

# SWEET TEXAS RECKONING

By  
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# SWEET TEXAS RECKONING

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*For Keeko...*

*My precious son and the very light of my life.*

*And for my dear friend, Linda S. Nelson...*

*Who has been there through thick, thin, and then some.*

## SWEET TEXAS RECKONING

*Sweet Texas Reckoning* was originally produced for the Thespis Theatre Festival in New York City by LSNelson Productions, featuring the following cast:

Ellie.....Jane Summerhays  
Alan John.....Robb Pruitt  
Kate.....Anne Richardson  
Samantha.....Michelle Hurd

*Sweet Texas Reckoning* received its 2<sup>nd</sup> production at the Garage Theatre in Long Beach, CA by Panndora Productions, featuring the following cast:

Ellie.....Rebecca Taylor  
Alan John.....Derek Long  
Kate.....Karen Wray  
Samantha.....C.J. Williams

*Sweet Texas Reckoning* received its 3<sup>rd</sup> production at the Den Theatre in Chicago, IL by Artemisia - A Chicago Theatre, featuring the following cast:

Ellie.....Molly Lyons  
Alan John.....John Wehrman  
Kate.....Scottie Caldwell  
Samantha.....Anita Kavuu-Nganga

CAST: 3 Women, 1 Man

ELLIE WOLCOTT	True southern Baptist in her late 60s
ALAN JOHN	Ruggedly handsome Texan in his 40s
KATE WOLCOTT	Simple beauty with a dancer's body in her 40s
SAMANTHA	Stunning dark-skinned beauty in her 30s

TIME: The present.

PLACE: The home of Ellie Wolcott in Sealy, Texas.

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## ACT ONE

*The living area is immaculate, though a bit overcrowded with collections of southern memorabilia including colorful Fiesta Ware, decorative handmade quilts, and a shelf over a side table with a dozen or so pairs of vintage cowboy boots. The kitchen upstage, which is open to the living area, has a cluster of collectible salt and pepper shakers including not so politically correct Black “Mammies” and “Sambos”. There is a hallway off the living area leading to the bedrooms with a decorative mirror hanging to the left of it, and a screen back door leading to what may be an outdoor porch. The back door is ajar.*

*ELLIE WOLCOTT enters from the hallway carrying a medium sized cardboard box. She is a very attractive woman in her mid-sixties wearing just the right amount of makeup to compliment her casual, upscale look. She sets the box on the floor next to the side table and sighs, looking around the room, checking her watch, and finally allowing her gaze to land on the boot collection sitting atop the shelf just above the side table. She reaches for one of the vintage boots but stops when she notices the opened back door. She crosses to the door, closes it, and heads back to the shelf where she again reaches for the boot and pulls from it a fifth of Jack Daniels. After a long, satisfying swig from the bottle, she replaces it within the boot, and sets the boot back upon the shelf.*

*She then begins taking framed family photographs, poems, embroidered samplers, and such from the box, carefully setting them upon the side table. After arranging the frames, she steps back to admire her work and reaches for the bottle within the boot, taking another long swig.*

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*The sound of footsteps is heard on the back porch and Ellie quickly replaces the bottle into the boot and exits into the hallway leading to the bedrooms. The back door flies open as ALAN JOHN, a ruggedly handsome man in his late forties enters the room. His pressed jeans are accented with expensive-looking western boots and a matching western belt. His starched button-down shirt is partially un-tucked forming a “balloon” just above his belt buckle.*

**ALAN JOHN.** Hello The House! *(Looking around the room.)* Ellie? Ellie, it’s me. AJ. She here?

**ELLIE.** *(Enters from hallway, checking hair in the mirror.)* Alan John, you ever knock? Shut that door, will you!

**ALAN JOHN.** She here yet?

**ELLIE.** Do you see her? Shut the damned door. You’re lettin’ in the heat.

**ALAN JOHN.** *(Shuts the door, then turns to Ellie.)* How do I look?

**ELLIE.** Tuck your shirt in.

**ALAN JOHN.** The gal at Walmart says this shirt won’t ever wrinkle. Ever.

**ELLIE.** *(Commanding him.)* Tuck! *(Ellie exits into the hallway as Alan John wanders around the living area tucking his shirt into his jeans. Noticing the newly laid frames upon the table, he picks one up and studies it carefully.)*

**ALAN JOHN.** *(Reading words from a framed sampler.)* “Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray the Lord my soul...” *(calling to Ellie.)* What is all this stuff? Never seen ‘em before.

**ELLIE.** *(From offstage.)* There’s a photo or two of the both of you in there.

**ALAN JOHN.** There is? I don’t see...

**ELLIE.** *(From offstage.)* Look in the back. Behind the Christmas sweater one.

**ALAN JOHN.** *(Bends to have a closer look at the photographs and accidentally drops the framed prayer sampler.)* Jesus H. Christ! *(He retrieves the frame from the floor and replaces it onto the table as Ellie re-enters and heads for the kitchen area where she checks a pot on the stove.)*

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**ELLIE.** Their plane landed in Houston a little over two hours ago. That shoulda' put them into Sealy already.

**ALAN JOHN.** *They?* She bringin' someone?

**ELLIE.** Don't fret, AJ. Probably just one of her dancer friends.

**ALAN JOHN.** Male...or female?

**ELLIE.** What difference does that make? Either way, doubt you could tell. Them dancer boys, they're all a little light in the slippers.

**ALAN JOHN.** *(Correcting her.)* Loafers. It's "light in the loafers".

**ELLIE.** *(Covering the pot, she then gets an empty coffee mug from the cupboard and crosses into the living area.)* All I'm sayin' is she's bringin' someone's all. *(Reaching into the boot for the bottle of Jack Daniels, she uncaps and pours a hefty swig.)*

**ALAN JOHN.** Is Katie still dancin'? She was so damned beautiful when she danced. Looked like a floatin' snowflake. A little floatin' snowflake.

**ELLIE.** *(Taking a hearty gulp from the mug.)* Thing 'bout snowflakes is they melt, AJ. That business? Women over forty may as well be dead.

**ALAN JOHN.** She surely was a beauty. When she danced.

**ELLIE.** *(Capping the Jack Daniels bottle, handing it to Alan John.)* Do me a favor and put that Jack Daniels back in the boot where it belongs. *(Alan John puts the bottle back into the boot and sits on the sofa as Ellie sets her coffee mug onto the coffee table and settles into her chair.)*

**ALAN JOHN.** She's been divorced now for what? Two years?

**ELLIE.** Goin' on two—

**ALAN JOHN.** Goin' on two years, and I been patient. Ain't I? Ain't I been a patient man, Momma?

**ELLIE.** 'Bout as patient as they come. And don't go callin' me "Momma" just yet.

**ALAN JOHN.** 'Bout as patient as a man can get, I reckon.

**ELLIE.** You can call me "Momma" when this is all wrapped up. Don't go jinx'en it!

**ALAN JOHN.** She's had some time to simmer down and think about things. I think the timing's just right.

**ELLIE.** I'm sure you've been roamin' around her mind, AJ. I've no doubt.

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**ALAN JOHN.** Well, she sure been roamin' round mine. Just as like to put up a fence to pen her in.

**ELLIE.** She was a damned fool to have picked him over you.

**ALAN JOHN.** We all make mistakes.

**ELLIE.** Look at you! You haven't aged a bit. Got your looks. And you make a damned fine livin'! Katie was a fool runnin' off to New York!

**ALAN JOHN.** Gets God-awful cold up there. Colder than a witches' tit. *(Ellie reaches again for her mug, taking a long swig as she studies Alan John.)* What?

**ELLIE.** Stand up. *(He obeys and stands in front of the sofa as Ellie rises from her chair and begins checking his shirt.)*

**ALAN JOHN.** What?

**ELLIE.** *(Tucking Alan John's shirt.)* It's hangin' all out the back! Maybe you shouldn't sit 'till she gets here.

**ALAN JOHN.** What??

**ELLIE.** *(Still tucking his shirt.)* Don't sit down. Don't sit 'till she gets here.

**ALAN JOHN.** Yes, ma'am.

**ELLIE.** Just...stand.

**ALAN JOHN.** Yes, ma'am. *(Ellie crosses, picks up the empty box and exits into the hallway leaving Alan John standing in the living area, not knowing quite what to do with himself.)*

**ELLIE.** *(From offstage.)* And I don't want to see you followin' her 'round like a puppy dog, you hear me?

**ALAN JOHN.** No, ma'am...

**ELLIE.** *(Peeking her head in from hallway door.)* No, ma'am?

**ALAN JOHN.** I mean yes, ma'am.

**ELLIE.** *(Retreating back into the hallway.)* You spent your whole life doin' that! Let her come after you for a change, you hear me, Alan John? You are the object of desire, you understand?

**ALAN JOHN.** I guess.

**ELLIE.** *(From offstage.)* There's no guessin', Alan John Corbin. You either understand or you don't. And right now, I'm thinkin'—

**ALAN JOHN.** I understand. *(Repeating Ellie.)* I am the object of desire.



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**ELLIE.** *(From offstage.)* You bet your ass you are. Let her see what she left behind! *(She re-enters the living area, looks Alan John up and down, and pats him on the shoulders. She then reaches for the mug and accidentally spills the entire contents onto the carpet in front of the sofa.)* Shit! Shit! Shit! Well, don't just stand there! Get me a towel! Quick! From the kitchen!

**ALAN JOHN.** *(Rushing to kitchen area.)* Yes ma'am!

**ELLIE.** And that spray stuff, too! Holy crap in hell!

**ALAN JOHN.** *(Frantically looking around the kitchen area.)* Where you keepin' the dish towels?

**ELLIE.** That's gonna smell to high heaven!

**ALAN JOHN.** Where the hell'd they disappear to? *(A car door slamming is heard from outside.)*

**ELLIE.** Get a move on, AJ! I heard a car door slam! *(Not knowing what else to do, Alan John quickly unbuttons his shirt, takes it off, and kneels down in front of the sofa to wipe up the spilled booze as footsteps are heard on the back porch.)* Jesus Lord in Heaven! She's here! She is...Shitshitshit! Hurry up, will ya?

**ALAN JOHN.** *(Bare chested and kneeling, he frantically wipes the floor with his shirt.)* I'm wipin' as fast as I can, Ellie! *(Ellie rushes to the kitchen, sets the mug onto the countertop, turns quickly to the mirror making certain that her hair is in place, and disappears momentarily into the hallway as KATE WOLCOTT enters through the back door dressed entirely in black, holding nothing but a small gift box.)*

**KATE.** *(Looking around the room, not seeing Alan John who is kneeling behind the sofa.)* Hello. Hello the house? I'm home. Momma? *(Alan John remains unseen by Kate as he continues, bare chested, wiping the floor as Ellie makes a grand entrance, greeting her daughter.)*

**ELLIE.** *(Sounding more southern than ever.)* Katie? That my Katie? Well...if it isn't my girl, Katie! All the way from New York City!

**KATE.** *(Attempting to give Ellie a genuine hug.)* Hello.

**ELLIE.** Katie...let me have a look at you. My, my. Fit as a fiddle. Where are the rest of your things, baby? I can't imagine you'll be wearin' that the entire time you're here!

**KATE.** I brought—

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**ELLIE.** ‘Less you’re plannin’ on attending a few memorial services.

**KATE.** Momma—

**ELLIE.** Or funerals. There’s so many colors out there to choose from! I mean, I understand. You’re an “artiste”, right? I just wonder why you don’t ever change your palate, that’s all. Expand your color horizons. But I suppose that is your choice, now isn’t it.

**KATE.** I suppose it is. *(Regarding the gift box she is holding.)* I...I brought you a little—

**ELLIE.** For me? Oh, now there’s no need for gift givin’!

**KATE.** It’s not Tiffany’s. It’s just a little— *(Ellie takes the small gift box and absently tucks it away into the cupboard as Kate watches this routine in silence.)* ...something.

**ALAN JOHN.** *(Popping up from behind the sofa, bare chested, holding his wadded-up shirt.)* Hello, Katie.

**KATE.** *(Startled.)* AJ—

**ALAN JOHN.** *(Embarrassed, making an attempt to cover himself with his wadded-up shirt.)* Heard you were comin’ down. Thought I’d say “howdy”. Well... *(Uncomfortable silence.)* Howdy!

**KATE.** What the hell— *(Both Ellie and Kate take note of Alan John’s shirtless physique.)*

**ELLIE.** For heaven’s sake, Alan John. Put your shirt back on.

**ALAN JOHN.** I oughta have a fresh one hangin’ in the truck. *(Alan John tosses the liquor-soaked shirt onto the kitchen counter and starts out the door as SAMANTHA enters with a roll-on suitcase. The shirtless Alan John attempts to cover himself with one hand as he holds the door for her with the other as Samantha squeezes past.)* Howdy.

**SAMANTHA.** *(Eyeing him up and down.)* “Howdy” yourself. *(Alan John exits, closing the door.)* I swear, Kate, that town-car driver would not shut up. He gave me his card telling me to “call him anytime, day or night!”

**KATE.** *(Taking the roll-on suitcase from Samantha.)* I’ll bet he did.

**SAMANTHA.** Bad enough he didn’t know the way. But then to hit on me? Sorta like insult to injury.

**KATE.** *(Making introductions.)* Momma, this is Samantha. Sam, this is my mother.

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**SAMANTHA.** I am so sorry. (*Extending hand to Ellie.*) Mrs. Wolcott. It's so nice to meet you. (*Ellie, partially frozen by the combination of beauty and "blackness" that Samantha possesses, slowly extends her hand.*)

**KATE.** You can call her "Ellie". She can call you "Ellie", right Momma?

**ELLIE.** (*Reluctantly shaking Samantha's hand.*) Pleasure.

**SAMANTHA.** (*With slight urgency.*) Hey Kate, where's the "little girl's room"? I gotta tinkle. Been holding it in since we passed George Bush Park. That ride—

**ELLIE.** (*A bit too accommodating.*) It's right through the door just off the hallway.

**SAMANTHA.** (*Pained.*) Thank you. I peed at the airport, but— (*Rushing off to the hallway.*) Thank you! (*Alan John enters the house buttoning up a fresh shirt. Noticing the wadded up, liquor-soaked shirt on the kitchen counter, he grabs it before Ellie can get to it.*)

**ELLIE.** (*Panicked.*) AJ, gimme that shirt. I'll toss it in the—

**ALAN JOHN.** Katie Ann Wolcott! Well, look at you! Just look at you! Beautiful as ever! C'mere.

**SAMANTHA.** (*From offstage. Relieved.*) Thank. You. Jesus. (*Alan John, liquor-soaked shirt in hand, crosses to Kate giving her a bear hug and lifting her two feet off the floor causing the roll-on suitcase to tip over.*)

**KATE.** (*Slightly annoyed.*) AJ. (*Alan John begins to twirl her around as Ellie makes a frantic attempt at grabbing the shirt from Alan John's hand.*)

**ELLIE.** Give me the damn—

**KATE.** (*Very annoyed.*) Let me down, AJ! (*Alan John drops Kate to the floor as Ellie swipes the shirt from his hand and quickly hides it in a cupboard.*)

**ALAN JOHN.** (*Sizing her up.*) Let me look at ya'! You're just beautiful.

**KATE.** Please.

**ALAN JOHN.** As beautiful as ever! Spin round. Let me get a gander!

**SAMANTHA.** (*Entering from hallway.*) Oh my goodness, that felt good. Ellie, that is a lovely powder-room. I can see where Kate gets

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her sense of style. (*Noticing Alan John as if for the first time.*) Well. Hello. Again. I'm Samantha.

**ALAN JOHN.** Pleasure's mine. I'm Alan John. Friends call me AJ.

**SAMANTHA.** So nice to meet you, AJ! I see you found a shirt.

**ALAN JOHN.** Heh. They never wrinkle. (*There is an awkward pause broken by Ellie who motions them to the living area. Alan John does not take his eyes off of Kate.*)

**ELLIE.** Well now, take a load off! Have a seat! Anybody want some iced tea? I'd offer you something stronger, but that's the strongest I've got in this house!

**KATE.** Iced tea sounds good, Momma. (*To Samantha.*) You want? (*Samantha nods.*) And for Sam, too. I forget how hot it gets here in August.

**ALAN JOHN.** Yes, ma'am! You could fry up a batch of catfish and hushpuppies right there on the back porch without takin' a match to the Coleman!

**SAMANTHA.** (*With a chuckle.*) Iced tea would be wonderful. Thank you.

**ELLIE.** (*Overly enthusiastic.*) A round of iced tea comin' right up! (*Ellie goes to the cupboard for glasses and gets the iced tea pitcher from the refrigerator. Kate wanders over to the side table, taking a brief look at the framed photos as Samantha takes a seat on the sofa. Alan John watches to see where Kate will sit and, when she sits next to Samantha, Alan John plops down right next to Kate, dangling his arm just above her shoulders, making the small sofa a bit overcrowded.*)

**SAMANTHA.** So. Kate tells me that the two of you—

**KATE.** Grew up together. We grew up—

**ALAN JOHN.** HA! We sure did “grew up” together. Yes Ma'am! Did a whole lotta growin' up, if you know what I mean! Ain't that right, Katie? (*Unseen by the others, Ellie takes a flask from a cupboard and pours a generous splash into her iced tea glass. She brings all four glasses to the living area and hands them out, making sure to set her own “iced tea” in front of her on the coffee table.*)

**ELLIE.** Katie and Alan John were practic'ly hitched.

**ALAN JOHN.** Now, Momma.

**SAMANTHA.** (*Shooting a quizzical look to Kate.*) “Momma”?

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**KATE.** No, Momma. AJ and I were not practically hitched.

**ELLIE.** *(Grabbing her “spiked” glass of iced tea, settling into her chair.)* Oh, yes you were. *(To Samantha.)* Had the bridesmaid’s dresses all picked out.

**KATE.** *You* had the dresses picked out—

**ELLIE.** Pretty, light-peach chiffon dresses—

**KATE.** *I* had no dress picked out.

**ELLIE.** And they were to be married in the Baptist church that she was—

**KATE.** We were not going to be married, Momma. *(To Samantha.)* Sam—

**ELLIE.** That she was baptized in!

**ALAN JOHN.** That’s right! First Baptist Church. Right down the road a piece.

**KATE.** *(Sotto voice to Samantha.)* I was not going to marry that moron. *(There is a long pause as everyone sips their iced tea, having heard what Kate just said. Ellie then takes a long gulp of her “tea” and sets it on the table dangerously close to Samantha’s glass.)*

**SAMANTHA.** Well now, this is refreshing! *(Sips.)* Is it always this sweltering in Texas?

**ELLIE.** Like walkin’ behind a city bus all the livin’ day. *(To Kate.)* But it’s home, right Katie? It’s the only place I’ll ever want to live, that’s for damn sure. Like my Granddaddy used to say: “You’re either a Texan, or you’re not.”

**ALAN JOHN.** Damn right! You’re either a proud Texan, or you’re wishin’ you were one!

**KATE.** *(Regarding her previous comment.)* I’m sorry, AJ. I didn’t mean—

**ALAN JOHN.** Nothin’ wrong with bein’ proud of where you come from Katie.

**KATE.** That’s not what I was saying—

**ALAN JOHN.** An’ like it or not, you’re from Texas too, Katie! Nothin’ wrong with that!

**KATE.** I didn’t say there was anything wrong with that, AJ.

**ELLIE.** *(Turning to Samantha.)* Now, where are your...*people* from, Samantha?

**KATE.** Her “people”?

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**SAMANTHA.** My entire family is originally from Boston, but we moved to New York when I was pretty young.

**ELLIE.** Boston? Hmmm. Isn't Boston mostly...I didn't realize there were—

**KATE.** *Mother.*

**SAMANTHA.** Didn't realize what?

**ELLIE.** *(Sipping her "tea".)* I was just wonderin' if there were—

**KATE.** Mother, please.

**SAMANTHA.** Wondering what?

**ELLIE.** Just...I didn't think there were...are there...are there a lot of blacks up there? I knew there were lots of Asians, 'specially in New York...blacks too but—

**KATE.** *(Turning to Samantha.)* Sam—

**ELLIE.** What?

**SAMANTHA.** It's okay, Kate. *(Carefully, to Ellie.)* Yes, Ellie, there are blacks in Massachusetts. It's just like New York. And Caucasians, and Asians, and—

**ALAN JOHN.** And homosexuals! There's an entire town, a *homo town* in Cape Cod.

**SAMANTHA.** Provincetown.

**ALAN JOHN.** That's it! Dedicated to queers! Provincetown. *(Kate slumps, putting her face in her hands as Ellie takes another swig of her "tea".)*

**ELLIE.** Well, now. That's nice. It's nice they have a town of their own.

**ALAN JOHN.** Yup. A whole town of queers.

**SAMANTHA.** Ellie, would you mind. I'm afraid I'm going to have to scoot off to the bathroom again. It's...it's been a long trip.

**ELLIE.** You know where it is. *(Samantha rises, sets her glass on the coffee table, and exits into the hallway. There is a silence as Ellie watches her go.)* They have pills now for that.

**KATE.** For what?

**ELLIE.** Overactive bladder.

**ALAN JOHN.** Had a whole infomercial on one of 'em right before the Superbowl this year. *(To Kate.)* Oxy-but-ynin. *(Proudly.)* I remember 'cause it has the word "butt" in the middle! Damned commercial was so long, I just about pissed myself right then and

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there. That would have been so...*(Tickled with himself.)*...waiting for it to be over? Hell, I wanted to toss my Long Neck right at the damn flatscreen! Woulda' been a sorry ass waste of beer.

**ELLIE.** 'Less it's just a...you know...a cultural thing.

**ALAN JOHN.** A cultural thing?

**ELLIE.** Could be. *(Ellie sips her "tea" as she ponders this with Alan John. After a moment, Kate slowly raises her head, staring at them both.)*

**KATE.** Do the two of you have any idea how you sound?

**ELLIE.** What?

**ALAN JOHN.** What are you talkin' about, Katie?

**KATE.** How offensive. I mean, you sound like...like a couple of racist hicks!

**ALAN JOHN.** Hey! Hey! I ain't no hick!

**KATE.** Jesus!

**ELLIE.** Watch your mouth, young lady.

**ALAN JOHN.** And I got a couple of blacks workin' for me down at the plant.

**KATE.** I rest my case.

**ELLIE.** Don't be silly, Katie.

**ALAN JOHN.** Damned good workers, too!

**ELLIE.** You're bein' overly sensitive, Katie.

**KATE.** I am not overly sensitive, Momma. I'm—

**ELLIE.** You remember how sensitive Katie was as a little girl, AJ?

**KATE.** *(Abruptly halting them.)* Stop it! Stop. It's "Kate". My name is "Kate".

**ELLIE.** Now, when did you go and start callin' yourself "Kate"?

**KATE.** About twenty-five years ago.

**ALAN JOHN.** That ain't true. I've been callin' you "Katie" all my life.

**KATE.** Yes, you have.

**ELLIE.** Maybe that's just what they do up in New York City. Take their birth name, their god-given Christian name, and mangle it all to hell.

**KATE.** My birth name is "Katherine". You're the one who shortened it to "Katie".

**ALAN JOHN.** I've always liked "Katie".

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**KATE.** And no more talk about any wedding, Alan John. Momma. Not one more word, you hear me? There was no...there never was a wedding. It was a non-wedding. It wasn't ever gonna be possible because—

**ALAN JOHN.** The timin' wasn't right.

**KATE.** And Sam—

**ELLIE.** See? Manglin'! Mangle. Mangle. I thought her name was Samantha. It's how she introduced herself as: "Samantha". Now, why would—

**KATE.** Well, I'm sure I don't know, *Eleanor*.

**ALAN JOHN.** The timin' just wasn't right.

**KATE.** No! Stop. That's it, okay? No more wedding. Got it? Not another word from either one of you.

**ALAN JOHN.** Timing.

**KATE.** AJ!

**ELLIE.** I think I'll call her "Sammie". Has a more feminine ring to it than "Sam".

**ALAN JOHN.** Think I'm gonna call her "Sexy Mama".

**KATE.** You gotta be—

**ALAN JOHN.** Well, she is.

**ELLIE.** She is quite pretty, I'll give her that. (*Sipping.*) Though, she really oughta look into that overactive bladder. The girl's not been here fifteen minutes and she's set up camp in my powder room.

**KATE.** (*Losing patience with them.*) She's pregnant, okay? She's pregnant. Remember "pregnant", Momma? No. You probably don't. Just drank your way... (*Reconsidering.*) We don't need to go digging up the past. (*Directly to Ellie.*) But, while we're on the topic—

**ELLIE.** We're on a topic?

**KATE.** I smell booze.

**ELLIE.** There's not a drop of liquor in this entire house! Maybe a bottle of rubbing alcohol in the guest bathroom, but—

**KATE.** I smell it.

**SAMANTHA.** (*Entering from hallway.*) Well, I think I've finally cooled off! It must be a hundred degrees out there!

**ELLIE.** Sooo. You're pregnant, huh?

**ALAN JOHN.** Got up to a hundred n' six yesterday. In the shade.



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**ELLIE.** *(Eyeing Samantha as she heads toward the sofa.)* Ya' don't look pregnant to me—

**ALAN JOHN.** *(Offering his seat to Samantha.)* Please—

**ELLIE.** But I suppose congratulations are in order.

**ALAN JOHN.** Yes, ma'am! Congratulations! How far along are you?

**SAMANTHA.** *(Takes Alan John's place on the sofa.)* Yes. Right. Just about eleven weeks. *(Glaring at Kate.)* I was going to wait to tell—

**ELLIE.** Your first?

**SAMANTHA.** Umm, yep. Far as I know!

**ELLIE.** Your husband must just be beside himself with joy!

**SAMANTHA.** Well—

**ELLIE.** Or maybe it wasn't planned—

**KATE.** Sam doesn't have a husband, Momma.

**ELLIE.** Huh? *(Perplexed.)* Well, do you...do you know who the father is?

**SAMANTHA.** Yes, Ellie. I know who the father is.

**ELLIE.** Well, there ya' go! See? Was that so hard? And that's some comfort, right? That's gotta comfort ya' some right, Sammie? Can I call you "Sammie"?

**KATE.** Momma, her name is—

**SAMANTHA.** That's alright, Kate. She can call me "Sammie".

*It's...it's kind of sweet. (Ellie shoots a glance at Samantha, not knowing quite how to respond. She then rises, crosses to the kitchen area and checks on a pot roast in the oven. She then begins taking plates and silver from a drawer, setting them on the kitchen counter.)*

**SAMANTHA.** Is there anything in the kitchen I can help you with?

**ELLIE.** Oh, for god's sake, no! In your condition? No. I just threw together a little pot roast. Be ready in a bit.

**SAMANTHA.** My favorite. *(Chuckling.)* But I've never stopped cutting the end off.

**ELLIE.** Cutting the end off?

**SAMANTHA.** I...I cut the end off of the roast before I cook it.

**ELLIE.** Now, what on earth would make you go and do a thing like that?

**SAMANTHA.** Well...it's a little embarrassing—

**ELLIE.** I'm all ears—

**SAMANTHA.** Makes me look like something of an idiot—

## SWEET TEXAS RECKONING

**ELLIE.** Oh, now I wouldn't say that—

**ALAN JOHN.** Heh! Not to your face!

**ELLIE.** *(To Samantha.)* Try me.

**SAMANTHA.** Okay. *(Pause.)* Well...my grandmother used to do a big pot roast every Sunday. And, when I was growing up, I'd watch her. She'd...before she put the roast into the pot, she'd put it on a carving board, slice off one end, and throw the larger piece into the pot with all the vegetables and stuff.

**ELLIE.** Store bought?

**SAMANTHA.** Pardon?

**ELLIE.** The vegetables. Were they store-bought?

**SAMANTHA.** Umm...I don't...I don't think—

**ELLIE.** 'Cause, it's a sin to cheat a good pot roast out of home-grown vegetables.

**SAMANTHA.** I'm...I'm not sure.

**ELLIE.** Pure sin.

**ALAN JOHN.** Hush up, Ellie. I wanna hear this.

**ELLIE.** *(Sipping.)* Just sayin'.

**ALAN JOHN.** *(To Samantha.)* Go 'head.

**SAMANTHA.** Right. *(Pause.)* So...one year, when I'd come home from college, I was given the honor. It was my turn to make the pot roast. *(Pause.)* So, there we are in the kitchen while I'm getting ready to cook. And I take the meat, put it onto the carving board, cut off one end—

**ELLIE.** Shameful—

**SAMANTHA.** Put the larger piece into the pot and shove it into the oven.

**ELLIE.** *(Shaking her head in disgust.)* With store-bought vegetables.

**ALAN JOHN.** Hush it, Ellie!

**SAMANTHA.** My...my grandmother is watching all of this. And so, she turns to me and says to me: "Samantha, why on earth did you cut the end off of that pot roast?" And I...I say to her: "What do you mean, Nana? You always used to cut the end off of your pot roast when you cooked it!" And then she just starts laughing.

And...laughing. She can't...she can't stop laughing. And when she finally does, she says...she says to me: "Samantha, honey. I cut the end off of my pot roast because, back then, my pot was too small!"

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**ALAN JOHN.** *(With a loud and genuine laugh as Kate and Samantha join in.)* The pot was too danged small!

**ELLIE.** Funny how some things just get passed down from generation to generation without givin' it a second thought.

**ALAN JOHN.** *(Tears of laughter.)* Just too danged small!

**ELLIE.** *(Annoyed.)* Alright, AJ. Alright. I need you to run on down to the store and get me some butter and dinner rolls. *(To Samantha.)* I'd meant to make some from scratch but—

**ALAN JOHN.** *(Gathering himself.)* Sorry. Heh. Be happy to. *(Rising and leaning in close to Ellie.)* Do you want me to pick up some—

**ELLIE.** *(Cutting him off.)* Dinner rolls and butter, AJ.

**ALAN JOHN.** *(To Samantha.)* Now, don't go tellin' any more of your stories while I'm gone, pretty lady! Save 'em for when I get back!

**SAMANTHA.** I'll do that, AJ. I'll save my stories. *(Alan John exits out the back door, tucking his shirt. Ellie, with her back to them, checks the roast once again as Samantha mistakenly picks up Ellie's "tea" from the table. She brings it to her lips, gets a good strong "whiff", and sets it back onto the table just in front of her without taking a sip.)*

**KATE.** *(Rising from sofa.)* Need help setting the table, Momma?

**ELLIE.** Not just yet.

**KATE.** *(Opening a kitchen cupboard.)* Do you still have all the antique Fiesta Ware? *(Ellie crosses into the living area, plops down in her chair, and takes a long swig of her "tea". When she realizes there's no alcohol in it because she now has Samantha's glass, there is a brief look of panic in her eyes. Kate continues rummaging through a cupboard, pulling out a colorful stack of Fiesta Ware plates and bowls, unaware of the following exchange between Ellie and Samantha.)*

**SAMANTHA.** *(Rescuing Ellie by deliberately switching glasses.)* I don't take sugar in mine. *(Ellie locks eyes with Samantha as she reaches for her original glass.)*

**ELLIE.** Yes. I still have the Fiesta. It's your inheritance.

**KATE.** *(Carrying stack of Fiesta Ware to table.)* I'll be careful not to drop them.

**ELLIE.** Come sit yourself down. I think it's time you and me had a little talk.

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**KATE.** Me too.

**ELLIE.** And I suppose it's okay if your friend here, Sammie, is in on it.

**SAMANTHA.** I think I'll set the table. Should I set the table?

**ELLIE.** Maybe she can talk some sense into you, bein' your friend and all. Lord knows someone's gotta.

**SAMANTHA.** *(Rising from sofa.)* I think I'll set the table.

**ELLIE.** Alan John's a good man, Katie. *(Takes a swig.)* He's hard working. Head of the entire plant now, you know that? Making a darned good livin'. Darned good. And, regardless of what you liberals think, oil is still king, Katie. It may not be popular to say in New York or Boston, but it's the truth! Alan John's gonna have one helluva retirement package!

**KATE.** What on earth are you talking about, Momma?

**ELLIE.** I'm talkin' about YOU. It's high time you moved back here and settled down. You're not gettin' any younger, and—

**KATE.** What?

**ELLIE.** Am I wrong? *(To Samantha.)* Sammie, am I wrong? I mean, frankly, a divorced woman of your age traipsing around like some gypsy, tryin' to be a dancer—

**KATE.** Choreographer.

**ELLIE.** Whatever. Same difference. A woman of your—

**KATE.** It is NOT the same. I have a company. We are a well-respected DANCE company, Momma. Sam's the one still dancing.

**ELLIE.** Pregnant? A pregnant dancer? Well, I never! Now that's a whole other can of worms! Who ever heard of a pregnant dancer? Can't be good for the baby!

**KATE.** *(Heated.)* I haven't danced professionally in over ten years—

**SAMANTHA.** Kate—

**KATE.** But then, you wouldn't know that. You don't have the slightest— *(Crossing to the table with the framed photos.)* I mean, look at this! My God. It's like some fake shrine! *(Picks up the embroidered prayer, reading from it.)* "Now I lay me down to—"

**ELLIE.** You embroidered that when you were six.

**KATE.** I hate embroidery. And I didn't even know what that prayer meant, Momma. *(Rummaging through the photos.)* Wow. There are no photographs of the two of us together. Not one.

## SWEET TEXAS RECKONING

**ELLIE.** What? What're you—

**KATE.** There's Daddy and me. Baxter. Baxter and me. (*Replacing a photo on the table.*) Nope. Not one single photo of the two of us.

**ELLIE.** I don't...there's gotta be at least one. (*Sipping her "tea" as she crosses to table.*) Let me just... (*Rummages through photos.*) There's just gotta be... (*Picking up a frame.*) Well, look at this here. Look at this one! Beautiful! It's you and AJ down at the lake! Look. You see? You see, Katie? (*Studying the photo.*) My, you and Alan John made such a beautiful couple! Sammie, have a look at this! Didn't they? (*Sipping.*) Ya know, good fortune doesn't come knockin' at your door every day. Certainly not for someone of your age! And a divorcee! No, ma'am! And, as your mother, it is my responsibility...my duty. It is my *duty* to point out the stroke of luck that is standin' right smack dab in front of you! And it's initials are Alan John Corbin!

**KATE.** Momma—

**ELLIE.** What? That boy's waited. Forever. And, he is a fine man, Katie. Alan John'll take care of you as you run into old age. And, believe me, Katie, it goes quickly! It may feel like it's crawlin', but the years come along as fast as hell to clobber you and, before you know what's hit ya', you're an old lady. (*Sipping.*) An old lady without a man! You do not want to suffer that alone, Katie, believe you me. (*Pause.*) And we both know you didn't come down here just to see your Momma.

**KATE.** (*Incredulous.*) *WHAT??*

**ELLIE.** (*Plopping into her chair.*) I understand. You're hittin' middle age...feelin' your years, and maybe...just maybe you've finally come to your senses about the man who has always loved you. (*Pause.*) Like no other man has.

**KATE.** I am *SO* not here to get Alan John back!

**ELLIE.** (*To Samantha.*) Honey, would you be a doll and—

**KATE.** She's why I'm here, Momma.

**ELLIE.** What?

**KATE.** Sam is why we're here. The trip was her idea.

**ELLIE.** I'm sorry, I don't...Sammie—

**KATE.** Samantha...Sam...is my *partner*, Momma.

**ELLIE.** Your partner?

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**KATE.** Yes.

**ELLIE.** Oh. *(Pause.)* Ok. I see. Right. *(Pause.)* Well, I'm sure you can work out some arrangement...her bein' pregnant and all. I'm sure you gals can work somethin' out. She can run the company, and you can keep your eye on it from here. Or...or she could buy you out or somethin'.

**KATE.** *No. No—*

**ELLIE.** I understand. She's your partner so—

**KATE.** We're a couple.

**SAMANTHA.** *(Rising from sofa.)* I think I'll set the table. *(There is a long silence as Samantha crosses into the dining area where she begins to slowly set the table. Kate crosses to the sofa and sits, carefully watching Ellie.)*

**ELLIE.** Katie?

**KATE.** I'm gay, Mother. *(Silence. Ellie lets out a huge laugh. Silence.)*

**ELLIE.** *(Bewildered, slightly drunk.)* Noooooooo. You were...you were going to marry AJ. You were all set to—

**KATE.** I never had any intention of marrying Alan John.

**ELLIE.** You were married before...to that guy in New York—

**KATE.** That was so he could get his green card, Momma. He was a friend.

**ELLIE.** Wait! Wait! *(Pause.)* You...you married an *illegal*?

**KATE.** I married a *friend*. For legal reasons to help him out. *(Pause.)* And now I'm married...for *love*. *(Samantha nervously drops some silverware to the floor causing an abrupt clatter.)*

**ELLIE.** What're you talkin' about?

**SAMANTHA.** We're married, Ellie. Katie...Kate and I were married in Manhattan. *(There is an excruciatingly long pause as Ellie allows this to sink in.)*

**ELLIE.** Oh, Jesus. Oh, Lord Jesus!

**KATE.** Momma—

**ELLIE.** So, you're tellin' me...You're sayin' first you...you married an *illegal alien*—

**KATE.** A *friend*—

**ELLIE.** And then you went and married a *WOMAN*? What in Christ's—? Oh, Lord God!

## SWEET TEXAS RECKONING

**SAMANTHA.** (*Trying to explain.*) So, now we have the same rights—

**ELLIE.** Rights? *Rights?* What in God’s name?! Your rights! No one’s got *rights!* You got duties and obligations! Just like...just the same as the rest of us!

**SAMANTHA.** Yes, we do.

**ELLIE.** And that means women marry men, and white people marry white people, and Americans marry Americans!

**KATE.** (*To Samantha.*) Glad you came?

**ELLIE.** Marriage is between a man and a woman. It says so in the Bible.

**KATE.** The “Bible”, Momma, allows a man to basically “own” a woman. Or two. She was considered his “property”—

**SAMANTHA.** (*Correcting Kate.*) Well, that’s not exactly true. In the Old Testament—

**ELLIE.** *I Don’t Give A Shit!* (*Pause.*) You are NOT—No daughter of mine is GAY! No daughter of mine is gonna be married to a *woman!*

**KATE.** You’re right. We’re not GONNA be married—We ARE married.

**ELLIE.** Don’t you be sarcastic with me, Katie! Don’t you dare! (*Pause.*) I thank Jesus, I thank the Lord your father isn’t—Thank God Morgan is dead and gone, that the Good Lord saw fit to take him when he did, because this woulda’ killed him. This woulda’ done him in all over again.

**KATE.** I don’t think Daddy would have had a problem with this, Mother.

**ELLIE.** My husband was a God-Fearing Christian who never missed a Sunday church service. My husband—

**KATE.** Your husband went to church every Sunday and sang with the choir because he believed—

**ELLIE.** You’re damn right, Katie. Your father believed in those messages. INCLUDING the one that says marriage is between a man and a woman!

**KATE.** That’s not a message from Jesus, Momma. It’s a rule of the church. There’s a diff—

**ELLIE.** It’s in the Bible! It is in the Bible! It’s the law!

**KATE.** I guess that’s open to interpretation.

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**ELLIE.** THERE IS NO GODDAMN INTERPRETATION! HERE IN TEXAS, IT'S THE GODDAMN LAW!

**KATE.** Like Stoning? Or Slavery? Or denying women the right to vote? Oh, and let's not forget a woman's right to choose?

**ELLIE.** Don't go bein' all uppity and Northern, tryin' to be all smart like bein' intelligent with me, missy.

**KATE.** Well, don't you go being all stupid-white-southern-redneck-backward-racist-bigot on me!

**ELLIE.** *What did you say?*

**SAMANTHA.** *(Crossing toward sofa.)* Ellie—

**ELLIE.** *(Correcting Samantha.)* Mrs. Wolcott. *(To Kate.)* What did you just say to me?

**SAMANTHA.** *(Corrected.)* Mrs. Wolcott. Our coming down here was my idea. It had nothing at all to do with Kate and Alan John. It was...It was an attempt—

**ELLIE.** To what? Hmm? An attempt to what?

**SAMANTHA.** I don't know. To connect...reconnect. Maybe.

Especially now. *(Pause.)* I thought—

**ELLIE.** What? What did you think? 'Cause y'all thought wrong. Y'all so high and mighty, rules don't apply to you? No? The rest of society, the bedrock of this country...they can all just go to hell. Right? What must it feel like to presume you have the right to destroy what people like your father, Katie, men like your father spilled their blood and guts for?

**KATE.** *Blood and guts?*

**ELLIE.** I follow the rules. I believe in those rules. I do not thumb my nose at the very people I owe my freedom and comfort to. I do not slam my Bible shut just 'cause the word of God didn't "suit" me. But YOU? No consideration for society. The normal portion of this country. Damn Hollywood. Makin' it seem like bein' gay is now suddenly...That's not NORMAL. The scriptures state clearly...CLEARLY that bein' gay is a sin! It just is.

**SAMANTHA.** Mrs. Wolcott—

**ELLIE.** *(Abruptly to Samantha.)* And look at you. I don't mean to offend you, bein' a guest and all in my home, but...well I suppose y'all just figure it's alright to go 'an get knocked up, right? That's what y'all do up there. Make babies 'an all. *(Pause as Samantha*



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*stares, bewildered, at Ellie.)* Don't look at me. Don't you look at me. I read. I read about unwed mothers givin' birth to crack babies 'an all. And so now I suppose you'll be lookin' to Katie to take care of your child. Supportin' that little baby. Oh, yes. I see what's happenin' here.

**KATE.** The baby was planned.

**ELLIE.** Planned? *(Cackling.)* What...did you get her pregnant, Katie?

**SAMANTHA.** It was I.V.F..

**ELLIE.** What in hell's an I.V.F.?

**SAMANTHA.** *In-Vitro-Fertilization. (Pause.)* They combine the sperm and egg in a lab and then it's placed into the uterus.

**ELLIE.** Ohhh, the wonders of modern science! Whose sperm? Hmmm? Was it black sperm? Some black man's sperm? Or...or maybe you got some white guy's sperm. So y'all can pretend the baby's really yours. Some poor redneck—

**KATE.** Momma—

**ELLIE.** The doctor playin' God's unnatural's what it is. Makin' a child in a lab. He's gonna bring that baby into this world with two Mammamas? To be raised by two women? *(Long pause.)* Does she know about AJ? The extent of your relationship with him? That you spent an entire weekend alone with him when you were here for Thanksgiving a few years back?

**KATE.** Jesus Christ, Momma.

**ELLIE.** *Don't you curse in this house. (Pause.)* I didn't see hide nor hair of either one of you the entire time you were here. And, when I finally did see Alan John the day after you left, he had a shit-eatin' grin on his face you couldn't wipe off with a can of Ajax. *(Pause.)* He was "thankful" for somethin' alright.

**KATE.** This is why I don't come down here. This is what she does. This is—

**ELLIE.** *The truth. (Pause, looking to Samantha.)* There's a garment bag in the guest room closet. Neiman Marcus garment bag. Got her wedding gown in it. *(Pause.)* Might wanna have a peek. It sure is a stunner.

**KATE.** That wasn't me. Ever. It was you. You were in love with the idea of us together. You did everything you could do to delude yourself into—

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**ELLIE.** Him fondlin' you on that sofa was no delusion. (*Samantha shoots a look to Kate who is fuming at Ellie.*)

**KATE.** Nothing happened that Thanksgiving.

**ELLIE.** Seems more like a whole lotta somethin'. (*Silence as Ellie contentedly sips her "tea".*)

**SAMANTHA.** (*Carefully.*) Mrs. Wolcott, I know what you're trying to do.

**ELLIE.** (*Calmly.*) Oh, you do? What a relief! I'm so glad you know. 'Cause, your Katie? AJ and her shared some pretty heated "sessions" of a sexual nature in this house, pardon my expression. Under my very own roof! (*Pause.*) Yes, ma'am. And I know for a fact that it wasn't just here that they—

**KATE.** That was a very long time ago, Momma. A lifetime ago.

**ELLIE.** There is no time when it comes to matters of the heart. (*The back door opens and Alan John ambles in with a large sack of groceries in one hand, and two bottles of champagne in the other.*)

**ALAN JOHN.** Hello the house! Woulda' been back sooner, but I had a hankering for some champagne! 'Cause we got somethin' to celebrate, right?

**ELLIE.** Somethin' to celebrate, alright. (*Alan John sets the items on the kitchen counter and takes the wire off of the champagne bottle cap.*)

**ALAN JOHN.** (*Oblivious to the mood in the room.*) You got champagne glasses, Momma? (*Looking in a cupboard.*) Hey, did y'all see that land for sale down by the railroad track? You see that, Ellie? Pretty nice piece of property. Probably a little over twenty acres. I'm gonna call Trevor. Bet I could get the zoning rights for a house as well as the stables! (*Popping the cork, turning to Kate.*) You still ride, Katie? 'Cause I've acquired three more horses since you were here last. And the mare? A real beauty! Just like you! Actually, she's the color of dark brown sugar, more like Miss Samantha here. (*Laughing at his little joke, gets a glare from Kate, a smirk from Ellie, and a nice laugh from Samantha.*) Oh, come on, Katie. What? It's not like we don't see that Samantha here's a shade or two darker than we are. (*Finding champagne glasses.*) Jeeze. Lighten up! (*About to pour for Samantha.*) Oops. Pardon. I assume you'll be abstainin'! (*To Kate.*) Katie? (*Kate gives a slight nod. Alan John pours.*)

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**ELLIE.** I'll just stick with my tea, thank you.

**ALAN JOHN.** Suit yourself. (*Oven buzzer goes off.*) Was that the roast? Want me to take—

**ELLIE.** (*Gulping "tea".*) Turn the oven off, AJ. Let it rest. Have yourself a seat. (*Alan John turns the oven off, grabs the two champagne glasses and a glass of water heading toward the living area where he hands the water to Samantha, and a glass of champagne to Kate. He then sits next to Kate, putting his arm around her, glass in hand.*)

**ALAN JOHN.** Wasn't expectin' to say anything. To be honest, wasn't expectin' anyone to be expectin'! So then, it seems to me that it's pretty darn clear what should be gettin' the first toast. If I may? (*Silence.*) I'll take that as a "yes". Thank you. Here's to Samantha and the little miracle inside her. May God bless this baby that she's carryin', keep it safe from harm, showing it all the love that this world has to offer. And, may God provide Samantha with a good man, an understandin' man, to help raise this precious child as his own. Amen, and bottoms up. (*He drinks.*) Wait! Wait. And thank you God, for leading those who have wandered for so long back home to us. May he continue to lead them all the way back. Puttin' us back together where we belong. (*To Kate.*) 'Cause, time don't matter when it comes to affairs of the heart. (*Alan John leans in to kiss Kate on the cheek. She pushes him away.*) Just leanin' in to give you a little "peck".

**ELLIE.** It ain't your peck she's wantin'.

**KATE.** Stop it, Momma.

**ELLIE.** Cat's gotta crawl outta the bag soon enough.

**ALAN JOHN.** What's she talkin' bout, Katie? (*Silence.*)

**KATE.** Shit. AJ. (*Thoughtfully.*) Alan John. I owe you an apology.

**ALAN JOHN.** For what?

**KATE.** AJ, you are a great guy. A perfect...the perfect man. (*Pause.*) You were simply not the right man for me. You couldn't possibly be. As much as I love you, and I do, as a dear, dear—

**SAMANTHA.** *Friend.*

**ALAN JOHN.** I have no idea what you're talkin' bout, Katie Anne Wolcott. And I don't care. I don't. Don't matter you been married before. Don't matter you been away. Nothin' matters but that you're home. And, hell, I can do better than this if that's what you're sayin'.

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Heck, I'd come up north if you want me to. Come on up to New York for a spell to test out the waters. To see if you can take the "cowboy" outta Texas. I love you, Katie and that's no lie. I'll do whatever it takes. And this time? I ain't lettin' you go this time.

**KATE.** You didn't let me go, AJ. I was never yours.

**ALAN JOHN.** What? 'Course you were—

**KATE.** AJ—

**ELLIE.** Oh My Lord In Heaven. She's GAY. Gay. *(Pause.)* She's a LESBIAN. *(Quietly hits her.)* My own...my own daughter. *(A very long silence.)*

**ALAN JOHN.** I know what this is about. I ain't a newly laid egg in the hen house. That son of a gun. That shady son of a gun. That son of a...he got me! That son of a gun got me, alright!

**ELLIE.** AJ, you don't—

**ALAN JOHN.** Ooohhhh. And you ladies. You got me! You did! You had me goin'! All y'all. How'd he even...damn, I'm gonna get him good.

**KATE.** Get who? There's no one to get. You don't—

**ALAN JOHN.** That brother of yours! That lyin', cheatin', son-of-a-bitch, sorry ass brother of yours! That Baxter! Oh, that was a GOOD one. Damn. When he said he'd get me back the other night after gettin' his butt whipped in that poker game, I knew he'd try somethin' on. But this?? Woo Boy! How'd he get y'all to go along with this one?

**KATE.** We didn't...we're not going along with anything, AJ.

**ELLIE.** AJ, you gotta—

**ALAN JOHN.** *(Slyly to Kate.)* Well, sure you are! Holy rat shit! Gotta give him credit. YOU? KATIE ANNE WOLCOTT. "GAY"! Like you could be...no ma'am. But, that Baxter. He has done outdone himself. Hell, this prank's better than that time at the turkey shoot when he switched out the birds with them human cadavers!

**SAMANTHA.** It's not a prank, Alan John. *(Silence.)*

**KATE.** I'm gay. *(Silence.)*

**ALAN JOHN.** But we went "steady" in high school. You were...you were a cheerleader.

**KATE.** There are a lot of gay cheerleaders, Alan John.

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**ALAN JOHN.** What? No, there ain't. You and me, we had somethin' special. We had—

**KATE.** I never meant to lead you on.

**ALAN JOHN.** “Lead me on?” Lead me—? That's what you call it? You didn't *lead* me. You *had* me. Hook, line, and sinker.

**KATE.** I know, Alan John. It wasn't fair. I tried to... (*At a loss for words.*)

**ALAN JOHN.** How long?

**KATE.** Forever.

**ALAN JOHN.** Wow. Well, I'll be. I mean...you had me fooled, that's for damn sure. That surely does put a whole mess of things into perspective. Does your brother know? Does...does Baxter know this? 'Cause, I was just with him fishin' down in Freeport last weekend, talkin' mostly 'bout you, like the entire time. (*Pause.*) Does he know?

**KATE.** Yes. He knows.

**ALAN JOHN.** You're tellin' me that your brother knew you were a *gay lesbian* this whole—? Oh, God. I am a fool. I am a goddamned fool! Baxter must think I'm the... (*At a loss.*) ...Jesus. He must have been crackin' up, the things I said. What an idiot.

**KATE.** I am so sorry. I asked Baxter not to tell you, AJ. That was my doing.

**ALAN JOHN.** You were right, what you said earlier. I am a complete idiot moron. Jesus H. Christ. All these years. All these thoughts. (*Pause.*) I mean, I know we'd go through long periods of time without seein' each other. And I realize we both sometimes had other things goin' on. Other...other people. But I...I always figured we'd end up together somehow. (*Pause.*) Kinda' figured you felt the same way, you know? That deep down, it's what you wanted too. I...oh god.

**KATE.** It's just as much my fault as it is yours, Alan John. We've both done some foolish things.

**ALAN JOHN.** Who's talkin' 'bout *fault*? How is it *my* fault? What the hell's *my* fault here? How the—? For the love of Pete, YOU MARRIED ANOTHER GUY. What did I misunderstand? Gay people, gay ladies don't marry *guys*. Katie, you threw me over for another guy and I even...I even understood you gettin' married. Marryin' that guy in New York. 'Cause I knew, I knew in my heart it wouldn't work out. Hell, everybody gets lonely. I understood.

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**KATE.** That's not...Oh, AJ. I am so sorry.

**ALAN JOHN.** I'm supposin' you knew this, Samantha. Bein' her friend and all. Awful nice a' you all pregnant and all. Comin' down here to support your buddy in all a' this. *(Pause. The realization slowly hits him.)* Oh. Shit.

**ELLIE.** And there ya' have it.

**ALAN JOHN.** I see. *(Pause.)* Right. I...I shoulda' seen it. I shoulda' seen somethin'. You. You had me goin'. Goin' down the wrong track.

**KATE.** I hid it, AJ. From everyone. Even myself. There was no way—

**ALAN JOHN.** Can y'all please give me a second. *(He heads out the back door. We hear him from offstage.)* JESUS H.—GODDAMN—HOLY HELL—CHRIST—SHIT. *(He re-enters through the back door.)* How the hell'd this happen? Huh? How the—? What, did y'all meet up at one of them Rainbow Bars, or whatever the hell they're called?

**SAMANTHA.** We didn't meet at a bar, Alan John. That's not how it happened.

**ALAN JOHN.** Well, I reckon I'd like to know. Yes, I would. The whole kit-n-kaboodle.

**SAMANTHA.** It was a...we met at a dance audition for Kate's company.

**ELLIE.** *(Very tipsy.)* Our girl Katie here's a *chore—oggg—rapher!*

**KATE.** Mother...

**SAMANTHA.** You may not realize it, but this company is the "*shit*". I mean...sorry. But it was a big deal to even get an audition.

**ELLIE.** Musta' been love at first sight.

**ALAN JOHN.** Hush up, Ellie. *(Pause.)* I wanna hear this. *(Samantha looks at Kate, who motions her on.)*

**SAMANTHA.** More like love at first "fight". *(Pause.)* She dismissed me after the first round. I mean, like some regal "wave of the hand" kind of thing. "Next". Right?

**KATE.** I wouldn't use the term "regal". It was just—

**SAMANTHA.** Oh, it was "regal" alright. *(Pause.)* So, I grab my bag and start heading for the door. It was...it was humiliating in front of the other dancers. Just so...humiliating. I was furious. And then

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she...she says “Make sure you close the door. I can hear the piano down the hall.” And *that*...that just pissed me off.

**ELLIE.** (*Tanked.*) You go, girl.

**SAMANTHA.** So, I stop. I turn around and I say...I say to her, “You know what? Screw this. You barely gave me two minutes on the floor. No warm-up, and *two* minutes. What the hell is that? You don’t know what I can do. You...you don’t want dancers. You want two-minute posers.

**ALAN JOHN.** What the hell’s a “poser”?

**SAMANTHA.** So, I turn back and start out. I’m at the door. Have my hand on the knob. “Wait”, she says. “Hold on. Okay. Your feet? I’ve seen better feet on a Longhorn. But, if you think you can do better than that high school Bob Fosse-wannabe bullshit, I might be interested.” So, now I want to kill her! Strangle her with my bare hands.

**ELLIE.** Know the feelin’ well.

**SAMANTHA.** But I say, “Yes. I can do better. I can dance better than that. And, she says, “Five minutes, darlin’. And don’t waste my time.” (*Pause.*) And I danced my ass off for her. (*Pause.*) Your Katie? She’s pushy, demanding, and she will only accept perfection. (*Pause.*) But Kate...your Katie force me to find myself. And I fell in love with her. Right then and there. (*Silence.*)

**ALAN JOHN.** I’m havin’ a...havin’ a hard time hangin’ my hat on this one. (*Pause.*) I’m just...Katie, the...the “gay” part’s not what’s botherin’ me. I don’t care if you’re—

**ELLIE.** An abomination? Really? You don’t care?

**ALAN JOHN.** You. Shut. Your. Mouth. (*Pause.*) I may be stupid, but I ain’t mean. (*Pause.*) You hurt me, Katie. You hurt me ‘cause you didn’t think you could *tell* me. An’ *that*...that’s what hurts so bad. (*Pause.*) You didn’t think enough of me to...to be able to tell me. (*Pause.*) You thought I’d stop...lovin’ you or somethin’?

**ELLIE.** Oh, for cryin’ out loud.

**KATE.** Our world didn’t...still *doesn’t* work that way.

**ALAN JOHN.** *I ain’t the world, Katie.* I’m me. And you didn’t trust me. You thought I was just some dumb moron. Ignorant, and too stupid to understand.

**KATE.** I’m so sorry—

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**ALAN JOHN.** You could tell Baxter, right? But, you couldn't...you couldn't *trust* me with it. 'Cause, deep down, you didn't... *(Pause. To Samantha.)* He know about the two of you? That you're expectin'?

**SAMANTHA.** He's the...he's the "donor".

**ELLIE.** *Beg your pardon—??*

**ALAN JOHN.** *The what—??*

**SAMANTHA.** Baxter is the father of the baby.

**ELLIE.** *THE HELL HE IS—!!*

**ALAN JOHN.** *Well, if that ain't the—!!*

**ELLIE.** Lord. Jesus. God. *(Pause.)* Oh, Lord God. You mean to tell me...are you tellin' me that my son is the baby daddy of that bastard child you're carryin'? *(Pause.)* Then I'm it's blood grandma.

**SAMANTHA.** Yes, you are.

**ELLIE.** Holy shit. *(A silence as this all sinks in. After a moment of resignation, Ellie takes the bottle from within the boot, lets the boot fall to the floor, and slowly un-caps the bottle taking a long, hearty swig. She seems to lose her balance for a moment. Then, another long swig as the three of them look on.)* So, my only daughter is a lesbian.

**SAMANTHA.** Mrs. Wolcott—

**ELLIE.** And my only *son's* the father of your child. *(Another swig.)* Oh, Sammie. Sammie. Where did we go wrong?

**SAMANTHA.** *We?*

**ELLIE.** We. You. Me. Where the hell did we go wrong?

**KATE.** Mother, don't go off.

**ELLIE.** "Go off"? *(Cackles.)* Don't go off? You wrangle your brother—my son, into your twisted, lesbian baby-makin' plan and you tell *me* not to go off? You got no idea! Hell, that's practically incest, is what it is.

**ALAN JOHN.** Ellie—

**ELLIE.** Alan John here wasn't good enough? Hell, you coulda' used him the old-fashioned way. He'd a done it. He could have been your M.V.P.

**SAMANTHA.** *(Correcting her.)* I.V.F.

**ELLIE.** I'm sure it must cost a fortune. Coulda' used AJ here for free! Or...or Sammie, you coulda' used one of his "blacks" down at the plant! I'm sure one of 'em woulda' been your stud! 'Specially as pretty as you—



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**KATE.** *Mother, that is enough—*

**ELLIE.** How did this get past you, AJ? How dumb could you possibly be? There musta' been some clues. A red flag or *twelve!*

**ALAN JOHN.** Same way it got past you, Ellie. Katie always was a free spirit. Always runnin' around. *(Pause.)* I was just waitin'. Waitin' for her to "land".

**ELLIE.** Oh, she landed alright. And, surprise, surprise...the dynamic lesbian duo didn't bother askin' you, AJ.

**ALAN JOHN.** I reckon that's none of my business, Ellie.

**ELLIE.** None of your—? Up to 'bout ten minutes ago, Katie was all the business you ever wanted. Now you're just a good ol' boy who wasn't asked to the "donor dance".

**KATE.** Baxter offered to be the donor, Mother. He—

**ELLIE.** Ohhh. Mighty "white" of him.

**KATE.** He already knew. And already had his children. I didn't think it would be fair to put Alan John in a position to have to make a decision that could affect his future with someone else.

**ELLIE.** Oh, so now you're thinkin' 'bout AJ's future? Really? 'Cause, far as I know AJ thought his future was with you. Ain't that right, Alan John?

**KATE.** And you wonder why I wasn't comfortable opening up to you. *(Pause.)* Why I had to fake my way through my life. You. Where I grew up, and the things that were expected of me. I just...it wouldn't be fair to do that. *(To Alan John.)* To me, or to you.

**ALAN JOHN.** You don't have to protect me, Katie.

**KATE.** It wouldn't have been right.

**ELLIE.** None of this is RIGHT. No. No. *(Taking a hefty swig.)* And now? Now it looks like I'm not gonna have a single grandchild that isn't "mixed". Not a single one that's not mixed.

**SAMANTHA.** It's "bi-racial".

**ELLIE.** Oh, Jesus, Mary and Joseph. You carryin' my blood thinks that gives you the right to correct me in my own home? *(Stands, swaying.)* I gotta pee. *(Ellie, now standing, takes the last hearty swig from the bottle of Jack Daniels, drops the bottle to the floor next to the boot and stumbles off into the hallway.)*

**SAMANTHA.** That went well.

**KATE.** We're getting out of here.

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**SAMANTHA.** Kate, you promised me.

**KATE.** I promised I'd try! I promised I'd show up! I didn't promise I'd stay.

**SAMANTHA.** Well, you can't leave now. Not like this. *(Kate crosses to the kitchen area and grabs her cell phone.)*

**KATE.** The hell I can't. It's probably too late to get a flight out.

**ELLIE.** *(From offstage.)* WHERE'S THE BOOT?

**SAMANTHA.** Kate—

**ELLIE.** *(From offstage.)* WHERE'S THE GODDAMNED BOOT?

**ALAN JOHN.** Don't leave me here alone with her!

**KATE.** *(Punching numbers into phone.)* It may not be too late. Get the next—

**SAMANTHA.** Kate, I'm not leaving—

**ELLIE.** *(From offstage.)* DID I BRING THE BOOT IN HERE?

**ALAN JOHN.** Please, Katie. Just stay the night.

**SAMANTHA.** *(Taking the cell phone from Kate's hand.)* We're staying, Kate.

**ELLIE.** *(From offstage.)* WHERE IN CHRIST'S NAME DID I PUT THAT BOOT???

*(Kate reluctantly plops onto the sofa.)*

**ALAN JOHN.** Much appreciated, Sam. *(Gently, to Kate.)* Katie. Much appreciated.

**ELLIE.** *(From offstage.)* NOT A SINGLE WHITE CHILD IN THE ENTIRE MIX! NOT A SINGLE ONE!

*(The three of them are silent for a moment.)*

**ALAN JOHN.** I don't think she's finished just yet.

**ELLIE.** *(From offstage.)* I HAD IT IN MY HAND! HAD THE BOOT IN MY HAND!

**ALAN JOHN.** And, if history repeats? She won't remember much. *(Pause.)* She's in what they call an "alcoholic blackout".

**SAMANTHA.** A what?

**ALAN JOHN.** Oh, she's walkin'...and she's talkin'...but she doesn't have a clue what's happenin' around her. *(Kate rises, looking out of the screen on the back door.)*

**KATE.** Momma's drunk and the sun's about to set. Just like old times, huh AJ?

**ALAN JOHN.** Near as like. *(Ellie enters, stumbling into the living area. She is hammered.)*

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**ELLIE.** HAS ANYONE SEEN MY GODDAMNED BOOT??

**END OF ACT ONE**

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