

AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY
BY TRACY LETTS

CHARACTERS

BILL FORDHAM (49), a college professor, recently separated because of an affair with a student; **BARBARA FORDHAM** (46), the injured wife, overly dependable and stoic

SCENE

A large country house outside Pawhuska, Oklahoma, sixty miles northwest of Tulsa

TIME

August 2007

BARBARA copes with the collapse of her marriage, her mother's drug addiction, and her father's recent disappearance. BILL has accompanied his estranged wife and their teenage daughter to his mother-in-law's home during the family emergency.

BILL: Look what I found. Isn't that great?

BARBARA: We have copies.

BILL: I don't think I remember a hardback edition. I forgot there was ever a time they published poetry in hardback. Hell, I forgot there was ever a time they published poetry at all.

BARBARA: I'm not going to be able to sleep in this heat.

BILL: I wonder if this is worth something.

BARBARA: I'm sure it's not.

BILL: You never know. First edition, hardback, mint condition? Academy Fellowship, uh... Wallace Stevens Award? That's right, isn't it?

BARBARA: Mm-hm.

BILL: This book was a big deal.

BARBARA: It wasn't that big a deal.

BILL: In those circles, it was.

BARBARA: Those are small circles.

BILL: (*Reads from the book.*) "Dedicated to my Violet." That's nice. Christ... I can't imagine the kind of pressure he must've felt after this came out. Probably every word he wrote after this, he had to be thinking, "What are they going to say about this? Are they going to compare it to *Meadowlark*?"

BARBARA: Did Jean go to bed?

BILL: She just turned out the light. You would think, though, at some point, you just say, "To hell with this," and you write something anyway and who cares what they say about it. I mean I don't know, myself—

BARBARA: Will you please shut up about that fucking book?!

BILL: What's the matter?

BARBARA: You are just dripping with envy over these... thirty poems my father wrote back in the fucking sixties, for God's sake. Don't you hear yourself?

BILL: You're mistaken. I have great admiration for these poems, not envy—

BARBARA: Reciting his list of awards—

BILL: I was merely talking about the value—

BARBARA: My father didn't write anymore for a lot of reasons, but critical opinion was not one of them, hard as that may be for you to believe. I know how important that stuff is to you.

BILL: What are you attacking me for? I haven't done anything.

BARBARA: I'm sure that's what you tell *Sissy*, too, so she can comfort you, reassure you: "No, Billy, you haven't done anything."

BILL: What does that have to do—why are you bringing that up?

BARBARA: They're all symptoms of your male menopause, whether it's you struggling with the "creative question," or screwing a girl who still wears a retainer.

BILL: All right, look. I'm here for you. Because I want to be with you, in a difficult time. But I'm not going to be held hostage in this room so you can attack me—

BARBARA: I'm sorry, I didn't mean to hold you hostage. You really should go then.

BILL: I'm not going anywhere. I flew to Oklahoma to be here with you and now you're stuck with me. And her name is *Cindy*.

BARBARA: I know her stupid name. At least do me the courtesy of recognizing me when I'm demeaning you.

BILL: Violet really has a way of putting you in attack mode, you know it?

BARBARA: She doesn't have anything to do with it.

BILL: Don't you believe it. You feel such rage for her that you can't help dishing it in my direction—

BARBARA: I swear to God, you psychoanalyze me right now, I skin you.

BILL: You may not agree with my methods, but you know I'm right.

BARBARA: Your "methods." Thank you, Doctor, but I actually don't need any help from my mother to feel rage.

BILL: You want to argue? Is that what you need to do? Well, pick a subject, all right, and let me know what it is, so I can have a fighting chance—

BARBARA: The subject is me! I am the subject, you narcissistic motherfucker! I am in pain! I need help!

THE AUTOMATA PIETA

BY CONSTANCE CONGDON

CHARACTERS

ELVIS YAZZI (20s) is a Navajo man who's just been working construction; **BAMBI** (teens) is a famous fashion doll, made of plastic (yes, she's a Barbie doll).

SCENE

Northern Arizona, near the Navajo reservation

TIME

The present

From Part 1, THE ARK OF THE DARK: BAMBI belongs to two young girls, sisters. SHE was separated from them when their mother threw the doll out because the girls kept fighting over her. Then SHE was drenched in toxic waste when, instead of going to a proper site, a truck dumped its contents on her in the desert. This caused BAMBI to become life-size, alive, and naked—SHE can only walk on her tippy toes. BAMBI found some garbage bags and fashioned a dress for herself when ELVIS encountered her, wandering. HE took her to the Many Farms Mall on the rez and bought her some real clothes. Now HE has taken her to his girlfriend's trailer to clean her up. When frightened, BAMBI wants to go back to the box SHE came in.

(Lights up on a space that contains a vanity and mirror. ELVIS enters.)

ELVIS: Molly? Moll? Yo, baby?

(BAMBI enters, dressed in cheap mall clothes, on her tippy toes, carrying the mall shoes.)

She's not here.

(BAMBI sees herself in a mirror, has a minor breakdown, and starts jumping up and down in distress.)

ELVIS: Bambi! Bambi! What is it?

BAMBI: Back in the box! Back in the box! Back in the box!!!!

(ELVIS grabs her and holds her in a tight grip. SHE calms down.)

That's nice.

ELVIS: What's wrong?