AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY
(Audition Material)
-- Everyone will choose ONE monologue to present at the auditions (NO MEMORIZATION NECESSARY) but be prepared to read the other one in your gender in case the directors request. Be prepared to read any of the (gender specific) parts in any of the scenes attached. Directors will decide who reads the parts in each scene. You will not have the opportunity to request to read for ANY role. We as directors will make ALL choices and you are expected to respect that.--

(BARBARA and BILL)

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: First edition, hardback, mint condition? Academy Fellowship; This book was a big deal.
BARBARA: It wasn’t that big a deal.
BILL (Reads from the book): “Dedicated to my Violet.” That’s nice. . . . 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: Will you please shut up about that book?! 
BILL: What’s the matter?
BARBARA: You are just dripping with envy over these . . . thirty poems my father wrote back in the sixties. 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:** 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 when I’m demeaning you.

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

**BARBARA:** 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:** You do understand that it hurts, to go from sharing a bed with you for twenty-three years to sleeping by myself.

**BILL:** I’m not necessarily keen on the notion of saying things that would hurt you.

**BARBARA:** Like what?

**BILL:** Don’t.

**BARBARA:** What? Say it. You must realize there’s nothing you can say that would hurt me any more than I’m already hurting.

**BILL:** Barbara, please, we have enough on our hands with your parents right now. Let’s not revisit all this.

**BARBARA:** Revisit, when did we visit this to begin with? You pulled the rug out from under me. I still don’t know what happened. Do I bore you, intimidate you, disgust you? Or is this just about the pleasures of young flesh—I really need to know.

**BILL:** You need to know now? You want to have this discussion with Beverly missing, and our daughter twenty feet away? Do you really want to do this now?

**BARBARA:** No. You’re right. I’ll just hunker down for a cozy night’s sleep. Next to my husband.

**BILL:** This discussion deserves our care. And patience. We’ll both be in a better frame of mind to talk about this once your father’s come home.

**BARBARA:** My father’s dead, Bill.
LITTLE CHARLES: I’m sorry, Dad.

CHARLIE: Stop apologizing to me. Hold on a second, comb your hair.

LITTLE CHARLES: I know Mom’s mad at me.

CHARLIE: Don’t worry about her.

LITTLE CHARLES: I wanted to be there.

CHARLIE: You’re here now.

LITTLE CHARLES: I loved Uncle Bev, you know that—

CHARLIE: Stop apologizing.

LITTLE CHARLES: The power must’ve gone out. I woke up and the clock was blinking noon. That means the power went out, right?

CHARLIE: It’s okay.

LITTLE CHARLES: I missed his funeral!

CHARLIE: It’s a ceremony. It’s ceremonial. It doesn’t mean anything compared to what you have in your heart.

LITTLE CHARLES: Uncle Bev must be disappointed in me.


LITTLE CHARLES: Just . . . it’s just . . . you know, I know how things are. I know how they feel about me, and when, something like this . . . you want to be there for people, and—

CHARLIE:—shhhh—

LITTLE CHARLES:—I missed Uncle Bev’s funeral, and…I’m sorry I let you down, Dad.

CHARLIE: You haven’t let me down. You never let me down.

Now listen here . . . you’re wrong about these people, they love you. Some of them haven’t gotten a chance to see what I see: a fine man, very loving, with a lot to offer.

Now take this . . . Give me my comb. Stand up straight. Look folks in the eye. And stop being so hard on yourself.

LITTLE CHARLES: I love you, Dad.
CHARLIE: Love you too, son.

(MATTIE FAE, LITTLE CHARLES, CHARLIE, BARBARA and KAREN-1 Line)

MATTIE FAE: Get yourself together, we’re heading back.

LITTLE CHARLES: Okay . . .

MATTIE FAE: Oh, look, honey, Little Charles has got the TV on.

LITTLE CHARLES: No, I was just—

MATTIE FAE: Too bad there isn’t a job where they pay you to sit around watching television.

CHARLIE: Mattie Fae, it’s been a long day.

MATTIE FAE: Did I tell you he got fired from a shoe store?

CHARLIE: Mattie Fae, we’re gonna go get in the car right now and if you say one more mean thing to that boy I’m going to kick your fat Irish butt onto the highway. You hear me?

MATTIE FAE: What did you say?—(Barb enters from the stairs)

CHARLIE: You kids go outside… We’ve been married for thirty-eight years. I wouldn’t trade them for anything. But if you can’t find a generous place in your heart for your own son, we’re not going to make it to thirty-nine. (Charles Exits)

BARBARA: I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to eavesdrop. I froze.

MATTIE FAE: That’s. Barbara. I thought … it seemed like . . .

BARBARA: What?

MATTIE FAE: something might be going on between Ivy and Little Charles.

BARBARA: Oh, this is . . . I’m not sure what to say here, it’s—

MATTIE FAE: Look, just. Can you tell me if that’s true?

BARBARA: Yes. It’s true.

MATTIE FAE: Okay… That can’t happen.

BARBARA: I realize it’s pretty unorthodox for cousins to get together, at least these days—

MATTIE FAE: Barbara. Listen to me. They’re not cousins.

BARBARA: Beg pardon?
MATTIE FAE: Little Charles is not your cousin. He’s your brother. your blood brother. Half-brother. He’s your father’s child. Which means that he is Ivy’s brother. Do you see? Little Charles and Ivy are brother and sister.

(Karen and Steve Enter.)

BARBARA: No. Go back.
KAREN: We’re just going to—
BARBARA: Go back into the kitchen. Now! Just . . . everyone stays in the kitchen!

(They Leave.)

BARBARA: You and Dad.
MATTIE FAE: Yes.
BARBARA: Who knows this?
MATTIE FAE: I do. And you do.
BARBARA: Uncle Charlie
MATTIE FAE: No?
BARBARA: Did Dad know?
MATTIE FAE: Y’know, I’m not proud of this.
BARBARA: Really. You people amaze me.
MATTIE FAE.: Maybe it’s hard for you to believe, looking at me; to you, I’m just your old, fat Aunt Mattie Fae. But I’m more than that, sweetheart . . . there’s more to me than that. I don’t know why Little Charles is such a disappointment to me. Maybe he . . . well, I guess I’m disappointed for him, more than anything.
BARBARA: If Ivy found out about this, it would destroy her.
MATTIE FAE: I’m sure as hell not gonna tell her. You have to find a way to stop it.
BARBARA: Why me?
MATTIE FAE: You said you were running things. (Exits)

--------------------------------------------------------------

(KAREN, JOHNNA, BARBARA, BILL, STEVE and JEAN)

KAREN: Steve, what happened?!
JOHNNA: He was messing with Jean—
KAREN: Honey, you’re bleeding, are you okay?
BARBARA: Who was? Talk to me, are you all right?


JOHNNNA: He was messing with Jean. So I tuned him up.

BARBARA: “Messing with,” what do you mean, “messing with”? BILL: What . . . what’s that mean?

JOHNNNA: He was kissing her and grabbing her.

BARBARA: I’ll murder you!

BILL (To Karen): Get him out of here!

STEVE (To Jean): Tell them I didn’t do anything!—

BARBARA: She’s fourteen years old!—”

JEAN: Mom!

STEVE: She said she was fifteen!

BARBARA: Are you out of your damn mind?

KAREN: Barbara, just back off!

JEAN: Will you please stop freaking out?

BILL: Please, sweetheart, we need to know what went on here.

JEAN: We smoked pot, all right? We smoked a little pot, and we were goofing around, and then everything just went hay-wire.

BARBARA: What have I told you about smoking that?! What did I say?

BILL: Then Johnna just chose to attack him with a frying pan? I don’t think so.

BILL: We’re concerned about you.

JEAN: No, you’re not. You just want to know who to punish.

BARBARA: Stop it—

JEAN: He didn’t do anything! Even if he did, what’s the big deal?

BILL: The big deal, Jean, is that you’re fourteen years old.

JEAN: Which is only a few years younger than you like ’em.

(Barbara slaps Jean; Jean bursts into tears.)

I hate you!

BARBARA: Yeah, I hate you too, you little freak!
(FEMALE MONOLOGUE)

**VIOLET**: Stick that knife of judgment in me, go ahead, but make no mistake, his blood is just as much on your hands as it is on mine.

He did this, though; this was his doing, not ours. Can you imagine anything more cruel, to make me responsible? And why, just to weaken me, just to make me prove my character? So no, I waited, I waited so I could get my hands on that safety deposit box, but I would have waited anyway. You want to show who’s stronger, Bev? Nobody is stronger than me. When nothing is left, when everything is gone and disappeared, I’ll be here. Who’s stronger now, you S-O-B?!

--------------------------------------------------------------

(FEMALE MONOLOGUE)

**KAREN**: You better find out from Jean just exactly what went on in there before you start pointing fingers, that’s all I’m saying. ’Cause I doubt Jean’s exactly blameless in all this. And I’m not blaming her. Just because I said she’s not blameless, that doesn’t mean I’ve blamed her. I’m saying she might share in the responsibility. You understand me? I know Steve should know better than Jean, that she’s only fourteen. My point is, it’s not cut and dry, black and white, good and bad. It lives where everything lives: somewhere in the middle. Where everything lives, where all the rest of us live, everyone but you.

--------------------------------------------------------------

(MALE MONOLOGUE)

**BEVERLY**: Violet. My wife. She takes pills, sometimes a great many. And they affect…among other things, her equilibrium. Fortunately, the pills she takes eliminate her need for equilibrium. So she falls when she rambles…but she doesn’t ramble much.

My wife takes pills and I drink. That’s the bargain we’ve struck…one of the bargains, just a paragraph of our marriage contract….cruel covenant. She takes pills and I drink. I don’t drink *because* she takes pills. As to whether she takes pills because I
drink…I learned long ago not to speak for my wife. The reasons why we partake are
anymore inconsequential. The facts are: my wife takes pills and I drink. And these facts
have over time made burdensome of maintenance of tradition American routine: paying
bills, purchase of goods, cleaning of clothes or carpets or crappers. Rather than once
more assume the mantle of guilt…vow of abstinence with my fingers crossed in the
queasy hope of righting our ship, I’ve chosen to turn my life over to a Higher
Power…(hoists his glass)…and join the ranks of the Hiring Class.

(MALE MONOLOGUE)

CHARLIE: I don’t understand this meanness. I look at you and your sister and the way
you talk to people and I don’t understand it. I just can’t understand why folks can’t be
respectful of one another. I don’t think there’s any excuse for it. My family didn’t treat
each other that way.

(Interrupting Mattie Fae) You had better not say anything about my family right now. I
mean it. We buried a man today I loved very much. And whatever faults he may have
had, he was a good, kind, decent person. And to hear you tear into your own son on a
day like today dishonors Beverly’s memory.

We’ve been married for thirty-eight years. I wouldn’t trade them for anything. But if you
can’t find a generous place in your heart for your own son, we’re not going to make it to
thirty-nine.