

THE GARDEN CLUB
(Tomatoes to Die For)

(A Dark Comedy)

By

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Rose Treppendahl, fifty-five, the current owner of her family's historic home in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi is forced to take in boarders due to financial difficulties, whom she quickly murders and uses as fertilizer in her prize-winning tomato garden.

Synopsis: It's Game Night at Beaufort for Rose and friends when her lover, (Sheriff) John, arrives with bad financial news and her first boarder. Threatened with losing her home, Rose relents to the boarding arrangement when cash payments are promised. However, the first boarder dies when an act of kindness – a tuna fish sandwich – goes terribly awry.

Rose discovers the government checks keep arriving even when the boarders are dead. She gleefully resorts to poisoning, hatcheting, running over, hammering and strangling each new boarder as they take residence at Beaufort. Behold the beginning of greatest agrarian revolution since the invention of the wheel!

Come for the murders, stay for the naughty. Come for comedy, prepare for horror...

The Garden Club (Tomatoes to Die For)

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CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
ROSE TREPPENDAHL	Beaufort owner, main character, white	55ish	Female
HARPER	Rose's best friend, white	60ish	Female
ANN	Happy, loud in manner and style, race flexible	60ish	Female
DARLENE	Strong (Bea Arthur), white	65ish	Female
TIFFANY	Attractive, creole (light skinned African American)	28	Female
(The above are smart, colorful, women)			
JOHN	Sheriff John, Rose's lover, white	58ish	Male
ENSEMBLE (3 or 2)	Keeper – unidentified handyman, ghost like, age unknown, white Boarders, Agriculture Agent, Carnival Barkers, EMTs	60ish	Male Male

ACT ONE.

SCENE ONE.

The curtain rises on Beaufort, Rose's family home since the 1880s. The large home's southern glory has faded. Rose and Harper busily prepare the dining room for Game Night. It's late summer.

HARPER

I brought my famous cheese straws.

ROSE

Infamous, cheese straws with my tasty Tuna fish sandwiches... And tomato pie. My tomato garden is just played out this year. It is *pit-ti-ful*.

HARPER

You used to serve the best appetizers. Your shrimp remoulade, to die for.

ROSE

Have you seen the price of shrimp? You gotta rob a bank.

HARPER

At least you've held onto your family crystal. Drinking cheap wine out of good stems does ease the pain.

ROSE

By the third glass, no one's tasting what they're drinking anyway.

A WOODEN SCREEN DOOR is heard
SLAPPING shut. Darlene enters stage left.

DARLENE

This party can now get started. Flowers for the table.

HARPER

I've seen better on a week old grave.

DARLENE

Don't tempt fate, Harper. You're only a year or two younger than me.

HARPER
(whispers to Rose)

Or five...

DARLENE
I heard that. Tomato pie, cheese straws and tuna salad. Well, two out of three...

ROSE
That's tuna *FISH* sandwiches, on stale bread. Love the texture.

DARLENE
Tuna FISH. Tuna FISH. Why not join the 20th century and call it tuna salad or a tuna sandwich? Tuna is already a fish!

HARPER
You add such delight to game night.

ROSE
No one would know it's a tuna *FISH* sandwich sandwich. I don't get you Darlene. Trying to homogenize our southern heritage. Tuna *fish* today, tuna *fish* tomorrow...

HARPER
(joins in unison)
Tuna *fish* for ever!

A car HORN sounds annoyingly outside.

DARLENE
Ann!..

ROSE
(returning)
Miss Subtle has arrived. Driving her green Caddie convertible?

Harper peers out.

HARPER
Yep. Big as a parade float.

DARLENE
So is Ann

They all LAUGH. Ann enters carrying two boxes of wine.

ANN

I'm here! One red. One white.

ROSE

Only two? Feels a little light for you.

ANN

Left the third box in the car for the ride home. I didn't become Bay Saint Louis' top selling realtor without a plan.

DARLENE

Well *uncork* the red first. I'm dry as a bone.

Ann looks out the kitchen window.

ANN

Who's out back?

ROSE

Keeper.

Rose puts two sandwiches on a paper plate and sets it on the back window seal.

ROSE

(yelling)

Keeper!

HARPER

God lord, look at him.

ROSE

Loyal as a old dog. Mows my lawn, tends my tomato garden. Been here since, forever.

Rough looking Keeper takes the plate from the window.

ROSE

Keeper's a lot like us. Got nowhere else to go, stuck on the Red Neck Riviera. Pickup trucks, gun shots, beer bellies and bad breath.

Ann places her hand on her stomach.

ANN

The thought makes one moist.

HARPER

You still get moist?

ANN

In my dreams.

All LAUGH.

Ann sets her wine glass on the table.

ROSE

Use a coaster! I will put your wine glass in time out.

Rose wipes the table.

A box fan sits on the kitchen floor stirring the air. Harper stands in front of it and slightly lifts her dress to cool.

HARPER

Little dewy (hot) in here.

ROSE

AC's on the list.

(slight pause)

Grey Line Tours twice a month. Glass of lemonade and a cookie. I am so over the blue hairs.

DARLENE

Excuse me? Blue hair *is* a life choice...

Darlene fluffs her "blue-white" hair.

ROSE

They ask a question. I just smile and nod my head like I'm hard of hearing.
(pause)

Made \$2000 on the Beaufort Community Haunted House. It was fun. Bottling flavored vinegar, pennies. Same with my tomato Che Che.

DARLENE

I'll take a hot vinegar and two jars of Che Che.

Rose retrieves the requested item from the cupboard.

ROSE

Che Che's five dollars each. Vinegar's twelve dollars. Twenty two dollars.

DARLENE

I got a twenty?

ROSE

Really?

Rose disgustedly snatches Darlene's \$20.

ROSE

Booked a few Treppendahl seances. Maybe found my calling, raising the dead. Momma visited the last one. Scared the hell out of the college girls.

(thinks)

At least I hope it was momma?

(laughs)

I can't even pay my cable bill! If I had money, I'd add a wedding barn.

(pause)

That I'd get on my knees and pray to god for a wedding barn? How pathetic is that?

DARLENE

Very.

(chuckles)

ROSE

(loudly to Darlene)

Your blue hair... why not, like every other post menopausal woman in America, put some blonde in it!

HARPER

The bank?

ROSE

Threatens, threatens, threatens! Said the only way I'm leaving Beaufort is in a pine box.
The Treppendalh family built his damn bank.

ANN

That's true.

ROSE

(gingerly)

I might'a missed up. Told him, Treppendalhs were here long before any eye-talian banker arrived.

GASPS.

HARPER

You called Randy DeFranco, a *eye-talian*? You said it like that? *Eye-talian*?

ROSE

He was threatening me. I'm not taking it anymore.

ANN

When a bank has held your mortgage for 14 months, It ain't a threat. It's real!

ROSE

You think!

HARPER

Isn't he married to your cousin?

ANN

Thanksgiving's going to be fun.

ROSE

Never liked spaghetti with my Thanksgiving anyway.

(pause)

I'm just tired of worrying about my house.

(pause)

Going to apologize. Bring some tomatoes. He'll be happy. He can make some *eye-talian* gravy... red gravy.

(chuckles)

DARLENE

You are going to hell.

ANN

Can we start a game?

ROSE

John's coming. Said he had news... Had a "plan."

HARPER

Plan for what?

ROSE

To drive me crazy.

HARPER

Too late.

ROSE

Haha. Tiffany's coming tonight. Don't peck her to death. Especially you Darlene.

DARLENE

Why would I? I take no offense that I wasn't invited to her and Roger's wedding.

HARPER

Wonder why.

DARLENE

I harbor *no* preconceived feelings for the new belle of our ball.

HARPER

Give her a chance.

DARLENE

I give everyone "a" chance.

HARPER

She's four things you're not – young, pretty and smart...

ROSE

Don't do it, Darlene. Game Night needs new blood. Tiffany will make a good fifth player. You might like her... Don't let your mouth get ahead of your brain.

DARLENE

1988. 1988's the last time I "liked."

(pause)

You said, "four, things?"

ROSE

Rich! Tiffany's got Tuscaloosa Trend natural gas money. Forty family acres, right in the center of the gas field. My bragging brother, Roger, told Harper...

HARPER

She gets a \$28,000 natural gas royalty check, every month. \$28,000!

ANN

Wow.

DARLENE

Wow.

ROSE

What does she see in Roger? He's twice her age?

DARLENE

Don't know what she sees... But Roger sees \$300,000 a year.

ROSE

It's Tiffany's. Her land. Her money.

DARLENE

He's her husband!

ROSE

What year you living in? Nineteen sixty?

HARPER

All she's got to do is sashay to the mailbox. A \$28,000 stroll.

ANN

I'm tingling (down low).

DARLENE

Rich, young, pretty? Get the towels ready. Definitely biting her face off.

A CAR DOOR SLAMS. The ladies move quickly to the front door, comically leaning, to get a look at Tiffany. Darlene's face drops.

DARLENE

She's...

ROSE

Creole! I told you she's creole.

HARPER

Close your mouth Darlene, before a bug flies in it.

ANN

Progress is upon us. The Treppendalh blood line has been diversified!

ROSE

God, get over yourselves!

ANN

She *is* cute.

ROSE

She's being nice coming here to see our saggy faces.

Tiffany enters through the front door.
Smiles, SQUEALS, hugs, all around.

ROSE

So happy you came! Darlene, pour Tiffany a glass of wine.

ANN

(to Tiffany)

Rule number one, if you drive home sober, that's a terrible waste of a Game Night.

DARLENE

Darlene. So nice to meet you. Heard you had a lovely wedding.

Rose slaps Darlene on the ass.

ROSE

Watch Darlene. She bites. You remember Harper.

HARPER

Welcome.

ROSE

Ann. My realtor friend I told you about.

Ann air kisses Tiffany and hands her several
of her business cards.

ANN

(overly solicitous)

For your natural gas money friends. New money, is a wonderful thing for home buying.

TIFFANY

Your home! I love high ceilings!

Tiffany caresses the worn drapes.

TIFFANY

I saw the most beautiful drapery material at Murphy Fabrics. I would love to decorate this house!

ANN

Beaufort *was* the most prestigious home in Bay Saint Louis. Built 1880. West Indies Planter style. Twenty eight hundred square feet, ocean facing front veranda, four bedrooms, three *modern* baths. John and Jackie Kennedy overnighted in 1962.

TIFFANY

(perplexed)

Who?

The ladies share a look.

TIFFANY

I bought two bottles of *good* wine.

(reading the label)

Pinot Gris. Willamette Valley, Oregon. Roger and I joined a wine club.

DARLENE

Aren't you sweet. Did you hear, Ann? Tiffany brought two bottles of, *good*, wine. Let's get a taste of that Pinot...? (Pea No) Gris, before we further dull our tongues on Chez Cardboard.

HARPER

(to Darlene)

Canines are showing.

ROSE

Ann, Tiffany is house shopping. Could be your next victim?

ANN

(to Tiffany)

Peg you as three, no, four bedroom Ranch. New construction. Beautiful Italian marble counter tops. Master suite, walk-in closets, his and hers.

TIFFANY

No, I want a historic home, like Beaufort. It'd be awesome to have generations grow up in the same house. Grow old in it, like Rose.

Darlene CHUCKLES, gives Rose a poke.

ANN

I like your money. I mean, your style! We can have fun house shopping.

HARPER

Tiffany, Ann counts her friendships in dollars.

ANN

I do not!

DARLENE

Ann's motto: If you can't screw a friend, who can you screw? I cleaned it up since you're new.

Rose places a coaster under Tiffany's glass.

ROSE

Ann perfected her motto at Southern Miss... where she screwed them all!

LAUGHS.

ANN

That's not true!

(demurely)

Mostly...

(pause)

Let me know when you're ready, honey. Inventory on historic homes is not great.

DARLENE

How did you and Roger... hookup? That's the au courant romantic term, hooked up?

TIFFANY

In New Orleans, at the Monteleone Hotel's Carousel Bar. He was with a very drunk male friend.

ROSE

Drunk in New Orleans, duh.

TIFFANY

Round and round we went on the Carousel Bar. I was dizzy. He has the nicest smile. Six weeks later, to the day, Roger proposed... On a street car named, Desire.

HARPER

No he didn't!

ANN

On a New Orleans' street car named, Desire? Impressive.

TIFFANY

It was sweet.

DARLENE, ANN AND HARPER

(In song... not too loud)

Clang, clang, clang, went the trolley...

ANN

Ding, ding, ding, went the bell...

HARPER

Zing, zing, zing went your heart strings...

DARLENE, ANN AND HARPER

From the moment you saw him you fell.

TIFFANY

(laughs)

That's close to being true.

(takes a sip of wine)

We're cash buyers. My home sits in the Tuscaloosa Trend natural gas play. I'm sure you've heard of it. I go to the mailbox, a check. I go to the mailbox, a check. It's crazy.

DARLENE

We hate you... and we are not the only ones.

ROSE

God, I need a mailbox like that.

TIFFANY

There's rumor that Beaufort might be in play, on the market?

ROSE

The Bay runs on rumor. Don't believe it.

ANN

Game Night runs on gossip. Believe it. Believe it all! Life's more fun that way.
(laughs)

TIFFANY

Roger seems excited about Beaufort being for sale. Did y'all talk?

ROSE

(suddenly hard)

Roger and I don't talk. We spit!

TIFFANY

Oh.

HARPER

Alrighty then.

(guiding Rose to the kitchen)

Let's get the tomato pies out of the oven. Darlene be a sweetie and refill Tiffany's glass.

Rose jerks pies from the oven.

HARPER

Wow, talk about chopping your sister-in-law's head off?

ROSE

Roger's sniffing around. Sent Tiffany to see if I'm selling. The bastard, knows!

HARPER

Knows?

ROSE

That I'm about to lose Beaufort. And he's happy about it.

HARPER

Beaufort is Beaufort. But it could use a fluff. You're a single woman...

ROSE

A broke, single woman.

HARPER

Why not take his... *Tiffany's* money? Do not let the the bank take it. Ann can rep it?

ROSE

No.

HARPER

Spittin' cobras. It's ain't healthy.

ROSE

Do you remember my high school boyfriend.

HARPER
(she does)

Julian Foy. I remember mine.

ROSE

Julian's the only boy I ever loved.

HARPER

Y'all were super cute together. Prom Queen and King nineteen, eighty five.

ROSE

We got super drunk at prom. Vodka and pink lemonade.

HARPER

Baaad combination.

ROSE

Tell me about it. Julian disappeared. I got a drunk ride home. Walked into my room.
Laying in MY BED, Roger, Julian and a stick of butter.

HARPER

You found your first boyfriend, with your brother, together, in your bed?

ROSE

With a stick of butter.

HARPER

Why butter? Oh. Oh my gawd!

ROSE

Ummmmm. Strange how high school love hangs over your whole life.

(pause)

Pretty sure Roger and Julian still slip slide around.

HARPER

Tiffany?

ROSE

(no)

You you can tell her?

HARPER

I'm not telling her!

ROSE

I was born right here on this kitchen floor. Mother was making breakfast. She'd say, "Labor lasted about as long as a kitchen match burns."

Rose strikes a kitchen match from the stove.

ROSE

Came shooting out like a watermelon seed.

HARPER

She loved to tell that story.

ROSE

I know God has a plan. If he does, it's time to share it.

KNOCK, KNOCK KNOCK at the front door.

Rose blows out the match. She gives Harper a look, moving to the front of the house.

Outside, (Sheriff) John waits. He's in uniform.

ROSE

Hey, John.

JOHN

Rose.

ROSE

Come in and have some wine. Game night. Harper and Ann are here.

JOHN

No, I, *we* should talk out here.

Questioning, Rose steps outside. John pulls her away from the front door.

JOHN

Rose, I'm here, I'm here on county business. Don't yell at me Rose. I have a signed eviction notice, okay?

John holds the papers in his hand.

ROSE

Eviction notice? From Beaufort? Eviction notice. John... this is too sudden!

JOHN

You've been warned a dozen times. Only thing keeping you in Beaufort is your Treppendalh name and me.

(pause)

What'd you do to Randy DeFranco? He was boiling. Yelling at the judge. The bank has waited long enough!

ROSE

(trying to process it)

An eviction notice for Beaufort?

JOHN

Friday, this Friday. Judge was hot.

(pause)

But you have, a chance...

(pause)

Rose, look at me. The state, the state will give you a check, for every boarder you host.

ROSE

(confused)

Host?

JOHN

(being as gentle as he can)

Board. Take in. You get a check. It'd stop the bleeding, Rose. Stop the eviction. Get the bank off your back.

ROSE

Friends are here... I wasn't. Oh, John...

(she leans into John)

You have to be tired of that empty house you live in? Move back in with me? We did it once. We can do it again.

JOHN

I... Hell no! You threw a pot of scalding coffee on me, Rose.

ROSE

(flirting)

You like me *because* I'm excitable.

JOHN

Was a fun six weeks. But you would've killed me.

ROSE

I don't want a strange person, living in my house!

JOHN

Men.

ROSE

Men?

JOHN

You'll have to take a few, to make a dent in your debt. Or, you're out!

ROSE

John!

JOHN

(waving the notice)

Rose, I rather shoot somebody than evict them.

(pause)

Listen, first check will be processed in the morning. I've already started the paperwork. The state will pay you a check for every boarder. Otherwise, Friday pack a suitcase. Everything else goes on the curb.

Rose is lost.

JOHN

Big house crazy lady. That's what people in town call you. Big house crazy lady.

ROSE

(thinking)

Which judge?

JOHN

Kent. Judge Kent.

ROSE

(disappointed)

The hanging judge?

JOHN

We don't hang people anymore.

ROSE

It's Mississippi, John. You never know what might come back in fashion.

JOHN

I resent that.

ROSE

(pointing off stage)

Who's that!

JOHN

Number one.

ROSE

This is crazy. I won't be safe!

JOHN

I ain't bringing ax murderers...

ROSE

Are you just a total jack ass!

JOHN

I don't have a answer! You scare the hell out of me sometimes.

John holds out the pen.

JOHN

We doing this? Or we doing Friday?

ROSE

(looks heavenly)

This your plan? Best you got?

(Rose snatches the pen.)

Turn around.

JOHN

You're not going to stab me, are you?

ROSE

(hard)

Not today.

Rose sign's the paper using John's back,
then forcefully pushes the paper into his
hand.

JOHN

You'll thank me for this.

ROSE

I don't think so. No good deed goes unpunished.

JOHN

Is that a threat?

ROSE

(eyes glaring)

It's the truth.

John waves the Boarder in from downstage
left. The Boarder carries a small suitcase.
John whispers to him.

JOHN

Tread lightly.

Rose points with a strong straight arm.

ROSE

(hard)

Inside, upstairs, bedroom on the right. Do not look at, nor speak, to my guests!

The boarder enters, walking past the slacked
jawed ladies now standing near the front
door. He moves quickly up the stairs and
enters his room.

ROSE

Did I call you a son of a bitch?

JOHN

You've called me a lot of things, Rose. Not all of them bad.

ROSE

Bye, John.

Rose does not look back. She turns to enter
her home.

JOHN

Rose?

The ladies, who have been ease dropping
scatter.

ROSE

I know you've been listening. I can put a pot of coffee on. You've been warned.

Rose sits, joining the other ladies at the
table. A uneasy SILENCE.

ROSE

I have failed... my friends... Failed Beaufort.

ANN, HARPER, DARLENE

No, no, no, no, no.

ANN

You haven't failed anyone.

ROSE

Just a stupid old fool.

The ladies joins hands.

DARLENE

We're family. Family sticks together, Rose.

HARPER

We love you, Rose.

Rose exhales. Looks to Tiffany.

ROSE

(to Tiffany)

Enjoying your first game night?

TIFFANY

(innocently)

It's been entertaining.

The ladies LAUGH breaking the tension.

DARLENE

(to Tiffany)

Don't make me like you.

The ladies recoil, shocked that Darlene may have a new friend.

TIFFANY

Y'all sure do drink a lot.

ANN

(deeply)

Wine allows us to believe the lies we tell. Plato. Roman times...

(nodding)

DARLENE

Baloney. Boone's Farm, Tickle Pink, 1988.

ROSE

Tiffany, will you make a plate and take it up to mister, No Name. I don't want him to think I'm a complete monster.

Tiffany makes a plate. Rose wipes a crumb off the plate with her napkin.

ROSE

Ann, get that third box of wine from your car.

ANN

Really? Think we'll need it?

(Rose stares)

I'm getting it!

ROSE

(to Harper)

Will you stay tonight?

HARPER

(yes)

Been a long time since we had a sleepover.

TIFFANY

(returning to the table)

I knocked. Left it at the door.

The Boarder drags the sandwich plate inside his room.

TIFFANY

Rose, I'm sorry, but I'm (worried)... Why not let Roger and me buy it? Don't let Beaufort go. Keep it in the family.

DARLENE

She's not wrong, Rose.

Upstairs the boarder takes a big bite of the tuna sandwich. His shoulders heave.

ROSE

No offense, Tiffany, I know you love my brother. But I don't. There is no future for Roger Treppendalh at Beaufort.

Upstairs in the bedroom, the Boarder continues silently choking. Weakening, he titters.

ROSE
(reflective)

All the old families are gone.

(pause)

I was born in this house. I'd kill before I'd sell Beaufort.

The Boarder crashes to the floor with a LOUD THUD. The women hear it, turn, pause, and ignore it.

ROSE
What's that Louisiana card game you play drunk?

TIFFANY
Burre. (BooRay)

ROSE
(forcefully)
Deal'um!

LIGHTS CUT TO BLACK.

SCENE TWO.

LIGHTS UP.

In the bedroom, two EMTs hover over the dead boarder. Rose runs frantically from the top of the stairs down to the front door. Seeing no one, she runs quickly back up the stairs.

Sheriff John calls from off stage.

JOHN
Rose?

Rose runs back downstairs. John enters stage left.

ROSE

John! He's dead, John! I found him. He didn't come out of his room for three days. This morning... it did not smell good. Thought it might be the tuna fish. It was him!

John and Rose move upstairs. John peers
down at the dead boarder.

JOHN

Looks dead to me. Whoa, he is ripe.

John and Rose move down the stairs to the
main room. The EMT's load the body into a
bag.

JOHN

(chuckles)

Over under at the office was two weeks. Two weeks before you'd kill him, maim him or
run him off. Don't think nobody had three days.

(laughs)

ROSE

It's not funny!

John returns upstairs to help the EMT's
bring out the body.

HARPER

(the screen door SLAPS)

Rose?

Harper enters stage left. Rose runs to
Harper. They hug.

HARPER

This is crazy town! Are you okay? When did he, die?

ROSE

I smelled him, a hour ago.

The EMT's carry the body out of the house.
Harper waves her hand under her nose.

HARPER

(calls)

Leave the door open, all the way.

ROSE

Was just laying there. Same clothes. One bite out of his tuna fish sandwich... He didn't come out for three days... I did not want to go in there. Look at my hands shaking...

HARPER

(sudden epiphany)

The thud! The thud, we heard game night. He died while we were playing cards. Dang.

(pause)

Your boarding for profit is not off to a good start.

ROSE

Where did you come from?

Harper is wearing paper sandals with cotton swabs between each toe.

HARPER

Sassy's Salon. Trying not to mess up my pedi.

ROSE

You were at Sassy's! Good god, now the whole town knows!

JOHN

(returns)

Judge is not going to like this. Not one bit. Circumstances seem... fishy.

ROSE

(rising)

I did not kill him!

JOHN

EMT thinks he choked to death... on a chunk of celery... in his throat.

HARPER

A chunk of celery?

The women are stumped, then it clicks.

ROSE

(flatly)

I like chunks of celery in my tuna fish. Like the crunch. Yep, the crunch.

JOHN

If you're a murderer, Rose, you a damn clever one. Damn clever.

(laughs)

The tuna fish caper. Murder by celery. Murder He Croaked!

Harper slaps John on the shoulder.

HARPER

You are a ass!

JOHN

I see a lot of dead bodies. Most not as lively as this one. Big House Crazy Lady kills boarder with celery chunk. News at Six. Paper's going to want a quote.

ROSE

(screaming)

I'm not giving a quote!

JOHN

Then give them your tuna recipe. Know lots of housewives would love to have it.

(laughs)

ROSE

I try to do one right thing... boom! Death, destruction. Tiffany goes to her mailbox, magic! Magic! Magic! I'm going insane!

(suddenly points to the floor)

What's that!

JOHN

(looking)

Fluid.

ROSE

Fluid?

JOHN

Body fluid.

ROSE

(screaming)

Aiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii!

Rose throw her hands up flees to the kitchen
for cleanser and paper towels.

JOHN

I seen it discolor a hardwood.

Rose makes PAINFUL NOISES while
carefully mopping up the fluid with her
shoe.

ROSE

Never, have I, in my house... Gross!

JOHN

It's alright, Rose. Was one in a million. Don't think he had family.

Rose carefully stuffs the used towels into a
kitchen bin.

John grabs the boarders small suitcase and
heads outside. Rose drifts after him,
stopping near the mailbox.

JOHN

Don't go in the bedroom. Department will come out to photograph. Do write down your
tuna recipe. Need it for the cause of death...

(shaking his head laughing)

A tuna fish sandwich...

Rose opens the mailbox and takes out her
first government check. She shields it from
John, opening it.

JOHN

This the end of the great boarding house try? Judge will want to know. Rose?

Rose, looking at the check, stiffens.

ROSE

Three. I can take three. I am not losing my home.

JOHN

Really?

ROSE

No more chunky tuna. I can board three. I'm not losing Beaufort. From God's lips to my
ears. It's His plan.

JOHN

You a strange woman. Big House Crazy Lady. Kill a man with a tuna fish sandwich.
Ready for more.

(chuckles)

A strange woman, Rose Treppendalh. A strange woman.

ROSE

I fail to see the humor.

John exits stage left. Rose turns holding the
check. She pauses, then resolutely re-enters
her home.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.

SCENE 3

ANN

(dark stage)

I do not like this. I do not like this!

LIGHTS UP.

Beaufort is dressed for a seance. The women
hold wine glasses. Darlene peers outside.

DARLENE

Blue moon. Perfect night for mischief.

ANN

I do not like, this!

HARPER

(hugs Rose)

How you doing?

ROSE

I'm nervous all the time.

Rose rings her hands.

ROSE

My last seance scared the hell out of my college girls. Momma answered.

HARPER

Then ask momma what to do!

ROSE

Momma left me the house to keep. I don't want her to know.

TIFFANY

Ann could do a pod cast, Raising the Dead to Save Your House.

HARPER

Look at little one getting in on the fun.

DARLENE

If we're calling momma, she deserves a seat at the table.

Darlene moves momma's large standup picture frame from the sideboard and sets it on the table. Rose lights the three candle candelabra with a kitchen match. The ladies sit.

ROSE

(deep breath)

Do not ask momma! Join hands.

HARPER

(laughs)

Woooo...

ROSE

Momma? Momma, come to us. Speak to us. We welcome you with open hearts and minds.

ANN

This is ridiculous.

HARPER

Shush! Drink your wine.

ROSE

Momma, speak to us. We welcome you with open hearts and minds. Everybody.

Stage lights dim blue.

ALL THE LADIES

Speak to us. We welcome you with open hearts and minds.

ROSE

Momma? Momma?

A door on the sideboard CREAKS open.
The women freeze.

DARLENE

Jesus...

TIFFANY

(rubs her arms)

My hairs are standing up.

ROSE

She wants a glass. Momma liked her wine.

DARLENE

Nut and tree...

Tiffany grabs a glass. Ann fills it. The
candles flicker. The sideboard door
CREAKS shut.

ANN

I did not see that!

DARLENE

Listen, you can hear the cicadas sing.

Distant THUNDER rolls.

ANN

The gates of hell open.

HARPER

Hush! What do we ask for?

ROSE

Not about my house.

TIFFANY

Who will be first to die?

DARLENE

You ghoul. That's awful.

TIFFANY

It's a seance! You don't ask about the weather...

Rose sets a Ouija board on the table.

ROSE

The college girls stole the planchette!

(brightens)

A wine bottle. We can use the wine bottle.

Rose lays the empty wine bottle flat on the
Ouija board.

ROSE

Everyone put a finger on it (the bottle).

They do, except Ann.

ANN

I am not part of this.

ROSE

Do it. Your disturbing the aura.

Ann reluctantly places her finger on the
bottle. Rose THUMPS the table three times.

ROSE

Momma guide us.

The bottle moves pointing to the first letter.

ROSE

A.

ANN

O' crap.

Darlene leans to Ann.

DARLENE

Darlene don't start with an A?

The bottle moves to the second letter.

ROSE

N.

ANN

O'hell no! No, no, no, no, no!

She flees the table.

ANN

If I'm not here, I can't be first in this house, to die. Right? Right?

Ann hurriedly gathers her pocket book and keys.

ANN

I think I'm making sense. Not an easy thing to do in a Crazy Lady's house.

ROSE

We're having fun! Stay!

Ann turns to leave.

DARLENE
(calling)

O'Ann? Ann!

Ann stops.

DARLENE

Your wine?

ANN

I'll see you in hell. If I live that long!

Darlene laughs. Ann storms off stage left.

ANN
(off stage)

I'll be holding the gate open for you!

The women look at one another.

HARPER
Wow. That's a first. Ann leaving her wine.

Rose gestures to the Ouija board.

ROSE
Well?

TIFFANY
Can't stop in the middle of a mystery.

DARLENE
Oh, we *are* going to finish.

Rose TAPS the table three times.

ROSE
Momma?

The ladies hands guide the wine bottle.

ROSE
D.
(pause)
Y.

The women question...

ROSE
A, N , D, Y. Andy?

HARPER
Isn't one of your guys named, Andy?

The bottle spins. The women turn to the
boarders' room where two men lounge.

One (Andy) taps on a SCRATCHY RADIO
three times, TAP, TAP, TAP. And again,
ONE, TWO, THREE.

Rose blows out the three candle candelabra
ONE, TWO, THREE.

LIGHTS CUT TO BLACK.

The RADIO'S STATIC grows.

SCENE FOUR.

Beaufort is humbly dressed for Christmas, a
string of lights drape outside, a plastic
snowman stands by the front door, a modest
Christmas tree inside. MEN'S LAUGHTER
and a RADIO are heard from within.

Rose's VOICE leads her and Ann on stage
as they enter downstage left. Rose is tipsy.

ROSE

(drunk singing)

All I want for Christmas is my two front teeth, my two front teeth, my two front teeth...

She carries a ugly Christmas blanket.

ANN

(hectoring)

I'm not forgetting nor forgiving. You were the designated driver! Willow Oaks Christmas
Gala... and I'm sober.

ROSE

A nightmare! Everyone was ancient. The whole room smelled of mothballs. Boney hands
picking, picking, picking. Laughing at me with their gray teeth!

ANN

They were not laughing, at you. They know your situation is... temporary.

ROSE

If I'd had a knife...

Rose makes a repeating slabbing motion..
She then throws the ugly blanket over the
snowman's head.

ROSE
Regifted!

ANN
You know I gave you that?

ROSE
You did? Oh.

Rose sheepishly picks up the blanket.

ROSE
Good wine...
(pause)
Coming in?

ANN
Not tonight.

Ann hears the music inside the home.

ANN
Sounds like you got another party to attend.
(pause)
You okay?

ROSE
I'm fine!
(not fine)

ANN
Tomorrow, ten o'clock mass?

ROSE
Third pew, center right. Haven't missed Christmas mass, in ever.

ANN
(quick hug)
Good.

Ann exits downstage left. Rose enters her home. Hearing the MEN'S LAUGHTER, she draws Ann's blanket to her chest.

Rose hurriedly resets two overturned dining chairs, moves to the sideboard and picks up Momma's broken picture frame off the floor.

ROSE

O' Momma...

She carries the frame into the kitchen. The cupboard is ajar. Boxes lie on the floor.

Rose sets the broken frame on the counter, She picks up a white box and a large kitchen knife off the floor. Rose puts the box into cupboard, then pulls out a bottle of bourbon.

A boarder exits their room. He stops seeing, Rose with the knife and bourbon. Rose stares. The boarder retreats into his room. The RADIO is turned DOWN. Rose pours herself a drink.

ROSE
(toasts)

Merry Christmas to nobody.

She drinks, then drops the knife into the sink. Rose looks lovingly at her mother's picture, then BURPS.

ROSE

I don't know what to do? Mama, I need you...

Stage lights dim blue. Rose hears her mother

What? What!

The CLOCK strikes midnight, GONG (1).
 Roses reaches back into the cupboard and
 pulls out the white box. She turns looking to
 the boarders' room. GONG.

ROSE
 (to her mother)

Really?

Rose pours powder from the box into the
 bourbon bottle. GONG. The box's skull &
 crossbones warning label can be clearly
 seen.

Rose grabs a sugar bowl and spoons sugar
 into three jelly jars. Rose playfully starts
 swinging her hips and hums. GONG.

ROSE
 (calling sweetly)

Boys...

She pours her potion into three jelly jars,
 GONG, then marks the level of liquid in the
 bottle. Rose begins HUMMING... A
 Spoonful of Sugar.

ROSE
 (calling)

Boy's, it's midnight! It's Christmas. I made y'all a toddy.

GONG. She grabs the jelly jars, turns, stops,
 and lovingly lays her mother's frame
 facedown on the counter. GONG.

ROSE
 (lightly humming)

Just a spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down, the medicine go down, medicine go
 down...

(calling)

Everyone into bed. Bed time! I got a bedtime toddy. (GONG)

Rose marches up the stairs and into the men's room. The three men scurry into their beds.

ROSE
(kindly)

A *good* bourbon toddy. Burns on the way down, then BAM, lights out!

Rose hands a glass to the first boarder (Andy). He drinks. GONG.

ROSE

Good. Tuck in tight.

She hands a glass to the second boarder.

ROSE

That's the way to hit it!

GONG. She hands a glass to the third boarder.

ROSE

Last one. *Good. Good...* (GONG)

(helps pull up his covers)

Merry Christmas.

Exiting she pauses.

ROSE

Good night my sweet babies...

Andy's arm slips off the bed lifeless. GONG (12). Rose coldly reflects, then flips off the bedroom light. She happily skips down the stairs.

ROSE
(singing)

Just a spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down, the poison go down, medicine go down.

She sets the jelly jars on the counter,
straightens Momma's frame, then skips out
the front door to the mailbox.

ROSE
(growing enthusiasm)

In the most delightful, in the most delightful....

Rose grabs a handful of checks from the
mailbox and shakes them at the audience.

ROSE
(crescendo)

... in the most delightful, *WAY!!*

LIGHTS CUT TO BLACK.

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

LIGHTS UP.

HAMMERING. Summer. Beaufort is
getting a fluff. Keeper carries a ladder and
paint can downstage right to left and exits.
He returns dragging a lumpy, heavy, blue
tarp (with a body in it?) across stage. At the
same time Darlene enters stage left carrying
a bouquet of flowers.

DARLENE
(calling)

Flowers! From my garden!

(no answer)

Rose?

Darlene places the flowers in vase adjacent
momma's *new* silver picture frame.

Rose and Harper enter stage left. Harper
trails Rose carrying a large trophy.

Rose has changed under the ether of being a successful murderer and a grower of tasty tomatoes. She laughs waving a check.

ROSE

Woooo! Fifteen hundred dollars! Best in Show. Winning never gets old!

Harper THUMPS the trophy onto the dining room table.

HARPER

Good grief.

ROSE

Don't scratch it. Sit it beside mother.

HARPER

I'm not A mule. The hideous thing's heavy!

Rose reads the trophy.

ROSE

Mississippi State Fair, Farmers Fruit, Best in Show.

(laughs)

Mother called me Bella Rose. She's happy for me.

(to Darlene)

She called you, Bee. When you moved in, I *loved* having a Big Sis.

DARLENE

A place to stay was part of my pay. I nannied for six years!

ROSE

She loved you.

DARLENE

Long as I was washing y'all's dirty laundry!

ROSE

Don't be just jealous. Celebrate with me. We've been friends for 40 years!

Ann enters stage left.

ANN

God, the gulf smells awful!

ROSE

That's fertilizer! Fish meal and chicken poop, with a drop of secret sauce.

DARLENE

Anybody for a warm, juicy, chicken poop tomato? Anyone?

No one.

ROSE

Okay laugh. The judges laughed, thought "Organic Cannibals," *cute*. No one laughed after tasting one. Two *good* downtown restaurants want a crate each.

(thinking)

I should scale up.

DARLENE

(air quotes)

Why, "Cannibals?"

ROSE

Cannibal *tomatoes* were first used when eating human flesh on Cook's Island. The natives...

DARLENE

Indigenous people.

ROSE

Right. Indigenous people, were cannibals. Human sacrifice with tasty tomatoes! A butt cheek with a good tomato chutney. Isn't that too funny!

HARPER

You are mad!

ROSE

Maybe a little...

Rose sits heavily.

ROSE

Whoa... Bee darling, be so kind and get me a glass of agua?

Darlene moves to do so. John enters stage left.

JOHN

Ladies. Rose. Coffee on?

ROSE

Don't be sassy...

Rose springs from the chair, pushing aside Darlene's offered glass of water.

ROSE

John.

JOHN

Wow, state fair winner! Everything's coming up...

DARLENE

Tomatoes?

John frowns at Darlene.

JOHN

Rose—es...

ROSE

Awwwww...

Rose leans into John and gives him a peck on the cheek, raising one foot off the floor.

HARPER

Ruh-roh.

DARLENE

There it is!

ANN

God.

ROSE

John's responsible for *our* good luck. He deserves a bit of *our* attention.

JOHN

(coughs nervously)

I suppose I do.

Tiffany enters stage left.

ROSE

Hey, Tif!

Rose hugs Tiffany.

HARPER

(happily not too loud)

Clang, clang, clang went the trolley...

DARLENE

Ding, ding, ding went the bell...

ANN

Zing, zing, zing...

(Tiffany gives Ann a look)

Oh, right...

ROSE

Tif thinks I need new drapes. I think she's right. How's the house hunt going?

TIFFANY

Not great.

ANN

What Tif wants doesn't exist on the Bay, other than Beaufort.

Keeper places a basket of tomatoes on the
back window seal.

DARLENE

Fifteen hundred dollars for growing "organic" "vegetables?"

ROSE

(sashaying)

I am, under, paid.

Rose retrieves the basket.

ROSE
(grandly)

The proper *verbiage* is, fruit. *Tomatoes* are *fruit*.

HARPER

We've created a monster...

ROSE
(dismissively)

Darlene, be a sweetie and get us a glass of wine. Ann will help.

Darlene glares at Rose as she and Ann move
into the kitchen.

JOHN

You are high as a kite!

ROSE

I'm happy, John. I am very, very, happy. Isn't that okay?

Rose gives John a tomato. He takes a sloppy
bite.

JOHN
(mouthful)

Boarders don't seem to be around much?

ROSE

Wander off for a day or two weeks. Wander back. Checks keep coming. Your new guy's
up there. It's worked out, this boarding thing.

JOHN

He fitting in?

ROSE

He'll have a row of his own, soon... I mean room, of his own. Room.
(smiles)

A RADIO is turned on in the boarders'
room.

ROSE

(strongly)

Listen to that. You give them a inch... Turn the radio, DOWN!

JOHN

(munching a tomato)

Cannibal tomatoes...Tomatoes to die for... Be like a horror movie.

FRONT ROOM LIGHTS DIM

KITCHEN LIGHTS BRIGHTEN

In the kitchen, Ann and Darlene search the cupboard.

DARLENE

Our State Fair Queen is turning into a insufferable witch.

ANN

If it's about being a witch, or a bitch, you would know.

DARLENE

I resent that.

ANN

No you don't.

Darlene doesn't. She grabs a bottle of wine from the cupboard and ceremoniously unscrews its top.

DARLENE

(dismissively)

"Good" wine.

She takes a slug. Ann pulls out the poisoned bourbon bottle.

ANN

"Good" bourbon.

Darlene pulls out the box of poison.

DARLENE

Paraquat? This is weed killer?

ANN

(holding the bourbon)

Haven't had a snort since college.

DARLENE

Who are you kidding?

Darlene reads the box label. Ann grabs a
jelly jar. Tiffany joins them.

DARLENE

Bipyridinium dichloride... Poison. *Poison!* Organic my butt. All Rose does is blab about
are her, *organic*, tomatoes.

Ann opens the bourbon bottle.

ANN

Anyone?

TIFFANY

Not me.

ANN

No reason to dirty a glass.

Ann wets her lips with anticipation.

DARLENE

(strongly)

Don't, drink, that!

Darlene shoots her arm out, stopping the
bottle millimeters from Ann's lips!

DARLENE

Ha! Rose marked the bottle! Big House Crazy Lady's so cheap she marks her liquor
bottles...

(laughs)

ANN

She knows a need a little something something every once in a while.

DARLENE

Maybe that's why Rose marked it. Because she cares about you. Now put it back.

Ann reluctantly does.

TIFFANY

Rose is kind'a freaking me out.

DARLENE

(sarcastically)

You think?

(pause)

Does Paraquat, weed killer, sound, *organic*, to you?

ANN & TIFFANY

No.

DARLENE

Cannibal Queen has herself a *organic* problem. A large, *organic*, problem.

Darlene shoves the box into the cupboard.

DARLENE

I got the wine. Grab some glasses.

Darlene, Tiffany return to the front room.

Ann takes a longing glance at the liquor
bottle before joining. Wine is shared

ROSE

We need a name? Beaufort Organic Heirloom Cannibals?

DARLENE

Might leave the *organic*, part out.

ANN

So, what makes a tomato organic?

ROSE

No chemicals, no pesticides, no herbicides. None. All natural.

DARLENE

No fancy fertilizers? No weed killers?

ROSE

Nope and nope.

DARLENE

Interesting...

ROSE

Got a secret sauce. But organic is organic.

Rose looking in a mirror.

ROSE

Do I need my roots touched up? Mississippi magazine wants a picture.

(pauses)

Need to evolve my brand. Do a Google. Get online.

Rose's phone RINGS in the kitchen. She goes to it. The RADIO plays in the boarders' room.

ROSE

(yells)

TURN THE RADIO DOWN!

HARPER

Dang, why not just kill him?

Rose briefly thinks about it before..

ROSE

(sweetly)

Hello?

Her CONVERSATION is muffled.

JOHN

(quietly to the others)

What is going on with, Rose?

DARLENE

Cannibal fever.

JOHN

When she flames out... it's Coffee City.

Rose enters and CLAPS her hands.

ROSE

Channel 17, Biloxi. They want to do a segment on my tomatoes, and our Game Night! A segment on us! And if it's good... The Today Show is interested!

Stunned silence.

ANN, HARPER, DARLENE

The Today Show?

(then HOWLS of joy!)

Today Show! Today Show! Today Show!

JOHN

Beaufort, beautiful fort. How about Beau Cannibals?

ROSE

Beau Cannibals. I like it. I like it!

(pleading)

O'John, take me to dinner Friday night. I want to go out to one of the restaurants serving my Beautiful Cannibals. I'll fluff up. Parade me around. I need it, John.

JOHN

I'd love to take you, Rose.

Rose hangs onto John.

HARPER

Look, he's shy...

JOHN

(embarrassed)

Friday, Rose. I got to get to the office. But definitely, Friday.

The RADIO distracts Rose.

ROSE

(anger rising)

I am too nice. Gave him radio privileges.

TIFFANY

It's not loud, Rose.

Rose smiles uneasily at John, distracted,
slightly breaking.

DARLENE

Coffee's getting hot, John! We'll walk out with you.

JOHN

6:30. Okay?

ROSE

I'll be fun.

HARPER

Remember Thursday's Game Night. My house.

ROSE

Tif?

TIFFANY

I'll be there.

John and ladies exit, Rose hurries into the
kitchen. She draws a hatchet from under the
cabinet, then marches upstairs.

OUTSIDE, Darlene pauses as John and the
other ladies exit downstage left.

IN THE BOARDERS' room, Rose points to
the RADIO.

ROSE

(flatly)

Off! Now!

The Boarder turns to the RADIO.

DARLENE

(calling to John)

Sheriff, whats the saying? Don't do the crime, if you can't do the time?

Rose rears back the hatchet!

LIGHTS CUT TO BLACK

ROSE

Bad Boy!

(THUNK)

Bad boy!

(THUNK)

Don't run from me!

(THUNK)

SILENCE....

SCENE TWO.

LIGHTS UP:

Beaufort is dressed for the 4th of July.

In the Boarders' room lies a body on a blue tarp. Only its legs stick past the bed posts.

Rose hums SPOONFUL OF SUGAR as she descends the stairs carrying the poisoned bourbon and jelly jar.

At the cupboard, Rose slips on a heavy rubber smock, rubber gloves and a large pair of goggles, Lastly she pulls out a power saw.

Rose marches up the stairs SINGING SPOONFUL OF SUGAR.

ROSE

Just a spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down, medicine go down, medicine go down...

She marches happily into the boarders' room. She plugs in the saw and gives it a WHIRL.

John calls from off-scene stage left. The saw
WHIRRRRLS.

JOHN

Rose?

(louder)

Rose.

(louder)

Rose!

Rose cuts the SAW.

ROSE

John? John!

Rose attempts to cover the body.

ROSE

(calling)

John, you should have called!

JOHN

Are you okay?

ROSE

No! Yes!

Rose steps from the bedroom pulling off her
googles and shakes her hair demurely.

ROSE

Just cleaning. Bathroom's a bloody mess.

JOHN

I can speak to them if you want!

ROSE

They're out! No need to come up.

(demurely batting her eyes)

You'd think bad of me...

Rose John meet on the middle stair.

JOHN

Now how could I think bad of you?

A light kiss on the lips. John tries to peer around Rose to the boarders' room. Rose pulls his attention to her.

ROSE

I've been thinking about you.

She puts her arms around John's neck.

ROSE

John, we haven't played good cop bad cop in a while.

JOHN

No we haven't.

ROSE

You bring your handcuffs?

(he has)

Bad cop!

Rose leads John by his hand downstairs, exiting stage right. A YELP and LAUGHTER sing from her bedroom.

ROSE

(off stage)

Hold still! I'm bad cop...

JOHN

(off stage)

Ouch!

TIFFANY

(off stage left)

Rose. Rose?

Rose hurries out stage right with disheveled hair.

ROSE

Doesn't anyone call anymore?

A screen door SLAPS shut. Tiffany enters stage left.

ROSE

Oh hey, neighbor!

Tiffany holds a wallpaper sample book.

TIFFANY

I have ideas. Good ones.

John stumbles out stage right with his hands cuffed behind him.

JOHN

Rose, they're pinching! It's too tight...

(oops)

Oh! Hey, Tiffany.

TIFFANY

(brightly)

Hi, John!

(pause)

Good cop, bad cop?

JOHN

(cough)

Police procedure training.

TIFFANY

Well... I was just dropping off paper samples...

ROSE

Stay! It's good for John to wait. My *naughty-boy* prisoner to wait.

John holds his cuffed hands out.

JOHN

Rose!

ROSE
(naughtily)

Nooo.

(to Tiffany)

Tif, can I get you some ice tea? John, you want some tea? Oh, my bad.

JOHN

Why not offer her a cookie too?

ROSE

Cookie?

TIFFANY

Sure.

ROSE

That's the spirit!

JOHN

Rose!

TIFFANY

We need to document this. They'll love it at Sassy's Salon.

Tiffany snaps a picture.

TIFFANY

There. Texted you.

ROSE

John, you want a copy?

JOHN

No. Rose!

ROSE

You look uncomfortable. Sit.

Rose pushes John into a chair.

ROSE

(sipping tea)

I'm starting a Beau Cannibals cookbook. Keeper's cleaning the smokehouse. Going to try a few smoked meat recipes.

JOHN

Good god.

TIFFANY

(snacking on her cookie)

Did you see where they're burying Judge Wilson under a tree? On Bay Square. Putting him in a cloth bag and planting him with a tree right in the center of the square.

ROSE

Really?

JOHN

Old Judge Wilson?

TIFFANY

Yep. It's a thing. No casket. No cremation. Drop you in a sack, pop in the ground. Plant a tree on top. A Green Burial. It's really kind'a of cool.

ROSE

That is, interesting... A green burial?

(thinking)

John, what does the county do with dead bodies, you know, indigent bodies? When nobody wants them?

JOHN

Potter's Field. Common burial. They get a pine box, but no marker.

John holds up his cuffed hands. Rose ignores him.

ROSE

So, if a body can be buried under a tree, why not corn fields or tomato fields? No cremation. No metal caskets. Environmentally... it would be okay.

(pause)

Deliver a body to a farmer. Intern it. Dust to dust. Everybody wins!

TIFFANY

It'd start a little weird. But there are plenty of weird people to start it.

ROSE

(pause)

If I took some bodies from the county, that'd save the county money, right? Maybe pay down my taxes...

(thinking)

I could expand a few acres...

TIFFANY

Have you lost your mind?

ROSE

Sometimes I think I'm the only sane person in this crazy world.

JOHN

You're serious?

ROSE

What's the difference? Trees, corn, my tomatoes? Might need the Ag (Agricultural) department to bless it. Three hundred thirty million people in America, John. Where they gonna go?

TIFFANY

That's not a bad idea.

ROSE

A never ending supply of clean, green, fertilizer. Would solve a *bunch* of problems.

TIFFANY

Gen Z will become Gen D, as in dead.

ROSE

They'd sign up like lemmings.

TIFFANY

If you get this off the ground, the Beaufort, Bay St. Louis Haunted House is gonna be wild!

ROSE

Beaufort, a World Heritage destination. I'd get a Rose Treppendalh statue on the square.

(laughs)

TIFFANY

Viva la revolucion!

ROSE

(thinking)

I need a patent lawyer.

JOHN

Big house crazy lady, I really would like for these cuffs to be off, now?

ROSE

Try a tomato, John.

Rose jams a tomato into John's mouth,
gagging him.

TIFFANY

I'll let y'all play... I'll leave these (wallpaper samples). Love, love, love the pink.

ROSE

Let's give clean & green some thought. I'm dead serious!

TIFFANY

John, just between you and me, those cuffs aren't coming off *anytime* soon.

JOHN

(tomato)

Mumble mumble mumble mumble!

TIFFANY

You have a good day too, John.

Rose gives Tiffany a big hug.

ROSE

I'm so glad you're here. Part of us.

TIFFANY

Me too. Bye, John...

Tiffany waves to John, exiting stage left.
Rose turns menacingly to John.

ROSE

You!

John cowers a step back.

JOHN

(desperately, repeatedly)

Mumbles, mumbles! Mumbles, mumbles, mumbles!

Rose pulls John ruffly to his feet. She fishes a handcuff key from his pants pocket.

ROSE

Here's the key, John. I'll get the State Ag guys. You get the city. We set a meeting. I'm serious. I can't do the boarding house thing anymore. This fertilizer idea could solve a lot, *a lot of my problems*. Okay? Okay?

John nervously MUMBLES, MUMBLES, MUMBLES with the tomato in his mouth.

Rose tugs the belt out of John's pants. His pants fall around his ankles. She swings the belt back and forth.

ROSE

You called me, Big House Crazy Lady.

(smiles)

You have no idea!

JOHN

(fear creeping in)

Mumbles. Mumbles! Mumbles...!!!

Rose points to her bedroom. John waddles, pants around his ankles.

ROSE

When's the last time you've been spanked?

Rose SLAPS the floor with the belt.

ROSE

Well that's too long!

JOHN

(shouting)

Mumbling!! Mumbling!! Mumbling!! Mumbling!!!

John frantically waddles off stage right!

JOHN

(off stage)

MUMBLE! MUMBLE!!

(BELT STRIKES BUTT!)

M..U..M..B..L..E!!!

LIGHTS TO BLACK

SCENE THREE.

BAD TO THE BONE PLAYS, leading us
into the scene.

LIGHTS UP

THUNDER ROLLS. Rose sits at the
dinning table contentedly sharpening a set of
large kitchen knives. She's haloed by single
light. (Let her have a moment.) BOOM of
lighting!

Rose rises regally and returns the knife set to
the kitchen. She strikes a kitchen match,
lights a stove top burner, then places a tea
kettle on the burner. Rose makes final
adjustments – lemonade pitcher, crystal
glasses, cookies, cut glass bowl of tomatoes
– are attractively placed. She peers out.

ROSE

Please, don't rain on my parade.

Tiffany enters stage left, hurrying from the
STORM.

ROSE

Lucky you made it!

A hug.

TIFFANY

Your house looks, great.

ROSE

Should photograph well... if the rain stops! Your hair's a wreck.

TIFFANY

Can we... talk?

Rose drags a stool into the room.

TIFFANY

Hey, I need to talk to you.

ROSE

Okay. Sit. I'll get a brush. Sit! Last time I brushed someone's hair was Cinderella Barbie.

Tiffany uncomfortably sits alone. Rose
returns with brush, pauses, takes a steps
back.

ROSE

God, you could be my daughter. Been nice to have a daughter...

TIFFANY

(bam)

Rose, I'm divorcing Roger.

ROSE

What?

TIFFANY

I caught him, with a man, in *our* bed. On my *good* duvet.

ROSE

Oh, Tif...

TIFFANY

Roger *laughed?* Laughed! He knew I was on my way home!

ROSE

Pastor Foy.

TIFFANY

You know?

ROSE

They been switch hitting since high school. I'm sorry, Tif. But wasn't my place to say...

TIFFANY

I'm a idiot.

ROSE

Your not the only one. You just got mixed up.

TIFFANY

Why didn't I see it?

(pause)

I like y'all. I like coming to Game Night?

ROSE

There is no escape from Garden Club. Darlene hates herself, but she likes you. She'll like you more when you kick Roger's butt to the curb.

(puts the brush away)

Have you told him?

TIFFANY

No.

ROSE

Sooner the better.

(a hug)

I'm sorry, baby. But hide your jewelry first.

Car horn HONKS.

ROSE

Ann and Pimpmobile.

TIFFANY

Honking's so white trash.

ROSE

You learning our secrets. Go dry your eyes. We'll talk more when we can...

Rose gives Tiffany a hug. Tiffany exits stage right.

CRASH of lightening.

ROSE

Can this day get any uglier?

Ann sweeps in stage left wearing a floral dress.

ANN

(weakly rhyming)

Hey ho! Hey ho! Its off to the Today Show we go! Hey ho! Hey ho! Hey... ho.

(her dress)

Plants. Tomatoes. Garden. Symbolism! B minus in theater.

ROSE

You got the drama part.

Harper arrives stage left.

HARPER

What a great day for a funeral! Saw the TV people downtown. I, am, excited!

Darlene enters stage left. BOOM, the lights flicker.

HARPER

(yells)

The Monster!

DARLENE

Rose tell you that black and white dress makes you look like a polecat?

HARPER

No.

DARLENE

She's being kind.

HARPER

What's a polecat?

Nobody knows...

ANN

Your hair!

Darlene's a blonde!

DARLENE

Joined the 21st Century.

HARPER

It's so much better...

DARLENE

With pictures and all today...

Tiffany enters stage right.

ANN, HARPER, DARLENE

Clang, clang, clang went the trolley...

TIFFANY

(loudly)

Blah, blah, blah went the romance, now everything is going straight to hell.

(pause)

How about that!

HARPER, ANN

Oh.

Rose waves them off. An uneasy pause.

DARLENE

Damn Roger. Not like we didn't know it coming.

Darlene points to the gas can on the kitchen floor.

DARLENE

You can use that gas can. I'll help you pour.

ROSE

She's not talking about it...

Rose sets the gasoline can in the window
(for Keeper).

DARLENE

What's the hell this talk about you making Beaufort a cemetery!

HARPER

She's crazy town!

ROSE

If they can plop a judge in a sack, bury him under a tree, on Bay Square... I can bury bodies on *my* private property and grow prize winning tomatoes!

DARLENE

A tomato cemetery and the Today Show? I would not miss this for the world.

ROSE

It's the green revolution. And I'm doing my part.

(pause)

What has the south given us? The Civil War and sweet tea! What else?

TIFFANY

Matin Luther King gave us a dream.

DARLENE

(gives Tiffany a side-hug)

Bless your heart...

(pause)

When the baptist hear about your fertilizer, they'll be roasting s'mores at the Beaufort bonfire.

ROSE

It's simply dust to dust. But its dollars to dollars they listen to. They'll bless my tomato garden. Soon as I show them, some MONEY!

(exiting stage right)

Okay. Do not touch anything! I've got to get into Today Show character.

Tiffany peers outside.

TIFFANY

Rain's stopping!

Rose SWEEPS dramatically into and around the room wearing a flowing, tomato red cape. She circles twice.

ROSE

(beatifically)

The circle of life... Beaufort will have Forever Fields. Tomatoes, corn, peach trees, surrounded by beautiful roses.

(pause)

The future! People will *pay* to get *married* and *buried* at Beaufort. The circle of life.

DARLENE

You have lost your mind.

ROSE

Completely.

(stops)

I should have naming rights for my fields? Bank of America Meadows, AT&T Field of Dreams.

Rose swinging her cape, snaps her fingers at Ann.

ROSE

What would Dolly say?

ANN

Don't blend in.

ROSE

(to all)

Is the hood too much? I can wear it back.

John enters stage left. They kiss. John spins Rose.

JOHN

Rose. You're so pretty you'd make a blind man see again! I've never seen you so, so dang beautiful.

Rose squeezes John's butt.

ROSE

Still sore?

JOHN

(proudly)

Every step I take.

John gives Rose a kiss.

ROSE

Wait! I made you something, from my cookbook. Canni-balls. Keeper smoked a couple pairs.

Rose retrieves a small plate of meat product.

ROSE

Go ahead. They're for you. That's a fava bean-tomato relish. Saw it in a movie. Go ahead. Swiss meatballs...

JOHN

(looking closely)

Canni-balls? Well...

(eating)

Crunchy. Chewy. Tomato relish works good.

He pulls a hair from his mouth.

ROSE

Did I miss one?

Rose flicks it off her fingers.

ROSE

Any word, from the mayor?

JOHN

(finishing the meat product)

We talked. Mayor's talking to the city lawyer. Helps that everyone *loves* your tomatoes. Crazy, but everybody's talking...

ROSE

Talking is good.

JOHN

I'm encouraged... for a crazy, lady's, idea.

ROSE

(swoons and kiss)

Oh, John.

DARLENE

America! America!
Rose shared her grace with thee.
With rows of corn,
Grown on bodies born,
From sea to shinning sea!

ANN

Copyright it!

JOHN

(to Rose)

Hey, step outside with me...

John pulls Rose outside.

JOHN

Rose. I've been thinking. I know, a dangerous thing. But, maybe you and me... again.

ROSE

Again?

JOHN

Forever this time.

ROSE

(floored)

Whoa! Whoa... I got things going on.

(dizzy)

I need to figure stuff out! Wow (laughs). But not today. Not this week.

John turns away.

ROSE

John, wait! Maybe, let me get my business going. Then, yes.

JOHN

Yes!

ROSE

Yes. A thousand times, yes.

They kiss. Big hug.

JOHN

Maybe we switch to cold brew coffee?

They kiss again.

ROSE

Let's hold the news for a day. Today's their day too.
(the ladies)

TIFFANY

Two trucks coming up the drive!

ROSE

TV truck?

HARPER

State truck. Got a Ag sticker on it. Second truck's towing a wood chipper?

ROSE

Well, that's a bit of good news! Said my wood chipper was on back order. That things got a eighty foot throw. Smooth distribution of material.
(sends John)

Tell the driver to put it by my tomato garden.

A handsome AG AGENT enters downstage
left. He stops at the front door.

ANN

(flirts)

Hey.

AGENT

Hey. Ms Treppendahl? State Agriculture Department.

Rose floats to the front door.

ROSE

I'm Ms Treppendahl. You aren't the agency director. Why are you here?

AGENT
(gathers himself)

Ma'am, the director respects your proposal. The science and need are, in his words, interesting. But the politics, the politics, are clearly not. The department's answer is, no.

ROSE

No? He said, no!

AGENT

Yes ma'am.

ROSE

It's a ethical use of human remains. It's the future whether your director can see it or not!

DARLENE

Yes. First come, first served!

John returns.

AGENT

Ma'am, state's not saying you can't do it. People get buried on private property everyday. State's saying it can't bless it. At this time.

ROSE

Then why are you here? Go away. I'm hosting a *major* news event in 10 minutes.

ANN

We don't dress like this every day!

AGENT

State needs a soil baseline before bodies are interned. Test's almost instantaneous.

Rose confused, what?

TIFFANY

TV people are here! Very cool!

DARLENE
(pleased)

Perfect timing.

The tea kettle begins SINGING on the stove.

JOHN

I'll grab them!

He exits stage left.

AGENT

You need a test for organic certification.

HARPER

It's Channel 17 for god sake. Coastal Living!

AGENT

You requested it, 606-0666?

ROSE

That's my... but I didn't call?

HARPER

(mouths to Darlene)

Did you?

Darlene turns away.

TIFFANY

Cameras are out!

The kettle SINGS.

ROSE

Enough!

Darlene removes the kettle from the stove.

ROSE

If you're still here in 10 minutes, your director will hear about it!

The agent exits. Rose floats, last
arrangements, trying to maintain her
composure.

ROSE

Darlene, will you serve the lemonade to the crew?

DARLENE

That's what I do best, *serve*.

ROSE

There's wine if they want it.

Ann raises her hand.

ANN

I do.

HARPER

What?

ANN

Want wine.

HARPER

It's ten o'clock!

Ann pouts.

ROSE

Oh, I don't care!

Rose peers out the back window, closely
watching the Agent. She fiddles with her
cape.

ROSE

Had it custom-made in New Orleans, Uptown.

(wiping a tear)

God, I need this day!

DARLENE

(soothingly)

He'll be done in minutes. Something in your garden, you worried about?

Ann has retrieved the box of poison.

ANN

"Darlene," found this.

Ann pushes the box off on Darlene.

DARLENE

Please tell me you're not using poison on your, *organic*, tomatoes?

ROSE

I wouldn't do anything so vile. They are completely organic!

DARLENE

You want to show John? Before he finds out?

ROSE

John's not going to find out!

Rose snatches the box and SLAMS it into a
sideboard drawer.

JOHN

Find what out?

John has entered stage left. Rose freezes.

ROSE

Nothing!

JOHN

They're setting up. Want a beauty shot of Beaufort with y'all on the steps.

(to Rose)

This is a hell of an achievement.

ROSE

You showed me the way. You believed in me.

JOHN

I do believe in you.

John grabs a tomato from the bowl and bites
into it.

JOHN

Sweet as apples. God I love these thangs.

The Agent sprints in from downstage left.

AGENT

(breathless)

Sheriff! It's awful. In the garden, it's awful!

JOHN

What?

Agent steps to Rose.

AGENT

Ms. Treppendahl, ma'am, respectfully, there is a body, buried, in your tomato garden.

SILENCE... long pause.

ROSE

Just one?

John's stops eating his tomato.

AGENT

Can't tell. It's spread around, chopped up.

ROSE

(sluffs it off)

Only one body...

JOHN

A body, in Rose's garden?

AGENT

Yeah.

John looking to discard the suddenly foul tomato he was eating, tosses it into the audience.

JOHN

Show me!

John and the agent race, exiting downstage left.

JOHN

(calling back)

Stay in the house!

DARLENE

I did not expect so much drama from a single phone call.

HARPER

It's a boarder that did it... Or had it done to?

Rose recovers.

ROSE

Darlene, lock the back door.

They rest hurry to the back window. Rose sets the gasoline can on the floor. Ann refills her wine glass.

TIFFANY

Never been part of a murder mystery. Exciting!

ROSE

Who would plant a body in my tomato garden?

ANN

Darlene's the only one mean enough to murder somebody.

DARLENE

If I do, I know who's my first victim.

Ann sticks her tongue out at Darlene.

ROSE

Tif, check the boarders' room.

TIFFANY

I'm not going up there!

HARPER

Rose, you got a gun?

ROSE

No! I don't have a gun!

DARLENE

I do, in my pocketbook.

Darlene retrieves a small pistol from her purse.

ROSE

(to Ann)

There's a bat in the cupboard.

Ann retrieves the bat. She holds the bat in one hand, wine glass in the other.

HARPER

I need something!

Rose pulls the blood caked hatchet from under the cabinet and gives it to Harper.

ROSE

You good?

HARPER

I guess?

TIFFANY

Sheriff's coming back!

The women meet John entering, weapons ready.

JOHN

Good god! Put those away! Whoever did this is long gone. Body's been out there a while. It's a bloody, mess.

(stomping mud off his boots)

Dog it! My new boots!

HARPER

Is that a toe?

Tiffany kneels.

TIFFANY

It is a toe! This is so awesome!

John kneels.

JOHN

Dang! A need a zip lock bag.

Darlene hurries to grab one.

JOHN

This stinks to hell and back...

(sniffs the air)

Something's burning?

ROSE

My tomato pies!

Rose runs to the kitchen and jerks pies from the oven. Pausing, she eyes the gas can, then shoves it into the hot oven.

JOHN

(convinced)

Gotta be a border. It's a border.

DARLENE

The killer? Or the dead?

JOHN

Both. But why chop it up?

John looks to the boarders room, then runs past Rose up the stairs...

ROSE

Don't!

... and into the boarders' room. The room is newly wallpapered pink. John searches, stops. Understands...

JOHN

Rose!

He starts down, one, stair, at, a, time.

JOHN

Pink, wallpaper, Rose. Pink?

ROSE

A Legacy pattern. Historical Society won't have a problem...

JOHN

No one's living in that room, Rose. Where'd they go? I know you been cashing checks.

Keeper crosses downstage left to right,
carrying a small suitcase. He exits.

JOHN

Rose, where did they go? Did you, *accidentally*, kill another boarder?

SIRENS in the distance.

DARLENE

Sounds like the whole department is coming.

ROSE

(half smile)

Pray one's a firetruck...

JOHN

Rose! Is *he*... in your garden? Tell me before all hell breaks loose.

ROSE

(breaks nervously)

They, were alcoholics. Hand on a bible, they mostly drank themselves to death.

JOHN

They? Were? They *were* alcoholics?

ROSE

All.

JOHN

Rose! You didn't buried *ALL* of them in your garden?

HARPER

That's impossible!

TIFFANY

Rose wouldn't do that!

DARLENE

She did beat Bobby Crews with a tire jack in the 7th grade...

ANN

People like her tasty tomatoes!

JOHN

Really? Rose! Seven men. You killed, murdered seven men!

ROSE

A regrettable faux pas.

JOHN

Mother of Jesus O'Mary

(softly)

Rose?

(pause)

Keeper! Where'd he go? He did this.

John spins looking for Keeper.

ROSE

(popping)

I left the stove. I left the stove on! Move. Move!

Rose pushes through the women.

JOHN

Rose!

ROSE

(doe-eyed)

I coming right back.

She runs and pulls the gas can out of the oven. The hot can burns Rose's hands. Fumbling it, she spills gasoline everywhere.

ROSE

(shaking her burnt hands)

Dang it!

SIRENS near. Rose turns. Johns is there.

ROSE

(screams)

Don't touch me! You! Don't touch me!

Rose strikes a kitchen match on the stove, threatening to set herself on fire. (Rapid dialogue, everyone yelling.)

ROSE
(teeth bared)

Don't you touch me!

JOHN

Do it!

ROSE

I'll do it!

JOHN

Do it!

HARPER, DARLENE, TIFFANY
Rose! Rose! No! Don't! Don't do it! Rose! Rose! Please!

JOHN

She won't do it!

ROSE

I'll do it! I'll do it! Stay back!

HARPER, DARLENE, TIFFANY
Rose, stop! Stop! Please stop!

JOHN

She doesn't have the guts!

HARPER

Shut your fat mouth!

John inches closer to Rose.

JOHN

Why... Why?

ROSE
(screaming)

Beaufort is my womb! My child! I have nothing, else!

SILENCE.

JOHN
(eases closer)

Okay. Okay. Give me the match, Rose. It's over. It's all over, Rose.

Rose reaches her trembling hand toward
John. John reaches for the burning match.
The match burns Rose fingers.

ROSE

Ow!

She drops the match! John dives, catching it,
leaving him kneeling at Rose's feet.

The ladies rush to Rose.

DARLENE, HARPER, ANN

O'Rose, Rose, Rose... Baby, Rose. Now, now.

Darlene holds her the tightest, guiding Rose
out of the kitchen. John rises slowly and
drops heavily into a chair.

SILENCE. Rose looks to John. Starts to
speak, doesn't.

JOHN

(defeated)

Knew you and me. Beaufort... Knew it would end poorly. Knew it...

QUIET.

ROSE

(quietly to everyone)

Didn't think murdering was so much work.

ANN

Oh my gawd.

HARPER

I refuse to believe this.

Darlene covers her mouth with her hand.
Harper turns and moves away.

JOHN

How Rose? Did any of them scream? Beg for mercy?

DARLENE

John stop.

(pause)

Rose?

ROSE

Poisoned four with your weed killer. Took a hatchet to another. Yeah.

(pause)

Ran one over with my car. Felt bad... He was still twitching. Had to run him over twice.

(counting on her fingers)

That five? One exposed himself. Hit him with a ball-peen hammer. Cut off his penis with a serrated steak knife.

DARLENE

Good god.

ROSE

He was a sour old fart. But made for some good tasting tomatoes. They were John's favorites.

(pause)

One got drunk, blacked out. Tied a slipknot around his neck. Strangling's hard, but bloodless. That's a plus on the clean up.

(thinking)

Eight! Mr Tuna Fish. He's not on me! No, sir.

JOHN

Big House Crazy Lady.

(pause)

Who'd a thought that an understatement?

ROSE

(half smile)

I might need to quote you on that in court.

JOHN

You are insane.

DARLENE

Beyond...

ROSE

I was getting my marrying barn.

Everyone's quiet. Rose looks to Harper,
brightens slightly.

ROSE

Mother called us twins, my better twin. She was right you know. I love you.

Rose hugs Harper.

HARPER

I love you. Rose.

Rose moves to Ann.

ROSE

You look good in this dress. But wine before noon is *not* a good look.

Rose takes the wine glass from Ann.

ROSE

Promise?

ANN

Promise.

Rose hugs Ann.

ANN

We loved you, Rose? (How could you do this?)

Rose turns to Darlene.

DARLENE

(smiles sadly)

I know what sandwich to bring on visiting day.

Rose hugs Darlene.

DARLENE

I was the one pulled the arms off your Ken doll. There was no monster! Only me.

ROSE

I forgave you a long time ago, Bee. I've loved you forever.

(another hug)

We gave Ken a shoe box burial in momma's garden.

Quiet THUNDER rolls in the distance.

ROSE
(to all)

Was a long time ago. Lots of stories in this old house. Suppose I added a few.

Rose looks to John. He stands.

ROSE
You were the lucky one. I almost loved you.

JOHN
Guess I missed the, *almost*, memo. (John loved her.)

Rose steps closer to John

ROSE
(lightly)
Remember when I said, "No good deed goes unpunished." I planted my garden, John. Not Keeper. I can tell the whole world this boarding thing was your idea. It was. You brought the men... my Garden Club. Leave Keeper be. I may not be a great friend. But I can be a hell of an enemy.

John considers...

ROSE
(lightly taps John on his chest)
I knew you'd do the right thing...

Rose looks to Tiffany.

TIFFANY
This the end of Game Night?

ROSE
(softly)
No.

Rose grabs a key from under the front door planter, puts it in Tiffany's palm and folds her fingers over it.

ROSE
Will you?

TIFFANY
Always, Rose.

Yellow light shines.

ROSE

(turns, her eyes squinting)

Sun's coming out.

Rose shares a last look to her friends.

JOHN

Rose, it's time.

Rose's face cracks. Behind the audience, a
TV VOICE calls.

TV VOICE

Ready for our 1st shot, Sheriff. Would you parade Ms Treppendahl down the walk?

ROSE

(to John)

I like parades.

JOHN

It's your parade, Rose.

TV VOICE

Action!

Rose stylishly billows out her tomato red
cape as she and John exit grandly,
downstage left.

Her friends are left in shock.

ANN

Rose, a serial killer. It doesn't make sense. For a house?

HARPER

Not house. Home. Home. Culture is a powerful thing.

(pause)

When you've know somebody your entire life?

Harper and Ann share side glances at
Darlene. Then take a precautionary half step
back.

DARLENE

Seven men? It's not possible...

HARPER

Maybe if you hadn't ripped Ken's arms off!

DARLENE

Not just Ken. Could'a been the other half dozen I dismembered.

HARPER

You better be lying.

Is she?

TIFFANY

There she goes...

Tiffany gives a small wave in the direction
of the departing Rose.

TIFFANY

I think she's sweet.

Long pause.

HARPER

Goodbye Today Show. Hello America's Most Wanted.

DARLENE

What would Dolly do?

ANN

I have no earthly idea.

HARPER

I need a *real* drink.

ANN

There's a bottle of *good* bourbon in the cupboard.

DARLENE

You just promised Rose no wine before lunch!

ANN

Never would I have promised giving up bourbon toddies. No.

DARLENE

Make mine a double!

The women head to the kitchen. Tiffany hangs back. HERE COMES THE SUN begins playing softly.

HARPER

Tif?

TIFFANY

I'm good here.

Tiffany measures the drapes.

HERE COMES THE SUN plays....

LIGHTS FADE.

CURTAIN

POST CURTAIN.

The actors return for bows. Rose joins, triumphant. Bows. The women and John exit, leaving the Ensemble actors on stage. The three crates of tomatoes and move downstage.

They SING OUT like Carnival Barkers, alternating lines.

ENSEMBLE

Juicy, meaty, certified organic, Cannibals! Fresh Beau Cannibals! USDA approved! Taste what's rockin' the New York culinary scene, Beau Cannibals! Tavern on the Green, Per Se, Jean-Georges! Juicy, meaty, delicious, USDA approved!

(continuing)

As seen on the Today Show. Rose's Garden Cemeteries! Don't be cremated, be activated! The Green solution! Multiple locations! USDA approved! Beau Cannibals! Lay-a-way plans available! Agents are in the lobby! Rose's Garden Cemeteries! One heart beat from heaven.