

Act One

Scene Two Oh, Charlena!

SONG I GOT THE FEVER #2

{Marion stays her age (real time) but has moved to side of stage sitting in a bar stool. She will be the communicator to the audience.}

Greg is riding in a car all right but he's a young Greg riding in the convertible with Charlena. Charlena is dressed for the Beach, radio blasting. Looking so fine.

SONG BE YOUNG BE FOOLISH #3

GREG

Charlena, I'm sure glad you invited me to go cruisin' with you. I didn't want to go back to hear Daddy preach hell fire at church again tonight.

(Greg reaches for a card in the sun visor.)

Hey, Charlena what's this, it says, 'Bee Baby Club?'

CHARLENA

**My goodness child, you don't get out much do you?
Don't you know about the Bee Baby Hops?**

GREG

Sure I do. Those are dances the radio deejay, Johnny Bee, has about every weekend. I'd like to go. How do I join the 'Bee Baby Club'?

CHARLENA

Well, one night soon Reggie and I will take you but I don't want you to go telling yo' daddy, Preacher Haynes, cause he'll tell my daddy and we'd all be in a heap of trouble.

(Glances sideways at her young passenger.)

GREG

I would never do anything to get you in trouble, Charlena. I am forever your friend. You know that, don't you?

(They look at each other. She nods yes.)

Do they do bad things at those dances?

(Looking over at her again quite perplexed and innocent.)

CHARLENA

Nope, but Baptist think dancing is a sin cause they say it leads to unmarried.....

(Cups her hands around her mouth.)

SEX!

GREG

Well, does it?

(Charlena shrugs.)

I guess I need to know about it, so I can be a promoter and book bands like Johnny Bee? I want to have the **BIG ONE**—the biggest show and dance ever. **Horns!** Lots of horns.

CHARLENA

Oh, Reggie Pooh, you silly boy, your daddy would **NEVER, EVER** let you be a band promoter!

(She falls out laughing.)

The BIG ONE!

**(Greg is in deep thought—planning the BIG ONE.
Charlena is still laughing.)**

**But you know, there is nothing like live music—
especially sweet southern soul.**

{Charlena turns up the radio. On the radio—}

SONG OH, CHARLENA! #4

GREG

(Waking up from his euphoric dream.)

Wow, Charlena, that song's about you!!

(He turns it up more.)

CHARLENA

**(She turns it down while looking horrified, thrilled and
befuddled.)**

**Greg, you must promise not to tell anyone. You know
the Baptist camp our daddys make us go to every
summer in Tallahassee?**

(Greg nods.)

Well, this summer, I snuck away with Joe. Remember, Joe the colored boy, the camp's handy man? He sings in a band and I sort of, sort of---well, late one night, I went with him to hear his band, a group at Panama City and I jumped, well I guess I kinda jumped the rope and well, while I was there.....

GREG

(Interrupts.)

You jumped the rope? Does Reggie know?

CHARLENA

(Indignant.)

Pooh, Reggie doesn't need to know everything I do. He's my boyfriend not my Daddy. Wow, just listen.

(Turns radio back up as she's totally listening to the song about her.)

Isn't it cool! Don't you just love it?!!

(She giggles with joy.)

SONG OH, CHARLENA! #4

(Continues to play as Greg and Charlena join in the lyrics as lights go out.)

(Marion clarifies for the audience, Jumping the Rope precedes Oh, Charlena! in time.)

Marion: I think it's important for you to be there when the song was conceived. Unbeknownst to Charlena, you see, Greg already knew about the song Oh, Charlena!—ever Charlena's young brother-like friend, Greg had jumped the rope with his Beach Music mentor. Let's watch.

Act One

Scene Three Jumping the Rope

SONG SEE SAW #5

{Charlena is sneaking away from the camp and gets into a truck with the church logo printed on the side-- Calvary Baptist Church Camp. She looks around hoping to be undetected. Seen only by an inside light, is the young black boy, Joe. In the dark, Greg hops in just before the truck leaves and hides in the back unnoticed.}

JOE

Charlena, now, you can't tell no body that I brung you here cause I'll loose my job. You gonna be the only, er, well, the only white person....

{He becomes speechless as Charlena slips over in the truck right next to Joe, gives him a big hug, and smiles at him as he drives.

Joe is scared and thrilled and turned on. Charlena is beautiful and very stimulated by the naughtiness of it all. They arrive at the all black honkey tonk at PC with an all black band playing.

SONG Too Much Dogging #6

She flies out of the truck with Joe running behind to catch her. The music takes her away into her own world.

She begins bopping with Joe who has his own moves. She is taking pictures with her Brownie camera, POP POP, as the band encourages Joe to come onto the stage.}

DANCE A

FATS

(He is with the band and he walks over to speak to Joe.)

Joe you're on. Come on stage!

(As he is checking out this beautiful white young woman, Charlena.)

{All the blacks dancing in their own smooth, harmonic cadence on the surface are ignoring Charlena, but in truth they are cautiously watching this dancing-fool-

cracker-maniac Charlena, but now, ain't she fine fine fine.....She is in her 60's attire all preppy with her long blonde hair and big brown eyes.

Greg carefully leaps out of the truck and converges with some white band guys who all watch the black band from a distance, listen to the music, and are moved to amazement at the sights and sounds that they behold.}

FOUR WHITE GUYS—One speaks

{They shake hands with Greg and do introductions—very preppy, well mannered, khakis, deck shoes or loafers. Button down collars.}

Hey, man, listen to those sounds! We just put together our own band. If we keep practicing all the time, we'll be pretty good--

(All nod.)

But could we ever sound like that? Wow, those horns blow me away.

{Guys showing much enthusiasm—Greg shakes head in acknowledgement and turns to listen—ever watching his older friend Miss Charlena. All the guys are watching her as well as she performs. She is the spotlight with her dancing.

Still on stage, Joe begins singing to Charlena.

**SONG DOES YOUR MAMA KNOW ABOUT ME?
#7**

She continues taking pictures. She glances his way teasingly—basking in the attention.}

{One of the white band guys jumps the rope and makes a beeline right to Charlena. They begin to slow dance.

Joe is obviously NOT pleased. She is all over her dance partner as they slow dance.

DANCE B

She's taking pictures of Joe and the band. POP POP.

The other white band guys are ogling Charlena—how could they not? She disappears from view with her dance partner. She NEVER saw Greg. But he's been watching her--a bit concerned and anxious in this forbidden world.

Fats has been watching and keeping an eye on things, too, since he is affiliated with the band on stage. He walks over to where the crackers are. Seeing Charlena leave, he wants to find out who the guy is just in case he needs to know. He's learned that you gotta be careful during these times. That's one of his jobs.}

FATS

**Who's dat boy who disappeared with the camera
poppah?**

GREG

**It's Charlena, my friend, Charlena has the camera.
We're at the Baptist camp in Tallahassee.**

(Concerned.)

FOUR WHITE GUYS One Speaks

**That's Rodney, oh, he's with us. We've got a band, too.
We're just watching. They are incredible.**

GREG

Hey, I'm Greg Haynes.

**(Extends hand and he and Fats properly shake hands in
a gentlemanly fashion.)**

FATS

**Fats. Pleasure. You ain't at no church camp right now
boy! It's kinda late, ain't it?**

(Matter of factly.)

FATS

He all right with yo' friend Charlena?

(Looks at Greg.)

GREG

(Looking at the white band guys.)

Oh, I'm not with this band. Is Charlena ok with Rodney?

SONG IT'S ALL RIGHT #8

(Band guys sing and then the all black band and Fats join in.)

{Greg begins his negotiating with Fats about the possibility of the band coming to Waycross. He realizes that Fats is a part of the group now playing with Joe singing. Greg knows Joe from Church camp. He works there.}

GREG

Joe works at the Baptist Church camp in Tallahassee. Gosh, I didn't know he could sing like that. Hey man, do ya'll ever come to South Georgia to play? Those guys sound super cool.

(Looking over at them admiringly.)

FATS

‘Sho man, we’ve played for Johnny Bee. We stay in Atlanta. Ain’t far to travel here to Florida or to South Georgia. Ain’t no big thing to travel from Atlanta. We just hop on the bus and we get a crowd together.

(Clicks his clicker.)

SONG AIN’T NO BIG THING #9

{Black band and white guys sing—no Charlena.

DANCE C.

MARION

She and Rodney were probably writing the song Oh, Charlena!