

PINEY. Vanilla.  
MYRA. And you've brought her candy?  
PINEY. Horehound.  
MYRA. Well, personally, I wouldn't consider that a compliment, but who am I to say?  
PINEY. Shore liked *her*.  
MYRA. But Mister Piney, surely you understood that my—my sister is a little—shall we say “odd”?  
PINEY. Not to me.  
MYRA. Well, I'm sorry you've gone to so much trouble, Mister Piney—wasting all that vanilla—but you can't see her.  
PINEY. Why not?  
MYRA. She isn't with me anymore.  
PINEY. Where's she at?  
MYRA. Away.  
PINEY. Away where?  
MYRA. Where? Why, Boston! I thought she'd be happier in Boston, where they won't notice the difference.  
PINEY. Comin' back?  
MYRA. I'm afraid not. It just got too complicated here. I put her in a home.  
PINEY. Whose?  
MYRA. A sort of hospital. I do hope you haven't gone to too much trouble.  
PINEY. Took a bath.  
MYRA. What a pity. Washing all those vitamins off.  
PINEY. Picked lilies.  
MYRA. Well, maybe someone will die.  
PINEY. (*Offers box.*) Like horehound?  
MYRA. I could try.  
PINEY. Made it myself.  
MYRA. Then you must let me pay you. Can you put a price on the candy?  
PINEY. Two bits.  
MYRA. Fair enough.  
PINEY. Without the box.  
MYRA. How much for the box?  
PINEY. Dime.  
MYRA. (*Gets purse.*) That makes my sister worth about thirty-five

cents. (*Hands him a bill.*) This will include the vanilla. I had no idea you would find my poor sister so attractive.  
PINEY. Sexy. (*Clucks.*)  
MYRA. Well, you know what the old lady said as she kissed the cow—each to his own.  
PINEY. Nice behind, too.  
MYRA. Really, Mister Piney!  
PINEY. Solid. (*Clucks again.*)  
MYRA. Thank you. I mean—thank you for her. I'll tell her.  
PINEY. When?  
MYRA. Next time I visit her.  
PINEY. I'll go, too.  
MYRA. I'm afraid it would be a waste of your time. Only relatives can visit. I wouldn't want you to take another bath. (*The front door chimes are heard.*) Come in. (*Reba and Cora enter.*)  
REBA. (*Seeing Piney.*) Who's that?  
MYRA. Piney.  
CORR. Somebody dead?  
MYRA. He's sparkin'.  
REBA. You?  
MYRA. My sister.  
REBA. George Washington Piney! You ought to be ashamed of yourself.  
PINEY. What for?  
REBA. Well, everybody knows she's addlepat. You smell terrible. What have you been rolling in?  
MYRA. Vanilla.  
CORR. He smells like a cake.  
MYRA. He's really gone to a lot of trouble.  
REBA. Well, don't let him come around courting your sister.  
MYRA. I've taken care of that.  
REBA. We just had a talk with Brother Leviticus. He wants to see your sister Sadie before the meeting.  
MYRA. Well, I'm afraid we have a teensy-weensy problem. (*The door chimes ring.*) Come in! (*Willa Mae barges in. She sees Cora and Reba and stops abruptly.*)  
WILLA. What are you two doing here?  
REBA. It's a free country.  
CORR. Hello, Willa.  
WILLA. (*Sees Piney.*) Who's that?

MYRA. Piney.  
WILLA. Somebody died?  
MYRA. Yes—the old Piney we knew and loved.  
WILLA. He looks like he's ready to be laid out in his coffin.  
PINEY. You, too.  
WILLA. (*Whirls on him.*) Don't you sass me!  
MYRA. You'll get pins stuck in you.  
WILLA. (*Turns to Myra.*) I came over to get you-know-what.  
MYRA. You-know-what what?  
WILLA. What I told you. I need a swatch of your sister's hair.  
PINEY. What for?  
WILLA. (*Whirls on him.*) Cat's fur to make kitten britches!  
(*Back to Myra.*) I have to have it tonight if I'm going to cure her.  
The moon is right.  
REBA. You're going to cure her?  
WILLA. I don't speak to you. You're Pisces.  
REBA. Well, I'm going to speak to you. If anybody is going to cure her sister, it is going to be Brother Leviticus. Not you.  
WILLA. You mean Brother Satan. (*Points her index finger under Reba's nose.*) I've twice as much power in my little finger!  
PINEY. Wrong finger.  
REBA. Well, Mrs. Durdle has already agreed to give her sister to us to cure.  
WILLA. After promising me!  
REBA. We've already seen Brother Leviticus.  
WILLA. I've already picked my mugwort.  
MYRA. Ladies! There is no need to fight over my poor sister. You see, she isn't with me anymore. (*Silence greets this announcement.*)  
WILLA. The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away.  
CORA. Amen.  
REBA. Oh, the poor, lost thing. When did it happen?  
MYRA. No—no. Not that. I sent her away. She wasn't happy here. So I put her in a home where she'd be taken care of.  
WILLA. Why didn't you tell me?! What am I going to do with all that mugwort?  
PINEY. I'll take it.  
CORA. This isn't going to make Brother Leviticus happy.  
MYRA. When I told my sister what you kind ladies wanted to do,

she got so hysterical I was beside myself. So I called these people and they came and took her away.  
REBA. Where is she now?  
PINEY. Boston.  
REBA. How do you know?  
PINEY. Asked.  
WILLA. Heathens. They burned witches in Boston.  
REBA. How am I ever going to face Brother Leviticus.  
CORA. Rented a carnival snake, too.  
MYRA. Well, I'm sorry I've caused so much trouble. Why don't we all sit down and have a cup of tea together?  
REBA. Might as well.  
MYRA. (*To Cora.*) Tea?  
CORA. Scotch.  
MYRA. (*To Willa.*) Tea?  
WILLA. Tea. I'll read the leaves.  
PINEY. Sarsaparilla.  
MYRA. I'll only be a moment. The water's hot. (*At door.*) It's sort of like a party, isn't it? (*She goes into the kitchen. There is a long silence while Cora pours herself a Scotch and sips it daintily. Piney clears his throat.*)  
PINEY. Anybody need manure? (*No one answers.*) Thought I'd ask. (*There is another long silence.*)  
WILLA. Funny—she sent her away so sudden-like.  
REBA. Guess she don't trust us.  
WILLA. I didn't see anyone come or go.  
CORA. Me neither. And I live catty-cornered.  
REBA. (*Whispers.*) You think she's still upstairs?  
WILLA. I'm going to look. (*Dashes up the stairs.*)  
REBA. Spry for her age.  
PINEY. Nosey, too.  
REBA. Well, it does seem kind of strange. Do you think she acted funny, Cora.  
CORA. Ha-ha funny or just funny?  
REBA. Why do you suppose she had chairs against the doors when we came in?  
CORA. I was going to ask.  
REBA. Ask me—there's something fishy here.  
CORA. You think there's something fishy here?  
REBA. I just said so!

MYRA. Where is she? Why—she's down in—Boston.  
SHERIFF. Where?  
MYRA. Oh, at a place.  
SHERIFF. What's its name?  
MYRA. What's its name? Well, isn't that funny. I can't remember at the moment. Oh. Yes. Lotusland.  
SHERIFF. (*To Reba.*) Get me Boston on the phone.  
MYRA. Oh, they don't have a phone. What's this all about?  
SHERIFF. Mrs. Durdle, I'm afraid you'll have to come down to the jail with me.  
MYRA. What for?  
SHERIFF. Suspicion of murder.  
MYRA. Who?  
SHERIFF. Your sister.  
CORA. Poor little bird with a broken wing.  
PINEY. Purdy, too.  
MYRA. Oh, this is absurd. I can explain everything easily. You see, I wanted privacy here so I invented this crazy sister to keep people away. She doesn't exist.  
PINEY. Don't *now*.  
REBA. Officer—we all saw her. She was real enough.  
MYRA. That was me. I was playing a role I played as a girl. You never saw us together.  
REBA. We heard her voice upstairs while you were down here.  
MYRA. That was my own voice—recorded on tape.  
SHERIFF. Let's hear it.  
MYRA. Unfortunately, I erased it this morning after I had gotten rid of this sister character.  
WILLA. She confessed!  
REBA. And destroyed the evidence.  
MYRA. Look—I might as well tell you the whole truth. I am really Myra Marlowe—the TV actress.  
WILLA. Mad as a hatter.  
MYRA. I moved up here to be alone and write my autobiography. Haven't any of you ever seen "Moonlight Mountain"?  
SHERIFF. I seen it. And you don't look no more like Myra Marlowe than I do.  
MYRA. I'm grateful for that but, nevertheless, I am me. You don't recognize me because I played Granny Gurton. Look. (*Hobbles and cackles like an old crone.*) "Git outta my cabin—you rap-

scallion, 'fore I sic my hound dog after you." (*Straightens.*) Well, it's a lousy performance but it gives you a rough idea of the stupid character I played.  
WILLA. I could do it better.  
SHERIFF. What did you dig into the ground out in your backyard?  
MYRA. Manure.  
SHERIFF. You buried a box. She in it?  
WILLA. All chopped up?  
MYRA. Oh, now I really feel silly. I buried some old costumes of mine.  
SHERIFF. Piney—go see what you can dig up. (*Piney goes out.*)  
MYRA. It was a theatrical gesture to mark the end of an episode in my life—very foolish of me.  
CORA. You can say that again.  
MYRA. It was a theatrical gesture to mark the end of an episode in my life. That enough?  
CORA. How heartless—calling your sister an episode.  
REBA. This is the worst scandal we've ever had in Beaver Haven!  
CORA. Except for the Becker boy and the turkey.  
SHERIFF. You want a lawyer?  
MYRA. I want someone to show a little sanity. Call my agent—Tom Lamont. He'll vouch for me. I am Myra Marlowe.  
WILLA. And I'm Debbie Reynolds.  
SHERIFF. Where do I reach him?  
MYRA. Well, come to think of it—you can't. He's on his way back to the Coast.  
WILLA. "The moving finger writes and having writ—moves on."  
SHERIFF. First you say you're your sister and then you say you're somebody else. Don't make any difference who you are if you've killed somebody. We don't cotton to people killing people in Beaver Haven. (*They all look over as Piney appears in the kitchen doorway. They wait.*) Well, don't jes' stand there! Say something.  
PINEY. She's dead, all right.  
CORA. You found the body?  
PINEY. Found her scalp. (*Holds up the blonde wig worn by Myra.*)  
MYRA. That isn't a scalp. It's a wig—you backwoods woodchuck.  
SHERIFF. Where's the rest of her?  
MYRA. Look at it! It's a wig.  
SHERIFF. (*Examines wig.*) Don't seem to have no skin on it.

WILLA. She peeled it!  
MYRA. Don't be a fool. Anyone can tell this is a wig. Look—"Sears Roebuck." You won't find that on a scalp.  
SHERIFF. Piney—go out and dig some more.  
MYRA. You dig up my tomatoes and there really will be a murder.  
SHERIFF. Dig until you find her head or something.  
CORA. I'm going to faint. *(Takes a drink.)*  
MYRA. You're not going to find her head because I'm wearing it.  
PINEY. Sheriff?  
SHERIFF. What do you want?  
PINEY. Kin I keep her hair?  
SHERIFF. Evidence belongs to the State. *(To Myra.)* I think you'd better come along with me, Mrs. Durdle.  
MYRA. Now, wait a minute. Let me get on the phone. I can straighten this all out.  
SHERIFF. You're allowed one call. You can make that from jail.  
MYRA. From jail!  
SHERIFF. *(Takes out handcuffs.)* I hope you ain't going to give me no trouble, Mrs. Durdle.  
MYRA. Give you trouble? Look—you Beaver Dam Dumbbell—you arrest me and I'll sue this township for every cent it's got.  
SHERIFF. Won't be much. You coming peaceful?  
MYRA. You don't know it, Sheriff, but you have just entered a disaster area. *(Backs up.)*  
SHERIFF. Grab her, Piney—I'm making you a deputy. *(Piney faints as the Sheriff moves toward Myra with the handcuffs. The door opens and Tom Lamont enters.)*  
TOM. CBS sent me back. They—*(Looks around.)* Oh. Giving a party?  
MYRA. Come in and bring your rope.  
SHERIFF. Who are you?  
TOM. Jack the Ripper. Who are you?  
MYRA. Tom—you have a divine gift for saying the wrong thing at the right time. How can so many feet get in one mouth?  
SHERIFF. You know her?  
TOM. Of course.  
SHERIFF. Who is she?  
TOM. Dora Dean—blind detective.  
SHERIFF. Somebody here has got to be somebody!  
CORA. Until we find a body.

SHERIFF. Now, let's start with you. What's your name?  
TOM. Puddin' an' Tame. Ask me again and I'll tell you the same.  
MYRA. I'm being arrested for murder and you clown.  
TOM. Who's been murdered?  
MYRA. That Sister Sadie character I created. They think I murdered her. Tom—please! Tell them who I am.  
TOM. *(To sheriff.)* You want to know who she is?  
SHERIFF. We're waitin'.  
TOM. She's a nut. But she's the best actress in the business. I should know. I've represented her long enough. She couldn't kill anything bigger than a bug. Haven't any of you ever seen her as Sis Sadie or Grandma Gurton?  
MYRA. Don't forget Baby John.  
SHERIFF. Why did she pretend she was twins?  
MYRA. I told you. I didn't want to be bothered by neighbors.  
CORA. *(Rises.)* That's gratitude!  
REBA. *(Moves next to Cora.)* After I baked her a pie and wrote her name in dough!  
MYRA. Sorry about that.  
TOM. Look, sweetheart—it's simple. Record your voice—put on your wig, and show them.  
MYRA. *(Wearily.)* All right. *(Picks up recorder.)* SISTER! SISTER MYRTLE! *(Waits.)* I GOT MY DOOR UNLOCKED. I GOT OUT! *(Stops the machine.)* That should be enough. *(She takes the recorder a few steps up the stairs and turns it on. She then returns to the foot of the stairs and waits.)*  
VOICE. SISTER! SISTER MYRTLE!  
MYRA. *(Answers.)* Oh, shut up! You've got me into enough trouble.  
VOICE. I GOT MY DOOR UNLOCKED. I GOT OUT!  
MYRA. Good. Jump out a window. *(Turns to the others.)* Satisfied or do you want more? *(From the recorder the tape continues.)*  
VOICE. AT EIGHTEEN I MARRIED HUGH HENDRICKS, THE ACTOR. HE HAD BEEN MARRIED FIVE TIMES BEFORE—"  
MYRA. *(Dashes up to turn it off.)* Oh, no you don't.  
TOM. Are you ladies and gentlemen convinced?  
WILLA. I knew who she was all along. It was in her hand.  
SHERIFF. So you really are Myra Marlowe! Why, I've watched you since I was that high. *(Measures a few inches off the ground.)*

MYRA. Thanks! (*As she passes him.*) Give me back my scalp!  
 (*Snatches her wig away.*)

CORA. Do it again!

REBA. I knew you must be somebody. I said to myself the minute I met you—

MYRA. —she must be somebody.

SHERIFF. Would you autograph something for my wife?

MYRA. How about your shorts?

TOM. Folks—this has been a trying experience for Miss Marlowe. I'm sure she would appreciate being left alone. Now. (*Pushes them toward door.*)

CORA. You must know everybody who is somebody. Is it true that Burt Reynolds is impotent?

MYRA. As far as I'm concerned.

PINEY. (*As they leave, to Tom.*) Who is Myra Marlowe?

MYRA. (*Hands him wig.*) Here—take my sister's scalp. (*He follows all out.*)

TOM. (*Turns to her.*) Still like the simple life?

MYRA. (*Sits on sofa.*) Oh, Tom, I can't tell you how good you looked to me coming in that door.

TOM. Then why don't you come back to the Coast with me and play house?

MYRA. What happened to your whistling blonde?

TOM. Married a Navajo cattle king. Imagine. When she could have had me.

MYRA. I couldn't cheat you, Tom. You want a young tomato— (*Changes it to "two-may-toe."*) who will give you children.

TOM. We'll adopt the Becker boy.

MYRA. You know I adore you. But let me think about it.

TOM. All right. I'm not unreasonable. I'll give you three minutes. (*He times himself by his wrist watch. The front door opens and Cora pops her head in.*)

CORA. Oh, Mrs. Durdle. I was just talking to the sheriff himself, and he told me the truth. I thought you ought to know since you live here, too. It wasn't a turkey. It was a duck. (*Shuts door.*)

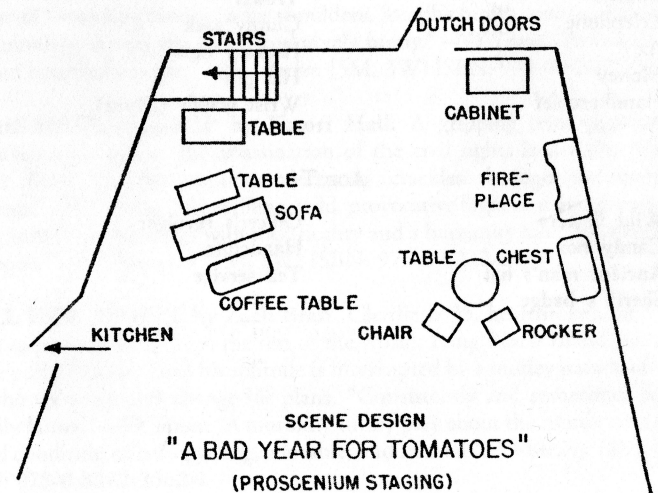
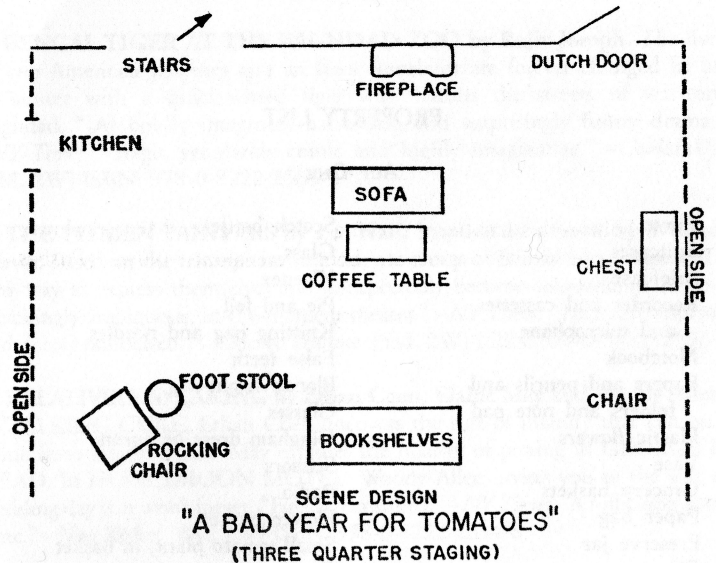
TOM. You see—they're as crazy here as they are in Hollywood.

MYRA. You can say that again!

TOM. You see—they're as crazy here—

MYRA. (*Stops him.*) Never mind! (*She kisses him on the forehead.*)

CURTAIN



## NEW PLAYS

### PROPERTY LIST

#### ACT ONE

Purse	Scotch bottle
Suitcases	Glass
Briefcase	Kleenex
Recorder and cassettes and microphone	Pie and foil
Notebook	Knitting bag and needles
Papers and pencils and folders and note pad	False teeth
Plastic flowers	Blonde fright-wig
Vase	Glasses
Grocery baskets	Gingham dress or apron
Paper bag	Scissors
Preserve jar	Radio
Cigarettes	Flower basket
Ash tray	Small tomato plant, in basket
Chimes	Garden gloves
Telephone	Picture hat
Ax	Trowel
Money	Gunny sack
Handkerchief	Hickory nuts
	Hat pin
	Wrist watch (Myra)

#### ACT Two

Wild flowers	Officer's revolver
Candy box	Handcuffs
Ancient man's hat	Tea service
Sheriff's badge	

★ **BENGAL TIGER AT THE BAGHDAD ZOO** by **Rajiv Joseph**. The lives of two American Marines and an Iraqi translator are forever changed by an encounter with a quick-witted tiger who haunts the streets of war-torn Baghdad. "[A] boldly imagined, harrowing and surprisingly funny drama." *—NY Times*. "Tragic yet darkly comic and highly imaginative." *—CurtainUp*. [5M, 2W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2565-2

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