

**"TOMCAT"**

A full-length stage play

by

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**Characters (12):****Tommy Monroe, black late 20s**

Charming, handsome, sharp dressing and extremely prone to violence. He is passionate about living his life on his own terms and can be heartless when it comes to confronting his enemies and naysayers. He doesn't take mess from anybody, black or white, and is fiercely proud and independent. He is Uncle Sonny's nephew and right-hand man and has no problems with doing Uncle Sonny's dirty work. He has the soul and passion of a poet and the ill-temperament of a stubborn mule. He is both protector and your worst nightmare. He has always loved Rubyanne and only her and lo be to any man that would stand in the way of what he wants.

**Rubyanne, black late 20s**

Sweet, pretty and guarded. She only has one friend, Earline. She just wants to make the best of what she has. She doesn't like being a kept woman but she doesn't mind having the trappings of being one. She doesn't see her situation changing and tries not to long for something more. She appreciates Riley but has stronger feelings for Tommy.

**Riley Sinclair, white early 20s**

He is coming into his own in running his daddy's business but still is not fully comfortable with the social order of the day. He is curious and loyal to his daddy and Rubyanne but not to his wife, Marybeth. He deeply loves Rubyanne but bows to the customs of the day. At times he wants to do the right thing but is always overcome by the social customs, and his father, Reese, of the day.

**Reese Sinclair, white mid 40s - 50ish**

He is the richest man in the county, and he makes sure everyone else in the county knows this as well. He is egotistical, gregarious, and controlling. He loves his son, Riley, dearly and wants him to succeed in taking over the family business and former plantation. He pines for the good ole days of the South and revels in the social customs of the day. Since his early adult years he has had a black paramour tucked away for his pleasure living on slave row of his property and he does not care who knows it. Uses a cane to offset the effects of gout. He is also a WWI veteran.

**\*\*\*Also portrays Lt. Wolferson\*\*\***

**Sadie, black late 20s**

She desperately escaped the South after being sexually assaulted and generally mistreated by the men there because of her beauty and ignorance. She is formerly a drug addict and prostitute that is trying to recreate herself. She is gaining confidence and self respect and loves Tommy to death; however, she is terrified of ever returning to the South and would like to forget her time there.

**Uncle Sonny, black 50ish**

He is a club/bar owner who is also a hustler, pimp, and racketeer. Unfortunately, he is also Tommy's uncle and mentor. He is only concerned with making money from his enterprises and keeping a low profile while doing

so. He doesn't mind bribing the local authorities in order to keep the heat off his rackets. He has a deep Southern drawl and like being the "man" when it comes to his domain. He is very fond of Tommy and has taught him how he knows how to survive in the white man's world. He likes to chomp on cigars.

**\*\*\*Also portrays Rev Monroe\*\*\***

**Rev. John Monroe, black 50ish**

He is a patient, humble man that loves his son, Tommy, and wife, Ruth. He did not want Tommy to be raised by Uncle Sonny but relented due to circumstances. He just wants his family and church to be safe and to do the lord's work with as little interference from the white folks in his county. He is a man of peace, principle and dignity.

**\*\*\*Also portrays Uncle Sonny\*\*\***

**Ruth Monroe, black 50ish**

She is sweet, strong but yet frail from her bout with tuberculosis. She wishes nothing more than to have her family intact but knows that Tommy is best off up North. She is old school and supports and loves her husband, John, and wants Tommy to have the same respect and admiration for John that she does. She is the heart and soul of her family.

**\*\*\*Could also portray one of the Uncle Sonny Club girls\*\*\***

**Marybeth Sinclair, white early 20s**

She is pretty and was Riley's college sweetheart. She comes from old Northern upper middleclass money is socially and emotionally conflicted due to her current social position in the South and her descendance from Northern abolitionist. She knows that Riley has a mistress and she is disgusted with him for it, but she still loves him and wants him to be only hers despite the history of dalliances with Negro women by the men in his family. In her own way she wants to change the social customs of the South but she enjoys the trappings of being wealthy and revered in their Southern community.

**Earline, black late 20s**

She is cute and spunky. She likes to have a good time and often encourages Rubyanne to do the same. She is single and somewhat independent but would love to have and be with a sharp dressed man like Tommy. She wants things to change and wants to travel up North to see how black folks are getting along up there. She wants a better life for herself and Rubyanne but is trying to enjoy the one that she currently has.

**\*\*\*Could also portray one of the Uncle Sonny Club girls\*\*\***

**Lt. Wolferson, white 40s -50ish**

Old school police officer who has maxed his potential on the police force and is now augmented his income by being Uncle Sonny's inside guy. He hates Tommy and dislikes black men in general, but he likes getting paid by Uncle Sonny so reconciles his displeasure. He also likes the perks of this clandestine

arrangement such as free sexual intercourse with Uncle Sonny's prostitutes. He likes this a lot. He is married but has no real interest in his wife and kids. He likes being a big shot and the only thing keeping the law away from Uncle Sonny's operation. And most of all he just wants what he wants when he wants it.

**\*\*\*Also portrays Reese Sinclair\*\*\***

**Melvin, black early 40s**

He is low-key and antagonistic toward Sadie and Tommy. He secretly hates Tommy and is jealous of him in every possible way as he is not a ladies' man or a man of physical action. He wants to be next in line to take over the rackets from Uncle Sonny. He helped Uncle Sonny build the business and is resentful that Uncle Sonny has elevated Tommy above him. He is conniving and will stop at nothing to remove Tommy from the scene.

**SCENE 1**

SONNY'S NITE CLUB & BAR – INDIANA AVENUE - INDIANAPOLIS, IN. THE JUKE BOX IS BLARING AND THE BAR IS FULL OF PATRONS. SUDDENLY OUT COMES A SHARP DRESSED TOMMY. HE IS DRESSED IN A SHARP SUIT AND COLORFUL SHIRT AND MATCHING TIE. HE DANCES AROUND FLIRTING WITH THE GIRLS IN THE CLUB FROM THE WAITRESSES AND LADY PATRONS.

HE GIVES“SKIN“ TO THE FELLAS AND FINALLY HE RAISES HIS GLASS AND TOASTS THE CROWD. THE NUMBER ENDS AND TOMMY HEADS OVER TO THE BAR TO SPEAK WITH ONE OF THE DRINK GIRLS – SADIE.

TOMMY

How's business tonight pretty lady?

SADIE

Business is business... Good as ever. What's got you on the prowl tonight tomcat?

TOMMY

You do, sugar, can't get enough of your sweet smile.

SADIE

Keep talkin' to me like that and I'll make an honest man of you yet, Tommy Monroe.

TOMMY SMILES AND TAKES SADIE BY THE HAND. SHE RETURNS HIS SMILE. SUDDENLY SONNY ENTERS HIS ESTABLISHMENT, CHOMPING ON A CIGAR. HE SAUNTERS OVER TO HIS FAVORITE TABLE AND TAKES A SEAT. HE IS ACCOMPANIED BY HIS LEFT HAND MAN, MELVIN (TOMMY IS HIS RIGHT HAND MAN) TOMMY RELEASES SADIE'S AND HEADS OVER TO SONNY'S TABLE WITH A DRINK IN HAND.

SONNY

(smiling) What's buzzin' nephew?

TOMMY

Feeling good, Uncle Sonny, like I'm made of gold.

SONNY

By the look in Sadie's eyes over there, you sho' don't spend like it.

TOMMY

Can't please everybody, Uncle Sonny.

SONNY

I know that boy, but she sho' is sweet on you.

TOMMY LOOKS OVER AT SADIE TO SEE HER LOOKING OVER AT HIM.

TOMMY

She deserves better than me. I can't give her what she's pining for.

SONNY

Then you never shoulda' started with her then, boy. She was perfectly content "hoe-ing" for you befo' you had to go and make a lady outta' her.

TOMMY

Uncle Sonny, you know when she stumbled up in here she was strung out and didn't know no better.

SONNY

So you showed her the light huh? (puzzled) Let's see, you took your best money-makin' hoe and turned her into a drink girl. A goddamn drink girl? I thought I taught you better than that boy?

TOMMY

Since she's been a drink girl these past few months tight fisted niggahs been drinking your overpriced hooch like it was blessed by Jesus Christ himself. She's still our best money maker, just in a different way.

SONNY

(laughing) You're right about that boy. That's why I ain't complaining about losing revenue, but I do got some advice for you.

TOMMY

And what might that be?

SONNY

This ain't no place for a lady. Just because she bending ears for drink orders don't mean that men won't covet her for they selves on account of her good looks and their knowledge of her prior vocation. Either get her outta here or turn her back out to do what she was meant to do.

TOMMY

I've tried to get her to leave and start somewhere fresh like Chicago or Detroit but she ain't having it. I was gonna stake her till she got on her feet, but you know Sadie, she's too proud for that.

SONNY

Tommy, my boy, can't you see that gal loves you and she ain't going nowhere less you go with her. Just the same, you shouldn't have her up in here for both y'all sakes.

TOMMY

I'm not sure about the tune you singing right now, Uncle Sonny?

SONNY

Oh, so now you don't recollect nothing, huh?

TOMMY

Recollect what?

SONNY

Last month you broke a bottle over Rufus Smith's head on account he grabbed your pretty little songbird by her tail feathers. And the week before that you cut Ollie Franklin from head to toe with that straight razor you packing.

TOMMY

(aggressive) That no-count, shiftless niggah had it coming. He lied in wait in the back alley for Sadie's shift to end before he attacked her like some kinda' rabid dog in heat. If I hadn't heard her scream he woulda' had his way with her. That son-of-bitch is lucky that I let him live, and that I didn't remove his alleged manhood and feed it to the alley cats.

SONNY

Look, boy, I don't mind you cuttin' up a few no-good bucks who get in the way of my enterprise. Hell, you did what needed doin' to the likes of Alonzo Rivers and Shorty Thompson. Them niggahs tried to beat me out my bread. That was business, but to go slicing up folk over some two-bit trick? I don't care how much a looker she is, or how much she might act like a lady. Bottom line she bad for business 'cause you won't see fit to make an honest woman outta her, but yet you don't want nobody else to have her either.

TOMMY

(perturbed) So what you want me to do, Uncle Sonny?

SONNY

Cool your heels young blood. All I'm sayin' is I don't need you puttin' lust filled fools on ice every time one takes a shine to your precious Sadie. Dig what I'm putting down for you, nephew?

TOMMY

(smiling) Like a coal miner with a shovel. Its' your world Uncle Sonny, I'm just a squirrel trying to get a nut.

TOMMY TAKES A SEAT AT SONNY'S TABLE WHEN LT. WOLFERSON STROLLS INTO THE CLUB LIKE HE OWNS THE PLACE AND PULLS UP A CHAIR TO THEIR TABLE

TOMMY

Out on your nightly constitution officer?

LT. WOLFERSON

(to Sonny) When are you going to put a muzzle on your boy here, Sonny?

TOMMY

I ain't nobody's boy, you ignorant, peckerwood mother...

SONNY

Tommy! That's enough. Why don't you go on over and see how things are going with Sadie whilst I entertain the good lieutenant here.

LT. WOLFERSON

That's right, junior. Go on over there and keep your pretty little girlfriend company. A sweet little thing like that should not be left alone too long or else the big, bad wolf might get her.

TOMMY SUDDENLY RAISES FROM THE TABLE AND PUTS HIS HAND IN HIS BREAST POCKET TO RETRIEVE HIS BLADE AND LEAVES HIS HAND IN HIS JACKET AS HE DOES THE LT SUDDENLY RISES UP AND PLACES HIS HAND ON HIS PISTOL HOLSTERED ON HIS SIDE.

TOMMY

(calmly) Don't even think about putting your hands on Sadie, else I just might go ape and forget that you supposed to be one of Indianapolis's finest.

LT. WOLFERTON

Hold it right there! You don't want to do something rash now do you, boy? Oh I heard about how handy you are with that razor of yours, but I got something for you (rubs his gun). This here is a bonafide bad-nigger stopper guaranteed to put your black-ass in your place... dead or alive.

SONNY SUDDENLY RISES UP FROM THE TABLE TO CALM THE SITUATION.

SONNY

No need for that Lieutenant Wolferson. (to Tommy) Get on over to the bar.

TOMMY REMAINS STANDING LOOKING LT. WOLFERTON RIGHT IN THE EYES.

SONNY

Goddamn it, Tommy! That's enough gaming, I'm still the boss around here. Now do what I says.

TOMMY

(to Sonny sarcastic like step n fetch-it) Yessuh, boss. (to Lt. Wolferson - serious) The first shall be the last and the last shall be the first. Catch you later, wicked alligator.

TOMMY WALKS OVER TO THE BAR TO JOIN SADIE. LT. WOLFERTON SITS BACK DOWN AS DOES SONNY.

LT. WOLFERTON

Sonny, that boy is going to cost you the good thing that you got going here.

SONNY

(smiling) He didn't mean nothin' by it, he just young and rambunctious. You know how young men can be, lieutenant.

LT. WOLFERSON

It's one thing for him to get frosty and threaten coloreds, but he should know better than to speak that way to a white man, especially one wearing a badge. SONNY SMILES AND PLACES A LUNCH SIZE BROWN PAPER BAG ON THE TABLE AND SLIDES IT OVER TO LT WOLFERSON.

SONNY

There you be lieutenant. I put a little something extra in there for your troubles. LT. WOLFERSON TAKES THE BAG AND SLIDES IT INTO HIS LAP.

LT. WOLFERSON

(smiling) What else you got for me, Sonny?

SONNY

You got an itch what needs scratchin' aye? Well then I'll throw in a round for you with sweet, ole Cora Mae. I believe she's stacked just the way you like 'em.

LT. WOLFERSON

(hesitant, smiling) I was thinking more like Sadie over there.

SONNY

(surprised-nervous) Sorry lieutenant, but she ain't for public consumption. Besides, you know she's soft on Tommy. I mean they ain't circled but...

LT. WOLFERSON

You forget yourself sometimes, Sonny. I'm not obligated to respect his or her wishes. I just want what I want.

SONNY

Can't do that, lieutenant.

LT. WOLFERSON

Can't do it, or won't do it?

SONNY

Look, I don't want no trouble. You know you got a good thing going here too. Now be the thinking man that I know you to be and go on upstairs and have a good ole time with Cora Mae. She waiting on you. Say she got a few new tricks to show you.

THE LT. SMILES AT SONNY AND RISES FROM THE TABLE. HE STARES AT TOMMY AND SADIE AS HE WALKS BY HEADING UPSTAIRS.

TOMMY

If it's one thing I can't stand more than a crooked cop, it's a cheap, greedy no class having one.

SADIE

Simmer down there, hotrod, ain't nothing worth getting all worked up about.

TOMMY

(knocks back a drink) I need to get some air.

SADIE

I get off in 15 minutes. If you hold your horses I can go with you and help cool your jets.

SADIE POURS TOMMY ANOTHER DRINK

TOMMY

Can't do it, baby-doll. I got business to take care of tonight. (lifts his glass up to toast) Woe be unto any man that don't see fit to pay his proper respect and/or his dues. 'Cause tonight, my little Alabama honey-suckle, I'm in a real cuttin' mood. Sweet Rachel is fittin' to taste the sweet nectar of my foolish so called colored brethren who would dare to bring about her steely wrath on account of their steadfast insolence and habitual welching.

TOMMY KNOCKS BACK THE DRINK AND GENTLY PLACES THE GLASS ON THE BAR.

TOMMY

Night, baby.

SADIE

(attitude)I don't believe you got the nerve to give that two-bit niggah slicing razor of yours a woman's name. I'm beginning to think you'd rather hold and thrust that steel bitch more than you do me.

TOMMY

(smiling) That ain't true at all, baby-doll. You see, Sweet Rachel is about handling my business and (points to her) you is about handling me.

SADIE

So, are you coming by my place tonight or not? (smiling) I got a present for you what needs unwrapping.

TOMMY

I'll see what I can do, but don't wait up cause knowing the hard-headed fools I'm calling on tonight, Immo' be awhile.

TOMMY HEADS OUT AS LIGHTS DIM ON STAGE AND A SPOTLIGHT ON SADIE.

SADIE

(frustrated/to herself) I'm getting tired of being a fool for that man!