

Bowling with Dixie

Ann Barham Pugh





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BOWLING WITH DIXIE

by

Ann Barham Pugh and Theresa Pugh

A small-town story based on real life!

Cast

DIXIE: Youngish sixty-year-old with dramatic hair by shape or unusual color and wears bright slacks or leggings and a t-shirt. Former high school cheerleader.

ALICE: Attractive, gray-haired, modestly dressed in tailored pants, jacket, and practical walking shoes. Was a nurse, now is a county social worker.

MARCELLA: Stylish and trendy, she is overdressed in snug-fitting pants, faddish jacket, and jewelry. She carries a purse and a brightly colored bowling bag (for example with polka dots or an animal print). She teaches Driver's Education and Girl's Physical Education. Recently divorced.

SANDY: Smart and funny, age 50, she is robust, and clearly nine months pregnant. Actor's physical shape should not be confused by appearing overweight. She wears an oversize t-shirt to accommodate bulging maternity padding.

EARL or JENNIFER: Banker, male or female, off-stage voice.

Time

Mid-morning

Setting: An abandoned former popular music store. There is a torn, faded, and sagging sign with hand painted lettering "OWENS MUSIC STORE." It is made of a narrow strip of canvas, ten yards in length, attached to the wall by a rope at each end. The store's band instruments, guitars and records are long gone, but on the walls there is an array of 1960s and 70s posters of recording artists like Elvis Presley, Patsy Kline, and Hank Williams. A flat screen can be used above stage or set off stage for hearing impaired to read screen with dialogue visible in large fonts next to photo of actor's face. Four metal chairs are folded down and stacked on the floor Stage Right. A counter or work table is Upstage Center. A folded collapsible wheelchair leans against the counter/table.

BOWLING WITH DIXIE

At Rise: DIXIE enters with a large cardboard box and a bowling bag. She turns toward audience, and with a satisfied grin looks offstage, scanning the big empty store.

DIXIE: (enthusiastically) You betcha! (moves quickly to the counter, plants the box and the bowling bag on the floor, places smart phone on counter and presses to play a playlist of Elvis Presley music. She dances, sings, spots and smiles at the Elvis Presley poster)

Lover boy, you were some looker! (kisses finger tips loudly and plunks kiss on Elvis, winks) Yes-siree, a real stud! But I got Sam Turner, (wiggles) and that ain't bad!

(ALICE and MARCELLA enter. ALICE carries an ordinary bowling bag and a tray of take-out coffee orders. MARCELLA carries her flashy bowling bag)

ALICE: (calls out over the music) Hi!

DIXIE: (turns off music) Hi, yourselves! Come on in.

*ALICE: So this is where we're meeting? Haven't been here in years! Remember when we hung out here, listening to the *Hit Parade* songs? We bought our guitars here. And so many records.... Ed Owens' Music Store got all of my spare money...*

MARCELLA: Yeah. (less enthusiastic)

DIXIE: Sure glad y'all could make it. Thank goodness the Court House and schools are shut down for the holiday weekend. Alice, hon (points to counter) set your load over there.

ALICE: (puts coffees on counter, bowling bag on floor, turns to DIXIE) Hey girlfriends, this is a great way to start a Labor Day holiday — Can't wait to hear about this big Surprise! (hugs DIXIE)

MARCELLA: Why here? (puts her bowling bag on the counter) Why in this dusty old place? Dixie, surely you're not going to turn this into another diner?

DIXIE: You'll see! (approaches MARCELLA, sees her manicured nails) Marcella hon, looks like you got one of those cool Hollywood manicures. (hugs MARCELLA)

MARCELLA: Gel- love it.

ALICE: *(checks name on each coffee and then distributes them to each actor, indicates the 6 metal chairs)* Let's set these up to serve coffee?

Everyone helps to set up chairs in a circle.

MARCELLA: *(spots wheelchair)* Maud Owens' wheelchair. Guess Ed just left it here after she died.

DIXIE: Thanks for picking the order up.

ALICE: No trouble, it was on my way.

MARCELLA: I'm surprised that the Sheriff and his crew didn't wolf down the donuts before you could slip out of the diner.

DIXIE: No way. You're going to love how I hide the donuts from them. *(peeks into bag)* How about this? *(whisks a sexy nighty from the bag and holds it up)*

MARCELLA and ALICE: Ho-ho! Wow!

MARCELLA: Nothing like pleasing your man!

DIXIE: And your pals! Ta da! *(from same bag, whisks a covered plate of brightly decorated doughnuts)*

ALICE: *(applauds)* Saved from the invading hoards!

MARCELLA: *(whistles)* Cheers for outsmarting those greedy guys!

(ALICE and MARCELLA sit, each eats a doughnut)

DIXIE: *(slips nighty into bag)* Alice hon, how are things over at the Court House?

ALICE: *(shrugs)* Cramped as ever. Our Human Services Department shares that dinky waiting room, part time file clerk, and a primitive microwave with the Sheriff's Office.

DIXIE: Well I'm glad you got Labor Day off. Free of emergencies?

ALICE: (*laughs*) No, I never count on that. Remember last year? When I was called to the trailer camp to deliver a baby on Presidents Day? (*sips coffee*)

MARCELLA: (*to ALICE*) Some holiday for you, huh?

ALICE: I don't mind playing midwife. Remember, before this I spent twenty years as a delivery room nurse and loved every minute of it. My current spot as county social worker is new. When I lost Fred, and our kids were ready for college, I needed a job.

DIXIE: (*moves to down left, looks off left*) Marcella hon, that's one, as my great nephew would say "tricked out" red SUV you're drivin'. (*turns back*) You win the lottery?

MARCELLA: I wish! Part of the divorce settlement. No way could I afford a SUV on my salary. Teaching Drivers Ed and girls' sports doesn't pay much. The trade-off is I haul the ex-mother-in-law and her sister to their family get togethers once a month.

DIXIE: That's not so bad, huh?

MARCELLA: Okay I guess. I plunk the old biddies in the rear, turn the overhead TV on for them to watch their soaps and with them using my iPod earplugs—what are they called? Earbugs? I drop them off in Springville with kinfolks and head for the outlets!

DIXIE: Put the pedal to the metal, huh? Say, with your driving experience and that Sports award you got, why not grab that school bus job? Should fit in with your teaching schedule.

MARCELLA: Wear that tacky green uniform? Never! You know green's not my color!

ALICE: (*points to fourth chair*) Is Sandy coming? Be good to see her again after all this time. What I remember most about her back in school was her sharp brain and tremendous sense of humor.

DIXIE: She sure loved a good joke.

MARCELLA: I haven't seen her in maybe ten years.

DIXIE: None of us have but when I heard they're moving back here and plan to buy a house, I suggested she drive on over today.

MARCELLA: So she's joining us?

DIXIE: Yes, ma'am. Let me tell you...you'll be surprised when you see her!

MARCELLA: Is she getting a divorce?

DIXIE: Not hardly. She's pregnant.

ALICE: Pregnant?

MARCELLA: At her age? You gotta be kidding!

DIXIE: *(raises right hand)* Word of honor! Sounds impossible, but it's true. She's what the docs call a clinical case.

ALICE: That means she's closely monitored.

DIXIE: Gonna be a national celebrity! Imagine, knowing a celebrity!

MARCELLA: She'll be on CNN and YouTube!

DIXIE: Maybe! 'Cause after her little one arrives she'll be written up in the *American Journal of Obstetrics*!

ALICE: That's quite important.

DIXIE: This morning she had to stop by Jacksonville Medical Clinic for an early appointment.

ALICE: A problem?

DIXIE: Naw. A routine check-up.

MARCELLA: Doc Hines is probably running late like he does with his magazine renewals. Hell's bells! They're as outdated as stirrup pants.

ALICE: Don't worry about Sandy. She'll fill the time working crossword puzzles. In the sixth grade she won the state spelling bee.

MARCELLA: Didn't she teach English Lit. over at State College?

ALICE: *(nods)* A professor for over twenty years. Then she married Gus. A widower with three teenagers. An investment banker.

MARCELLA: After life in the city why would she move back here?

ALICE: You have to admit Rocky Creek's a great place to raise kids.

MARCELLA: *(shrugs)* I guess.

ALICE: I heard that Gus got a neat offer from his cousin, bank President Rawlins, to be financial advisor to seniors.

DIXIE: Yeah! *(offers doughnuts)* Jennifer Rawlins is retiring from the job next month.

ALICE: You have to marvel at Sandy. Whew! *(moves to counter)* Who else would dare be pregnant at forty-eight, produce twins and get pregnant a second time?

DIXIE: *(laughing)* Gus sure doesn't need Viagra.

ALICE: *(laughing)* Guess not.

MARCELLA: What that man needs is a vasectomy. *(giggles)*

DIXIE: I'd say Rocky Creek'll be lucky to have them here. They're good people. *(The others hum in agreement).*

ALICE: Indeed. *(beat)* Isn't it strange how folks move back to the home town when they chomped at the bit to leave it?

MARCELLA: We all left here for collage. Except Dixie. Oops! *(spins around)* Sorry, Dixie, I didn't mean-

DIXIE: *(laughs)* Let's face it, hon, from the get-go I never hankered for college. I had exactly what I wanted right here. Hardworking faithful Sam, two red-headed sons four red-headed grandkids and, of course, great parents.

(MARCELLA restlessly picks up polka dot bowling bag and takes it to her chair, slips it under the chair and sits. ALICE and DIXIE do not notice the bowling bag.)

ALICE: *(to DIXIE)* Dixie dear, I loved your parents and can't get over how you and Sam made their last years so comfortable.

MARCELLA: *(brings bowling bag to lap)* Dixie, you asked us to bring our bowling gear. So I'm guessing this surprise is about starting a women's bowling team.

DIXIE: You got that right!

ALICE: Ah-ha! *(to DIXIE)* I guessed that's why you asked us to dig out the bowling stuff from our by-gone teams!

DIXIE: Yes, ma'am! Been hankerin' for a women's team since the old bowling alley burned down. *(to MARCELLA)* Whatcha got in there, Marcella?

MARCELLA: *(slips out of stilettos)* Something special! *(pulls out bowling shoes decorated with unexpected 'glamour-n-glitz', ALICE and DIXIE roll eyes)* Aren't they just too adorable? *(models shoes)* Really different, huh?

ALICE: Uh, yes, you could say quite different.

MARCELLA: Look at this! *(faces downstage, removes jacket with attitude, poses, turns upstage to show the 'glamour-n-glitz' back of the t-shirt)* See, they match!

DIXIE: Yep! Sure do.

MARCELLA: An ensemble! They make a fashion statement. See, the insignia's a gorgeous peacock. It says *(struts, quoting logo on t-shirt)* *Winners Deserve To Strut Like Peacocks*. It's so me!

DIXIE: *(nods)* Sure is, hon.

MARCELLA: *(models)* Can you believe I found this ensemble over in Springville *(beat)* at a yard sale?

ALICE: *(struggling)* Uh, no ... Not in a million years.

MARCELA: *(self-pleased)* As my students would say, it's AWESOME!!

DIXIE: Sure is. *(beat)* And thanks for sharing them with us but — *(Interrupted)*

MARCELLA: *(interrupts, reaches into bowling bag)* I have more.

DIXIE: I'm sure you do, and we'll get back to them. First, let's see what Alice brought.

ALICE: I'm afraid my things pale by comparison and — *(interrupted)*

MARCELLA: *(interrupts)* Hey, girls, you didn't see my *(produces a brightly-colored monogrammed bowling ball from bowling bag)* custom-made bowling ball with my very own monogram. Designed with holes *(slides fingers into holes)* that protect my manicure. Isn't that the cleverest idea you ever saw?

DIXIE: *(firmly)* Sure is. *(turns to ALICE)* Show us your favorites.

ALICE: They're *(gets bowling bag)* nothing great. *(pulls T-shirts out and holds them up individually)* This blue one says Spare Me. This red says Roll One, and this purple says Nine Or Better, *(shrugs)* but none compare with Marcella's colorful -- uh — *(interrupted)*

MARCELLA: *(interrupts, corrects)* Ensemble. The word is Ensemble.

ALICE: *(politely)* Yes, thank you. Her colorful ensemble. *(turns to DIXIE)* It's your turn Dixie. *(returns t-shirts to bowling bag)*

END OF FREEVIEW

You'll want to read and perform this show!