

WAYWARD
A Play in Two Acts

By
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CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
CAROL KWIATKOWSKI	energetic, short	22	female
SISTER ANNE*	petite, child-like	22	female
SISTER ELIZABETH*	matronly, imperious	38	female
COUNTRY GIRL	thin, crooked smile,	18	female
MAGGIE**	fair-haired, freckled	18	female
MAYFLOWER	preppy, slouchy, angular	20	female
JERSEY GIRL	dark-haired, grim-faced	24	female
BARBARA**	inquisitive mien	25	female

College and other amateur groups are encouraged to supplement the cast with others playing staff members, orderlies, residents, etc.

* Anne and Elizabeth are preferably Filipina but can be any ethnicity, as long as they resemble each other somewhat and are from a foreign country that was predominately Roman Catholic in the 1940s. Elizabeth and Anne speak English as a second language, having come to the United States in 1958, and the actors playing those roles should feel free to interpret their lines accordingly.

** Maggie and Barbara may be played by the same person.

The characters and events portrayed in this work are fictitious. Any similarity to actual persons, living or dead, or to actual events is purely coincidental.

"Such as we were we gave ourselves outright...
To the land vaguely realizing westward,
But still unstoried, artless, unenhanced,
Such as she was, such as she would become."

From "The Gift Outright", by Robert Frost

Recited by Frost at the inauguration of John
F. Kennedy, January 20, 1961

ACT ONE

PROLOGUE

The stage is dark, with one spotlight downstage center on CAROL, as a sixty-year-old woman, wearing a few easily doffed indications of her age: reading glasses, or maybe a cardigan. She addresses the audience as though she's speaking to a single listener.

CAROL

I've wanted to tell you this story for a while now, but the time never seemed right. Now that you're married, and have kids, it'll be easier to hear. I've tried rehearsing and rehearsing this in my mind so many times. It's still not easy. I'm very nervous. So bear with me.

(deep breath)

A long time ago, in 1961, before you were born, I got pregnant. I was a good Catholic girl and good Catholic girls did not get pregnant before they were married (at least, not in 1961, and not any way that they'd publicly admit). But marriage did not happen for me. So, I went away. To an adoption home in Kansas City. It was called "The Home for Wayward Girls." "Wayward" was another one of those little lies we told ourselves, meaning that we had only gone astray a little bit, for a little while.

Lights up full stage, revealing--

SCENE ONE.

The dayroom of THE HOME FOR WAYWARD GIRLS, Kansas City, January 1962.

The dayroom is a large gathering space with high ceilings. Between the stage and the audience is an imaginary fourth wall of floor-to-ceiling windows.

A dozen overstuffed chairs, sofas, ottomans, etc. furnish the room. A hi-fi console and a t.v. are downstage center.

(nonplussed)
 Noveliz--Jesus, speak English!

COUNTRY GIRL
 For a girl whose family came from England, why don't you speak English?

MAYFLOWER
 Sorry. . . The legend of King Arthur, the Knights of the Round Table, Guinevere for all time. That's been around for fifteen hundred years. "The Once and Future King" is just a new take on them. And then they turned it into a musical.

COUNTRY GIRL
 Maybe we have it in the records here.

MAYFLOWER
 The legends of King Arthur that we all think of? They were up a thousand years after King Arthur was around.

ANNE enters from the dormitory doors wheeling MAGGIE in a wheelchair.

ANNE
 Ladies. We have a visitor.

MAGGIE
 (still a little groggy from the anesthesia)
 Hello, everyone.

CAROL
 Where's the baby?

MAGGIE
 I had the baby.

CAROL
 Is it okay?

MAGGIE
 Yeah. They told me everything was fine. So that's that.

ANNE
 You're permitted ten days' bed rest. Then we start the move-out process.

MAGGIE

(to ANNE)

Okay.

CAROL

So, is it a boy or a girl?

MAGGIE

A girl. Six pounds, six ounces. Eighteen inches.

CAROL

Congratulations.

MAYFLOWER

Congratulations.

CAROL

Eye color? Hair color?

MAGGIE

I don't know. I don't know if the baby had hair or was bald. No idea on eye color.

CAROL

Didn't you see her?

MAGGIE

No. They wheeled me in to the delivery room. They put the mask on my face and then I felt like I was there, but not there.

CAROL

They call it "twilight."

MAGGIE

Yeah. I can see why. Next thing I know I'm in the recovery room. The birth certificate in an envelope next to me . . . Like a receipt.

CAROL

So you couldn't even hold her? They didn't let you even hold her?

MAGGIE

No.

(beat)

MAGGIE

It's okay. It's better this way.

CAROL steps up to the middle of the room, dragging a chair behind her.

With difficulty, she climbs up on the chair. The other RESIDENTS worriedly look at her, teetering there.

CAROL

I have an announcement to make! My name is Carol Kwiatkowski.

ANNE

No names!

CAROL

(ignoring ANNE)

I am six months pregnant. I'm twenty-two years old. I am from Menasha, Wisconsin. My address is Rural Route Number Five. My baby's father is Ronnie Carlsen and he is a student at the University of Wisconsin.

ANNE

No revelatory dialogues!

CAROL

I don't care who knows it. I don't care if you all know who I am, because any second now Ronnie is going to pull up in his nineteen-sixty Corvette, walk in that door and ask me to marry him and I'm going to say yes and he's going to pick me up and carry me out and set me down in the front seat of his car. And he's going to keep the top up because he knows it is better for my hair.

ANNE

You're breaking the rules.

CAROL

I do not care.

Still standing on the chair, CAROL points towards the front door. All RESIDENTS watch the door, waiting for Ronnie to appear.

LIGHTS SLOWLY FADE.

the empty dayroom, much like that
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CAROL enters, carrying a bucket with
some cleaning supplies. She quietly
tiptoes to the "windows" on the fourth
wall between the stage and the audience
and tries to cl