ALABASTER
by
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CHARACTER BREAKDOWN
ALICE - a photographer
JUNE - a folk artist
WEEZY - a goat
BIB - a very old goat

Note: Neither BIB nor WEEZY should be dressed like goats. While they may have the occasional goat "feature," mostly they walk and talk just like humans except for the very few moments when they don't. We should be able to see their faces, their expressions, etc. This is vital.

TIME
Present day.

SETTING
Somewhere near Alabaster, Alabama, early April. Portrait of a an old farmhouse, mid-morning. A yard, a porch. A small goat barn. The focal point is a master bedroom. An assemblage of folk art fills the corners and walls of this sun-lit room along with a large old bed, draped in white. Somewhere in this picture is a space for WEEZY and BIB, a pallet of straw, perhaps, or a lean-to.

This place, a virtual canvas, gains color and crispness as the story moves along, reflecting at any moment the mood or perspective of what the players experience as well as their point of view through the viewfinder.
SCENE 1

NOTE: This is not a friendly farm; folks aren't friendly here. That's not to say they don't care. The love is there. Always. And the humor. But death and destruction is known to the inhabitants of this farm and to the people lured into its clutches in a way that changes people forever. In this play, which spans a single day, we are experiencing four women, each of them at a crossroad, each of them facing a wall of fire. Though at times it may seem like they are simply exchanging pleasantries, they are quite literally fighting for their lives. In "come to Jesus" moments like these, especially for women who have seen a thing or two, we are faced with our own mortality. We understand time as a luxury and it's do or die time, except no one here has their shit together. The time for pleasantries is over. Resist the urge to play things "nice."

AT RISE: WEEZY enters the light. SHE addresses the audience as she addresses nearly everyone else around her, with a neutral, no-nonsense, no bullshit tone (she's not warm, but she's not cold either).

WEEZY

(more dry than convivial)
My name is Weezy, I am a goat, I am aware that I am a goat.
(looking around the room)
We are presently on a small farm in the backwoods of North Alabama.
(beat)
So that's happening.
(beat)
We are in-

BIB
(from OFF)
Maaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!

WEEZY
We'll get through it together.
(beat)
We are in Alabaster, Alabama. Right near Gip's Place, of which you might have heard, the last remaining juke joint in the state of Alabama, it's BYOB, which is nothing to do with this story, but is useful information on a Friday night.
BIB, an aging goat, enters. SHE is a bit disoriented and confused about her whereabouts.

    BIB
    (she calls to WEEZY)
    Maaaaaah...

BIB notices WEEZY and walks toward her.

    WEEZY
    That's my mama. Bib.

BIB stops in her tracks, suddenly noticing the audience. SHE is highly PUT OUT at the site of so many unexpected visitors. SHE looks at WEEZY and back at the audience.

    BIB
    (to WEEZY - "What's all this, Field of Dreams?"
    Mmah-Maah...

WEEZY gives her a look, like "It is what it is."

    BIB (CONT'D)
    (to WEEZY - "shit")
    MAH!

BIB works her way across the yard to her pallet at the goat barn giving certain audience members a suspicious side-eye and griping as necessary.

    WEEZY
    (to the audience)
    We don't get many visitors.

At times, BIB stops and re-routes herself. It is obvious she has directional issues.

    WEEZY (CONT'D)
    (to the audience)
    She's sick. Old and sick.

WEEZY helps her along as necessary (ad lib, e.g.,"around the garden, mama," "no, yes... that way, got it?").

    WEEZY (CONT'D)
    (as she watches BIB make her way to her pallet)
    I didn't always know my mama. I was taken from her when I was real little. I have no memory of her from before. But she's here now. Right.
BIB settles onto her pallet.

WEEZY (CONT'D)
(to BIB)
OK, mama?

BIB closes her eyes.

Lights up on a large sunlit bedroom. On the bed, a woman sits dressed in a robe nervously sipping from a coffee mug and looking anxiously around the room. Her body, or what we can see of it, is covered with scars.

WEEZY (CONT'D)
That's June.
(almost goading)
June and me, we have a connection.
Right, June?

JUNE shoots WEEZY the bird then goes back to looking around the room nervously. There are camera bags, video and lighting equipment lying around the room.

ALICE, a bright-eyed woman of a certain energy, enters the bedroom as if returning from a related task.

WEEZY (CONT'D)
And that's a new person.

ALICE unzips the case of her video camera. A small dust cloth inadvertently falls out of the bag and onto the floor.

WEEZY (CONT'D)
She's not from around here.

During the following, ALICE sets up her tripod and video camera, pointing it in the direction of the bed.

WEEZY (CONT'D)
(to JUNE - a reminder)
Just remember, June. You asked her to come.

JUNE nods nervously in response.

During the following, WEEZY tucks BIB into bed and fixes a loose braid in her hair. SHE then settles into a lawn chair next to BIB outside the goat barn and watches on, eating popcorn, drinking beer, and occasionally commentating on the scene as if watching a daytime soap.

NOTE: WEEZY need not look directly at JUNE or the players to know everything that's going on. SHE knows all. Sees all.
SHE is a goat of few words and her default demeanor is cool, her expression stoic. She is tough love. Worn down by the ravages of time and responsibility, a mentor of sorts (think: Mr. Miaggi, Yoda, Gandalf).

Lights now focus on ALICE and JUNE.

JUNE
Did you get something to eat? People talk about eatin when they don't know what to talk about.

ALICE
I had a snack on the plane.

JUNE
Never been on a plane.

ALICE
Never?

JUNE
I don't really know anybody I could fly to, anyway. Well, I know you now, I could fly to you.

ALICE
Sure.

JUNE
Times Square, maybe.

ALICE
See a show?

JUNE
There's mystery meat there. On sticks. Stand there in the middle of it, feel big or feel small. (beat) You live in Brooklyn right?

ALICE
Uh... that's debatable.

JUNE
How so?

ALICE
I'm kind of sorting that out.

JUNE takes a sip from her coffee mug and offers a sip to ALICE.
ALICE (CONT'D)
Is that coffee?

JUNE
Mmm hmm. Variation on coffee.

ALICE
What's the variation?

JUNE
I use Bourbon instead.

ALICE
Instead of what?

JUNE
Instead of coffee.

JUNE offers her the mug.

ALICE
Tempting. I shouldn't.

JUNE
Gotta be somewhere.

ALICE
It's the work, ya know?

JUNE
The work.

ALICE
Nothing personal.

JUNE
Do you know Annie Leibovitz?

ALICE
I do know Annie.

JUNE
What's she like?

ALICE
She's hysterical. And very real. And miles ahead.

JUNE
I read some place it's the photographer's job to make their subjects comfortable. She does not... subscribe to this notion.
ALICE
How so?
(off JUNE'S look)
Well, we're not wedding planners.
I'm not supposed to console you,
I'm supposed to capture you.

JUNE
Really?
(beat)
I bet that was meant to sound
dangerous.

ALICE
Did it not sound dangerous?

JUNE
That wasn't dangerous.

ALICE
OK, define dangerous.

JUNE
(sipping from her mug)
Indoor malls. Banana slugs. Clowns.
(beat)
We used to let outsiders just come
and go but things have gotten so
desperate.

ALICE
Oh yeah?

JUNE
It's the inbreeding, we lay traps.
(beat)
Amazing what we catch.

ALICE
Really...

JUNE
Really.

Pause.

ALICE
(pointedly)
What do you use for bait?

An electric pause.

ALICE's phone rings with the THEME SONG FROM PSYCHO.
JUNE
(recognizing the ring tone)
Who the fuck is on your shit list?

ALICE
That's my dad.

JUNE
Solid.

ALICE digs for the phone in her backpack and mutes it.

ALICE
Sorry.

JUNE
Alice?

ALICE
Yeah?

JUNE
Breathe.

ALICE
That's my line.

JUNE takes a breath. ALICE takes a breath.

JUNE
You need a break?

ALICE
I'm good.

ALICE resumes setting up her equipment.

JUNE
So, how many women have you... ya know...

ALICE
You're number seven.

JUNE
Lucky seven.
(beat)
You just go from city to city...

ALICE
Pretty much.
JUNE
Got a favorite?

ALICE
Savannah.

JUNE
Is she pretty?

ALICE
What- oooh, you're asking me to pick a favorite woman.

Sure.

ALICE (CONT'D)
No way.

JUNE
(a new tack)
Do they all have scars like me?

Pause.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Guess not.

ALICE
What are you asking?

JUNE
I thought that was pretty straight forward.

ALICE
Ya think?

JUNE
I don't know what to think, I'm making shit up.

Beat.

ALICE
What was the question?

WEEZY
(to the audience)
June likes to push.

JUNE
Do they all...have scars...like me?
WEEZY
(to the audience)
I used to think it was the PTSD
from her injuries, but then I
remembered, nope, she's always been
a bitch.

JUNE
Hello?

ALICE
No and yes.

JUNE
Good answer, duh.

ALICE
It's not about the scars.

JUNE
You're taking pictures of people
with scars but it's not about the
scars, what's it about, then,
Alice, tell me.

ALICE
I think it might be hard to tell
you anything.
(beat)
I dunno, fear?

JUNE
Rings a bell.

WEEZY
(flatly)
Fear of the unknown, fear of self-
discovery, fear of happiness, even.

ALICE
These women--some of these women--
are--

JUNE
(overlapping)
Why not men?

ALICE
(overlapping - continuing)
In a lot of pain because-- NO. Men?
Why do people / always ask me that?
JUNE (overlapping) WEEZY (overlapping)
It's whatever, do / you're thing. Let her talk!

ALICE (overlapping)
Can I finish?

Pause.

ALICE (CONT'D)
It's not about the scars, / the scars are just a way in.

JUNE (overlapping)
You're gonna tell me / they're beautiful?

WEEZY (overlapping - under her breath)
Oh my god.

Long pause, while ALICE waits for JUNE to settle.

ALICE
They're a way in.

JUNE
In.

ALICE
What I mean is -- and I want to... I want to be careful here because it's not like I'm an expert on scars. But, what I'm learning is -- or what I have learned is -- every woman, every scar, is different. Some women are still in the early stages, others have... made peace? I guess? With their physical worlds?

JUNE
And now you're in it.

ALICE
Mmm hmm. I feel pretty lucky too. Not everyone gets to do what I do.

Beat.
JUNE (calculating)
Why the switch?

ALICE
Switch?

JUNE
From the celebrities.

ALICE
("What are you up to?")
My assignment work, you mean?

JUNE
Assignment. Work.

ALICE
I'm not painting you in.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Have you been reading my diary?

ALICE
I needed a change.

JUNE
Just all of a sudden...
(beat)
You spend just as much time with Demi Moore as someone like me, what's the difference, really?

ALICE
Is that a serious question?
(beat)
It's more intimate, obviously.

JUNE
Not obviously. I've seen your celebrity shots, those are some scarred up motherfuckers.

Beat.

ALICE
I can see I have to choose my words more carefully.

JUNE
Because you weren't before?

ALICE
That's not how I meant it.
JUNE
It's how I meant it.

ALICE
I'm listening.

JUNE
Why the switch?

ALICE
I told you, I needed a change.

JUNE
You needed a change because you needed a change?

ALICE (CONT'D)
And it was admittedly a pat response, but it's what people say in polite company instead of the alternative.

JUNE
I'm not polite company.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Which is the horrible truth of their lives.
(beat)
Is that ok? Is that ok, June? If I hang back on that question. Until I know you. A little better?

JUNE
(flatly)
I think you would make a *shitty* wedding planner.

WEEZY
(disapprovingly - throwing popcorn at JUNE)
Ba'laaaah!!!! Ba'laaaaaaah!!!

JUNE
(to WEEZY)
Would you- I got it!

WEEZY
(goat-spitting)
Pfff!!

*JUNE turns her focus on WEEZY during the following.*

JUNE
(to ALICE)
I've got... an apology.

*Two slow lifeless claps from WEEZY.*
ALICE
No. Actually, I'm sorry. Can we start over?

JUNE
(to ALICE)
Sure.

ALICE
Great.

ALICE nervously turns her attention to fixing the video camera. She looks around at the art in the room.

ALICE (CONT'D)
(nervously - regarding the art)
I love all your pieces.

JUNE
(to ALICE)
Thanks.

ALICE
I haven't had a good look, but I'd like to.

JUNE
(to ALICE)
Sure.

ALICE
Did I see Jim Sudduth over there? You're a collector, obviously.
(positioning the camera)
I collect a bit myself.

Beat.

JUNE
(to ALICE)
Am I scar-i er than Hollywood?

WEEZY smiles at this wording.

ALICE
By an order of magnitude.
(beat)
But, I wouldn't come all this way just to cower in a corner.

JUNE
(to ALICE)
You can if you want to.
ALICE
I don't want to.

Beat.

JUNE
(turning her focus now to
ALICE)
You don't want to?

ALICE
(pointedly)
I don't want to.

ALICE adjusts the light on JUNE. JUNE watches her.

ALICE (CONT'D)
I'm glad you answered my ad.

JUNE
Oh, That was my neighbor, Peachy
Sawgrass.

ALICE
Peachy Sawgrass. JUNE (CONT'D)
She told me -- I know, it's a
name, it's a name -- she told
me you were lookin' for
women.

ALICE
Oh. I don't know why I thought you
found it online.

JUNE
I don't do online. I'm dumb and I
have a dumb phone and I like it
that way.

ALICE
(stunned)
Really?

JUNE
No shit.

ALICE
So...if you don't do online, how
did you find me?

JUNE
("duh")
The library.
ALICE
Your local library has my books?

JUNE (CONT'D)
Birmingham. I called Aggie Nolan at the Five Points branch, she sends me stuff.

ALICE
You have your own personal librarian?

JUNE
She's my cousin, she's also a librarian, she told me she saw your pictures one time at the Corcoran when she went up there on a school trip to DC. She wanted me to ask you why people in your pictures look so sad all the time and then I looked at your pictures and I saw it too. The sadness, I mean. Or maybe that's new information. To you?

(beat)
Are you gay?

WEEZY
(to JUNE)
OH MY GOD.

ALICE
You ask a lot of questions. Are you?

WEEZY
(to JUNE)
SERIOUSLY?

ALICE
Does it matter?

JUNE
No.

ALICE
OK...

JUNE (CONT'D)
Are you attracted to me?

(beat)

ALICE
No. No, I'm not attracted to you.

JUNE
Really?

ALICE
(making a joke)
You're not my type.
JUNE
(amused)
DAMN! Not. Your. Type!?

WEEZY
(amused)
NICE!

JUNE
Wow...

WEEZY
(to JUNE)
You deserved that one.

JUNE
(mostly to WEEZY)
Whatever.

WEEZY
(to JUNE)
She's just trying to do her job,
June. Would you relax?

JUNE
(bratty)
Assignments and clients and jobs.
Oh, my.

ALICE
(playfully)
You're pretty impossible.

JUNE
So many words.

ALICE
Maybe we should stay focused on the
work.

JUNE
Yeah, OK.

ALICE
Are you ready?

JUNE
Born ready.

ALICE sits in a chair next to the video camera and pulls out
a note pad and a pen.
ALICE
OK. So, these questions...just say skip, OK, if you can't or don't want to answer.

JUNE
Skip?

ALICE
Yeah. Ya know, like if I ask you--

JUNE
NEXT QUESTION!

Pause.

JUNE (CONT'D)
My head pops off from time to time, just to warn ya.

JUNE turns to see WEEZY amused but shaking her head with disappointment. SHE sticks her tongue out at WEEZY.

ALICE smiles at JUNE and takes a big breath. JUNE takes a big breath. WEEZY takes a reluctant breath. BIB, still snoozing, takes sleepy staccato-style catch-up breath and then exhales softly.

ALICE
You're very brave, sitting there.
OK...just so you know the order, I'm going to ask about the scars first so I can get the video. We'll do the photographs separately when we get the light.

JUNE
Fine.

ALICE turns on the video camera. JUNE nervously mugs for the camera.

JUNE (CONT'D)
I don't know why I did that, there's nobody in there.

ALICE turns on her little handheld voice recorder. SHE looks up to see that JUNE has removed her robe.

ALICE
Oh. No. I'm only recording from the shoulders up. You can...

Pause.
(pointedly)

Why am I so quick to take my clothes off, Alice? That is something I should explore.

Are you more comfortable with your clothes off?

That is....

YES.

Yes. Yes, I am.

Well, it certainly doesn't bother me, whatever makes you comfortable.

JUNE begins to ask a question --

(overlapping -- to JUNE)
GIRL, GET DRESSED!

JUNE rolls her eyes at WEEZY and then, just to fuck with her, SHE slowly pulls her robe up over her shoulders and ties it closed.

This is June. It's April 5, 2018, and we're just outside Alabaster, Alabama.

Lord, that's almost my gravestone.

So, how long have you lived here, June?

All my life. Which is forever, seems like forever.

You like living here?

I like the farm.
ALICE
The farm.

JUNE
(a loaded answer)
I don't get out much.

ALICE
Why's that?

JUNE
(as if she's used or heard this word a thousand times)
Issues.

ALICE
Issues.

ALICE makes a note on the paper.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Anything interesting?

JUNE
Next.

ALICE
Got it. So, what do you do for a living?

JUNE
That's a stupid question.

ALICE
I'm sorry?

JUNE
No, I get it. I get it. It's a progression.
(beat)
I take care of the farm. Feed the goats. Whatever needs doin. I don't really need a whole lot...

ALICE
Are you--

JUNE
actually...

JUNE now turns her focus to WEEZY during the following.
ALICE
(tentatively)
So... you're happy?
(beat)
Last week, when we spoke on the 
phone, you were telling me about 
the accident.

A fuzzy memory in JUNE'S head suddenly pulls her focus. SHE 
looks at WEEZY for help decoding it.

JUNE
(to ALICE - still looking 
at WEEZY)
Accident?

WEEZY
(calming - "it's just a 
word")
Accident...

JUNE
(agitated)
When you say accident, I think 
maybe we're talkin about a fender 
bender on the bypass.

ALICE
I'm so sorry. I was just trying to 
be sensitive.

JUNE
Could you not, you're creepin' me 
out.
(turning her attention 
back to ALICE now)
We don't have to dance around it.

ALICE
OK.

JUNE
Sorry.

Beat.

ALICE
There was a storm?

The video camera BEEPS. JUNE startles.

JUNE
(very unsettled now)
You could say that...
The BEEPING continues. ALICE becomes momentarily distracted trying to silence the noise.

WEENZY (to JUNE - a warning) 
Breathe.

The BEEPING continues.

ALICE (oblivious to JUNE's agitated state) 
And you were here, right? On the farm?

The BEEPING continues. ALICE struggles with the camera.

ALICE (CONT'D) (regarding the noise) 
Shit. It's not stopping!

The BEEPING stops.

ALICE (CONT'D) 
Oh, there we go. God. I hate that thing.

ALICE collects herself and turns her focus back to JUNE.

ALICE (CONT'D) 
So sorry. OK... umm... right. You lost your family? They were... crushed?

Pause. JUNE is now having a full-blown PTSD episode.

JUNE (suddenly cold as ice) 
You need to trust me, don't you?

WEENZY (to JUNE - a warning) 
OK.

ALICE 
What?

WEENZY (overlapping) 
She's just trying to do her job, June.
JUNE (continuing)
because you want your story to be accurate because it's just too hard to believe or whatever

WEEZY (overlapping)
Why do you have to be such a ball buster all the time,

JUNE (overlapping - continuing)
but I could be unstable, right, I could just be some redneck meth head, for all you know,

WEEZY (overlapping)
just let her do her job!

JUNE (overlapping - continuing)
lookin for my payday, my 15 minutes, and embarrass the hell outta you

WEEZY (overlapping)
Let her do her job!

JUNE (overlapping - continuing)
Like that lyin shitball did to Oprah Winfrey.

ALICE
A Million Little Pieces...

JUNE (overlapping)
A million little SHITBALL pieces.

Pause.

ALICE
("I'm not your enemy.")
June. I came a long way to be here today and I'm sitting here with you now and there are scars all over your body, every part... of your body. I just want to know what happened.
JUNE
For your coffee table book? Fancy
New York friends.

Pause.

ALICE
You know, June, I have scars too.

Beat.

JUNE
That's hot. Are we in a club now?

ALICE
I'm on your side.

JUNE
(nauseated by the
syllables)
On - your - side?

(beat)
Who the fuck'r you, Jerry
Lewis? Are you Alice, are
you? If you were passin
through this shit town on
your way to sunny Orlando and
you saw me sittin on a bench
outside of Golden Corral, and
you wanted to take my
picture, would you ask my
name and buy me a coffee, or
is that just too much

WEEZY
(to JUNE)
She could go, you could just
ask her to go. Or just let
her sit here. In your creepy
bedroom. And get eaten alive.
Slowly and painfully.

JUNE
of a chore?

WEEZY (CONT'D)
BY A WEIRDO!

JUNE
On your side. You know somethin, I
was valedictorian of my high school
class, you believe that? That's all
right though, just sit there...
with your / assumptions.

WEEZY
(overlapping - to JUNE -
exasperated now)
OK. OK!

JUNE
(al to WEEZY)
"My" assumptions?
No. No. NOT OK.

ALICE

JUNE
(to ALICE)
Maybe you should go. If you know where you're going. Do you know?

ALICE
(overlapping - utterly confused at JUNE's sudden hostility)
Soooo lost. / So lost.

JUNE
Where / you're going? To?

WEEZY
(to JUNE)
JUNE! KNOCK IT OFF!!!!

ALL ACTION stops.

JUNE startles. SHE glares at WEEZY. SHE looks at ALICE, horrified, as if waking up from a nightmare.

JUNE
I--I am so sorry. Did I- can we- can we just... umm... slow down for a minute?

Beat.

ALICE
Absolutely. Yes. Yes.

JUNE
OK...

ALICE's cell phone rings playing THEME SONG FROM PSYCHO.

ALICE
(reaching to silence it)
Fuck! Goddamn you, fucking phone.

JUNE
(flatly)
What if like you changed it to something from Sound of Music, could that be a thing?

ALICE
I'm sorry.

ALICE swipes at the phone and dismisses the call.

JUNE
(a realization)
Oh my god.

(MORE)
JUNE (CONT'D)
(half to JUNE, half to WEEZY)
This is just like Bridges of Madison County.

WEEZY
(dryly - to JUNE)
It's not like Bridges of Madison County.

JUNE
(to WEEZY)
It is.

WEEZY
(to JUNE)
No it's not.

JUNE
(to WEEZY)
Yes it is.

WEEZY
(to JUNE)
No it's not!

JUNE
(to WEEZY)
Yes it fucking is!
(to ALICE)
You're Clint Eastwood.

WEEZY
(hissing)
NO! She's not!

Beat.

JUNE
(to ALICE)
Are we gonna sleep together?

ALICE
(coldly)
It's not a coffee table book, also, you don't know my life.

Pause.

JUNE
(apologetically -
bewildered by her own behavior)
I'm sorry / I don't know what...
WEEZY
   (overlapping - to JUNE)
The camera was beeping.

JUNE turns to look at WEEZY.

WEEZY (CONT'D)
   (pointedly - to JUNE)
The camera was beeping.

JUNE
   (remembering)
Oh, yeah. It was beeping...
   (to ALICE)
The camera was beeping.
   (reacting to ALICE's puzzled look)
The camera was beeping and I...

JUNE taps a bit on her head to indicate her PTSD.

ALICE
   (slowly - a realization)
Oh! Oh... and I- Oh, I'm sorry. I'm so sorry, it was beeping and I got distracted-- shit. I'm sorry, June.

Pause.

JUNE
   (warmly)
No, ya know what, you're here, and you're great, and I have a lot of

WEEZY

Blockers.

JUNE
   (continuing)
Blockers. So.
   (beat)
You're great... you're-

Pause.

JUNE looks at ALICE with ache of a thousand years. ALICE notices.

ALICE
   (tenderly)
June...

JUNE
Alice...