



Betty's Diner

A New Musical

Set: single set, about two hours

Cast:

Six females: Miranda (42, E² to E⁴), Emma (20, G² - C^{#4}), Carla (31, G² - E⁴), Ruthie (60, G² - D⁴), Jennifer (29, G² - B⁴) and Alice (91, no required vocal range).

Four males: Gabriel (40-45, A² to E³), Jack (21, C² - A⁴), Arthur (52, G¹ - A³) and Roy (93, no required vocal range).

Orchestra: Guitar 1 (acoustic guitar and mandolin), Guitar 2 (electric guitar, banjo, mandolin), Acoustic bass (optional electric), Percussion (drum kit plus hand percussion), Keyboard (piano and accordion).

Three-Page Treatment with Additional Support Materials

Music and Lyrics by Carrie Newcomer
Book by Carrie Newcomer and Richard K. Thomas
Music Direction and Orchestrations by Gary Walters
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Three-Page Treatment

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Betty's Diner *A New Musical*

Music and Lyrics © 2005 – 2017 Carrie Newcomer;
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Betty's Diner, has been a family business for three generations. The diner has become something of an institution in a small college town in Southern Indiana near Indianapolis. The regulars and refugees of Betty's Diner are a humorous and somewhat gritty collection of regular customers that create the fabric of a deep community.

At the top of the play, the diner has fallen on hard times. A new expressway has opened on the edge of town. Betty's Diner, as are many local and family businesses, is struggling to find its place and even chances of survival in a world that seems to be moving faster everyday. Miranda, the owner, works most of the shifts herself, barely able to make ends meet. In the wee hours of the first day of spring, a mysterious stranger, Gabriel, appears. He's handsome, albeit a little worn around the edges (1. *Angels Unaware*). There is an immediate attraction between the two.

Its Monday morning, Memorial Day, and the diner is about as bustling as it gets these days. Miranda describes all the regulars and refugees in the key line of the chorus of a song she has written: "Here we are all in one place, the wants and wounds of the human race, despair and hope sit face to face, when you come in from the cold." (2. *Betty's Diner*) Ruthie, Miranda's cook is busy in the kitchen, but never too busy to make her presence known, and what a presence she is. Loud, boisterous and loveable, today she is training a new waitress, Carla, who is undocumented and newly arrived from Mexico. Ruthie is humorous and goodhearted but still holds some pretty intolerant ideas about undocumented workers, so they're off to a rocky start. All the regulars are there. There's Arthur, a middle-aged college professor who is in deep grief over the loss of his wife and soul mate to cancer. Also there is Jennifer, a high-school dropout and exotic dancer who has a five-year old son, Tristan. Miranda's daughter Emma is also there, a smart, wisecracking and trendy young woman still discovering an outlet for her own artistic gifts. Emma sits at the counter with her boyfriend Jack. Jack is studying business at the college, and is full of the new ideas and the passion of optimistic youth. He believes that if you can imagine it, you can do it. Jack envisions a Betty's Diner that is not remade but rather transformed. He tries to explain to Miranda that the answer is not trying to become more like one of the new fast-food and homogenous restaurants on the expressway, but to become more deeply itself, using its local presence and sustainability as a selling point. He tries to persuade Miranda to risk hoping in the survival of the diner, and to realize that she has help in working through these overwhelming challenges. (3. *You Can Choose*). Miranda is not so sure, though as Gabriel has returned to the diner. Miranda has questioned for years whether her work at the diner has meaning and importance, and if there is something bigger that she should be doing with her life and songs. And now she feels she is falling in love with this mysterious stranger. (4. *Is This Love?*)

It's lunchtime at the diner on the fourth of July. Miranda, her personal crisis growing, has just won a local talent contest at the county fair, and is stressing about competing at the State Fair, and fantasizing about what a life on the road without the Diner might be like. Tuesday can only mean one thing: Alice and Roy will come in for the senior club special. Alice and Roy are wry and loveable, and even now in their

nineties, they still act like teenagers in love (5. *Alice and Roy*). This makes quite an impression on Jack and Emma, who have entered the diner with their own secret to disclose, but now wonder if their new love will be as enduring as the love they see in Alice and Roy (6. *Silver*).

Meanwhile, the friction between Ruthie and Carla continues, and finally boils over. Carla discloses that the reason she left Mexico was to earn money for an operation for her sick child (7. *La Paloma*). Ruthie has a change of heart with this new knowledge. Carla and Ruthie reconcile, when suddenly Jack and Emma break the news to Miranda that Emma is pregnant. Although this news deepens her dilemma, Miranda lets Emma and Jack know that she will be there for them no matter what. Eventually, everyone is hugging and determined to help each other find a way through all these problems. Miranda, alone, contemplates her suddenly more complicated choices (8. *Is This Love, I-3*).

It's now August, and we find ourselves on the stoop of the diner with Miranda working on a new song after recently winning the talent contest at the State Fair! Winning the contest only increases her stress, however. Could she really contemplate leaving her extended family in the diner behind and heading out on the road as a touring musician? Arthur enters lost in sadness over his wedding anniversary. He takes refuge in the diner, where Miranda serves him up some of his favorite tea. Gabriel tries to help, flips a coin, and as we've seen earlier in the play, magically transforms the situation (9. *Arthur B and Bob*). Jack and Emma have also dropped into the diner, having just returned from shopping for Emma's very unique wedding dress. Jennifer enters, and everyone decides to play a rousing game of Scrabble with the idea that this could help Carla in her efforts to learn English. We discover that Jennifer is really quite bright as one word leads to another, and before you know it, an idea has emerged to help Jennifer get her G.E.D. At the same time, Jack proposes the idea that Emma join Ruthie in the kitchen to create artistic new locally grown menu items. The first act ends on the most promising of notes for a bright future for everyone (10. *Be True*), except Miranda, who seems more hopelessly stuck in her own dilemma than ever before: stay with the diner and embrace the things she already knows she loves, or go off and pursue the music she loves and the real possibility of greater fame and fortune (11. *Is This Love I-4*).

As Act II opens, Miranda appears for the first time onstage with Gabriel and his band (12. *Room At the Table*). The scene has changed to Wednesday, the first day of Autumn, and, inside the diner, preparations are underway for Jack and Emma's big wedding; all of the regulars are there. Roy teases Jack mercilessly about the perils of marriage, and Ruthie is panicked because Emma is getting nervous. Miranda officiates, and Jack and Emma exchange their vows in a sacred, if unconventional wedding (13. *Silver Reprise*).

Business has picked up under Jack's entrepreneurial eye and they've had a big night when the electrical circuits overloaded and the power went out. Ruthie is out trying to get the power back on, when Jennifer arrives in crisis. She had an incident with Tristan at the grocery store in which he dislocated his arm, and now child protective services have taken him away suspecting child abuse, which Jennifer adamantly denies. Miranda and Arthur gather to support Jennifer, Ruthie adding her well-intentioned but not productive two cents. Together they try to prop up the devastated Jennifer as she shares her side of the story. Jennifer had seen a glimmer of hope, but now the world is tumbling around her (14. *I Fly*).

All Saint's Day rolls around and we learn that Miranda didn't win the National

Competition. It's Friday evening and everyone has gotten behind one of Jack's brilliant ideas to resuscitate the diner: "Taco Night!" Actually, the diner has already experienced quite a bit of a renaissance, but the tension between Emma and Ruthie in the kitchen threatens to undue everything, and can only be resolved with a big production number (15. *It's a Big Glass*). That tension is nothing compared to Miranda's growing crisis, which reveals itself poignantly on the evening when the veil between worlds is at its thinnest, and she gets a rare glimpse into the greater meaning of things (16. *All Saints Day-Angels Unaware Reprise*).

Perhaps the most enduring tradition at Betty's Diner is the annual dinner on Christmas eve, which this year falls on a Friday. All of the regulars gather at the diner for this dinner save the lone refugee Gabriel, who wanders down the street outside the diner and sings to us about the diner's enduring history and the power of a rite whose spirit cannot be broken (17. *Long Christmas Dinner*). The regulars spot what appears to be a homeless man at the door, and insist that Miranda invite him in. Miranda goes out to Gabriel, who tells her that he came because he's heard there's a potential buyer for the diner. Miranda's head is spinning, as her music career is taking off and she now is faced with a critical decision about whether to sell the Diner and pursue life as a musician or stay at the Diner. Gabriel once again flips his coin.

Saturday comes in the middle of the night on Valentine's Day. Jack and a very pregnant Emma show up at the diner. Their baby is due any day and she needs chocolate, and she needs it now! Ruthie fawns over Emma, indulging her sweet tooth while everyone does their best to help an emotional Emma and hapless Jack cope with the moment. Arthur bursts in, he's come by to warn Carla that the immigration authorities are coming after her. Jennifer charges in with her own crisis: the deputy prosecutor showed up at the gentleman's club, and she's scared to death that she'll never get Tristan back. They all turn to Miranda who has taken shelter out on the stoop, overwhelming her with their many needs, when Emma announces that she's going into labor. A frozen moment of time ensues, in which Gabriel comes to Miranda one last time (18. *Is This Love II-5*). It's the moment of truth for Miranda; she thinks she has to choose a life in the diner, or to follow a life on the road (19. *If Not Now*). In a moment of clarity she finally understands that she already has everything she needs, She already has the music, people and diner she loves. She can have it all, but within a new frame she hadn't considered. She now understands that Gabriel has just come to help her on the next leg of her journey. Miranda returns to the moment in the diner, embraces the situation, and everyone goes off to the hospital to bring Jack and Emma's child into the world.

Easter Sunday morning and we've witnessed the passing of the hours of the day, the days of the week, the weeks of the year, and now the passing of a lifetime. Jack and Emma bring their new baby into the diner, whom they've affectionately named after Roy. Today everyone has another reason to celebrate—the formal rebirth of the diner, as they take down the old sign on the front of the diner, and raise a new one. Everyone fusses over "Roy-Boy" except Roy who has fallen asleep as he has so many times before at his customary table. Alice goes to wake him, but not this time, for Roy has passed, and the cycle is complete. A new life comes into the world, an old life passes, and the world continues to turn in its own unshakeable way. The actors drop their costumes and join the audience in a celebration of community and sharing of the great gift of life. (20. *A Gathering of Spirits*).

Betty's Diner



Scenes and Musical Numbers

Act I

Scene 1: Sunday, March 21, First Day of Spring 4:30 a.m.	
Angels Unaware	Miranda/Gabriel
Scene 2: Monday, May 25, Memorial Day, 11:00 a.m.	
Betty's Diner	Miranda
You Can Choose	Jack, Company
Is It Love?	Miranda
Scene 3: Tuesday, Fourth of July, 12:00 p.m.	
Alice and Roy	Miranda, Gabriel
Silver	Jack, Emma, Roy, Alice
La Paloma	Miranda, Carla, Ruthie
Is It Love? (Reprise)	Miranda, Gabriel
Scene 4: Tuesday, August 10, National Lazy Day, 3:30 p.m.	
Arthur B and Bob	Gabriel, Arthur, Company
Be True/One More Girl Alone/Is It Love? (Reprise)	Company

Act II

Entr'acte

Room At the Table	Miranda
Scene 1: Wednesday, September 22, Autumnal Equinox, 7:00 p.m.	
Silver (Reprise)	Jack, Emma, Company
Scene 2: Thursday, October 1, World Vegan Day, 8:00 p.m.	
I Fly	Jennifer, Miranda, Arthur, Ruthie
Scene 3: Friday, November 1, All Saints Day, 9:00 p.m.	
It's a Big Glass	Jack, Company
All Saint's Day/Angels Unaware (Reprise)	Carla, Miranda, Gabriel
Scene 4: Friday, December 24, Christmas Eve, 10:00 p.m.	
Long Christmas Dinner	Gabriel
Scene 5: Saturday, February 14, Valentine's Day, 3:00 a.m.	
Is It Love? (Reprise 2)	Miranda, Gabriel
If Not Now	Miranda, Gabriel, Company
Scene 6: Sunday, March 21, The First Day of Spring, 9:00 a.m.	
The Gathering of Spirits	Miranda, Alice, Roy Company

Sample versions of songs may be found at: <http://bit.ly/2zPMVAo>

Regulars and Refugees

Artists' Bios

Carrie Newcomer (Music, Lyrics, Book)

CarrieNewcomer.com



Carrie Newcomer is a Grammy winning songwriter, recording artist, performer and educator. She has been described as a “prairie mystic” by the Boston Globe and “asks all the right questions” by Rolling Stone. Recent appearances include PBS *Religion and Ethics* and National Award-Winning Krista Tippett’s *On Being*, and a nationally released PBS live concert special *An Evening with Carrie Newcomer*. She has toured with Alison Krauss Europe and U.S. Nickel Creek recorded Newcomer’s song “I Should’ve Known Better”, on their Grammy-winning album *This Side*. In the fall of 2009 and 2011 Newcomer was a cultural ambassador to India invited by the American Embassy of India. In October, 2011 she released her interfaith collaborative benefit album *Everything is Everywhere* with world master of the Indian Sarod, Amjad Ali Khan. In June 2012 Carrie Newcomer traveled to Kenya, Africa performing in schools, hospitals, spiritual communities and AIDS hospitals. In 2013 *Huffington Post* listed her song “Holy as the Day is Spent” as one of the best spiritual songs of 2012. Carrie has 17 nationally released recordings on Rounder Records/Concord and Available Light Records including *The Beautiful Not Yet*, *A Permeable Life* and *Everything is Everywhere*, *The Geography of Light* and *The Gathering of Spirits*. Newcomer has released two books of poetry and essays *A Permeable Life: Poems and Essays* and *The Beautiful Not Yet: Poems and Essays*. Currently Carrie engaged in performing a spoken word/music collaboration with Parker J. Palmer entitled *What We Need is Here: Hope, Hard Times and Human Possibility*. Newcomer has emerged as a prominent voice for progressive spirituality, social and environmental justice. Carrie internationally facilitates workshops and presents keynotes on the topics of songwriting, spirituality & a new political conversation.



Richard K. Thomas (Book)

<http://zoundsproductions.com>

Betty’s Diner is Thomas’ third full length musical. Other original works include *Choices* theEDMatre at World Stage Design in Taipei in 2017. *An Unkindness of Ravens* co-created with Joel Fink in Chicago in 1999, *The Creature* at Purdue University in 2000 (excerpts also performed in Santiago Cuba, Finland and Poland), *Ad Infinitum*³, at the 2011 Prague Quadrennial, *Labcoats on Clouds*, at the 2007 Prague Quadrennial, *The Art of the Fugue*, a 2004 collaboration with the New Century Saxophone Quartet that played in St. Louis MO and New York NY, *The Life of Umbrellas* at Purdue University in 2004, and *Stone in Palm* at Columbia University in New York in 1998. At Purdue Rick teaches a course in playwriting for the ear, which has generated more than a hundred original one act radio dramas that have aired on the long running NPR affiliate WBAA program, *A Theatre in Your Head*. Rick has composed sound scores for close to one hundred plays at many theatres including the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, The Perry Street Theatre in New York, The Colorado, Illinois and Great Lakes Shakespeare Festivals, Wisdom Bridge in Chicago, and Indianapolis Repertory Theatre, as well as ESPN television and Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center. He authored the books, *Music as a Chariot* in 2017, and *The Designs of Abe Jacob* in 2008. He is a Fellow of the United States Institute of Theatre Technology (USITT), an elected member of the National Theatre Conference, and a Legacy Artist at Purdue University. Other awards include USITT’s Herbert D Greggs Award for Outstanding Journal article, the USITT Founder’s Award and 2017 Distinguished Achievement in Sound, and two Indiana Master Artist Fellowships.

Gary Walters (Music Director, Orchestrations)

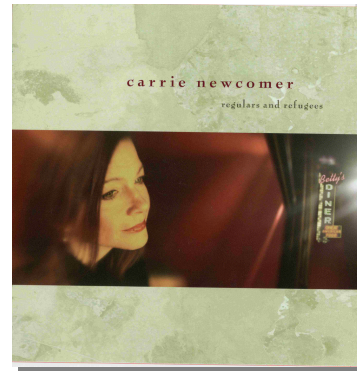
www.garywalterspiano.com



Gary Walters has a B.S. in Music Education and a Masters in Composition. He has been an adjunct faculty member at Butler University since 2000, teaching a variety of jazz courses, primarily Jazz piano. He also teaches at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis campus in the same capacity. Gary has been performing, recording and touring with Carrie Newcomer since 2004. When he is not with Carrie, you will find him working with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra Pops concert series, and area singers including Steven Stolen, Erin Benedict and Sylvia McNair. He is co-founder of The Icarus Ensemble, an eclectic jazz/classical group that includes members of the ISO. Gary also leads his own groups when schedule permits. He released his first solo piano album, *Moments in Time*, in 2010. In April of 2017 he released a second solo piano album entitled *The Way Through*. As a composer, Gary has written jazz compositions that appear on albums with other groups as well as his solo projects. He also has composed for a variety of chamber groups including solo piano, string quartet, clarinet trio, marimba & vibes, brass quintet, etc. His 3x3x3, written for string trio and jazz trio premiered in March 2011.

Betty's Diner

A New Musical



Brief Character Descriptions

Every character was created with an element of humor somewhere in their story.

Miranda Miranda is the owner of Betty's Diner. She is 42 years old, a waitress and songwriter. She began working at Betty's Diner in her early 20's as a recently divorced single mother. The diner passed to Miranda when her beloved Aunt Betty died. Miranda is a strong and resourceful person and she has kept the diner going all these years while raising her daughter Emma. She's the glue that holds the restaurant (and the Betty's Diner community) together. She senses a spiritual light around all the regulars and refugees she encounters. Her strength is not loud and bombastic like Ruthie, or defiant and angry like Jennifer, or soft and mystical like Alice. But rather, her truest gift and greatest strength lies in her ability to be "radically present." She listens in a way that allows others to feel truly heard and seen. She doesn't try to fix other people's problems, but rather she trusts that each person has the ability to find their own solutions. She listens and hears them in a way that allows them to access the wisdom already available within their own hearts. Her grace and hospitality welcomes the stranger and makes everyone feel like they are part of a community. But grace, hospitality and radical presence are not always the gifts the world generally celebrates, and so part of her journey is acknowledging and owning what makes her truly gifted. She's a good listener and good-natured, but she is not an earth mother or a Pollyanna. She's smart, perceptive, creative, funny and tender to the "wants and wounds of the human race." Miranda writes poetry and songs, which is how she makes sense of her life and the world around. It is her "radical presence" and ability to see the extraordinary moment in the ordinary day that she often crafts into her songs and poetry. Until recently, Miranda has not widely shared her songs beyond Emma and her diner family. She's shy and wonders if her songs have value and worth if she is not a famous touring musician. Miranda has not had a significant romantic relationship since Emma's dad left, no one has felt like that magical other, someone she would risk her heart with again. Miranda's journey is one that asks her to risk her heart and art, claiming it's full power and worth. Miranda calls Gabriel into being because she is ready to ask the deepest questions of her life, "Are my gifts truly valuable?" "Is what I need here, or somewhere out there?" "What does love and family really look like?" and "What does success really mean?" Perhaps for this reason, there is an immediate

recognition and trust between Miranda and Gabriel, and that's where our story begins.

Gabriel Gabriel is an angel, a metaphor for spiritual help in hard times. In many ways, he functions like the character Puck in Shakespeare's *Midsummer's Night Dream*. He is tall (or his presence makes him appear tall), somewhere between 40-45 years old. He is attractive and has a quietly powerful presence. He is forthright and honest, and something of a mystery. Gabriel is not just another "character in a play." He transcends the dramatic space and flows effortlessly between the dramatic space, the theatre, the musicians, and the actors. He connects the various "families" of theatre audience, actors, stagehands, and musicians, and dramatic characters. He is the one character who, throughout the play, is completely aware of everything, including the artifice of dramatic illusion. When he leaves the diner, he goes back into the theatre, where he, he chats with the audience, and bears witness to the events of the play. When Miranda needs help in the play, he returns to the diner and Miranda as an angel, and then leaves when his work is done. This helps us understand Gabriel to be a more omnipresent character in the play, with special powers that transcend a realistic depiction of a character in a play. And as a character who transcends the natural—some may say "supernatural"—Gabriel has a very special relationship with Miranda: Miranda always recognizes Gabriel when he returns, but other characters in the play do not remember having ever seen Gabriel before when he appears again in subsequent scenes. Each time he comes into the diner it is as if they're encountering him for the very first time. This helps to increase Gabriel's mystery, but makes it crystal clear that he is not of their world, that he is not just another character in the play, and that he has a very special connection to Miranda that transcends the natural. It forces the audience to individually consider who he is, reconcile him to their own belief system, and hopefully to then apply that belief system to Miranda's (and their own) journey. Allowing the audience to reconcile their worldview with who Gabriel is (as the catalyst for change in the play), more deeply personalizes the audience experience. He does not impart wisdom or give answers. He has come to ask the most important questions – which until now, Miranda was not ready to hear. Questions like; "Are my gifts truly valuable?" "Is what I need here, or somewhere out there?" "What does love and family really look like?" and "What does success really mean?" He will eventually leave when his work is finished. Gabriel is deeply connected to the universe, and, as such, deeply knows about human nature and what makes people tick. He has a wry sense of humor – which we experience when he becomes Bob the dog. He carries around a coin that he tosses into the air when decisions are being made, adding a little magic to the scene, increasing his mystery and affirming that what we need is right here, and the answer is within us.

Jennifer Jennifer is a 29-year-old single mother, convenience store clerk and exotic dancer. She is pretty but pushing the age limit for her work as an exotic dancer. Jennifer projects a swaggering confidence and toughness and yet we sense within her something quite vulnerable. Jennifer spent difficult years in the foster system and eventually dropped out of high school. She fiercely loves her five-year-old-son,

Tristan, and wants to provide a better childhood for him than she experienced. She tried a variety of low paying minimum wage jobs, but could not make ends meet to support her son. She started stripping because the money was better than anything else available to her. In the beginning, she liked the sense of control, attention, the feeling of being sexually powerful. But the seedy and dangerous circumstances, the extraordinary commission the club takes and having no recourse for unfair treatment, has worn on Jennifer. At 29 she is beginning to get snide comments from the other girls about being "well preserved." She has grown tired of high heels and blond wigs but is worried she will not be able to provide for Tristan if she stops. She's exceptionally smart, but she has often been misjudged and underestimated. She loves books and words and takes pride in being able to easily ace a difficult New York Times crossword puzzle. She works days at a Stop and Go convenience store and nights at the strip club. She often visits Betty's Diner on her way home after dancing. Sometimes she stops in with Tristan before her Stop and Go shift. Trust is difficult for Jennifer; the club is a rough place. She lives with a chip on her shoulder and a hard knot of anger in her stomach, especially when people size her up as trashy without really knowing her; mothers at the PTA meetings whisper when she comes in the room and no one talks to her. Miranda treats Jennifer with kindness and courtesy, something that Jennifer doesn't receive at work or other places. Jennifer does not feel judged by Miranda, and when she is at the diner she feels like somebody. She wants to feel she has choices in her life and to continue her education. But, for all her bravado, she is still afraid to look stupid or vulnerable. She is drawn to the diner's sense of family and community, something she has never really experienced before.

Roy

Roy Brennaman is ninety-three years old and has been a regular at Betty's Diner since Miranda's Aunt Betty opened it in the 1940's. He may have been a tall, broad-shouldered man at one time, but now he has become frail and walks with the aid of a cane. Although Roy is diminished physically, he is still intelligent, wry and quick minded - occasionally a little bawdy. He loves to tell bad jokes and often recycles his favorites. He was a conscientious objector during WWII, serving in AFSC (American Friends Service Committees) Noble Peace Prize efforts in Germany during reconstruction after the war. At a rowdy country-dance he met the love of his life, Alice, who was (and is) charming, sweet and a little gullible. During his time in service overseas he wrote Alice beautiful poems, love letters with descriptions of all he experienced, saw and felt. They had one child, James, who enlisted right out of high school and was killed in action in Vietnam. Even after all these years, things that remind him of his son can easily bring him to tears. He is touched that after 40 years, James' girlfriend still sends them Christmas cards. He loves being a part of the clamor, activity, life and vibrancy of the diner. He likes being the guy with the one-liner. Roy deeply enjoys his good-humored, bantering friendship with Miranda. Roy wants to continue to do small acts of chivalry (simple things like get her sweater, hold doors) for his beloved Alice, but it is getting increasingly hard for him to do these things. Miranda often comes to the rescue. but she does this in a way that allows him a

continuing dignity. Roy is nearing the end of this cycle of life. He wants to leave this world with a certain dignity, value and a sense of humor.

Alice Alice is the diminutive wife of Roy. She is 91, sweet and blissfully forgetful. She loves Roy and worries about his health as he's been having heart issues and took a little fall recently. She knows that each day together is a gift at their age. She has seen it all and experienced it all, and therefore has the compassion, the wisdom and the patience to embrace every day and every person with a special joy. She met Roy at a wild country dance; They had one child, James, whom they lost in the Vietnam War. It moves her to tenderness to see how deeply Roy still grieves losing James. She and Roy have frequented the diner since it opened in the 1940's. Alice loves the bustle, activity and community of the diner. They are regulars on Wednesday, which is Senior Club Special Day. Alice cherishes Roy's small gallantries, opening the door, helping her with her sweater. She loves seeing Jack and Emma together, young and in love. She can remember Emma as a little girl running around the diner. It would be easy to underestimate Alice because she's a little spacey and gullible, but Alice notices small things, cherishes them and points them out to Roy. She's aware of the preciousness of each day and loveliness of the small moment as she and Roy near the end of this cycle of life.

Arthur B Edgerton Arthur is 52 years old, and an English professor at the local liberal arts college. He recently lost his wife, Libby, to cancer. He is grieving and lost without her. He is fastidious and polite, somewhat reserved, a little too thin lately. He prefers Earl Grey tea and Miranda keeps it in stock, even though no one else orders it. Libby taught English as a second language at a local Latino Cultural Arts Center. Arthur took over her class when Libby was unable to finish the semester and has continued to teach there. Arthur and Libby were inseparable. They both enjoyed doing the NYT crossword puzzle. Libby was spontaneous and full of life, lighting up a room whenever she walked in. Libby made quilts, including the one that hangs in the diner. She was adventurous and often drug Arthur into new and unexpected kinds of experiences that stretched and expanded his life. Arthur doesn't know how to fit into the community without Libby. Arthur and Libby had a mixed breed rescue dog named Bob. Bob loves Arthur in the uncomplicated manner of a good and faithful dog, and Bob's companionship has been a comfort to Arthur. In his nights of deepest grief, Arthur and Bob have sat together and howled their sorrow. Arthur comes to the Diner when he can't sleep or when the house gets too quiet without Libby. Miranda is a friend and comfort to Arthur. Arthur doesn't feel so alone when he's at the diner. It's hard for him to be around people, but the diner community helps him heal. In the beginning of the play Arthur can only feel the all-encompassing enormous absence of his wife.

Ruthie Ruthie is 60 years old and, as the diner's cook has been a fixture in the diner since long before Miranda took it over--back when Miranda's Aunt Betty owned and ran the place. When Miranda bought the diner, she got Ruthie in the bargain, and the two of them have become loyal and endearing friends despite their often-contrasting personalities.

Ruthie is loud and boisterous, and typically says exactly what she thinks; Miranda, careful and considerate. Ruthie thinks of herself as someone who rolls up her sleeves and fixes problems; Miranda sometimes has to redirect Ruthie's energy and tendency to jump into situations inappropriately. Ruthie takes great pride in her home style cooking. Even though Ruthie is not always seen, we soon understand that she is always there listening--she hears and sees *everything* and is not shy about commenting on it in her own inimitable way. Ruthie and her husband are raising her two energetic grandchildren. You get the impression that Ruthie's daughter has been disappointing and irresponsible and their relationship is strained. She has a little brother, Paulie, who owns a U-pick strawberry and vegetable farm. Like many rural people who have never had the benefit of travel, Ruthie has a great suspicion and even dislike of those who are different. But once she gets to know you, she becomes your most trusted friend, a friendship that often results in misplaced and inappropriate behaviors, but one that is never insincere or lacking in earnestness. Ruthie and Emma banter constantly, but there should never be any doubt that Ruthie has a large and genuine soft spot for Emma in her heart, as she has watched Emma transform from a little kid crawling around the diner into a smart young woman.

Carla Carla was born in Cautla, Mexico and is 31 years old. Carla has a gentle demeanor, but you get the impression that Carla is strong, even heroic. She has braved coming to a dangerous unknown world for the sake of her child. Carla washes dishes and buses tables at the diner. She married Enrique, whom she loves deeply. She has a little girl, Maria, who is five years old. Maria was born with a small hole in her heart, and needs special medication and eventually an operation. Heart surgery is beyond what Carla and Enrique can afford, so together they made the decision to try to enter the United States illegally. Their plan was to work together, save every penny and head home before the operation needed to be done, but Carla and Enrique became separated during the rough and dangerous trip. Carla's daughter Maria lives with Carla's mother Inez. It was extremely difficult for Carla to leave her daughter and she feels great sorrow and guilt. Carla is taking ESL classes at the Latino Community Center to improve her English. She loves to garden and is known in her village for having a great gift with plants and growing things. She is a devout Catholic, and misses being able to attend mass, especially during the Dios de los Muertos celebration. Ruthie's loud and brash demeanor intimidates Carla. Carla met Miranda at the Latino Cultural Center and Miranda offered her a job at the diner. As often happens to those that are depressed and downtrodden, Carla has simple dreams and desires, a better life for her family that includes health, happiness, and perhaps a little niche of this earth that she and her family can call their own. She lives every moment of her life for this dream.

Jack Jack is 21 years old and Emma's boyfriend; he has boyishly good looks in a "down-home" Indiana sort of way. He is bright, confident, sincere and earnest. Jack tries really hard to keep up with Emma's hipster nature, but is just too earnest, serious, and perhaps "rural" to be hipster cool like Emma. He is in his last year of a business and marketing degree at the local community college. He is eager to tackle

the world with his new-found knowledge. And, in fact, has a lot of leadership qualities: an infectious enthusiasm that is quite contagious, loyalty to a fault once committed, and hopelessly confident and optimistic. For all his competency and confidence, he can be charmingly hapless when he gets out of his comfort zone.

Emma Emma is Miranda's daughter. She is 20, pretty in a "hard core" sort of way, and exceptionally bright. She has an offbeat sense of humor, very young and hip in her speech and delivery, and has the extraordinary ability to cut right through to the obvious, often in a rather cynical way. All of these qualities may cover up a simmering vulnerability. Emma grew up in the diner, which is literally her second home (she and Miranda live in the apartment right above the diner). She attends the local community college, dresses with a funky flair and is currently a vegan. She is creative and artistic. She loves to cook and experiment with new and unusual vegan recipes, and deplores the traditional fare of the diner, perhaps out of an awakening sense of youthful rebellion. Deep down, however, she loves the diner and everyone in it. She has a funny bantering relationship with Ruthie, who has watched Emma grow up in the diner. She is not tough like Jennifer, but she does have an edge. She is in love with Jack, who matches her energy and creativity. She has the "its you and me kid" kind of close relationship that sometimes happens with single mothers and their children, but she is definitely her own unique person.