



Scripts.com

# The Trip to Bountiful

By Horton Foote

Don't try to be quiet, sonny. I'm awake.

Yes, ma'am.

- Couldn't you sleep?

- No, ma'am.

- Why couldn't you sleep?

- I just couldn't.

- Couldn't you sleep?

- No, I haven't been to bed at all.

You're not worrying about your job,  
are you, sonny?

No, ma'am.

Everybody seems to like me there.

- I'm thinking about asking for a raise.

- You should, hard as you work.

- Why couldn't you sleep, Mama?

- Because it's a full moon.

I never could sleep

when there's a full moon.

Even back in Bountiful,

when I worked out in the fields all day...

and I got so tired I thought

my legs would just give out on me...

you let there be a full moon,

and I'd just toss the night away.

I remember once when you were little

and there was a full moon.

I woke you up and dressed you

and took you for a walk with me.

- Do you remember that?

- No, ma'am.

- You don't?

- No, ma'am.

I remember that,

it's just like it was yesterday.

I dressed you and took you outside...

and there was an old dog

howling away someplace...

and that scared you.

And I held you.

You were just trembling with fear...

and you said someone told you

that when a dog howled...

a person was dying somewhere.

And I held you close to me...

and then you asked me  
to explain to you about dying.  
And I said, "You're too young to worry  
about things like that for a long time."  
It's funny the things you think of  
when you can't sleep.  
I was trying to think of that song  
I used to like to hear you sing.  
What was that, sonny?  
I don't remember the name. I just remember  
I'd always laugh when you'd sing it.  
That old song. That was...  
I hate it when I can't think of things.  
Hush, little baby, don't say a word  
'Cause Mama's gonna buy you  
a mockingbird  
And if that mockingbird don't sing  
Mama's gonna buy you a diamond ring  
I used to think I was gonna buy you  
the world back in those days.  
I remember remarking that to my papa.  
He said the world can't be bought.  
I didn't rightly understand  
what he meant by that then.  
Oh, Ludie... Well, no.  
Would you like me  
to get you some hot milk?  
Yes, ma'am, if you don't mind.  
How do you expect to work tomorrow  
if you don't get your sleep, Ludie?  
Mother Watts...  
what did you do with that recipe  
that Rosella gave me on the phone today?  
Jessie Mae, I don't remember you  
having given me any recipe.  
Well, I did.  
This morning, right here in this very room...  
and I asked you  
to please put it on my dresser...  
and you said, "I will,"  
and went out holding it in your hand.  
- Did you look on your dresser?  
- Yes, ma'am.  
And it wasn't there?

No, ma'am.  
I looked just before I went to bed.  
We are just gonna have to get out  
a little more, Ludie.  
It's no wonder you can't sleep.  
Every couple I know goes out  
three or four times a week.  
I know we couldn't afford it before,  
so I kept quiet about it.  
But now that you're working again...  
I don't think a picture show  
once or twice a week would break us.  
Okay. Why don't we go out  
one night this week?  
I mean, I think we have to.  
I was talking to Rosella about it  
this morning on the phone.  
When did you and Rosella  
get friendly again?  
This morning.  
She just all of a sudden called me up  
on the telephone.  
She said she would quit being mad  
if I would.  
I said, shucks, I wasn't mad,  
she was the one that was mad.  
I told her I was plain-spoken  
and said exactly what I felt...  
and people have to take me as I am  
or just leave me alone.  
Rosella found out definitely  
she can't have any children.  
Walk, don't run.  
Your mother's pension check  
didn't come today.  
It's the 18th. I swear it's due.  
I just don't understand the government.  
Always late.  
Rosella was glad to hear  
you're working again.  
She said she was cleaning some drawers  
night before last...  
and had come across  
some pictures she'd taken...

of you and me  
when we started going together.  
I said, I don't care to see them.  
No, thank you.  
Passing of time makes me sad.  
Jessie Mae, here's your recipe.  
Thank you. Where did you find it?  
- In your room.  
- In my room?  
Yes, ma'am.  
Where in my room?  
In your dresser drawer. Right-hand side.  
- In my dresser drawer?  
- Yes, ma'am.  
I looked on the top of your dresser,  
wasn't there, something told me...  
Ludie,  
how many times have I asked her never...  
to look into my dresser drawers?  
You wanted me to find the recipe.  
I don't want you to go  
into my dresser drawers.  
I'd like a little privacy, if you don't mind.  
Yes, ma'am.  
And don't you ever let me catch you  
looking in them again for anything.  
I can't stand people snooping  
in my dresser drawers.  
All right. Next time you just find it yourself!  
You pick that recipe up, if you please?  
Pick it up yourself.  
I have no intention of picking that up!  
- You pick that up!  
- I won't!  
- Mama.  
- You will!  
For God's sake,  
you're both acting like children.

**It's 1:**

- You make her pick that up.  
- I won't!  
You will! This is my house  
and you'll do exactly as you're told!

Oh, now. I hope you're satisfied.  
You have got Ludie good and upset.  
- He won't sleep for the rest of the night.  
- Shut up, up there!  
What are you trying to do?  
Get him sick again?  
- Shut that goddamn radio off!  
- You shut up!  
You're going too far with me  
one of these days, old lady!  
- Jessie Mae.  
- I can't stand it, Ludie.  
I'm at the end of my rope.  
I will not take being insulted by your mama  
or anyone else! You hear that?  
Mama, will you give this recipe  
to Jessie Mae?  
All right, son.  
Mama, will you please tell  
Jessie Mae that you're sorry?  
- Ludie.  
- Please, Mama.  
: : : late-night sound, and we'll be right  
here with you till dawn:  
This next trio,  
the best in big-band sounds: : :  
Is brought to you by the  
Grand Prize Brewing Company of Galveston:  
All right.  
Grand Prize is the reason why:  
What do you want, Ludie?  
Mama has something to say to you.  
- What is it?  
- Jessie Mae, I am sorry...  
for throwing the recipe on the floor.  
I accept your apology.  
Jessie Mae, I know it's hard and all,  
but for your own sake...  
I sometimes think if you could  
ignore certain things...  
Ignore?  
Why, how can you ignore something...  
when it is done right under your very nose?  
- Jessie Mae, nobody...

- I know her, Ludie.  
She does things just to aggravate me.  
Now, you take her hymn singing.  
She never starts until I come into a room.  
And her pouting?  
Why, sometimes she goes...  
a whole day just sitting there,  
staring out the window.  
How would you like to spend  
24 hours a day...  
shut up with a woman  
who either sang hymns...  
or looked out the window and pouted?  
I'm not saying it's easy, I'm only...  
It just keeps me so nervous,  
never knowing when I leave...  
whether she's gonna run off  
to that old town or not.  
She's not gonna run off.  
She promised us she wouldn't.  
Sometimes I think she hides that check...  
and I tell you right now,  
if it is not here tomorrow...  
I am gonna search this house  
from top to bottom.  
Rosella asked me  
if I realized it would be 15 years...  
this August since we were married.  
Right.  
I never will forget the night I came home  
and told Rosella you had proposed.  
I thought you were  
the handsomest man alive.  
And I thought you were the prettiest girl.  
Did you, Ludie?  
Jessie Mae, I've got to start making  
some more money.  
I'm thinking about asking for a raise.  
I'm entitled to it.  
I've been there six months  
and not been late or sick once.  
I'm walking into Mr. Douglas' office  
the first thing...  
and saying, "I have got to have a raise

starting as of right now.

"We can't live on what you pay us."

Well! I would.

I don't understand it, Jessie Mae.

I try not to be bitter and I try not to...

I don't know.

All I know is a man works for a company  
for eight years.

He saves a little money.

He gets sick...

and he has to spend two years in bed  
watching his savings all go.

And then start all over with a new company.

The doctor says not to worry about it.

He says you have

to take things like they come.

And that's what I do. Every day.

- What's this book?

- It's mine.

I bought it at the drugstore,  
coming from the office.

How to Become an Executive?

My boss likes me.

Billy Davis told me he did,  
he was positive he did. Today, he told me.  
Billy Davis has been there 10 years now,  
you know?

You getting sleepy now?

Yes. Are you?

Yes, I am.

Good night.

Good night.

Now from our KPRC: : : :

In the latest national news: : :

President Harry Truman said  
today from the Oval...

- Mama?

- I'm all right, sonny.

I'm just still not sleepy.

Good night.

Ludie, please, son, I want to go home.

Mama, you know I can't make a living there.

We have to live in Houston.

Son, Ludie, I cannot stay here any longer.



I want to go home.  
I beg you not to ask me this again.  
There is nothing I can do about it.

**- Ludie, it's 8:**

- Yes, ma'am.

We shall gather at the river  
It's too early for hymn singing.  
Walk, don't run.

- Morning, Mama.

- Morning, son.

I'll have your toast ready for you  
in a minute.

Why don't we have an early supper tonight?

**6:**

And after supper I'll take you both  
to the picture show.  
Do you want to go downtown  
or to one of the neighborhood movies?  
Whatever you want to do, Jessie Mae.  
Maybe it would do us good to go downtown.  
Billy's picking me up.  
I want to get in early.  
Mr. Douglas is usually in before 9:00.  
I think I'm doing the right thing  
asking for a raise, don't you?  
Sure.  
Rita, this is Jessie Mae Watts.  
Can I have an appointment for my hair?

**2:**

I'll see you then. Bye.  
- Bye, Mama.  
- Bye, son.  
- Holler if there's any mail down there.  
- All right, I will.  
- No mail for us.  
- All right.  
I can't understand about that pension check.  
Can you?  
No, ma'am.  
You know, you are so absent-minded.  
You don't think that you put it around

the room someplace...  
by mistake?  
I don't believe so.  
You're listening to KTRH in Houston  
on a beautiful Wednesday morning:  
Clear skies, it's currently 68 degrees:  
Bus wasn't fast enough for you  
this morning, Ludie?  
No. I'm hoping to get a chance  
to speak to the boss...  
before we start our work this morning.  
- How's everything with your family?  
- Fine.  
The kids were full of life  
this morning as, usual.  
I said to Myrtle Sue, "My Lord, have mercy...  
"we have a lot of live wires around here,  
don't we?"  
- How's your wife?  
- She's fine.  
Your mother lives with you, too,  
doesn't she?  
She sure does.  
I'm gonna call Rosella and tell her  
to meet me at the drugstore for a Coke.  
Calling, O sinner  
Would you stop that hymn singing?  
Want me to jump right out of my skin?  
You know what hymns do to my nerves.  
And don't pout.  
You know I can't stand pouting.  
I didn't mean to pout, Jessie Mae.  
I just meant to be silent.  
She's not home.  
I bet she's at the drugstore right now.  
Can't make up my mind  
what movie I wanna see tonight.  
Well, I'll ask Rosella.  
Would you stop that noise for a minute?  
I'm nervous.  
You know, when I first came to Houston...  
I went to three picture shows in one day.  
I went to the Kirby in the morning...  
the Metropolitan in the afternoon...

and the Majestic that night.

- Mother Watts!

- I'm all right, Jessie Mae.

- Is it your heart?

- No.

It's just a little sinking spell.

I think just... If I can just lie down  
on the sofa for a minute, I'll be all right.

- Can I get you some water?

- Thank you.

- Do you want me to call a doctor?

- No, ma'am.

- Do you want me to call Ludie?

- No, ma'am.

Are you feeling better now?

Yes, I am, Jessie Mae.

Do you think you ought to get up so soon?

Yes, ma'am. I'm feeling better already.

I think I'll just sit here in this chair.

All right. I'll just sit here for a while  
and keep you company.

It always scares the daylights out of me  
when you get one of those sinking spells.

What do you think of the Buffs' chances  
in the Dixie Series?

I think they gotta take  
the Texas League first.

That's right.

We're going out  
to Buff Stadium Friday night...

- if you'd like to go.

- That's nice.

You can bring your wife and mom  
if you want.

Sounds like fun.

Hello?

Hello, Rosella. I tried to call you earlier.

You were at the drugstore.

That's what I just figured.

I would like to, but Mother Watts has had  
another sinking spell and l...

No. You go on, Jessie Mae.

I'm going to be all right. I'll just rest here.  
There's nothing you can do for me.

- Are you sure?  
- Yes, I'm sure, Jessie Mae.  
Well, all right, then.  
Rosella, Mother Watts says  
that she won't be needing me here.  
So I think I will come over  
for just a little while.  
All right. I'll see you then. Bye.  
Now, are you sure you're gonna be all right?  
Yes, Jessie Mae.  
I'll go on over then.  
Now you call me over at the drugstore  
if you need me, you hear?  
Yes, ma'am.  
I forgot to take any money.  
Who are you writing to?  
I just thought I'd drop a line to Callie Davis  
to let her know I'm still alive.  
Why did you decide to do that  
all of a sudden?  
No reason. Notion just struck me.  
All right.  
But if you are trying to put something  
over on me with that pension check...  
I have told Mr. Reynolds  
at the grocery store...  
never to cash anything for you.  
- Morning, Mrs. Watts!  
- Good morning, hon.  
- How are you doing?  
- Just fine.  
- That's true.  
- Child, look at that clock.

**It's 10:**

Maybe I better get back up to Mother Watts.  
She wasn't feeling so well this morning.  
I'll just try on this dress.  
1117 is now ready for boarding on track 28:  
1117 bound for McAllen: : :  
Is now ready for boarding on track 28:  
A ticket to Bountiful, please.  
- Where?  
- Bountiful.

It's between Harrison and Cotton.

No trains go there anymore.

- Are you sure?

- Yes, I'm sure.

There used to be excursions between

Bountiful and Houston, you know.

I remember, because I was...

No trains go there now.

Bus now boarding for Chenango, Aratola: : :

Rosharon, Angleton: : :

Clute, and Velasco:

Mother Watts, I'm home.

Lady? Lady, it's your turn.

Yes, excuse me.

I would like a ticket to Bountiful, please.

- Where?

- To Bountiful.

- What's it near?

- It's between Harrison and Cotton.

- Lady?

- Yes, sir.

I can sell you a ticket

to Harrison or to Cotton.

But there's no Bountiful.

Yes, there is.

It's between Harrison and Cotton.

I'm sorry, lady.

You say there is, but the book

says there isn't. And the book don't lie.

Well. But I'm...

Make up your mind, lady.

Cotton or Harrison?

There are other people waiting.

Well, let me see.

- How much is the ticket to Harrison?

- \$3.50.

- Cotton?

- \$4.20.

Yes. Well, give me

a ticket to Harrison, please.

All right.

- That'll be \$3.50, please.

- Yes, sir.

Could you cash a pension check?

I came at the last minute  
and couldn't go by the grocery store.  
I can't cash any checks.  
It's perfectly good. It is a government check.  
I'm sorry.  
It's against the rules to cash checks.  
Is that so?  
Well, I can understand that. A rule is a rule.  
- Now, how much was that again?  
- \$3.50.  
\$3.50.  
Just a minute. It is all in here.  
Nickels and dimes and quarters.  
There. Now, I believe that is \$3.50.  
- Thank you.  
- That's quite all right.  
Sorry to have taken up  
so much of your time.  
Here, lady. Don't forget your ticket.  
Oh, good heavens!  
I'd forget my head if it wasn't on my neck.  
Taylor. Two, please.  
The Beaumont express bus will be  
delayed by 30 minutes:  
- Good afternoon.  
- Good afternoon.  
Would you watch this suitcase for me?  
I'll be right back.  
Yes, ma'am.  
- This seat taken?  
- No, ma'am.  
Kind of warm, isn't it,  
when you're running around?  
Yes, ma'am.  
I had to get myself ready  
in the biggest kind of a hurry...  
and I'm trying to get to a town  
nobody here has heard of.  
- What town is that?  
- Bountiful.  
- Did you ever hear of it?  
- No.  
Yeah, that's what I mean.  
Nobody's heard of it.

Not much of a town left, I guess.  
I haven't seen it myself in almost 20 years.  
It used to be quite prosperous.  
But all they had left was a post office...  
and a filling station and a general store,  
at least when I left it.

- Do your people live there?  
- No. My people are all dead.  
Except for my son and his wife, Jessie Mae.  
They live here in the city.

No, I'm hurrying to go  
see Bountiful before I die.  
I had a sinking spell this morning...  
I had to get down on the bed and rest.  
It was my heart.

- Do you have a bad heart?  
- Well, it's not what you call a good one.  
Doctor says it'll last me...  
as long as I need it  
if I could just cut out worrying.  
But I can't seem to do that lately.  
Could you keep your eye  
on that suitcase again?  
Of course.

Lady, is there something wrong?  
No, honey, I'm just a little nervous.  
That's all.  
Say a prayer for me, honey.

- Good luck.  
- Good luck to you.

Ludie, she always tries to go by train.  
But, no, we wait at one railroad station  
for five minutes...  
and because she isn't there right then,  
you drag me on over here.  
We've always found her there.  
Why, she won't believe them at the depot...  
when they tell her  
there isn't a train to Bountiful.  
She says there is...  
and you watch, as far as she's concerned,  
that is how it'll have to be.  
I think we ought to just turn  
this whole thing over to the police.

- That would scare her once and for all.

- We are not gonna call any police.

It's \$1.63 and there's no tax...

Did a lady come here to buy a ticket  
to a town named Bountiful?

Not since I've been on duty.

- How long have you been on duty?

- About 15 minutes.

Sorry.

Excuse me. Do you have a match?

My lighter is out of fluid.

Oh, thank you.

I hope you're lucky enough  
not to have to fool around with any in-laws.

I've got a mother-in-law  
about to drive me crazy.

She's always trying to run off  
to this place called Bountiful.

Of course, there has not been a train  
to that old town in I-don't-know when.

But you try and tell her that, and she just  
looks at you like you're making it up.

But I was too trusting today.

I gave her every chance  
in the world to get away.

People ask me

why I don't have any children.

I say I've got Ludie and Mother Watts.

That's all the children I need.

What did you bring me? I've seen that one.

I think we are wasting our time sitting here.

You want to go to the other train station?

I don't care what you do. It is your mother.

Would you like this? I never read them...

and my wife has already seen it.

Thank you.

Is this...

Hi. Just by any chance did you see  
a woman about...

- Sorry.

- Thank you.

Excuse me, miss.

Miss, I just found this handkerchief there  
and it belongs, I think, to my mother.



She has a serious heart condition and it might be real serious for her to be alone. I don't think she has money, and I'd like to find her. Do you remember having seen her? She'd be on her way to a town called Bountiful. Yes, I did see her. She was here talking to me. She left all of a sudden. Well, thank you so much. I was right. She was here. That lady there saw her.

- We're not gonna wait.

- That lady there was talking with her.

We are not going to wait. I talked it all over with the police.

- You didn't really call them?

- I did...

and they said in their opinion she's just trying to get our attention this way... and that we should just go home and pay her no mind at all. They say such things are very common among young people and old people... and they're positive... if we just go home and show her that we don't care... if she goes or stays, she'll return of her own free will. We are going to do what the police tell us to. Now, Ludie, I wish you'd think of me for a change. I am not gonna spend the rest of my life running after your mother. All right, Jessie Mae. Come on. Let's go.

- Come on.

- All right.

But if Mama isn't home in an hour, I'm going after her. All right. The bus for Brazoria is now ready

**for departure:**

Passengers for Harrison, Cotton, Old Gulf: : :

And Corpus Christi will change at Gerard:

- Is this one yours?

- Yes.

- I'll get it.

- Thank you, sir.

- How long a wait do we have?

- I'd say about an hour.

- Mercy.

- Well, it can't be helped.

Oh, no, sir, I know.

I know it can't be helped.

Well, we have to take what comes.

- Do you have far to go?

- Right far. Corpus.

You know what Corpus Christi  
means in Spanish?

- Why, no, I don't.

- The body of Christ.

Oh? That so?

I never heard that, did you?

No, I sure hadn't.

The body of Christ. Is that right?

Isn't that right?

You know that I don't understand English:

I see it coming!

Oh, my. Yes.

I sure am glad to see it.

- The bus is nice to ride, isn't it?

- Yes, it is.

Excuse me for getting personal...

but what is a pretty girl like you  
doing traveling alone?

My husband's just been sent overseas.

I'm going to stay with my family.

Oh, I'm sorry to hear.

You just say the 91st Psalm

over and over to yourself.

It will be a bower of strength  
and protection to him.

"He that dwelleth in the secret place  
of the most High...

"shall abide under the shadow  
of the Almighty.

"I will say of my Lord,  
He is my refuge and my fortress."  
I'm sorry, honey.  
That's all right.  
I'm just lonesome for him, is all.  
You keep him under the Lord's wing  
and he'll be safe.  
Yes, ma'am. I'm sorry.  
I don't know what gets into me.  
Nobody needs to be ashamed of crying  
'cause we've all dampened a pillow...  
sometime or other. I know I have.  
- Lf only I could learn not to worry.  
- I know, guess we all ask that.  
Jessie Mae, my daughter-in-law, don't worry.  
"What for?" she says. Well, like I tell her...  
that's a fine attitude, if you can cultivate it.  
Trouble is, I can't any longer.  
It is hard.  
I didn't used to worry. When I was a girl, I  
was so carefree. I had lots to worry me, too.  
Everybody was so poor back in Bountiful,  
but we got along.  
I said to my papa once  
after our third crop failure in a row...  
whoever named this place Bountiful?  
He said his papa did, because in those days  
it was the land of plenty.  
You just dropped seeds in the ground  
and crops would spring up.  
We had cotton and corn and sugar cane.  
I think it's the prettiest place I ever heard of.  
Jessie Mae says it's the ugliest,  
but she only says that to bother me.  
And she only saw it once,  
and that was on a rainy day, at that.  
She says it's nothing but an old swamp.  
"That may be," I said...  
"but it's a mighty pretty swamp to me."  
- Mrs. Watts?  
- Yes?  
I think I ought to tell you this.  
I don't want you to think I'm interfering  
in your business but, you see...

your son and daughter-in-law  
came in just after you left.

I know. I saw them coming.

That's why I left so fast.

- Your son seemed very concerned.

- Oh, bless his heart.

He found a handkerchief that you dropped.

Mercy. That's right, I did.

He asked me if I'd seen you.

I felt I had to say yes. I wouldn't have said  
a thing if he hadn't asked.

Oh, that's all right. I would have done  
the same thing in your place.

- Did you talk to Jessie Mae?

- Well, yes, I did.

Isn't she a sight?

I bet she told you I was crazy.

- Well...

- No, don't worry about hurting my feelings.

Poor Jessie Mae thinks everybody is crazy...

if they don't wanna sit in a beauty parlor  
all day and drink Coca-Cola.

I think Ludie knows how I feel about getting  
back to Bountiful because...

once when we were talking about something  
that happened back there in the old days...

he burst out crying...

and so overcome, he had to leave the room.

That's a pretty hymn.

What's the name of that?

Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling:

- Do you like hymns?

- Yes, I do.

So do I.

Jessie Mae says they're going out of style,  
but I don't agree.

What's your favorite hymn?

- I don't know.

- The one I was just singing is mine.

I bet I'd sing that a hundred times a day  
when Jessie Mae isn't home.

Hymns make Jessie Mae nervous.

Jessie Mae hates me.

I don't know why. She just hates me.

Hate me or not...

I gotta get back and smell that salt air  
and work that dirt.

Callie said I could always come back  
and visit her, and she meant it, too.

That's who I'm going to see now.

Callie Davis.

The whole first month of my visit

I am going to work in Callie's garden.

I haven't had my hands in dirt for 20 years.

My hands just feel the need of dirt.

- Do you like to work the ground?

- I never have.

Try it sometime! It'll do wonders for you.

I bet I'd live to be 100

if I can just get outdoors again.

It was being cooped up in those two rooms  
that was killing me.

I used to work that land like a man.

I had to, when Papa died.

And I got two little babies buried there.

Reenie Sue and Douglas.

Diphtheria got Reenie Sue.

I never knew what carried Douglas away.

He was just weak from the start.

I know that Callie has kept up their graves.

If only my heart will hold out till I get there.

Now, where do you go, after Harrison?

Old Gulf.

My family just moved there from Louisiana.

I'll go stay there with them

till my husband comes home again.

Oh, isn't that nice?

It'll be funny living at home again.

- How long have you been married?

- A year.

My husband was anxious for me to go.

He said he worried about me being alone.

I'm the only child

and my parents and I are very close.

Isn't that nice?

I so hoped my mother and daddy

would like my husband. And he'd like them.

I needn't have worried.

They hit it off from the very first.  
Mother and Daddy say they feel like they've  
got two children now, a son and a daughter.  
Isn't that nice?  
I've heard people say...  
that if your son marries, you lose a son.  
But if your daughter marries, you get a son.  
What's your husband's name?  
- Robert.  
- That's a nice name.  
I think so, but I guess any name he had  
I'd think was nice.  
I love my husband very much.  
Lots of girls I know think I'm silly  
about him, but I can't help it.  
I wasn't in love with my husband.  
Do you believe we are punished  
for the things we do wrong?  
I sometimes think  
that's why I've had all my trouble.  
I talked to many a preacher about it,  
and all but one said he didn't think so.  
But I can't see any other reason.  
Of course, I didn't lie to my husband.  
I told him I didn't love him.  
That I admired him, which I did...  
but I didn't love him.  
I'd never love anybody...  
but Ray John Murray as long as I lived...  
and I didn't, and I couldn't help it.  
Even when my husband died...  
and I moved back with Mama and Papa...  
I used to sit on our front gallery  
every morning...  
and every evening just to nod hello  
to Ray John Murray...  
when he went by the house  
to work at the store.  
He went a mile out of his way  
to pass the house.  
Never loved nobody but me.  
- Why didn't you marry him?  
- Cause his papa and my papa didn't speak.  
And my papa forced me to write a letter

saying I never wanted to see him again.  
Then he got drunk  
and he married out of spite!  
You know, I felt sorry for his wife.  
She knew he never loved her.  
I don't think about those things now.  
But they're all a part of Bountiful.  
I think that's why I started thinking  
about it again.

You are lucky to be married  
to the man you love.

- I know I am.
- Awful lucky.
- You want any help with those bags?
- No, thank you.
- Oh, excuse me.
- Yes?

Is the bus to Old Gulf gonna be on time?  
Always is.

- Honey, what time is it?

**- It's 10:**

**10:**

I bet Callie will be surprised  
to see me walk in at 10:00.  
Did you tell her you were coming today?  
No, I couldn't, because I didn't know.  
I had to wait for Jessie Mae  
to go to the drugstore.  
My bus leaves in half an hour.  
I see. I better be finding out how  
I'm gonna get on out to Bountiful.  
No, you sit down. Sit down. I'll find the man.

- Excuse me again.
- Yes?

My friend here would like to know  
how to get to Bountiful.

- Bountiful?
- Yes.

What's she going there for?

- I'm gonna go visit my girlhood friend.
- I don't know who that's gonna be.

The last person in Bountiful

was Miss Callie Davis.  
She died day before yesterday.  
That is,  
they found her day before yesterday.  
She lived all alone,  
so they don't know exactly when she died.  
Excuse me.

- Callie Davis?

- Yes, ma'am.

They had the funeral this morning.

Was she the one you were gonna visit?

Yes, sir, that's the one.

She was my friend. My girlhood friend.

- Is there a hotel here?

- Yes, ma'am. The Riverview.

- How far is it?

- About three blocks.

What'll you do now, Mrs. Watts?

I'm thinking, honey.

It's come to me what to do.

I'll go on.

That much has come to me. I'll go on.

I feel my strength and my purpose  
strong within me.

I will go to Bountiful.

I will walk the 12 miles if I have to.

Now, Mrs. Watts, what are you gonna do  
if there's no one there this time of night?

Oh, yes. I guess you're right.

I think you ought to wait until morning.

Yes, I guess I should.

And then I can hire somebody  
to drive me out.

You know what I'll do?

I will stay at my own house,  
or what's left of it.

You put me in a garden,  
and I get along just fine...

with the help of my government checks.

- Mrs. Watts.

- What?

The man says there's a hotel not too far  
from here. I think I'd better take you there.

Oh, no, thank you.



I'm not gonna waste my money on hotels.  
They're high as cats' backs, you know.  
I'll just sleep right here on this bench.  
I'll put my coat under my head  
and my purse under my arm...

My purse!

- Honey, did you see my purse?

- Why, no! Excuse me!

This lady left her purse on the bus!

All right, I'll call ahead about it.

- How can you identify it?

- It's a plain brown purse.

- How much money?

- 35 and a pension check.

- And who was the check made out to?

- To me.

- Mrs...

- Mrs. Carrie Watts.

All right.

- I'll call up about it.

- Thank you. You've been most kind.

How long will it take to get it back?

Well, depends.

If I can get ahead of the bus at Don Tarle...

they can send it back on the Victoria bus  
and it should be here in a couple of hours.

Thanks. It's awfully kind of you.

- Try not to worry about the purse.

- Oh, I won't. I'm too tired to worry.

Be time enough to worry

when I get up in the morning.

Why don't you see

if you can go on to sleep now?

No, I thought I'd stay up and see you off.

No, you go on to sleep.

Oh, I can't go right off to sleep now.

I'm too wound up.

I don't go on a trip every day of my life.

You're lucky.

The bus hasn't gotten to Don Tarle yet.

Now, if they can find the purse,  
it'll be here...

**around 12:**

Make you feel better?  
Yes, it does. Of course,  
everything has seemed to work out today.  
Why is it that some days everything works  
out and then other days nothing works out?  
What I mean is, I have been trying  
to get to Bountiful for over five years.  
Now, usually Jessie Mae and Ludie'd come  
and they'd find me...  
even before I got inside  
the railroad station good.  
Today, I got inside both the railroad station  
and the bus station.  
I bought a ticket.  
I seen Ludie and Jessie Mae  
before they saw me.  
I hid out, and I met a pretty friend like you.  
I lost my purse, and now  
I have somebody finding it for me.  
Guess the Lord's just with me today.  
Wonder why the Lord's not with us  
everyday? Sure would be nice if He was.  
Well, maybe then we wouldn't appreciate it  
so much on those days when He is with us.  
Or maybe He's with us always,  
and we just don't know it.  
And maybe I had to wait 20 years  
cooped up in the city...  
before I could appreciate getting back here.  
Blessed assurance  
Jesus is mine!  
O what a foretaste  
of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation  
purchase of God  
Born of His Spirit  
washed in His blood  
Isn't it nice to be able to sing a hymn  
when you want to?  
This is my story  
this is my song  
Praising my Savior  
all the day long  
This is my story

this is my song  
Praising my Savior  
all the day long  
I am a happy woman, young lady.  
I am a very happy woman.  
I still have a sandwich left.  
Will you have one?  
- Well, you sure you don't want it?  
- No, I'm full.  
I'll just take a half.  
- Take the whole thing.  
- No, just a half. Thank you.  
You know, I don't eat much.  
Particularly if I'm excited.  
- I came to my first dance in this town.  
- Did you?  
Yes, ma'am. It was the summertime.  
And my father couldn't decide whether  
he thought dancing was right or not.  
But my mother said that she danced  
when she was a girl...  
and so I was gonna dance, and so I went.  
The girls from all over  
the county came for this dance.  
And it was at the Opera House.  
I can't remember what the occasion was,  
but it was something special.  
You know something, young lady?  
If my daughter had lived...  
I would have wanted her to be just like you.  
Why, thank you.  
Yes. Sweet, and considerate,  
and thoughtful, and pretty.  
Thank you.  
You better get your suitcase, miss.  
The bus will be up the road.  
He won't wait this time of night.  
I was just telling my little friend here...  
I came to my first dance in this town.  
- Is that right?  
- Yes.  
And I've been to Harrison  
quite a few times in my life. Shopping.  
- Goodbye.

- I'm so sorry, darling. Good luck to you.  
Good luck to you. Many good things.  
You gonna stay here all night?  
Well, I have to.  
Everything I have is on the bus.  
We can't go anywhere without money.  
I guess that's right.  
Do they still have dances  
over at Borden's Opera House?  
No, ma'am. It's torn down.  
They condemned it, you know.  
Did you ever know anybody in Harrison?  
I knew a few people when I was a girl.  
Priscilla Nytelle. Did you know her?  
No, ma'am.  
Nancy Lee Goodhue?  
- No, ma'am.  
- The Faye girls?  
No, ma'am.  
I used to trade in Mr. Ewing's store.  
I knew him to speak to.  
- Which Ewing was that?  
- George White Ewing.  
- He's dead.  
- That so?  
- Been dead 12 years.  
- Is that so?  
He left quite a bit of money.  
But his son took over his store  
and lost it all.  
Drank.  
Oh, is that so?  
One thing I can say about my boy,  
he never gave me any trouble that way.  
Well, that's good.  
I got one boy that drinks,  
and one boy that doesn't.  
I can't understand it.  
Raised them the same way.  
I know.  
I've known of other cases like that.  
One drinks, other one doesn't.  
A friend of mine has a girl that drinks.  
I think that's the saddest thing in the world.

Isn't it?

- Well, good night.

- Good night.

- Come on, Roy, wake up.

- Jesus!

Hello, Sheriff.

You're working too hard, Roy.

How long has this old woman been here?

About six hours.

She get off the bus from Houston?

Yes, sir. I know her name. It's Watts.

She left her purse on the bus.

I had to call up to Don Tarle about it.

You have her purse?

Yes, sir. Just came.

She's the one, all right.

I got a call from the Houston police  
to hold her till her son can come for her.

She said she used to live in Bountiful.

The poor thing's sleeping so sound,

I don't have the heart to wake her up.

Tell you what. I'm gonna go over to my  
office. Call Houston, tell them she's here.

Her son's coming in his car,  
should be here around 7:30.

I'll be back in 10 minutes.

If she gives you any trouble,  
you just call me.

Now, you keep your eye on her.

All right.

- Good morning.

- Good morning.

Did my purse arrive?

Yes, ma'am.

Thank you so much.

I wonder if you could cash a check for me?

Oh, I'm sorry, ma'am. I can't.

It's a government check.

And I have identification.

I'm sorry, ma'am.

I can't.

Well, do you know where

I could get a check cashed?

Why?

Why, I need money to get me started  
in Bountiful.

I want to hire somebody to drive me out,  
look at my house, and get a few groceries.  
Try to find a cot to sleep on.

I'm sorry, lady.

You're not going to Bountiful.

- Oh, yes, I am. You see...

- I have to hold you here...

for the sheriff.

You are joking with me. Now, don't you joke  
with me, I have come too far!

I need to keep you here until your son  
arrives in his car this morning.

My son hasn't got a car...

so I don't believe you.

He'll be here in a minute

and you can ask him yourself.

All right.

But I'm going. Do you understand that?

You'll see.

This is a free country,  
and I'm gonna tell him that.

And no sheriff or king or president...

is gonna keep me

from going back to Bountiful!

All right, well, you tell him that.

- What time is my son expected?

**- Around 7:**

Where can I find me a driver?

I can make it to Bountiful and back

**way before 7:**

- Look, lady...

- That's all I want!

Just to see it! Just to stand on the porch  
of my own house again.

- Lady, I don't have anything to...

- I thought last night that I had to stay.

I thought I'd just die if I couldn't stay.

But now, I'll settle for less.

An hour! Half an hour. Fifteen minutes!

Lady, it ain't up to me.

I told you, the sheriff!

- Then, get me the sheriff!

- Lady!

You get me the sheriff! Time is going.

They're going to have me locked up

in those two rooms again soon...

and the time is going. Time is...

- Mrs. Watts?

- Yes, sir.

- Are you the sheriff?

- Yes, ma'am.

I understand that my son

is going to be here at 7:30...

to take me back to Houston.

- Yes, ma'am.

- Then listen to me, sir.

I have made myself one promise:

To see my home again before I die.

- Lady...

- Now, I am not asking that I not go back.

I'm willing to go back.

Just let me go these 12 miles now.

I have money, I can pay.

- That's between you and your son, ma'am.

- Ludie?

Why, he's got to do

whatever Jessie Mae tells him to do.

And I know why she wants me back,

for my government check.

I don't know anything about that, ma'am.

- Won't you let me go?

- Not unless your son takes you.

All right, then.

I've lost.

I've come all this way only to lose.

I'm gonna die, and Jessie Mae knows that.

And she's willful...

and it is her will

that I die in those two rooms.

She's not gonna have her way.

- It is my will to die in Bountiful!

- Mrs. Watts.

Please let me go those 12 miles

before it's too late!

Understand me. Suffering, I don't mind.

Suffering, I understand.

I didn't protest once!

Even when my heart was broken

when those babies died.

But these 15 years of bickering...

of endless, petty bickering...

It's made me like Jessie Mae sees me...

and it's ugly, and I will not be that way!

I want to go home!

- Hey, Roy?

- Yes, sir?

- Get a doctor.

- I'm all right!

- Hurry.

- No doctor.

Bountiful.

Mrs. Watts, just lie down. It's all right.

She'll be all right.

Take care of her.

- How you feeling?

- Stronger by the minute, thank you.

The doctor said we're to keep you calm

and see that you rest till your son gets here.

Thank you. I appreciate your interest.

But he said he didn't think it would do harm

if I wanted to drive you out to your place...

as long as you felt well enough to go.

Yes, sir!

Thank you. I feel well enough to go.

All right. I'll take you.

Does this look familiar?

Oh, yes. It certainly does.

My Lord.

Tell you, look at Bountiful.

There's nothing left.

Home.

I'm home.

Thank you.

Better come over here and sit down

and rest for a while.

Let me get this.

- There you go.

- Thank you.



You don't wanna overdo it.

Yes, sir.

- Are you feeling all right now?

- Oh, yes, I am.

I'm feeling ever so much better.

Well, you look better.

I just hope I'm doing the right thing  
in bringing you here.

Thank you, you've been very kind.

What kind of bird is that?

That's an old redbird.

I thought it was a redbird,  
but it's been so long since I heard one...

I just... I couldn't be sure.

Do they still have scissortails around here?

Yes, ma'am.

I still see one every once in a while  
when I'm driving around the country.

I don't know of anything prettier  
than a scissortail flying through the sky.

You know, my father was...

a good man in many ways.

He was a peculiar man, but a good one.

And one thing he never could stand  
was to see a bird shot on his land.

If he saw a man come in here hunting,  
he'd just take his gun and chase him away.

And I think the birds knew  
that they couldn't be touched here.

Our land was always home to them.

We had ducks, and geese, finches...

blue jays, bluebirds, and redbirds.

The old ricebirds,  
they're in thicker every year.

They seem to thrive out here on the coast.

I think a mockingbird's my favorite of all.

I think it's mine, too.

I don't know, though.

I am mighty partial to the scissortail.

Hope I see one soon.

I hope you can.

You know, my father was born on this land  
and in this house.

- Did you know my father?

- No, ma'am. Not that I can remember.  
I guess there aren't many around here  
who remember my father.  
I do.  
Of course. And my son.  
You know, it's funny,  
but ever since we got here I just...  
I've had half a feeling...  
that my father and my mother...  
would come out of this house...  
greet me...  
and welcome me home.  
Well, I guess when you've lived longer  
than your house and your family...  
you've lived long enough.  
What happened to the farms?  
For the last five miles,  
I've seen nothing but empty fields.  
I know.  
The land around Bountiful just played out.  
People like you got discouraged,  
moved away.  
Callie Davis kept her farm going.  
Yes, she did.  
She learned how to treat her land right.  
It began paying off for her towards the end.  
Heard she was out riding her tractor  
the day before she died.  
Yeah, it was a lonely death she had.  
All by herself in that big old house.  
There are worse things.  
Looks to me like you're gonna have  
a pretty day.  
I hope so.  
- You feeling more rested now?  
- Yes, I am.  
I'm going to go on back down to my car.  
Now, you call me if you need anything.  
Anything.  
Thank you.  
Mama!  
- Hello, Mama.  
- Hello, son.  
- How you feel?

- I feel much better, Ludie.

Yes, ma'am.

I got my wish.

Yes, ma'am.

I hope I didn't worry you too much, Ludie.

- But I just felt that I had to...

- I know, Mama.

You see, son...

I know it's hard for you to understand...

and for Jessie Mae to understand.

Yes, ma'am, I understand, Mama.

It's done now, so let's just forget about it.

All right, son.

- You did bring Jessie Mae, didn't you?

- Yes, ma'am.

Now she's here, isn't she going to get out of the car and look around a little?

She didn't seem to want to, Mama.

- You asked her?

- Yes, ma'am.

- Did you ask about your raise, son?

- Yes, ma'am.

Mr. Douglas said he liked my work and that he'd be glad to recommend a raise for me.

The sky is so blue, Ludie.

Did you ever see a sky so blue?

No, ma'am.

You know, Callie Davis died.

Is that so?

- When did that happen?

- They don't rightly know.

They found her dead.

She'd been riding a tractor the day before they found her.

They buried her yesterday.

I should've made myself bring you out here sooner.

I'm sorry.

I just thought it'd be easier if we didn't see the house again.

I know, Ludie.

But now you're here...

wouldn't you like to come inside, son?

- Look around?

- No.

I don't think I'd better, Mama.

I don't see any use in it.

I'd rather remember it like it was.

Yeah, the old house has gotten

kind of run-down, hasn't it?

I don't think it's going to last out

the next Gulf storm.

Doesn't look like it would.

You know who you look like standing there?

- Who?

- My papa.

I do?

Just like.

Of course, I've been noticing

as you've been getting older...

that you look more and more like him.

My papa was a good-looking man.

He was?

You've seen his pictures.

Didn't you think so?

I don't remember. It's been so long

since I looked at his pictures.

He was always considered

a very nice-looking man.

Do you remember my papa at all, son?

No, ma'am, not too well.

I was only 10 when he died, Mama.

I remember the day that he died.

I heard about it as I was coming home

from school.

Lee Weems told me. I thought he was joking

and I called him a liar.

I remember you took me

into the parlor there...

the day of the funeral

to say goodbye to him.

I remember the coffin

and the people sitting in the room.

Old man Lew...

Joe Weems took me up on his knee...

and told me that Grandpapa

was his best friend...

and that his life

was a real example for me to follow.  
I remember Grandmama sitting  
by the coffin and crying...  
and she made me promise...  
that when I had a son of my own  
I would name him after Grandpapa.  
I would, too!  
I have never forgotten that promise!  
I didn't have a son.  
Or a daughter.  
Billy Davis told me today  
that his wife is expecting her fourth child.  
They already have two girls and a son.  
Billy Davis doesn't make much more  
than I do.  
And they certainly seem to get along.  
Have their own house and a car.  
It does your heart good to hear  
about how they all get along.  
Everybody has their own job,  
even the youngest child, she's only three.  
She puts the napkins on the table  
at mealtimes. That's her job!  
And Billy says to me, "Ludie, I don't  
know if I could get along without my kids."  
He says, "I don't know how you get  
along, Ludie. What you work for?"  
I said, "Well, Billy..."  
I haven't made any kind of life  
for you, Mama.  
Either of you.  
And I try so hard...  
Mama, I lied to you.  
I do remember.  
I remember so much.  
This house, this life here.  
The night you woke me up, dressed me,  
took me for a walk when the moon was full...  
and I cried 'cause I was scared,  
and you comforted me.  
I want to stop remembering.  
It doesn't do any good remembering.  
That's Jessie Mae.  
We have to start back now, Mama.

No!  
Ludie, what has happened to us?  
How did we come to this?  
I don't know, Mama.  
To have stayed and fought the land  
would be better than this.  
Yes, ma'am.  
You know, pretty soon all this'll be gone.  
In 20 years, 10.  
This house...  
me...  
you.  
I know, Mama.  
But the river's still here...  
the fields...  
the trees...  
and the smell of the Gulf.  
I always got my strength from that.  
Not from houses.  
And not from people.  
It's so quiet.  
It's so eternally quiet.  
I'd forgotten the peace...  
the quiet.  
Do you remember how my papa always had  
that field over there planted in cotton?  
Yes, Mama.  
You see, it's all woods now.  
But I expect someday people will come...  
and cut down the trees  
and plant the cotton...  
and maybe even wear out the land again.  
And then their children will sell it  
and move to the cities.  
And then, trees will come up again.  
I expect so, Mama.  
And we're part of all that.  
We left it, but we can never lose  
what it's given us.  
I expect so, Mama.  
Ludie, are you coming or not?  
We were just starting, Jessie Mae.  
Hello! Jessie Mae!  
I am not speaking to you.

I guess you're proud of the time you gave us  
dragging us here at this time of morning.  
If Ludie loses his job over this,  
I hope you are satisfied.  
I'm not gonna lose my job, Jessie Mae.  
- Well, you could!  
- All right, Jessie Mae.  
And she should realize that.  
She's selfish. That's her trouble.  
Always has been, just pure-dee selfish.  
Did you tell your mama  
what we were discussing in the car?  
No, we can talk it all over  
driving back to Houston.  
I think we should have it all out right here!  
I would like everything understood  
right now. I have it all written down.  
You want to read it or you want me  
to read it to you, Mother Watts?  
What is it, Jessie Mae?  
It's a few rules and regulations  
that are necessary to my peace of mind.  
And, I think, to Ludie's.  
- First of all, I'd like to ask you a question.  
- Yes, ma'am?  
Didn't you know you'd be caught  
and have to come back?  
I had to come, Jessie Mae.  
Twenty years is a long time.  
- Didn't you know you could've died?  
- I knew.  
And you didn't care?  
I had to come, Jessie Mae.  
- I hope it's out of your system now.  
- It is.  
I've had my trip...  
and that's more than enough  
to keep me happy for the rest of my life.  
I'm glad to hear it.  
That's the first thing on my list.  
- There'll be no more running away.  
- There'll be no more running away.  
Good.  
Number two. No more hymn singing...

when I'm in the apartment.

When I'm gone,

you can sing your lungs out.

- Agreed?

- Agreed.

- Number three.

- Jessie Mae, can't this wait till we get home?

Honey,

we agreed that I was going to handle this.

No more pouting.

When I ask a question,

I would like an answer.

Otherwise, I'll consider it pouting.

All right.

Number four.

With your heart in the condition that it's in...

I feel you should not run

around the apartment when you can walk.

All right, Jessie Mae.

Is there anything you want to say to me?

No, Jessie Mae.

I might as well tell you right now...

I'm not staying in the house

and watching over you anymore.

I'm joining a bridge club...

and I am going to town

at least twice a week.

We also agreed...

to try to get along.

Jessie Mae also realizes that sometimes

she gets upset when she shouldn't.

Don't you, Jessie Mae?

So let's start

by trying to have a pleasant ride home.

All right.

Is there any water around here? I'm thirsty.

I don't think so, Jessie Mae.

There any water around here, Mama?

The old cistern's gone.

Look at my shoes!

They have scratches on them.

They're my good pair.

I ought to have my head examined...

for wearing my only good pair of shoes



out here in this old swamp!  
When I was a boy, Jessie Mae,  
I used to drink in the creek over there.  
You wouldn't catch me  
drinking out of any creek.  
I knew a man once  
who went on a hunting trip...  
and drank out of a creek  
and caught something and died.  
Cistern water, there's nothing like it  
for washing your hair with.  
Come on. Let's get going.  
Do we go back by way of Harrison?  
Good.  
We can stop at the drugstore.  
I'm so thirsty I could drink 10 Coca-Colas.  
Are you ready?  
- Yes, ma'am.  
- Where's your purse?  
Are you talking to me, Jessie Mae?  
Who else would I be talking to?  
Since when did Ludie start going around  
with a pocketbook under his arm?  
I guess I left it inside.  
- Where?  
- I'll go get it.  
No. I want to go. You'll take all day.  
You wait here.  
It's all right, Ludie. Son.  
Here! Here's your purse.  
Where is that money for that  
government check?  
I didn't cash it. It's right there in the purse.  
- No, it isn't.  
- Oh, here, let me look.  
- What is the matter with you?  
- That's a good joke on me.  
What is so funny?  
You know, I just remembered  
I left this purse on the bus last night.  
It caused a man a lot of trouble  
because I thought the check was in it.  
And do you know,  
that check wasn't in that purse all that time.

Where was it?  
It was in here. It's been in here  
since yesterday afternoon.  
Well, give it to me  
before you go and lose it again.  
I'm not gonna lose it.  
Now don't start that business again.  
Just give it to me.  
Look, I'm not going to do anything...  
We are going to stop this wrangling  
once and for all!  
You have given me your word  
and I expect you to keep your word.  
We have to live together.  
We're going to live together in peace.  
Go ahead, you keep the check.  
But don't lose it before you get home.  
Come on, let's go.  
Mama, if I get that raise, you won't have to...  
It's all right, son. I've had my trip.  
You go on. I'll be there in a minute.  
The house used to look so big.  
Goodbye, Bountiful.  
Goodbye.  
5@y3