By Brian Sylvia

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DEDICATION

Thanks to my "focus group" of script readers: Merci & Shane Hotchkin, JP Marker, Nicole Miller, and Annaliese Sylvia (all of whom have also helped me to bring my characters to life on stage with their acting skills). To my wife Rebecca who suggested a slight change in the title for this show by swapping two words (& I love it) - you're the queen of titles. To the many colorful people, I've met through the years - you may or may not have inspired a character in this show. And to the gifted, innovative, Jesus-serving friends that surround my life - thank you for your encouragement in the creative process.

STORY OF THE PLAY

The leaders of a small rural church are ecstatic when told the church may receive $6 million. Longtime church member Chance McDermott has passed away and left his fortune (unknown to anyone who knew him) to the congregation. But, there is one interesting caveat: they must care for his three prized hogs…immediately! So they arrange to bring the hogs to the church property and temporarily care for them in the fenced playground. That doesn't seem like a lot to ask for $6 million, except that the church's most influential --and pretentious-- member, Pearl June Carbuckle, has arranged to meet a state senator at the church property to discuss an award for being the most civic-minded church in the region. Church secretary Robyn Chandler can do a great impression of Pearl June, which comes in quite handy as they attempt to keep the senator distracted from the swine. Add relatively new pastor Vince Valentine; a church janitor (Jingles Bradshaw) who has a "creative" grasp of the English language; and Pearl June's husband Quentin, who is having trouble seeing, and it makes for a hilarious sequence of events. What happens to the $6 million? Well, that is all part of the fun 24-hour journey of *Casting Swine Before Pearls.*

CAST OF CHARACTERS
3 m, 2 w, 2 flexible
(In order of appearance)

ROBYN CHANDLER: Dayspring Christian Church's secretary, who can do a great impersonation of Pearl June Carbuckle; mid-30s.

PASTOR VINCE VALENTINE: Dayspring Christian Church's pastor; mid-40s.

JINGLES BRADSHAW: Dayspring Christian Church's janitor, confused but sincere and concerned, his nickname is Jingles because of the unusual number of keys he is always carrying; in his 50s.

PEARL JUNE CARBUCKLE: Cranky and controlling member of Dayspring Christian Church, pretentious and opinionated; in her 50s.

QUENTIN CARBUCKLE: Pearl June's wimpy husband who is used to getting put in his place by his overbearing wife. He is just returning from a visit to the ophthalmologist; in his 50s.

MICAH (Or MARIE) TASKER: Young lawyer who represents Chance McDermott's estate; in his 30s.

SENATOR McNUTT: State senator who is in charge of an award for most civic-minded church organization in the county; may be anywhere from 40 to 60.

Note: It is very important that ROBYN and PEARL JUNE sound nearly identical.

SETTING

The office/waiting area of Dayspring Christian Church. There is an exit to the church sanctuary and an exit to the educational wing of the church. Access to the church's exterior can be reached in either direction.

PROPS

Office phone
Appointment book
Enormous ring of keys
Crocheted American flag
2 cell phones
Briefcase and papers for lawyer

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: LIGHTS UP on the office/waiting area of Dayspring Christian Church. ROBYN, the church's secretary, is "practicing" answering the phone.)

ROBYN: *(Rehearsing her phone answering skills.)* Ring, ring, ring. *(Picking up phone.)* Good morning, Dayspring Christian Church, proclaiming and demonstrating the love of God through Christ while being Bible-believing and Christ-centered: a twenty-first century church that is involved in and caring about the community. May I help you? *(Gasps.)* We really need to revisit our mission statement! *(Puts phone down.)* I need a coffee break after that! One more time. Ring, ring, ring. *(Picking up phone.)* Good morning, Dayspring Christian Church, proclaiming and demonstrating the love of God through Christ while being Bible-believing and Christ-centered: a twenty-first century church that is involved in and caring about the community. May I help you? *(Head collapses onto her desk; she's out of breath.)*

(PASTOR VINCE VALENTINE enters.)

VINCE: Good morning, Robyn! *(Noticing her head on the desk.)* Need another coffee to get you going today?
ROBYN: After the recitation of our church's mini novella of a mission statement, yes!
VINCE: I've been telling the board that needs to be shortened.
ROBYN: You think?! I know you've only been here a few months, but please let the board know I don't have the stamina to recite that for every call. Our previous pastor was as long-winded a preacher as there ever was. So, consequently, so was his mission statement for us. *(Pause.)* Uh, Pastor Vince, weren't you supposed to be heading over to Watertown this morning?
VINCE: Actually, I was halfway there when I got a strange call on my cell phone.

VINCE: *(Cont'd.)* An attorney representing Chance McDermott's estate called and said he needed to meet with me today. Said it was pretty important.

ROBYN: Chance McDermott had an estate? *(Surprised.)* Chance?! He was a great, God-fearing man, but he was a little odd to say the least. There's no way he had an estate. I went by his house a couple of times, and it wasn't much to speak of.

VINCE: All I know is that before Chance passed away, he told me about a property he owned up by the state line about sixty miles from here.

ROBYN: Swamp land no doubt. Can't imagine that Chance McDermott had anything of value.

VINCE: Well, you never know. This attorney, I think his/her name is Tasker, wouldn't give me any details.

ROBYN: Pastor Vince, it's probably just that Chance McDermott is leaving you his collection of slightly used overalls. I never saw the man in anything else. *(Shuffling through appointment book.)* Oh, and don't forget that Pearl June Carbuckle is scheduled to come by here this afternoon.

VINCE: That's right, thanks for the reminder.

ROBYN: *(Mocking PEARL JUNE.)* You are much obliged, Reverend Valentine. It is, of course, no secret that I am the most influential member of Dayspring Christian Church.

VINCE: *(Chuckling.)* It's remarkable how much you sound like Pearl June. I probably shouldn't enjoy that as much as I do, but, well…

ROBYN: *(As PEARL JUNE.)* Everyone loves to chortle at the expense of the efficacious members of the congregation. *(As ROBYN.)* Oh, Pastor Vince, sometimes I think personalities like Pearl June Carbuckle were placed here for a little bit of entertainment value.

VINCE: But mocking her, is…

ROBYN: Let's consider it more of a lesson in character analysis and less of a character assassination.

VINCE: Always looking for a positive angle, aren't you, Robyn?

ROBYN: It's a gift! *(SFX: Jingling of keys is heard.)* Speaking of a lesson in character analysis, I do believe that—

(JINGLES bursts into the room jingling an enormous ring of keys.)

JINGLES: Are you folks aware that Pearl June is coming by here today? Gird your loins, everyone!
ROBYN: Duly noted.
VINCE: Yes, Jingles, we're aware.
ROBYN: *(As PEARL JUNE.)* Mr. Bradshaw, we are quite aware that the most prominent citizen of our county is about to grace us with her magnificence.
JINGLES: *(Laughing.)* You kill me when you do that! That sounds just like Pearl June. And she always calls me Mr. Bradshaw. Never ever calls me Jingles!
ROBYN: Nicknames aren't allowed into her vocabulary. And I'm not completely sure that she knows why we call you Jingles.
JINGLES: *(Jingling keys the entire time.)* I guess that's not an easy nickname to figure out.
VINCE: So, when is Mrs. Carbuckle due here?
JINGLES: Well, whenever the senator gets here this afternoon.
ROBYN: Senator?!
VINCE: Oh, yeah, Senator McNutt is coming to discuss some civic award that Pearl June applied for.
ROBYN: Civic award?!
JINGLES: Yeah, Pearl June applied for a county award for our church. Something about being the most civic-minded church.
ROBYN: You can *apply* for that?
VINCE: Apparently so. I'm not totally comfortable with our church self-proclaiming how wonderful we are.
ROBYN: *(As PEARL JUNE.)* Now, Reverend Valentine, humility is reserved for the ineffective.
JINGLES: *(Laughing and pointing at ROBYN.)* Absolutely kills me!

ROBYN: So, we get to deal with Pearl June *and* Senator McNutt? *(To JINGLES.)* By the way, I think McNutt is as appropriate a name for him/her as Jingles is for you.

VINCE: Robyn! At least *try* to behave.

ROBYN: Sorry, Pastor. I realize your sarcasm meter just redlined. I'll do my best to *(As PEARL JUNE.)* maintain proper decorum. *(As ROBYN.)* Sorry, one last jab!

VINCE: *(Exiting to church.)* You'll probably cramp up when the senator and Pearl June are here together. *(Exits.)*

JINGLES: *(To ROBYN.)* Exactly how can you imitate Pearl June so good?

ROBYN: Characters like that come around only a few times in your lifetime. And they either make you cry or make you laugh. I opt for the laughing. *(As PEARL JUNE.)* As it says in Proverbs, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones." Incidentally, that is the King James version, Mr. Bradshaw.

JINGLES: *(Laughing.)* Remarkable, I tell ya! *(Moving to exit.)* I gotta go and clean up the fellowship hall. There's bits of yarn everywhere.

ROBYN: Bits of yarn?

JINGLES: Apparently the ladies who meet for Crochet Cafe had a little too much caffeine last night. Things got a little crazy. Rumor has it that Bettie Mae had three shots of espresso and crocheted a huge American Flag for out front of the church.

ROBYN: A crocheted flag?!

JINGLES: Not seen it myself. *(Pulls a large folded up piece of paper out of his pocket.)* Jingles Bradshaw's to-do list. *(To ROBYN.)* Gotta check this every day. Number one - check to-do list. Check. Number two - make sure that Robyn has very strong cup of coffee to keep her from being difficult to deal with.

ROBYN: *(Not amused.)* Check! *(To JINGLES.)* Hey Jingles, what about the flagpole?

JINGLES: Oh yeah, and that's not even on my list. Good thing the flagpole is right outside the door. And remember, I'm the fastest flagpole runner in this county.

JINGLES: *(Cont'd. Delivers line as he exits.)* Those ladies were so hyped up on espresso shots, no telling what happened.

ROBYN: *(To herself.)* Well, just another day in the life of Dayspring Christian Church. A crochet flag. There's no telling what will happen around here. Okay. *(Back to practicing the phone.)* Good morning, Dayspring Christian Church, proclaiming and demonstrating the love of God through Christ while being Bible-believing and Christ-centered…

JINGLES: *(Offstage - singing loudly to the tune of "His Eye is on the Sparrow" - sort of.)* His eye is on the *(Enunciates clearly.)* spare road… and I know he splotches me.

ROBYN: What in the world?

(JINGLES enters.)

ROBYN: *(Cont'd.)* Hey Jingles, that was quick, and nice song you're singin'. What's that called again?

JINGLES: "His Eye Is on the Spare Road." Y'know, I never did quite get why God was more concerned with the folks who took the wrong turn.

ROBYN: Actually, Jingles…

JINGLES: *(Wide-eyed.)* Yes, ma'am?

ROBYN: Oh, never mind. What's that you've got?

JINGLES: *(Unfurls the crocheted flag.)* They did it alright! The crochet ladies had quite the time last night.

(VINCE enters.)

VINCE: Robyn, could you… *(Noticing JINGLES.)* Oh, hey, Jingles, what do you have there?

ROBYN: You'll never believe it even if he explains it.

JINGLES: I meant to tell you something earlier. Y'know, Pastor, I understand you're new here at Dayspring, but I've got a suggestion for your preaching.

VINCE: *(Tentative.)* You do?

JINGLES: Yes, sir! I think you need to do less tropical preaching.

(VINCE looks at ROBYN confused.)

ROBYN: *(To VINCE.)* Topical, I believe.
JINGLES: Yeah, less tropical sermons and more suppository preaching.

(VINCE looks at ROBYN even more confused and wide-eyed.)

ROBYN: I'm not even going there!
VINCE: *(Making the connection.)* Oh, you mean expository! Expository preaching!
JINGLES: That's what I said… suppository preaching. Well, I gotta go and finish in the fellowship hall. See y'all later! *(Walking away.)* Take my suggestion, Pastor. *(Exits.)*
ROBYN: *(Laughing.)* Yeah, take his suggestion!
VINCE: Robyn, you could have helped me out there, you know.
ROBYN: Pastor, if my previous sarcasm stressed you out, you certainly didn't want to hear my comments on the new preaching methods suggested by Jingles.
VINCE: This is true! I was wondering if you had seen or heard from the attorney. I had just left the office when I got a text from an unknown number saying, "I have just arrived on the church property."
ROBYN: I haven't gotten any word. And there's certainly no confusing Jingles with an attorney! *(Thinking.)* Well…
VINCE: Robyn, resist whatever comment you're tempted to make about people in the legal profession.
ROBYN: I had a good one too.
VINCE: I bet you did.
ROBYN: Pastor Vince, I get the feeling that this day is going to be pretty epic. Or as Pearl June would say, *(As PEARL JUNE.)* This is the day that the Lord hath made. I shall frown and complain in it. *(As herself.)* That's the CSV: Carbuckle Standard Version.

(JINGLES enters with MICAH.)

JINGLES: Hey Pastor, I found this stranger lurking in the fellowship hall.
ROBYN: *(To VINCE.)* I'm impressed… he got *lurking* right.
MICAH: I was hardly lurking. I am here to see Pastor Valentine.
VINCE: That's me.
JINGLES: You gonna be okay, Pastor?
VINCE: Yes, Jingles, I am fine. *(To MICAH.)* Welcome. You must be Mr. Tasker. *(To JINGLES.)* He is the lawyer meeting with me today.
JINGLES: Whatever you say. *(Begins to exit, singing.)* "While shepherds washed their socks by night." *(Actual lyrics: While shepherds watch'd their flocks by night.) (Exits.)*
MICAH: What did he say?
VINCE: I'm sorry. Jingles gets his words a little confused.
ROBYN: By *a little*, he means constantly.
VINCE: So, Mr. Tasker, what can I do for you?
MICAH: Well, Rev. Valentine, it appears that the late Chance McDermott left the church in his will.
ROBYN: Chance McDermott had a will?!
VINCE: Robyn, I can handle this. *(Beat.)* Chance McDermott had a will?!
MICAH: A substantial will. Though Mr. McDermott lived a, well, simple life, he managed to amass quite a fortune.
ROBYN: A fortune?!
VINCE: *(To ROBYN.)* Robyn! *(Beat. To MICAH.)* A fortune?!
MICAH: If you call six million dollars a fortune.
VINCE and ROBYN: *(Slowly.)* Six million dollars?
MICAH: That's right. And since Mr. McDermott has no next of kin, he has left the entire six million dollars to the church.
ROBYN: *(Screaming.)* Six million dollars?! Six million dollars?! *(Looks at VINCE.)*
VINCE and ROBYN: *(Loudly.)* Six million dollars?! *(THEY dance around.)*
MICAH: That's right, but—
JINGLES: *(Rushing in.)* What's all the commotion in here?
ROBYN: Chance McDermott died.

JINGLES: *(Shaking his head. Aside.)* People sure don't mourn like they used to.
ROBYN: We're not mourning.
JINGLES: I can see that.
VINCE: We're really sad about Chance…
JINGLES: You two have lost it.
MICAH: But, Pastor Valentine…
VINCE: *(To JINGLES.)* But apparently, he was rich.
ROBYN: Filthy rich.
JINGLES: Well, he didn't wash his overalls as much as he should…
VINCE: And he left the church six million dollars.
JINGLES: *(Loudly.)* Six million dollars?!

(HE dances around. ROBYN and VINCE join in.)

MICAH: Excuse me. *(No one listens. Slightly louder.)* Excuse me. *(Loudly.)* Excuse me!
VINCE: Oh sorry, Mr. Tasker. Do we need to sign something?
MICAH: Actually, there's a bit of a caveat in the will.
JINGLES: What do fish eggs have to do with this?
ROBYN: Shhhh. Not caviar, caveat.
JINGLES: I'm confused.
ROBYN: No kidding!
VINCE: What's the caveat?
MICAH: Mr. McDermott will leave all six million dollars to the church on one condition.
VINCE: What's that?
MICAH: The church must care for his dearly loved pets until their passing.
ROBYN: That's no problem, we love pets.
VINCE: I can take the dogs out to our house. My kids love dogs.
ROBYN: If it's cats, I can take them.
JINGLES: Chance seemed like a bird kinda guy. But if it's a snake, I'll take care of it.

(THEY all start to talk at once.)

MICAH: Excuse me. *(No one listens. Slightly louder.)* Excuse me. *(Loudly.)* Excuse me! They're not dogs.
ROBYN: Okay, well, I can take the cats.
MICAH: They're not cats either. And before you ask, they're not birds or snakes.
VINCE: I'm sorry, then what are we talking about?
MICAH: Mr. McDermott had three prize-winning hogs.
JINGLES, ROBYN, and VINCE: Hogs?!
VINCE: As in pigs?
MICAH: That's right, Reverend, three giant swine named Moe, Larry and Curly.
VINCE: How are we going to care for three hogs?
ROBYN: For six million dollars, we'll find a way.
MICAH: *(Puts briefcase on desk and opens it.)* I have the details of the agreement right here.

(VINCE and ROBYN look over paperwork with MICAH.)

JINGLES: So, when exactly are we eating that caviar?

(LIGHTS out.)

Scene 2

(LIGHTS UP. ROBYN is sitting at her desk as VINCE paces the room.)

VINCE: How are we going to care for three hogs?
ROBYN: Uh, six million dollars. *(VINCE looks at her.)* Just providing a little perspective.
VINCE: With that money, we could completely renovate the sanctuary. We could even build a new sanctuary.
ROBYN: I could get a raise.
VINCE: We could create ministries to the needy of our community.
ROBYN: And I could get a raise.
VINCE: The church could finally get a van. Or five of them!
ROBYN: And I could get a raise.

End of Freeview

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