

THE CURSED BONES

By Michael Tennant

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SYNOPSIS: “Good friend for Jesus sake forbear, To dig the dust enclosed here. Blessed be the man that spares these stones, And cursed be he that moves my bones.” William Shakespeare’s *Gravesite Epitaph*

Joe, and his daughter Angela, have inherited an old house after his uncle’s mysterious death. They soon discover that many owners of the home have died under suspicious circumstances—Shakespearean circumstances—as the past owners have met a fate similar to characters in William Shakespeare’s plays. Rumors have spread and the locals stay clear of the haunted house. Only the elderly Hazel and her daughter are brave enough to return and to help Joe fight this evil. Will they be able to break the curse before Joe’s family becomes the next Shakespearean tragedy? This haunted story is full of suspense, romance, and comedy for the whole family.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4-6 females, 3-9 males, 0-1 either)

HAZEL (f)	A woman in her late 60s to early 70s. She suffers from dementia. <i>(129 lines)</i>
CASSIDY (f)	Hazel’s daughter. A woman in her mid-40’s with a very troubled past. Very beautiful but has a darkness that follows her. <i>(145 lines)</i>
JOSEPH “JOE” KING (m)	A divorced man in his 40s. Good looking, charming, witty. Father to Angela. <i>(418 lines)</i>
ANGELA KING (f)	A teenager of 17. Daughter of Joseph King. Defiant, resentful of her father. Must be able to show a spectrum of emotions. <i>(248 lines)</i>

SHERIFF (m).....	A male in his late 30s to early 50s. A small town Sheriff in New Church, Virginia. Very nervous of the house where Joseph King lives. <i>(49 lines)</i>
ERNIE (m).....	Nephew to the Sheriff. A home inspector. A very unusual fellow in his late 20s to early 30s. Socially awkward. <i>(48 lines)</i>
GRAYSON (m)	A grave robber in the late 1700s. A shady character. Partner to Tobias. <i>(36 lines)</i>
TOBIAS (m)	A grave robber in the late 1700s. A shady character. Partner to Grayson. <i>(39 lines)</i>
TAMORA (f).....	A beautiful woman from the Shakespearean play “Titus and Andronicus.” Dark, scary, a seductress. <i>(8 lines)</i>
HAMLET (m).....	A character from the Shakespearean play of the same name. <i>(2 lines)</i>
OTHELLO (m).....	A character from the Shakespearean play of the same title. <i>(10 lines)</i>
DESDEMONA (f).....	Wife to Othello. <i>(10 lines)</i>
PUCK (m/f).....	A mischievous fairy from the Shakespearean play “A Midsummer Night’s Dream.” <i>(1 line)</i>
JULIET (f)	Offstage voice <i>(1 line)</i>
ROMEO (m).....	Offstage voice <i>(1 line)</i>
JULIUS CAESAR (m).....	Offstage voice <i>(1 line)</i>

DURATION: 100 minutes.

SETTING: Cabin in New Church, Virginia

TIME: Present & 1700s flashbacks

OPTIONAL DOUBLING

TAMORA can double as DESDEMONA.

SHERIFF can double as GRAYSON, OTHELLO, and HAMLET.

ERNIE can double as TOBIAS and PUCK.

ANY WOMAN (except TAMORA) can double as JULIET.

ANY MAN can double as ROMEO and JULIUS CAESAR.

SET

There is a couch in the center of the room, and an end table. There are stairs to the second floor. There is a front door, a door to the kitchen, and another door leading down to the basement. As the show begins, an old sheet covers the couch and end table. The house needs definite cleaning and tidying up. This house has seen a lot of strange things, and has a definite personality to it.

PROPS

- old bag
- 2 human skulls
- dagger
- luggage
- bag of groceries
- jar
- Change (for the swear jar)
- portable stereo or boom box
- \$50 Cash
- handkerchief with strawberries on it
- shopping list
- pouch containing fairy dust
- box of books
- Shakespeare for Dummies Book (or something equivalent)
- notebook

- certificate of sobriety
- loyalty card (to Jedadine's Massage Parlor)
- one penny
- newspaper
- shovel
- little black book

PREMIERE PRODUCTION

The Cursed Bones premiered at Play With Your Food Productions in Hemet, California in January of 2019 with the following cast:

HAZEL	Gina Kraut
ANGELA.....	Mattea Leigh
JOSEPH KING.....	Michael Tennant
CASSIDY	Monica Reichl
TAMORA/DESDEMONA.....	Alexandra Miller
GRAYSON/SHERIFF/OTHELLO/HAMLET.....	Levi Hand
TOBIAS/ERNIE.....	Shen Sellers
PUCK	Melanie Rose Johnson
Director.....	Michael Tennant
Stage Manager.....	Danniell Garcia
Intern, The	Mattea Leigh

DEDICATION

To Ackley Hornsby and Dr. Julia. Be well on your adventures.

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

AT START: *The late 1700's. Dim lights in an old cabin in the mountains of Virginia. It appears to be abandoned. Night has fallen. Two thieves, GRAYSON and TOBIAS, they look about cautiously.*

GRAYSON: Is anyone here? Anyone? This place is deserted. It has to be.

TOBIAS: Anybody here?

GRAYSON: I think we're alone. No one's been around this place for years from the looks of it.

TOBIAS: Should we get a fire going before the storm starts?

GRAYSON: No fire. *(Beat.)* If anyone's following us the smoke will lead them right to us.

TOBIAS: How far behind do you reckon they are?

GRAYSON: Hard to say.

TOBIAS: I had a sense, when we crossed the river outside, that someone was watching us. I still feel it. Do you?

GRAYSON: No.

TOBIAS: Maybe we ought to just keep moving.

GRAYSON: These mountain storms, they're nothing you want to get caught up in. We'll lay low until the storm breaks.

TOBIAS: The tempest.

GRAYSON: What?

TOBIAS: Wasn't that something he wrote about? A tempest?

GRAYSON starts to look around, feeling extremely uneasy—a sense that something is about to go wrong. TOBIAS picks up on this.

TOBIAS: What is it? Is something wrong?

GRAYSON: Just feels like something isn't right.

TOBIAS: I'm telling you, I've felt the same way, ever since we left Stratford-upon-Avon. And when we were on the ship, there were nights when I couldn't close my eyes.

GRAYSON: Let's just get some rest. The second the sun comes out, we're gonna put some distance between ourselves and anyone who might be following us.

TOBIAS: You want me to take first watch?

GRAYSON: No, no one takes watch tonight. We're exhausted. We need to rest. We can't afford to be slow tomorrow.

TOBIAS: But if they track us here...

GRAYSON: If they track is here, it's already over. They'll surround the house. We won't be able to get out. Besides, when the storm hits, they won't be chasing us. They'll be looking for shelter instead.

TOBIAS: I wish we'd never stolen him. Do you think the curse is real?

GRAYSON: No. Don't believe in no curse. *(Starts to open an old bag.)*

TOBIAS: What are you doing?

GRAYSON: I just wanna make sure he's in one piece. *(Removes a human skull from the old bag.)* There you are William. As soon as we deliver you, we'll be made rich.

TOBIAS: Put him back, I can't look at him.

GRAYSON: You're too superstitious. *(Returns the skull to the bag.)* I'm gonna look for a place to stash him, just in case they do come while we're asleep. Don't want to be caught red handed.

TOBIAS: Like Macbeth.

GRAYSON: What?

TOBIAS: Macbeth was red handed.

GRAYSON: Right....

GRAYSON exits. TOBIAS looks nervously out the cabin window. TAMORA enters. She is beautiful, sexy, alluring... very haunting. TOBIAS turns to see her.

TOBIAS: Oh, ma'am, I'm so sorry. We didn't know anyone lived here. My apologies. We thought this house was deserted.

TAMORA: Dost though seek shelter from the storm, m'lord?

TOBIAS: Yes, ma'am, if you wouldn't mind.

TAMORA: Nights like these frighten me. The gods are angry.

TOBIAS: Ma'am?

TAMORA: You will find rest here, good lord. Please, come with me.

TAMORA reaches for TOBIAS'S hand. TOBIAS takes a step back.

TOBIAS: Why are you dressed like that? *(Calling for GRAYSON.)* Hey!!

TAMORA: Pray, m'lord, do not raise your voice. But come hither.

TOBIAS turns from TAMORA, he can't look at her. Frozen in a terror he can't explain. TAMORA approaches from behind.

TOBIAS: Ma'am, why are you in this house?

TAMORA: M'lord, why did you disturb his bones?

TOBIAS winces in pain. TAMORA has stabbed him from behind. He falls to the floor, dead. GRAYSON enters.

GRAYSON: I pulled up an old floorboard and—(Sees TAMORA and freezes.)

TAMORA: Dost thou seek shelter from the storm, m'lord.

Blackout. SFX: crash of thunder.

ACT ONE, SCENE 2

AT START: *Present. Evening. HAZEL enters from the kitchen door. She walks cautiously inside the house, untrusting of what she may find there. She has a sense of confusion, which seems to disappear as she fully enters the house.*

HAZEL: I've come back! (Announcing loudly to the "empty" house. HAZEL taps her feet on the ground three times and then listens for a response. She hears nothing.) Your silence doesn't fool me! I know you're here, Puck! I know you've been wandering in the forest again. Tamora? There's a chill in the air. I know you're not far away!

HAZEL peeks up the stairs and then down into the basement. She hears voices from outside. As she hears these voices, she rushes towards the kitchen to make her escape out the back door.

JOE: (Offstage.) Sweetie, you wanna start grabbing stuff from the car?

We'll just unload everything in the front room.

SHERIFF: (Offstage.) You need a hand there?

JOE: (Offstage.) Thanks, but I think we can manage.

JOSEPH KING and the town SHERIFF enter the house. The SHERIFF tries not to let on, but he's nervous to be in the house. He stays near the front door.

SHERIFF: Here you are, Mr. King. Welcome to town and to your new home.

JOE: Temporary home, but thank you. And please, call me Joseph, or Joe. *(Flips a switch and is pleased to see that a light comes on.)* Great! The electricity is turned on. Now I just gotta get a hold of the phone company and get a land line put in. Cell service seems a little sketchy.

SHERIFF: You'll want to make sure you have plenty of heat, too. Gets awful cold this time of year.

JOE: I'm used to the cold. I have an ex-wife.

SHERIFF: Don't we all. So, Gary was your uncle?

JOE: Yeah. I hadn't seen him since he moved here to Virginia.

SHERIFF: I didn't know him well, but I used to see him in town sometimes. Seemed like the type who just wanted to keep to himself. I'll tell you, it was a real shame to hear about his passing.

JOE: Where was he found?

SHERIFF: About thirty feet from the house, by the river. I'm afraid he'd been there a while and wild life had started to snack on him. Neighbors called me to check it out when they saw a squirrel run by with one of his fingers.

JOE: Were you able to determine a cause of death?

SHERIFF: Looks like Gary's knuckle may have gotten caught in the squirrel's throat and it choked.

JOE: No, I mean my uncle Gary. What happened to him?

SHERIFF: Looks like he'd been drinking and fell. Hit his head on a rock.

JOE: That doesn't surprise me. He was a drinker. It cost him a good job and his reputation back home. We all figured that's why he moved across the county. To get away from everyone and start over.

SHERIFF: This is the place to come if you want to avoid folks. Ain't got the noise or the traffic of the big city. Now, is that your daughter outside?

JOE: Yeah, that's my girl, Angela. Though, why we decided to put the word "angel" in her name, I have no idea. She's gonna help me get the house all fixed up and put on the market.

SHERIFF: You got here at a good time. Pretty big storm is heading this way over the next few days. If you need any supplies, you'll want to stop into town and pick them up before the storm hits.

JOE: I've heard these mountain storms can be pretty fierce.

SHERIFF: Definitely not my favorite part about living on the mountain. Hey, listen, this is a small town and news gets around pretty quick. If you come into town and get some folks looking at you funny, well, don't let that bother you none. They're always curious when someone new comes around up here. Especially since you're staying in this house. I told my nephew, Ernie, you'd be fixing up the place, and he'll get in touch with you. He's my sister's boy. He's dumb as a brick, but he's a fine home inspector.

JOE: That'll be great! I'm sure we'll have lots of projects to do around here before we can get it up for sale. Really an old house, too. I'm no expert, but it looks like it's got a lot of potential. From the outside, it looks like a terrific piece of real estate.

SHERIFF: Well, hopefully you still feel that way after you've spent a few nights here. Well, I'll get out of your way and let you get settled in, but I did want to let you know something...

JOE: Sure. What's up?

SHERIFF: Before you got into town, neighbors called and said they saw a light on in one of the rooms upstairs. They said they could see someone walking around inside.

JOE: They saw someone here?

SHERIFF: I came and had a look, but never saw anything. All the doors and windows were locked up tight. It was probably nothing. The house has a reputation for bad luck, and folks are always letting their imagination run away.

JOE: Did you say "bad luck"?

SHERIFF: Yeah, bad luck. I'm sure if we could ask your Uncle Gary, he'd agree.

JOE: What makes the house unlucky?

SHERIFF: Bad things just happen to the people who live here. To be honest, makes me a little nervous just being here.

JOE: Well, that's completely reassuring, Sheriff. I did hear about the politician who lived here, some years back.

SHERIFF: Mayor Donnelly. He's a local legend.

JOE: Do you think you might have a look around upstairs and make sure anyone who might have come around is gone?

SHERIFF: Oh... well... alright. *(Becomes a bit nervous. Walks to the stairs and looks up them. He stays at the bottom of the steps and yells up.)* Hello, is anyone up there? *(Looks back at JOE.)* I'd say you're in the clear.

JOE: What do you mean I'm in the clear? You didn't even go upstairs!

SHERIFF: *(Looks extremely disturbed, like this is well above his pay grade.)* Oh man... alright.

SHERIFF heads slowly upstairs. ANGELA enters. Her hands absolutely full of suitcases and bags of groceries.

JOE: Oh, honey, let me help you.

ANGELA drops everything by the door.

JOE: Yeah, just drop those anywhere.

ANGELA: Dad, guess what?

JOE: What?

ANGELA: This house sucks. You suck, too. Guess that's why you inherited the house.

JOE: How can you think it sucks? We just got here. It's peaceful, it's in the mountains, it's right by a river. There's no one else around...

ANGELA: You're around, and you suck.

JOE: Yeah, I'm around. But like we learned from Uncle Gary, I may not always be around, so maybe we should try and make this work.

ANGELA: Why didn't you try and make your marriage work?

ANGELA stares at JOE with an icy glare. SHERIFF comes down stairs. He looks at ANGELA.

SHERIFF: Now, aren't you just the sweetest thing. *(Looks back at JOE.)* Everything looks fine. All the windows are locked up tight.

JOE: Thank you. It was really nice of you to meet us here and help us out.

SHERIFF: Well, small town sheriff and all, I like to get to know everyone and help out where I can. Oh, listen, the neighbors also said there was a raccoon who ran off with Gary's nose. If we track it down, do you want us to get that back to you?

JOE: No... no, we'll be OK without it.

SHERIFF: Well, you both have a good evening.

JOE: You too, Sheriff.

SHERIFF exits.

JOE: Well, it's starting to get late. You wanna go up and pick out a room.

ANGELA: I'm not sleeping in the dead guy's room.

JOE: That's fine. There's several to choose from. It's really pretty up here. I was thinking this would be a great place to work on your art or write some of your poems.

ANGELA: Oh, I forgot to tell you, I came across a poem I wrote for you in third grade.

JOE: You did?

ANGELA: Yeah. I have it memorized. Sit down, I'll recite it to you.

JOE: Alright.

JOE sits down on an old, questionable looking couch.

ANGELA: Roses are red—and you suck.

JOE: Short and to the point.

ANGELA: See, even in the third grade I was prolific. Of course, these days I can sum up my feelings for you using just one finger.

JOE: And if you ever show me that finger, I'll break it off.

ANGELA: I'll call CPS.

JOE: How are you gonna do that, smart one? We've got no cell service up here.

ANGELA: Oh dad, guess what? Mom unfriended you on Facebook and added a bunch of hot guys.

JOE: That's terrific, sweetheart.

ANGELA: Guess what else?

JOE: What?

ANGELA: I unfriended you, too.

JOE: That's fine. I'll just go back to Myspace.

JOE goes through a bag of groceries ANGELA left by the front door.

JOE: What do you want for dinner?

ANGELA: Anything but Spaghettios.

ANGELA exits upstairs.

JOE: Spaghettios it is.

JOE grabs a can of Spaghettios and exits, heading into the kitchen, as ANGELA comes down the stairs.

ANGELA: Dad, this place is disgusting. There's a skeleton of a lizard in one of the bedrooms. Didn't your Uncle Gary ever clean?

There is a knock at the front door.

ANGELA: Dad! There's someone knocking at the door.

JOE: *(Calling from the kitchen.)* Can you get it? I'm having a problem with the sink!

ANGELA: Nope. *(Heads back upstairs.)*

JOE comes onstage, flustered. He's a bit wet from a battle with the sink. He answers the door. CASSIDY stands in the doorway.

JOE: Hello? Can I help you?

CASSIDY: You're the new family who is moving in?

JOE: That's right. My uncle Gary lived here, but he passed away recently.

CASSIDY: Yes, I heard about that. I'm so sorry.

JOE: Thank you. Listen, I don't mean to be rude, but could you excuse me for just one moment? I need to run back to the kitchen. I turned the faucet on—now it won't shut off, and the drain is clogged. Any moment the kitchen is going to start flooding.

CASSIDY: Pull up hard on the faucet when you turn it off.

JOE: What?

CASSIDY: Pull up on the faucet! Try it, quick!

JOE rushes into the kitchen. CASSIDY looks around from the doorway. The house is mysterious to her.

JOE: *(Enters.)* It worked. How did you know it would work?

CASSIDY: I used to live here, a long time ago. The house belonged to my mother once.

JOE: Really? Come in. Um... welcome back?

CASSIDY: Thank you. Again, I really am sorry to hear about your uncle.

JOE: Thank you. Yeah, just really sudden and unexpected. I guess he was down by the river, feeding the squirrels and raccoons. My daughter and I are here to clean up and sell the place. My name's Joseph King.

CASSIDY: I'm Cassidy. It's very nice to meet you.

JOE: Anything else I may need to know about the house besides the kitchen faucet?

CASSIDY: Depends how squeamish you are.

JOE: You're talking about the murder that took place here?

CASSIDY: Right.

JOE: I did hear a little about that. Took place quite some time ago?

CASSIDY: Depends which death you're referring to.

JOE: There was more than one? I tell you what, can we keep this on the down low for now? My daughter is upstairs and I don't want her to be creeped out. She really doesn't do well with stuff like this.

CASSIDY: Of course.

JOE: Though, if you have any details, maybe you can fill me in some other time.

CASSIDY: Absolutely!

JOE: So, Cassidy, to what do I owe the pleasure of this visit?

CASSIDY: Well, I was passing by on my way home, and I saw your Pinto in the driveway. Just decided to stop in real quick. This is going to seem very upfront, but I was hoping I could ask a favor of you. I don't want to be a burden, and I would understand entirely if you were to say no. But I have to ask.

JOE: Listen. Would you like to sit?

CASSIDY: Oh, well, thank you.

JOE and CASSIDY sit down on the couch.

JOE: But be warned: that couch has been sitting here for a while, and I haven't cleaned it or checked it for snakes and lizards.

CASSIDY: Like I mentioned, I lived here with my mother about 25 years ago.

JOE: It seems like a great house.

CASSIDY: I left, went away for a while. When I finally came back, I had a bomb dropped on me. My mother is battling dementia.

JOE: Oh no.

CASSIDY: She used to have some good days, but now she just retreats into her own mind. That's how the doctor describes it. I've been trying to jar her memory by showing her old photos from different stages of her life. I showed her some pictures of this house, and she responded—she had a lot of memories here. And I'm embarrassed to tell you this, she came up here a few days ago on her own. I suspect it's not the first time.

JOE: How did that happen?

CASSIDY: Well, if I'm not watching her, once in a while she'll sneak off. I try to keep an eye on her, but I can't watch her all the time. Sometimes I hire someone to help me, when I can afford it.

JOE: I understand. I saw a very similar thing happen with my grandfather.

CASSIDY: I guess, what I'm asking is this: my mother wants to come here. She saw the pictures, and she wants to come back. I understand if you say no, but I am wondering if you would allow her to come spend a little time here some afternoon?

JOE: We'd love to have her.

CASSIDY: Do you need to talk it over with your wife, or anything?

JOE: Oh, she really doesn't speak to me (*Beat.*) unless her alimony check is late—then I hear from her.

CASSIDY: I see. Thank you, so much. It wouldn't be for long; I don't want to impose.

JOE: Please, be our guest. After all, I owe you one. You saved me from having a flooded kitchen. You know, the sheriff mentioned that neighbors saw someone inside the house. I wonder if that could have been your mother.

CASSIDY: Maybe? (*Sheepish shrug.*) If so, I truly apologize.

JOE: No, no. It would make me feel better if I knew it was just your mom. When would you like to bring her by?

CASSIDY: The sooner the better. Maybe in a few days, after you've had the chance to settle down and check the couch for snakes and lizards?

JOE: That sounds perfect.

CASSIDY: Thanks again. I know you're busy, I won't take any more of your time.

JOE: Where do you both live?

CASSIDY: Not too far from here, about three miles down the mountain.

JOE: Why did she move?

CASSIDY: Why?

JOE: Well, you said she loved the house, and she must've liked the area if she only moved three miles away.

CASSIDY: That may be a question for another day.

JOE: Let me give you my cell phone number. We don't seem to get much service up this way, but who knows?

CASSIDY: I'll give you mine, too. Thank you.

JOE and CASSIDY exchange numbers.

JOE: It was a politician, wasn't it?

CASSIDY: Come again?

JOE: A politician who was murdered here, years ago? The story I heard said he was stabbed all over his upper body.

CASSIDY: In this room, yes. Jamison Donnelly. One of the many deaths that occurred here.

JOE: Many deaths? Or many murders?

CASSIDY: It's hard to say. My mom would know better than I would. I've always had a feeling she spared me the details. She probably didn't want me spooked any more than you want your daughter spooked. I hope to see you soon, Joseph.

JOE: You too, Cassidy. It was nice to meet you.

CASSIDY exits. ANGELA comes down the stairs.

ANGELA: What was that all about?

JOE: Oh, don't act like you weren't eavesdropping.

ANGELA: What makes you think I was eavesdropping?

JOE: You always eavesdrop! When your mother and I would be talking, you...

ANGELA: I didn't need to eavesdrop to hear you and Mom "discuss."
The whole neighborhood could hear it.

JOE: (*Changing the subject.*) Anyway....

ANGELA: So who was the lady at the door? You don't waste much time.

JOE: I didn't invite her here. She just showed up.

ANGELA: Ten minutes after we arrived? How'd she know we were here?

JOE: Ever heard of a thing called coincidence?

ANGELA: Nope.

JOE: Well, then that leaves two options. Either she was drawn here by my magnetic personality, or I put up a sign that said "I'm desperate" and left a trail of bread crumbs.

ANGELA: Did you get her number?

JOE: Well... we...

ANGELA: Mmm hmm....

JOE: Whatever.

ANGELA: How long do we have to stay in dead Uncle Gary's House o' Fun?

JOE: I'd like to get it fixed up and put on the market as soon as possible, but at least a few weeks.

ANGELA: I wish I could have stayed with Mom.

JOE: I know. But I'm glad you're here. Did you pick out a room?

ANGELA: They're all creepy as hell.

JOE: And they probably all smell like Uncle Gary.

ANGELA: The upstairs smells like sweat and rotten cheese.

JOE: Yeah, that's Uncle Gary. The one good thing about him decomposing is, he probably smells better.

ANGELA: There's a sonnet carved into one of the closet doors. I kid you not. All fourteen lines.

JOE: What's a sonnet?

ANGELA: A Shakespearean sonnet. A type of a poem. It's the type of BS they torture you with in English class.

JOE: And here I thought you liked poetry.

ANGELA: Not Shakespeare.

JOE: Yeah, total waste of your time learning about Shakespeare. He probably can't spin a rhyme nearly as well as that rapper you listen to. What's his name? Skittles? Reese's Pieces?

ANGELA: It's Eminem. And you know his name is Eminem. You're just trying to piss me off.

JOE: Yeah, I am. It gives me a certain enjoyment. You know what else is going to piss you off?

ANGELA: Oh, please tell me.

JOE: We're having spaghettiios for dinner.

ANGELA: You suck.

JOE: I think you may have mentioned that earlier. And to answer your question from before, the lady who was at the door used to live here before Uncle Gary. She wants to stop in again with her mother, and relive some old memories. Have a look around, see what we're doing with the place.

ANGELA: Oh, perfect. Knowing you, you'll end up giving her the grand tour of the bedroom. Let's go eat. I'm so hungry even spaghettiios sound good. (*Exits into the kitchen.*)

JOE: Oh God, please let her ask for a tour of the bedrooms.

JOE exits into the kitchen. The lights dim. TAMORA walks down the stairs and stands in the center of the room. We hear voices from the past. TAMORA smiles lustfully as she hears these final words cried out.

JULIUS CAESAR: (*Offstage.*) Et tu, Brute.ⁱ

JULIET: (*Offstage.*) O happy dagger.

This is thy sheath.

There rest, and let me die.ⁱⁱ

DESDEMONA: (*Offstage.*) Heaven have mercy on me! ⁱⁱⁱ

OTHELLO: (*Offstage.*) Peace, and be still!^{iv}

HAMLET: (*Offstage.*) The rest is silence.^v

ROMEO: (*Offstage.*) Thus with a kiss I die.^{vi}

Blackout.

ACT ONE, SCENE 3

AT START: *There is a knock at the door. JOE opens the door. ERNIE enters.*

ERNIE: Howdy, howdy. I'm Ernie with the home inspection agency. My uncle's the town sheriff. He told me to stop by.

JOE: Ernie, great! Please come in. Joseph King.

ERNIE: Joseph King?

JOE: That's my name. Joseph King.

ERNIE: You're Joe King? (*Says it fast, pronounced "joking."*)

JOE: (*Sarcasm.*) Oh, never heard that one before.

ERNIE: Sorry to show up unannounced but I figured it would be alright since I was fully clothed. Like my uncle said, I'm the local home inspector. I was told you might be able to use my services as you're fixin' up the place to sell.

JOE: Absolutely!

ERNIE: I'm the only home inspector anywhere near here, so I wouldn't waste time looking for anyone else.

JOE: I'm sure you'll be fine.

ERNIE: I'm kind of expensive.

JOE: Help me get the house sold and I'm sure you'll be worth every penny.

ERNIE: I have a little time right now and figured I could get started. Have a look around and see what we're up against.

JOE: Sure, that's fine by me.

ERNIE: You know I always wondered what this place looked like on the inside. Most people I know would never come in here.

JOE: You're one of the brave ones, huh?

ERNIE: Well, Thursday is bowling night and I can only mooch off my mom for so long. Gotta make a living somehow. I have a dog walking service too, if you have any dogs that need to be walked?

JOE: Oh, no, my ex-wife doesn't live anywhere near here. Listen, were you serious when you said most people won't come in here?

ERNIE: Yes, sir. Folks are superstitious. Not me though. I'm just stitious. Where should I start?

JOE: Well, there's this floor, there's the upstairs, and there's the basement. Haven't really been down there yet.

ERNIE: I'll start there. That's the place most likely to flood when the storm hits.

JOE: So, my question is, if people are afraid to come in the house, then how am I going to sell the house?

ERNIE: Gonna be a tough market for sure, but in my experience, there's always a sucker. Well, I'll go down and have a look. You can just leave me to it.

JOE: Perfect. I'm really curious as to what you'll be able to tell me about the structure of the house. I know it's pretty old. Must have been remodeled quite a bit.

ERNIE: Yep, we'll take a close look and see. I doubt much of the original structure would still be here, but the original foundation may still be in place.

ERNIE heads down into the basement. ANGELA enters, yawning.

JOE: You've been yawning all day. You sleep okay last night?

ANGELA: It took me forever to fall asleep, and when I did, I had weird dreams.

JOE: I blame it on the spaghettiios.

ANGELA: No, like, really weird dreams.

JOE: Like what?

ANGELA: Like, I was in a forest, and...

JOE: Hey, Einstein, you are in a forest. What's weird about that?

ANGELA: There were bright lights in the trees and music...

JOE: Barry Manilow?

ANGELA: No, it was like I was being watched.

JOE: By Bigfoot?

ANGELA: Dad, where is our property line?

JOE: I have no idea, really. Why?

ANGELA: Last night, I was looking out the window and I saw someone walking by the river.

JOE: You're sure it was a person?

ANGELA: What else would it be?

JOE: Tree branches moving or an animal? (*Muttering to himself.*) Lady with dementia.

ANGELA: It was a person. Maybe a neighbor?

JOE: So you saw someone walking outside, and then you had a dream about being watched?

ANGELA: No, it was the other way around. I had a dream that I was being watched, and then I looked out the window.

JOE: And saw something walking?

ANGELA: Yeah.

JOE: You're right, it was probably just a neighbor.

ANGELA: Oh, and also, there were lights in the trees.

JOE: Like from the moon?

ANGELA: No, way too bright for the moon. There were blue lights, and red lights.

JOE: Wait, this was when you looked out the window, or in your dream?

ANGELA: In my dream, keep up.

JOE: In your dream. OK, so blue lights, red lights, green lights, Coors lights.

ANGELA: Actually, I can't remember. Maybe it was when I looked out the window. It was all kind of blurred together.

JOE: Then the person you saw walking outside could have been in your dream?

ANGELA: I don't know.

JOE: Honey, you know the mushrooms we saw growing outside? You didn't eat them with your spaghetti's did you?

ANGELA: No, Dad. I'm being serious, you know?

JOE: You haven't been popping any happy pills?

ANGELA: No, but Mom put on Facebook that you take Viagra.

JOE: For the record, the Viagra was only a necessity while we were married. I blame that on your mother. I don't need it around other women.

ANGELA: Classy, Dad, real nice.

JOE: Alright, forget it. Go back to your dream.

ANGELA: I don't want to talk about my damn dream anymore.

JOE: Uh oh, you know I don't like to hear you talk like that. Where did you even learn that kind of language?

ANGELA: From you! I learned every curse word imaginable, in every variation, and every combination from you when I was six years old.

JOE: What?

ANGELA: Don't you remember? You hit your thumb with a hammer and danced around for the next half hour screaming at the top of your lungs.

JOE: Oh, yeah, my first and last attempt at any form of construction.

ANGELA: And the last time my first grade teacher invited parents into class to demonstrate building projects to the children.

JOE picks up a jar.

JOE: Nevertheless, we're going to try something new. This is now the swearing jar. Whenever you say something inappropriate you're going to have to put money in it.

ANGELA: Great. You're trying to turn me into a mute.

JOE: Right now, you owe the swearing jar fifty cents.

ANGELA: Fine. *(Places fifty cents into the swear jar.)* But I'm telling Mom what you said about the Viagra.

JOE: Can I ask you not to?

ANGELA: Nope.

JOE: Do you accept bribes?

ANGELA: One hundred dollars.

JOE: Are you serious? Fine. Take a down payment from the swear jar. I'll owe you the rest. If I can't afford your mother's alimony, it's your fault.

ANGELA takes her money back from the swear jar. There is a knock at the door. JOE answers the door. It's CASSIDY.

JOE: Oh, hey!

CASSIDY: Hey, Joe. Listen, I know this is sooner than we'd talked about, but Mom and I were out running errands—picking up some candles and flashlight batteries for when the big storm hits—and I was wondering if this might be an okay time to bring her in for just a few minutes.

JOE: Sure, why not? We haven't had a chance to do much of anything, so you'll have to excuse the mess.

CASSIDY: It's no problem at all. Come on in, Mom.

HAZEL enters and looks around the room suspiciously. Something clearly bothers her about this house.

CASSIDY: They're fixing the house up, Mom. This is Mr. Joseph King. And this is my mother, Hazel.

JOE: It's nice to meet you, Hazel. Would you like to sit down?

HAZEL: Thank you.

JOE: And this is my daughter, Angela.

JOE turns and sees ANGELA sitting on the couch with her legs across the cushions. He brushes them off. ANGELA moves across the room with a hint of an attitude.

CASSIDY: Hello, Angela.

CASSIDY helps HAZEL get comfortable on the couch.

CASSIDY: Mom, do you remember when we had your birthday party here, and Patsy, and Gladys, and a few of your other friends from your bridge club came?

HAZEL: Yes, those people are all dead now.

CASSIDY: Mom!

HAZEL: You're the one that brought them up. Remember Patsy? She had a kidney stone that took her 32 years to pass. Remember, it got stuck? When it finally came out, she had separation anxiety, got depressed, and died. The house smells funny.

ANGELA: You should smell the master bed room. It smells like rotten cheese. Everyone should stay far away from the master bedroom. *(Directing that last line at CASSIDY.)*

JOE shoots ANGELA a dirty look.

JOE: Alright, is anyone hungry? Honey, why don't you go into the kitchen right now and get some Fig Newtons.

ANGELA exits into the kitchen.

JOE: So, Hazel, how long did you live here in the house?

HAZEL: Longer than most. It was never something that bothered me, living here. Not at first. Not for years. But it was all happening, all around me, and I had no idea.

CASSIDY: Mom....

JOE: It's alright. She's talking about the house's past?

CASSIDY: I didn't figure it was something to talk about the first time meeting you. But she's talking. This is more than I've heard her say in a week.

ANGELA returns from the kitchen.

ANGELA: Dad, I couldn't find any Fig Newtons.

JOE: That's because we don't have any.

ANGELA: Dad! What the....

JOE: Ah! Go put money in the swearing jar.

ANGELA: But I didn't swear!

JOE: You were thinking about it.

ANGELA angrily puts money in the swearing jar.

ANGELA: What are you going to do with the swear jar money?

JOE: I'm saving up for some Fig Newtons. Now, go upstairs.

ANGELA rolls her eyes and exits upstairs.

CASSIDY: She's a beautiful girl.

JOE: She is, thank you. We don't always get along so well.

CASSIDY: It's just a phase. It always seems to happen with children and their parents.

JOE: Then it's a very long phase. It started before she was born. Her mom said, "oh, honey, the baby is kicking. Put your hand on my stomach." I did and she kicked me so hard she jammed my finger.

HAZEL: The house is a mess.

CASSIDY: Mom, they just moved in. They're going to fix it up.

HAZEL: What if people arrive early for the party. I'd be terribly embarrassed. Patsy said she would help me clean, but she's not feeling well.

JOE: Yeah, that kidney stone, right?

CASSIDY: Mom, there's not going to be a party. We already had the party. Years ago.

HAZEL: Oh...

JOE: I'll tell you what, I have the home inspector down in the basement. I'll go check in on him see if he's doing alright.

CASSIDY: I don't want to inconvenience you.

JOE: Not at all. Really. Take your time.

CASSIDY: Thank you.

JOE exits into the basement.

CASSIDY: Mom, do you remember this house? Is there anything about this house that you can tell me about? Anything that we did here? Anything that you loved about this place? Anything at all about this house?

HAZEL thinks, and opens her mouth as if she's about to answer, when very loud music starts to play from upstairs. HAZEL is startled by the music. JOE storms out of the basement.

JOE: *(Shouting upstairs.)* Hey! *(To CASSIDY and HAZEL.)* I'm so sorry.

JOE races upstairs to put an end to the loud music. HAZEL covers her ears and begins to rock back and forth.

HAZEL: Loud.

CASSIDY: It's OK, Mom, it's just music.

There is an exchange of words between JOE and ANGELA offstage. Finally, the music stops. JOE comes downstairs holding a stereo. He opens the front door and puts it outside. ANGELA, who has followed him down the stairs, is shocked.

ANGELA: Did you really just kick my stereo out of the house?

JOE: Congratulations. You just scared off Big Foot. I just saw him holding his ears and running off into the woods.

ANGELA is so flustered, she pulls all the money from her pockets and puts it in the swear jar, just for the things she's thinking.

CASSIDY: I don't think this is working. Thank you for letting us come by.

JOE: We're sorry. We can do better than this. Right sweetie?

ANGELA: Yes, we can. That's something I learned from my mom. She always said that she could do better, too. In fact, everyone told my mom that she could do better.

ANGELA exits up the stairs. JOE is embarrassed and really caught off guard.

JOE: I'm sorry about that.

CASSIDY: That is some razor sharp wit. I'm glad it's not directed at me.

JOE: I think I'll be the one with the eternal target on my forehead.

CASSIDY: She loves you, you know.

JOE: Thanks for the heads up. Maybe you should fill her in as well.

CASSIDY: She may not know she loves you, but she does.

JOE: Ah, drawing on that feminine psychic ability you ladies all seem to have. Well, maybe you can look into the future and see how things work out between us.

CASSIDY: Between you and your daughter?

JOE: Well, that's not the "us" I was thinking about.

CASSIDY: I'm not sure I want to step into the middle of that minefield. You win her heart over first. Then, maybe you and I will talk. Maybe. You ready to go, Mom? Thank you for letting us come by. That really was more than I've heard her say in a while.

JOE: Could just be an off day. Why don't you try it again sometime soon.

CASSIDY: I... we'll see.

HAZEL stands up while JOE and CASSIDY are talking. They don't notice. She takes a few steps in the room.

JOE: You know where to find us. And I hear what you're saying. Thank you. I'll give it a go. Hopefully your feminine psychic abilities are on the money.

HAZEL taps three times on the floor, then listens. There is no response.

CASSIDY: Oh... Mom....

HAZEL: The soothsayer warned him of his future. She warned him. The Ides of March.

JOE: Warned who?

CASSIDY: I'm sorry.

HAZEL: But he didn't listen. In here, in this room, he was betrayed, and his soul departed from his body—but not from the house. His soul doesn't rest. None of their souls are at rest.

JOE: The Ides of March... that's...

CASSIDY: Julius Caesar.

JOE: Did Julius Caesar die in my living room?

CASSIDY: Definitely time we go.

HAZEL: The politician, the young lovers, the faithful wife who was falsely accused,—

CASSIDY: Mom.

HAZEL: —the Scottish man—they found his body but never his head—and my poor Ophelia.

CASSIDY: We're going.

ERNIE enters from the basement.

ERNIE: Well, that's interesting. Looks like the foundation is... oh, hello.

CASSIDY: Hello, Ernie.

ERNIE: Long time no see.

CASSIDY: It's been a while.

CASSIDY feels very awkward with ERNIE in the room.

JOE: Hope to see you soon.

CASSIDY: We didn't just scare you off?

JOE: I have a teenage daughter. Nothing scares me.

HAZEL makes her way outside. CASSIDY looks back on JOE and gives a wave. Not a romantic or flirty wave, just a wave.

ERNIE: I ain't seen them in a while. They don't come out in public too often. Or if they do, they just keep to themselves. I especially didn't expect to see them back in the house. Folks think they're both looney, you know.

JOE: Why?

ERNIE: I'm not really at liberty to say. I think it would be rude to air someone else's dirty laundry.

JOE: You're right. I shouldn't have asked.

ERNIE: Well, you talked me into it. We all heard the daughter was locked up.

JOE: In jail?

ERNIE: No, in that place for crazies. She tried to drown herself in the river. Luckily, I was skinny dipping at the time and pulled her out. She was unconscious and her lips was all blue like.

JOE: You were skinny dipping in the river?

ERNIE: I like to commune with nature. I like it a lot.

JOE: Of course you do. What happened after that?

ERNIE: Ambulance took her away and I jumped back in the water. I got bit in the leg by a water snake. Lucky for me the water was cold that day or...

JOE: I mean, what happened to Cassidy and Hazel?

ERNIE: Cassidy was locked up and we didn't see her no more, until a few months ago when she turned back up in town. Hazel went nuts, too, but they didn't lock her up. She didn't stay in the house too long after that. Became kind of a recluse. Lots of gossip about her in town, but I'm not one to listen to gossip.

JOE: I can see that.

ERNIE: The women in Hazel's bridge club say they thought the house was haunted. I never believed in ghosts though. Listen, could you advance me fifty dollars?

JOE: Fifty dollars?

ERNIE: Yeah, for the job. It'll cost way more than that, but I just need fifty dollars.

JOE: For bowling?

ERNIE: Well, I was actually gonna stop by ol' Jedadine's Massage Parlor and...

JOE: Yep, here you go. Fifty dollars, no questions asked.

ERNIE: Thanks. I'll be back later and check out the other floors.

ERNIE exits quickly. ANGELA comes down stairs.

ANGELA: Are you done playing the field?

JOE: Game was called on account of loud, annoying music.

ANGELA: Is my stereo allowed back in the house yet?

JOE: Yes, but you're grounded.

ANGELA: How are you going to ground me here? There's nothing to do anyways. Bringing me up here in the first place was one big punishment.

JOE: Two hours of Barry Manillow.

ANGELA: No!

JOE: I could make it three.

ANGELA: No, two is more than enough.

JOE: Put on his greatest hits album.

ANGELA: Does that mean I'll be hearing only one song over and over again?

JOE: No, smart one, it doesn't.

ANGELA: Dad, did someone die here?

JOE: You mean besides Uncle Gary?

ANGELA: Yeah.

JOE: Apparently so. A long time ago though.

ANGELA: Creepy.

JOE: You heard us talking about that?

ANGELA: No, just a feeling I have.

JOE: Honey, you have to remember, this house is really old, and a lot of people lived here, and a lot of people had really great times in this house. They didn't just come here to die.

ANGELA: I had a dream about this house, and about people who lived here once....

JOE: You and your dreams. Hey, you wanna go on a walk?

ANGELA: Why? You need the house to yourself?

JOE: No, I mean go on a walk with me. Like, we go outside, check the place out, maybe find a trail to hike down. See some wildlife. It sounds like when the storm hits we may be stuck inside for a while.

ANGELA: Does that get me out of listening to Barry Manilow?

JOE: Not at all. But instead of Barry Manilow singing Barry Manilow songs, it will be me singing Barry Manilow songs.

ANGELA: You know that's going to scare the wild life away, right?

JOE begins to sing a Barry Manilow song. An exasperated ANGELA drops money into the swear jar as penance for her thoughts and heads out the door. JOE follows her out. A shift in lighting. DESDEMONA appears, wandering in the room. OTHELLO enters. [Quoted text below from Act V, Scene II of Shakespeare's "Othello", endnote citing available.]

DESDEMONA: Who's there? Othello?

OTHELLO: Ay, Desdemona.

DESDEMONA: Will you come to bed, my lord?

OTHELLO: Have you pray'd tonight, Desdemon?

DESDEMONA: Ay, my lord.

OTHELLO: I would not kill thy unprepared spirit,
No, heaven forfend! I would not kill thy soul.

DESDEMONA: Talk you of killing?

OTHELLO: Ay, I do.

DESDEMONA: Then heaven have mercy on me!

OTHELLO: Think on thy sins.

DESDEMONA: They are loves I bear to you.

OTHELLO: Ay, and for that thou diest.

That handkerchief which I so loved and gave thee,
Thou gav'st to Cassio.

DESDEMONA: No, by my life and soul!

OTHELLO: Sweet soul, take heed, Take heed of perjury,
Thou'rt on thy death-bed.

DESDEMONA: Ay, but not yet to die.

Lord have mercy on me!

OTHELLO: I say, amen.

DESDEMONA: Kill me tomorrow, let me live tonight!

OTHELLO: It is too late. ^{vii}

As OTHELLO approaches a fearful DESDEMONA the lights fade to black.

ACT ONE, SCENE 4

AT START: *The following afternoon. Lights up as JOE is making an inventory and shopping list to prepare for the upcoming storm. Desdemona's handkerchief is on the floor.*

JOE: I have water bottles, candles, flashlights, extra blankets...

ANGELA: Batteries?

JOE: Oh, yeah, forgot that. OK, batteries. Anything else you can think of? Storm may last for a while. Hope the store hasn't sold out.
(Writes batteries down on his list.)

ANGELA: Did you spray something in the house?

JOE: Yeah, sprayed for ants in the basement.

ANGELA: No, not that. It smells like a woman. Like... perfume.

JOE: I don't smell anything. *(Looks closely at ANGELA and notices her eyes.)* Honey, look at me. You have dark circles under your eyes. Are you still not sleeping?

ANGELA: I kept waking up. I kept thinking I was hearing footsteps.

JOE: The house was probably settling. It creaks a lot.

ANGELA: You creak a lot. No, this was different.

JOE: Could have been me walking around.

ANGELA: Dad, do you think I could sleep in a different room?

JOE: Sure. Why?

ANGELA: I'm just not liking it.

JOE: It's got the best view in the house.

ANGELA: What about the room next to yours?

JOE: That tiny one? It's barely even a room. More like a big closet.

ANGELA: You can't smell that? That's perfume. Who was in here?

JOE: It still smells like Uncle Gary to me.

ANGELA finds DESDEMONA'S handkerchief on the floor.

ANGELA: What's this?

JOE: I don't know?

ANGELA: This smells like the same perfume. See?

JOE smells handkerchief.

ANGELA: Who did you have in here last night?

JOE: Nobody.

ANGELA: Then where did this come from?

JOE: How should I know?

ANGELA: You are such a liar! You had a woman in here last night.

Was it your bed creaking that I heard?

JOE: There was no woman here last night.

ANGELA: You know you wouldn't like it if I brought a guy home.

JOE: If you brought a guy home, I would take his head off.

ANGELA: Hypocrisy.

JOE: It is not. We're talking about two very different things. If you bring a guy home, it's wrong. If I bring a lady home, it's necessity. But that's irrelevant because there was no woman here.

ANGELA: I don't even know what to say to you right now.

JOE: Look, I'm going to go to the store and pick this stuff up.

ANGELA: The way you're going, that's not all you're going to pick up.

You better get some penicillin!

JOE: Do you want to come with me, or do you want to stay here?

ANGELA: *(Flings the handkerchief on the couch.)* I will stay here. You can take this and return it to its rightful owner. I'd rather the house smell like your Uncle Gary. *(Heads angrily upstairs.)*

JOE: Alright then, I'll be back in an hour or so. If you get bored, do something useful, like smiling. Goodbye.

JOE exits. Lights change. TAMORA enters from the kitchen area. [Quoted text below from Act V, Scene II of Shakespeare's "Titus Andronicus", endnote citing available.]

TAMORA: Thus, in this strange and sad habiliment,
I will encounter with Andronicus,
And say I am Revenge, sent from below
To join with him and right his heinous wrongs.
Knock at his study, where they say he keeps
To ruminate strange plots of dire revenge;
Tell him Revenge is come to join with him,
And work confusion on his enemies.^{viii}

TAMORA looks up, as if she senses someone coming. She exits to kitchen. ANGELA comes down the stairs.

ANGELA: Dad? Dad, is that you?

There is a noise from the kitchen. ANGELA takes a step towards the kitchen, but looking at the front door in case she needs to make a fast exit.

ANGELA: Hello?

HAZEL enters from the kitchen.

ANGELA: Oh....

HAZEL: You're here to clean the house?

ANGELA: What?

HAZEL: The guests will arrive soon. I'd like the house to look presentable for them.

ANGELA: What guests?

HAZEL: I'm sure they must have told you about the party.

ANGELA shakes her head no.

HAZEL: What are you wearing?

ANGELA stands silently, not sure of what to do or say.

HAZEL: I'd like you to.... I'd.... *(Her voice trails off as she realizes she's not in her right frame of mind.)*

ANGELA: Are you alright?

HAZEL: This isn't my house anymore....

ANGELA: You haven't lived here in years, ma'am.

HAZEL: I'm so sorry. Your name? Tell me your name again, dear.

ANGELA: It's Angela.

HAZEL: Angela, yes. I'm terribly sorry. I get confused sometimes is all. I hope I've not upset you.

ANGELA: No, not at all. Come sit down.

ANGELA helps HAZEL to the couch.

HAZEL: Thank you dear. You really are very kind.

ANGELA: How did you get here?

HAZEL: I can't remember exactly. Did I drive?

ANGELA: I sure hope not.

HAZEL: Don't ever get old dear. It's really rather miserable.

ANGELA: Just relax here. Can I get you anything?

HAZEL looks over and sees DESDEMONA'S handkerchief. She is alarmed.

HAZEL: Where did you get this?

ANGELA: I found it here, on the floor.

HAZEL stands and looks cautiously about the room.

HAZEL: You found it here? In this room? When.

ANGELA: Just a few minutes ago.

HAZEL: You shouldn't be here. No one should be here.

ANGELA: Any reason why not?

HAZEL doesn't answer. She sits back down on the couch. She is very focused, as if memories are coming back to her.

ANGELA: Okay, well, I'll just sit here with you. My dad went to the store, but he'll be back soon. Do you like music? I can play some Barry Manilow?

HAZEL looks over at ANGELA with a grimace.

ANGELA: OK, no Barry Manilow. That's perfectly alright. Do you like poetry? I know a poem if you'd like to hear it. It's actually something I wrote.

The moon, the stars, a night time breeze
Blowing wherever it may please
In the night the flowers sway
Dancing 'til the light of day
I can hear the nightingale
Singing to the world a tale
All night long and all the night
Darkness is no need for fright
It's the time when spirits play
And linger 'til the break of day
Enchantment for us all until
The sun comes up then all is still

I have night terrors sometimes. I had them every night when I was little. Then my dad sat up with me one night. I think it's my most special memory with him. He showed me the night really wasn't so bad after all.

HAZEL looks at ANGELA and leans in closely. She is intense.

HAZEL: Cobwebs, potions, witches brew
Skulls and bones, flesh and sinews
Cauldrons boiling, bubbling hot
Lives that will soon be forgot
Tattered dresses, bloody messes
You'll see the face of fear
Beg for a blessing, do your confessing
Ere Tamora harkens near

ANGELA: Tamora?

HAZEL: You recognize that name?

A pause.

ANGELA: No.

HAZEL: You will. If you stay in this house, you will. She's been here recently. I can always feel her. I could tell you stories about this house. About Tamora. But by the look in your eyes, I think you may already know. Are you scared to stay in this house?

ANGELA: I don't know. No reason I should be, I guess.

HAZEL: I lived here as well, for many years. I'd understand if you are.

ANGELA: I get butterflies in my stomach sometimes. Not the good kind of butterflies, like when you think about kissing Justin Timberlake. But the type of butterflies you get when something bad is going to happen. [Or insert current celebrity.]

HAZEL: I know them well.

ANGELA: The bad butterflies, or the Justin Timberlake butterflies? [Or current celebrity.]

HAZEL: Both.

ANGELA: I didn't think much about it. Not at first anyways.

HAZEL: I used to get them, too. And it was hard to fall asleep. I used to think I heard whispers. I told myself it was just the way the wind would blow through the trees. Until the whispers got louder and louder and I couldn't deny, someone was trying to talk to me.

ANGELA: Did you ever have dreams? Of people you didn't know?

HAZEL: Every night.

ANGELA: I wake up in the morning feeling like I haven't slept at all.

HAZEL: Can you remember any of your dreams?

ANGELA: Mostly they're about this house, and of people who used to live here. I don't know if they're real or not. Maybe it's just my imagination.

HAZEL: Do you dream of any particular room in the house?

ANGELA: I dream of this room... the room I'm staying in, with the sonnet on the closet door...

HAZEL: Yes, that used to be Cassidy's room.

ANGELA: I dream of my dad's room and a room that I've never seen before.

HAZEL: A room in this house you've never seen?

ANGELA: But I've seen all the rooms here. It's not possible. It's just a dream.

SFX: loud crash from upstairs.

ANGELA: What was that?!

HAZEL quickly climbs to her feet. Silence.

ANGELA: That came from upstairs. There's someone up there. We should get out of here!

HAZEL: Don't move. Be still.

Silence. Tension. Then SFX: sound of footsteps stomping upstairs.

ANGELA: It's at the staircase.

HAZEL taps with her feet three times. SFX: three taps are repeated from upstairs. HAZEL'S face lights up. HAZEL taps with her feet two more times. SFX: two taps are repeated from upstairs.

HAZEL: It's alright!

ANGELA: What's happening?

HAZEL: Look out the window.

ANGELA runs to the window. HAZEL is now more alive and happy than we've seen her. Her mind is fully revived. Her body full of energy. SFX: soft music, as sung or played by fairies (perhaps a pan flute), is heard in the distance.

ANGELA: There's lights in the forest.

HAZEL: Yes!

ANGELA: I saw this in my dream.

HAZEL: Can you hear the singing?

ANGELA: Yes! What is that?

HAZEL: The fairies—in the woods.

SFX: another noise from upstairs.

HAZEL: And upstairs.

ANGELA: I'm sorry if this is a dumb question, but why are there fairies upstairs?

HAZEL: I've not seen them anywhere but my dreams for many years. Titania must be wandering the forest tonight.

ANGELA: Titania. Right. If Titania is in the forest, then who is upstairs?

HAZEL: Puck, of course!

ANGELA: I don't know who that is.... But I almost said something that rhymes with his name.

HAZEL holds out the swearing jar. ANGELA puts money into it.

ANGELA: Who is Puck?

HAZEL: Haven't you read A Midsummer Night's Dream?

ANGELA: I successfully avoided that one.

HAZEL: He's the merry wanderer of the forest, and quite the trickster I might add. He's an old friend of mine.

ANGELA: Do you think you could ask him to stay outside until he's invited inside next time?

SFX: music grows louder as the lights change from realism to fantasy. PUCK appears at the bottom of the staircase.

HAZEL: There you are, Puck! Just like I remembered you.

PUCK smiles and reaches for HAZEL'S hand. HAZEL accepts his hand and they dance. HAZEL laughs like she hasn't done in years. ANGELA looks out the window at the forest, then back at HAZEL and PUCK.

ANGELA: This isn't real. This is a dream.

PUCK pulls out a pouch.

HAZEL: Is that your love dust?

ANGELA: Love dust? Oh God, he's a tweaker.

HAZEL: In Shakespeare's play, Puck sprinkled the love dust on Titania, and she fell madly in love with the first thing she saw, which was an ass.

ANGELA: Like, a literal ass? Because I don't think that takes love dust. I was at the beach and there was this guy...

HAZEL: As in a donkey, dear. I've always adored that story. I've often wondered what would happen if the love dust was thrown on the donkey instead.

PUCK smiles and snaps his fingers as if he likes that idea.

ANGELA: Well, too bad there are no asses around. (*Looks out the window.*) Oh, my dad is home.

PUCK smiles and shakes his bag of love dust.

HAZEL: Oh, Puck, you wouldn't!

PUCK runs out the front door. We hear JOE'S voice offstage.

JOE: (*Offstage.*) Hey!! Hey hold it!! Hey!!!

JOE stumbles in the front door, confused.

ANGELA: Dad!

JOE: There was this... thing. It covered me in—(*Looks over and sees HAZEL. Enchantment overtakes him.*) Oh my, you're beautiful. Never before have my eyes beheld such beauty
I worship you, tis now my sacred duty
From now to forever, I now beseech
You never to stray beyond my reach

ANGELA: Dad! Stop it!!

HAZEL: You'd better close your eyes, dear.

JOE: I will protect you from all that is scary
In this vast realm that was once Uncle Gary's

ANGELA: He's speaking in rhyme. Really bad rhyme.

JOE: Oh sweet love, I've never felt like this
Bless my soul with a most passionate...

JOE embraces HAZEL, kissing her. Blackout.

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