

THE EATON WOMAN

Written by
ANTHONY E. GALLO

Address
Phone Number

CHARACTERS

Margaret O'Neal Timberlake
Andrew Jackson Seventh American President
John Eaton, Senator and Secretary of the Army
Rachel Jackson, Andrew's wife
Reverend John Campbell
Floride Bonneau Calhoun
John Calhoun, Vice President
Ezra Ely. Presbyterian Minister
John Campbell, Jackson's Minister.
Emily Donelson, Jackson's niece.
Martin Van Buren, Eighth President
Antonio Gabriele Buchignani
Mabel Dodge, reporter for the Washington Standard
Deborah Ingham, Treasury Secretary's wife)
Elisabeth Branch, Navy Secretary's wife
Lisa Berrien, Attorney General's wife
John Branch(Navy Secretary
Samuel Igham(Treasury Secretary)
John Berrien (Attorney General)
Jones,
Chair Thief
Mother O'Neil, Margaret's mother
Willie, Calhoun Slave
Ensemble
Jacksonites
Adamites

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SCENE 1 THE UNITED STATES 1828

We hear rousing patriotic music.

JACKSONITES
JACKSON! JACKSON! JACKSON!

ADAMITES
ADAMS! ADAMS! ADAMS!

JACKSONITES
AMERICA FOR ALL AMERICANS!

ADAMITES
TREAT THE INDIANS RIGHT!

JACKSONITES
OFF TO OKLAHOMA

ADAMITES
HUSSY! HUSSY! HUSSY!

JACKSONITES
HONOR WOMEN! HONOR WOMEN! HONOR!

ADAMITES
NOT THAT ONE!

JACKSONITES
JACKSON! JACKSON! JACKSON!

ADAMITES
BIGAMISTS! BIGAMISTS! BIGAMISTS.

JACKSONITES
WE WILL WIN! WE WILL WIN!

ADAMITES
NO DUELISTS IN THE WHITE HOUSE!

JACKSONITES
WE WANT DEMOCRACY!

ADAMITES
MEN OF HONOR IN THE WHITE HOUSE!

JACKSONITES
DEMOCRACY! DEMOCRACY! DEMOCRACY!

ADAMITES
NO MOB RULE!

JACKSONITES
DEMOCRACY FOR ALL!

ADAMITES
SAVE THE NATIONAL BANK!

JACKSONITES
NO NATIONAL BANK!

ADAMITES
CHAOS!

JACKSONITES
AMERICA FOR ALL AMERICANS!

ADAMITES
SAVE US FROM TYRANNY.

JACKSONITES
NO RIGGED ELECTIONS THIS TIME!

ADAMITES
NO BIGAMISTS, DUELERS, AND WHORES IN THE WHITE
HOUSE.

JACKSONITES
WE WILL WIN!

ADAMITES
NO ADULTERESSES IN THE WHITE HOUSE.

JACKSONITES
SLANDER! SLANDER! SLANDER!

ADAMITES
NO ADULTERERS AND DUELERS IN THE WHITE HOUSE!

JACKSONITES
YOU STOLE THE LAST ELECTION! NOT THIS ONE!

ADAMITES
SAVE AMERICA! VOTE ADAMS!

JACKSONITES
THE ELECTION IS OVER! JACKSON 650,000 VOTES.
ADAMS 500,000 VOTES.

ADAMITES
NO! NO!

JACKSONITES
TO THE VICTOR BELONG THE SPOILS.

ADAMITES
BARBARIANS!

JACKSONITES
HA! HA! HA! SORE LOSERS!

ADAMITES
DESTROYING THE AMERICA OF THE FOUNDING FATHERS!

JACKSONITES
HA! HA! HA!

ADAMITES
NO ELECTED MONARCHY!

JACKSONITES
HA! HA! HA! WE HAVE THE POWER.

SCENE 2 THE HERMITAGE DECEMBER 22 1828

President-elect Andrew Jackson,
Margaret O' Neal Timberlake, Emily
Donelson, Andrew Jackson, and
Senator John Eaton are seated in
the living room of the Hermitage.

JACKSON
The great lady insisted that we all see her in
her Inaugural Outfit.

MARGARET
PRESIDENT JACKSON! PRESIDENT JACKSON I can
hardly believe my lips. You won by a
landslide and no one can steal the Presidency
from Mr. Jackson this time. And Rachel has
every reason to be proud.

JACKSON
Yes, she does. She has been through so much!

EMILY
She will get well, Mr. President.

JACKSON
I am Uncle Andrew to you, Emily! Now and
forever.

MARGARET
Our seventh President! You have had many
victories! The British, the Indians, and now
your greatest victory.

EATON
We could not be prouder of you.

MARGARET

A toast to the seventh President of the United States.

Rachel Jackson enters the room from the stairs wearing a beautiful dress. She looks very tired.

EATON

A toast to our First Lady.

RACHEL

I hope you like it, Andrew!

JACKSON

You look as beautiful as you did the night we married.

Margaret rushes to embrace her

MARGARET

You look so elegant!

JACKSON

My Rachel.

MARGARET

Rachel you feel so cold.

RACHEL

I'm just a bit dizzy from all our shopping in Nashville this afternoon.

MARGARET

She will be fine.

JACKSON

Take it easy, my love.

MARGARET

Water!

Eaton brings water.

RACHEL

Andrew. I am going to die.

JACKSON

No!

RACHEL

You must go to Washington without me.

JACKSON
(crying) Never.

RACHEL
You must. I am going to die!

JACKSON
NO!!!!

RACHEL
I go to my grave with you in my heart, Andrew.
Death will not part us!

MARGARET
You will live!

JACKSON
Rachel. My only Rachel.

MARGARET
Let us take her to bed. Quick.

Her eyes close.

JACKSON
She is dead! SHE IS DEAD! My Rachel is dead.
Forty years of marriage.

They embrace him.

MARGARET
She is now with the angels.

JACKSON
MY RACHEL! MY RACHEL! I CAN NOT GO TO MY
INAUGURATION WITHOUT YOU.

EATON
But you will.

JACKSON
My Rachel!

EATON
Take courage, Mr. President. Take courage.

JACKSON
I LOST MY MOTHER AT FOURTEEN! BOTH BROTHERS
DEAD. RAISED AN ORPHAN ON MY OWN. AND NOW I
LOSE THE ONLY WOMAN I HAVE EVER LOVED.

EATON
ANDREW. MY FRIEND ANDREW.

JACKSON
Rachel in heaven WILL FORGIVE THESE BASTARDS.
I WILL NOT.

MARGARET
God will get them in the end.

JACKSON
THEY KILLED HER! THEY KILLED HER!

MARGARET
She has been spared the punishment and
humiliation from those rotten fools.

JACKSON
She is now in heaven with the angels.

MARGARET
I will love her forever.

JACKSON
John Henry Eaton!

EATON
Yes, Sir.

JACKSON
My closest friend.

EATON
With honor sir.

JACKSON
Will you write her epitaph. No one can write
like you.

EATON
I already have one in mind.

JACKSON
Pray tell.

EATON
A being so gentle and so virtuous, slander
might wound but could not dishonor.

MARGARET
How beautiful.

JACKSON
Indeed. It moves me to tears. A brave woman,
but too gentle a heart.

MARGARET

She is the embodiment of love. She will be with us forever.

JACKSON

And you, Margaret and John. They will be coming after you too. Gossips gossips evil gossips.

MARGARET

I'm a horse of a different color. Like water off a duck's back.

EATON

We stand together. Now and forever.

JACKSON

And I will stand solidly behind you. Especially in Rachel's memory.

EATON

Blessed be God.

MARGARET

Blessed be God.

SCENE 3 INAUGURATION DAY 1829 THE U. S. CAPITOL

Jackson , Eaton and Margaret are seated together.

CROWD

Jackson! Jackson! Jackson!

JACKSON

What is that beautiful diamond on your finger?

MARGARET

I am now Mrs. John Eaton. I am that Eaton Woman!

EATON

As of yesterday morning.

JACKSON

Congratulations! MR. AND MRS. JOHN EATON!

EATON

Hopefully, Now the tongues can stop gossiping about marital infidelity, betrayal, and illegitimate births.

MARGARET

No man was kinder to my first husband than Mr. Eaton. And then saved my daughters and I after his death.

EATON

As I would treat my best friend's widow. And we know we have Captain Timberlake's blessing from heaven.

MARGARET

And if we ever could have a son we would name him Andrew. And a daughter, Rachel. But because of my mishap in the childbirth of Commander Timberlake's child, we can have no more children.

JACKSON

But you have one another. As I had Rachel.

EATON

Now take your oath of office and read your speech.

JACKSON

As written by the Secretary of the Army, a Mr. John Eaton.

We hear the Star Spangled Banner.

JACKSON

We are about to undertake the arduous duties that I have been appointed to perform by the choice of a free people, I avail myself of this customary and solemn occasion to express the gratitude which their confidence inspires and to acknowledge the accountability which my situation enjoins.

MARGARET

(Whispering)

What does this speech really say, Husband?

EATON

We move the Indians to Oklahoma, we tell the Brits to but out, we transfer wealth from the rich to the poor, we close down the Bank of the United States, and no state better leave the union.

MARGARET

Really? MY BRILLIANT HUSBAND.

EATON

It's all written between the lines. Listen.

JACKSON

(Speaking to crowd)

In such measures as I may be called on to pursue in regard to the rights of the separate States I hope to be animated by a proper respect for those sovereign members of our Union, taking care not to confound the powers they have reserved to themselves with those they have granted to the Confederacy.

ELIZABETH BRANCH

(whispering)

That woman and her husband are seated right close to the President

JOHN BRANCH

Get used to it, dear. She will be the acting first lady.

ELIZABETH BRANCH

What! That Wh...

JOHN BRANCH

(interrupting)

Don's say it.

JACKSON

The management of the public revenue—that searching operation in all governments—is among the most delicate..., it would seem to me that the spirit of equity, caution, and compromise in which the Constitution was formed requires that the great interests of a

FLORIDE

They dare come together.

CALHOUN

My dear, they are now man and wife. And their former life is a thing of the past.

FLORIDE

That's what you think!

SCENE 4 INAUGURATION NIGHT THE WHITE HOUSE

We hear loud raucous dance music,
drinking and

LISA BERRIEN

The mob is tearing out chandeliers and walking off with furniture and china. Mr. Attorney general

JOHN BERRIEN

Patience my wife. The worst is yet to come. We are now the Peoples Republic of the United States Adams country no more.

CROWD

JACKSON! JACKSON! JACKSON!

MARGARET

He will be coming shortly

CROWD

MORE DRINK! MORE DRINK! MORE DRINK!

MARGARET

More will be coming

CROWD

DRINK! DRINK! DRINK!

MARGARET

More is coming! FOR GOD'S SAKE.

CROWD

Yippee.

Jackson enters.

CROWD

PRESIDENT! PRESIDENT! PRESIDENT!

JACKSON

My fellow Americans! My friends. We have conquered and the spoils are ours. And you will all be rewarded to the best of my ability

CROWD

Jackson! Jackson! Jackson!

JACKSON

I will see each of you ahead in the next days.

CROWD

Jackson! Jackson! Jackson!

JACKSON

Drink up everyone. This is a day of celebration!

CROWD

Hip hip, hooray.

JACKSON

And I want to present to you the two women who will be hosting you when you come to the White house.

CROWD

Yes! Yes! Yes!

JACKSON

First is my Niece emily Donelson, and I must say she resembles my late wife Rachel.

CROWD

Emily! Emily! Emily!

EMILY

Welcome to the White House.

CROWD

Emily!

JACKSON

And also assisting will be a long time friend of both my wife Rachel and I. Margaret O'Neal Timberlake and as of this week she just added Eaton, becoming the wife of our Secretary of the Army, Major Eaton.

CROWD

Rah! Rah! Rah!

MARGARET

Welcome Ladies and Gentlemen. I am here to serve you. Feel free to call on me at anytime

CROWD

Margaret! Margaret! Margaret!

MARGARET

I love you all.

LISA BERRIEN

(Whispering)

She sure does.

ELIZABETH BRANCH

(whispering)

My husband says she not only slept with Senator Eaton but the rest of the Senate too.

DEBORAH INGHAM

(Whispering)

I had to sit next to that vulgar woman at the luncheon today. She's abrasive. We must have a meeting.

EATON

(to the crowd)

The room is so crowded that you can all rarely move. Can you all move to the West Garden.

CROWD

LATER.

MARGARET

Feel free to remain. But refreshments are now being served on the West lawn.

The room vacates immediately.

JACKSON

You did it again.

MARGARET

I must tell the staff to bring food out to the West Garden.

JACKSON

I heard that all the China is gone.

MARGARET

It can be replaced.

JACKSON

And the silverware?

MARGARET

You are the People's president.

JACKSON

With you and John by my side, I think I can survive.

MARGARET

How foolish. You will go down as one of the greatest Presidents in American history. In the meantime that man is stealing one of the White House Chairs. In fact one from Dolly Madison. . I'm going after him.

JACKSON

No!

EATON
Stop

MARGARET
You two men go outside. I will handle this.

EATON
But

MARGARET
Outside!

EATON
Off we go.

They exit. She runs after man
with chair

MARGARET
Sir! What are you doing with that chair.

JONES
I'm taking it home.

MARGARET
Why?

JONES
A memento from the White house.

MARGARET
Did you not take a few dishes.

JONES
This chair belong to the American people. And
I'm one of them.

MARGARET
Well you'll have to divide it with 7 million
other Americans or leave it here for the
President to sit on. He represents the American
people. And he owes his election to people
like you.

JONES
You're a tough woman lady.

MARGARET
You bet.

JONES
Are you that Eaton woman?

MARGARET

Yes.

JONES

Goodbye, Lady.

ELIZABETH BRANCH
(Whispering)

That woman is so crude.

LISA BERRIEN
(whispering)

We must have that meeting.

DEBORAH INGHAM
(whispering)

The sooner the better.

SCENE 5 THAT NIGHT THE CALHOUN HOME

John and Floride Calhoun are
seated

CALHOUN

You must relax today Floride. The inauguration
has exhausted you.

FLORIDE

All of us are exhausted. I am proud of you Mr.
Calhoun. Vice President under Mr. Adams and
now under Mr. Jackson. Some relaxation is in
order.

CALHOUN

Tomorrow is a heavy day.

FLORIDE

For both of us. Are we expecting any callers
tonight.

CALHOUN

Not to my knowledge

Suddenly Willie, the butler
appears.

WILLIE

Senator and Mrs. John Eaton are paying their
respects.

FLORIDE

What! I had no idea they were coming.

CALHOUN

There's been a misunderstanding. Shall we send this Secretary of the Army away.

FLORIDE

Of course not. Show them in Willie.

WILLIE

Yes Ma'am.

Floride and Calhoun look at one another. Margaret and Eaton enter.

FLORIDE

Why Secretary and Mrs. Easton! Welcome.

MARGARET

Thank you for having us, Mrs. Calhoun. I hope we are not intruding.

FLORIDE

Certainly not.

EATON

We thought we would pay a visit.

CALHOUN

Most welcome!

MARGARET

We were in the area and decided to drop in

FLORIDE

Why how lovely. I just told dear Mr. Calhoun that this has been such a long day but would it not be nice to have visitors. And both you and Major Eaton at one time. How delightful.

MARGARET

You're sure we are not intruding?

CALHOUN

Absolutely Not. I especially want to congratulate you and Major Eaton on your marriage.

MARGARET

Thank you.

FLORIDE

Mr. Eaton, shall we address you as Mr. Eaton, Senator Eaton, Mr. Secretary, Major Eaton or.....

EATON

John will do.

FLORIDE

And Your Mrs. Eaton. Do you prefer Margaret or Peggy.

MARGARET

I prefer Margaret.

FLORIDE

Margaret it shall be. Will you have some tea?

MARGARET

No it is much too late. I shall look forward to your first visit to our home.

FLORIDE

Absolutely.

MARGARET

Your home is so lovely

FLORIDE

We are just renting rooms here from Mrs. Tothal. We like to spend as much time at our farm in South Carolina Flint hill. And during the summer months we go to Newport where the weather is much more acceptable than it is in Charleston.

MARGARET

Agreed. And Charleston and Washington weather are so much alike. I have only lived in one city. We may someday need to move to Tennessee. Did you not live on Rock Creek park at one time?

FLORIDE

A large Cholera park. That is why we sold our home. Surely you can stay for dinner.

MARGARET

We must go. But please do drop in!

FLORIDE

Sooner rather than later.

CALHOUN

And you as Secretary of the Army and in my role as vice President it is good to socialize once in a while

FLORIDE

Most certainly.

CALHOUN

One question I've been meaning to ask you John. You were elected to the Senate from Tennessee at age twenty-eight? The Constitution has a minimum age of thirty. How did you and Jackson ever manage that one.

EATON

No one ever asked.

CALHOUN

Remarkable.

EATON

Are you aware that several other members of the Senate were also elected before the age of thirty.

CALHOUN

Really! Like who?

EATON

Henry Clay for one.

FLORIDE

No more political talk.

MARGARET

Now we must go.

FLORIDE

Come back again.

They exit. The door closes.

CALHOUN

I had no idea they were coming.

FLORIDE

Who let them in here.

CALHOUN

I have no idea.

FLORIDE

WHO LET THAT WHORE INTO MY HOME!

CALHOUN

I do not know.

FLORIDE
WILLIE!

WILLIE (O.S.)
Yes, Ma'am.

FLORIDE
WHY DID YOU LET THAT WOMAN IN THE HOUSE.

WILLIE
What woman!

FLORIDE
Mrs. Eaton!

WILLIE
I was in the wine cellar when they came in.
When I got to the first floor they were already
walking into your room.

FLORIDE
How abrasive. Thank you, Willie.

CALHOUN
These people have no shame.

FLORIDE
To say the least. But we haven't heard the end
of this.

CALHOUN
Meaning.

FLORIDE
You will see. The women of this town, and
especially the Cabinet wives are up in arms.

CALHOUN
As well they should be.

FLORIDE
Andrew jackson defeated the British, conquered
the Indians, but he will not defeat the cabinet
wives.

CALHOUN
Agreed.

FLORIDE
This may cost you the future presidency.

CALHOUN
Morality comes first.

FLORIDE
My beloved husband.

CALHOUN
My beloved wife.

Outside the house

MARGARET
Do you think she will visit us?

EATON
Of course not.

MARGARET
What? It would be rudeness of the worst kind.

EATON
Right.

MARGARET
She was gracious and said she would come.

EATON
You don't know Southern hypocrisy like I know
Southern hypocrisy. And South Carolina
hypocrisy is the worst in the South.

MARGARET
I am optimistic.

EATON
I hope I don't have to say "I told you so!"

MARGARET
I'm optimistic.

SCENE 6 OVAL OFFICE A WEEK LATER

Andrew Jackson is seated. Emily
Donelson enters.

JACKSON
Things are functioning so smoothly as if Rachel
were running things.

EMILY
It's in the blood , oh Uncle.

JACKSON
And to have you and the family near me.

EMILY

I know how much you miss Aunt Rachel. I want you to know how helpful Mary Randolph has been

JACKSON

Would you expect anything less from Thomas Jefferson's only surviving daughter.

EMILY

She's a sweetheart.

JACKSON

Is that enough help for you?

EMILY

Yes.

JACKSON

Are you sure?

EMILY

Yes.

JACKSON

You know Mrs. Eaton is always willing to help.

EMILY

Oh Really?

JACKSON

Oh Really she says. You are well aware.

EMILY

I will use her wherever I can.

JACKSON

She's a very a talented woman.

EMILY

I do not disagree.

JACKSON

I have invited the Eatons to join us for our holiday at the Hermitage. I hope you will be there.

EMILY

Of course I will. With husband and daughter.

JACKSON

Perhaps you will know her better.

EMILY

I know her well enough.

JACKSON
Do you like her?

EMILY
Yes.

JACKSON
But you like everyone.

EMILY
That's right.

JACKSON
Do you have any objections to her?

EMILY
No.

JACKSON
Look me straight in the eye.

EMILY
Yes, Uncle.

JACKSON
Do you think she s an immoral woman?

EMILY
No I do not.

JACKSON
Then why are you avoiding her.

EMILY
She is abrasive. And that along with her reputation is hurting the person I love most in the world.

JACKSON
Who is that?

EMILY
Andrew Jackson.

JACKSON
Then stand up for her.

EMILY
Why?

JACKSON
Because when you stand up for her, you are helping to destroy the same forces that killed your Aunt Rachel.

EMILY

That is pork riddle. Aunt Rachel was never offensive, or abrasive, and she was loved by neighbors and all who new her. That is not true of the Eaton woman

JACKSON

But you know the charges against her.

EMILY

Which are all untrue to my knowledge.

JACKSON

Perhaps you will come to like her after spending a week with her at the Hermitage

EMILY

I will try.

JACKSON

Enough said.

EMILY

Uncle, please remember one thing. There is one man to whom I have greater allegiance to than my uncle Andrew.

JACKSON

Your husband?

EMILY

No.

JACKSON

Who then.

EMILY

PRESIDENT ANDREW JACKSON

SCENE 7 CALHOUN HOME A DAY LATER

Floride Calhoun, Deborah Ingham (Treasury Secretary's wife), Elisabeth Branch (Navy Secretary's wife) and Lisa Berrien (Attorney General's wife) are knitting.

ELIZABETH BRANCH

Floride, you serve the best scones.

LIZA BERRIEN

And the sandwiches are delicious. How do you do it?

DEBORAH INGHAM
And is this tea from England?

FLORIDE
From South Carolina. Flint Hill.

ELIZABETH BRANCH
The family home? .

LISA BERRIEN
Wasn't that a hilarious story about the bullet
being taken out of the President's arm.

FLORIDE
No I did not hear it.

LISA BERRIEN
Well you know Senator Benton, the man in the
Senate closest to Mr. Jackson. Two days ago
doctors removed a bullet from the President's
arm inflicted by Thomas Benton during a tussle
fifteen years ago. Mr. Jackson sent it as a
gift to Senator Benton, who declined ---saying
that having carried it for twenty years, it was
Jacksons to keep.

ALL
Ha! Ha! Ha!

DEBORAH INGHAM
Would I be too presumptuous to say that we all
know why we are really here?

FLORIDE
Not presumptuous, at all..

LISA
Our husbands run the country. But if this
nation is to have moral standards, it is we
women who must take charge.

FLORIDE
Exactly.

ELIZABETH BRANCH
My husband says that she is now the wife of
John Eaton. But also the wife of all other
members of congress.

LISA BERRIEN
I need some background on her.

DEBORAH INGHAM

Margaret Eaton was the daughter of John and Mary Eaton. Owners of the Franklin Hotel. A vivacious young lady she was quite precocious.

ELIZABETH BRANCH

Precocious. What a polite word. Yes she first eloped at 15. To begin with.

FLORIDE

No actually she was just 14.

LISA BERRIEN

Her father found her and brought her home.

FLORIDE

Thankfully she was still a virgin. At least according to her.

LISA BERRIEN

The behavior got worse over time

DEBORAH INGHAM

Then she ran off with another man the following year. Her father found her again.

LISA BERRIEN

In 1816, John Bowie Timberlake, a former navy purser was riding with a friend outside the Franklin House When he saw Margaret through the window, They were married on a week later.

DEBORAH INGHAM

I remember the house they lived in across from the tavern.

ELIZABETH BRANCH

In 1818, the Timberlakes met John Eaton, then a widowed senator who was staying at Franklin House.

LISA BERRIEN

While Timberlake was away, John Eaton was frequently her companion.

ELIZABETH BRANCH

Timberlake was able to come home only for short, occasional visits. In 1825, Margaret gave birth to their daughter, Margaret Rosa. Timberlake went to sea again, this time on a four-year voyage on the U.S.. Constitution.

He wrote to his wife that if anything happened to him, there was one man to whose hands she should be willing to trust you, John H. Eaton, the noblest work of God, an honest man

DEBORAH INGHAM

Timberlake, suffering from anxiety and depression, died at sea in April of 1828. Margaret was told that he had contracted and died of pulmonary disease. But his death was really a suicide. Timberlake had killed himself while in a drunken stupor, supposedly unable to bear his wife's infidelity with his friend, John Eaton.

FLORIDE

She bore a child. Surely it was not Timberlake's!

ELIZABETH BRANCH

The child was stillborn.

DEBORAH INGHAM

Not so. According to the servants, she had an abortion.

ELIZABETH BRANCH

So we have adultery, abortion, infidelity and betrayal. We must get her out of the White House.

FLORIDE

Can you imagine having a woman who slept with her husband's best friend while he was at sea. The baby conveniently dies. The husband learned of her infidelity with his best friend and committed suicide.

DEBORAH INGHAM

We have become the laughing stock of the country. Even those loose Europeans are snickering at us. The wife of the Dutch Ambassador came to my house crying this morning because she was forced to sit next to that woman at a White House luncheon.

FLORIDE

The Nation is rightfully concerned about this whole thing. Each summer I bring all the children to Newport Rhode Island where John and I have a summer home.

I often stop and visit old friends like the Adamses both John and Quincy. They are aghast at all that is happening her.

DEBORAH INGHAM

You know that President Jackson will stand behind her the whole way.

ELIZABETH BRANCH

Of course. This President is lawless. At least twenty duels. And then his own messy marriage.

LISA BERRIEN

Yes. And you know how much he has suffered. I still do not know that whole story.

DEBORAH INGHAM

I will tell you in a few words. Rachel Donelson, a wild, wealthy and beautiful 18 year old frontier belle married Captain Robards, an influential and wealthy Kentuckian. He was violently jealous and frequented slave quarters at night-and not to pick cotton. Rachel was of a lively disposition, was not an obedient, demure, and silent wife which did not fare well with a jealous husband. She sought solace in the company of other men.

ELIZABETH BRANCH

I will share something about what happened. But only shared in the room.

ALL

Word of honor!

ELIZABETH BRANCH

My cousin Sam Short. The richest man in Virginia and quite an aristocrat-- A graduate of the College of William and Mary. Sam immediately fell in love with Rachel and sent her a note asking for her hand in marriage when she divorced Robards. So there must have been some hanky panky going on. In any case Robards intercepted the note. He sued and extracted a thousand dollars from Sam. Which he paid. And we also now that Sam is the stingiest aristocrat in Virginia.

ALL

Oh my.

DEBORAH INGHAM

But once Andrew Jackson came into the picture, she only had eyes for him. Andrew Jackson would you believe gave up his American Citizenship and became A Spaniard because Mississippi was under Spanish rule to get her. It was love at first site. And they went to bed together. Her husband was furious when he found Rachel and brought her back to her parent's home.

FLORIDE

Not exactly St. Rachel of Nashville.

LISA BERRIEN

And that is when Robards place an ad in the Newspapers announcing his intention of divorcing Rachel. Jackson And Rachel got so excited that they ran off and got married. The did not find out until a year later that Robards had pulled a trick on them Andrew Jackson went after him, and finally Robards divorced. Hence she became a bigamist.

DEBORAH INGHAM

I can not help but relate what happen to my cousin's father-in-law John Sevier, Governor of Tennessee in 1803. Jackson alluded to his personal service to the state of Tennessee. To which Sevier replied. "I know of no great service you have rendered the country except taking a trip to Natchez with another man's wife." A duel ensued. Thank God, the Governor was not killed.

LISA BERRIEN

Total lawlessness. He's had at least twenty duels, and I understand he killed at least six men.

DEBORAH INGHAM

Well there is nothing we can do about it.

FLORIDE

I beg to differ.

DEBORAH INGHAM

What power do we as women have?

FLORIDE

Plenty of power. The Lord has chosen us to be the keeper of morals. And we can have to keep up our trust. And we do have our weapons.

ELIZABETH BRANCH

What is that?

FLORIDE

The White House will be dull without women.
And the whole world through its embassies will
know the depth of our the public anguish.

DEBORAH INGHAM

I support you totally.

ELIZABETH BRANCH

We must still contend with our husbands.

LISA BERRIEN

What do we do

FLORIDE

Strike!

LISA BERRIEN

How?

FLORIDE

No more visits to the white house until she is
gone

LISA BERRIEN

I agree!

FLORIDE

With God's help we will prevail.

DEBORAH INGHAM

A victory for morality

ALL

Amen.

SCENE 8 VAN BUREN DINNER THE NEXT WEEK

President Jackson and Martin Van
Buren are standing near a
fireplace.

JACKSON

Very nice of you to hold this dinner. My niece
say she cannot come because of sickness during
her pregnancy.

VAN BUREN

How did the holiday at the Hermitage go?

JACKSON

Icy.

VAN BUREN

Both Mr. And Mrs. Calhoun have said that they would be coming As did the Secretary of the Treasury and twelve other cabinet members. And of course Mr. And Mrs. Eaton. The table is set for 26.

CALHOUN

Good evening all.

VAN BUREN

Mr. Vice President. Mrs. Calhoun must be in the ladies room

CALHOUN

No. Poor Floride has been suffering from the worst case of sinus. She was planning to come tonight but sends her best.

VAN BUREN

So sorry.

JACKSON

Those sinuses have always affected her.

CALHOUN

Than you so much Andrew. You know how fond she is of you.

JACKSON

And Mrs. Berrien.

JOHN BERRIEN

Mrs. Berrien intended to come Bur we just learned that her Aunt Martha died. She was so inconsolable that she could not come.

SAMUEL INGHAM

And Mrs. Ingham hurt her foot. She may arrive as soon as the doctor has tended to her foot and...

JOHN BERRIEN

A broken foot can be painful.

CALHOUN

Indeed.

JACKSON

Yes. I remember when I broke my foot. It was painful indeed.

CALHOUN
And your niece Mrs. Donelson?

JACKSON
Her pregnancy sickness.

CALHOUN
I know about pregnancy illnesses. With ten children.

JACKSON
Well we'll have a jolly time.

Margaret and Eaton enter.

EATON
Good evening

ALL
Good evening

EATON
We look foreword to a great evening indeed

CALHOUN
Indeed

BERRIEN
Indeed

JACKSON
Indeed

VAN BUREN
Yes, really.

MARGARET
We will have one great evening.

VAN BUREN
Surely

MARGARET
I love the ratio of men to women.

They all begin laughing.

SCENE 9 OVAL OFFICE 1830

Jackson is seated at this desk.
Ezra Ely comes in. Ezra Ely comes
in

JACKSON
Welcome! Reverend Ezra Ely.

EZRA
Mr. President thank you so much for seeing me.

JACKSON
Always. I owe you and the Christian Soldiers so much.

EZRA
We were pleased to help you. Both times, but this time you are in the White House. .

JACKSON
And I will never forget. Like my Mother taught me.

EZRA
Good for Mrs. Jackson.

JACKSON
Elisabeth. You know what she wanted me to do.

EZRA
What?

JACKSON
To her dying day--- when I was orphaned at 14--she wanted me to become a Presbyterian minister.

EZRA
As well she should. You are a righteous man, Mr. President. And would have made an excellent minister. But you have chosen to serve your God and Country by another route. And you are blessed for it. And I am, as fate would have it, able to minister to you.

JACKSON
Which I truly appreciate .

EZRA
You are a great man like King David. So as he was chosen to lead a nation, so you too have been chosen.

JACKSON
Well thank you.

EZRA

So as David was chosen to save the Hebrews from the Philistines so you have had to deal with the Savages and the British. And you have treated the savages with love and kindness. And now I have come to speak to you about matters of the greatest delicacy.

JACKSON

Let me hear you.

EZRA

The Christian Nation and...

JACKSON

The Eatons?

EZRA

I must warn you , Mr. President

JACKSON

About what?

EZRA

God has chosen you to lead this country!
Andrew Jackson

JACKSON

Yes, Reverend Ely.

EZRA

And now I must help you in this hour of need.

JACKSON

How?

EZRA

By helping to remove that evil woman from the White House.

JACKSON

Why?

EZRA

ANDREW JACKSON! You are the President of the United states. I have had to conjure the strength to let you know how much this woman is damaging your presidency and the United States of America.

JACKSON

Oh?

EZRA
You are the chief moral influence on the
Nation. You must set the moral tone for the
nation.

JACKSON
And?

EZRA
This woman is a disgrace.

JACKSON
Why?

EZRA
Her moral conduct!

JACKSON
What are your charges against her.

EZRA
Moral turpitude!

JACKSON
Such as.

EZRA
Having a child out of wedlock.

JACKSON
Where did you learn about this child of
wedlock?

EZRA
From impeccably reliable sources.

JACKSON
I want names.

EZRA
I cannot reveal them.

JACKSON
But then you admit that this is based on
hearsay.

EZRA
Well if you put it like that.

JACKSON
What makes you believe that her husband was not
the father.

EZRA
He was not in the country.

JACKSON
Says who!

EZRA
Everyone knows it.

JACKSON
Therefore this is based on gossip.

EZRA
Gossip is not gossip when it comes from alarmed Christians who want to preserve morality. Remember at 19 and still a student at Yale, I spent a year among the prostitutes of Philadelphia. I have great pity for them.

JACKSON
Mrs. Eaton is as chaste as a virgin.

EZRA
That is impossible, sir. She already had two children

JACKSON
You know what I mean.

EZRA
Also, reliable sources say they spent a night at a New York hotel together.

JACKSON
Again gossip.

EZRA
Can all these Christian women be wrong.

JACKSON
I would call them Christian gossips!

EZRA
We disagree. I am intending to condemn her from my pulpit.

JACKSON
Please do not!

EZRA
I must.

JACKSON
Let your conscience be your guide then.

EZRA

But I wall always be faithful to you. This must become a Christian nation.

JACKSON

It is one.

EZRA

It most certainly is not. Our president must always be a Christian.

JACKSON

They have been in fact.

EZRA

Not at all . Both John Adams and John Quincy Adams are Congregationalists. Essentially deists.

JACKSON

So what is the solution?

EZRA

We must end the separation of Church and state. That will assure that we are a Christian nation.

JACKSON

And how about the Jews and these other people. Like the Jews....

EZRA

Oh fear not. We'll find a place for them somewhere and sometime. Besides, they would make excellent converts.

JACKSON

You realize that if John Adams were President and did not like your sermon he might fire you or perhaps send you to jail

EZRA

As for the Adams, they are a reprehensible people. Abigail Adams referred to me as the Reverend Ezra Gadfly. That is why the Christian Army defeated her son for office.

JACKSON

I thank you for your support., I will take your suggestions under advice.

EZRA

Thank you. And Again I must advise you not to work on Sundays.

JACKSON

I will follow your edict as much as I can.

EZRA

You are God's Chosen.

JACKSON

And I hope you do not condemn Mrs. Eaton from the pulpit.

EZRA

I will certainly consider your suggestion. Thank you Mr. President.

JACKSON

Good day.

He exits. Margaret walks in behind the curtain

JACKSON

That must have been painful for you to hear.

MARGARET

Hell no!

JACKSON

It tortured me to hear what he said about you. Similar to the things they said about Rachel.

MARGARET

I am not Rachel. I will devour that bastard.

JACKSON

They say you're intemperate.

MARGARET

That's putting it mildly. I'm going after the gadfly.

JACKSON

Meaning?

MARGARET

I am visiting him before his next sermon. I am leaving immediately for Philadelphia. I shall arrive before he is.

JACKSON

You heard what he said?

MARGARET

A pack of lies from beginning to end.

JACKSON
Keep up the fight for Rachel.

MARGARET
With my whole hear and soul.

JACKSON
Now begone.

MARGARET
Why so abrupt.

JACKSON
Campbell is coming.

MARGARET
When Gadfly arrives at his rectory I will be waiting for him. Fingernails and all.

JACKSON
Be genteel.

MARGARET
Only a fool is genteel with a skunk. And this one is a collared skunk.

JACKSON
Margaret!

MARGARET
I'm on my way

She exits. Reverend John Campbell enters.

CAMPBELL
Mr. President.

JACKSON
Reverend Campbell.

CAMPBELL
I am here to be of service to you.

JACKSON
I hope so. You are my minister.

CAMPBELL
You are my President.. We are so proud. The American people are a chosen privileged people to have you as their our leaders. Each Sunday you had two hours of Sunday School as you were growing u. Right, Mr. President?

JACKSON

Elizabeth Jackson would never stand for only two hours. I had four sometimes five hours. She taught me to survive. I think of that woman every day. Now both she and Rachel are gone.

CAMPBELL

How old were you when she died.

JACKSON

Fourteen.

CAMPBELL

So you learned to cope. God was watching over you. You are such a humble man. I so admire how you firmly deal with the Indians, and yet love them so much. You have even adopted two Indian children.

JACKSON

Rachel and I always referred to our 12 adopted children as being either Redskins or Whiteskins.

CAMPBELL

And God will bless you for it.

JACKSON

We must always be humble. I now need your support to face the savages.

CAMPBELL

You mean the Indians.

JACKSON

No I mean Caucasians.

CAMPBELL

What!

JACKSON

Caucasian women!

CAMPBELL

What!

JACKSON

Caucasian women. White folks.

CAMPBELL

White women are not savages.

JACKSON
Some of the time.

CAMPBELL
What are you referring to Mr. President?

JACKSON
Guess.

CAMPBELL
The Eaton Women.

JACKSON
Right.

CAMPBELL
You need to be protected, Sir.

JACKSON
Protected!

CAMPBELL
So as King David had Nathaniel as one of his advisors, so I believe I have been appointed by God to minister to you.

JACKSON
And what is your opinion

CAMPBELL
She is an immoral woman who is bringing shame to your administration. She must be taken out.

JACKSON
How has she been immoral?

CAMPBELL
She had another man's child when she was married.. She had her husbands best friend take up conjugal duties with her causing the poor Timberlake fellow to commit suicide.

JACKSON
And where did you get this information.

CAMPBELL
Everybody knows.

JACKSON
Everybody does not know. Who specifically told you. Name some of them.

CAMPBELL
I never reveal my sources.

JACKSON
I AM ASKING YOU.

CAMPBELL
For one, Floride Calhoun.

JACKSON
And where did the Vice President's wife learn
of this

CAMPBELL
I do not know. I am sorry sir. We all know
that Mrs. Eaton is guilty.

JACKSON
I need evidence. The evidence is not there.

CAMPBELL
Do you doubt the intentions all the good women
who have risked their standing with you to
stand up to this woman.

JACKSON
Would you have been one of the First to defend
her. Reconsider.

CAMPBELL
It takes a strong God wiled man to face you
squarely.

JACKSON
Meaning

CAMPBELL
My total allegiance Is to Andy Jackson. In
the last election, Mr. Ely and I through our
militant Christian brought in one out of every
four of your votes In the next election, we
will bring even more. We will always be
faithful to you and to God.

JACKSON
I thank you.

CAMPBELL
I must stand up to the devils which lie even in
you Andrew Jackson. I know you are powerful,
and could do with me as you wish but, I will
fight for God's Truth.

JACKSON
Then we have no more to say on the subject.

CAMPBELL
I hope never to loose your good graces, and
know you will someday appreciate my bravery in
being frank and honest .

JACKSON
We differ.

CAMPBELL
Will I see you at service on Sunday.

JACKSON
Yes. Now I must be off.

CAMPBELL
I shall pray for you for at least one hour each
day.

JACKSON
Thank you.

CAMPBELL (O.S.)
Praise be to the Lord

Campbell exits.

JACKSON
God save me from my own Presbyterians.
End of Act 1
Act 2

SCENE 1 REVEREND ELY'S OFFICE THE NEXT DAY

The Reverend is working
prodigiously at this desk. A knock
on the door

EZRA
Who is it?

The door open and Margaret
appears.

MARGARET
Good morning.

EZRA
You came in unannounced. Who are you?

MARGARET
The woman you are writing about in your sermon.

EZRA
(putting on spectacles)
That can not possibly be you.

MARGARET
It is I. Margaret O'Neal Timberlake Eaton. A
woman of honor!

EZRA
I know who you are.

MARGARET
How! You have never met me!

EZRA
I have seen you.

MARGARET
From a distance!

EZRA
Now I must ask you to leave.

MARGARET
I have three reporters with me.

EZRA
What!!!

MARGARET
Yes! They are waiting outside, pencil and paper
in hand. Your idiocy will sell newspapers

EZRA
You vile, grotesque woman. What do you want?

MARGARET
Tell me about your sermon.

EZRA
Virtuosity.

MARGARET
Your virtuosity or mine?

EZRA
Yours! I have only heard the most serious of
charges about you!

MARGARET
Serious!

EZRA

You are destroying our sacredly chosen
President.

MARGARET

Sacredly!

EZRA

He won the elction only because of the
Christian Soldiers-my followers We want a
Christian President. And want one who will
uphold God's laws.

MARGARET

He would have won with or without your
Christian Soldiers. But I am asking you to
behave like a Christian!

EZRA

I do!

MARGARET

The hell you do!

EZRA

What an abrasive woman!

MARGARET

Call me what you like. I am here to prevent
you from sinning.

EZRA

Me from sinning!

MARGARET

Giving a sermon based on gossip.

EZRA

Gossip!

MARGARET

You know the story of the woman was being
stoned and Jesus of Nazareth went tin to save
her. You are the opposite. The devil
incarnate!

EZRA

Leave!

MARGARET

Chicken!

EZRA

Leave!

MARGARET

But you will see me in your church tomorrow.
At both services. And you dare mention my name
and I will come up and scratch your eyes.

EZRA

You wouldn't dare!

MARGARET

You bet I will.

EZRA

Get out

MARGARET

I will be staying at the Philadelphia Hotel.
And intend to eat donuts at the church social
after each service. I will also be coming to
the church supper.

EZRA

Goodbye, Mrs. Eaton!

MARGARET

Good-bye Reverend Gadfly.

EZRA

That bitch!

SCENE 2 THE OVAL ROOM 1831

Martin Van Buren sits across from
President Jackson

JACKSON

So you read this morning's newspaper?

VAN BUREN

I always read the newspapers. There are at
least ten stories about Andrew Jackson.

JACKSON

The quote from John Quincy Adams?

VAN BUREN

It must have been hurtful! But Harvard made a
a good choice in offering you the honorary
degree. Will you accept?

JACKSON

Of course. But let me read to you what
President number six said about President
number seven: "as myself an affectionate child
of our Alma Mater.

I would not be present to witness her disgrace in conferring her highest literary honors up on a barbarian who could not write a sentence of grammar and hardly could spell his own name."

VAN BUREN

I see the Green Eye of jealousy upon you.

JACKSON

But....

VAN BUREN

Bear in mind that you thoroughly kicked his you-know-what in two elections.

JACKSON

Nevertheless...

VAN BUREN

Also remember that the American people love Andrew Jackson. By contrast those Adamses, both father and son are nothing more than a couple of New England snobs who care very little for the common people.

JACKSON

Well....

VAN BUREN

And what aggravates him even more is that not only are you a great military and political leader, but you have more money than Adams and his father combined.

JACKSON

I now but...

VAN BUREN

Which of our Founding fathers do you admire most..

JACKSON

Either Washington or Franklin.

VAN BUREN

And what did Franklin think of Adams?

JACKSON

Not much.

VAN BUREN

To say the least. And considered Adams a pompous fool who obstructed his work in Paris

JACKSON
Enough on the subject.

VAN BUREN
To some good news. I understand that Reverend Ely did not condemn Mrs. Eaton from the pulpit in Philadelphia.

JACKSON
I think Mrs. Eaton convinced him otherwise. What are they saying abroad.

VAN BUREN
I do not know.

JACKSON
Are you not the Secretary of State?

VAN BUREN
I am, but have no proficiency in picking up back fence gossip.

JACKSON
Martin!

VAN BUREN
I can only relate some anecdotes that have been reported to me.

JACKSON
Now we're speaking.

VAN BUREN
French and English diplomats have been openly discussing the possibility of South Carolina's secession. And that others may follow

JACKSON
That is not going to happen.

VAN BUREN
Old Hickory speaks again.

JACKSON
You bet. Word is already out that I will visit Charleston-- with heavy stick, gun and foot in gear.. Foot to kick the most tender part of South Carolina's ass.

VAN BUREN
Your threats work.

JACKSON
This one had better work.

VAN BUREN
Yes, Sir.. Have you informed the Vice
President?

JACKSON
I just did.

VAN BUREN
WHEN!

JACKSON
ABOUT A SECOND AGO.

VAN BUREN
I am not your vice president.

JACKSON
Have you already resigned?

VAN BUREN
I don't understand.

JACKSON
I have fired John Calhoun.

VAN BUREN
What! Constitutionally impossible.

JACKSON
The Constitution has nothing to do with it.
Tonight I will praise Mr. Calhoun to high
heaven, despite his perfidy. I will propose a
toast to him.

VAN BUREN
But you have fired him! You say.

JACKSON
Correct. And I will appoint you as our
ambassador to Great Britain.

VAN BUREN
I am Vice President or ambassador to Great
Britain. Ha!

JACKSON
One at a time.

VAN BUREN
Explain

JACKSON
Vice Presidents are the easiest people to fire.
No announcements.

It just happens Tonight I will toast him at the Hill House dinner. He shall have more duties than ever. A visit to Florida. Another to New Orleans. And plenty of hospitals to open.

VAN BUREN

He is your vice president.

JACKSON

You are the Vice President. And will become president the first from New York state.

VAN BUREN

I humbly accept.

JACKSON

Calhoun is unqualified to be either President or Vice President.

VAN BUREN

Why!

JACKSON

Mr. Calhoun is not an American.

VAN BUREN

Well, he....

JACKSON

He is a South Carolinian first and foremost. Then dot, dot, dot. Then he's an American.

VAN BUREN

I suppose you're right.

JACKSON

I spent the first 17 years of my life as a South Carolinian. Then a Tennessean I am proud to say. But I am first and foremost an American. America trumps all.

VAN BUREN

Well you are...

JACKSON

My mother, father, and two brothers all died fighting for the Union. And I almost died fighting for the Union many times. And I never want to hear a word about the breakup of the Union. And that bastard speaks of Nullification.

VAN BUREN

Nullification sounds like a precursor to
breakup.

JACKSON

Over my dead body. Or preferably his.

VAN BUREN

Preferably his.

JACKSON

Look he worries about losing his slaves and
about tariffs imposed by the North. I don't
intend to give up any of my slaves, but I am an
American first.

VAN BUREN

And the American people love you for it. .

JACKSON

What would I do without you , Martin Van Buren?

VAN BUREN

You would survive nicely.

JACKSON

What you have done for the Eatons can never be
forgotten.

VAN BUREN

I only did what was right.

JACKSON

All those dinners.

VAN BUREN

But in the end the gals won out.

JACKSON

No they did not.

VAN BUREN

What?

JACKSON

You will see.

VAN BUREN

You appointed me vice President.

JACKSON

That's just between us. Now we go through a
complete reorganization.

VAN BUREN
Meaning?

JACKSON
All cabinet members resign.

VAN BUREN
What! Is that why they are waiting outside?

JACKSON
Yes.

VAN BUREN
Eaton was not there.

JACKSON
I am seeing him privately.

VAN BUREN
But why the firings.

JACKSON
Sometimes you have to start all over. Now
scoot out. Mr. Ambassador to Great Britain.

He exits as Jackson rings a bell.
Cabinet members and Calhoun enter

JACKSON
Good Afternoon, Gentlemen.

ALL
Mr. President.

JACKSON
I welcome you and want to thank you.

ALL
Yes, Mr. President.

JACKSON
I want all of you to resign your positions

ALL
WHAT!

JACKSON
You have all done an outstanding job. And you
will all go on to greater things.

SAMUEL INGHAM
When are they to be made effective.

JACKSON

No later than tomorrow morning. But effective as of two weeks.

JOHN BRANCH

I am please to comply. But why? I believe I speak for all of us.

JACKSON

Changing cabinets is commonplace. I am not the first President to do so. You gentlemen have all done a fine job and you can rest assured I am grateful. But it is time for a change.

JOHN BRANCH

Well, we thank you, Mr. President. What more can we say?

JACKSON

I have treated you fairly and all alike. Do you all understand the reason for my doing this.

ALL

Yes.

JACKSON

Now please step into the Green Room for drinks and I have gifts for all of you.

ALL

Thank you.

They exit and close the door.
Jackson runs to the door and opens it slightly, keeping his ear to the door

JOHN BERRIEN (O.S.)

No surprise.

ALL (O.S.)

No.

SAMUEL INGHAM (O.S.)

And we all owe it to one woman.

ALL

Yep!

SAMUEL INGHAM (O.S.)

The Whore!

CALHOUN (O.S.)
You said it. I did not.

JOHN BRANCH (O.S.)
We all know that it's true.

CALHOUN
Just one rumor about the worst kept secret in town. Martin Van Buren owe's his future Presidency to that W...I mean woman.

We hear uproarious laughter.
Margaret and Eaton enter from another door.

MARGARET
You tried your best!

JACKSON
I have failed you and Rachel.

EATON
Stop this nonsense. You did everything you could for us.

MARGARET
We love you! Andrew Jackson. And Rachel loves you from heaven.

EATON
You had no alternative.

MARGARET
It was a brilliant strategy. Accepting resignations from all the cabinet ministers and starting anew.

JACKSON
We got the Brits, we saved the Indians, but the gossip mongers won.

MARGARET
Old Hickory will get'em.

JACKSON
In the meantime, will you serve as my Governor for Florida. Mr. Eaton.

MARGARET
He is honored.

JACKSON
And honored we go to a party in the Green Room.

SCENE 3 OVAL OFFICE THE NEXT WEEK

Andrew Jackson is seated at his desk. We see a display of 12 guns on his wall. John Eaton runs in hurriedly.

JACKSON
I've been waiting for you. You must defend your honor.

EATON
I must proceed quickly

JACKSON
Take your choice of guns.

EATON
They are beautiful guns

JACKSON
Which one do you want?

EATON
I have my own.

JACKSON
These are the best guns in America.

EATON
These are the best looking guns in America. I only have two guns neither is much to look at but they are deadly.

JACKSON
I will have to defer to our judgment. You are a better shot than I am.

EATON
We meet in two hours.

JACKSON
I know you will kill him.

EATON
The preparations are all ready.

JACKSON
I should have never appointed Samuel Ingham the secretary of the treasury. He is a shameful man. Now get him. Dead!

EATON

Did you ever foresee a duel between your Army Secretary and your Treasury Secretary. Albeit the night before their departures. -

JACKSON

A man has got to do what he has got to do. I have been involved in twelve duels and do not give a dam. Now blow his brains out.

EATON

His attacks up on me I could tolerate. His attack on Mrs. Eaton I can not.

JACKSON

And right you are. Can you blow out his wife's brains out too.

EATON

That I can not do. Now I must be off

JACKSON

I will be praying for you.

The door opens and Van Buren rushes in.

VAN BUREN

We are saved. Ingham has fled to Baltimore.

EATON

Fled. The Coward!!

VAN BUREN

My prayers are answered!

EATON

What!

JACKSON

What! You would surely win! And then like Burr be banded a murderer for the rest of your life.

EATON

Where is my honor?

VAN BUREN

The coward showed his true colors.

EATON

I intend to pursue him to Baltimore

VAN BUREN

No way. We is being hidden by his relatives.
And you have won and your honor is preserved.

EATON

He did not retract.

VAN BUREN

It's over.

Margaret rushes in

EATON

My love!

MARGARET

You're alive.

SCENE 4 AMERICAN EMBASSY IN SPAIN 1840

Margaret and Eaton are drinking
rum and smoking cigars. They both
appear to be drunk.

MARGARET

Mr. Envoy Extraordinary and Minister
Plenipotentiary.

EATON

Mrs. Envoy Extraordinary and Minister
Plenipotentiary. I should be ambassador.

MARGARET

But they never did name you the Ambassador. The
skunks.

EATON

Do you like my cigars? The Cubans are best.

MARGARET

YEP! I enjoyed sitting next to the Queen of
Spain last night. She is fat.

EATON

The king is no prize either.

MARGARET

But they are kings.

EATON

I like Jackson better. He could have been a
king.

MARGARET

He is a king. Only without title. Alphonse or whatever his name has title but no office.

EATON

Oh well, Pour me some more rum.

MARGARET

Gladly. And then you pour mine.

EATON

Gladly. I hear that Van Buren has been grumbling about me.

MARGARET

That jackass should not be grumbling about anybody.

EATON

And Mr. Jackson stands behind him! From the minute he nominated him at the Democratic Convention.

MARGARET

I hope Mr. J isn't becoming senile.

EATON

Martin Van Dunkhead has reversed all the Jacksonian policies. The imbecile. We have high unemployment, the panic of 1837, inflation and the country is falling apart. He would not admit Texas to the Union, he abandoned the Mormons, and doesn't lie slavery.

MARGARET

Out he goes.

EATON

Let's raise a toast.

MARGARET

To whom.

EATON

Our next president

MARGARET

To William Henry Harrison!

EATON

To William Henry Harrison!

MARGARET

Oh here's a note he sent you.

EATON
Who?

MARGARET
The imbecile.

EATON
Give it to me.

He opens it.

MARGARET
What does he say.

EATON
The bottom line is that we are fired.

MARGARET
Hip Hip Horray. Washington and Tennessee, here
we come.

SCENE 5 ANDREW JACKSON'S OFFICE AT THE HERMITAGE 1843

President Jackson is seated at his desk. We hear a knock at the door. He does not answer. The knock becomes louder. Jackson simply turns his back and faces the wall. The door opens and Margaret and John Eaton enter. She carries a present.

EATON
Mr. President. Did you not hear the knocking?

JACKSON
I did.

EATON
And you did not answer?

JACKSON
Why do you call me Mr. President?

MARGARET
Because you are the seventh President of the
United States. Now and forever.

JACKSON
I expect you to treat me like one.

MARGARET
We can not have a conversation with your back
turned against us.

JACKSON
That's right!

MARGARET
ANDREW JACKSON!

JACKSON
(Turning) What can I do for you?

MARGARET
We have a present for you.

JACKSON
I don't accept gifts from traitors.

MARGARET
What!

EATON
Andrew Jackson!

MARGARET
I am hurt.

JACKSON
How dare you betray the man who stood solidly
behind you!

MARGARET
What!

JACKSON
What she says! You support not Martin Van
Buren but that Harrison fool for President
after all Martin did for you. During our crisis
he stood solidly behind you

EATON
He fired me!

JACKSON
He did no such thing.

EATON
I was not reappointed.

JACKSON
That is not the same thing!

EATON
Of course it is.

JACKSON
Why did he not reappoint you.

EATON
Because he's incompetent.

JACKSON
I do not agree!

EATON
I sent memoranda from Spain and his incompetent staff did know how to read them.

JACKSON
His story is different. He also mentioned empty bottles of port and cigars lying all over the place.

EATON
That has nothing to do with my competence.

MARGARET
The cigars are mine not his! Rachel taught me the art of smoking cigars.

JACKSON
Let us calm down!

EATON
All right.

JACKSON
Did you have to campaign for Harrison?

EATON
Yes.

JACKSON
Why!

EATON
For the sake of my country! We can not have that inkenpoop in the White House

JACKSON
But he continues my legacy!

EATON
He destroys your legacy. That is why the voters threw him out. MARTIN VAN BUREN IS NOT ANDREW JACKSON!

MARGARET
And that is that. Did you ever reprimand that nincompoop for not reappointing my husband.

EATON

You call a President of the United States a nincompoop.

MARGARET

He will go down as the worst president in American history.

JACKSON

I don't know what happened between you two, but why did you not contact me.

EATON

Had you saved my job!

JACKSON

You people have no sense of gratitude

MARGARET

You People!! He's allowed to run all over us and you want us to play dead.

JACKSON

People always said you were vulgar. Now I see it.

MARGARET

You have me in tears.

JACKSON

I think we have said enough

EATON

And please open our gift.

JACKSON

The meeting is over.

MARGARET

We are hurt!

JACKSON

The meeting is over.

MARGARET

And we love you.

JACKSON

The meeting is over.

They exit

JACKSON
 (Calling) Joseph. Come in here. I have a gift
 for you.

SCENE 6 THE HERMITAGE 1845

The entire cast is crying.

MARGARET
 I weep more today than I wept at my own
 Father's funeral.

EATON
 He was a father and brother and President to
 us.

MARGARET
 I am so glad we broke bread and made peace with
 Mr. Jackson before he died.

EATON
 Three thousand people here to pay homage to the
 great man.

MARGARET
 There's Martin Van Buren. He took one look at
 us and turned his back.

EATON
 Oh well.

MARGARET
 He has a problem. Yesterday was yesterday and
 today is today.

EATON
 Here comes the Reverend Ely.

MARGARET
 Indeed.

EZRA
 Why Mr. And Mrs. Eaton I have not seen you
 years. Age goes well with you.

MARGARET
 And with you Reverend Ely.

EZRA
 We have not always agreed but today were are in
 morning for Andrew jackson. I can hardly
 control my tears.

MARGARET
Why is that Reverend Campbell.

EZRA
He and I are delivering the eulogies today.

CAMPBELL
Mr. And Mrs. Eaton. So good to see you.

MARGARET
Even on this very sad day.

CAMPBELL
Now we are all united.

MARGARET
Yes indeed.

CAMPBELL
Why Mr. Calhoun approaches us.

EATON
Age goes well with the vice president

CALHOUN
Hello everyone. We mourn a great man.

EATON
I am aware that you have not always agreed

CALHOUN
But we are all Americans.

MABEL
Indeed. And where is Mrs. Calhoun?

CALHOUN
In Rhode Island. And one of our children is ill. She wishes you her best.

EATON
And now the eulogy begin.

Organ playing Rock of Ages.

CAMPBELL
Three thousand people from all over the world today pay respect to Mr. Andrew Jackson. A very great American.

CROWD
Amen

CAMPBELL

Our first really Christian president

CROWD

Amen.

CAMPBELL

We know all of his accomplishments. But I will mention the main ones. Were it not for General Jackson winning the Battle of New Orleans, we would be Canadians. He made sure that this Nation, once it survived the Second War of Independence, would be safe for both Europeans and Indians. And third he kept the Union together, and now he has joined his Mother, Father, and two brothers who all died fighting for the Union.

AMEN

And now he will again be with his Beloved Rachel. In this hallowed ground at the Hermitage.

CROWD

Amen.

EZRA

And we know his personal bravery. The day that assassin tried to kill him, President Jackson subdued him personally, and held him to the ground until the assassin was jailed.

CROWD

Amen

CAMPBELL

And he loved people of all races. He adopted Indian children. And before he died he said to his slaves: "Do not cry. I hope to meet you all in Heaven, White and black.

EZRA

May his soul rest in peace.

CROWD

Amen

CAMPBELL

And now we begin a short eulogy this remarkable man deserves.....

MARGARET

(whispering)

This should take at least an hour.

EATON
 (whispering)
 Thank God. A long time ago I learned how to
 sleep with my eyes not closed. Seemingly.

SCENE 7 EATON HOME SUNSET 1856

Margaret and John Eaton are seated
 on the front porch of their home,
 drinking rum.

MARGARET
 Beautiful sunset.

EATON
 Sure is.

MARGARET
 I've never seen that sun shine so brightly.

EATON
 It's for me.

MARGARET
 For you?

EATON
 Tis the last sunset I will ever see.

MARGARET
 Oh hush. You are going to live.

EATON
 The doctor said three weeks. This is my sixth
 week.

MARGARET
 And it could be 600 weeks.

EATON
 I'll take more rum.

MARGARET
 Strictly against doctors orders!

EATON
 It's what will keep me alive for a few more
 minutes. Give me my rum, and pour more for
 yourself.

MARGARET
 As you command.

EATON
And stop crying.

MARGARET
I'm not crying.

EATON
That water streaming down your face is not
rain. I want you to make me three promises.

MARGARET
Shoot.

EATON
The first is that you will never stop flirting.

MARGARET
I give you my solemn promise never to stop
flirting.

EATON
The second is that you'll remarry as soon as
possible.

MARGARET
No way.

EATON
I insist.

MARGARET
You're a hard act to follow. I will not
remarry. And the third.

EATON
That you will not cry at the funeral.

MARGARET
I'll try.

EATON
Kiss me once more time

She kisses him.

MARGARET
It's been 28 great years.

EATON
Twenty nine.

MARGARET
And I've loved every minute of it.

EATON

You made it possible. By my side.
And when Myra passed on, it was you who lifted
me about of melancholy.

MARGARET

You lifted mine when Mr. Timberlake died.

EATON

God blessed us.

MARGARET

What a glorious life, Mr. Eaton. Member of
Congress, then the Senate, soldier in War of
1812, member of the kitchen cabinet Secretary
of the army, Governor of Florida, Minister to
Spain, President of the DC bar...

EATON

Stop. None of them will get me into heaven.

MARGARET

You rascal.

EATON

(interrupting)

Stop. ...the Sunset seems to be disappearing.
Kiss me again.

She gets close. Eaton dies.

MARGARET

John! My John! I will love you forever.

SCENE 8 THE EATON HOME 1859

We hear Ponchielli's Dance of the
Hours and children laughing and
dancing in and the background.
Antonio Busicangi and Margaret are
watching.

MARGARET

They dance so beautifully.

ANTONIO

(heavy Italian accent)

Yes my dear Mrs. Eaton. Your grandchildren
have so much talent.

MARGARET

They have learned so much from you. You have a
way with children.

And have made life so much better for all of us, since both of my daughters passed away. . I must be both mother and father to them. You have been a Godsend to us. They look upon you as a father.

ANTONIO

The day I arrived two years ago you were so sad. Your husband gone, then both of your daughters. Now you seem so happy. And I intend to make you even happier.

MARGARET

You have do done so much.

ANTONIO

You need a man's protection.

MARGARET

That is what my mother says.

ANTONIO

Mother knows best.

MARGARET

She goes so far as to suggest marriage.

ANTONIO

Mother does know best. I truly love your mother.

MARGARET

Life can be so hard. I miss John so much.

ANTONIO

But I am by your side.

MARGARET

There is the difference in our ages. I am fifty nine and you are nineteen.

ANTONIO

A mere forty years. You are attracted to me, Right?

MARGARET

Yes I am. I love the touch of your big hands and body.

ANTONIO

I will always be true you.

MARGARET

How can you be such a superb ballet dancer with such a large body

ANTONIO

I am a born dancer. Now I have a question for you.

MARGARET

Yes?

ANTONIO

Will you marry me?

MARGARET

Well...

ANTONIO

Please?

MARGARET

But..

ANTONIO

Your mother says yes..

MARGARET

But.....

ANTONIO

Major Eaton will not come back.

MARGARET

Let me think about it

He jumps to the ground, gets on his knees and brings out a ring.

ANTONIO

Here is this ring which belonged to my mother. She would want you to have it.

MARGARET

Oh, Antonio, this is the largest diamond I have ever seen.

ANTONIO

It goes back 700 years. And now it is yours.

MARGARET

Let me think about it.

ANTONIO

Say Yes.

MARGARET

But...

ANTONIO

I shall bring to you Italy and show you off to all the Italians. And we will be the best looking couple in all of Lucca. You look thirty years younger than you are and I look twenty years older. We will be a beautiful couple.

MRS. O'NEILL (O.S.)

ACCEPT!

ANTONIO

YOU HEAR HER.

MARGARET

Mother you're eavesdropping.

MRS. O'NEILL

Say yes, and shut up!

ANTONIO

Mother knows best. And those children need a father.

MRS. O'NEILL (O.S.)

Right.

ANTONIO

AND OH YES, PLEASE. I want to sign a premarital agreement.

MARGARET

Oh Antonio. I'm overwhelmed.

He jumps to his feet and kisses her. She responds.

ANTONIO

Marry me!

MARGARET

Oh Antonio.

ANTONIO

Say yes.

MARGARET

I'm....

ANTONIO

I am waiting

MARGARET

I accept....

We hear wedding music, followed by
loud laughter from women offstage.

FLORIDE

Can you believe she married a nineteen year old
Italian?

DEBORAH INGHAM

Perhaps she wants to start a new family.

LISA BERRIEN

Surely she'll want an audience with the Pope.

ELIZABETH BRANCH

She'll flirt with him too. Trust me.

ALL

Ha-Ha-Ha.

SCENE 9 LOCHIEL HOUSE, A HOME FOR DESTITUTE WOMEN, 1879

Margaret is seated in a rocking
chair. She hears a knock at the
door.

MARGARET

Come in.

Mabel Jones, from the Washington
Standard enters

MABEL

Good evening Mrs. Buchignani. I'm Mabel Jones.

MARGARET

Mr. Buchignani is my FORMER husband. I prefer
to be called Mrs. Eaton. I have always carried
the name of my dear deceased second husband,
Senator John Eaton of Tennessee.

MABEL

Certainly Mrs. Eaton.

MARGARET

But I prefer Margaret. And I will help you in
every way I can.

MABEL

You look so young.

MARGARET

I will be eighty in a few weeks. I have always looked younger than my years.

MABEL

You look at least thirty years younger.

MARGARET

I have been very blessed.

MABEL

You were called the most vivacious woman in Washington at one time

MARGARET

I suppose I must have been very vivacious". I was a lively girl and had many things about me to increase my vanity and help to spoil me. While I was still in pantalettes and rolling hoops with other girls, I had the attention of men, young and old, enough to turn a girl's head. It must be remembered that I had been raised in the gayest society and was naturally of a mercurial temperament.

MABEL

You were married to three times.

MARGARET

At various points in my life I was courted by an adjutant general, a major and a captain - which delighted me. But I married only three times, widowed twice. To a sailor, a senator, and a ballet dancer.

MABEL

How amazing. How do you explain your popularity?

MARGARET

I was a flirt. The fact is I never had a lover who was not a gentleman, save one, and was not in a good position in society. My tongue was ungoverned, and ungovernable. And they loved me for it.

MABEL

How fascinating.

MARGARET

And I was faithful to all three husbands. But the first two husbands were gentlemen of the first order. My last was a thief, but I forgave him years ago.

MABEL

Do you regret anything you did?

MARGARET

I must have said a great many foolish things.
I was foolish, hasty, but not vicious.

MABEL

And your critics?

MARGARET

I was quite as independent as they, and had more powerful friends. None of them had beauty, accomplishments or graces in society of any kind, and for these reasons... they were jealous of me.

MABEL

Were any of the charges true?

MARGARET

While I do not pretend to be a saint, and do not think I was ever very much stocked with sense, and lay no claim to be a model woman in any way, I put it to the candor of the world whether the slanders which have been uttered against me are to be believed. I can say one thing for certain. I was always faithful to all three of my husbands. I do not believe in sex outside the institution of marriage.

MABEL

Did the rumors both you?

MARGARET

No. What others think of me is none of my business.

MABEL

And Mrs. Calhoun?

MARGARET

Floride?

MABEL

Yes.

MARGARET

She's dead.

MABEL

Do you think about her.

MARGARET

I have outlived her by twelve years. Once I said that what killed her was losing all her slaves when slavery was abolished. But I have become more sensitive.

MABEL

Why?

MARGARET

I outlived both of my daughters And Mrs. Calhoun lost nine of her ten children. Only one survived, and she has married into the Clemson family, another of South Carolina's prominent families.

MABEL

And about Antonio?

MARGARET

He is the first man who ever did me wrong. He was a gold miner. An Italian gold miner.

MABEL

I remember that morning in the Philadelphia court room.

MARGARET

He never did look me in the eyes. I married him under duress. He came here with a ballet company. He began teaching my grandchildren. Then he began courting me immediately. I could not get away from him. And he was a charming man. Finally after much pressure I submitted to him.

MABEL

Do you hate him?

MARGARET

I never hate anyone.

MABEL

Did you love him? You were 59 and he was 19.

MARGARET

That was not an issue. You see I looked so much younger than my 59 years. In fact most people thought I was in my later twenties. And Antonio, although a good looking man, looked at least 25 years older. So we looked fine together. And I thought he loved me.

MABEL

And..

MARGARET

Things went fine for several years. First I should say that it was not my idea to marry him. He was an impoverished Italian one step above a peasant. But my mother insisted upon it. So I complied. I had four grandchildren I had to take care of and she thought they needed a father.

MABEL

How long you were married?

MARGARET

7 years.

MABEL

What happened?

MARGARET

I set him up in business and that failed. Twenty thousand dollars went down the drain. After four years of marriage he insisted that I turn over all my wealth to him. I said no and he threatened to leave. So in a weaker moment I submitted and turned everything over to him.

MABEL

Regrettable.

MARGARET

Then one day I came home and he had run off with everything including my granddaughter. They went through Italy and spent everything within a short period of time. They ended out penniless. And she bore him two children. They never did marry. And it feels strange to have a former husband be the father of my illegitimate great grandchildren. Now he is dead.

MABEL

Was he not librarian of the Library of Congress, and one of President Lincoln's favorites.

MARGARET

Through my connections with Abraham Lincoln. I got him the job. He was personable and smart.

MABEL

Are you happy now?

MARGARET

Very. I have my grandson to take care of me. He has been so faithful to me. I spend all holidays with him and his wife. He's my boyfriend.

MABEL

Do you like living here at Lochiel house.

MARGARET

They want me to move in with them. But I will impose on no one. And I maintain my independence.

MABEL

Which of your husbands do you plan to be buried with?

MARGARET

Mr. Eaton at Oak Hill in an unmarked grave.

MABEL

Why unmarked?

MARGARET

Because in life I had so much notoriety that in death I want to go unnoticed.

MABEL

But death is along time away. Any words of advice to young women?

MARGARET

Love your husbands as I loved mine. Always be faithful to them. . Hold no resentments. And most of all....

MABEL

Yes.

MARGARET

Have a good time And love God.

END OF PLAY