

ODETTE/PEANUT/HOUSTON. "Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost!!!"

(HOUSTON plays "lounge songs" underneath this scene and subsequent bar scenes. ODETTE and PEANUT settle onto the stools at the table. NOTE: ODETTE and PEANUT bring their drinks, an ashtray and a tip bowl that is placed on the piano. After each one of their scenes, they strike the props from the table during the transition.)

ODETTE. Oh, that's a good 'un. I'm Odette. Odette Annette Barnett. I know, that many rhymes is trashy, which I am not, thank you very much, but Mama wanted twins and was gonna name 'em Odette and Annette, but I come out all by my lonesome, so she just gave me both names, and along with Barnett, well... thus the triple rhyme.

PEANUT. Well, idn't that somethin'. Nice to meet you, Odette Annette Barnett. I'm assuming you were raised Southern Baptist.

ODETTE. Accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior and was baptized at nine.

(They both raise their arms to heaven, HOUSTON hits a chord to emphasize.)

ODETTE/PEANUT. Amen! Hallelujah!

ODETTE. I got kicked out here a little while back over an unfortunate incident I'd rather not discuss right now. And you? What's your story?

PEANUT. Well, we have something in common. I got kicked out early on when I was found in a precarious situation with the handsome assistant pastor fresh outta seminary. I'm Preston LeRoy. Folks just call me Peanut.

ODETTE . (*Toasts.*) Nice to meet you Peanut. Here's to backslidin' Baptists.

PEANUT. To backslidin', homosexual, former Baptists. To sinners in need of redemption!

ODETTE. Oh, no, honey, I'm not a lesbian. I'm a alcoholic.

PEANUT. Well, as for me, I'm just a social drinker. You have a drink, so shall I!

ODETTE. (*Laughs.*) Oh, that's a good 'un. No, I like to come here because there's just no judgment with you people. The gays don't seem to judge your behavior like other folks.

PEANUT. (*Oh, really?!*) Oh, ho, ho....

ODETTE. Just let drunks be drunks, you know? And I don't have to worry about all the latches tryin' to pick me up.

PEANUT. I see. (*Bursts out laughing.*)

ODETTE. Go ahead and laugh. Shit. You don't think I get offers?

PEANUT. I'm sorry.

ODETTE. Shit, honey... if my bed could talk, it'd never shut up! You give head like me, word gets out, you know what I mean? I had a reputation. A wicked one! And I liked it...shit...you think you gays have the blow job market cornered. Hell, I'd put my blow job up against yours any time, any place. Just say the word. I was born without a gag reflex. Need I say more?

PEANUT. No! You're ruining my buzz.

ODETTE. Sorry. I don't know what makes me talk dirty sometimes. I'm just an ol' showoff. So sorry. (*Spots "someone" across the bar, points.*) Look there! Do you know that boy over there?

PEANUT. Oh, no, no, no, no, no. No, ma'am, no sirree. You don't want to trifle with that 'un. That's love for sale. They call that boy Traveling Ray. And honey, he's got a pecker long as your arm and a rap sheet even longer. (*Indicates just how long.*)

ODETTE. How do you know that?

PEANUT. I've heard.

ODETTE. Traveling Ray, huh? I thought for a minute — well, he looks like someone from my past.

PEANUT. And I'll bet there are many.

ODETTE. Well, that's for me to know and you to find out. *(Thinks, gets emotional.)* Sometimes I miss the church. The hymns. *(HOUSTON starts playing "Softly and Tenderly", she turns to HOUSTON, in appreciation.)* Yeah! Those Baptists know how to sing, that's for dang sure. There was a feelin' that I got there, Peanut. Safe in the arms of Jesus, you know? But I had to leave. After that unfortunate incident I'd rather not discuss, I just had to. Do you miss it, Peanut?

PEANUT. Like a root canal!

ODETTE. Oh, you do too and you know it. I saw it in your eyes when you were singing. There was a sadness. Did it feel like that to you, Peanut? Safe in the arms of Jesus?

PEANUT. More like safe in the arms of the handsome assistant pastor fresh outta seminary. But we got caught. His wife found out. He shot and killed hisself. *(ODETTE gasps.)* It's true.

(Lights fade and come up on MARK at his desk. PEANUT, ODETTE and HOUSTON exit. MARK stands, addresses the audience.)

MARK. Everybody has their truth. Yours may be different than mine. *(Steps into the church, lights slowly come up in church.)* This was mine. Or would it be "this is mine"? Because right now, at this moment...fortunately...or unfortunately...I am the sum of me. Now don't think too hard about that one 'cause it will fuck you up. Thinking has always fucked me up — or has it been my salvation? Now I'm confusing myself. By thinking. The story of my life. Oh,