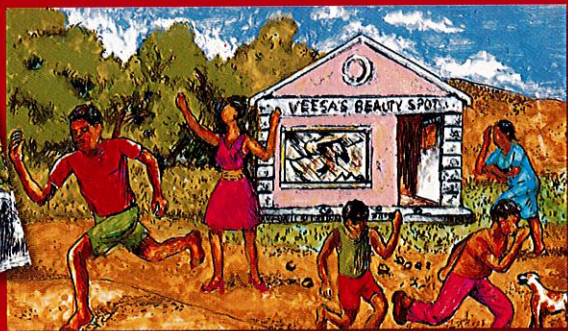




# Play Me

A collection of three  
one-act plays



Telcine Turner

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# *Play Me*

A collection of three  
one-act plays

Telcine Turner

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WITH COMPLIMENTS

MACMILLAN CARIBBEAN



For my husband, James O. Rolle

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# *A Cross for Easter*

(A one-act play for Youth Groups)

STOCK MARKET

OCTOBER 2005



### Characters

**Cleaning Woman** diligent and unobtrusive

**Hubert Livingstone** simple, courteous carpenter

**Veesa Gaitor** beautician with pretensions

**Effie Mae Small** mother, meddler and fault-finder

**Ma Roker** elderly lady who looks at the good side

**Janet Small** Effie's small daughter

**Constable Biggit** sometimes brash, but well meaning

**Revd Isaac Newton** worried pastor of the Little Church

**Setting:** New Providence Island, The Bahamas, 1972

## Scene 1

**Inside the Little Church, noon,  
Holy Thursday 1972**

*A short centre aisle cuts across centre stage. There are folding chairs on either side of the aisle. Facing the chairs is a pulpit. Affixed to the front of the pulpit is a slim, gold crucifix. An upstage right opening gives access to the street. A door to the interior is located upstage.*

*The church is open to visitors for a special Quiet Time and Meditation period. Faintly, in the background, is the **sound** of the unseen **choir** rehearsing "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?" The **Cleaning Woman** is dusting the furniture and humming along with the choir as best she can. **Hubert Livingstone** enters through the door upstage right, nods to the **Cleaning Woman**, goes to a seat in front of the pulpit and bows his head in prayer. The **Cleaning Woman** continues her work and humming. **Hubert** looks up and stares at her. She gathers her cleaning materials and goes out through the door to the interior. **Hubert** resumes his praying posture and maintains it throughout the ensuing dialogue.*



Well-dressed **Veesa Gaitor** tips cutely in from the street. She ignores **Hubert** but sits across the aisle from him. She bows her head for a few seconds, opens her handbag, removes a compact, rearranges her hair, composes her face, rises and exits, almost colliding with **Effie Mae Small** and **Ma Roker** at the street door. She breezes by them without a word.

**Effie:** That Veesa Gaitor's rude, hey Ma Roker? Look at her, with her mouth curled up like old shoe leather. Even in church she think she too good to talk to people.

**Ma Roker:** Pay her no mind, Effie ...

**Effie:** Pay her no mind? And you see how she almost knocked me down and didn't even bother to say "Scuse me, dog"? I ought to go right behind her and tell her off!

**Ma Roker** [*holding Effie back*]: Come 'long, child. Remember where we are – in church. And this is supposed to be a Quiet Time, a time to think over old sins, not commit new ones. [*Walks, leaning on a cane, and sits down centre, across from Hubert.*] My Lord coming soon, and I want to be ready to meet Him in the air.

**Effie spots Hubert as she settles next to Ma Roker.**

**Effie:** Well, well, well. When Hubert Livingstone finds the church door, the Lord must be coming for true.

**Ma Roker:** S-s-sh!

**Effie:** That's another crazy one. They should put him in Sandilands.

**Ma Roker** [*in a fierce whisper*]: Shush! He might hear you!

**Effie:** Who cares if he hears? This is my mouth and I don't have to pay licence for it. I could say anything I feel like saying. Who don't like it can lump it.

**Ma Roker:** All right, all right, just don' be too hard on poor Hubert. I knew him from he was a boy, and he never yet tell me the white o' my eyes black. He was always good mannered and he graduate from high school with four GCEs. Up until the accident he was the best carpenter 'round here.

**Effie:** Carpenter? That's all he was, carpenter?

**Ma Roker:** That's all Christ was!

**Effie:** Humph! I don't see the use of all that schooling, if at the end all he could do was pound nail. [*Pause*] And what was a big man like him doing falling off a roof?

**Ma Roker:** Troubles don't pick and choose who to come to. It coulda happened to anybody. [*Pause*] Since that fall, giddy spells been plaguing Hubert. Yet still he mannerly and know how to treat people.

**Effie:** One thing with you, Ma Roker, you could find something good to say about Lucifer himself.

**Ma Roker:** I guess if it wasn't for Lucifer, Christ wouldn't a had to be born. [*Laughs.*]

**Effie** [*joining in the laughter*]: Just what I said: you *must* say

something good, even about the devil. *[Pause]* I know this much, though, if it's education what bring Hubert to the state he's in, I don't care if my Janet and Junior *never* see the inside of a high school. What they don't know won't hurt them.

**Ma Roker:** I can't bother argue with you.

**Janet Small** *pokes her head around the street door and calls to Effie in a loud, excited whisper.*

**Janet:** Mummy! Mummy!

**Effie:** That's Janet now. *[To Janet]* What you want, child? Don't you see me in the House of the Lord?

**Janet:** You better come quick quick, Mummy! Junior gone throw rock and broke Miss Veesa shop window and Miss Veesa say she wan' see you *now*!

**Effie:** Hear that, Ma Roker? If it isn't one thing, it's the next! I can't even pray in peace. *[Rises.]* I'd better go find out who's lying on my child. *[Exits.]*

**Ma Roker** *[shaking her head]:* The devil busy in these last days, yes, Lord.

**Ma Roker** *bows her head, leans forward on her cane and prays silently. Hubert rises from his knees and looks slowly around the church. He sees the old lady praying. He continues his survey until his eyes come to rest on the crucifix hanging on the front of the pulpit. He stares at it. Ma Roker gets up stiffly from her seat. Hubert turns. They wave to each other. Ma Roker moves slowly to the street exit and leaves. Hubert*

*turns back to look at the crucifix and stares with increasing interest at it. Slowly, like one hypnotized, he approaches the pulpit, where he regards the crucifix with a countenance displaying wonder and joy. As the lights dim he turns, almost fully facing the audience.*

## Scene 2

The local police station, late afternoon,  
same day

*Furnishing consists of a desk, two chairs and a bench. There is a telephone on the desk and a hat rack near the door. The cap of a female officer hangs on the rack. The only officer on duty is Constable Biggit, here played as a female officer, but who could be a male officer. Biggit is young, and tends to be brash, but can be considerate at times. She likes to believe that she has become hardened to the usual offences that confront a police officer in an overcrowded neighbourhood; she thinks she has seen it all. At the moment she is whiling away an uneventful evening gossiping on the telephone. Prior to Revd Isaac Newton's entry, the length of the telephone conversation depends upon the actor and director. The conversation is completely spontaneous and improvised. (As far as decorum permits, the actor should speak about things that interest young adults of her age group.) There is a knock on the door. Revd Newton enters and stands looking increasingly impatient as Biggit carries on her conversation. He clears his throat.*

**Biggit** [*placing her hand over the mouthpiece*]: Can I help you, sir?

**Revd Newton**: I'm not the one to answer that, officer. I presume you *can* help. After all, that's your job. Anyway, to be brief ...

**Biggit**: Yes?

**Revd Newton**: I am Isaac Newton, pastor of the Little Church on Fig Road.

**Biggit**: And?

**Revd Newton**: Well, just over an hour ago, I went to my church to hold a special service. There I found the strangest thing had happened.

**Biggit** [*into the telephone*]: Be right with you, child Angie. [To **Revd Newton**, *hoping he will come to the point*] Go on, sir. You went to your church an hour ago. What happened then?

**Revd Newton**: You might not believe this, officer. In fact I find it hard to believe, myself.

**Biggit** [*becoming impatient*]: You find *what* hard to believe, Reverend?

**Revd Newton**: Someone stole the crucifix.

**Biggit** [*promptly, into the mouthpiece*]: Angie, I gotta go. Something *big* just turned up. About that other story – I'll give you the specifics later. Bye for now. [Hangs up the telephone. Then to **Revd Newton**] What was that, Reverend?

**Revd Newton**: I said someone ...



**Biggit:** ... stole the crucifix. That's what I thought I heard, but one of us must be cracking up – with all due respect, Reverend. It's impossible. I mean, who would be fool enough to steal from a church? It's sacrilege, and sacrilege is a serious offence!

**Revd Newton:** As it should be. *[Pause]* This has me upset, officer, very upset. *[Pause]* I've heard about break-ins in the area, which are to be expected if young men in particular spend all their spare time "hanging out on the blocks".

**Biggit** *[aside]*: That's where the Church should come in.

**Revd Newton:** What was that?

**Biggit:** Nothing, Reverend, nothing at all.

**Revd Newton:** Understand, officer, I don't want to get anyone into trouble, but there has got to be a limit! If the ungodly start stealing from churches, there's no limit to what they'll do.

**Biggit** *puts on her cap.*

**Biggit:** You don't have to worry, sir, you've got the law on your side. *[Pause]* Any idea *when* the cross was taken?

**Revd Newton:** None at all. We planned a Quiet Time for this morning and a special service for five this afternoon. You cannot imagine how it was – people in and out all day, the impossibility of keeping track of them, especially since we don't have a visitors' book ... But even if we *had* a register, not everyone would sign it.

**Biggit:** You're telling me you don't know the names of *any* of the persons who came to your church today?

**Revd Newton:** Well, I know the names of some. But that doesn't mean much.

**Biggit:** Who do you know was in your church today?

**Revd Newton** *[looking uncomfortable]*: Uh, one of the sisters in the choir said she saw Veesa Gaitor entering, but I wouldn't place much credit on that, seeing as how Miss Gaitor is not exactly popular with most of the ladies in the church. *[Pause]* Anyway, she came early in the day, quite early. The crucifix couldn't have been moved then, otherwise someone would've raised the alarm long before now.

**Biggit** *collects a notebook, pen and flashlight from the desk drawer.*

**Biggit:** Still, it's a start, and we must have something to go on, mustn't we? *[Pause]* You know where this Miss Gaitor lives?

**Revd Newton:** Not personally. Someone in the congregation who's a customer of hers should be able to tell us where her shop is.

**Biggit:** Good. The car's out front, Reverend. Let's go find your thief.

*They exit. Lights dim.*

## Scene 3

### Hubert's room, 8.00 pm the same day

*The room is simply furnished with a low cot, a rocking chair, a table on which are a few personal effects and toiletry items, and another table near the exit, on which is a one-burner kerosene stove. **Hubert** places a pot, which contains the first stage of supper, on the stove. As he works, he sings. He covers the pot, adjusts the flame, crosses to a bedside table and picks up his pipe, still singing. He then goes over to the chair, sits and begins filling his pipe. These actions last for the duration of the song.*

**Hubert** [singing]: I'm feeling good,  
I'm feeling good,  
I'm feeling good, hallelujah!  
I am feeling good.

I know the Lord,  
I know the Lord,  
I know the Lord, hallelujah!  
Now I know the Lord.

*There is a knock at the door. **Hubert** stops to listen.*

**Hubert:** Wonder who that could be this time of night.

*There is a louder **knock**.*

**Hubert:** Who ... who ... that is? [**Knock**] Must be someone in plenty trouble. All right, I'm coming!

**Hubert** *hobbles to the door and cracks it open.*

**Biggit** *pushes it wide open and enters imposingly.*

**Hubert** *talks to cover his nervousness and curiosity at the visit. **Biggit** saunters around the room, taking in its contents.*

**Hubert:** Oh, it's you, constable, come in, come right on in. Glad to see you, yes indeed. Was just catching a smoke before getting supper for me and Trixie. [Notices **Biggit**'s perplexity.] Trixie's my dog, constable, and a good one too. Don't mind she's just a potcake – she can watch this house better than any pedigree, and that's a fact. We understand one another, Trixie and me, 'cause it ain' just now I had her, you know. I got her when she was a small little puppy, long before I had that fall and was sick so bad. You remember the fall, hey, constable? I guess not. You probably were a child in school then. I could show you the mark left when the doctor stitched back my skull. [Parts his hair to show his scalp, but **Biggit** is too busy looking around to notice.] Trixie sure is fine



company, constable, fine company. [*Goes to the stove, raises the lid off the pot and stirs the contents.*] If you want to have some supper, you welcome to. Isn't often we get visitors. [*Laughs.*] Isn't much, but it's enough for three. Now, when I had a steady job ...

**Biggit** stops walking around and looks fixedly at Hubert.

**Biggit:** Why did you do it?

**Hubert:** Eh? What you say, constable?

**Biggit:** I asked why you did it.

**Hubert:** I don't rightly know, constable.

**Biggit:** Aha! You admit it.

**Hubert:** Why not? I couldn't help what happened. As the old folks say, "Misfortune never throw cloud" – one minute I was nailing wood, then *wham!* Next thing I knew, they were wheeling me into the operating room. I been laid up in hospital for months. When I think 'bout all them bandages ...

**Biggit:** Hubert, you still have not answered my question.

**Hubert:** You asked me why I fell.

**Biggit:** No, I asked you why you took the crucifix out of the Little Church.

**Hubert:** Crucifix? Me? Now, really, constable ...

**Biggit:** It was stolen from the Little Church on Fig Road today. Don't say you had nothing to do with it.

Reverend Newton came to the station this evening and said when he went to the church this afternoon the crucifix was missing.

**Hubert:** And he thinks I took it.

**Biggit:** I'm coming to that. [*Pause*] Reverend Newton and I spoke with persons who had gone to that church today. Miss Gaitor said she left Mrs Effie Small there. Mrs Small said she left you and Mrs Roker there. When I spoke with Mrs Roker, she admitted she left you there alone. She also said later you passed her porch on your way home [*Pauses for effect.*] walking with a cane. Hubert, do you normally use a cane?

**Hubert:** Not normally.

**Biggit:** Aha! What was interesting was that Mrs Roker said the light was dim, but she thought the cane gleamed somehow. [*Pause*] If you recall, the missing crucifix is made of silver, overlaid with gold, and gold glitters. [*Pause*] So where is it?

**Hubert:** I don't know. I *do* know I don't have it.

**Biggit:** Go get it this minute! [**Hubert** looks surprised and does not move.] Perhaps you had one of your spells and took the crucifix while you were not quite yourself.

**Hubert** [*firmly*]: I am not crazy and I am not a thief. I never stole before and I'm not about to start now.

**Biggit:** Think hard. Try to remember what you *might* have done. If you're guilty, you could be in serious trouble, but if you confess I might be able



to make a plea on your behalf.

**Hubert** [*quietly*]: I do not have the crucifix.

**Biggit**: Then let me see the cane you walked with.

**Hubert** *hesitates for a second then goes to his cot, raises the mattress and removes a bamboo cane from under it. It is slender and honey-dappled, a lovely but tough thing.*

**Biggit** [*stroking the cane*]: Doesn't look like a cross to me.  
Where'd you get it?

**Hubert**: I can't tell you.

**Biggit**: Can't or won't?

*Silence.*

**Biggit**: All right, put on something warm, we're going.

**Hubert**: Where?

**Biggit**: I can't tell you that.

**Hubert**: Can't or won't?

*They laugh. Hubert puts on a shabby sweater and turns off the stove.*

**Hubert**: Could I have the cane back now?

**Biggit** *looks appraisingly from Hubert to the cane.*

**Biggit**: Not for the time being. I'll take it with us. It might come in handy. [*Motions to the door.*] You first.

**Hubert** *precedes Biggit from the room. Lights dim.*

## Scene 4

The local police station, ten minutes later

**Hubert and Biggit** enter to find **Ma Roker** seated on the bench. **Hubert** nods to her.

**Biggit:** Good evening, Mrs Roker. We shouldn't be long clearing this matter up. [*Points Hubert to the bench.*] Please sit.

**Hubert** sits beside **Ma Roker**. **Biggit** walks around, using the bamboo cane as a walking stick.

**Biggit:** Mrs Roker, do you think this could have been what you saw Hubert walking with earlier?

**Ma Roker:** It might well be. Sure is a pretty piece o' wood. It put me in mind o' the cane the schoolmaster in Exuma used to beat with, when I was a child.

**Hubert** looks uncomfortable but **Biggit** does not notice this.

**Biggit:** Thank you, ma'am.

**Ma Roker:** If you don' mind me asking, constable, what this stick have to do with the missing cross?

**Biggit:** I don't know yet. [*Pause*] Hubert, you said you didn't move the cross.

**Hubert:** As God is my Judge!

**Biggit:** If you didn't move the cross, the question is, who did?

*Sounds of raised voices offstage. Veesa sweeps in, followed by Effie.*

**Veesa:** Good evening, constable, I have come to lodge a complaint against this woman.

**Effie:** Who you calling "this woman"?

**Veesa:** This serpent, then.

*Effie dashes towards Veesa, but Biggit comes between them.*

**Effie:** Let me get at her! Let me pull them dead people hair off her head!

**Biggit:** Ladies, calm yourselves.

**Effie:** Calling me "this woman" and "serpent". You ... you Hecate!

**Veesa:** You will live to regret the hour and minute you called me names. [*Darts at Effie. Biggit forces her away.*] Trash!

**Effie:** I'll tell you where to find trash. Humph! Just because you have that one little house and piece o' shop, you believe you better than other people. Let me tell you one thing, Miss Nix. I am more woman than you will ever be. Putting on airs like a blasted ...

**Biggit:** I said calm down! Remember where you are. [*Pauses, waiting for silence.*] Now, Miss Gaitor, I saw you earlier today and at the time you didn't make any complaint against Mrs Small.

**Veesa:** That was because out of the goodness of my heart I was trying to give this Jezebel a chance.

**Biggit prevents Effie from reaching Veesa.**

**Veesa:** I was willing to settle out of court, but now I know better.

**Effie:** Settle what? Settle what? I wouldn't spit on you, much less talk 'bout settle ...

**Biggit:** Quiet! [*Effie subsides.*] Miss Gaitor, tell us what happened.

**Veesa:** Well, officer, I went to church for a few minutes this morning. I scarcely reached home when I heard *whop* and the sound of glass breaking. I rushed outside just in time to see the back of her little boy's heels flying down the road. And there in my beauty parlour was a rock bigger than her head. Her boy ran away and left my shop window all smashed up. That is my complaint.

**Biggit:** How do you know it was Mrs Small's son who threw the stone?

**Effie:** Yeah, how you know? More than Junior was there. At least that's what he tell me. How you know for sure Junior broke your window?

**Veesa:** Officer, I know because the children who were there said he threw the rock that broke the ...

**Effie:** Lord, give me faith! I always thought you had a bad mind against me and mine; now I'm sure. You would do anything to get at us!

**Veesa:** I wouldn't lower myself. [*To Biggit*] Officer, when I sent for her to see about repairing the damage, you know what she said?

**Effie:** What I say? What I say?

**Biggit:** Listen and you will hear.

**Veesa:** That poor excuse for a mother told me I was lying on her child, and she would rather drop dead than give me one red copper. [*Pause*] It's not like I didn't give her a chance, officer. She had all afternoon to make up her mind. I'm going to have to make up her mind for her.

**Biggit turns to Effie.**

**Biggit:** So that's how it went.

**Effie looks embarrassed.**



**Ma Roker:** Effie, give right where right is due. In the church, even before you knew the full story you were sure someone was lying on Junior. Remember the Lord made ugly, but He don' love it.

**Effie:** OK, constable, this is the way it went. Janet came for me at the church and I went straight home. When I reached there, I meet Junior crying. I asked him what happened and he said a boy threw a rock and broke her window then tried to pin the blame on him. That's when the blood rise up in me and I said I wasn't paying for what my child didn't do. [*Sobs.*]

**Biggit:** A mistake is a mistake. Why would your boy have to lie?

*Effie gains control of herself.*

**Effie:** As good a mother as I've been to him, that boy look like he wan' bring down troubles on my head. After I fall down and get up with them.

**Biggit:** Then you're willing to pay for the damages.

**Effie** [*again indignant*]: Not me! I willing to whale Junior behind so much he wouldn't be able to sit on it. I would've beat him already, but I couldn't find my cane.

**Ma Roker** *holds out the bamboo cane.*

**Ma Roker:** So this is yours.

**Effie** [*staring at the cane*]: Where you get it?

**Biggit:** Hubert, you might as well tell us how you got the cane. We're bound to find out.

**Hubert** [*with reluctance*]: A boy gave it to me. [*Pause*] I was in church till about noon. Then I went visiting friends and a few family. It was getting on to evening when I started for home ...

**Biggit:** Come to the point, we don't have all night.

**Hubert:** Well, I met this little boy and he looked scared and had this cane in his hand. When I asked what was wrong, he told me he was in trouble and asked me to keep the cane.

**Effie:** And you didn' think something was fishy about that?

**Biggit:** I'll ask the questions. [*To Hubert*] Why didn't you tell me this before?

**Hubert:** He said he did something bad and when his mother found out, she'd kill him with beating; that she wouldn't be vexed for what he did, but because others saw him do it ...

**Ma Roker:** Yes. "What eye don' see, mouth don' talk."

**Hubert:** I was sorry for him. Then when I heard 'bout someone taking the cross from the church, well, I thought maybe that was what he'd done wrong. But I didn't want to cast suspicion on him, so I kept quiet.

**Effie:** Wait till I lay my hand on Junior! Like I ever cloak him in badness!

**Biggit:** Mrs Small, if you so much as shout at that boy, I'll have you up on cruelty and child abuse charges. I suggest that from now on you concentrate on bringing up your children properly, instead of harbouring grudges against other people.

**Veesa:** This is all a waste of time, officer. I'm going home.

**Biggit:** What about the charges?

**Veesa:** That boy already has enough problems, and I'd be surprised if she [*Pointing at Effie*] would listen to sense. I'm gone. Goodnight. [*Struts out.*]

**Ma Roker**

**Hubert**

**Biggit**

} : Goodnight.

**Effie:** Constable, could I leave now too?

**Biggit:** Just remember what I said – no abuse!

**Effie** [*somewhat cowed*]: Goodnight, all. [*Exits.*]

**Ma Roker**

**Hubert**

**Biggit**

} : Goodnight.

**Ma Roker:** All that worriation and no cross in sight.

*The telephone rings. Biggit lifts the receiver.*

**Biggit:** Hello. Yes, Constable Biggit speaking ... Who? Oh,

good evening to you too, Reverend ... Fine, thank you. Sorry I can't make a positive report on the whereabouts of the crucifix ... What? ... It has? ... How? ... Where? ... Good. *Very* good ... I'm glad too. To think that I almost arrested an innocent man ... Yes, it certainly *does* go to show ... Right. And please tell her thanks for me too ... I'll pass it on ... Right ... Goodnight to you too, Reverend, and a happy Easter! [*Hangs up the telephone.*] That's that. Reverend Newton wishes you all a blessed Easter.

**Ma Roker:** What else did he have to say?

**Biggit:** The crucifix is back in the church.

**Hubert:** After all that fussing and mistrusting.

**Biggit:** I apologize, Mr Hubert, for giving you such a hard time.

**Hubert:** Apology accepted. Why would I want to steal the cross? Christ would still get crucified every day.

**Ma Roker:** I'm so glad things turned out well, Hubert. I wouldn't want to be the cause o' you coming to harm. [*Pause*] Constable, how did the cross get stolen?

**Biggit:** It wasn't stolen.

**Hubert:** Fancy that.

**Biggit:** Reverend said the cleaning woman left polishing the crucifix too late. When she was finished dusting, people were already coming in. She waited until the church was empty then took the crucifix, planning to polish it at home and bring it



back for the five o'clock service.

**Hubert:** Why didn't she explain that to the Reverend?

**Biggit:** Because she never saw him. He came back to the church, saw the crucifix was missing, locked the door and came here to the station. While he was here, the woman went to re-hang the crucifix but she couldn't get in. So she decided to bring it to tomorrow's vigil. She felt that was a reasonable thing to do – until she heard a neighbour talking about how Mr Hubert was arrested on suspicion of crucifix theft. That's why she turned it in tonight.

**Ma Roker:** Thank You, Jesus!

**Hubert:** You can say that again!

**Ma Roker:** Thank You, Jesus!

**Biggit and Hubert** laugh. **Ma Roker** smiles.

**Biggit:** All this time wasted for nothing.

**Ma Roker:** I wouldn't say that. Effie Mae might be a changed woman for Easter.

**Biggit:** If okras could grow on tamarind trees! [*Glances at her watch.*] Ten already! I'd better be taking you two home. [*Helps Ma Roker up.*] Come, Mrs Roker. Mr Hubert, I'll drop Mrs Roker off first, then you on the way back.

**Hubert:** Trixie must be starving by now.

**Biggit:** Trixie? ... Oh, yes, your dog. Sorry about that.

**Ma Roker and Hubert** exit. **Biggit** is about to follow when the **telephone rings**.

**Biggit:** Hey, Angie ... Yes, girl, is me ... Uh huh, I was busy-busy up until a minute ago, but things should be easing off now ... Uh huh ... Look, I gotta go! I'll call you when I get back! ... Right. Bye for now. [*Exits.*]

*Lights dim. Blackout.*



# *Master Thief*

**(Originally written as a radio drama and  
adapted from "Jack and the King", a  
Euro-Bahamian folktale)**

### **Characters**

**Currie Crosbin** a cobbler

**Jack Crosbin** Currie's youngest son

**Bulgen** a butcher

**Patches Quiltum** a tax collector for the king

**Captain of the Palace Guards**

**Palace Guards**

**King Reynault**

**Queen Imogen**

## *Scene 1*

### **Inside Currie Crosbin's cobbler shop, one afternoon**

*A tall cupboard stands upstage, with a blue leather jerkin (sleeveless jacket) hanging from it on a nail. There is a counter in front of the cupboard. On one end of it is a pile of mended shoes, including a woman's golden shoe; at the other end is a cash box. There is a workbench and a bench centre stage. **Currie** and **Jack** are seated on the bench, mending shoes.*

**Currie:** Jack, now that your brothers have gone on their own – Tom as a tailor and Dick as a carpenter – you'll be taking over this business.

**Jack:** Suppose I don't want to mend other people's shoes the rest of my life.

**Currie:** Suppose the sun don't rise tomorrow. Look, this is a chance to make a steady living with a service everyone needs. Even the poorest serf's got to clothe himself against the weather. He'll need a

place to shelter and rest himself, so he'll have to have a house. And he's got to protect his feet from rough ground and the elements, so he'll have to have shoes – which is where you come in. We Crosbins will make the clothes, build the houses and shoe the feet. Talk about job security!

**Jack:** It's just not fair, Papa.

**Currie:** What's not fair?

**Jack:** The way you've decided what I should be. Before Dick and Tom went to learn trades you sat each of them down and asked them what they wanted to be, but not once did you ask me. Not once.

**Currie:** I didn't think I needed to. I'm your father and you're only thirteen, a minor. I've been teaching you my trade for years. I guess I took it for granted you'd take over from me. Remember, me mending shoes put clothes on your back, food in your belly and gave you a place to sleep.

**Jack:** Just barely, Papa. You know that. Look at all these shoes piled up here, the property of people who can pay to collect them, yet won't. *[Pause]* That golden slipper, for instance. You fixed it over a year ago, yet the owner has still to collect it!

**Currie:** She probably forgot.

**Jack:** Yeah. Seems like only the rich can afford to forget! Whether we make money or not, let us just once miss paying the king's rent for this hole and we'd wind up in his dungeon. Besides which we have to pay Patches ...

**Currie:** Mr Patches, to you. Watch your manners.

**Jack:** Yeah. We have to pay Mr Patches something he calls a Sudden Tax for a service we don't even get.

**Currie:** It's not so much the money. What I find hard to live with is the way Patches goes all out to grab every penny I earn ...

**Jack:** He picks on you, doesn't he, Papa. Why's that?

**Currie:** ... to benefit a wastrel who hunts for fun and parties as if his life depended on it. *[Pause]* Still, I suppose it's not for me to question what the king does.

**Jack:** I don't see why not.

**Currie:** *[Laughs.]* It's those books the monks have been letting you read at the monastery. I knew once they got you into books you'd start thinking strange thoughts. *[Pause]* Not that I don't appreciate what they did for me when I was your age. You realize they almost got me to join their order?

**Jack:** Why didn't you?

**Currie:** Well, one day at a christening, Patches introduced me to the most glorious creature I ever set eyes on, and that was that! After I married your mother and we started having children, I realized a man can't feed his family on books.

**Jack:** Why not?

**Currie:** Questions, questions, questions. It's just the way things are.



**Jack:** So we'll change the way things are.

**Currie:** [*Laughs again.*] Young boy's dreams! You might find this hard to believe, son, but when I was your age I too had dreams. [*Pause*] Enough of that. All right, Master Jack Crosbin, what do you want to be when you grow up?

**Jack:** A thief.

**Currie:** You must be joking.

**Jack:** I'm as serious as the plague.

**Currie:** If your mother – God rest the dead! – could hear you, she'd roll over in her grave. To think that we gave life to someone who wants to be a common thief!

**Jack:** Not *common*, Papa, *master*. Master thief. I've decided to turn things around for you and others in this village.

**Currie:** Talk sense, boy. If you wanted to wash your hair, would you empty a pot of hot water over your head?

**Jack:** 'Course not! That would be not only stupid, but dangerous!

**Currie:** A career as a thief is dangerous too! [*Pause*] Listen, we'll put this to the test... [*Opens the cash box, removes a five-pound note and closes the box.*] Here's my last five-pound note. Go to Bulgen's shop down the road and bring back half a cow *and* this money. You want to be a master thief, then *master* that!

**Jack:** Will do. [*Pause*] I'll just take this pencil and pretty up your five pounds with "ten". [*Writes on the banknote.*] See ya! [*Exits, slamming the door behind him.*]

**Currie:** Manda, tell me where we went wrong.

*Lights dim.*

## Scene 2

### The same place, later that afternoon

**Currie and Jack** are mending footwear at the workbench.

**Currie:** Jack, I never thought you'd bring me to shame.

**Jack:** But Papa, I just did like you told me. I took your five pounds to Mr Bulgen's shop for half a cow and brought back half a cow and the money.

**Currie:** That was just a test to show you how risky, silly and wicked it would be to earn a living as a thief. I didn't expect you to rob anyone, least of all a hard-working man like Bulgen. *[Pause]* How did you pull off that scam, anyway?

**Jack:** Well, I went to Mr Bulgen's shop and said "Good morning" ...

**Currie:** Fine. You showed manners ...

**Jack:** Then I told Mr Bulgen what you'd sent me for. When he went in back to get it, I took a five-

pound note from his cash box, wrote "ten" on it and put it back. Then when he came back, I took the meat and said "Thanks", and ...

**Currie** *[incredulous]*: You left?

**Jack:** I would've done, except Mr Bulgen started raising one fuss ...



**Bulgen:** Hey you, Crosbin boy, stop! You ain' paid me for that meat!

**Jack:** Yes, I did.

**Bulgen:** Did not!

**Jack:** Did too! *[Rummages in his pocket.]* In my pocket, see, I have this five-pound note with "ten" on it. I came here with two of these, each marked "ten". I gave you one and kept the other.

**Bulgen:** Malnourished rat, you never give me nothing! *[Grips Jack by an ear.]* I'm taking you straight to your pa.

**Jack** *[pretending to weep]*: Ow! Ow! Leggo my ear! Ow! ... Ow! ... Ow! You're hurting me! I'll tell Papa you tried to cheat me! Ow! ... Ow! ... Ow!

**Bulgen:** Cut out the blubbering, you lying ounce of flesh! I'll look in my cash box and if I see a five-pound note like you say, you can have the meat. If not ... *[Opens his cash box and examines the notes inside.]* Well I'll be a ...! Appears there is a five-pound note with "ten" on it. *[Grudgingly]* Take the meat

and get the hell outta here and don' be in no hurry to come back!



**Currie:** You scoundrel, you tricked a simple man out of his goods *and* his money!

**Jack:** Sorry, Papa, I didn't mean to. I just wanted to please you.

**Currie:** You can please me now by going right back to Bulgen to explain this mess and pay him for his meat. [Pause] Jack, if you forget everything I ever tried to teach you, remember this: the most precious thing a man can own is his reputation.

*Offstage sounds of cartwheels and a donkey braying. The door opens. Patches Quiltum enters.*

**Patches:** The Honourable Patches Quiltum at your service!

**Jack:** Oh no, Mr Patches, you were here last week. The rent's not due for another three weeks!

**Patches:** Shut up, twerp! Children should be seen and not heard.

**Currie:** The boy's right, Patches. I *did* pay rent last week.

**Patches:** *This week* His Majesty has dispatched a decree mandating payment of a five-pound Sudden Tax in honour of the royal birthday, day after tomorrow. You may cough up yours now, Crosbin.

**Currie:** But ... But ... I was about to pay ...

**Patches:** But me no buts, Crosbin. Dora and me's got one more stop to make before heading back to the Palace. She's hungry and tired. In such a state she might well kick in your shop door, which would cause you more expense. [Pause] Mayhaps you'd rather lose your business licence and share the royal dungeon with this fast-mouth son of yours?

**Currie** removes a five-pound note from his cash box and passes it to **Patches**.

**Currie:** Take it, for all the good it'll do you!

**Patches:** A man's got to do what a man's got to do, especially when he's got a living wife! Ta ta! [Exits.]

**Jack:** Papa, what did he mean by that?

**Currie:** That he's got to do his job.

**Jack:** Not that! About the living wife.

**Currie:** All right, well, it's like this. That girl Patches introduced me to some years ago at a christening was your mother, Manda. I ended up marrying her without knowing Patches had his eyes on her. He never forgave me, especially when she died giving birth to you.

**Jack:** Sorry, Papa.

**Currie:** Manda's death wasn't your fault. And you remind



me of her in so many ways, it's like she's still alive. [Pause] Guess that ends our chance to pay Bulgen.

**Jack:** I wouldn't be too sure about that. [*Opens the cupboard.*] I'll be needing this [*Takes out a carrot.*] and this! [*Snatches up the golden shoe.*]

**Currie:** What do you need a carrot and that slipper for?

**Jack:** Can't say.

**Currie:** Where're you going?

**Jack:** Can't say. Bye!

**Currie** removes the jerkin from the cupboard and hands it to **Jack**.

**Currie:** At least put on your jerkin – draft's falling!

**Jack** hurriedly puts the jerkin on and exits.

**Currie:** Manda, pray for us.

*Lights dim.*

## Scene 3

**On the king's highway, in a rural area,  
late afternoon**

**Patches Quiltum** is driving a donkey cart. **Sounds of hoofs and cartwheels** are audible.

**Patches:** Dora, dear, today will be our day of reckoning, I can feel it. When His Majesty sees what I've collected, he'll be sure to reward me. Not that every household gave, mind you. That beast Bulgen insisted some boy robbed him, without giving any proof! Imagine me telling His Majesty such a story. He'd surely think I'd filched the money. I'll just report that Bulgen will pay next week. [Pause] Talk about filching, Dora, it's just as well the sun's still out, though it's getting late. This highway's got more curves than boiled spaghetti! With so many bushes both sides, a person could fear for his life. [Pause] Turn's coming up now, Dora. Easy, girl, slow like ... As I

was saying, a person could well fear for his ... Oh, oh ... Something up ahead there mid-road. Well, well, if it isn't a golden slipper. Looks just the size to fit my Maybelline! Problem is there's only one slipper, while Maybelline's got two feet. So that, as they say, is that. *[Pause]* Yes, Dora, today will be our day of reckoning. His Majesty's sure to make me a knight. *[In a suitably lofty tone]* "Arise, Sir Patches Quiltum!" From henceforth everyone will address Maybelline as "Lady Maybelline Quiltum". Of course we'll have to move from the servants' quarters into a wonderful mansion with a wonderful garden out front, a wonderful meadow out back, and our very own servants. No longer will I have to collect royal rents and Sudden Taxes – that will devolve to a lesser stipendiary. And Dora, dear, I shall make you honorary head of the equine entourage that will propel our carriage. *[Growing more transported by the gleam of his vision]* No longer will you have to hee-haw for a bite to eat. And you're not going to drop dead from exhaustion, as did your predecessor. In the summer you'll feed on the best oats, mixed with sweet grass from our very own meadow. And, when the winds of winter blow, you'll eat hay in your personal stall in our very own barn. *[Pause]* Another turn, girl. Slow like. *[Pause]* Aha, what's this? Slipper number two, a sure match for the one we saw earlier. W-h-o-a there, Dora girl! W-h-o-a!

***Sounds of hoofs and cartwheels stop.***

**Patches:** I can see Maybelline in her fancy dress and golden slippers. *[Pause]* Dora, wait here like a good donkey whilst I pick up this slipper and go back down the road for the other one. Remember, the best treats come to them that wait! *[Exits the way he came in.]*

**Jack** emerges from behind a tree and approaches the cart.

**Jack:** Dora, dear, I've brought your treat, a juicy carrot! *[Holds out a carrot.]* Good girl. Eat while we move right along ... *[Gets into the cart and picks up the reins.]* Giddy-up, girl! Giddy-up!

**Jack** exits with the cart. **Patches** enters from the opposite side.

**Patches:** Hey, stop! Stop in the name of the king! Stop! ... Oh no! Oh! Oh! Oh! ... What'll I tell the king?

*Lights dim.*

## Scene 4

**The Throne Room inside the Palace, early evening  
the same day**

**King Reynault** *is seated on the throne. A Palace Guard stands at the entrance of the room. Offstage fanfare of trumpets. A dishevelled Patches enters.*

**Guard:** God save the king!

**King:** Approach, Officer Quiltum. *[Pause]* It has come to our attention that an hour ago your driver-less donkey with its money-less cart showed up at the Palace gates. Now you appear, long overdue, looking as if you have been through a tornado. Explain this dereliction of duty!

**Patches:** Well, I ... Your Majesty, there were extenuating circumstances.

**King:** There had better be! *[Pause]* Well?

**Patches:** Sire, I uh ... I uh ...

As I drove along the highway,  
Bearing money bags for thee,  
Behold, from out of the forest  
Sprang a dreadful enemy.

He was as tall and thin as a flagpole,  
Had arms that were ten feet long,  
A mouth as wide as the gates of hell,  
And teeth like two-foot prongs.

He lunged into the money cart  
With a snarling, angry sound,  
Snatched the bridle from my hands  
Then threw me to the ground.

I fell into a stupor  
While with a rod he laid  
Blows on the beast that pulled the cart  
And on it rode away.

**King:** Officer Quiltum, in a normal situation your story would be considered beyond belief, but this is not a normal situation. *[Pause]* We expect you know the consequences to you and your family were we to discover that you have lied to us.

**Patches:** Yes, Your Majesty.

**King:** Good. We have also been informed that to date your service has been exemplary.

**Patches:** Thank you, Your Majesty.

**King** *[pacing up and down]:* Let us see ... Since someone has taken what rightfully belongs to us, we shall give him leeway to hang himself. *[Pause]* Officer Quiltum, we direct you to make this proclamation



public: we challenge the craven criminal who stole our funds to accomplish two more thefts. If he performs both, he will become king. *[Pause]* Why look so alarmed? Surely you don't expect anyone – not even a mal-formed giant – to be so foolhardy as to set foot on these premises with our guards all around! *[Pause]* The first challenge will be to steal our birthday cake. We shall issue the second challenge if the dastardly devil succeeds in accomplishing the first – an unlikely event. See to it!

**Patches:** As you wish, Your Majesty. *[Retreats a few steps backwards, respectfully, then turns and exits.]*

**King:** Guard, take this message to your captain. Tell him he is to increase the number of guards at all entrances and exits of the Palace, and he must inform everyone to be on the lookout for a scrawny giant!

**Guard:** Yes, Your Majesty. *[Marches out.]*

**King** *[reciting]:* “Will you walk into my parlour?” said the spider to the fly ...” *[Laughs.]*

*Lights dim.*

## Scene 5

### Inside Currie Crosbin's cobbler shop, at midday the following day

*Currie and Jack are mending footwear at the workbench.*

**Currie:** Jack, tell me this village is the same today as it was yesterday.

**Jack:** Papa, this village is the same today as it was yesterday.

**Currie:** Be serious for once, boy! *[Pause]* Something strange is going on. This morning I passed Bulgen's shop and he smiled at me and wished me good morning. Considering what we did to him, you'd think he'd be very angry, but no – not only did he smile and speak, he came out and shook me by the hand without a word.

**Jack:** That was strange.

**Currie:** That's not all. Everyone else in the village seemed

cheerful, somehow. Smiling as if St Nicholas was here yesterday instead of Patches Quiltum.

**Jack:** And no one gave a reason?

**Currie:** Not a soul. But listen to this: strangest of all was when Patches made it known in the square that someone stole his money cart yesterday. And now the king has challenged the thief to steal the royal birthday cake!

**Jack:** He has?

**Currie:** Believe it or not.

**Jack:** And if the thief is successful?

**Currie:** He probably won't be, but just in case the impossible happens, the king will decree another challenge. Should the thief succeed with that, he wins the throne!

**Jack:** The older adults get, the more addled their brains become.

**Currie:** I don't trust this happiness bug. You never know what evil it'll bring.

**Jack:** Or what good. *[Pause]* I suppose this cake test is to get the thief to show himself.

**Currie:** But why are people so happy?

**Jack:** Maybe they like how one thief is stealing from another. Papa, I've got an errand to run, but first things first. *[Removes an apple from the cupboard.]*

**Currie:** Boy, you have a good appetite today! You came in late last night, got up late this morning, ate like a horse and now an apple! And it's only midday.

**Jack** *removes his jerkin from the nail on the cupboard and puts it on.*

**Jack:** You know what they say about an apple a day ... I'm off!

**Currie:** Not only is your appetite better, you even put your jerkin on without me telling you.

*Offstage sound of cartwheels and of Patches Quiltum's voice, reining in the donkey.*

**Jack:** See ya!

**Jack** *goes to the door. Before he can open it, Patches pushes it open and enters.*

**Patches:** Oh ... you.

**Jack:** Oh you, too, sir. *[Exits.]*

**Patches** *stares after Jack.*

**Patches:** Good afternoon, Currie.

**Currie:** More mystery – Patches wishes me good afternoon and calls me by my first name for the first time since I married Manda.

**Patches:** Let bygones be bygones. *[Pause]* That's a nice jerkin your son's wearing.

**Currie** *[warming to the compliment]:* Made it himself. He's clever that way.

**Patches:** Must have taken after his mother.

*Moment of silence.*

**Patches:** That jerkin looks familiar, somehow.

**Currie:** It should. I make him wear it often enough. Still, it's one of a kind, especially being blue. *[Pause]* Since when did you get interested in Jack and his clothes?

**Patches:** Since he almost knocked me over going out of the door, without so much as a "beg your pardon".

**Currie:** If you've come to collect another Sudden Tax, you'll have to throw me into the dungeon.

**Patches:** No tax, Currie, no tax. *[Pause]* You heard about the robbery?

**Currie:** Couldn't help but hear. It's the talk of the village. What I don't understand is where you were when the thief was driving off with the money.

**Patches:** Currie, I'm telling you this in the strictest confidence – I was further down the road, looking for a slipper.

**Currie:** You did say a *slipper* ...

**Patches:** Yes, golden. It's a bit embarrassing. You see, Dora and me came across this slipper in the middle of the road and I ignored it. Then around the next bend we came across the other one. I couldn't help it, Currie, I ran back to get the first, so I could give them both to Maybelline ...

**Currie:** I would've done the same for ...

**Patches:** I really felt like a fool when I couldn't find that first slipper. *[Pause]* You know what that means.

**Currie** *[uneasily]*: I do?

**Patches:** It means the thief was lying in wait, and when I passed by the first slipper, he picked it up, cut through the bushes and put it mid-road again, where he knew I was going to see it.

**Currie:** You told this to the king?

**Patches:** I might act the fool once in my life, but I'm not crazy! No, I did not tell the king. He wouldn't have believed me, anyway. I made up a story. *[Pause]* Currie, where were you late yesterday afternoon?

**Currie:** This sounds like the Inquisition. I was right here till closing time at sunset.

**Patches:** I suppose someone can vouch for that?

**Currie** *[opening the cash box]*: Look! It's empty, thanks to you!

**Patches:** I shouldn't suspect you, Currie, really I shouldn't. Anyway, if you *had* committed the felony you wouldn't be stupid enough to keep the funds there. *[Pause]* And, you're too well behaved to be a thief. *[Pause]* By the way, while I was delivering the proclamation, I sensed a feeling in the air that wasn't there yesterday, a cautiously happy feeling. Everyone seemed to have it – except you, of course, being your usual grumpy self. *[Pause]*



Mayhaps their cash boxes were full.

**Currie** [*angrily*]: Amazing! Patches, you were born in this village and grew up here. You know the people, yet you stand there and accuse them of being thieves. Get out of this shop before I throw you out!

**Patches**: Calm down, Currie, calm down. Circumstances change, people change. I apologize, but I bet no one else in this place would open his cash box like you did for me to inspect. [*Pause*] Eureka, that's it! That is it!

**Currie**: What is what?

**Patches**: I've just remembered why your son's jerkin looked familiar. Yesterday when I heard Dora start up again and looked her way, from a distance I saw the back of the person driving the cart. He was wearing a blue jerkin. [*Pause*] Currie, when I came in just now, your son was leaving. A life depends on your answer to this question: Where was he going?

**Currie**: How would I know? I'm only his papa.

**Patches**: Only his papa! [*Breaks into laughter that becomes almost hysterical.*]

*Lights dim.*

## Scene 6

### The parapet of the Palace, early afternoon the same day

*The Captain of the Guards is standing talking to a Guard.*

**Captain**: Guard, you say a lad with a homemade box-cart has brought an apple as a birthday gift for the king. How touching – one apple for the owner of all the fruit-bearing trees in the kingdom! Hhmm. If the youth leaves the apple with us, it will spoil. But if any of us leaves his station to take the apple to the kitchen, the giant might take advantage to strike. [*Pause*] There's nothing for it but to direct the boy to take the apple to the kitchen. Talk about devotion! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

*Lights dim.*

## Scene 7

### The Throne Room inside the Palace, mid-afternoon the same day

*Offstage fanfare of trumpets. King Reynault is seated on the throne. The Captain of the Palace Guards enters and stands in front of him.*

**King:** Captain, it has come to our attention that the royal birthday cake and its candles have disappeared from the kitchen.

**Captain:** It *has*? I mean, yes, Your Majesty.

**King:** You must have arranged for it to be removed and placed in safekeeping.

**Captain:** No, Your Majesty.

**King:** You should have done, nitwit! *[Pause]* Now report the identities of all those who have visited the Palace today, since early this morning.

**Captain:** Yes, Your Majesty. Apart from the usual

tradespersons and personnel involved with tomorrow's birthday ball, no one of significance entered under my supervision, and I've been on the walls all day.

**King:** Captain, clarify what you mean by "no one of significance".

**Captain:** No giant of a linear formation with a hellish mouth, ten-foot-long arms and teeth like two-foot prongs, Your Majesty.

**King:** Excellent memory, captain. Report now on the "insignificant" visitors.

**Captain:** There was only one, sir – a mere boy with an apple as a gift for you.

**King:** *[dryly]*: I suppose I should be touched by the thought. *[Voice rising]* But did it not seem suspicious to you that a boy would show up for such a purpose with something so paltry?

**Captain:** I didn't see the youth myself, sire, but from the guard's description he seemed harmless. Then I thought such a display of devotion from a young subject would please you, hence my granting of permission to let the boy in, apple, box-cart and all.

**King:** *Box-cart! Box-cart!* You allowed ingress to an individual with the flimsiest of excuses and, in addition, the means by which to secrete and transport our birthday cake!

*Offstage the sounds of voices shouting and raised*

*in protest, then **Patches** flings open the door and rushes in with two helpless-looking **Guards** in pursuit. The **King** raises a hand and the **Guards** stand to attention. **Patches** stands in front of the throne.*

**Patches:** Your Majesty! Your Majesty!

**King:** Control yourself, Officer Quiltum! What is the reason for this brash intrusion?

**Patches:** I've come to warn you, Your Majesty!

**King:** Warn me about what?

**Patches:** He's coming!

**King:** Who is coming, Officer Quiltum?

**Patches:** The thief.

**King:** He has already *been*. [Pause] Officer Quiltum, why did you lie to us?

**Patches:** I can explain, Your Majesty!

**King:** We have had enough of your explanations. Guards, take this man to the dungeon!

**Patches** [*screaming*]: Have mercy, Your Majesty, have mercy! What about my loyal service? Remember my service! Mercy! Mercy!

**King:** Captain, if you wish to avoid a similar fate, see to the capture of that adolescent miscreant! We shall make it known to all our citizens that our second challenge is the theft of Her Majesty's wedding ring from off her finger. [Pause] Oh, and take our sword

to the royal blacksmith. Direct him to make its blade very sharp – sharp enough to slice through a thought! Go! Go!

*The **Guards** exit, with **Patches** struggling between them. The **Captain** follows. Lights dim.*



## Scene 8

### Inside Currie Crosbin's cobbler shop, mid-afternoon the same day

**Currie:** Jack, I tried to talk to you yesterday about choosing a sensible way of making a living. Now we must continue that talk. *[Pause]* After you left this morning, Patches became quite civil. He not only wished me good morning and called me by my first name, he said he liked your blue jerkin. *[Pause]* He also said the robber of the money cart wore a blue jerkin. Then he wanted to know where you were going this morning when he came into the shop. I'd like to know that too. All fun and jokes aside, Jack, where did you go?

**Jack:** To the Palace ...

**Currie:** Just as I feared.

**Jack:** ... to steal the birthday cake ...

**Currie** *[quoting Scriptures]:* "Woe is me, for I am undone!"

**Jack:** ... as I had stolen the money bags.

**Currie:** Ah, yes, the carrot for the donkey. *[Pause]* I suppose I should ask you what you did with the money. No, let me guess – you spread some joy around.

**Jack:** Sort of. I gave money to everyone Mr Patches had collected the Sudden Tax from, except for you. Yours went to pay Mr Bulgen. I still have the birthday cake, though.

**Currie:** The king's soldiers should be coming for us soon.

**Jack:** Coming for *me*. I did the stealing, not you.

**Currie:** You're a minor. I'm responsible for what you do. At least now you won't get us into any more fixes.

*Offstage sound of a horse approaching. It halts outside the shop.*

**Currie:** I'll do the talking.

*The shop door opens and the Captain of the Palace Guards enters.*

**Captain:** Good afternoon, Mr ...

**Currie:** Crosbin, Currie Crosbin, cobbler. This is my son Jack.

**Captain:** I am the Captain of the Palace Guards. My mission is to announce that His Majesty is

offering a second challenge to the person who stole the royal birthday cake. That person must now steal Her Majesty's wedding ring from off her finger. On completion of this theft, the thief should present proof of both thefts in order to gain the throne.

**Currie:** If I may make so bold, sir, what has become of Officer Quiltum, who delivered the last proclamation?

**Captain:** What has become of him is none of your business!

**Jack:** No offence meant, sir, but how do we know you are who you say you are, and that this proclamation is really the king's?

**Captain:** How dare you doubt my veracity! Look at this document with the royal stamp signed in His Majesty's own hand. *[Pause as he holds up an official document.]* And if you must know, the tax collector's working days are over!

**Currie:** He's retired, then.

**Captain:** That's for me to know and for you to find out! God save the king! *[Exits.]*

*Offstage sound of a horse's hoofs departing.*

**Jack:** That man's sure on edge, Papa, but you handled him right!

**Currie:** The king's second challenge certainly packs a wallop. We'll need help.

**Jack:** *We? I'm the thief, and you said I'm through being one.*

**Currie:** That was before the captain came. *[Pause]* You heard him – Patches has been fired and for all we know his life might be in danger. Obviously he didn't tell them who he suspected of robbing the money cart. Also, the captain didn't recognize you as being at the Palace today, otherwise he would've arrested you. In any case Patches is in trouble and it's all because of me.

**Jack:** Papa, *I* did the stealing, not you!

**Currie:** My dumb dare made you gyp Bulgen in the first place. Then you had to rob the cart to repay Bulgen and ...

**Jack:** With all due respect, sir, if you think I robbed the cart to pay Mr Bulgen, you're wrong. I robbed the cart to give the people back their money. *[Pause]* We should go right now to the Palace and demand that they let Mr Patches go.

**Currie:** If we do that, they'll toss both of us in the dungeon with him, or worse. No, the king is like a mountain, and mountains are hard to move, but with the help of your brothers and a few friends, we can do it.

**Jack:** That's the spirit, Papa!

**Currie:** Dick should have contacts who know the layout of the Palace. Besides, being a carpenter, he can advise on how to scale walls. Tom should come in handy too.

**Jack:** Tom's just a tailor.

**Currie:** Never say "just", Jack. Every skilled craftsman is worthy of respect. The king won't lie down and play dead while we steal his wife's ring. He'll be waiting with sword drawn.

**Jack:** I still don't think Tom can sword-fight a king.

**Currie:** He won't have to. Tom can make a dummy that'll fool anyone, even a king. What are we waiting for? Let's go win us a throne!

*Both exit. Lights dim.*

## Scene 9

**The queen's bedroom in the Palace,  
late evening, same day**

**Queen Imogen and King Reynault** sit in chairs on either side of a small table, on which a candle burns. Upstage centre is a window.

**Queen:** Reynault, I don't understand why we've been locked in my bedroom all evening like illegal stowaways, and you're still going through with this challenge nonsense.

**King:** Call it what you will, Imogen. No king worth his crown would allow a precocious peasant to make him look like an imbecile!

**Queen:** All you have to do is put the ring in the safe ...

**King:** You're forgetting the proviso I made known to the public – the rapacious rascal must steal the ring from off your finger.



**Queen:** That's all right for you to say. You're not the one likely to have some villain cut off a finger while you sleep.

**King:** That will only happen if the culprit manages to get into in this room, which he won't. Even if he did get in, I'd be ready for him. *[Pause]* After this is over, my dear, we'll take a vacation in the south of France.

**Queen:** Vacation! As if we can afford to go anywhere! Scarcely two years since our marriage, Reynault, and already you've spent my whole dowry. Now you're talking about a vacation. *[Grumbles.]* All those jousting tournaments and hunting forays!

**King:** My dear, we must not forget your balls and parties. They didn't pay for themselves.

**Queen:** A woman in my station must have a social life!

**King:** Much more so must a man of my station. Tournaments and hunts keep me fit. They also allow the populace to see what I do with their money. It's called vicarious fulfilment. What else is there to do?

**Queen:** You might try something useful, like commerce, manufacturing, agriculture, industry, trade ...

**King:** Ha!

**Queen:** Oh, beg your pardon, dear. I forgot – you weren't brought up to do anything but fight. *[Pause]* All right, Reynault, we'll have to find you a war.

**King:** For all I know a war has found me. *[Pause]* It

seems the aberrant adolescent has won himself a following among his kind. If he comes tonight, he'll probably not be alone.

**Queen:** You're making me even more nervous.

**King:** Fighting is one thing, Imogen; ruling is quite another. *[Pause]* Listen, I can hear something. *[Goes to the window and looks out. Beckons to the Queen.]* Look, a human form. Let me at him! *[He opens the window and leans out, waving his sword. Sound of a thwack and a heavy thud offstage.]* I believe I got him, Imogen! I got him! Wait here till I get back. I'm going down to check for a body. *[Goes to the table and blows out the candle flame. Exits, waving his sword.]*

**Queen:** Take care, my love! *[to herself]* O, my hero! My very own hero! *[Goes to the door and locks it.]*

*Several seconds of silence.*

**Jack** *[calling softly]*: My dear – here, at the window.

**Queen:** Reynault, there so soon? *[Goes to the window and peers out.]* What happened?

**Jack** *[softly]*: I got him all right! Cut his head clean off! Before I move the body, I want you to take off your ring, tie it in a corner of your bedspread and lower it down to me!

**Queen:** Why, my love?

**Jack** *[softly]*: Because his cronies might still be around.

**Queen:** Anything you say, my love. [*Takes off ring, ties it in a corner of the bedspread and lowers the bedspread out of the window.*] Here 'tis!

*A moment of silence, then a **knock** at the bedroom door.*

**King** [*panting*]: Open up, Imogen.

**Queen:** Wait, dear! Let me light the candle. [*Goes to the table, strikes a match and lights the candle. She unlocks the door.*]

*The **King** enters, panting.*

**Queen:** Come and sit down, my dear. You're out of breath.

**King:** So I am, and all for nothing.

**Queen:** What?

**King:** It was a false alarm.

**Queen:** False alarm? Then give me back my ring.

**King:** What ring?

**Queen:** My wedding ring. The ring I tied to my bedspread and passed down to you outside.

**King:** Oh no! Oh no! Oh no!

*Lights down. Blackout.*

# Sunday, Funday

(A one-act play for Youth Groups,  
based on improvisations by  
New Providence Anglican Diocesan  
Sunday Schools)

## Characters

**Hezekiah (Kiah) Pratt** middle-aged construction worker

**Susie Pratt** Hezekiah's wife

**Isabel Moss** Susie's best friend

**Leslie (Bulla), Delroy, Jane, Mary, Betty and Joanne**  
six of the Pratts' eight children

**Miss Taylor** Sunday school teacher

**Children** at least five girls and five boys

**Manager** at the movie theatre

**Father** Anglican priest

**Bouncer** at the movie theatre

**Old Woman**

**Setting:** New Providence Island, The Bahamas, 1984

## Scene 1

**The Pratts' living room, 2.15 pm on a Sunday**

**Susie Pratt**, at her ironing board, is pressing items of children's clothing. She is grumbling in annoyance at her husband,

**Hezekiah Pratt**, who lies sprawled in an armchair, drinking rum and listening to a baseball game. Next to the armchair is a small table, covered by a floor-length cloth. A radio and a telephone are on the table. There are several rum bottles on the floor around the armchair, despite the presence of a waste bin.

**Hezekiah:** Oh Susie, stop makin' noise. I got a headache and furthermore, I want to hear the ball game.

**Susie:** You should have more than a headache, there wasting your money on liquor, instead of bringing it home.

**Hezekiah:** Woman, I work hard five long days for my money. Don't tell me what to do with it.

**Susie:** I mean it's a shame! I work the same amount of days as you, yet every Sunday I got to wash, iron, cook, clean house and care for eight children. All



you good for is drink. [Pause] Look at you. You look older than your pa, and he over seventy!

**Hezekiah:** Look who's talkin'. You forget when miss woman did ask you if you and your ma is sisters, aye?

**Susie:** Don't change the subject! It's a crying shame how every Sunday Isabel has to pick up *your* children and take them to and from Sunday school when you have a whole truck.

**Hezekiah:** That Isabel acts like she runnin' my house. I tell you to keep away from her! I never could rest on my day off, she in and out of here playin' Christian.

**Susie:** She is Christian!

**Hezekiah:** You must be mean "Christmas"! All Isabel is is a Sunday Christian and a Monday back-stabber. Grandma always say, "Ain' how hard you shout in church; is how you live!"

**Susie** [*throwing up her hands*]: Oh, if only I did listen to my pa, I woulda never married you. Daddy always said you was no good.

**Hezekiah:** He must be was meanin' heself. That old Andros crab-catcher – he is the one you should be sendin' to church. He all about thievin' people crabs outta they pen and sellin' them back to them.

**Susie:** Kiah, leave my pa out of this!

**Hezekiah** [*taking another swig of liquor*]: I right to say so.

**Susie:** Give me faith! Look how I burned piece out of this child dress, here listening to your foolishness. And

Isabel soon come. [*Shouts.*] Delroy! You all ready back there?

**Delroy's voice:** Yes ma'am!

**Hezekiah** *dozes off.* **Jane** *runs in with her shoes.*

**Jane:** Mummy, I can't find my socks.

**Susie:** Go look in the bottom drawer where your panties and ribbons is. One pink set right there.

**Jane** *rushes out.* **Mary** *dashes in.*

**Mary:** Mummy, tell Bulla to stop hitting me!

**Susie** [*shouting*]: Leslie, behave yourself! [*To Mary*] You all think you going set me crazy. Go get ready for Sunday school, Miss Isabel soon come. Don't let me gat to come in there!

**Mary** *runs out.* **Isabel Moss** *enters without knocking. She makes a wry face at the dozing Hezekiah and addresses Susie.*

**Isabel:** How you doin'? I hope the children ready. 'Most three o'clock.

**Susie:** They should be ready by now. Wait one minute. [*Exits, shouting.*] Leslie, Delroy, Jane, Mary, Betty, Joanne!

**Leslie, Delroy, Jane, Mary, Betty and Joanne** *appear; Susie* *shepherding them in. She busies herself making a last-minute inspection, wiping eyes, etc.*

**Susie:** Now you all behave yourselves! [*Doles out five cents to each child.*] This yinna collection. Remember, behave yourselves!

*The six Children exit. Isabel goes to follow them but stops to whisper to Susie.*

**Isabel:** Susie, good thing that Lucifer sleepin'. When I get back, we goin' play Twenty-one. I might get back that five dollars you win from me last time. I goin' bring back li'l somethin' to drink too.

**Susie:** Yeah, bring li'l gin. How my teeth hurting me, I could use some.

**Isabel:** Gal hush your mouth! How I gat gas pain now!

*Isabel exits. Hezekiah rouses himself and goes over angrily to Susie.*

**Hezekiah:** So *that's* what you all does be up to when I out and the children gone to Sunday school. Susie, who does wear the pants in this house, me or that Jezebel?

**Susie** [*meekly*]: You, Kiah. I thought you was sleeping.

**Hezekiah:** Every shut-eye ain' sleep, and every kiss ain' goodbye. You and your worthless friend should remember that.

**Susie:** Stop shouting before you wake up them twins. And you shouldn't be talking so 'bout Isabel. [*Pause*] If it wasn't for her, I don't know how I would manage.

**Hezekiah:** You and her just alike. Next thing I know, she'll be carryin' you out to sweetheart on me. I tell you now, stay away from them Acklins Island people!

**Susie:** Listen to you! That's lone rum talking!

**Hezekiah** [*becoming more angry*]: Let me get out o' here before that runny-mouth Isabel come back. [*Pause*] Give me five dollars. I may as well go to the picture show, 'cause I can't relax in my own house.

*Hezekiah takes another swig of rum. Reluctantly, Susie withdraws five dollars from her bosom and holds it out.*

**Susie:** I was saving this for the children lunch. The couple o' coppers you give me don't go nowhere these days.

**Hezekiah** [*taking the money*]: You ain' gambling with this. This is just enough for one Ratbat before I go to the show. [*Exits.*]

**Susie** [*to herself*]: Anyway, I done get rid of him. [*Starts setting up for the card game. Places cards on the table and takes a marker from her bosom.*] Let me mark couple of these cards to help me 'long li'l bit. Like the priest say, "The Lord helps those what help themselves." How Isabel blind again! [*Pause*] Now let me get two glasses for the drinks. [*Picks up the ironing board and exits, chuckling.*]

*Lights dim.*

## Scene 2

Inside the church Sunday school, 3.05 pm, same day

**Miss Taylor** assembles **Leslie** and the other **Children** of her Sunday school class in a semi-circle downstage left. She then proceeds with the teaching of the lesson.

**Miss Taylor:** Good afternoon, children.

*The **Children** fidget and play silently with one another.*

**Miss Taylor:** You seem to be restless. Stand for prayers. Put your hands together, bow your eyes and close your heads.

*General laughter from the **Children**.*

**Miss Taylor:** Remember, I don't want any noise. We are in God's house and so we should act reverently. The

Grace, please.

**Children:** The Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with us now and for evermore. Amen.

**Miss Taylor:** Good. Sit and be quiet. The only way to learn is to listen, and you cannot listen while you are talking. *[Pause]* Now, who can remember the slogan that the bishop gave us?

**Children:** Make a friend ...

**Miss Taylor:** Yes, make a friend ...

**Children:** Be a friend ...

**Miss Taylor:** Be a friend ...

**Children:** Bring a friend to Jesus.

**Miss Taylor:** Excellent. To make sure everyone knows that slogan, let me hear it once more.

**Children** *[dragging it out]:* Make a friend, be a friend, bring a friend to Jesus!

**Miss Taylor:** All right. How many of you brought a friend today?

*Some of the **Children** raise their hands.*

**Miss Taylor** *[pointing at Girl 1]:* Who did you bring?

**Girl 1** *[looking at Girl 2]:* Michelle.

**Miss Taylor** *[to Girl 3]:* Who did you bring?

**Girl 3** *[pointing to Girl 4 beside her]:* Her!



**Miss Taylor:** She has a name. What is her name?

**Girl 3:** Her name ... Er ... [To **Girl 4**] Hey, what's your name?

**Miss Taylor:** I don't think she's your friend, if you don't even know her name. Can anyone tell her her friend's name? She's forgotten it.

**Girl 2:** Matusalem!

*General laughter from the Children.*

**Miss Taylor** [to **Girl 2**]: Can you spell Matusalem, since you're such a smart aleck?

**Girl 2:** M-a-t-u-s-a-l-e-m!

**Miss Taylor:** All right. Now we can carry on with the lesson. Sit still, otherwise you will have to leave. [Pause] Today we are going to talk about The Disobedient Boy, and, as I recall, his name was *not* Leslie. [Touching **Leslie**] I'm not going to tell you his name. [Much giggling from the **Girls**] It might have been The Disobedient Girl, judging by the behaviour of some of you here. [Pause] Can anyone tell me what we mean by the word "disobedient"?

**Girl 2:** Not following what someone said you should do?

**Miss Taylor:** Right. When you cannot follow instructions it means something is wrong with your brains. [General giggling from the **Children**] Now we are going to sit quietly. I want to see how many sensible people we have here. All the stupid ones will be those acting badly.

*Most of the Children sit up, except for Leslie.*

**Miss Taylor:** Now I'll tell you a story about a disobedient boy, like Leslie here, who cannot do as he is told. Leslie can't even sit properly. Maybe they don't have chairs in their home.

**Leslie:** We come from China, ma'am, where they sit on the floor!

**Miss Taylor:** You don't look Chinese to me. All right, this disobedient boy was just like all of you here, but he soon found that he could not get away with breaking rules and regulations. [Pause] Now tell me some of the things you think this disobedient boy – or girl – might have done.

**Girl 1:** Run into the street.

**Miss Taylor:** All right. Leslie?

**Leslie:** He wouldn't do his chores, and he smoked cigarettes.

**Miss Taylor:** He wouldn't do his chores. What else?

**Boy 1:** He didn't go to church.

**Miss Taylor:** Didn't go to church ...

**Girl 3:** He went in the road and played ball on Sunday.

**Miss Taylor:** Maybe. Any other guesses?

**Boy 2:** Instead of washing the dishes, he would go and watch TV.

**Miss Taylor:** Right. Leslie?

**Leslie:** Well, the way I see it, if he was told not to eat candy in Sunday school, he would still eat it.

**Miss Taylor:** Sounds like someone we all know.

**Boy 3:** He wouldn't do his homework.

**Miss Taylor:** All right. These are things the disobedient boy might have done. Well, he soon found out that he could not get away with doing these things and so he finally decided to do as he was told.

**Boy 2:** What made him listen, teacher?

**Miss Taylor:** None of his friends played with him because he was too dirty. Soon he became an outcast, so he decided to obey the rules like everyone else. Now, what I want you to learn from this is that you must obey. Our Lord showed us an example when He lived on Earth. For instance, in the Garden of Gethsemane He was reluctant to face His lot, but remember, He prayed: "Not my will, but Thine be done." So, for our sakes He became obedient, even unto death on the cross.

*Sound of an ambulance siren offstage.*

**Boy 1:** What's that?

**Girl 2:** Sounds like ambulance.

*The Children chatter excitedly. Delroy bursts in.*

**Delroy:** Sorry, Miss, my ... my ...

**Leslie:** Say "Excuse me", Delroy. Where's Joanne?

**Miss Taylor:** Quiet, Leslie. [To Delroy] Young man, where have you just come from?

**Delroy:** We get send to Sunday school, ma'am and ...

**Miss Taylor:** And you're just coming? Sunday school started some time ago. Why are you so late? I haven't seen you here in ages.

**Leslie:** Delroy, where is Joanne? She was with ...

**Miss Taylor:** Quiet, Leslie! Delroy, it's very good that you are coming to Sunday school, but you should've been here already. Now what was it you wanted to say?

**Delroy:** My sister got knocked down!

**Leslie** [*jumping up*]: What!

*The Children babble with excitement. Miss Taylor turns to them.*

**Miss Taylor:** Quiet, please! [To Delroy] What happened?

**Delroy:** Joanne got knocked down and she's out there and she's hurt!

*Leslie runs from the room. Delroy follows.*

**Miss Taylor:** Lord, what is this? [To Girl 1] Rose, go call Father! The rest of you stay right here! I don't want see anybody behind me!

**Girl 1 and Miss Taylor** rush out. Four of the **Children** run out behind them, while the others, seemingly more obedient, wait a few seconds, then leave, taking their chairs with them offstage. Lights dim.

## Scene 3

**Inside a movie theatre, the same afternoon**

**Children and an Old Woman** are watching a movie.  
**Hezekiah Pratt** enters and sits down.

**Boy 4:** Oooh! Look at him turning!

**Hezekiah:** Who turnin'? Who turnin'?

**Boy 5:** Michael Jackson.

**Hezekiah:** What Michael Jackson? I come here to see cowboys and crooks, and you all talking fool.

**Boy 4:** You drunk, hey?

**Hezekiah:** Who drunk? Your ma and your pa drunk.

**Old Woman** [*in a high-pitched voice*]: Be quiet! I watchin' this movie!

**Hezekiah:** What all you children doin' in here, anyhow? You all don' go to Sunday school, aye?

**Boy 5:** This is a movie for children.



**Audience:** SShhh!

**Hezekiah:** Why you all ain' in Sunday school? I bet every one o' you all is Anglican children. All the Baptist children in Sunday school.

**Girl 5:** I don' know why he don' shut up. I can't even see the picture for him.

**Hezekiah:** You all is a generation of vipers, all of you! Instead o' you bein' in church ...

**Boy 4:** Goodness, look-a how he turning!

**Hezekiah:** I mean, even the baby to the breast in here.

**Old Woman** [*getting up*]: I going to the manager right now! I can't even watch Michael Jackson in peace. These young people think I don't know my rights! [*Exits.*]

*Children express their appreciation at the movie with oohs and aahs. Hezekiah leans over to Girl 5.*

**Hezekiah:** You. You, gal. Who your people for?

**Girl 5:** That ain' none of your business!

**Hezekiah:** You all no-manners, just like my children back home.

**Boy 4** [*to Boy 5*]: This man's mouth is piping with rum. Why you think he don' shut up?

*Bouncer approaches Hezekiah and taps him on the shoulder.*

**Bouncer:** Sir, we have a complaint that you are disturbing everyone. Come with me, please.

**Audience** [*in chorus*]: That's right, good for him! Carry him! And he's full o' Ratbat perfume.

**Hezekiah** [*to Bouncer*]: What you want? Who you is?

**Bouncer:** I am the bouncer in charge of security, and if you can't behave, you'll have to get put outta here.

*Bouncer grips Hezekiah by the arm and lifts him out of his seat.*

**Hezekiah:** Who child you for?

**Bouncer:** Don't worry who child I for – you come. Let's go see the manager.

**Hezekiah:** Who child you for, anyway? You ain' got a ounce o' manners. I bet you come from Acklins.

**Bouncer:** Look, you can't even walk straight. I can see you're stone drunk.

**Hezekiah:** Show me a straight line, watch me walk 'long it!

*Bouncer points out a straight line on the floor.  
Hezekiah staggers crookedly along it.*

**Bouncer:** See, you can't even walk a straight line!

**Hezekiah:** That's 'cause it's a *crooked* line. It ain' me – I walk straight.

**Bouncer** escorts **Hezekiah** to the **Manager**, who is waiting with the **Old Woman** upstage.

**Manager** [to **Old Woman**]: Miss Lady, this is the man?

**Old Woman**: This is him! You see I was sittin' down watchin' the movie getting good, when he came there.

**Manager** [to **Hezekiah**]: This old lady claims that you were disturbing her.

**Hezekiah**: Look ... Looka here ... Who you meanin'? Not me.

**Old Woman**: Yes it's you! And I can still smell the Ratbat!

**Hezekiah**: Just listen here! Listen here, you old witch.

**Manager** [to **Hezekiah**]: You have respect. This woman's old enough to be your mother.

**Hezekiah**: Which is exactly why I want to know what she doin' here. [To **Old Woman**] Tell me somethin'. What old woman like you doin' in this picture show, anyhow?

**Old Woman**: Watching *Thriller*.

**Hezekiah**: Instead o' you try gettin' next to God, you 'round here talking 'bout *Thriller*! Why you don't go home and read your Bible?

**Old Woman**: 'Cause I don't have none.

**Hezekiah**: Lord, why is this nation so? The old ain' settin' no example for the young.

**Old Woman**: Mind your business before I don't body slam you. I does watch wrestling too, you know.

**Hezekiah**: I goin' back home. [To **Manager**] Gimme back my money. That could get me couple good rounds o' Ratbat.

**Bouncer**: You stink of rum and higher than a kite. You best get outta this theatre *now*, before I don't kick you out. No rebate for you!

**Hezekiah** exits.

**Old Woman** [pleading]: Start the picture over for old Ma. This is my only bit of entertainment.

**Manager**: OK, OK.

**Old Woman** sings a verse from Michael Jackson's *Thriller* and dances back to her seat. *Lights dim.*

## Scene 4

### The Pratts' living room, later that afternoon

*As the scene opens, Isabel and Susie are deep into card playing and gossiping.*

**Isabel:** Gal, Susie, work goin' kill you. You don' get tired, hey?

**Susie:** If I don't do it, who's going to do it? I have eight children, two in diapers and the oldest just twelve. [Pause] I hope what you bring will settle my nerves.

**Isabel** [*passing over gin*]: See it here.

**Susie:** Child, Bela, just you gone to drop the children, Kiah get up. He raised one cane.

**Isabel:** You mean he wasn' sleepin'?

**Susie:** No child, he was pertending. He is one crooked Cat Island man.

**Isabel:** I don' know how you got hooked up with him,

'cause he spells "No good" with a capital N.

**Susie:** Let's cut out the talking and finish a couple more games before Sunday school comes out.

*They play in silence for about five seconds.*

**Isabel:** Susie, I don't understand how you winnin' so much. That's done six games you win on a stretch.

**Susie:** It's just that my luck must be on today. [Pause] You heard 'bout what happened last vestry meeting in the Valley? I heard the treasurer couldn't balance the church books. I heard him and Father nearly came fist-to-fist. [Laughs.] Gal, they said that was something else!

**Isabel:** That ain' what I hear. [Pause] You hear what happen in church to one o' them dicty women who always looking down their nose at people? She was steppin' up for Communion and when she reached the altar [*Gets up and imitates.*] her wig fell off! I hear the whole church lit up with the laughter. [Notices **Susie** is not amused.] Something wrong?

**Susie:** You best watch your mouth, Bela! That wasn't no "woman", that was me!

*Isabel stares at Susie, mouth agape. There is loud, persistent **knocking** at the front door.*

**Susie:** Who it is? Who it is?



**Father:** It's me, Father. [*Knocks again.*]

**Susie** [*loudly*]: Just one minute, Father! Just one minute!  
[*Turns to Isabel and whispers.*] Child hurry up  
clear 'way these things. That's Father!

**Isabel** *throws the cards into her handbag. Susie  
stuffs the money into her bosom, hides the gin bottle  
under the table, then hurries to open the door.*

**Susie:** Come right in, Father, come right in!

**Father and Miss Taylor** *enter.*

**Susie** [*indicating Miss Taylor*]: This the wife, hey Father?

**Father:** No, Mrs Pratt, you know I'm not married. This is  
Miss Taylor, the Sunday school teacher.

**Susie:** Pleased to meet you, Miss Taylor. Father, we was  
just saying what a beautiful sermon you preached  
the other day about drinking and gambling.

**Isabel:** That's right. And about how you say the people  
take the S out of Sunday and put in F to make it  
Funday.

**Miss Taylor:** Mrs Pratt, I think you should sit down. We  
have some rather bad news.

**Susie** [*sitting*]: Father, what it is? [*Becoming more agitated*]  
What happened?

**Father:** It's your daughter, Joanne. She's been knocked  
down and she's now in the intensive care unit at  
the hospital, in a coma.

**Susie** *wails. Isabel grows frenzied.*

**Susie:** Oh ... Oh ... What I going to tell Hezekiah? O  
Lord, my child! My child!

**Isabel** *attempts to comfort Susie.*

**Susie:** How she could get knocked down if she was in  
Sunday school? [*Stares accusingly at Isabel.*]

**Isabel:** Don't look at me! I dropped the children on the  
corner by the church like you asked me, and told  
them to go in.

**Susie** *resumes her wailing. Hezekiah can be heard  
singing outside. He enters in a drunken state.*

**Hezekiah:** Well, what's this in my house today? What  
happened here?

**Susie** *runs to Hezekiah.*

**Susie:** Oh, Lord, Kiah! Oh Lord, oh Lord!

**Hezekiah:** What happened, Susie? My ma dead?

**Isabel:** No, Hezekiah.

**Hezekiah:** My pa dead?

**Isabel:** No, Hezekiah.

**Hezekiah:** Well what happened, then? [*Bangs on the table.*]  
Tell me now! The blackbird fly over my head this

mornin' and I know something bad was gonna happen.

**Father:** Your daughter Joanne had an accident. She's at the hospital in a coma.

**Hezekiah:** Coma? Coma? What coma? You say she gone to Coma Hill, Cat Island?

**Susie:** Calm yourself, Kiah, calm yourself. Joanne's in a coma in the Princess Margaret Hospital.

**Hezekiah:** Calm myself, and the child supposed to be in church?

**Isabel:** Hezekiah, don' row her. I is the one who took Joanne to church.

**Hezekiah:** So you is the cause o' all this! Susie, I am tired telling you to stay away from these Acklins people. Now look what she bring down on we fam'ly. Where is my child? What happened to her? I want her back whole and unmaimed.

**Susie:** Calm yourself, Kiah.

**Hezekiah:** Yeah. Get me that bottle o' liquor yinna hide 'way. Lemme calm myself.

**Father:** That's the very thing: You drink too much! Liquor won't solve anything. You need God's Word.

**Hezekiah:** Father, your priestly duty ain' do nothing – the child still get knocked down. A bottle will solve things. [*Bangs on the table again.*] *Get me the bottle!*

**Father:** But Mr Pratt ...

**Hezekiah:** Don't "But Mr Pratt" me, Father, 'cause you was

ever a wicked man. I don' know what the bishop ordained you for. You just wan' be priest to get respect free, and make easy salary. 'Round here playin' Christian. You ever once act like Christ?

**Susie:** Kiah, watch your mouth! That's the priest you talking to. Have respect.

**Hezekiah:** Same thing I say. You priests want automatic respect. [*To Susie*] These priests ain' God, especially this one. Wicked is his second name!

**Isabel:** Joanne got knocked down. I feel so guilty.

**Hezekiah:** You is the cause. You ... Lord, I shoulda know something was goin' happen today – Granpa came to me last night in a dream and he was dressed all in black ...

*Susie goes to Hezekiah and hugs him.*

**Susie:** I had the same dream.

**Hezekiah:** Move! You ain' had no same dream. Stop putting on a show, 'cause you ain' know the last day you hug me. [*Pause*] Go bring me that bottle!

**Susie:** I am not getting nothing. You drink too much. If you woulda stayed sober once every blue moon and carried the children to church, this woulda never happened.

**Miss Taylor:** If you all want to see Joanne, you'd better come go to the hospital.

**Hezekiah [*to Miss Taylor*]:** You gat bigotty mouth. Whey

you from? Who child you for? Who is your people?

**Miss Taylor:** That is irrelevant.

**Father:** Keep calm, Mr Pratt, the solution is in God's Word.

**Hezekiah:** Father, you only playin' with God.

**Isabel:** Hezekiah, Susie, come let's go to see the child.

**Susie:** I'll get the twins. *[Exits.]*

*All move to the door. Hezekiah turns back.*

**Hezekiah:** Lemme get this stuff. *[Searches under the table and picks up the bottle of gin.]*

*Telephone rings. Everyone stands transfixed.*

**Miss Taylor:** Mr Pratt, why don't you answer the phone?

**Hezekiah** puts the bottle on the table and lifts the telephone receiver.

**Hezekiah:** Yeah, this is Hezekiah Pratt. *[Pause]* What you say? Say Joanne Pratt what?

**Hezekiah** drops the receiver and slumps into a chair.  
**Susie** re-enters.

**Susie:** I thought I heard the phone. *[Looks at the receiver, then at Hezekiah.]* What they say, Kiah?

**Hezekiah:** Joanne ...

**Susie:** Yes, Joanne ...

**Miss Taylor** lifts the receiver.

**Miss Taylor:** What happened to Joanne? *[Pause]* Yes, we'll be there. Soon. *[To the others]* She died.

**Susie** weeps softly. **Hezekiah** stares blankly.

**Miss Taylor:** Anything I can do to help?

**Isabel:** If you could stay with the twins till we get back from the hospital. *[To Susie and Hezekiah]* We should be going now.

**Susie** rises as if in a trance. **Hezekiah** looks at the bottle on the table. In the silence he moves to the table, picks up the bottle, walks to the waste bin and drops it in.

**Hezekiah:** That make two I buried today – my child, and liquor.

*All except Miss Taylor exit. Lights dim. Blackout.*



## Acknowledgements

I wish to thank the late Venerable William E. Thompson for appreciating my skills, and the late Mrs Margaret Thomas, my former Sixth Form Literature teacher/College of The Bahamas colleague for advising me to create plays for young people.

**A Cross for Easter** was first produced by St. Anne's High School Drama Club on 21 April 1977. It was that group's initial project after being formed in January 1977. Cast members:

<b>Cleaning Woman</b>	Sandra Darville
<b>Hubert</b>	Stephen Duncombe
<b>Veesa Gaitor</b>	Marsha Miller
<b>Effie Mae Small</b>	Eloise Lightfoot
<b>Ma Roker</b>	Mavis Johnson
<b>Janet</b>	Claudine Farquharson
<b>Constable Biggit</b>	Vanessa Miller
<b>Reverend Isaac Newton</b>	Bernard Turner

**A Cross for Easter** production – Mrs Muriel S. Eneas, former Headmistress, St. Anne's High School; Miss Gwyneth Williams, English Department Head, St. Anne's High School. *Director* Mr Kim Smith. *Lights* Earlyn Baillou, Clenty Bullard, Christine Deveaux, Margie Hilton, Oswald Isaacs, Alison Prince, Christine Robins, Jennifer Rolle, Joy Sherman, Sonya Smith, Paige Turnquest, Sandra Darville, Christine Deveaux, Father Frederick Fleischer, Dexter Johnson, *Props* Miss Watson

With Telcine Turner Rolle as Consultant /Leader, **Sunday, Funday** evolved through six weeks of improvisations by New Providence Anglican Diocesan Sunday Schools. The first performance took place on 26 March 1984. Cast members:

<b>Hezekiah Pratt</b>	Michael Hepburn, St. Agnes Church.
<b>Suzie Pratt</b>	Sylvia Forbes, St Margaret's
<b>Isabel Moss</b>	Gloria Gibson, St. Gregory's

<b>Pratt Children</b>	Lakisha Wright, Moira Pinder and Lisa Daxon, St. Margaret's; Berne Wright and Wellington Richards, St. Agnes; Sonia Gibson, St. Gregory's
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<b>Sunday School Teacher</b>	Vanessa Brice, St. Barnabas
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<b>Sunday School Children</b>	The Pratts, as above; Eddie and Safford Strachan, St. Gregory's; Bridgetta Seymour, Tiffany Braynen and Jeanette Swann, St. Mary's; Michelle Burrows, Church of The Holy Spirit; Renee Moxey, Church of Christ The King; Kimberley Wallace, Antoinette Moxey and Tiffany Tynes, St. Agnes
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<b>Children at the Movies</b>	Kenrah Francis, St. Mary's; Tracey Kemp, Church of The Holy Cross; Phillipa Pratt, St. Gregory's; Lisa Daxon and Lakisha Wright, St. Margaret's
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<b>Old Woman</b>	Antja Clarke, Church of The Holy Cross
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<b>Bouncer</b>	Kingman Ingraham, St. Agnes
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<b>Manager</b>	Wellington Richards, St. Gregory's
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**Sunday, Funday** production – Father Kingsley Knowles, St. Margaret's Church; Mr Idris Reed, St. Mary's; Father Gilbert Thompson, St. Barnabas; Father Harry Ward, Headmaster, St. John's College; Betty Simms, St. Agnes, *Co-ordinator* Veronica Smith, St. Barnabas, *Lights/Publicity* Beryl Seymour, St. Mary's, *Props* Linda Burrows, Olga Lockhart, Ruth King Outten and Agnes Williams of St. Agnes; Beryl Seymour of St. Mary's, Nicole Francis of St. Matthew's, Jewell Pierre of St. George's.

# Play Me

A collection of three  
one-act plays

*A Cross for Easter* is a whodunit set on New Providence Island, Bahamas, in the early 1970s. Characters include courteous, disabled Hubert Livingstone, meddling Effie Mae, optimistic Ma Roker, pretentious Veesa Gaitor, brash Constable Biggit and Reverend Isaac Newton, worried pastor of the Little Church. Reverend Newton sounds the alarm when he discovers the crucifix is missing three days before Easter Sunday service.

*Master Thief* is Telcine Turner's stage adaptation of her original radio play based on 'Jack and The King', a Euro-Bahamian folk tale. This stage version combines atmospheric settings and colourful characters to provide a challenging yet enthralling project for youth and adult drama groups.

*Sunday, Funday* presents rum-drinking, ballgame fanatic and construction worker Hezekiah Pratt, his long-suffering wife Susie, six of their eight children and Susie's best friend, Isabel on a tense but illuminating Sunday afternoon that changes the course of their lives.

**TELCINE TURNER** is Bahamian and was educated at Queen's College and the Government High School, New Providence, before going on to study at the University of The West Indies, Jamaica, and Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois. She is the author of *Woman Take Two*, also published by Macmillan, and a winner of the Playwriting Prize in the Twenty-fifth Anniversary Literary Competition run by the University of The West Indies in 1975. She taught at high school, at the former Bahamas Teacher Training College and the College of The Bahamas. Ms. Turner is now a full-time writer. She is married to Bahamian artist James O. Rolle. Her other Macmillan titles are *Song of The Surreys* (out of print), *Once Below A Time* and *Climbing Clouds*.

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