

DEAR MAMA

Characters:

BUTCH 1 (He writes the letter.) – 30's-40's country boy.

**BUTCH 2 (He acts out the scenes.) – 30's-40's country boy.
-He also plays Mama.*

(BUTCH 1 and BUTCH 2 don't necessarily have to look alike, but it's great if they do. They should be dressed the same.)

**PERSON – male over 21 - He will play the following parts (in order of appearance):*

-RICHARD WAD – Director of the Retreat. A smooth, accomplished professional man.

-ESTELLE THE LUNCH LADY – Your typical hairnet sort of gal.

-DR. BARBARA – a professional woman. She's a licensed therapist.

-CHAD – Butch's roommate. He's a Wall Street professional.

**The director may choose to stage the actors changing into their various characters in full view of the audience for added amusement.*

Set:

A chair set DSR or DSL and a stool set in the middle of the stage.

At Rise:

Butch 1 is seated on the chair with a pen and pad of paper. He is writing a letter to his mother.

BUTCH 1

Dear Mama. *(He pauses a minute to think.)* How are you? This is your son, Butch. But I guess you probably figured that out already. *(He pauses again.)* I'm so glad you made me go to this here retreat place. It's almost like the summer camp I used to go to 'til they physically removed me. I've only been here a few days, but the people here have been real nice from the start.

(Enter PERSON. He is playing RICHARD WAD, male director of the rehab center. He stops as Butch 2 enters.)

RICHARD

(He crosses to reach BUTCH 2, hand outstretched.) You must be Butch Waverly.

BUTCH 2

If I hafta be, I hafta be! *(They shake hands.)*

RICHARD

Welcome to Pleasant Thoughts and Serenity Retreat Center, Butch. I'm Richard Wad, the director. We're so very pleased that you're here.

BUTCH 2

Well, ya know, court ordered is court ordered.

RICHARD

We try not to think of your visit in that regard. We're here to help you get through the trauma that has led you to this.

BUTCH 2

Don't really know about any trauma, but I sure do get pissed as hell at people.

RICHARD

(Brightly.) And that's why you're here! Okay. Your paperwork is all done, but I need to do one more thing before you are admitted. I know it's a little uncomfortable, but I must check your person for weapons. Don't want anyone to have any weapons, do we?

BUTCH 2

(Starting to heat up.) What?! I went through the metal detector back there. What more do you want?

RICHARD

(Still cheerful) I understand, but more and more these days we're seeing some items come through here that are not metal but can still be dangerous. So, if you'll just splay your legs like this *(he demonstrates)*, we'll begin.

BUTCH 2

Hell no, we're not doing that! You ain't touchin' me.

RICHARD

(He's putting on rubber gloves, still cheerful) This won't take but a minute.

BUTCH 2

(He squares off to fight) Nope. Nope. Nope.

RICHARD

Now, Butch, it's fine. Don't be a dick.

(BUTCH 2 hauls off and smacks RICHARD, knocking him down. RICHARD tries to run for it, but BUTCH 2 is quick to get up and grabs him. They are tussling as they go offstage.)

BUTCH 1

(He continues writing) I really like the fella who runs this place. He's real nice. I hit it off with him right away. His name is Richard, but he said I could call him Dick. *(pause.)* At least I think that's what he said. *(pause)* Food here is real good. *(hastily)* Not as good as your cookin', Mama. I still dream about that possum casserole you used to make. But they serve up some real nice grub.

(PERSON enters as ESTELLE; she has a pot with a ladle in it. She also has a clipboard. She goes to the stool and sets the pot on it. BUTCH 2 enters with a tray. He acts like he's in a line of people.)

BUTCH 2

(As he inches forward in the "line.") Come ON. Why is this line movin' so slow?! I'm so hungry I could eat at my cousin Marie's house. Not sayin' she's a bad cook, but her hound-dog don't beg at the table no more. *(He inches up again.)* They didn't show a picture of this line in the brochure. *(He gets up to ESTELLE.)* Finally.

ESTELLE

What is your name, dear?

BUTCH 2

(Impatiently.) Butch Waverly.

ESTELLE

(She consults her clipboard.) I see we have you on a lovely vegetarian diet.

BUTCH 2

Whoa, whoa, whoa now, little lady. I ain't no veganarian.

ESTELLE

I'm sorry, Butch, but our lovely dietician personalizes each menu for our lovely guests and that's what I serve.

BUTCH 2

I want a steak and some fries. The greasier, the better.

ESTELLE

(She scoops up some noodles from the pot.) I have some lovely butter noodles for you and then you can help yourself to our lovely salad bar over there.

BUTCH 2

No, lady, that ain't happening. I'll tell you what you can do with your lovely noodles! *(He grabs the pot and dumps it on her head. He steps back to admire his work.)* Lovely. *(He storms out.)*

(ESTELLE sighs, picks up the mess and exits. The stool is left onstage.)

BUTCH 1

There's a bar and everything, just like Old Mike's Casino, Beer and Taxes place. The lunch lady Estelle liked me right away. She said I was lovely. *(Pause.)* Oh, and Mama, the other thing they make you do here is go to your very own therapist. Imagine...me with a personal person to talk to about all my feelings. It's real fun, Mama, I get to talk about anythin' I want.

(PERSON enters as DR. BARBARA. She goes to the stool onstage and sits down with her pad and paper. BUTCH 2 enters carrying a second stool and sits near DR. BARBARA.)

DR. BARBARA

So, Butch. I'm afraid we haven't dug very deep so far. I feel that you are just simmering underneath with all sorts of things that your psyche just won't let you reveal.

BUTCH 2

I don't know nothin' about simmerin' or psychics, Dr. Barbara. I just seem to always get in trouble because of my temper.

DR. BARBARA

(She claps.) Bravo! Bravo! I'm so proud that you can say that out loud and admit that you need help.

BUTCH 2

I can say it softer. *(He whispers.)* I get mad as hell at people.

DR. BARBARA

No, no, no. I mean I'm glad you're willing to face the fact that you have some anger issues.

BUTCH 2

I don't have anger issues. I have stupidity issues. It's not that I don't like people. I love people. I just can't stand the stupid ones. And I seem to run into more and more of them every day.

DR. BARBARA

(She checks her pad of paper.) It says here that you have been getting into fights with people since you were five years old. Do you remember what happened when you were five that may have caused this behavior?

BUTCH 2

I guess I've been runnin' into stupid people from the get-go.

DR. BARBARA

Um. *(Pause.)* Would you like to talk about your parents? We can learn a lot when we talk about our childhoods.

BUTCH 2

I had a great daddy. He was always real nice to me. We went huntin' and fishin' a lot. One day he just disappeared and Mama planted a new flower garden. I guess she dug it in his memory or somethin'. Flowers grew real fast, never had to fertilize 'em or nothin'. The best thing was Mama took out a fancy insurance policy on him before he disappeared and we had good eats for a long time. I miss him.

DR. BARBARA

What about your mother?

BUTCH 2

(He starts to stand.) Don't you say nothin' about my mama!

DR. BARBARA

I just asked. I meant nothing by it.

BUTCH 2

I don't want you blamin' her, is all. She means the world to me.

DR. BARBARA

And that's great! I'm glad you have a good relationship with your mother.

BUTCH 2

I mean, she can get a little spicy sometimes.

DR. BARBARA

Spicy?

BUTCH 2

You know. She gets a little mad over stupid people. Same as me.

DR. BARBARA

I see. *(She writes something down.)*

BUTCH 2

(He tries to see what's on the pad.) Whatcha writin'? Better not be something bad about my mama.

DR. BARBARA

(She's still writing.) I'm just writing down what we should do next from the perspective of the maternal influence on your ability to control your inner insecurities and your inability to recognize outer social cues that would enable you to function in society.

BUTCH 2

(He sits back down.) Dr. Barbara, you have me more confused than a Republican at a drag brunch.

DR. BARBARA

One's mother has a great influence on how a person behaves. *(She starts to write again.)*

BUTCH 2

(He grabs her pad of paper.) You leave my mama out of this. She did the best she could and I will NOT have you blamin' her for me gettin' into fights all the time. I told you I just can't stand stupid people. *(He throws the pad on the floor and starts jumping up and down on it. DR. BARBARA stands and tries to leave.)* And this here?! This is stupid! *(He throws the pad at her and storms off. DR. BARBARA picks up the pad and exits.)*

BUTCH 1

(He continues to write.) I talked about you Mama and how wonderful you are. We talked about some other stuff too, but then my time ran out. I never did get to tell the doctor about that time you got a little het up and had to spend time in the county jail. I figured that was none of Dr. Barbara's business anyways. Besides, you paid the bar for the broken sink in the ladies' room, the door and the fractured skull. *(Pause.)* I forgot to tell you! I have a roommate. He's a nice enough fellah. He works on Wall Street or something and he does real important things.

(PERSON enters as BUTCH's roommate, CHAD. He walks over to where BUTCH 1 is writing.)

BUTCH 1

(He looks up from his writing.) Hey Chad.

CHAD

Hi, Butch. *(He leans over BUTCH 1's shoulder.)* You spelled 'figured' wrong.

BUTCH 1

(He snatches up his letter.) Don't be readin' my letter to my mama!

CHAD

(He shrugs.) Just trying to help a guy out.

BUTCH 1

Well, you're not helping. Not one bit. This letter ain't none of your business.

CHAD

(He sighs.) I've told you Butch. Ain't isn't a real word. You need to say "This letter IS none of your business." Not only is ain't not a real word but you've also created a double negative. I told you, it's very important to know how to write well. Remember, the pen is mightier than the sword! I don't know how many times I've told you not to use the word ain't. I know it's how you were raised, but you know you CAN improve yourself. *(He turns to walk away from BUTCH.)*

BUTCH 1

(He gets up from his chair.) Don't you go talkin' about how I was raised. I was raised just fine!

CHAD

If by that you mean you're dumber than a box of hair, then yes, you were raised just fine. I personally think that you fell out of the Stupid Tree and hit every branch on the way down.

(By now, BUTCH 1 is out of his chair and rushing at CHAD. He takes him down and begins stabbing him with his pen.)

CHAD

(As he is dying.) I guess the pen IS mightier than the sword. *(He dies.)*

(BUTCH 2 comes in as BUTCH 1's MAMA.)

BUTCH 1

(He jumps up.) Mama!

MAMA

I heard from Cousin Maybelle who heard from Sissy Walgrin when they was shoppin' at the Piggley Wiggley that you was gettin' into trouble in here. I've come to take you home. We're not wastin' any more money on this place.

BUTCH 1

But Mama! I just killed a man!

MAMA

(She glances at CHAD.) Was he stupid?

BUTCH 1

He was, Mama. He was.

MAMA

No loss then. Now get your stuff and we're gonna get you outta here faster than shit from a goose.

BUTCH 1

(He picks up the letter and his pen.) I'm sorry, Mama. I know I cause you all kinds of trouble.

MAMA

That's okay. I'm takin' you home. I have some insurance papers I need you to sign and I'm puttin' in a new flower bed.

BUTCH 1

(He puts his arm around her and says lovingly.) Dear Mama.

(BLACKOUT)
END OF PLAY