

ECLIPSE CAFE

By Michael Soetaert



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SYNOPSIS: Chatoba Falls, deep in Hawgwaller County. Come for the Haws, stay for the Falls. Or is it, Come for the Falls and stay for the Haws? For Barry Marantz, it's the perfect place to hide from the mob, especially since the entire town is too dumb to realize that he's not really somebody named Earl, that one guy you either love, or you hate. But who can blame them? After all, Barry is a dead ringer for Earl, and they are Dumb. With a capital D. Come hick it up while Barry waits for the next bus out of town, and everybody else waits to see what might happen next at The Eclipse Café.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(7-8 females, 6 males, 4 either)

ESTHER (f)	<i>(49 lines)</i>
YANCY HORNER (m)	<i>(12 lines)</i>
BARRY MARANTZ (m)	Also plays EARL ELDRIDGE. <i>(360 lines)</i>
LEROY GRUBB (m).....	<i>(186 lines)</i>
DEPUTY SHERIFF	
DAPHNE SWANN (f).....	<i>(45 lines)</i>
MAYOR THADIUS APPLGATE (m).....	<i>(85 lines)</i>
EWELL LONGATE (m)	<i>(7 lines)</i>
LAURA BETH BAUMGARTEN (f)	<i>(50 lines)</i>
LAURA JUNE (f)	<i>(13 lines)</i>
LAURA LYNN LONGATE (f)	<i>(22 lines)</i>
LAURA JOAN (f).....	<i>(12 lines)</i>
OXLEY BOYS:	
HERMENA OXLEY (f/m).....	<i>(17 lines)</i>
HOYT OXLEY (f/m)	<i>(17 lines)</i>
LAURA JEAN HOOPENHAUER (f)	<i>(7 lines)</i>
LAURA JANE (f)	<i>(12 lines)</i>
GOOB HOOPENHAUER (m).....	<i>(18 lines)</i>
MOBSTER #1 (f/m).....	<i>(5 lines)</i>
MOBSTER #2 (f/m).....	<i>(2 lines)</i>

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NOTE: LAURA JUNE and LAURA JANE can be played by the same person.

SYNOPSIS OF ACTS

ACT ONE: Early Afternoon; just before the total eclipse of the sun.

ACT TWO: Later that day; after the eclipse.

EPILOGUE: That same day, in a bus station in Kansas City.

SET

One main set; the finale will take place on the apron.

The main set is the Eclipse Café. A place that time overlooked somewhere around 1970. Maybe. It's always hard to tell when places are left behind. It's not much of a café; never was. The counter runs the length of Stage Right. Behind the counter is a door that will never be used that leads to the kitchen. There is a slot that also will never be used that opens into the kitchen, complete with one of those spinning things for orders to be placed on, and then handed through, the slot, not the spinning thing. There are three or four stools that run the length of the counter, except at the upstage end. That is where the old time cash register sits. Also on the counter there needs to be a glass pie tray, with pie. Other than that, the more frou frou, the better, including the ubiquitous fly strips.

The glass door to the outside is on the UR back stage wall, next to (more or less) the cash register. On the wall immediately to the right of the outside door (to the left of the cash register) there is a sign that says: "Bus Tickets Sold Here." On the other side of the door is a metal hat rack. You'll need hats. Lots of hats. There is a large window that takes up most of the back stage (it doesn't need to be practical), with a booth set in front of it. The door and the window need to have various paraphernalia on them: backwards writing with the café's name, an open/closed sign, etc.

There is a free standing table with four chairs, more or less DSL. The left stage wall really should have a juke box. There is the idea of a hallway heading offstage DL. A sign informs all who need to know that that is the way to the restrooms. Hope they're clean.

Throughout there needs to be all the trappings of a diner: salt and pepper shakers, napkin holders, menus, daily special signs that haven't been changed in years, bus tubs, glasses and plates and silverware – have some fun. If you're in a theatre that doesn't have a stage (and even if you do), tables can be extended into the audience for fun. But what kind of theatre doesn't have a stage? You can even serve pie at intermission. Don't be surprised if nobody wants any.

The finale's set will consist entirely of two signs on the right proscenium arch. One says: "Bus Station." It will have an arrow that points right. The other will say: "Welcome to Kansas City." It is important, though, that both signs aren't made visible to the audience until after the curtain is closed at the end. You'll see.

PROPS

FOR ESTHER

- Bus Ticket Book
- Cigarettes (or not)
- Order pad
- Pen
- Flyswatter
- Old lunch tickers

FOR BARRY

- Cheap suitcase
- Wallet
- Travelers' Cheques
- \$11.00 in bills
- .95 in change
- Driver's license
- Watch

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FOR YANCY

- Dollar bill
- Swimming pool noodle; your choice of color

FOR LEROY

- .58 cents
- Handkerchief

FOR EWELL

- Wad of money with rubber band around it

FOR MAYOR

- Note pad
- Pen
- Pocket watch
- Blue legal paper
- Menu

FOR LAURA JOAN

- Car keys

FOR DEPUTY

- Blue legal paper
- Barry's library card
- Badge

FOR HERMENA

- Spit cup
- Hammer

FOR HOYT

- Watermelon

FOR GOOB

- Flyswatter

FOR LAURA JANE

- Marriage certificate (with ribbons)

FOR MOBSTER #1

- Newspaper

FOR MOBSTER #2

- Large coin (to flip)
- Large picture of Earl

FOR EARL

- School pennant
- Shoe box tied in brown paper

HATS: Aside from at least 5 random ball caps on the hall tree, all of which should have writing on them (the more obscure, the better, and at least two bonnets, you will need:

A hat with ear flaps and fur

Deputy's ball cap (blue with a star)

Mayor's spare top hat

Mayor's (as the banker) spare fedora

Laura June's extra headband

COSTUMES

ESTHER – She wears classic waitress uniform. Her reading glasses have one of those convenient chains.

YANCY HORNER -- Wears coveralls and untied work boots. No shirt. It's been a while since a razor saw his face, and then it didn't help much. He usually has a ball cap on, except when he's in the diner. Then he switches it for one that's on the hall tree, as will others.

BARRY MARANTZ – He wears dark slacks and a button down shirt, over which he wears a suit coat, but no tie. Nothing too fancy, but give the impression that this is somebody who has actually read *GQ*, but maybe not in a while. EARL ELDRIDGE – The look we’re going for on Earl is that of a ‘50s big man on campus. You know, the knit letter jacket with elbow pads. The straw boater. Striped pants. School pennant (I’m thinking “Ole P.U., which may be over the top, but what a great place to be).

LEROY GRUBB – LeRoy wears old, worn out blue jeans, a rope for a belt, barn boots, and a somewhat soiled T-Shirt that says “Hawg Daze” on it. He also wears a ball cap – at least temporarily – the more obscure the better.

DEPUTY SHERIFF DAPHNE SWANN – Wears the stereotypical sheriff’s outfit, all the way down to the the mirrored sunglasses, Smokey the Bear hat, and chaw of ... something. The badge comes and goes, so to speak.

MAYOR THADIUS APPLGATE – Who is also the banker, and about everything else. As the Mayor, he wears a tuxedo with full tails, a bow tie, and a top hat, the taller, the better, which he will always swap out for another shorter top hat when he comes in the diner. When he’s the bank president, he just wears dark dress pants, a conservative white shirt, and a bright red vest. A white flower boutonniere is optional. And, of course, he has a hat. Something that your great-grandfather would have worn, like an old fedora, which he will swap out for one similar to it when he enters the diner. An unlit stogie – a cigar, not the covered wagon, although a covered wagon on fire would be cool, but a bit over budget and probably a violation of fire codes ... now, where was I? Oh yeah, An unlit stogie would be good if you can get away with it, but only when he’s the banker.

EWELL LONGATE – Holey coveralls, barefoot, straw hat, plaid shirt hanging out. Hick it up.

LAURA BETH BAUMGARTEN – Tight shorts and a crop-top. Pig tales. You know, the Daisy Duke look – except for the hat, a garish straw number covered in fake flowers.

LAURA JUNE – She wears a dress straight off the set of *Grease*. She wears her hair down, but with a headband. Other than being barefoot, she would pass for well dressed.

LAURA LYNN LONGATE – Wears a worn house dress with her hair down, not that it would help to put it up.

LAURA JOAN – She’s wearing coveralls with her name embroidered on the pocket. She also has on high top work boots, unlaced with the tongue hanging out. There’s a greasy red bandana (sounds like a country music song) hanging out of her back pocket, though she never uses it to wipe her nose. I mean, why bother when you got a sleeve? She also wears a do-rag, at least, until swapping it at the door.

HERMENA and HOYT OXLEY – They’re large, dressed in overalls, dirty and crude; there is nothing feminine about them, except a vague outline and longish hair. They will wear no hats.

LAURA JEAN HOOPENHAUER – She wears a wedding dress, about ankle high is what I see, but I suppose you’ll have to do with what you can find. A veil is a must. She is barefoot.

GOOB HOOPENHAUER – He wears nothing but cover-alls and an old straw hat. Shoes are optional.

LAURA JANE – Laura June and Laura Jane can be played by the same person, but with a different dress – or dresses.

MOBSTERS – They are your stereotypical mobsters. Cheap, dark suits. Pen stripes would be nice. Suit coats, skinny ties, mobster-esque hats, dark, shiny shoes. Slicked back hair. The works.

ACT ONE

AT RISE: *The audience sees the Eclipse Café, a throwback to the 1960s. It's a quiet afternoon. ESTHER is sitting on a stool in front of the counter. If you can get away with having her smoking a cigarette, great. Trust me, it should not be glamorous, and it doesn't have to be lit. She has one of her shoes and a sock off; the shoe is on the counter. She is inspecting the sock, trying to decide which end has the bigger hole. YANCY HORNER is sitting in the booth by himself facing the door. He is wearing one of those hats with ear flaps and fur all around the face. He's concentrating on the way the salt moves in the shaker every time he tilts it. When he tires of that, he switches to pepper. BARRY enters. He is carrying a cheap suitcase, which HE will set on the floor out of the way. As he enters, he looks around. ESTHER wads up the sock and stuffs it into a sugar bowl on the counter, slips her shoe back on, gets up, and goes around the end of the counter to where the cash register is. YANCY will notice BARRY and immediately sit bolt upright. He is obviously agitated.*

ESTHER: *(With no enthusiasm whatsoever.)* Welcome to the Eclipse Café. Would you like a booth or a table?

BARRY: *(Put out.)* I need a bus ticket.

ESTHER moves over to a book to the left of the cash register, which SHE opens, then places her glasses on her nose, only so SHE can rearrange them several times.

ESTHER: *(Poised to start the necessary paperwork.)* Are you comin' or goin'?

BARRY: What?

ESTHER: If you're comin' from Crawfordsville, then the bus is leavin' about now, so you best be goin'. Of course, it's goin' back to Crawfordsville. But if you're goin' to Emmett, then that bus won't be goin' 'till 11:00 p.m., that's in the night, when it comes back from Crawfordsville, so if you're not goin', you might as well be comin' inside to wait awhile.

BARRY: Are those my only two choices?

ESTHER: Oh, heavens no! There's lots of towns out there. (*Thinks for a moment.*) But ya pretty much have ta go through Crawfordsville or Emmett if ya wanna get to any of 'em.

YANCY has been angrily staring at BARRY the whole time. He now gets up and struts over to the cash register and places a wadded dollar bill on the counter. He will never take his eyes off of BARRY, and he will always look like he's ready for a fight. The sooner the better; only he might lose, so best just to act menacing for now and put off the fight for later.

YANCY: There. That's for the coffee! You can keep the change.

ESTHER: Coffee comes to a dollar five.

YANCY: Then I guess I'll keep the change.

YANCY turns to go and purposefully bumps BARRY with his shoulder as HE moves over to the hall tree. BARRY does not back down, but HE's not looking for a fight, either.

(Not the least bit friendly.) Pardon me, Earl!

YANCY takes off the hat he's been wearing and switches it with a ball cap that's been hanging there. He opens the door and exits, but not before he makes one more parting glare at BARRY, who gives a "What the hey?" shrug to ESTHER.

ESTHER: Oh, don't worry none about Yancy. He's a little bit... um...
He's Yancy.

BARRY: And who is Earl?

ESTHER: I reckon he thinks you are. Now, where was ya wantin' ta go, hon'?

BARRY: Since I've already been to Crawfordsville, why would I want to go back there?

ESTHER: Ya never can tell. Some folks are content to ride the bus in circles all day. Personally, after the second time around I've had my fill. But who's to say?

BARRY: How much is a ticket to Emmett?

ESTHER: You want non-stop or scenic?

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BARRY: Non-stop.

ESTHER: I'm sorry; there's only scenic. You want smoking or non-smoking.

BARRY: Smoking.

ESTHER: I'm sorry, but they don't allow no smoking on the bus.

BARRY: *(Losing his patience.)* Just give me the darn ticket!

ESTHER: *(Offended.)* I'm just trying to do my job. *(She writes on a slip of paper and tears it out of the book.)* That'll be 28 dollars.

BARRY brings his wallet out of his vest pocket and takes out a traveler's cheque.

ESTHER: *(With a smile and a friendly wave.)* Oh, hon', your money's no good here.

BARRY: *(Pleasantly surprised.)* Why, thank you. *(Reaches for the ticket.)*

ESTHER: *(Quickly puts her hand on the other half of the ticket.)* Wait a minute. Where you think you're goin'?

BARRY: I thought you meant that I didn't need to pay.

ESTHER: No. I said you're money's no good here. I never said you didn't have to pay. We don't take travelers' cheques. We take cash and we take... well... we take cash.

BARRY: How far can I get on... *(Quickly counts out the bills in his wallet and then reaches in his pocket and does a quick inventory of his change.)* ...eleven dollars and 90 cents?

ESTHER: That would take you about as far as where the old school used to be.

BARRY: Where's that at?

ESTHER: Just down from where they're gonna build the new pole barn.

BARRY: And where's that?

ESTHER: Down from where the old school used to be.

BARRY: *(Exasperated.)* Right. Is there any place in town that might cash a traveler's cheque?

ESTHER: I suppose the bank might. But they're all going to be out of the office until after the eclipse.

BARRY: What eclipse?

ESTHER: Why, we're havin' a total eclipse of the sun, right here in Chatoba Falls. Today, even. Why, it's pert near the biggest thing we've ever had come to our town. It's even bigger than the tornado that never touched down back in '94.

BARRY: (*Checking his watch.*) What time is that supposed to happen?

ESTHER: What? The tornado?

BARRY: No. The eclipse.

ESTHER: They been sayin' it's suppose to start around 1:00 and be completely done with by 4:00. Of course, that all depends on if they get it started on time. I suppose they'll be back in the bank by then – when it's over an' all. Unless they decide to take the rest of the day off. If Mr. Applegate is there they'll open back up, but if Clare is left in charge, you might as well be makin' plans to stay the night.

BARRY: How will I know?

ESTHER: Well, it's up to you, but if I was you, I'd sit an' wait. One or the other, Clare or Mr. Applegate, the Bank President, maybe even both, is bound to come in. If the Mayor comes in, ya might ask him.

BARRY: The Mayor?

ESTHER: You can't miss him.

BARRY: Are you sure they'll be coming in?

ESTHER: Where else would they be during an eclipse than the Eclipse Café?

BARRY: Wouldn't they be outside watching?

ESTHER: Why?

BARRY: I... just figured that... um... they'd want to see it.

ESTHER: Why?

BARRY: Well, it *is* an eclipse...

ESTHER: I suppose. But the way I figure it, ya seen one eclipse, ya seen 'em all. You want anything while you're waiting?

BARRY: (*Looking at her name badge; a bit credulous, which is a great word.*) Well... Ms. ... *Your Name...*

ESTHER: That ain't my name. It's really Esther. But that's what the boss wanted me to put on my name badge. So who's to argue with the boss?

BARRY: What does he have on his name badge?

ESTHER: “My Name.”

BARRY: What? Esther?

ESTHER: No. “My Name.” Now what can I get for you?

BARRY: (*Noticing the pie.*) Is your pie any good?

ESTHER: (*Proudly.*) Best darned pie in the county!

BARRY: (*Sitting on a stool.*) I’ll take a piece.

ESTHER removes a slice of pie and puts it on a plate, which SHE sets in front of BARRY along with a fork. BARRY takes a bite and immediately spits it back out.

BARRY: That’s awful! I thought you said it was the best in the county.

ESTHER: (*Matter of fact.*) I did. But I never said it was any good. Want some coffee?

BARRY: (*Weary.*) How is it?

ESTHER: Best in the county.

BARRY: I think I’ll just have some water.

ESTHER: (*Reaching for a glass.*) You’re learnin’.

BARRY: (*Trying to make conversation.*) So this is Chatoba Falls.

ESTHER: (*Handing him his water.*) Truth be known, there never was much of a fall. More like a leaky downspout. Then Thornton dammed the crick to make a pond for his hawgs, an’ that was that.

Enter LEROY. He is as happy as legally possible in 17 states. He takes a step in the door, then remembers to switch the ball cap he’s wearing for one on the hall tree. Then he walks up and pounds BARRY on the back, causing him to spew water all over the counter.

LEROY: The minute I heard you was here, I had to come and see it for myself!

BARRY: Who are you?

LEROY: Who am I? I’m LeRoy. Like the dog food. Only no Lee, an I ain’t very old. I’m your bes-s-s-st friend.

BARRY: You’re my best friend?

LEROY: (*Thinking hard for a beat.*) Yeah, I guess it works that way, too. But yeah, we’s best friends. Why, we been best friends since second grade, when we chose sides.

BARRY: We chose sides? For what?

LEROY: For friends. It was the only fair way. But, heck, you know that.

BARRY: Look, friend, I don't know you. I've never seen you before in my whole life. This is the first time I've ever been to... what? Where are we?

LEROY: Chatoba Falls. But there ain't much of a fall.

BARRY: So I've been told. As I was saying, this is the first time I've ever been to Chatoba Falls, and hopefully, it will be the last.

LEROY: (*Trying to figure it out.*) So... Earl... you're sayin' you ain't Earl?

BARRY: My name is Barry. Barry... never mind the last name. My name is Barry. And I'm from Kansas City. (*Realizing he's said too much.*) No. No. Never mind where I'm from. I meant to say Chicago. I was thinking about my mother. She lives in Kansas City.

LEROY: That would make it kinda hard for her to do your laundry, wouldn't it?

BARRY: What? (*He sees that LEROY is going to start to explain.*) Never mind. Look. (*Slowly.*) I don't know you. I've never been here before in my entire life, and I'd appreciate it if you would leave me alone.

LEROY stares at BARRY for a moment, totally puzzled, before building into a full-fledged laugh.

LEROY: Now that's funny!

BARRY: What?

LEROY: You comin' back to town and sayin' you're somebody else! Why, that's almost as funny as all them watermelons... but them watermelons was funny. You never seen such a mess. (*Thinks a beat.*) Well, I guess you did, 'cause you was there. Why, pert near everybody thought that was just about the most funniest thing they ever did see... except them Oxley Boys, but I guess that's to be expected.

BARRY: I have no idea what you're talking about. (*Taking out his wallet and showing LEROY his ID.*) Look. That's me. That's my picture. And that's my name. It's not Earl. It's Barry.

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LEROY takes the ID and looks at the picture up close and then at BARRY. He does this a couple of times before saying...

LEROY: Wow. That's really good. That's the best fake ID I've ever seen. *(Getting excited.)* An' it even says you're over 21. *(Looks left and right quickly for security's sake; in confidence.)* Say, Earl, could ya pick me up a little somethin' for later?

BARRY: No. And this is not a fake ID!

LEROY: So, you're sayin' you're not Earl?

BARRY: No. I mean yes. Look! I'm not Earl!

LEROY: Well, that's a shame. It's especially gonna come as a shock to your mama. Of course, what with her still being in prison and all... *(Totally back to La La Land.)* Hey, guess what, Earl? I got your favorite hawg out in the backseat.

BARRY: What?

LEROY: Sandra. Your favorite hawg. You know, the one you named after that actress who was in that movie with the bus that was gonna blow up if they stopped it? *(Drifting a bit.)* You know, that movie was just down right silly. I've yet to be on a bus I didn't want to see get blowed up.

BARRY: I don't have a favorite hog!

LEROY: *(Confidentially.)* I know you don't want 'em to think you have favorites, but we all do. But don't worry. I won't tell.

YANCY suddenly pushes in through the front door, takes off the hat he's wearing, and switches it for another hat on the hall tree.

YANCY: *(Terse; to ESTHER.)* I got the wrong hat. *(Exits.)*

LEROY: *(Shaking his head.)* Well, I guess Yancy knows you're back. I'll bet he'll run straight to them Oxley Boys. *(As a second thought he moves quickly – but jerkily – to the front door, opens it, and shouts after YANCY.)* Tattle-tale!

BARRY: What?

LEROY: Oh, don't you mind them, none. They're sore, is all. Why, they won't do half the things they said they would. *(Laughing.)* They cain't. Ain't nobody gonna sell 'em no dynamite. At least not in Chatoba Falls.

BARRY: I have no idea what you're talking about.

LEROY: That's OK. Most of the time, I don't either.

BARRY moves over and sits down in the booth. LEROY happily follows him and sits across from him, just happily staring at BARRY. After a few moments of that, BARRY finally asks...

BARRY: *(Annoyed.)* Why are you sitting here?

LEROY: Because you're my very bestest friend in the whole world.

BARRY: Doesn't it matter that I don't know you at all? That we've never met? That I wish you'd go away?

LEROY: *(Thinks a moment.)* Nope.

BARRY: Listen, Larry...

LEROY: LeRoy.

BARRY: LeRoy... here's the thing. I'm in trouble.

LEROY: What? Them Oxley Boys? Shoo!

BARRY: No. Not *them* Oxley Boys. I don't even know who *them* Oxley Boys are. I'm in real trouble. Serious trouble. There's some people where I come from who want to hurt me. Bad.

LEROY: Why would they wanna do that?

BARRY: Have you ever had a girlfriend?

LEROY: *(A bit offended.)* Why of course! But then the bell rang and we had to go back inside.

BARRY: What would you do, Larry...

LEROY: LeRoy.

BARRY: LeRoy. What would you do if a beautiful young woman... an available young woman... a *fine* young woman... really *liked* you?

LEROY: Why would she do that?

BARRY: *(Ignoring the question.)* You see, I worked for these brothers back in Kansas City who both happened to be named Guido, which, I know, sounds confusing.

LEROY: What's so confusin' 'bout that? Fewer names to remember.

BARRY: Ah... yeah. You see, it was like a collection agency. If somebody owed something to the Dons ...

LEROY: I thought you said their names was Guido.

BARRY: They are. Don is just a title – to show respect.

LEROY: *(Trying to figure it out.)* So their names is Don *and* Guido?

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BARRY: Right.

LEROY: You was right. That is confusin'.

BARRY: Well anyway, you see, if somebody borrowed money and didn't pay it back when they should, I helped the Guido Brothers *collect* it.

LEROY: How did ya do that?

BARRY: Never mind. That's not important. But you see, Guido had this daughter ...

LEROY: Which one?

BARRY: There was only one daughter.

LEROY: No. I meant which Guido?

BARRY: I'll be darned if I know. Not that it mattered, because it was the other one's niece. But you see, she was this sweet young thing...

LEROY: Well, whadya do? Run her over with the car?

BARRY: No. (*Ashamed.*) I held her hand. That's it. I swear, nothing else.

LEROY: Was ya gonna give it back?

BARRY: That's not the point.

LEROY: If ya wasn't gonna give it back it might be.

BARRY: Yes. I was going to give it back. But you see, I didn't ask the Don if I could hold his daughter's hand.

LEROY: So?

BARRY: (*Disbelief.*) So? So? I disrespected Don Guido.

LEROY: So?

BARRY: There are people who want to kill me.

LEROY: Are you supposed to be makin' sense?

BARRY: Would it matter?

LEROY: (*Thinks for a moment.*) No, I reckon not.

BARRY: Why do you think I was riding the bus?

LEROY: Well, I reckon it was to get to Chatoba Falls. That's the only way to get here. We ain't got no airport. And even if we did, we ain't got no planes. I suppose they kinda go together that way. Of course, you wouldn't need to take the bus if you had a car. Or a truck. I'd rather have a truck. It's easier to haul the hawks in a truck. When they ride up front with ya in the car, they keep tryin' to change the station on the radio, which is just plumb annoyin'!

'Cause there's really only one station anyway. Unless you like country.

BARRY: I don't like country. And that's not why I was riding the bus.

LEROY: Well, that's a good thing. They don't play music on the bus.

BARRY: I'm riding the bus because no one ever looks for you on the bus. Nobody would send hit men to a bus station. I guess they figure if you're riding the bus there really is no point in killing you. They'd only be doing you a favor. (*Leaning across the table.*) I'm running for my life, Larry.

LEROY: LeRoy.

BARRY: LeRoy.

LEROY: People say they're gonna kill ya all the time, an' it don't mean squat.

BARRY: People want to kill you?

LEROY: No. You.

BARRY: That's what I've been trying to tell you.

LEROY: Ya have? Why would ya wanna tell me somethin' I already know?

BARRY: I'll be darned if I know.

LEROY: Well, I wouldn't worry about it none. Them Oxley Boys, they just like to jaw. Except that one time with ol' Mulford. But he was old, so I guess that don't really count.

BARRY: What are you talking about?

DEPUTY SHERIFF DAPHNE SWANN enters with her usual swagger. Of course, SHE takes off her Smokey the Bear hat when SHE enters, puts it on the hall tree, and takes another cap -- dark blue with a star on the front -- and puts it on. LEROY notices her and sits bolt upright, hiding his hands in his lap.

LEROY: (*To BARRY, as if the DEPUTY can't hear him.*) Quick, put it away.

BARRY: Put what away?

LEROY: Whatever you don't want her to take away.

BARRY: Who?

LEROY: (*Motioning with his head.*) The Deputy, that's who.

BARRY: (*Ignoring LEROY; forced politeness, as a mobster would be prone to do around a cop... any cop.*) Hello, officer. You must be the Sheriff.

DEPUTY: (*Terse.*) You know darn well who I am. And you know darn well I ain't the Sheriff.

BARRY: You're not?

DEPUTY: You know I'm the Deputy.

BARRY: Pardon me, Deputy.

DEPUTY: Your sweet talkin' ain't gonna work with me, so can it.

BARRY: Yes ma'am.

DEPUTY: I just want cha to know, I ain't gonna put up with none of your shenanigans. I'm not afraid to run you in.

BARRY: (*Starting to lose patience, and politeness.*) Run me in? To where?

DEPUTY: Jail. Where else?

BARRY: This town has a jail?

DEPUTY: Well... sorta. Actually, it's my upstairs bedroom. But I *will* lock the door.

BARRY: Pardon me, Deputy, but where is the Sheriff?

DEPUTY: We ain't got one. At least, not yet. I haven't appointed me.

BARRY: Excuse me?

DEPUTY: I haven't appointed myself Sheriff yet.

BARRY: You appoint yourself Sheriff?

DEPUTY: That's right.

BARRY: Who appointed you Deputy?

DEPUTY: I did. (*Waits a beat; finally decides she may need to explain a bit.*) We'll, them boys wasn't gonna do nothin'.

BARRY: (*Totally confused.*) About what.

DEPUTY: Friday nights, that's what. When them Oxley Boys come into town with their hawgs. Well, I for one had enough of all the trouble they was causin' week after week. Breakin' things. Drivin' the wrong way around the courthouse. Playin' their music so loud you couldn't hear yourself think.

BARRY: You were actually thinking?

DEPUTY: No. But that's beside the point. What if I wanted to? Well, like I said, I says, I had enough.

BARRY: What did you do? Did you arrest the Oxley Boys?

DEPUTY: Why, I ain't talkin' about them Oxley Boys. I'm talkin' about their hawgs. Well, it had to be stopped. There just wasn't no way around it, so I got me a badge... *(Aside.)* They sell 'em at Woolworth's... an' I decided right then an' there...

BARRY: When and where?

DEPUTY: Wherever it was whenever I decided, I think it was Woolworth's. Well, I decided, by golly, right then and there, to appointed myself Deputy Sheriff.

BARRY: Why deputy? Why not go straight to sheriff?

DEPUTY: Well, then, who would tell me what to do? And now I'm gonna tell you what you're gonna do, Earl...

BARRY: Look, I don't know who you think I am...

LEROY: She thinks you're Earl, Earl.

BARRY: I don't care who you think I am. But I can assure you, I am not this person you call Earl. My name is Barry...

DEPUTY: Like the singer?

BARRY: What singer?

DEPUTY: The one who sung all them songs like "Copacabana" and "Weekend in New England." That was always one of my favorites, though most people won't admit that they actually have a favorite Barry Manilow song. But I reckon we all do.

BARRY: No. My name is not like Barry Manilow.

DEPUTY: What is it like, then?

BARRY: It's not like anything. It's just Barry.

DEPUTY: How is that not like Barry Manilow?

BARRY: It's just not.

DEPUTY: How old are you?

BARRY: What?

DEPUTY: You heard me. How old are you?

BARRY: I'm 23.

LEROY: *(Forgetting; giggling.)* It says so on his ID. *(He suddenly remembers; alarmed, to BARRY.)* I'm sorry! I forgot! *(He then covers his mouth with his hand.)*

DEPUTY: *(To LEROY.)* You stay out of this. I asked you how old you was.

BARRY: And I already told you. I'm 23.

DEPUTY: Don't get smart with me.

BARRY: Is that possible?

DEPUTY: I don't think so. Now, you say you're 23. I happen to know that Barry Manilow was born on June 17, 1943... (*Interpreting BARRY's look of "you got to be kidding".*) ...that's the kind of thing a law enforcement officer is expected to know. And I know that make's Barry Manilow way older than you are.

BARRY: Will all this make sense?

DEPUTY: Quite possibly. Now here's my deduction. Since Barry Manilow is older than you, then your name has to be like his. If you were older than him, then maybe you could make that claim. But it just didn't work out that way, now, did it? That's what we call good police work around here. Besides, it still don't make you Barry, Earl.

BARRY: I can prove it.

BARRY reaches for his ID, but LEROY catches his hand.

LEROY: (*Tersely through clenched teeth, trying poorly not to let the DEPUTY hear him.*) Don't show her the ID.

BARRY: (*Pulling free.*) I'll show her my ID if I want! (*He looks in his wallet for an ID that is no longer there.*) Hey! You took my ID.

LEROY: (*Totally forgetting that the DEPUTY is right there.*) Well, if I hadn't, you'd a showed it to the Deputy, and she woulda taken it away on account that it's a fake ID.

BARRY: You're insane!

DEPUTY: I don't need to see no ID. I know who you are. You know, I'd love to arrest you, just to run you in. But with my sister-in-law, the one who left her husband because he was spendin' too much time with his hawgs fishin' an' all... with her sleepin' in my upstairs bedroom, I really ain't got no place to run you in to. And besides, you know and I know that I can't prove nothin', but you know and I know that you did it, but you know and I know that it's really not against the law anyway. But that doesn't mean that I like it. And it doesn't mean that I'm gonna stand here and watch it happen while I'm wearing this badge. (*Realizes that her badge is missing.*) Have either of you seen my badge?

LEROY: Was you a wearin' it when you came in?

DEPUTY: I thought so.

LEROY: Where was the last place ya seen it?

DEPUTY: This morning. On my shirt. When I looked in the mirror.

LEROY: Well, then. That's where I'd go back and look first, ifin's I was you.

DEPUTY: That's good advice. *(Turns to leave, but then turns back to BARRY.)* Don't say you haven't been warned, Earl.

The DEPUTY then strides out, but not before switching her hat back. Dejected, and with just a whole lot of incredulousness, BARRY puts his head in his folded arms on the table.

LEROY: *(After a beat.)* You Okay, Earl?

BARRY: *(Looking up; with sudden inspiration.)* Look, Larry ...

LEROY: It's LeRoy.

BARRY: LeRoy. We're best friends, right.

LEROY: You're darn tootin'. We're B-F-F-A-A's.

BARRY: What?

LEROY: Best Friends Forever And Always. B-F-F-A-A. You said so yourself.

BARRY: I don't doubt that I did. Lookit, Larry...

LEROY: LeRoy.

BARRY: LeRoy. Since we're... what was that again?

LEROY: B-F-F-A-A.

BARRY: Best Friends for Always and Ever.

LEROY: 'Ever and Always.

BARRY: Right. Well, since we're... *friends?* How about giving me some money?

LEROY: *(Sincere, no hesitation.)* You just name the amount.

BARRY: Well, I sure could use a hundred dollars.

LEROY: Nope. That's too much.

BARRY: How about 80 then?

LEROY: Nope. Ain't got that either.

BARRY: Do you have fifty?

LEROY: Nope.

BARRY: *(Getting exasperated.)* Well, how much do you have?

LEROY: *(Digging in his pocket and then counting out the change.)* I got 58 cents. Here, it's yours. *(He dumps the loose change in BARRY's hand, then notices something amongst the change,*

which HE takes back.) Better not let ya have that. That's my lucky kidney stone.

While LEROY has been counting his money, the MAYOR has entered the café. He takes off his top hat and exchanges it for another top hat before heading back to BARRY's table. Don't worry. I'm going to explain that whole hat thing coming up here in a bit. But you can just wait with everybody else until then... or read ahead to the end of the act, but that's cheating.

MAYOR: *(More to LEROY.)* They said we had an out of town guest, so I had to come see it for myself.

LEROY: Shoot, Mayor. This ain't no out of town guest. It's Earl.

MAYOR: Well I know that, but he's been out of town, right?

LEROY: Well ... yeah.

MAYOR: And I like to think of everybody in Chatoba Falls as my guest. So therefore, he's an out of town guest.

LEROY: *(Impressed.)* You know, Mayor ... that's why you're the mayor.

MAYOR: Besides, I wanted to remind Earl, who happens to be registered to vote, that primaries are comin' up in just one short month.

BARRY: You have primaries?

MAYOR: Most certainly. You're supposed to. That's the American way.

BARRY: Who are you running against in the primary?

MAYOR: Oh, I'm unopposed.

BARRY: Then why have a primary?

MAYOR: Because you're supposed to. Just wanted you to know. There's a lot at stake this election. Them Oxley Boys done put Eleanor on the ballot. I'm still tryin' to find where it says that a hawg can't run for office in Hawgwaller County, and I'm pretty sure she cain't, but just in case there's some loophole in the law, I wanna beat 'em anyways. Fair and square.

BARRY: Who would vote for a hog?

MAYOR: Well, they would. If they were registered to vote, they would. And they might just get themselves registered.

BARRY: But that's just... what? Two votes.

MAYOR: Three.

BARRY: So? What's three votes?

MAYOR: Enough. I'm countin' on your vote, now. (*Turns to go.*)

BARRY: Excuse me, Mayor ...

He stops and turns back around.

BARRY: Mayor, I'm wondering if you can help me.

MAYOR: For a taxpayer and a registered voter, I'll do everything I can. It's the American way.

BARRY: So I've been told. See, I'm having me a little bit of financial trouble. You see, I got all these travelers' cheques and I can't cash them. Could you help me out here?

MAYOR: The Bank President's the one you need to see.

BARRY: I've been told that, too. But I was wondering if you could, maybe... make sure that he sees me today.

MAYOR: Well, if you need to speak to the Bank President so bad, I reckon I could go an' try an' find him. He's never too far away.

BARRY: I'd appreciate that.

MAYOR: And I'd appreciate your vote. (*Turns to go, swapping his hat at the door.*)

BARRY: (*Upbeat.*) Well, what do ya know, Larry...

LEROY: LeRoy.

BARRY: LeRoy. I think things are starting to look up.

Enter EWELL LONGATE. His eyes are downcast. He has the hat with the ear flaps in his hands, having swapped it out for his straw hat at the door. Wait for it. He has obviously prepared his speech. He crosses to BARRY's table.

EWELL: I'd like to say, Mr. Earl, that I'm mighty sorry that you had to wait so long for me to give you back all the money I borrowed. An' I wouldn't blame you if you was to run over one of my toes with your car, but I'd appreciate it if you didn't, since I like all my toes and don't know which one I'd pick, ifin's you was even kind enough to let me pick.

BARRY: What?

EWELL: (*Handing him a wad of money with a rubber band around it.*) You can count if you like, but it's all there.

BARRY: What?

EWELL: 352 dollars. Every penny. Unless you want interest. And I'm hopin' you don't, since that's all the money I have. But it ain't really mine since I owed it to you anyways.

BARRY: You owe me money?

EWELL: Well, hopefully not anymore. And hopefully you won't want to run over one of my toes.

BARRY: I'm not going to run over any of your toes.

EWELL: (*Relieved, but not relaxing much.*) I'm much obliged. Like I said, I've become quite attached to my toes. A toe isn't something you ought to take for granted.

BARRY: No. I suppose not.

EWELL: If you don't mind, I'd like to go now.

BARRY: Okay.

EWELL turns to leave, then stops and turns back around.

EWELL: An' I'd like to thank you for not smashin' my toes. You are a true gentleman indeed.

EWELL turns and leaves, switching his hat at the door. When he's gone, BARRY picks up the money and looks at it in amazement. He slips the rubber band off and starts to count it, when the MAYOR, dressed as the BANKER, enters. BARRY immediately hides the money inside his jacket while the MAYOR is switching his hat for one like he's wearing.

MAYOR: (*Offering his hand in greeting, which BARRY will cautiously stand and take.*) Hi. I'm Thadius Applegate. I'm the President of the Bank of Chatoba Falls. The Mayor said you was lookin' for me.

BARRY: (*Letting go.*) Aren't you... the Mayor?

MAYOR: Yes, I am. I'm the President of the Bank, too.

BARRY: (*Trying to sort it out.*) If you're the Mayor... and the President of the Bank... then why did you have to go get yourself?

MAYOR: Because nobody else would've.

BARRY: Listen. I need for you to open the bank back up... today. I need you to cash some travelers' cheques for me.

MAYOR: Why would you need to do that?

BARRY: Because I need money. (*Aside.*) Though not as much as I did before. (*Back to MAYOR.*) I can't use a credit card. They can trace credit cards.

MAYOR: What?

BARRY: Never mind. (*Taking out the cheques for emphasis.*) I just need to cash these.

MAYOR: Well, I can do that, Earl. But you don't need to cash no travelers' cheques. Why you got plenty of money in the bank.

BARRY: Excuse me? Plenty of money? How much is... *plenty*?

MAYOR: Oh, I'd say pert near 12,000 dollars.

BARRY: (*Flabbergasted – a fun word.*) 12,000 dollars!

MAYOR: Well, give or take. (*Trying to make a joke.*) If you was to give it, I'd take it.

BARRY: (*Ignoring the joke; somewhat in shock.*) 12,000 dollars?

MAYOR: Well, like I say, there's been some interest, but you ain't touched it since... well, since you left.

BARRY: If I were... um... wanting to get it out... say, all of it... would you need to see some ID or something?

MAYOR: ID? What for? Everybody knows who you are.

BARRY: When will the bank be open?

MAYOR: We're open Monday through Friday, 9-4, Saturdays 'till noon. Of course, we take holidays off, but that's only right, don't cha think?

BARRY: No. I mean yes. I mean... what I'm wanting to know is, what time *today* are you opening back up?

MAYOR: Oh, I was thinkin' about just cuttin' out for the rest of the day. Live life on the wild side. That's what you always say, ain't it, Earl? But seein' it's you, and seein' that you're registered to vote, why, what say you just come by around 4:00 and we'll get you whatever you need.

BARRY: (*In a trance.*) All of my dreams are coming true.

MAYOR: An' don' you go an' worry about them Oxley Boys. They're growl is worse 'an their scratch. (*Leaves, switching hats at the door.*)

LEROY: That was fortuitous.

BARRY: What?

LEROY: Fortuitous. It means fortunate.

BARRY: I know what it means. It just surprises me that you used such a big word.

LEROY: I found it in the dictionary. There's a lot of 'em in there.

BARRY: *(Taking out the roll of cash and handing it to LEROY.)* Here, my friend. I'll let you be in charge of my chump change.

LEROY: Excuse me?

BARRY: I'm giving this to you. It is my present.

LEROY: Wow. You really is the bestest friend I ever had. Of course, you're the only friend I ever had, but I guess that don't matter.

BARRY: *(More an aside.)* And neither does 350 dollars when you have 12,000 in the hole.

Enter LAURA BETH. She's wearing a garish straw hat with flowers, which she switches at the door for a bonnet. She will walk over to BARRY's booth and nervously stand there for a beat.

LAURA BETH: *(Nervous.)* Hello, Earl.

BARRY: *(Standing, obviously interested; after all, she is cute.)* Why, hello.

LAURA BETH: *(Quickly, before she loses her nerve.)* I just want ya to know, Earl, that even though Clem done gived me a hawg, it don' mean nothing'. An' the only reason I ever kept it was because I figured that I could give it a better home than Clem. An' besides, Clem's already got himself a gal. Least ways, that's what she says. *(Melting a little.)* An' besides, she's so sweet – the hawg, not Laura Linda. Why, ifin's you was to take one look at her, you'd fall in love with her, too – the hawg. But hopefully not more than you already love me. Ya do, don' cha, sweetie?

BARRY: What?

LAURA BETH: *(Thinks back a minute and then starts over.)* I just want ya to know, Earl, that even though ol' Clem gived me a hawg...

BARRY: No. I heard all that you said. It just doesn't make any sense.

LAURA BETH: Well, maybe it would ifin's you'd see the hawg...

BARRY: I think you're missing the point.

LAURA BETH: Probably so. That's why I gived up sewin'.

BARRY: What?

LAURA BETH: Ya really can't sew worth a hoot if you keep missin' the point.

BARRY: What?

LAURA BETH: What I'm tryin' to say is that I waited for ya, Earl.

BARRY: *(Still confused, but trying to play along.)* Why, thank you. I guess. What were you waiting ... for?

LAURA BETH: *(A bit embarrassed.)* Well... you know.

BARRY: *(Aside.)* I wish the heck I did.

During the following, LAURA BETH will become increasingly friendlier with BARRY. SHE will keep touching BARRY's arm. When SHE does, BARRY will look accusingly at her hand, which SHE'll then pull away, until BARRY's no longer paying attention, and then THEY'll do it all over again.

LAURA BETH: *(Loosening up a bit.)* Why, the minute you was gone, all them other boys started comin' around. Why they was thicker than flies on a 'possum on a hot summer day.

LEROY: *(Interjecting.)* Them ain't the good eatin' kind.

BARRY: What?

LEROY: The 'possum, not the flies. Most folks don't eat flies. Although my granny has a recipe that she's mighty proud of.

BARRY: What?

LEROY: A 'possum with flies has done exceeded it's due date. Ya want your 'possums fresh, you know, before it's been run over too many times.

LAURA BETH: *(Exasperated; to LEROY.)* Why, everybody knows that. But I would like your granny's recipe.

LEROY: 'Tain't likely. She took it to the grave.

LAURA BETH: I didn't know your granny died.

LEROY: She didn't. She just buried the recipe out back.

BARRY: I'm sorry ... but what were we talking about?

LEROY: I was talkin' 'bout 'possums.

LAURA BETH: *(After thinking a beat.)* I was talkin' about all them boys that would come round. Why, they was always wantin' to take me to Lovers' Gulch ...

BARRY: Lovers' Gulch?

LAURA BETH: (*Sideling up.*) Aw... you know. We went there plenty of times.

BARRY: We went parking... in a gulch?

LAURA BETH: Well, it ain't really a gulch. It's more like a sink hole... (*Really turning it on.*) ...but yeah.

BARRY: What did you say your name was again?

LAURA BETH: You know my name, Earl. You whispered it enough times in my ear.

BARRY: Which ear?

LAURA BETH: Well ... I don't rightly remember. One or the other.

BARRY: (*Pushing her back.*) Look, sweetheart. I'm sure you're a swell gal and all, and I really would like to get to know you, but I've never met you before. My name isn't Earl. It's Barry. I've never been to this town. I've never been to this diner. And I sure as heck ain't never been parking in any Gulch.

LEROY: He's been actin' this way all day. (*Tapping his head in confidence.*) I think he's a bit touched.

BARRY: I am not touched.

LAURA BETH lets go of his arm that she's been holding.

BARRY: I am perfectly sane. It's all of you who are crazy.

LEROY: (*Matter of fact.*) I'm not crazy... I'm stupid. I've been told there's a difference.

LAURA BETH: (*Hurt; to BARRY.*) Just because you graduated from the 7th grade doesn't mean you have to act like you're smarter than everybody else.

BARRY: There was a 7th grade graduation?

LAURA BETH: Why sure. We have graduations every semester. That way nobody's left out. I still have my 5th grade diploma.

BARRY: Look. I'm not trying to act smarter than you. It's just that I don't know you.

LAURA BETH: (*Still hurt.*) My name is Lah-Rah Bey-eth.

BARRY: Well, tell me Laura Beth ... (*Pronounces it like it should be.*)

LAURA BETH: (*Once again hurt.*) You know that ain't the way I say my name.

BARRY: (*Trying again; over pronounces her name, but she's Okay with it.*) Well, tell me, Lah-Rah Bey-eth, (*Trying to be coy; I mean, after all, she is cute.*) What did we like to do down in the ... gulch.

LAURA BETH: (*Becoming very friendly, interspersed with embarrassed giggles.*) Well ... you'd put the car in park ... an' then we'd slip into the backseat ... an' then we'd get real close ... an' then we'd swat skeeters.

BARRY: Skeeters? We'd swat mosquitoes? That's it?

LAURA BETH: That's about all you can do down in Lovers' Gulch. There's a passel of 'em down there. Big uns, too. Why, you can hear 'em comin' from acrost the hollow. It gives ya time to get ready for 'em. (*Cuddling up again.*) Sometimes I'd swat 'em on you, an' sometimes you'd swat 'em on me. It was romantic.

BARRY: Why ... why wouldn't we go somewhere else?

LAURA BETH: Well I don't rightly know where else there is to go. Besides, you said it was our special place. You said you never took any other gal there but me.

BARRY: And I never did anything else?

LAURA BETH: Well, one time you chased a 'possum off with a Dixie cup.

BARRY: I did?

LAURA BETH: You know, I always thought 'possums were supposed to play dead. An' that was a nice Dixie cup, too.

BARRY: But I did nothing else?

LAURA BETH: Nope.

BARRY: Did I ... Did I have brain damage? Fall on my head when I was a boy? Get kicked by a mule?

LAURA BETH: No. Not that I know of. You did smack some of them skeeters pretty darn hard against your forehead, but I don't reckon that'd be enough to give ya brain damage, unless you was a skeeter. But then, I don't reckon skeeters got much of a brain to begin with.

BARRY: (*An epiphany.*) Wait a minute! You said we were in *my* car. Right?

LAURA BETH: (*Puzzled.*) Well, yeah.

BARRY: Whatever happened to my car?

LAURA BETH: (*A bit scared.*) You said I could keep it 'till you came back. If I didn't bang it up. An' I didn't. I didn't never touch it. I didn't even drive it. That way it'd still look perty when you got back. (*Happy.*) But you're back, now.

BARRY: (*Suspicious.*) What kind of car do I have?

LAURA BETH: You is the most forgettin'-est feller I know.

BARRY: Humor me.

LAURA BETH: I don't know why you was always so worried 'bout scratchin' that ol' car of yours. Ifin's it was new, well, I could see that. But your ol' car was made way back in 1959. Why that's way before I was even born. Probably before I was even thought of. It's *really* old.

BARRY: (*Trying to be patient.*) What kind of car is it?

LAURA BETH: You always called it your 'Vette, which jus' makes no sense at all. It was never in any war. An' it sure as heck don't take care of no sick hawgs.

BARRY: (*Astounded.*) Wait a minute! I own a '59 Corvette?

LAURA BETH: Like that's somethin' special?

BARRY: Do you have any idea how much that car is worth?

LAURA BETH: I don't have very many ideas about anything, much less cars.

BARRY: That car's worth a fortune.

LAURA BETH: Shoo! That car ain't worth doodley squat. You cain't even get a hawg in it. Not unless you're countin' Laura June. But I wouldn't want to call her a hawg. I like hawgs too much. Heck, if it was worth anything, it'd have a bigger back seat in it.

BARRY: But Corvettes don't even have back seats.

LAURA BETH: Well, it wouldn't be hard to get one that's bigger, now, would it?

BARRY: Tell me. Where is this car?

LAURA BETH: It's in my barn. I had to keep it locked up inside so the hawgs wouldn't drive it. But they wanted to.

BARRY: I don't suppose we could go get that car, could we?

LAURA BETH: (*Sideling up to BARRY.*) Are you wantin' to go park somewheres?

BARRY: Isn't it parked right now?

LAURA BETH: (*Confused.*) Well ... yeah. But you can't go parkin' until you go drivin', can ya?

LAURA JUNE enters out of breath. She dashes over to BARRY's booth, where she slides to a stop. LAURA BETH will immediately become icy. LAURA JUNE will then realize she's still wearing the headband she came in with, so she'll slide up to the hall tree and swap it with another headband, and then slide back.

LAURA BETH: *(Cold; a bit snooty.)* Well, if it ain't Laura June. We was just talkin' about you. Well, actually, we was talkin' about hawgs, but I don't see much difference.

LAURA JUNE: *(Ignoring LAURA BETH; enraptured with the sight of BARRY.)* Earl! They said you was here! I couldn't believe it. I just stopped what I was doin' an' came straight over.

BARRY: What were you doing?

LAURA JUNE: *(Trying to act casual.)* Oh, just puttin' out a little fire in the kitchen. It'll wait.

BARRY: So, you're Laura Jane?

LAURA JUNE: Laura Jane? No, silly, that's my sister. I'm Laura June. *(Icy; threatening.)* An' you better not be messin' around with my sister no more.

BARRY: Let me get this straight ... You're Laura June. You have a sister named Laura Jane. And you're Laura Beth ... Are all the girls in this town named Laura Something?

LAURA JUNE: *(Thinks about for a moment.)* No. No ... I don't think so. *(To ESTHER.)* Esther? There ain't no one named Laura Something, is there?

ESTHER: No. Unless you're thinkin' of Laura Samantha. But that's only one, not all of you.

BARRY: Never mind.

LAURA BETH, who has been getting increasingly angrier, has finally had enough.

LAURA BETH: What are you doin' here, Laura June?

LAURA JUNE: I've come to see my man.

LAURA BETH: Your man?

LAURA JUNE: That's what I said. Do ya need me to say it again?

LAURA BETH: I heard what you said, but I didn't like it. 'Cause he's *my* man.

LAURA JUNE: Ha! Why, you couldn't keep a man ifin's you had a bungee cord.

LAURA BETH: I don't *need* no bungee cord to keep my man ... like *some* people I know.

LAURA JUNE: An' just what are you tryin' to say?

LAURA BETH: I ain't a tryin'! I'm a sayin'!

LAURA JUNE: Then say it.

LAURA BETH: Alright. You're nothin' but ... you're nothin' but a floozy.

LAURA JUNE: A floozy?! Well ... you ain't no better than a ... a hawg waller.

LAURA BETH: (*Puzzled.*) A hawg waller? Why ... that ain't bad.

LAURA JUNE: A *clean* hawg waller.

LAURA BETH: That does it! Little girl, you've done crossed the line!

LAURA JUNE: (*Puzzled.*) What line?

LAURA BETH: All of 'em!

THEY both get nose to nose with their fists clinched.

BARRY: (*Stepping in between.*) Ladies! Ladies! Please. There's enough of me to go around.

The two GIRLS stop and think about it for a beat, relax and smile.

LAURA BETH and LAURA JUNE: (*Together; suddenly happy again.*) Okay!

THEY turn, arm in arm, and exit, leaving BARRY dumbfounded for a beat.

BARRY: (*To no one in particular.*) I've died and gone to heaven. (*After a beat; sitting back down.*) Tell me, Larry ...

LEROY: LeRoy.

BARRY: Tell me, LeRoy ... You know, it really seems like people have missed me. How long have I been gone?

LEROY: The better part of three days.

BARRY: Just three days?

LEROY: A lot can happen in three days. Why, that's how long it took to make the whole world.

BARRY: I believe that it was six days.

LEROY: *(Thinking for a beat.)* Why, that makes no sense. *(Counting on his fingers.)* That means a weekend would only be two days long, then. That's plum' crazy.

BARRY: Um ... Yeah. *(Moving on.)* When I left, was I planning on coming back?

LEROY: Cain't rightly say. You slipped out all a sudden an' all. But most folks didn't reckon you was.

BARRY: How do you know?

LEROY: On account that you gived all your hawgs ta me. An' I appreciate that. Why, it's good to have somebody to look after.

BARRY: Why, thank you for looking after my hogs.

LEROY: Oh, no. I wasn't lookin' after your hawgs. They was lookin' after me.

BARRY: You know, Larry ...

LEROY: LeRoy.

BARRY: Whatever. *(Enraptured.)* I was looking for a place to hide. Somewhere where I'd never be found. Somewhere where I could stay, maybe forever. And I found it. I'm done running Larry ...

LEROY: LeRoy.

BARRY: Chatoba Falls has everything I'd ever want. I've got a best friend ...

LEROY: Who's that?

BARRY: It's you, Larry.

LEROY: Would it just be easier if I changed my name to Larry?

BARRY: *(Continuing.)* I've got a girl friend ... or two ...

LEROY: Or three ... or four ...

BARRY: It gets better every minute. I've got all the money I need. I've got a car. I've got a place to stay ... I do, don't I?

LEROY: Well, at least until your Mama gets outta jail.

BARRY: How long is that?

LEROY: Eight years. Five with good behavior. But that's not very likely.

BARRY: LeRoy ...

LEROY: Larry ... No, wait ... you was right.



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