CAST OF CHARACTERS -- 5F (1 to play a Trans girl), 2M,

RUTHIE ROSE HAMILTON-- A no-nonsense, rigid, sixty-five year old, country woman, raised to be gentler than this life has allowed her to be. She rules her world and her sister with love, but in black and white terms.

DOTTIE LORRAINE HAMILTON-- Ruthie's slightly older sister. A small, seemingly genteel sixty-eight year old woman, stronger in many ways than her fragile frame implies.

ROBERT (ROBBIE)PARKER-- Thirty five years old and a good guy, as well as the local Sheriff.

AMBER-- A battered and abused 18 year old girl with lots of anger-issues and a big secret.

SHEILA RAY-- The town gossip and hair dresser. A woman who's been thirty years old for at least the last fifteen years.

DOC MARSHALL-- Mid-Fifties, the most influential and most beloved man in town.

JANIE MARSHALL-- Doc's wife, a woman who hides her secrets with prescription drugs.

SCENE AND TIME

The entire play takes place in the living room and on the porch of the Hamilton's old, weathered, farmhouse in rural America. The time is the present, but in some of these isolated communities people tend to live as though time stopped in the sixties. And for many of them, it did.

RUTH
Well, I'll be damned.

DOTTIE
See. I told you so.
(calling to the dog)
It's okay, girl. We hear it. That's right, you're a good girl.

RUTH
It's not a girl, it's a boy. Or have you forgotten what those things look like?

DOTTIE
Didn't matter to me. I don't go turning things upside down to find out. Hootchie's a name that could go either way.

The dog quiets down as the car lights sweep across the porch. And the car comes to a stop.

DOTTIE
That sounds like Robbie's car?

The car stops and a car door is heard opening. Ruth moves to the porch steps while Dottie gets out of the swing.

RUTH
(calling)
Robert? What you doin' out here?

ROBERT'S VOICE
I'm sorry to do this to you, but I didn't know where else to bring her.

RUTH
(shouting to him)
We don't need another dog. The one you brought last week is useless. Well, practically useless.

A second car door is heard being opened.

RUTH
I said, we don't need...

DOTTIE
Ruthie, I don't think it's a dog he's bringing.

ROBERT'S VOICE
Okay, easy now. Let me help you.

AMBER'S VOICE
(angry, defensive,
and wounded)
Get your hands off me. I don't need your...ohhhh.

ROBERT'S VOICE
I'm trying to help, damnit.

RUTH
What the hell is he bringing in here?

Dottie grabs the door and opens it as Robert enters supporting a battered, bleeding young girl(AMBER). He's also dragging a ripped backpack when he drops on the floor.

ROBERT (ROBBIE) PARKER is a slightly overweight, middle-aged man who wears a Sheriff's badge, though it's obvious tonight, he's the one who needs help.

It's hard to tell what Amber looks like with her bloody face, and smeared makeup, but first impressions are that she's tough, like a hooker who's tricked the wrong john. Her heavy makeup is streaked with blood, her teased hair is disheveled, and her blouse and skirt are blood stained, torn and shredded on her body.

As Robert helps her into the house, Dottie clicks on the lights and we see the interior of the house for the first time.

Once elegant, the sitting room furniture has seen better times,.

A wooden staircase angles up into the 2nd story darkness, There is an archway by the dining room table that leads to the back of the house.

RUTH
Who is she?

ROBERT
She's hurt.

RUTH
I can see that.

DOTTIE
Good gracious, the poor thing.

Dottie rushes out to the kitchen

ROBERT
She needs a place to sit.

When Ruth doesn't move, he grabs one of the dining room chairs and lowers Amber down. Amber continues to try to push Robert away.

ROBERT
Will you stop fighting me? I've got to see...

RUTH
Who is she?

ROBERT
In a minute, Right now, I need some hot water and towels.

DOTTIE'S VOICE
(from the kitchen)
It's coming.

RUTH
What happened? An accident?

ROBERT
No.
(to Amber)
Miss Dottie's bringing something to clean you up with.

Amber pushes his hands away as she tries to catch her breath.

AMBER
Can't breathe with you smothering me.

RUTH
Stop ignoring me. No, what?

ROBERT
What, what?

RUTH
You said it wasn't an accident. So what was it?

ROBERT
(hesitant about saying too much)
A fight...that sorta got out of hand.

RUTH
(to Amber)
What's she want to go pickin' a fight for?

AMBER
I didn't pick a fight,damnit. He attacked me. Stupid.

RUTH
Watch who you're callin' stupid in my own house. I'll take you out and give you a beating myself.

DOTTIE
(entering with a basin of water and washcloth)
You'll do no such thing. Just hush.

RUTH
She called me stupid.

DOTTIE
If you don't calm your feathers back down, I'm gonna call you worse. Now help me.

Ruth moves completely away.

ROBERT
I'll help you.

AMBER
I didn't call her stupid and I don't need...

ROBERT
I know. I know. But we're gonna do it anyway.

RUTH
Well, somebody certainly got called Stupid.

DOTTIE
Now, let's see what we have here.

AMBER
Me, I was talkin' about me.

ROBERT
Will you hush and let Miss Dottie clean you up. We need to know how bad those cuts are.

AMBER
I'm okay. I said I was okay.

DOTTIE
(getting ready to begin the clean up)
Well, You certainly don't look okay. Goodness, you've got blood all over.

Skip to page 17 →

ROBERT
Because it was Doc who beat the kid up.

RUTH
What? Doc? Not possible.

ROBERT
Janie called and said Doc was killing her.

RUTH
Janie?

ROBERT
So I burst in and hell, if it didn't look like she wasn't lying.

RUTH
Wait a minute. If Doc did beat up this kid, why didn't you arrest him?

ROBERT
Come on Miss Ruth, how do you think I got this job?

RUTH
We all voted for you. Bad mistake, but you were the only one that wasn't a drooling idiot on that ballot.

ROBERT
But nobody gets on that ballot unless Doc allows it.

RUTH
Still?

ROBERT
He's Doc. I couldn't arrest him. So I just grabbed the kid up off the floor and ran. I was headin' for the county line but there was so much bleeding and my Doofus Deputy didn't put the first aid kit back in the trunk, and I didn't want the kid dying on my watch, so yours was the only place I could think of that was safe.

RUTH
Safe? What do you mean by safe? Why was Doc trying to hurt her? Was she stealing drugs or something?

ROBERT
No, nothin' like that.

RUTH
Then why was he beatin' her?

ROBERT
First off, She's not a her. She's a him.

RUTH

What?

ROBERT

You pull up that dress and you're going to get a real surprise.

RUTH

What are you talking about? She's...

ROBERT

She's not a she. She's a he. That's Alan.

RUTH

Alan? Alan who?

ROBERT

Alan. Doc and Janie's son.

Ruth steps back as though slapped in the face,

RUTH

Alan?

She then turns to face Dottie who is finishing up with Amber. Dottie hasn't been hearing the previous conversation.

DOTTIE

I don't have much for pain killin'...just aspirin but Doc always says you can take more than just two, so I think maybe four will tide you over for a bit, or at least help. Then we'll see about finding you a place to sleep for tonight.

RUTH

Dottie, he can't stay.

DOTTIE

Well, she certainly can't be going anywhere tonight. She's exhausted and needs to be in bed.

RUTH

Not any bed of ours.

DOTTIE

Don't be silly. I'm not about to let the poor girl....

RUTH

She's not a girl.

DOTTIE

What?