

THE RELUCTANT SUPERVISOR  
A Play In One Act

By  
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## CHARACTERS

KATE: 50's, new to politics and unsure about it.

HATTIE: 50's, township clerk, in office one year

KARMEN: 50's, township treasurer, in office a few months

KEITH: any age, township trustee

EARL: any age, township trustee

PLUMBER/ SEPTIC TANK TECHNICIAN/ ELECTRICIAN/ ACCOUNTANT/  
SEXTON/ DELIVERY GUY can be played by one actor. This same actor  
can also play KEITH or EARL.

2 TEEN GIRLS can be played by the actors playing HATTIE and  
KARMEN

SPEAKERS: 4 in the final scene, or SPEAKERS can be audience  
members reading from cards.

## SETTING

Modern day, a simple township office, which can easily be  
arranged for a township meeting.

## SYNOPSIS

Kate, a local resident with no political background or interest,  
is roped into being appointed Supervisor of a small township.  
The township has seen its share of political division and  
upheaval. It is Kate's job to try and figure things out while  
learning the new role. Will she succeed? Does she have what it  
takes?

\* Based on a true story and events, names have been changed to  
protect the innocent, the guilty, and the indifferent.

Scene One

*(Lights up on KATE and HATTIE in office)*

**KATE:** Absolutely not! I have no experience in-

**HATTIE:** You don't need any! You'd be great!

**KATE:** But I don't know the first thing about township government-

**HATTIE:** *(shrugs)* None of us do-

**KATE:** What would I even do?

**HATTIE:** All you have to do is run meetings-it's super easy.  
*(Shoves a book in KATE'S hand)* Read this book-it's like a how-to for Supervisors.

*(KATE looks at the book in her hands, flips through it)*

**KATE:** Robert's Rules.... What the... HATTIE! This is a comic book! Come on!

**HATTIE:** Well, it fits. Our township has been more like a cartoon than a governmental body. That's why Susan resigned. But if you stepped in, you could keep working on all the stuff she started. PLEASE???

**KATE:** I just don't feel qualified-

**HATTIE:** You're breathing. You're qualified. Besides, if you don't like it, you wouldn't have to run for election-

**KATE:** How long is left on Susan's term?

**HATTIE:** Only 6 months. And we'd help you!

**KATE:** Hmm. Maybe. I'll think about it.

**HATTIE:** *(excited, hand clap)* Sweet! I'll recommend you to the board right now! *(runs out the door, and from off stage)* Guys! She didn't say no!

**KATE:** *(sits down)* Oh boy.

*(HATTIE comes back in with a book, KATE stands up, raises right hand. They mime being sworn in to office)*

**HATTIE:** Congratulations. You are now the appointed Supervisor of Gregory Township. Good luck! *(turns away and in a sotto voice)* You're going to need it!

END SCENE 1

Scene Two

*(The next day, KATE is in office, moving things around, KARMEN enters)*

**KARMEN:** Welcome aboard! So, the budget. You have to deal with it. With the new software, the budget got deleted-

**KATE:** Deleted? Like, the township has no budget?

**KARMEN:** Correct. You have to present one to the board next week.

**KATE:** I don't know how to write a budget-

**KARMEN:** You better figure it out. It's your responsibility.

**KATE:** MINE? I thought the board worked on that together.

**KARMEN:** Nope. Supervisor...

**KATE:** Can you help me? I don't even know how to log in to the program.

**KARMEN:** No-I don't have any training-that's how the budget got erased. I only do the tax rolls.

**KATE:** But how will I-?

**KARMEN:** The guy from that group BTO is coming in tomorrow afternoon-

**KATE:** Bachman Turner Overdrive?

**KARMEN:** Budget, Turmoil, and Overkill. He will help you.

**KATE:** Maybe you should stay for the training, too?

**KARMEN:** I can't make it.

*(HATTIE enters as KARMEN exits)*

**HATTIE:** There you are Madame Supervisor. Before you get too busy, you have to make some calls to get some quotes on repairs. Good luck getting people to call you back.

**KATE:** I think I can handle making some calls. What needs to be fixed?

**HATTIE:** Plumbing, outlets, toilets, urinals, tiles, siding, fans, grab bars, the sign, locks, septic, water softener, walls, cabinets.....oh, and then the carpets need cleaning, windows need washing, gutters need checking.....

**KARMEN:** *(from Off stage)* Don't forget the furnace cover!

**HATTIE:** And please don't forget to get that budget done. We can't pay any bills until the budget is approved.

**KATE:** We can't pay the bills? Maybe that's why no one calls you back! And why so many repairs?

**HATTIE:** The old board didn't believe in maintenance-or cleaning-or listening to people-or being decent humans... *(exits)*

**KATE:** What have I gotten myself into?

*(KATE picks up phone, dials, speaks into phone)*

**KATE:** Yes, I am calling about some plumbing repairs.....

*(lights out)*

END SCENE 2

Scene 3

*(Next morning, KATE at desk, shuffling papers, banging and clanging can be heard in background, then plumber enters)*

**PLUMBER:** Hey-did you know that urinal in the men's room is really loose?

**KATE:** *(eyebrows up)* No, actually, I didn't-

**PLUMBER:** Well, it's about gonna fall off the wall. Land on someone's foot. Want me to fix it?

**KATE:** I guess so-I don't want someone's foot to get broken. By a falling urinal.

**PLUMBER:** Got it. And on that water softener-the drain is cracked. The utility closet is flooded. Want me to fix it?

*(KATE nods, PLUMBER exits, SEPTIC TECH enters)*

**SEPTIC TECH:** Lady, we have a problem.

**KATE:** You don't say?

**SEPTIC TECH:** Yep-the cap is cemented on-I've never seen anything like it in 25 years! Cannot get that cover off, so can't check if that filter is clogged or not.

**KATE:** And that's bad?

**SEPTIC TECH:** Oh yeah, the whole system is going to back up in the building.

**KATE:** *(eyes wide)* That's definitely bad! How much to fix it?

**SEPTIC TECH:** Well worst case, \$3000, best case, \$500.

**KATE:** Let's go with the best case.

**SEPTIC TECH:** Gotcha. I'll be back in a couple days. In the meantime, watch the flushing or you'll be swimming in sewage!

**KATE:** A couple days? Should I wear a swim suit to work in the meantime?

**SEPTIC TECH:** (*flirtatious*) Well, now, with an attitude like that, I just might come to township meetings. (*winks, and exits*)

**KATE:** Please don't-

(*SEPTIC TECH exits, ELECTRICIAN enters*)

**ELECTRICIAN:** So, uh, I checked out the power issues in the kitchen-I shut it down for safety. If anyone tries to use an outlet, they could get electrocuted. Especially with this heavy rain.

**KATE:** Electrocuted?

**ELECTRICIAN:** I'll have to order parts and I'll be back next week. Until then, don't use the power back there.

**KATE:** What about up here in the offices?

**ELECTRICIAN:** You can use the power up here. (*pauses, scratches chin*)it should be fine.

**KATE:** Should be?

**ELECTRICIAN:** I hope so-

(*Electrician exits, as two young teen girls come running in, barefoot, frantic, crying, with a backpack full of puppies*)

**GIRL 1:** Help! There's a man following us!

**GIRL 2:** He is in a green truck-

**GIRL 1:** He followed us down the road and when we ran in here-

**GIRL 2:** He turned in behind us!!!

*(KATE grabs towels to wrap around the girls, looks out window)*

**KATE:** It's okay girls, it's the guy who mows the lawn. He just lives down the road, and he turned in here to drop off receipts. See? Is that him?

**GIRL 1:** That's him. But he was driving really slow, he was following us-

**KATE:** He is 85 years old. He drives slow. What are you girls doing with puppies in a backpack? *(pause)* In the pouring rain? *(pause)* Barefoot?

**GIRL 1:** We were going door to door trying to sell the puppies.

**KATE:** That doesn't seem safe. What are your names?

**GIRL 1:** We don't know.

**KATE:** Do you know your phone number? I need to call your mom.

**GIRL 2:** You can't. She's in Florida.

**KATE:** Where's your dad?

**GIRL 1:** He's at work. You can't call him. He'll get fired.

**KATE:** Okay, I will have to call the police.

**GIRL 1:** *(brightly)* I hope it's Officer Jordan. He's nice. He knows our grandma-

*(KATE turns and picks up phone as CEMETERY SEXTON enters)*

**SEXTON:** Oh-you girls came in here. I was worried about you-walking in the rain barefoot-are you okay?

**GIRL 1:** Yep! Just waiting for Officer Jordan. *(girls exit)*

**SEXTON:** I'm Dennis-You must be the new Supervisor. I'm the cemetery sexton.

**KATE:** Gregory Township has a cemetery?

**SEXTON:** Sure does. I've been taking care of the cemetery for 50 years. Trimming and mowing and digging. Whenever there's a burial, I dig the grave. Open graves and close graves.

**KATE:** You open graves? For the medical examiner? Like if there is a cold case and they are trying to get DNA? Like on Forensic files?

**SEXTON:** Opening graves just means I prep the ground for burial.

**KATE:** *(disappointed)* Oh.

**SEXTON:** I love my job, but it's time to retire. *(hands KATE a letter)* Here's my letter of resignation. Effective next month.

**KATE:** Thank you for your service.

*(DENNIS exits as KARMEN returns)*

**KARMEN:** Dennis is such a great Sexton. I don't know what we'd do without him.

**KATE:** Well, he just told me he's retiring, so-

**KARMEN:** You're screwed.

**KATE:** Me?

**KARMEN:** It's your job to find a new Sexton.

**KATE:** I thought the budget was my job-

**KARMEN:** The Sexton salary and cemetery maintenance are part of the budget.

*(ACCOUNTANT enters)*

**ACCOUNTANT:** Did someone say budget?

**KARMEN:** Gotta go!

**ACCOUNTANT:** *(reaching for KATE'S hand in introductory mode)*  
Bryan from Budget, Turmoil and Overkill at your service.

**KATE:** I'm glad you're here. I have a lot of questions.  
*(begins to open computer)*

**ACCOUNTANT:** It was a long drive, mind if I use the restroom before we get started?

**KATE:** Not at all-just be careful with the urinal and don't flush!

**ACCOUNTANT:** *(sotto voice as he exits)* That's a fine how do you do-

*(KATE opens the computer, sits down, opens the drawer, pulls out a bottle or fifth, takes a swig. As she is putting it back, a loud mower sound and what sounds like shrapnel occurs. KATE takes cover, then creeps to window, peeks out, shakes head in disbelief)*

**KATE:** Seriously?! He mows the townhall grass too? Clearly he doesn't pick up any sticks or rocks! *(pause)* That explains all the holes in the siding. Thank goodness he is retiring next month.

*(ACCOUNTANT returns, pulls up a chair)*

**ACCOUNTANT:** Okay, Kate-can I call you Kit?

**KATE:** I guess-

**ACCOUNTANT:** Everyone thinks us accounting types are so stuffy-but we can be very casual. So, what can I help you with, Kit?

**KATE:** For starters, I cannot login to this program-

**ACCOUNTANT:** No problem. I've got your credentials here-*(starts typing on her computer)* Now for a password?

**KATE:** Umm-

**ACCOUNTANT:** *(looking at her)* I recommend something easy to remember and realistic-

**KATE:** I hate budgeting 2026?

**ACCOUNTANT:** *(smirks)* Already in use- *(whispers)* by the Supervisor of Richards Township. *(pause)* I probably shouldn't have shared that. How about "blond lady supervisor in over her head"

**KATE:** Hmm. Casual and very realistic. Feel free to share that password with any other Supervisors-maybe they will have mercy on me and do my budget. *(laughs)*

**ACCOUNTANT:** *(sternly)* Budgeting is no laughing matter.

**KATE:** Oh, sorry. Bryan, if I can call you that? In all seriousness, I have a huge issue here. The whole budget was deleted and I truly don't know where to start.

**ACCOUNTANT:** *(looking at computer)* You mean this budget? I just hit "restore". Nothing is ever really deleted.

**KATE:** Oh, thank you! *(looks at budget)* So this is the money we are bringing in-

**ACCOUNTANT:** The revenues-

**KATE:** And this is the money going out-

**ACCOUNTANT:** The expenditures-

**KATE:** Uh huh. But- it looks like we have spent way more than we have brought in.

**ACCOUNTANT::** Correction. You are on course to spend significantly more than you are expected to bring in. You are only part way through your fiscal year.

**KATE:** So we are over budget?

**ACCOUNTANT:** *(Agrees)* Very much over budget. You will have to amend it to make sure your line items are accurate.

**KATE:** How do I do that?

**ACCOUNTANT:** Just change the numbers on whatever lines you need to.

**KATE:** Don't I have to put more money in the budget before I do that?

**ACCOUNTANT:** No- it doesn't matter.

**KATE:** But if I don't put money in, isn't it going to be even more over budget?

**ACCOUNTANT:** For sure.

**KATE:** So I should put something in there about transferring money to cover our budget?

**ACCOUNTANT:** No-you don't have to, the budget is only on paper. It's not like a checkbook.

**KATE:** *(Confused)* But, I am responsible for a balanced budget.

**ACCOUNTANT:** *(agrees)* It's the law.

**KATE:** If the expenditures exceed the revenues, then the budget is not balanced.

**ACCOUNTANT:** It is absolutely not balanced. But it doesn't have to be.

**KATE:** The budget has to be balanced by law, but the revenues and the expenditures do not have to equal each other? It makes no sense.

**ACCOUNTANT:** That's the beauty of government accounting.

**KATE:** I am so confused.

**ACCOUNTANT:** That means your training is complete. You'll be ready to present your budget next week to the board. Pretend to be confident and just plop the budget down in front of them. They won't understand it anyway. No one does.

**KATE:** Why can't our government budget operate the same way as our household accounting?

**ACCOUNTANT:** I can't believe you don't know the answer. It's to keep the public in the dark about government spending, and *(looks around conspiratorially, then softly)* to make fudging the numbers easier. *(stands up)* You'll get better at this money management. You're still green. *(pause)* Get it? Green? *(laughs, exits)*

*(KATE sits, bemused, in her chair, a loud bang can be heard off stage)*

**PLUMBER:** *(from OS)* A ceiling fan just fell out of the ceiling-do ya want me to fix it?

**KATE:** Are you a licensed electrician?

**PLUMBER:** Do you want me to be?

**KATE:** Go for it.

*(DELIVERY GUY walks in with a bouquet, various goodies, sets them down)*

**DELIVERY GUY:** This is from "Wind in the Sky and Sun on the Fields Renewable Energy"- enjoy! *(exits)*

**KATE:** *(opens attached card, reads it)* Dear Ms. Ramen, We heard there was a new Supervisor and we wanted to introduce ourselves. We represent the largest and most invasive renewable energy company in the state, and we are coming for your township. Please enjoy this gift of flowers from the field, fruits from the vines, and any other nature loving phrases that come to mind. We have also booked the fabulous upscale guest house "The Robin's Nest" for you and 25 of your closest friends to enjoy on all sports Clifton Lake.

*(KARMEN walks in and drops into a chair)*

**KATE:** This can't be legal.

**KARMEN:** The Robin's Nest? That sounds like a short term rental-

**KATE:** No- the gifts.

*(HATTIE walks in)*

**HATTIE:** We don't allow short term rentals in the township! That's illegal.

**KATE:** Oh boy.

*(KATE grabs the bottle from her drawer again, pours drinks, hands them to HATTIE and KARMEN. KARMEN takes the bottle instead and throws back a long swig)*

**KARMEN:** I can't do the effin' taxes. Someone archived the whole tax roll this afternoon and now I am locked out!

**HATTIE:** That's nothing. I just got a phone call about a guy running a chainsaw all night outside his neighbors window. Get this- there is no noise ordinance so the guy can do it!  
*(pause, to KATE)* How was your first day in office?

*(SHELLSHOCKED, all three women raise a glass and take a big swig)*

END SCENE 3

Scene 4

*(One week later, lights up on township hall meeting, five board members seated at front behind a table-KATE in middle, HATTIE and KARMEN on either side, KEITH and EARL at ends of table. There are several people in attendance as audience members)*

**KATE:** First order of business is the township budget. You all have a copy to review. *(pause for a couple seconds as they all pretend to seriously consider the budget)*

**KEITH:** *(quickly)* I motion to approve the budget as written.

**EARL:** *(quickly)* I second.

**KATE:** All in favor?

**BOARD MEMBERS** (in unison): aye

**KATE:** Budget approved. *(wipes brow)* Old business?

**HATTIE:** We need to discuss a noise ordinance. I've had a couple complaints about power tools and chainsaws being run all night.

**KARMEN:** I make a motion for people to be courteous of their neighbors.

**EARL:** *(quickly)* Second.

**KATE:** All in favor of people being good neighbors?

**BOARD MEMBERS:** aye

**KATE:** *(addresses audience)* Motion passed for polite, neighborly conduct.

*(Grumbling from the audience)*

**KATE:** *(to the board)* I'll ask the Planning Commission to take a look at a noise ordinance. *(shuffling papers)* New business. We received bribes-er, correspondence from a wind and solar company. No specific projects, but I thought I should share.

**KEITH:** I make a motion to table any discussion on wind and solar until all their federal subsidies run out.

**EARL:** I second.

**KATE:** All in favor?

**BOARD MEMBERS:** Aye.

**KATE:** On to public comment. Please direct your comments to the board, and-

**KEITH:** keep it clean-

**EARL:** and PG.

*(Hand goes up in back, KATE acknowledges)*

**SPEAKER 1:** About the noise-if my neighbor can run his mouth all day at me, I can run my chainsaw all night! It's my property!

**SPEAKER 2:** About the running of the mouths-make sure you cover all kinds of noise in a noise ordinance-like whistling!

**SPEAKER 3:** And add hootin' and hollerin' too. These yahoos around here are hooters!

**SPEAKER 4:** We're talking about Hooters? I would like to voice my support for bringing a Hooters restaurant to the township.

**SPEAKER 1:** If we get a Hooters, I volunteer to be on the hiring committee.

**SPEAKER 2:** All in favor? *(laughter)*

**SPEAKER 3:** Regarding favors. I understand the wind and solar company sent you some bribes.

**SPEAKER 4:** Incentives.

**SPEAKER 1:** You should accept them. I was born by candlelight in a one room shack with no running water or electricity, and placed in a dresser drawer, so I feel that I am the best person to address renewable energy. I would hate for anyone else to be born by candlelight when a solar panel could be used.

**KATE:** Noted. Any other comments?

**SPEAKER 2:** All the talk about Hooters reminds me we have a woman in charge of the money now. I have a question for the new lady Supervisor. You didn't give much information about the budget-how did you come up with the figures? Will there be a forensic audit of files this year?

**KATE:** The cemetery sexton said we don't do forensic files on graves. *(proudly)* I asked. On the budget question. I do not know what the hell I am talking about, and have no background in accounting, so, allow me to explain. *(takes a breath)* Governmental budgeting is about moving numbers around from line to line, adding figures to some while subtracting money from others, with no real rhyme or reason. Government math is even better than the old math, or the new math for that matter. It does not require logic, forethought, or strategic planning. If you have overspent in one category, simply add an amount that makes you happy. Grant money coming in? Great! Just make up a line. Not sure where to put a particular expense? Easy. Keep a miscellaneous line as a big dump cake sort of spot. *(pause)* But, one might ask, where are we getting the money from to fund the budget? *(looks around the room, and at the board*

*members*) I am asking-do any of you know? *(silence)* Well, JOIN THE CLUB! No one can possibly understand government finance. It's a miracle this township, or any other, is still viable. If we ran our households like we run this township, we would all be out on the streets. And speaking of streets, apparently there is no money left for roads, so if you don't want potholes as big as craters, set up a GoFundMe!

*(Audience members give standing ovation, KATE eats it up. When audience sits, SPEAKER 3 remains standing)*

**SPEAKER 3:** That was the most refreshing, transparent answer I have ever heard from an elected official.

**KATE:** I was appointed.

**SPEAKER 3:** Would you consider running for election?

**KATE:** *(still basking in the glow of applause)* Thank you all for the support. I just might!

**SPEAKER 4:** I want someone who represents my own interests and not the greater good up there.

**SPEAKER 1:** Are you a pro regulation or pro individual rights advocate?

**SPEAKER 2:** Yeah. Which way do you swing?

**KATE:** *(indignant)* You can't ask me that.

**KEITH:** Keep it clean!

**EARL:** and PG!

**SPEAKER 2:** I mean politically.

**KATE:** Oh. I have always thought of myself as a liberal republican, a conservative democrat, and a progressive regressivist. I support personal property rights with a healthy dose of unnecessary regulation.

**SPEAKER 3:** You've got my vote! What was your name again?

END SCENE 4

Scene 5

*(Several months later, lights up on hall, people milling about-its the evening of the election)*

**HATTIE:** Eight o'clock! Polls closed everyone!

*(HATTIE goes to a computer)*

**HATTIE:** The results of the special election for Supervisor are tabulated.

*(KATE holds up her hands in a fingers crossed way)*

**HATTIE:** And the winner is: KATE RAMEN!

*(applause)*

**SPEAKER 1:** Who is that?

**HATTIE:** It's this lady here-

**SPEAKER 1:** No-*(pointing to KATE)* Her name is Kate Cross. I would never have voted for her! I voted for Kate Ramen!

**KATE:** I was Kate Cross, but I got married last year and changed my name.

**SPEAKER 1:** *(to others, and audience)* This woman is a cheat!

**SPEAKER 2:** I am calling the county clerk! It's election fraud, I tell you!

END SCENE 5

Scene 6

*(LIGHTS up on office with KARMEN, HATTIE and KATE, each holding a drink)*

**HATTIE:** Congratulations!

**KARMEN:** Well done!

*(HATTIE and KARMEN raise their glasses to toast)*

**HATTIE:** Cheers to the Dream Team!

**KARMEN:** I'll drink to this well-oiled machine!

**KATE:** Here's hoping it doesn't break down!

**KARMEN:** If it does, at least we have a Hooters now.

**HATTIE:** I've had a lot less complaint calls since it opened.

*(From off stage, a newspaper is tossed into the office. KARMEN opens it)*

**KARMEN:** (sucks in breath, reads) Hooters announces bankruptcy, shutter doors around the country.

*(KARMEN, HATTIE, and KATE exchange worried looks)*

**KARMEN, HATTIE, KATE:** SHIT!

END of PLAY