

## CAST (4 women, 2 men)

Harry Bennyhoff, late 40-50's, a collector

Carol Black, 60's, ageless

Paula Twombly, 40-50, a realtor

Dani Black, 40, Carol's daughter

Matthew Black, 32, Carol's son

Tawnee Faithful, 29, a stranger, non-white

A modest living room that's been "staged" to look like a living room. It should look hyper-real: a perfect cozy sofa, a clean coffee table, proper end chairs, a cheery flower arrangement. But the cigarette smoke-stained walls and the lack of air and light tell a different story.

Lighting can dictate the altered time segments of the play. A feeling of transience, of change, of memory.

The time is 2009.

\*Note: once we learn more about Carol, her entrances and exits can become less conventional.

Where you come from is gone, where you thought you were going to never was there, and where you are is no good unless you can get away from it.  
Flannery O'Conner

The future is certain, the past is always changing.  
Polish proverb

**ACT ONE**

*The living room of an old house. Pristine. Spare but immaculately furnished ala Pottery Barn. A high-end flat-screen t.v. is prominent on a wall. The room is dimly lit, strangely uninhabited, except for two peppy red-striped cartons of popcorn and two Coke bottles sitting atop a tray on an ottoman--like someone is about to watch the best movie they've ever seen.*

*A swinging door leads to the offstage kitchen. A doorway leads to offstage bedrooms down a hall. A front door with glass-paned windows is visible upstage.*

*Silence. Memory.*

*A key rattles (offstage) in the front-door lock, to no effect. A pause, then a cloth-covered fist abruptly busts through the door's glass pane. The hand reaches down, fumbles with the door-knob, finally turning it. HARRY pushes the door open and enters. He carries a bag of groceries and a duffle bag. He silently makes his way across the dim room-- perhaps stumbling over the ottoman, finds a light switch, turns it on-- then abruptly turns it off. He goes out the front door-- but not before stuffing his jacket into the space left by the broken pane.*

HARRY (OFFSTAGE)

Ssh. Did you think I would forget you?  
Did you? I wouldn't forget.

*He enters with a cardboard box; he introduces the box to the surroundings.  
(softly)*

Here's our new couch. Here's our new  
chair. Here's our new rug. And our nice  
new t.v. And oh, looky, popcorn, but you  
can't have any.

*He sets the box somewhere out of the way.*

I'm going to let you sleep in your little  
house, just for now. We'll find something  
better.

*He removes a packet of something from the grocery bag; he glances around,  
then puts the packet*

*ceremoniously in the drawer of a coffee/side table. He takes off his shirt  
and puts on a white t-shirt from his duffle bag, removes his shoes and puts  
on a pair of comfy slippers. He settles in a chair. He is happy.*

HARRY (cont'd) (CONT'D)

Are you glad to be home? I am glad to be  
home.

CAROL (OFFSTAGE)

Who's there-?

HARRY

*(singing)*

Good morning to you!

Good morning to you!

We're all in our places

With bright happy faces

CAROL  
Harry-? Is that you?

*CAROL enters, wearing a nightgown or robe. She has fancy hair of an unnatural brown color.*

HARRY  
*(singing)*  
There she is, Miss America.

CAROL  
You're back? Where are you?

HARRY  
Where am I? I'm right here in the chair.  
*(to pet-carrier)*  
Put your manners on.

*Carol shines a harsh flashlight on Harry.*

CAROL  
Well there you are!

HARRY  
In the flesh.

CAROL  
What time is it? Where have you been?  
What are you up to?

HARRY  
Too many questions, Woman.

CAROL  
Harry, Harry. Did you miss me?

HARRY  
You lost weight.

CAROL  
Oh god no. Maybe a little.

HARRY  
Your hair, you did something to your hair.

CAROL  
My hair?

HARRY

You did something. It looks good.

CAROL

It's lumpy and I hate the color.

HARRY

We think it looks good. Don't we Little Guy?

CAROL

For gods sake, why don't you turn on a light?

HARRY

We don't need any more light.

*She moves towards a light switch.*

CAROL

I can't see the end of my nose it's so dark in here.

HARRY

*Leave it.*

*Harry turns a very small lamp on.*

HARRY (cont'd) (CONT'D)

There now. You surprised?

CAROL

What do you think?

HARRY

Good. Good.

CAROL

When did you get back?

HARRY

Just. Just rode in.

CAROL

On a horse? The horse you rode in on?

HARRY

Not a horse nor a mule.

CAROL  
*(re: the grocery bag)*  
What's that in there?

HARRY  
I stopped off at the store.

CAROL  
The store? At this hour?

HARRY  
I had to stock up. The cupboards were bare.

CAROL  
Did you get mommy anything?

HARRY  
Don't go looking around.

CAROL  
Did you bring me back some?

HARRY  
No I did not.

CAROL  
Where are they? Are they in the drawer?

*She heads towards the side table.*

HARRY  
I just told you no.

CAROL  
Harry!

HARRY  
How about "I'm happy to see you"?

CAROL  
For gods sake, Harry.

*She starts searching the room, looking under the sofa cushions.*

HARRY  
"I'm happy to see you".

CAROL

Matthew used to hide his pot under the cushions. I'd take some, no more than a finger, til I had a nice bag of it.

HARRY

You smoked his dope?

CAROL

God no, I sold it.

HARRY

Are you happy to see me?

CAROL

I'm happy to see you, yes yes yes yes.  
There's your answer, now where are they?

HARRY

You could have said so, Woman. Instead  
of making me ask.  
You're cold.

*This is a game they play. She turns and heads towards the side table.  
Colder.*

*She turns in a different direction.*

HARRY (cont'd) (CONT'D)

Warmer. Hot. Hotter. Hotsie-totsie. You're  
on fire. You're burnin' down the house!  
Cinders and ash, nothin' left but our  
teeth!

CAROL

Don't be an idiot, it's made of brick.

HARRY

Sticks and stones.

CAROL

Brick and sticks and stones.

HARRY

Burn Baby, burn.

*She is crawling, groping under chairs, etc.*

CAROL  
Here? Under here?

HARRY  
Hold on. I can't watch a grown woman  
crawl...for more than a few minutes.

*He opens the drawer to the coffee table (the one he steered her away from),  
and removes the packet...of cigarettes.*

HARRY (cont'd) (CONT'D)  
Your gold doubloon. Your filter-free  
ciggy's.

CAROL  
Son-of-a-bitch.

HARRY  
You're welcome.

CAROL  
You said I was *cold!*

HARRY  
You believed me.

CAROL  
I won't do *that* again. You're terrible.

HARRY  
Madame, you give me far too much credit.

CAROL  
Harry, Harry. Let me see you.

*She's trying to get a good look at him but it's too dark for her eyes.  
Well I'm just going to sit on your lap.*

HARRY  
Stand back-- incoming!

*He does the truck-backing-up beep as she settles onto his lap.*

CAROL  
Oh stop it.

HARRY  
Thar she blows!

CAROL

*Sit still.*

HARRY

Man the life rafts!

CAROL

Harry, Harry, Harry. Look at you. What's going to happen to you?

HARRY

Nothing's going to happen to me.

CAROL

I'm not playing now.

HARRY

Not a goddamn thing.

CAROL

They'll come. They'll send you away.

HARRY

Nope.

CAROL

They will, you know they will. Oh I can't stand the thought of them taking you from me. I can't be away from you ever again, it will kill me. What are we going to do?

HARRY

It's not complicated. I'm staying, Carol.

CAROL

But they'll come--

HARRY

Quit *worrying*, woman.

*(re: cigarettes)*

*Those things*, those will kill you.

CAROL

That's right. I'm going to smoke 'em all right now, middle of the night and you can't say anything.

HARRY

I wasn't going to say anything.

CAROL

That's the deal.

HARRY

I know that. I know the deal. Go ahead.

CAROL

I will.

HARRY

Stink up this nice room.

CAROL

Oh for the love of christ.

HARRY

Go on.

CAROL

I'll stand on the porch. *Then I'll smoke.*

*She exits towards the bedrooms. Harry pours some of his beer into a bowl and sets it inside the cardboard box.*

HARRY

A little vitamin B for you. Sleep tight.

*(calling off to Carol)*

We could watch some t.v. Mary Poppins, we haven't seen her in a while. Would you like to watch Mary Poppins?

CAROL (OFFSTAGE)

It's not real.

HARRY

I know that. I know it's not real.

CAROL (OFFSTAGE)

I mean the t.v.

*He tries to turn it on-- but it's a very realistic one-dimensional cardboard replica: a "staged" t.v.*

HARRY

Tell me something, Carol. Why would someone go to all the trouble of putting a fake t.v. on this wall? Why would anyone do that?

CAROL (OFFSTAGE)

The popcorn's not even real.

*CAROL enters, wearing a puffy parka over her nightgown. Her hair is a different color and style.*

CAROL (cont'd) (CONT'D)

Want to come out on the porch with me?

HARRY

No. No thank you.

CAROL

Can't beat the view.

HARRY

It's dead people. I can't watch dead people.

CAROL

Oh for god's sake, you're too sentimental.

HARRY

Go on, go smoke.

CAROL

I will. It's a nice night. It was supposed to rain, but it didn't. Not even a little bit. We could use some rain. Everything's shriveling up. The grass, the trees, me.

HARRY

It'll take a lot more than rain to fix that.

CAROL

Why are you so mean to me?

HARRY

You have different hair.

CAROL

Do you like it?

HARRY

It's red.

CAROL

I think it goes better with my skin tone.

HARRY

Whatever you say. What happened here?  
Who put that there? That picture of a t.v.?

CAROL

Oh I don't want to talk about it. Not just  
now, Harry.

*She goes to the front door.*

HARRY

It makes no sense. Unless it's ironic. Is it  
ironic?

CAROL

Someone just pulled up, Harry! Police I  
think.

HARRY

It's not the police. Why would it be police?

CAROL

Stay inside. Lock the door. *Hide.*

HARRY

I'm not going to hide.

CAROL (cont'd) (CONT'D)

They'll take you from me.

CAROL (cont'd) (CONT'D)

They'll make you leave again.

HARRY

Nothing's going to happen to me.

CAROL

What are you going to tell them when they  
ask you why you're here? That you *forgot*  
*something?*

HARRY

Get away from the door, Woman.

*A knock at the door.*

PAULA  
*(offstage)*  
Hello? Mr. Bennyhoff? Are you inside?

CAROL  
*(fierce whisper)*  
*Don't answer.*

HARRY  
*(answering)*  
No.

CAROL  
For god's sake, Harry!

PAULA (OFFSTAGE)  
Mr. Bennyhoff, it's Paula Twombly.

HARRY  
Hello. How are you?

PAULA (OFFSTAGE)  
I'm fine. How are you?

HARRY  
Very well, thanks.

PAULA (OFFSTAGE)  
I just had a call from a neighbor. She saw  
the light on. She was concerned.  
*(pause)*  
Can you please open the door, Mr.  
Bennyhoff?

CAROL  
*(fierce whisper)*  
*Don't.*

HARRY  
She's nice.

CAROL  
She's a *realtor*.

HARRY  
I know that.

CAROL  
You shouldn't have said anything!

HARRY  
What was I supposed to do?

PAULA (OFFSTAGE)  
Mr. Bennyhoff, I'd like to talk to you.

HARRY  
Just a minute, Paula.

CAROL  
Oh, first name, la-dee-dah!

HARRY  
What's the matter with you?

CAROL  
Don't get friendly. You know why she's here.

HARRY  
Maybe, maybe not.

CAROL  
Be cool. Be firm.

HARRY  
I know how to be.

*Persistent knocking.*

CAROL  
Don't listen to her. Whatever she says--

HARRY  
You're making me nervous.

CAROL  
Listen to me. This is *my house*. That's all anyone needs to know. It's my house and I decide what happens!

HARRY  
I know you do.

CAROL

What she says doesn't matter.

HARRY

I know that.

CAROL

What *any of them* say--

HARRY

*Doesn't matter.* I know that.

CAROL

Spoiled little free-loaders, think they're entitled to a piece of me. Think again!

HARRY

I'm going to answer the door.

CAROL

Answer the door. Stick to your guns.

HARRY

Witness a master class in charm.

*Harry opens the front door and PAULA enters. CAROL is gone.*

PAULA

Mr. Bennyhoff.

*She turns on a light switch and glances at the room, nervously assessing its contents.*

HARRY

Sorry to make you wait, madam.

PAULA

I'm sure you were very busy. At this hour.

HARRY

*(all charm)*

How are those kids of yours? A boy and a girl if I'm not mistaken?

PAULA

Marshall and Kate. They're both away at school now.

HARRY  
College? No!

PAULA  
Can you believe it?

HARRY  
They were just running down the street to catch the school bus. Where did the time go?

*Paula makes a "fly away" gesture.*

PAULA  
Ffphfft!

HARRY  
They'll be running the world one day.

PAULA  
Well.

HARRY  
I have no doubt.

PAULA  
We're still adjusting to the empty nest. It's hard. I mean, it's wonderful. Greg and I are getting to know to know each other again. It's like starting over, with a pre-existing condition.

HARRY  
How is that husband of yours?

PAULA  
Thank you for asking. We think he'll be fine.

HARRY  
Oh-?

PAULA  
Well, last week Greg was out running and he managed to fall. I still don't understand how. Paramedics found him on the ground, a little confused, somewhat bruised, but nothing broken.

HARRY

He's alright?

PAULA

He probably slipped on loose gravel, or maybe he stepped wrong. I don't know. He took a good tumble, but he'll be fine. He should be home tomorrow.

HARRY

Still in the hospital?

PAULA

Just some tests.

HARRY

You'll give Greg my best?

PAULA

Oh absolutely. Absolutely.

*(beat)*

Mr. Bennyhoff--

HARRY

Harry. Otherwise I'll think you're talking to my dad.

PAULA

Harry. You know why I came over.

HARRY

I think I do, yes.

PAULA

You're really not supposed to be here.

HARRY

Well, that's a matter of opinion.

PAULA

No, it's really not. This isn't your house.

HARRY

I understand that.

PAULA

Do you? Do you understand that you can't break into someone's house like you just did?

HARRY

Young lady, in no way did I break into this house.

PAULA

You did. You broke into the house.

HARRY (cont'd) (CONT'D)

No ma'am. No I did not.

PAULA

Look, look at the window, it's broken, there's glass everywhere!

HARRY

Because my key didn't work.

PAULA

Because I changed the lock.

HARRY

And that is why the window is broken.

*She regroups.*

PAULA

The open house is in two days. This is the worst time you could be here.

HARRY

Let me tell you something, young lady. Good-bye!

PAULA

Mr. Benny--

HARRY

Harry.

PAULA

Harry. I know you were here a long time.

HARRY

Ten years to be exact.

PAULA

Bless her heart.

HARRY

I took care of her.

PAULA

I'm sure you did.

HARRY

When her kids couldn't or didn't, I took care of her. Every day. Fed her, dressed her, helped her to the toilet. Did all the errands and doctor's appointments.

PAULA

I'm sure.

HARRY

I didn't expect anything, I didn't want anything.

PAULA

Well I know Danielle must have told you--

HARRY

*Carol* decided what she wanted to do, which entailed me staying in her house up til and including after she was gone.

PAULA

Carol's children have made it very clear they can't pay for your housing any longer.

HARRY

Her children.

PAULA

Well. Yes.

*Harry gesturing around the room.*

HARRY

You did this?

PAULA

You know, I'd been paying a professional stager to do my houses, but I thought 'I can do this', and I just went and did it!

(MORE)

PAULA (CONT'D)

I can't believe how nicely it turned out-- compared to what it was. I mean... Well. Carol never did go in for appearances, did she?

HARRY

She had chickens.

PAULA

Carol-?

HARRY

A couple of ducks, a goose. Mean, too. If that goose didn't like you he let you know it. No uncertain terms. You knew what was what and where you stood with that goose.

PAULA

*(carefully)*

Yes. That was a while ago. Harry...

HARRY

Bob. That was his name.

PAULA

Who-?

HARRY

The goose.

PAULA

Oh, yes.

*During the following, Harry begins walking-- strutting, actually, in a slow circular pattern.*

PAULA (cont'd) (CONT'D)

I thought you had moved to your sister's house. In Phoenix? Won't she be missing you? What's her number?

HARRY

None of your damn business.

PAULA

Harry, look, I don't want to--

*He begins to jut his chin, and flap his arms occasionally.*

PAULA (cont'd) (CONT'D)  
Are you alright?

HARRY  
SQUAWK.

PAULA  
Mr. Bennyhoff?

HARRY  
HONK!

PAULA  
*(quickly, disturbed)*  
I know it can be overwhelming--

HARRY  
*(fierce)*  
HONK, HONK!

PAULA  
Mr. Bennyhoff! Now listen to me.

*He confronts her, jutting and strutting, flapping.*

HARRY  
HONK, HONK, SQUAWK!

PAULA  
Stop that. Stop it! I mean it!

*He lunges at her, thrusting his chin, flapping and squawking all the while.*

PAULA (cont'd) (CONT'D)  
Go away. Go! Shoo!

*He stalks the couch, leaps onto it, and remains, perched, confrontational, honking and squawking under her speech.*

PAULA (cont'd) (CONT'D)  
If you get anything on that couch--! They warned me, they told me you would be difficult, but I *defended* you. I felt sorry for you. Losing your place, having to go live with a relative who doesn't like you. Well no wonder!  
(MORE)

PAULA (cont'd) (CONT'D)  
 If you're going to act like this, like a moronic child, you'll be treated like one. I'll tell Danielle and Matthew. If you don't stop that and leave right now I'll go straight to--

*He runs at her, fluttering and squawking.*

PAULA (cont'd) (CONT'D)  
 I am calling Dani!

HARRY  
 HONK!

*PAULA exits. HARRY goes back to his perch. CAROL enters and looks out the front door; she waves good-bye, then closes it.*

CAROL  
 That poor husband of hers. If I had to listen to that laugh I'd try to kill myself too.

HARRY  
 Honk!

CAROL  
 Harry, Harry. What if you hadn't come back? What would I do?

*She huddles next to him on the couch.*

CAROL (cont'd) (CONT'D)  
*(softly, talk-singing, to the tune of 'Jolly Holiday' from Mary Poppins)*  
 Owh it's a jolly 'oliday with 'arry  
 'arry makes your 'eart so light.  
 When the day is gray and ordinary--

HARRY  
 Whatever happened to that goose?

CAROL  
 Bob.  
*(she thinks)*  
 Coyotes. I left him out one night and that was the end of him.  
 (MORE)

CAROL (CONT'D)

Poor old goose. He deserved better.

*(she lays her head on Harry's  
shoulder, softly singing)*

Owh it's a jolly 'oliday with 'arry

No wonder that it's 'arry that we love.

## SCENE TWO

*Very early the next morning. MATTHEW sits on the couch, texting. DANI patrols the stage during the following.*

DANI

He had to come back, today of all days.

MATTHEW

What's today?

DANI

You don't even know.

MATTHEW

Hold on.

DANI

I told him I was changing the locks. I told him to stay away.

MATTHEW

Maybe it wasn't even him. Have you thought of that?

DANI

No Matthew.

MATTHEW

It could have been some homeless guy taking advantage, you know? Nice house, no sign of life. Everyone knew mom was gone.

DANI

No Matthew.

MATTHEW

She was probably delusional.

DANI

Mom was *not* delusional. She knew *exactly* what she was doing, like a lucid terrorist.

MATTHEW

I'm talking about the realtor.

DANI

Oh. No. Paula knows him, she said it was Harry. It was him.

*(exiting down hall)*

Take your shoes off. You're tracking sand in.

MATTHEW

*(removing his shoes)*

Hey, I just got back from Cabo. You ever been to Cabo? Cabo was fantastic. We just fished and drank. I met a girl. I think she liked me. She said I smelled like booze and fish.

*Dani breezes by and exits into the kitchen.*

Yeah, probably not your kind of place.

*He texts.*

So Dani. I have this friend, this guy I know. Rocky Mountain? I'm not kidding-- all of his sibling and his kids and everyone are named like that! Candy Mountain, Sierra Mountain, Appalachia Mountain. Crazy, right? So anyway he and his brother, Allegheny, buy dilapidated houses like this one--

*DANI enters from the kitchen with a trash bag.*

DANI

This house isn't dilapidated.

MATTHEW

It's fucking old. Same thing.

DANI

It's not the same thing. It's not falling apart, it hasn't gone to decay. That's what dilapidated is, it's *ruin*.

MATTHEW

Did you know the aging process starts in your mid-teens? So pretty much you turn sixteen and start dying.

DANI

Are you going to help?

MATTHEW

*(looking around, baffled)*

What is there to do?

*DANI exits down the hall.*

MATTHEW (cont'd) (CONT'D)

So the Mountain brothers buy up old houses, and they set up camp with a tent inside and a Coleman stove and basically renovate them. Then they lease the houses out or just sell when the market's up. They've done it with about fifty places. I'm not kidding, Rocky told me this.

DANI (OFFSTAGE)

Great.

MATTHEW

So what do you think, Dani?

DANI (OFFSTAGE)

Talk to him.

MATTHEW

I am going to talk to him. The thing is--

*DANI enters.*

DANI

Of course, the thing.

MATTHEW

What do you mean?

DANI

There always a “thing”.

MATTHEW

There is not always a “thing”. It’s just, Rocky is kind of a liar. A pretty big liar. I’m not even sure I believe the business about the names.

DANI

Oh my god.

MATTHEW

Forget it.

DANI

Great. Okay, except for the busted window, I think we’re ready for the open house tomorrow.

MATTHEW

You can call someone to fix that.

DANI

*You* could call someone to fix that.

MATTHEW

What about Donald?

DANI

What about Donald?

MATTHEW

He’s good with his hands, you always say that.

DANI

I’m not asking Donald, he doesn’t have time.

*Her watch alarm goes off; she reads it.*

I don’t have time. I’m not asking him.

MATTHEW

Okay, that’s cool.

*(laying it on)*

(MORE)

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Look, you've been doing a lot, Dani, I know that. You're the best. I've been super slammed with work, otherwise--

*She drops a box in the middle of the room.*

DANI

This is it. The last box.

MATTHEW

What are you going to do with it?

DANI

Give it to the Goodwill.

MATTHEW

Really? Just..?

DANI

It's crap, you want it? An old muffin pan. A burnt wooden spoon. Bunch of marbles. Because if you want it--

MATTHEW

Give it away.

DANI

God that'll feel good. Really fucking good.

*Her watch alarm goes off again. She reads it.*

We're meeting with the realtor before the open house. *Don't forget.*

MATTHEW

I won't forget. God Dani, give me some credit.

DANI

*(not sorry)*

Sorry.

MATTHEW

Why are you all wound up?

DANI

I'm not wound up. I just know he's going to ruin it.

MATTHEW

Take a deep breath.

DANI

I'm not wound up!

MATTHEW

Got it.

*(crossing away from Dani)*

It doesn't look like our house. Not Mom's anyway.

DANI

That's good.

MATTHEW

No, yeah, that's good. Some of her stuff...

DANI

The electric blue couch with the filthy arm sleeves and the greasy back?

MATTHEW

Nasty.

*Dani plops onto the nice rental couch and assumes the position, mimicking Carol.*

DANI

"Have you seen your little brother? Me either, not since he moved out. I don't know what happened to him. I hope he didn't get hit by a bus or shot and killed."

*(herself, now)*

At least she didn't die on it.

MATTHEW

I hid so much shit under those cushions. Dirty magazines, french fries, pot. *A lot of pot.* I can't believe she never found it.

*(he laughs, then:)*

Hey, do you think she found it and never said anything? Like when she vacuumed.

DANI

She didn't vacuum, Matt. She used a leaf blower.

MATTHEW

She would have said something, right?

DANI

Does it matter?

MATTHEW

Yeah, no.

*A noise offstage; not loud, from the direction of the bedroom. They ignore, it's an old house.*

MATTHEW (cont'd) (CONT'D)

It was boldface creepy, right? The Harry and Mom thing.

DANI

I don't want to talk about it.

MATTHEW

Do you think there was ever, you know...

DANI

*I don't want to think about that.*

MATTHEW

Christ, she fawned all over the guy like he was George Clooney.

DANI

How do you think that makes me feel? *He was my ex-husband.*

MATTHEW

I had to share my *bedroom* with your ex. My *bunkbed*, Dani. It was weird. I think it affected me.

DANI

She told me it was "mutually beneficial". The two of them.

MATTHEW

There's got to be something in Greek literature about this. Something, you know, Greek.

DANI

She said he was *noble*.

MATTHEW

Harry? How about anti-social free-loading loser bum? We sell the house, that'll be the end of Harry.

DANI

And Mom. If we sell it.

MATTHEW

*If-?*

DANI

It's across from a cemetery, Matthew.

MATTHEW

It's a view property, the realtor should tack on extra.

DANI

God you sound like Mother. Sitting on her front porch, watching the dead people.

MATTHEW

Yeah, well, an idiot could sell this place.

DANI

Nobody knows anything about the market right now, including you.

MATT

I know this place is worth something and I need the money.

DANI

Why? Did you declare personal bankruptcy?

MATTHEW

*Jesus, Dani.*

DANI

I was *kidding*.

MATTHEW

It didn't sound like you were kidding.

DANI

This house brings out the worst in me.

*(slight pause)*

What are you doing for work?

MATTHEW

I'm thinking of doing something new. You know, making a fresh start.

DANI

Why?

MATTHEW

Why not?

DANI

You're such a bad liar.

MATTHEW

*What.*

*(slight pause)*

I went into a business venture with a friend. The one who's in jail now.

DANI

Oh my god you didn't.

MATTHEW

It was a solid idea, Dani! Automotive solar panels. It's just, our guy couldn't design one that would stay on a moving car. We went belly up and I kind of lost everything. So what, no big deal, I'll go to the bank, get a loan, rebuild. Right? But it's like as I'm walking through the glass doors they're rewriting all the goddamn rules and conditions-- and suddenly, I don't qualify!

DANI

You *did*, you declared bankruptcy.

MATTHEW

So what, people do it all the time, it's the American Dream! Fucking bankers.

(MORE)

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

If they'd just listened to me and stopped waving that stupid formula in my face. I even offered this house as collateral.

DANI

You used this house as *collateral*?

MATTHEW

No, that's what I'm saying! I tried to, but guess what: fucking equity doesn't matter anymore. Now it's some bullshit income-to-debt formula.

Look, I've got a bone-crushing drive ahead of me--

DANI

So do I.

MATTHEW

Can we get out of here?

DANI

*What are you doing with your life, Matthew?*

MATTHEW

Where is that coming from?

DANI

Do you need money?

MATTHEW

I need a *job*.

DANI

I'll charge you interest if that'll make you feel better.

MATTHEW

Look, Miss V.P.-of-Marketing-Whatever, I've got stuff going on.

DANI

*What?*

MATTHEW

*Stuff.*

DANI

That's right. I work at a real job in the real world, and yet somehow you're the golden boy no matter what you do. Even if it's nothing.

MATTHEW

Whoa.

DANI

You have been completely out of the picture. All this time I have had to deal with everything!

MATTHEW

Whoa, whoa, whoa.

DANI

Her estate, her belongings, the legal crap--

MATTHEW

You *wanted* to do it.

DANI

No. I wanted it to *get done*.

MATTHEW

When the lawyer contacted me he said you had already been in touch about all of this stuff.

DANI (cont'd) (CONT'D)

I was trying to get things taken care of as quickly and efficiently as possible.

DANI (cont'd) (CONT'D)

I didn't want to complicate it. Everything was a mess.

MATTHEW

I never said you should do it. I never said that.

MATTHEW (cont'd) (CONT'D)

I would have helped. You never asked me! How many times did you ask me? How many times?

DANI

How was I supposed to know that? How? You were never available! You were never available.

MATTHEW

Hey, I'm sorry, I was in Cabo!

DANI

I want to be able to depend on you, *just for once*.

MATTHEW

So depend on me!

DANI

*(thrusting an Open House sign at him)*

Put this sign up.

MATTHEW

Okay.

DANI

You have to dig a deep hole.

MATTHEW

*I know.*

DANI

You hate this house.

MATTHEW

I don't hate this house! It was a great house. It is.

*(pause)*

Where's a shovel?

DANI

I don't know. Borrow one from the cemetery.

*A noise offstage, now undeniable.*

MATTHEW

What the hell-?

DANI

*(calling off)*

Harry? Harry! Don't you dare try to hide from me.

*(to Matthew)*

Go see.

MATTHEW

*You go see.*

DANI  
I can't believe you, Matt.

MATTHEW (cont'd) (CONT'D)  
There's nothing back there, okay?

*DANI exits towards the bedrooms. Matt waits; checks his cell phone; waits.*

MATTHEW (cont'd) (CONT'D)  
*(calling offstage)*  
Dani? Forget it, let's just--

*He glances at the coffee table and, perhaps underneath, notices a pack of cigarettes. He picks it up, smells it. A flood of memory.*

The last shard, the sticking piece. You  
have a wicked sense of humor, Ma.  
*(pocketing the cigs and calling  
offstage)*  
Hey-? Dani?

*DANI enters.*

DANI  
No sign of you-know-who.

MATTHEW  
Who?

DANI  
*Who do you think?* I know he's going to  
come back.

*Her watch alarm goes off; she reads it.*

MATTHEW  
It's weird. This room. Seeing it all dressed  
up. Someone else's date to the prom.

DANI  
Yeah. But we've moved on, right?

MATTHEW  
I keep half-expecting Mom to walk in  
smoking. Or singing.

DANI  
Singing?

MATTHEW

How she'd do to annoy us?

*(singing, badly)*

"Good morning to you  
 Good morning to you  
 We're all in our places  
 With--"

DANI

*Matt. Let's go.*

*CAROL enters from the bedroom; her hair is a new color and style. She has a dust pan and broom.*

CAROL

Your shoes.

*Matthew grabs his shoes, then opens the door and gestures to Dani.*

MATTHEW

Awesome sisters first.

*DANI exits, MATTHEW follows her off, locking the door after. CAROL sweeps where Matthew tracked in sand.*

CAROL

Oh for god's sake, I'm still cleaning up  
 your messes.

*She reaches to get a cigarette, realizes she doesn't have them on her, then starts a search for the missing pack. It looks very much like the previous night's search.*

*A hand reaches through the broken window, turns the knob, and the front door opens. HARRY enters, pulling a little red wagon piled high with a variety of found objects.*