddy’s pistol.

Only not so loud, right!

There, I did one, now you do the other.

Course you can do it! Well if you’d stop sniveling and start clicking like I just showed you!

Don’t let Daddy make you cry! Tell you what. You ever need anything, I mean anything, you just come on over to me and Bobby Pritchard’s and we’ll take care of you. He’s gonna be your brother! Bobby Pritchard is the best man I know.

MARTHA sings to “HANK” (to us)

(sings) God knows
How I’ll ever get out from under
Your spell and the wonder-
Ful Hell that your draggin’ me through.

There you go! That’s one click!

(sings) God knows
How I’ll ever get free from the thunder
And lightning that you’re
Frightening me with, you devilish you.

That’s two! Keep going!

(sings) God knows
How I’m drowning each day
In a brimstony pool

Where you made me a fool for you.

Three. Four. Almost there!

(sings) God knows ...

That's five! Now if you can finish your galoshes, surely I can finish this song.

(sings) God knows...

That if you are my sin
Then I take it all in and
I gladly say I do!

All six! Good boy!

Bobby'll be so happy I finished the song. God knows that if you are my sin then I take it all in and I gladly say I do. God knows that if you are my sin then I take it all in and I gladly say I do. God knows that if you are my sin -

Wait, Hank! I gotta get a picture!

There. Hank in his galoshes on the snowy day.

Don't ever forget this, Little H. Not many days like this in Boiling Springs!

Bobby and I will always take care of you. You remember that. Always.

MARTHA is gone.

HANK

Whereupon Mama made a surprise visit.

KATHY is there with the wedding dress and a chess pie.

KATHY

I mended this after Mary...I'm not as good a seamstress as your Mama. It belongs in your family, so...

I made you a chess pie. Made two, actually. One for Mary. She won't touch it. Miss Margaret's recipe. Hope I'm not twice rejected.

HANK

Thank you.

KATHY

Not that one thing has anything to do with another, but I was hoping you could still take me to pick up the new cushions on Saturday.

HANK

I can take you Monday.

KATHY

We said the cushions would be on the pews this Sunday.

HANK

The old cushions are fine for another week.

KATHY

What's happening this Saturday? Huh?

HANK

I got plans.

KATHY

What plans?

HANK

With Oren. I mean Poss. My son.

And Marta. Who is no longer Martha. But who is my sister.

KATHY

And that Cyn.

HANK

And Cyn.

And then I will take you to pick up the cushions on Monday.

KATHY

No you will not.

You will not be doing anything with me on Monday or any other day.

HANK

I pray you will one day understand.

KATHY

Or anyone else. You think Ben Connor's gonna buy another filter just to help you out? You think Sally Marshall's gonna beg her cousins to come down for a weekend to rent a boat from YOU?

You think anyone would ever let you baptize them or let you set FOOT in that church or even TALK to you again // if you let them do this

HANK

I'm sure they won't.

KATHY

Then why, Hank?? WHY??

HANK

An inconvenient truth always beats a pretty lie in the long run.

KATHY

If you soil my church on Saturday... if you contaminate...

HANK

Then what? What happens, Kathy? The river will keep on flowing. Just like it has flowed since creation, just like it flowed the night a good man named Bobby Pritchard died, just like it flowed fifty years since, and just like it will flow to eternity.

Thank you for the pie.

KATHY grabs the pie.

KATHY

You don't deserve to eat your Mama's chess pie!

HANK

Perhaps you're right, Kathy. Perhaps you're right.

KATHY

Hank! Hank!! What the hell am I gonna do with two whole chess pies? WHAT THE HELL AM I GONNA DO??

HANK

You could bring them to the church on Saturday for fellowship.

KATHY is gone.

MARY CHARLES and CYN are there, as at the beginning.

MARTA appears in a billowing dress, not a typical wedding dress, but something light and airy. She may also carry a bouquet. She is escorted by POSS.

MARTA and CYN begin a wordless exchange of vows.

HANK appears. The others notice him. They are surprised, and happily surprised, to see him. POSS is especially happy.

After some time with the wordless vows...

MARTA

I do.

KATHY is there. She may hold a gun. We hear five gunshots in rapid succession.

MARY CHARLES

The first shot lands in the stained glass window with the Nativity scene, just below the Star of Bethlehem.

POSS

The second shot lands in the stained glass window just above the manger.

CYN

The third shot lands in the stained glass window right below the Magi.

MARTA

The fourth shot lands in the stained glass window right through the Virgin Mary's heart.

HANK

The fifth shot lands in the brass collection plate.

There is a gunshot. We may see that KATHY has turned the final shot on herself.

MARY CHARLES

The sixth shot.

KATHY

Die zombies.

MARY CHARLES

The sixth shot hits its intended target.

KATHY is gone.

Oh, Mama. How I wish you'd learned to live with the zombies.

Sleep well, Mama. Have a good rest.

(sings) But when the troubled waters own
A Savior's presence in the wave
The healing power of grace is known
And found omnipotent to save.

*MARTA might be looking at her reflection in a
stained glass window. She might fix her hair a little.
BOBBY might bid MARTA a farewell.*

END OF PLAY