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P.O. Box 237060  
New York, NY 10023

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Email: [questions@playscripts.com](mailto:questions@playscripts.com)  
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## **Cast of Characters**

WANDA, Carrie's mother, 50s

CARRIE, age 26

SHANNON, Carrie's sister, age 30

DOT LOLLY, 50s or 60s, Southern dialect and etiquette coach

WEBB, Carrie's father, 50s

## **Place**

Carrie's Cake in a Jar, Columbus, Mississippi

## **Time**

The Present

## **Acknowledgements**

*Y'all* was commissioned and produced by The Drilling Company, under the artistic direction of Hamilton Clancy, and premiered at the 78th Street Theatre Lab in New York City on October 16, 2003, with the following cast and staff:

WANDA..... Jane Ray  
CARRIE ..... Carrie Keranen  
SHANNON..... Billie Davis  
DOT LOLLY..... Rebecca Darke  
WEBB ..... Michael Gnat  
  
Director ..... Hamilton Clancy  
Lighting Designer..... Jerry Browning  
Scenic Designer..... Bradford Olson  
Sound Designer ..... Michael Graetzer  
Costume Consultant ..... Anna Alisa Belous  
Production Manager ..... Rebecca Allyn Jones

# Y'ALL

by Elizabeth Scales Rheinfrank

*(Lights up on Carrie's Cake in a Jar, a bakeshop in Columbus, Mississippi. CARRIE, dressed like a New York sophisticate, all in black, stands behind a counter, where we see a row of mason jars, their tops wrapped in brightly colored cellophane and tied with silver ribbon.)*

**WANDA.** *(Running in from the kitchen:)* Carrie! Oh, Carrie, you won't believe it. It's too delicious.

*(SHANNON follows, screaming. WANDA screams, and the two women hug each other, jumping around in circles.)*

**CARRIE.** What?

**WANDA.** Oh, I'm sorry, sugar, it's just, the most delicious thing has happened—

**CARRIE.** Stop saying delicious.

**WANDA.** Another word I can't say. Tell me, sugar, what is the Yankee word for such an occasion?

**CARRIE.** What occasion?

**SHANNON.** *(Jumping in:)* Carrie, The Food Channel's coming to Columbus; they want to do a story on us.

**WANDA.** Can you believe it, sugars? Carrie's Cake in a Jar, a household name! And us, celebrities!

*(WANDA and SHANNON jump around in a circle again, screaming.)*

**CARRIE.** Why?

**SHANNON.** Why must you always be so negative? Something wonderful has happened to us. Can't you just be happy, for once?

**WANDA.** Girls, let's not fight. Soon this place will be crawling with tourists, on their way to New Orleans, just falling all over each other for a little jar of Mississippi hospitality. Isn't it just too delicious, sugar?

**CARRIE.** It's delicious, mama. *(Hugging her mother)* I'm happy for you.

**WANDA.** Happy for us!

**CARRIE.** Happy for us.

*(CARRIE grabs WANDA, and they jump around, screaming. SHANNON tries to hand CARRIE a piece of paper.)*

What's this?

**SHANNON.** To practice, you know, for TV.

**CARRIE.** No, I don't want to.

**WANDA.** Oh, come on, Carrie.

**CARRIE.** I came back home to get my life together. I don't want to do it in front of a camera. You do it.

**SHANNON.** I can't, dummy. Mama named the shop after you. You're the one they want to see. *(More to herself, bitterly:)* Aren't you the lucky one?

**WANDA.** Oh, please, sugar. It won't work without you. You're my inspiration.

**CARRIE.** Well, OK...

**WANDA.** *(Positioning SHANNON where she wants her:)* Shannon, you hold the camera.

*(SHANNON looks perturbed, pretends she is holding a television camera.)*

**CARRIE.** *(Seeing SHANNON, thinking it's a little odd:)* Oh, OK. *(Reading from the paper; with a heavy Northern accent)* Hey, y'all, and welcome to Carrie's Cake in a Jar. I'm Carrie, coming to you from the heart of Mississippi hill country. Why a jar, you say? Why not a tin? I'm glad you asked that question. Baking cakes in a jar is an old Southern tradition. Back in the days before refrigeration, cakes baked in a jar lasted longer. Banana nut, Mississippi mud fudge, pecan, take your pick. Our cakes are made from all natural ingredients, using old family recipes perfected over the years, from our

family to yours. (*Looking up from the script*) Well? What do you think, you guys?

**WANDA.** Oh, boy.

**SHANNON.** What the hell was that?

**CARRIE.** What?

**WANDA.** Your accent, sugar, what has happened to it?

**CARRIE.** What do you mean?

**SHANNON.** You went and turned into a damn Yankee.

**WANDA.** Shannon.

**SHANNON.** We'll never become a major tourist attraction with Joan Rivers here behind the counter.

**CARRIE.** OK, so I've lost my accent. That does not make me a Yankee. (*To SHANNON:*) You're jealous, because I got out of this hell-hole, and you didn't. Sorry, mama.

(*WANDA sighs.*)

**SHANNON.** And, look how far you got, back where you started.

**CARRIE.** At least I followed my dream.

**SHANNON.** If it was to be a hoity-toity Yankee bitch, I'd say you made it. Congratulations.

**WANDA.** Girls, let's not fight. We have a serious problem here.

(*WANDA hands CARRIE a brochure.*)

**CARRIE.** SBIT?

**WANDA.** (*Pointing out a line in the brochure with her finger:*) Southern-Belle-in-Training. It's a crash course in Southern dialect and etiquette with celebrity coach, Dot Lolly.

**CARRIE.** Mama, that's ridiculous. I don't need lessons on how to be Southern. I was born and raised in Mississippi.

**WANDA.** That's who these classes are for, sugar, people just like you. This woman, Dot Lolly, is wonderful. She helped Ms. McMahan's daughter when she ran for Miss U.S.A.

**CARRIE.** *(Reading from the brochure; not believing how ridiculous it sounds:)* "Thanks to Dot, I re-claimed the Southerner inside me. I'm 100% Southern Belle again."

**SHANNON.** It's signed Sela Ward! Sela Ward has a beautiful accent. She's from Meridian, you know.

**CARRIE.** I don't know, mama. This seems a little kooky to me.

**SHANNON.** See. I told you she wouldn't do it. She thinks she's too good for SBIT.

**WANDA.** *(Desperate times call for desperate measures:)* Carrie, I want to hear you sing "Dixie."

**CARRIE.** OK. *(She readies herself to sing. Singing:)* "Oh..." *(She laughs, her composure is shot.)* Sorry, this is a little silly—

**WANDA.** Sing!

**CARRIE.** "Oh, I wish I was in the land of cotton..."

*(Pauses for dramatic effect; looks at her mother.)*

"Old times there are not forgotten  
Look away, look away, look away, Dixie land.  
In Dixie land where I was born..."

*(CARRIE forgets the words.)*

In Dixie land where I was born..."

**WANDA.** *(Picking it up, with conviction:)*

"...Early on a frosty mornin',  
Look away, look away, look away, Dixie land.

*(SHANNON and WANDA march around CARRIE, singing.)*

**WANDA / SHANNON / CARRIE.**

"Then I wish I was in Dixie, hooray! Hooray!  
In Dixieland I'll make my stand, to live and die in Dixie,  
Hooray, hooray, away down South in Dixie,  
Hooray, hooray, away down South in Dixie."

**WANDA.** Carrie, you OK?

**CARRIE.** *(Crying:)* I really am a Yankee.

**WANDA.** I know, but we love you anyway.

**CARRIE.** I'm sorry I didn't believe you.

**WANDA.** It's OK, sugar. Help is on the way. And, besides, what kind of family would we be if we didn't interfere in your life from time to time?

*(DOT LOLLY appears in the doorway of the bakeshop. She is a sight to see, with perfect hair and makeup, a pink suit and heels. Everything about Dot is exaggerated, like a beauty queen on acid.)*

**LOLLY.** Hey, y'all. Knock, Knock.

**WANDA.** Oh, Miz Lolly, so good of you to come. Girls, this is Ms. Lolly. And, this is Carrie—

**LOLLY.** *(Seeing CARRIE:)* Mercy, child, what have you done to yourself? You look like you've been sleeping facedown on a bed of nails. Why are you dressed this way? Do you work in a funeral parlor?

*(She pulls a brightly colored scarf out of her bag and ties it around CARRIE's waist or neck.)*

And, why aren't you in make-up, honey? It's eleven AM and you look like you just rolled out of bed.

**CARRIE.** I don't wear make-up.

*(The women gasp.)*

**WANDA.** Since when?

**CARRIE.** I don't know, since I was about eighteen.

*(Everyone gasps again.)*

I don't need it anyway, because of my flawless skin.

**WANDA.** She does have beautiful skin.

*(DOT pulls a make-up case, seemingly out of nowhere and begins to apply make-up to CARRIE's face.)*

**LOLLY.** Yankee liberal propaganda, Yankee liberal propaganda, all women need make-up, and there is no such thing as flawless skin. It appears I have arrived just in time. How long was she up yonder?

*(WANDA and SHANNON look at DOT, confused.)*

In Yankeeland?

**WANDA.** Eight years. Are we too late?

**CARRIE.** Don't you think you guys might be overreact—

*(They all gasp at the words "you guys." WANDA holds back a tear. LOLLY pushes CARRIE.)*

**CARRIE.** Ouch. You pushed me.

**LOLLY.** Can anyone tell me what Carrie did wrong?

**SHANNON.** *(Raising her hand:)* She said "you guys." Again.

**CARRIE.** I did? I'm...sorry.

**SHANNON.** *(Becoming emotional:)* Sorry isn't good enough, Carrie. You're a Yankee. My sister is a Yankee.

**CARRIE.** I know. Sorry. I can't help it.

**LOLLY.** Do you want to tell us about it, Carrie? Do you remember how it started?

**CARRIE.** Well, it was freshman year in College. The kids on my hall used to make fun of my accent, and then one day my American history professor, Professor Whitfield, was talking about how in the Old South people didn't have shoes or running water, and then he looked straight at me, and he said, "And, you know what that's about, don't you, Carrie?" And, I wanted to stand up and say, "Screw you! Professor Whitfield! You don't know shit." But, instead I went to my room and ate an entire carton of moon pies you sent in a care package, mama, and from that point on, I started to lose my accent, on purpose, until it got harder and harder for people to tell where I was from. Sometimes, I lied and said I was from Kansas.

**WANDA.** Oh, I knew it. I knew I never should have let her go up yonder to that school.

**LOLLY.** You mustn't blame yourself, Wanda. Now, whenever you think "you guys," Carrie, I want you to say "y'all" instead. Can you do that?

**CARRIE.** I'll try.

**LOLLY.** Good. Now, say it after me, y'all...

**CARRIE.** Y'all.

**LOLLY.** No, honey, that's not quite it. Think of yourself as having been in a horrible, disfiguring accident.

**CARRIE.** Oh, how tragic. What kind of accident?

**LOLLY.** A car accident, a horrible car accident, and you've got to train hard to get those muscles working again. In this case, it's the muscles in your face. Y'aaaalllll...

**CARRIE.** Y'aaaaalllll...

**LOLLY.** Now, your voice is saying 100% Southern Belle, but your body's still screaming Yankee, so work with me, child. Put your whole body into that y'all.

**CARRIE.** Y'aaaaalllll...

**LOLLY.** Y'aaaaalllll...

**CARRIE / SHANNON / WANDA / LOLLY.** Y'aaaaaalllllll.

**LOLLY.** Did y'all know y'all is the most inclusive word in the English language? It's a fact. You can use y'all whether you're talking to two people or two hundred, which makes y'all the perfect word. Keep practicing, honey. Here, take off your shoes, that will help. Pretend the grass is squishing up between your toes.

*(CARRIE walks around barefoot, repeating the word "y'all.")*

**CARRIE.** *(She repeats the word:)* Y'aaaaalllll.

**SHANNON.** How bad is it, Dot?

**WANDA.** Is there any hope for my little girl?

**LOLLY.** I'm not going to lie to y'all. It's bad. But, I reckon I've seen worse. Come closer, Carrie, that's right.

*(DOT pulls what looks like a rhinestone dog collar out of her bag and puts it around CARRIE's neck.)*

**CARRIE.** *(Stopping with the y'all's:)* Hey.

**LOLLY.** Not to worry, honey, just a little aversion therapy.

**CARRIE.** Aversion therapy? What are you guys, crazy?

*(LOLLY points a pink remote control at CARRIE, and she receives a shock. CARRIE yells out in pain.)*

Mama!

**WANDA.** It's y'all, sugar. Y'all are crazy.

**LOLLY.** Good one, Wanda. Use your words, Carrie. I have to confess: I stole the technology from my little Pekingese, Precious...

**CARRIE.** I think—

*(She gets shocked.)*

**SHANNON.** Reckon. I reckon. Right?

**LOLLY.** Very good, Shannon!

**CARRIE.** I reckon you g—

*(CARRIE gets shocked again. CARRIE is having a very difficult time walking around.)*

Ouch! I th— *(shock)* reckon you—Y'all are all freaking crazy. Crazy!!!!

**LOLLY.** We used the collar to teach Precious not to leave the yard.

**WANDA.** Did it work?

**LOLLY.** No, the little thing's terrified to go out. Can you blame her? Every time she does she gets a nasty shock. All my carpets are ruined.

**WANDA.** Carrie? Stay off the carpet, sugar.

**LOLLY.** Wanda, that banana nut cake looks divine.

*(We hear CARRIE's dialogue under LOLLY and WANDA's dialogue about the cake.)*

**WANDA.** Would you care for a jar, Dot?

**LOLLY.** Love it.

**WANDA.** Shannon, get Ms. Lolly some cake.

*(SHANNON gets some cake for DOT.)*

**LOLLY.** She's really doing much better. Quick learner. Carrie, I don't have my glasses on. *(Pointing)* What's that?

**CARRIE.** Where? Over there?

*(She receives a huge shock.)*

**LOLLY.** Wrong. Over yonder, Carrie. Over yonder. That one was too easy.

**CARRIE.** Hey, you guys— *(shock)* y'all, sorry, tricked me, I thi— *(shock)* reckon, reckon, sorry. I reckon I'm going to— *(shock)* fixing to kill somebody.

**LOLLY.** Oh, good, Carrie, "fixing to." She got that one on her own. UUUmhhh. This cake is to die for.

**WANDA.** Why, thank you, Dot.

*(CARRIE is shocked again, and screams out.)*

Oh, me.

**LOLLY.** Don't worry, mama bear. She'll get the hang of it.

*(Suddenly Carrie's father, WEBB, enters from the kitchen. He is dressed in a Confederate uniform and boots. He carries a plate of boiled okra.)*

**CARRIE.** Daddy? Oh, daddy, not you, too!

**WEBB.** *(Innocently:)* What? *(Pause.)* Can I eat this?

**WANDA.** *(Taking the okra from him:)* No, you may not. That's part of Carrie's therapy.

**WEBB.** Therapy? Good God. Am I paying for it?

**WANDA.** No.

*(WEBB mumbles something and exits.)*

**WANDA.** Don't you touch any of them cakes!

*(We hear WEBB mumble something else, incomprehensible. WANDA hands the okra to DOT.)*

**CARRIE.** What's daddy doing in a Confederate uniform?

**SHANNON.** Gosh, Carrie, you're so out of it. He joined up with the possum town re-enactors.

*(LOLLY puts the plate of boiled okra on the floor.)*

**LOLLY.** Quiet. Drop down and give me ten.

**CARRIE.** What?

**LOLLY.** Push-ups. Ten of them.

*(CARRIE looks at WANDA and SHANNON. They shrug, but encourage her to do it. She moves to the floor in push-up position. LOLLY slides the plate, so that if CARRIE falls, her face will fall into the plate of okra.)*

**CARRIE.** Boiled okra, yuck! You're not going to make me eat that, are you? It's so slimy, yuck!

**LOLLY.** That depends on you. Go!

*(CARRIE does one push-up.)*

**LOLLY.** *(In a very Southern accent:)* One.

**CARRIE.** *(Imitating her:)* One.

**LOLLY.** Two.

**CARRIE.** Two.

**LOLLY.** Three.

**CARRIE.** Three.

**LOLLY.** Four.

*(She places her foot on CARRIE's back, making it harder for CARRIE to push up.)*

**CARRIE.** Four.

*(CARRIE is becoming increasingly weaker.)*

**LOLLY.** Five.

**CARRIE.** Five.

**LOLLY.** *(Still baring down on CARRIE's back:)* Stretch out that "i," soldier.

**CARRIE.** Fiiiiive.

**LOLLY.** Six.

*(CARRIE is stuck in the up position. She doesn't move.)*

Six.

*(Her arms start to wobble uncontrollably.)*

Six!

*(CARRIE collapses face-first into the plate of boiled okra.)*

**LOLLY.** Weak. *(Pause.)* Eat! Eat, you miserable Yankee.

*(DOT exits. CARRIE starts to shovel the okra into her mouth. SHANNON and WANDA look on at the horrible scene, grimacing. WEBB enters, holding a jar full of cake.)*

**WEBB.** What in hell's going on here?

**CARRIE.** Daddy, help.

**WANDA.** Webb, what did I say about that cake?

**SHANNON.** We told you, daddy, it's part of Carrie's therapy.

**WEBB.** Therapy? Good God. Am I paying for it?

**WANDA / SHANNON.** No.

**SHANNON.** Carrie's in SBIT, daddy.

**WEBB.** SBIT? What's this foolishness?

**WANDA.** Never you mind. Just, eat your cake.

**WEBB.** What?

**SHANNON.** She's a Yankee.

**WEBB.** Yankees? Where?

*(WEBB runs to the window.)*

Good God, I see one! Coming up yonder hill!

*(He holds up his rifle, and starts a wild rebel yell. He exits.)*

**CARRIE.** Daddy!

**WANDA.** Go get them Yankees, sugar.

**SHANNON.** And, that would be the postman.

*(SHANNON, CARRIE, and WANDA watch in horror, let out a groan as WEBB leaps on the postman.)*

**SHANNON.** Where's Ms. Lolly?

**WANDA.** I don't know.

*(DOT re-enters. She is now wearing white shoes.)*

Oh, there you are—Ms. Lolly!

*(The women suddenly notice simultaneously what DOT is wearing on her feet. WANDA and SHANNON gasp.)*

Oh, my word.

**CARRIE.** *(Mildly uncomfortable:)* Ms. Lolly, your shoes.

**LOLLY.** What about my shoes, Carrie?

**CARRIE.** *(Examining them closely:)* Are they new?

**LOLLY.** Yes, brand new. Do you like them?

*(LOLLY twirls around her in the shoes like a runway model.)*

**CARRIE.** Not especially, no.

**LOLLY.** I saw them in Vogue. Black and white is all the rage for fall. What do you think?

**CARRIE.** *(Something clicks in CARRIE's head:)* I think... I reckon you can't wear white after Labor Day.

**LOLLY.** That's not true. You can wear white any time of year now. All the fashion magazines say so.

**CARRIE.** Well, they're wrong.

**LOLLY.** But, these shoes are designer, Carrie.

**CARRIE.** I don't care. Take them off.

**LOLLY.** No. That's a silly rule.

**CARRIE.** You can't wear white after Labor Day. Take them off.

**WANDA.** Something's happening, y'all.

**CARRIE.** *(With a thick Southern accent:)* Stay out of this, y'all! In the name of everything holy, take off the shoes and step away. I reckon, I'm fixing to beat you to death with them.

**SHANNON.** That's the Carrie I remember.

**WANDA.** *(Frightened by the look in her daughter's eye:)* Carrie?

**LOLLY.** Carrie, wait...

*(CARRIE gives a rebel yell and makes a wild leap for the shoes. She hangs onto DOT's ankles.)*

**SHANNON.** Way to go, sissy!

**WANDA.** *(Helping CARRIE onto her feet:)* Carrie? Carrie?

**CARRIE.** What happened?

**LOLLY.** You're cured, honey.

**CARRIE.** I am? That's great. Hey, y'all, we did it!

**WANDA.** I'm so proud of you, sugar.

**CARRIE.** How did you know about the shoes?

**LOLLY.** Oh, sugar, it's like you said, everyone knows you can't wear white after Labor Day; any Southerner would sooner die than break the cardinal rule.

**CARRIE.** Thanks, Dot.

*(DOT's cell phone rings. She answers it.)*

**LOLLY.** Dot Lolly. Hey, y'all. Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Uh-huh. *(She hangs up.)* Sorry, ladies, got to go.

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