

MOVE

A Play in One Act

by

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by Trey Nichols

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Cast of Characters

<u>Liz Harris:</u>	A real estate agent in her 40's. Passionate. Energetic. Driven.
<u>Katherine Cantrell:</u>	A woman in her late 20's. Unhappy. Stuck. On the verge of something.
<u>Denny Cantrell:</u>	A man in his early 30's. Hard-working. Vain. Narcissistic.
<u>Mary B:</u>	A former homeowner.

Scene

The spacious but cozy den of a recently foreclosed home in
a U.S. suburb.

Time

The present.

Scene 1

SETTING: The spacious but cozy den of a recently foreclosed home in a middle class neighborhood.

AT RISE: Late morning or early afternoon on a Saturday. LIZ HARRIS, an energetic, seasoned real estate agent leads DENNY and KATHERINE CANTRELL, a youngish but not too young couple into the room from SR.

And standing in an upstage corner is Mary B. That is, the ghost of Mary B. She is filthy in a soiled nightgown and matted hair, somewhat twitchy, eyes fixed straight ahead, on what is anyone's guess. She has an aura of comic pathos. She never changes her position or seems to notice the living; she's just there, a haunting presence.

LIZ

And this is the den...

DENNY

Wow!

KATHERINE

It's big!

LIZ

It is big.

DENNY

Big is good.

KATHERINE

Big is big.

DENNY

Me like big.

KATHERINE

You don't think it's too big?
DENNY

How do you mean?

KATHERINE

(To Liz)
I tend to lean toward cozy.

LIZ

This could be cozy.

DENNY

I think it's cozy already. It's like a big cozy cave.

LIZ

Look, I've been in this business for a long time. Cozy is not about size; cozy is about two people--such as yourselves--turning a house into a home.

DENNY

We're a cozy couple! A damn cozy couple! "I've seen the cozy and the cozy is us!"

KATHERINE

I'm not sure I could fill a room like this.

DENNY

Sure we can! I can see our cozy widescreen TV going right on that wall. And a cozy L-shaped couch right there. And a cozy coffee table filled with big plates of snacks.

LIZ

I know this is a big decision. It's the biggest decision most couples ever make in their lifetime.

KATHERINE

Second biggest.

(Beat.)

LIZ

You know, Katherine, you're not limited by what you see here.

KATHERINE

But we'd be buying the house "as is."

LIZ

But think of the possibilities. First thing I'd do is knock down that wall and put in a sliding glass door. Brighten things up!

DENNY

I like that!

LIZ

The late afternoon sun is really lovely here, everything just glows.

DENNY

We could put in a deck.

KATHERINE

(vaguely)

That might be nice.

LIZ

(confidently)

That would be nice. I can just picture you sitting out there in your little backyard oasis some lazy afternoon, curled up in a chaise lounge, lost in the pages of a good book, a glass of wine, a gentle breeze--

DENNY

And me barbecuing steaks!

KATHERINE

Honey. Let's.

DENNY

What?

KATHERINE

Slow down? We need to think about this, talk about this.

DENNY

Hey, I'm all for thinking and talking. But this house is like the fifty-...?

LIZ

Seventh.

DENNY

Fifty-seventh one we've looked at in the last six months. And I've had good feelings about more than half of them and

maybe I'm not as particular as you but I have a good feeling about this one too, a really good feeling, and I like the neighborhood and I feel like we could really start the next part of our lives here.

(He takes her hand. They share a moment.)

KATHERINE

I just. I just want. I want to be sure.

(KATHERINE looks over DENNY'S shoulder and suddenly becomes aware of MARY B.)

Oh! Um, hello. Excuse us.

(Denny looks over at Mary B.)

DENNY

Hi there! Are you a buyer? Cuz we saw it first.

(No response whatsoever from MARY B.)

LIZ

Denny and Katherine, this is Mary B. Or was Mary B.

KATHERINE

Was?

LIZ

She's a ghost.

KATHERINE

A...ghost?

DENNY

No shit?!

KATHERINE

You mean...a real ghost?

LIZ

That's right.

KATHERINE

Who was she?

LIZ

The last owner of the house. Before the foreclosure. She died here.

DENNY

And now she haunts the place?! That is so great!

KATHERINE

Her name was Mary B?

LIZ

We don't disclose the last names of the deceased in these cases. For privacy.

KATHERINE

Of course. I-I didn't mean to pry.

DENNY

I do! What happened?!

LIZ

Well, you know--

DENNY

It didn't end well, I can tell that much.

LIZ

It's really not something I--

DENNY

Oh come on, you can tell us.

KATHERINE

Denny, she's obviously not comfortable--

DENNY

We're gonna find out anyway. I can probably just google it.

(Off KATHERINE'S look of disapproval.)

What! I think it's interesting! Don't you think it's interesting?

KATHERINE

I think it's morbid. Liz, you don't have to--

LIZ

No, it's okay. It's really just the same story you've been hearing about all over. The B's just got caught up in the whole subprime mess. Mister B lost his job and they fell behind on the mortgage payments. Negotiations with the bank failed, then he got sick and she fell into a deep depression. The night before they were supposed to vacate the premises, she got out of bed, walked over to where she is now and just stood there. Her husband and kids pleaded with her the next morning but she wouldn't budge. Finally they gave up; just got in the moving van and drove off. She stayed behind and kinda went batty but she never gave in. Even when the sheriff's deputies came, she just stood her ground. By the time they came back to forcibly remove her, she was dead; they say natural causes, but.

KATE

How awful.

LIZ

Well, there's a happy ending: her husband remarried a few months ago and the girls are just crazy about their new mommy. In fact, they just bought a three-bedroom not far from here on Twain Street.

DENNY

What a great story. That is definitely going on the blog.

KATHERINE

Oh god.

LIZ

You blog?

DENNY

Yes I do.

KATHERINE

She doesn't want to hear about your blog.

DENNY

Maybe she does.

KATHERINE

He thinks he's a writer.

DENNY

I do write; on the blog.

KATHERINE

Which makes you a blogger.

DENNY

(shrugging)
Same thing.

KATHERINE

It's not the same thing; writers get paid.

DENNY

Writers get read.

KATHERINE

Liz, do you know anyone who blogs?

LIZ

I do.

KATHERINE

Oh?

LIZ

All my friends do. Mostly about the housing market. We all have stories to tell.

DENNY

I keep telling Katherine she should start a blog.

LIZ

The streets here are named after authors. If you moved in maybe it would inspire you.

KATHERINE

It just seems so pointless. All my little thoughts out there for the whole world to see.

DENNY

If you read my blog, you'd see how fun it could be.

KATHERINE

I'm not reading your blog.

DENNY

It would mean a lot to me if you did.

KATHERINE

I don't need to read your blog; you're my husband.

DENNY

Exactly.

(Small pause.)

KATHERINE

Thanks for your time, Liz. If you find any other--

DENNY

Now wait a minute.

KATHERINE

What?

DENNY

I really like this place.

KATHERINE

Denny, there's a ghost!

DENNY

Hold on a sec.

(DENNY goes over to MARY B. HE waves his hand in front of her eyes. Snaps his fingers. She doesn't flinch or appear to notice.)

Liz, does she even know what's going on?

LIZ

She's always been pretty out of it when I've been here.

DENNY

Does she ever roam the house looking for her family or knock over pots and pans?

LIZ

As far as I know, she just stands there.

DENNY

So she's not like a poltergeist. I mean, she doesn't even look all that ghostlike. More like she's just having a bad day. I've had bad days like that. And she seems quiet.

LIZ

Oh, she's quiet.

DENNY

I wish she hadn't soiled her nightgown before she died, but maybe that's being nitpicky. I say we put in an offer.

KATHERINE

Denny--!

DENNY

I can live with a ghost. Think of the parties we'll have. None of our friends have ghosts.

KATHERINE

Oh, Denny.

DENNY

We can just ignore her. The way she's ignoring us. We won't even notice her.

KATHERINE

I don't know...

DENNY

Baby, I love this house; I want us to live here. My god, it feels like fate. Look at me, I'm all trembly. And I have that trembly smell. If we miss this chance, how can we live with ourselves? How can we go back to our crappy little apartment with all our crap in it knowing that someone else got this place and we missed out.

KATHERINE

I love our little apartment.

DENNY

You know how much I lost in the dot com bomb.

KATHERINE

That was so long ago.

DENNY

It feels like yesterday.

(Small pause.)

KATHERINE

You could live with a ghost?

DENNY

What ghost?!

("Looks" around.)

See?!

(Beat. A new tactic.)

Come on, give me that pirate face. Where's that little pirate face?

(After a moment...)

KATHERINE

(with a half-hearted pirate face)

Arrrrr.

DENNY

Shiver me timbers! Let's put in a bid. Twenty percent below market.

(Agonized pause.)

KATHERINE

I guess a bid couldn't hurt.

DENNY

Yay!

LIZ

Why don't you take a few minutes then we can head back to the office. I really do hope it works out. This neighborhood is really starting to take off. I just sold a condo a few blocks from here on (mispronouncing) Goethe. Is that how you say it?

KATHERINE

(correctly pronouncing)

Goethe.

LIZ

(incorrectly pronouncing)

Goethe?

DENNY

How do the new owners say it?

LIZ

(incorrectly pronouncing)

Goethe.

DENNY

Then it must be right.

Right. LIZ

Goethe. KATHERINE
(correctly pronouncing)

BLACKOUT

SCENE 2

The den. Evening. MARY B as before. KATHERINE and DENNY on the couch. KATHERINE is stuffing envelopes with cover letters and resumes. DENNY is working on his laptop.

Heh...hehehe... DENNY

(HE types gleefully, deep into his blog. KATHERINE looks at him for a moment. He's oblivious.)

I'm going to bed. KATHERINE

(Pause. He continues to type.)

Did you say something? DENNY

I'm off to bed. Are you coming? KATHERINE

In a bit. DENNY

(Small pause. She sits there. He continues typing, not really looking up at her.)

Are you blogging? KATHERINE

I'm replying to a fan. DENNY

KATHERINE
A fan? You have fans?

DENNY
Well, readers.

KATHERINE
How many?

DENNY
I don't know. A few dozen.

KATHERINE
Sounds like a party.

DENNY
It's more intimate than that.

KATHERINE
Oh?

DENNY
Traffic's been up lately. Since the new house.

KATHERINE
Since the ghost.

DENNY
That helps, I guess. People love to read about ghosts. I
picked up three new clients this week.

KATHERINE
Congratulations.

DENNY
How about you?

KATHERINE
How about me what?

DENNY
How's the job search going?

KATHERINE
Oh, you know. It's going.

DENNY
Something'll turn up.

KATHERINE

Will you be home for dinner tomorrow?

DENNY

I'll call.

(Small pause.)

KATHERINE

I'm off to bed. I have an early yoga class.

DENNY

Heh. Funny.

KATHERINE

What is?

DENNY

You and yoga. I was just writing about it.

KATHERINE

On your blog?

DENNY

Yeah.

KATHERINE

You write about me on your blog?

DENNY

Well, yeah. I mean, I write about me too; I write about lots of things.

KATHERINE

So what about yoga?

DENNY

I just think it's funny. "Ommm."

KATHERINE

Yoga is hard!

DENNY

I never said it wasn't.

KATHERINE

You don't just sit there, it's a workout! Have you ever tried downward facing dog?!

(He closes his laptop and leans toward her suggestively.)

DENNY

No, but I'd like to.

KATHERINE

Then come to class with me.

DENNY

How about right now? How 'bout a little downward facing doggie style right here.

KATHERINE

Oh god.

DENNY

Come on, we've been working all night. We could use a little sumphn'-sumphn'.

KATHERINE

I'm not going to do that here.

DENNY

Why not?

KATHERINE

You know. In front of.

DENNY

In front of what?

(KATHERINE indicates MARY B.)

Her?! She's a ghost! She doesn't even know we're here!

KATHERINE

You don't know that.

DENNY

Hey, that could be hot.

(HE starts to undress through the following until he's down to his socks and shorts.)

KATHERINE

What?

DENNY

Let's do stuff! Right here, right now.

KATHERINE

(protesting)

Denny!

DENNY

Let's make sweet love right here in front of Mary B.

KATHERINE

You're ill.

DENNY

Sweet love or dirty? Or how 'bout some sweet then dirty? Then a little more sweet, followed by a bunch of dirty, then a dash of sweet, then some new things we could call sweet or dirty, followed by some light pecking of lips and cheeks 'til the cock crows and it be mornin'. Let's give Dead Mary a show!

KATHERINE

I'm going to bed.

DENNY

Come on, my teeth are getting all sweaty just thinking about it.

(SHE gets up.)

KATHERINE

Teeth don't sweat.

DENNY

Mine do! They are right now.

KATHERINE

Come watch Conan with me.

DENNY

We can watch him right here on the widescreen. After we.

(SHE remains standing, arms crossed.
HE gives up. There's a pause of some
kind.)

KATHERINE

Have you really forgotten that she's here?

DENNY

Not exactly. But I don't dwell on it.

KATHERINE

Sometimes it's all I think about.

(Awkwardness. DENNY opens his laptop and starts to type. After a moment:)

KATHERINE

More blogging?

DENNY

A little. Is this becoming an issue?

KATHERINE

No. I don't know. Is it?

DENNY

It shouldn't be. It might bring me more clients. Which could lead to all sorts of things.

KATHERINE

For you and your fans?

DENNY

For you and me.

(Beat.)

And I don't think of them as fans.

KATHERINE

Excuse me, "readers."

DENNY

They're more like...soulmates.

KATHERINE

Oh. Okay then. G'night.

(SHE starts to exit.)

DENNY

Hey, wait. Why don't you shoot me a copy of your résumé tomorrow? I'll see if I can punch it up a bit.

Okay. Thanks. KATHERINE

G'night. DENNY

G'night. KATHERINE

BLACKOUT

SCENE 3

The den. Late afternoon. DENNY sits on the sofa with his laptop. He's got a mixed drink of some kind on the coffee table and a bowl or plate of snacks.

DENNY
(reading the laptop screen)
Hunh.

(reads)

Hunh! Ha ha! Hnnnh.

(Small pause. Then, to MARY B:)

You'll enjoy this: Angelwings575 says she once thought she had a ghost in her guest room, but it turned out to be a raccoon. A raccoon! That is wild! I wonder how it got in. My dog Chopper caught a raccoon in our backyard when I was like nine. Poor guy. I mean Chopper. Two seconds of triumph followed by. Echh. We buried him in the backyard. Chopper. The raccoon I have no idea but we never saw it again. Probably died that night too. Alone and unmourned. Angelwings575. I wonder if 575 is her birthday.

(Small pause.)

Did you have dogs, Mary B? You strike me as more of a cat person. Or maybe a bat person, considering your present circumstances. Which I don't mind, by the way. I mean you being here. Doing your thing. And I must say, my blog traffic has gone way, way up since I started making you the main subject. Honestly, it's been a big thrill. People from all over the world are reading my blog, sharing their

ghost stories, sharing their own foreclosure nightmares, cursing your husband for leaving you; I feel like in some ways I'm performing a public service. And that feels good, knowing that you've touched so many lives, that we've touched so many people's lives. Me and Mary B: The Ghost of Melville Drive.

(Small pause.)

I don't know whether you were computer savvy in your former life, Mary B, but this whole blogging thing has changed my life, the way I relate to people, everything. It's become the center of my world. I can't believe I used to spend so much time reading newspapers, watching TV...taking in other people's voices, their points of view, my god, what was it all about? I'm just so much more interesting. At least my readers think so.

(Beat.)

I think you would, too. I owe you a debt of gratitude, Mary B. We've lived here a month now; I thought I'd forget all about you, like a creaky stair you just stop paying attention to. But no. I'm starting to feel like you're part of our family. What part I have no idea, but--

(Lifts his glass.)

--cheers.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 4

The den. Days later. DENNY sits on the sofa watching an investment seminar DVD on the widescreen TV. He's got a beer bottle and there are plates and bowls of snacks on the coffee table. KATHERINE is swiffing with a Swiffer. She moves to the front of the sofa.)

KATHERINE

Feet.

(DENNY raises his feet.)

Thank you.

DENNY

I told you I'd help clean. Right after I'm done watching this.

KATHERINE

I'm fine.

DENNY

This is the last DVD in the series. He summarizes all of his investment strategies.

KATHERINE

I'm fine.

DENNY

Do you want me to pause it?

KATHERINE

Sit. You'd just be in the way.

DENNY

I know how to swiff.

(Beat.)

DENNY

You know, you could watch this with me.

KATHERINE

No thanks.

DENNY

It wouldn't hurt to learn a little of this stuff. While you're still, you know, between jobs. I could see you doing this.

KATHERINE

I don't want to do that. I want to teach. I want to walk into a classroom full of eager faces again. I want to hear a bell ring.

DENNY

It's such a shame teachers are so underpaid. You deserve better.

(Beat.)

KATHERINE

This is the last room. Then I'm taking a shower.

DENNY

(flirting)

Mmmm... a shower. What a good idea. I could use a little hosing down myself.

(SHE grabs some newspapers from sofa.)

DENNY

I'm not done with that.

(SHE puts down the Swiffer, folds the newspaper so it looks unopened and unread, and puts it back on the sofa. SHE picks up the Swiffer and starts swiffing again, making her way toward Mary B.)

DENNY

I work hard, you know? Even my "me time" is about planning for our future.

KATHERINE

Believe me, I know how hard you work. You don't have to tell me how hard you work. No one knows how hard you work more than I do.

(SHE now stands at the side of Mary B.)

Feet.

(Pause. Mary B, of course, does not respond.)

DENNY

Honey, she can't--

KATHERINE

Oh, she can hear us. I'm convinced.

DENNY

Fine. Let me know what she thinks of this argument. Maybe she can offer some insight.

KATHERINE

This isn't an argument. I'm cleaning, you're having some "me time." Or "you time." Or "cha-ching cha-ching" time.

DENNY

(muttering)

Someone around here has to.

(KATHERINE starts to swiff around Mary B. Then she notices something on the floor near Mary's feet.)

KATHERINE

What' this?

DENNY

What?

KATHERINE

On the floor. Some kind of goo. Is it ecto... that ecto-stuff?

DENNY

Ectoplasm.

KATHERINE

It's slimy.

(SHE looks up.)

Did it drip from the ceiling?

(Something dawns on DENNY. HE gets up.)

DENNY

I'll clean it.

KATHERINE

What about your "me time?"

DENNY

I paused it. Take a break. Want a glass of wine?

(KATHERINE crouches down to look at the goo more closely. She touches it with her fingers. She's appalled and disgusted.)

Oh. Oh my god.

KATHERINE

Honey.

DENNY

Oh my god it's.

KATHERINE

Honey. Just.

DENNY

You pig. How could you?

KATHERINE

It's not what you think.

DENNY

It's not?

KATHERINE

I mean it is, but it's not.

DENNY

How long has it been going on?

KATHERINE

Um.

DENNY

Days? Weeks?

KATHERINE

A few months?

DENNY

A few months?! We've only been in the house a few months!

KATHERINE

Oh god. It started a little after we moved in. I was up late, and I was just giddy with everything, the new house, the blog, her. Not gloating, but I just felt good, you know. Happy. You'd gone to bed. And there she was, in her corner, doing her thing. Quiet as a little mouse. It just felt...natural.

DENNY

What do you...do with her? Do you just...hump the air?

KATHERINE

DENNY

No, god no. She's not a glory hole.

KATHERINE

I wouldn't know about those.

(Small pause.)

Well?!

DENNY

I dunno I just. I go up to her. You know, right up to her. And I. It's very gentle. I use my hand.

KATHERINE

How could you do this? She's not even real.

DENNY

She's real. She's just...

KATHERINE

Diaphanous.

DENNY

I don't know what that means but it sounds right. And to be quite honest, lately she feels a little more real than you do.

KATHERINE

How can you say that?

DENNY

Floating in and out of the den with your Swiffer. Cleaning rooms that already clean. I never know whether you're coming or going. Unless I try to get close to you. Then you're going.

KATHERINE

I'm between things!

DENNY

That's just temporary.

KATHERINE

This is sure to bring us closer together.

DENNY

She's lonely.

KATHERINE

You don't know that.

DENNIS

I feel her loneliness. My readers talk about it all the time.

KATHERINE

Maybe I'm lonely!

DENNIS

Maybe I am too!

KATHERINE

You have your blog. You go to an office. I'm in this house all day and this neighborhood isn't taking off the way Liz said it was: we've been here six months, most of the houses are still empty, some have been vandalized, the lawns are just weeds, and the streets are named after dead authors! It's depressing, like every corner has a stuffy little black cloud hanging over it. And the street plan is incomprehensible, there's no sense to any of it, the streets aren't grouped by genre or style or literary influence, it's just a hodgepodge.

DENNIS

Well there's Goethe, Hawthorne, Irving, James, Kafka...

KATHERINE

See?

DENNIS

They're alphabetical.

KATHERINE

(he's right)
Really? Shit!

DENNIS

It's not so bad here. You have stuff. The house, and, and Direct TV and the freedom of long-term unemployment and those big books you love and...yoga?

KATHERINE

I stopped going.

DENNIS

Why?

KATHERINE

You made it sound stupid.

DENNIS

I never used the word "stupid." And I didn't mean for you to stop going. I just...that was just something I wrote on my blog, jeez, it's just pixels.

KATHERINE

I value your opinion, you asshole.

DENNIS

Then why don't you read my blog?

(SHE holds her fingers out to him.)

KATHERINE

Here. Want to take a picture of this for your blog? I bet your readers would just love these pixels.

DENNY

Of course not. Some things are private.

KATHERINE

Are they?

(Small pause.)

DENNY

Honey, I'm sorry. I'm sorry I hurt you. It was stupid.

KATHERINE

Do you love her?

DENNY

Who, Mary B? God, no! No, no, no. She's nothing, she's just a blast of cold air, she barely even haunts the place. It was a mistake. I'm sorry.

KATHERINE

Would you clean up your mess?

DENNY

Of course.

KATHERINE

Your plates, too?

DENNY

Aye aye, captain.

(HE grins and salutes, forgiven?
SHE looks at him warily.)

BLACKOUT

SCENE 5

The den. Late afternoon. A few days later. A big square of sunlight pours in from downstage, through the panes of the sliding glass door. KATHERINE sits on the sofa. She has a thick book in her lap and a glass of wine on the coffee table. KATHERINE is reading her book. She stops reading and regards MARY B.

KATHERINE

For what it's worth, I'm not mad at you. For that thing between you and Denny. I blame him. That doesn't mean we're friends. I'm just saying. 'Kay?

(Small pause.)

Do you like the new sliding glass door? It really does brighten up the room. And what about the deck? We spent it seems like forever shopping for just the right patio furniture: contemporary and rustic and comfortable and now that it's all done and out there and ready to be enjoyed I honestly just can't stand it. I've tried to sit out there but I feel like I'm still at the Home Depot trying it out and not liking it. And it gets so hot and bright out there, especially in the late afternoon. Liz Harris said the sunlight was "lovely." Frankly, I find it oppressive. And I got three bug bites yesterday. It's nice and cool in here and just dark enough to feel like a secret fort.

(Small pause.)

Sometimes I still feel like we're living in your house. Actually, that's most of the time. An occupying army of two. And you're just...waiting for us to finally go so you can just get on with things. Isn't that silly? I mean, it's the other way around, right?

(Small pause.)

Is there anything I can do for you? To help you, you know, move on? To wherever? Heaven or Hell? Or maybe the garage? Is there some unfinished business I can help you with? Isn't that why ghosts haunt places? Is there something you need to get done? I understand your ex-husband and his new wife live close by. Do you want me to kill them for you?

(Small pause.)

I don't know if you read much when you were alive, you honestly don't look like much of a reader, maybe it's that vacant stare, which I know really isn't your fault, but I've just started reading this book: Faust. By Goethe. Have you heard of him? Goethe. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. It's a play, a drama, about a man--a scholar, actually, who dabbles in a little magic on the side--who's on a quest for knowledge, but not the kind you get from books, no, he yearns for wisdom and truth, for one brilliant shining moment of clarity about the nature of the universe and his place in it. Then he adopts a poodle he finds on the street. That's as far as I've gotten. This is Part One. There's a sequel I think.

(Pause. She closes the book.)

I hate it here.

SCENE 6

LIZ HARRIS's office. Afternoon. Later that day or maybe the next. This area of the stage is probably downstage right of the den. MARY B is still illuminated, perhaps in a softer light. LIZ is sitting at her desk, doing some paperwork. KATHERINE walks into the office.

KATHERINE

Liz?

LIZ

Katherine! Hi.

KATHERINE

(curtly)
Hello.

LIZ

The receptionist didn't tell me you were here.

KATHERINE

I didn't tell the receptionist I was here. I waltzed right past her.

LIZ

There's a protocol for drop-ins. You need to sign in at the front desk.

KATHERINE

Why don't I sign in and out when I leave? This won't take long.

LIZ

How can I help you?

KATHERINE

Liz! You sold us a lemon!

LIZ

Excuse me?

KATHERINE

The sunlight in the backyard is shit! And the neighborhood is not taking off! It's just...lying there like a dead animal!

LIZ

I'm sorry. Do you want me to take it off your hands so you can move back into your old apartment?

KATHERINE

Would you?

LIZ

No.

(picks up phone, presses button)

Bob, Liz, could you zip on over to my cube?

KATHERINE

Who's that, security?

LIZ

(to KATHERINE)

Uh huh.

KATHERINE

Wait wait wait I just want to talk I just want to talk I'll be superfast I'm not a looney tune please please I promise.

LIZ

(into phone)

Hold off. Just: be around. Thanks Bob.

(to Katherine)

Okay, go.

KATHERINE

Thank you.

(KATHERINE seems flustered.)

LIZ

You're unhappy with the house.

(KATHERINE nods.)

LIZ

And you're sure it's the house?

(KATHERINE nods, but not convincingly.)

That's a shame. Because I didn't sell you a "lemon." There are no lemons in this business. I didn't sell you anything. I showed you a house. I showed you and your husband many houses. I made myself available at all hours of the day and night for you. Weekends, too. You bought a foreclosure. As is! My god, you and your husband and the inspector and the contractors went over every inch of that house. We went over the paperwork ad nauseum. What part now, six months later, did you not understand?

KATHERINE

The part about the ghost.

LIZ

(shrugging)

As is.

KATHERINE

You could have referred us to an exorcist.

LIZ

Honey, she's a ghost, not a demon.

KATHERINE

She's always there.

LIZ

May I offer my professional opinion? Feel free to disagree.

(KATHERINE nods.)

Maybe there's another ghost. One that doesn't stand in a corner. One you can't even see.

(KATHERINE absorbs this.)

I've sold a lot of homes with ghosts to some very happy couples.

(Small pause.)

KATHERINE

(Lost.)

Maybe. Maybe it's. Maybe I. Oh, Liz. I'm so.

(She's about to cry.)

LIZ

Kleenex?

KATHERINE

Please.

(LIZ rummages through her handbag.)

LIZ

I'm all out. Want to know why? It's been kind of a rough week. When you walked in, I was just finishing up some correspondence. My resignation.

KATHERINE

Something good?

LIZ

My resignation.

KATHERINE

Oh?

LIZ

I'm getting out of the business. After almost twenty years. I just can't do it anymore.

KATHERINE

What are you going to do?

LIZ

The first thing will be to torch my Franklin Planner in a small private ceremony, followed by a hot, hot bath; after which I will take to my bed for at least seven days. Then after that, and in the days that follow, though I'll have officially given up my role as prognosticator of trends, I see myself taking long, aimless walks through state parks, swimming in the ocean, hang-gliding into the wild blue, roller-blading like a mad demon on streets named after dead authors, all the things I've wanted to do for as long as I can remember. Oh, and I've never seen an opera! Add that to the list. And yoga!

KATHERINE

Yoga? Really?

LIZ

I've never taken a yoga class! Isn't that crazy?!

KATHERINE

It's...it's fun! It's hard.

LIZ

I can't wait.

KATHERINE

You might fart.

LIZ

I'll keep that in mind.

KATHERINE

What brought this on?

LIZ

I started reading your husband's blog.

KATHERINE

And this is what it did to you?

LIZ

Have you read it?

KATHERINE

No. I'm...I'm too busy reading Faust! By Goethe.

LIZ

Well, good. Stay away from the blog. When you bought that house, I'd almost forgotten the sad tale of Mary B. Now she haunts me, too. There are so many ghosts out there. I made a fucking killing during this mess. People like us come and go, but the ghosts? They aren't going anywhere.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 7

The den. Early morning. A day or two later. KATHERINE stands next to MARY B, a suitcase at her side. There is an envelope in her hand.

KATHERINE

I just wanted to say good-bye. So: good-bye. As you can see, I'm leaving. It was nice, uh. No. It wasn't nice at all.

(Small pause.)

Denny's still asleep. I didn't want to wake him. He'd try to talk me out of it. Out of this. Going. Leaving. I'm...no longer between things at the moment. My mind is rather made up. And Denny, I suppose I still love him but he's just impossible. He's so smart about so many things I just don't care about. I think the two of you are: right for each other. In fact, I'm counting on it.

(Indicating envelope.)

This is for Denny. In my nicest handwriting, I try to explain a few things. A little bit of me. It's not exactly a blog, but. I haven't quite had my moment of clarity, so the mysteries of the universe will just have to

remain hidden for the time being. But I've had something. See that he gets it, will you?

(SHE sets the envelope on the coffee table.)

Did Denny ever tell how we met? It might help in case he gets lonely and "visits" you again. It was at a costume party. We both went as pirates. Purely by chance, I mean, I didn't even know him. I just put together something simple from my closet, but Denny, he went all out. He wore a crushed velvet coat and a felt hat with gold leaf trim and a cutlass swinging from his sword belt and a fake parrot on his shoulder that squawked like a real parrot. Well, everyone was kind of blown away when he walked in, and right away he started in this booming pirate voice, "Arrr matey! Avast ye scalawag!" and it was really cool for like ten seconds. But then he wouldn't shut up, long after the gag had worn off, he just kept walking up to total strangers, "Arrrrrr matey," and now people are rolling their eyes and moving away when they see him coming, but it was like he couldn't help it, like the voice was part of the costume and he just couldn't let go of the moment when he first walked in. And a lot of people thought we were together, because of our costumes, which, I mean, I was so shy that I just let them. And after awhile he ended up in the kitchen all by himself, talking to his parrot--"ahoy me hearty"--while everyone else got stoned in the den. Except me; I drifted into the kitchen and. Sort of stuck around. So if he wants to talk his pirate talk, don't let it be a problem, okay? It's who he is. But for the record: I am not now, nor have I ever been, a pirate.

(Small pause.)

I'm going now. I have an early Tae Bo class. And tonight: I'm seeing an opera.

(KATHERINE picks up suitcase and exits. Time passes. MARY B does her thing. Then...)

DENNY

(O.S.)

Honey?! Hon?! Ahoy, matey. Where's me little wench?!

(DENNY enters in boxers & t-shirt or pajamas, bedhead, etc. Small pause. HE calls out to the house.)

Katherine?! Are you here?! I reached over and you weren't there! Just sheets. Still warm. I thought you were in the bathroom but the toilet never flushed so... I figured you'd be down here. Lost in the pages of a good...

(HE sees the note on the coffee table; smiles.)

Is that a note?! Awww.

(HE opens the envelope. Reads the note. Blinks. Reads again. Again.)

This is definitely going on the blog.

(Looks over at MARY B.)

What.

BLACKOUT

END OF PLAY