A KNOCK AT THE WRONG DOOR

by Shawn Deal

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SYNOPSIS: Sometimes it's not the door you expect to walk through that leads to change in your life, sometimes it's the unexpected one, that you never saw coming. For Jack, it's the mistaken door or wrong door that he knocks on, that leads to an unexpected connection with someone.

DURATION: 30 minutes.
TIME: Morning, present.
SETTING: Front porch of a house.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 females, 1 male)

BRIE (f) .....A teenage girl at her house. *(139 lines)*
JACK (m).....A teenage boy who knocked. *(150 lines)*
KAITLIN (f) .....The teenage girl who lives three to four houses down. *(63 lines)*

SET: A street, a house porch with a door.

PREMIERE PRODUCTION

This play was performed March 6th thru 8th at Wahkiakum High School, Cathlamet, Washington, with the following cast:

BRIE..... Hannah Bussanich
JACK.....Ryan McKay-Beach
KAITLIN..... Kendall Westcott

AT START: *All is quiet on this suburban street. JACK walks down the street slowly, he holds two cups of coffee in his hands. He goes up to the door and knocks. Beat. BRIE opens the door.*

BRIE: Hello... good morning.

JACK: *(Taken aback immediately as BRIE opens the door.)* Is this Kaitlin's house?

BRIE: No. She lives three houses down the street. *(Motions to where the house would be, somewhere off stage.)*

JACK: Oh my gosh, I'm sorry. I thought... *(He takes a step back from the door to get a better look at the house.)* This house... your house... looks an awful lot like her house. *(Takes several more steps out into the street and looks down at KAITLIN'S house and then back to BRIE'S house.)* Actually, it doesn't look like Kaitlin's house at all.

BRIE: No it really doesn't. Hers is painted that really horrid purple with maroon trim.

JACK looks back down the street.

JACK: Yeah, I have no idea how I possibly confused your house with hers. Sorry to have bothered you.

JACK shakes his head as if he can't believe he made such a mistake and takes a few steps down the street to KAITLIN'S house.

BRIE: It's understandable.

JACK gets a puzzled look on his face by the remark and turns back to face BRIE.

JACK: It is... really? I mean if I was color blind, I'd understand. That's really horrid purple. Like really bad haunted house purple. Yours is not anywhere close to that. I mean yours isn't even the same design as hers.

BRIE: Well... no… not that. I figured because of the way you must be feeling right now.

JACK: *(Confused.)* The way I'm feeling?

BRIE: Well... you know... all torn up inside and everything. I know when I feel so emotional inside—those confusing times we all have—I just tend to go on autopilot and my feet just take me to wherever, until my mind finally catches up with what my body is doing.

JACK: Oh, I completely get you. I've done that before as well. I walked into a swimming pool once.

BRIE: You didn't?

JACK: I did and fully clothed too. It was really embarrassing. I honestly never saw it, until I fell into it. Then I had to walk all the way home, my shoes squishing with each step. My mother was home when I got there.

BRIE: Oh no… what did she say?

JACK: Oh the usual... asked me what happened.

BRIE: I figured that... just what did she do?

JACK: Laugh. She laughed so hard she was crying. If she'd been drinking milk it would have squirted right out her nose. She still laughs to this day, anytime someone brings it up.

BRIE: Oh... that must have be embarrassing.

JACK: Constantly. I can't even remember what I was thinking about in that moment. More than likely I was thinking about a hundred different things. I didn't notice when I got off the sidewalk, didn't notice when I was walking on the grass and certainly didn't notice my neighbors swimming pool until I dropped into the water.

Beat. JACK looks up and down the street again trying to compare houses.

JACK: I just... I just... don't know why I came here. The houses really don't look anything alike.

BRIE: Well, I understand... so it's okay. Good luck. And I think the coffee is a good gesture.

BRIE turns around to face her door and go inside.

JACK: *(To BRIE'S back.)* I'm sorry... I still don't understand.

BRIE turns back around to face JACK.

BRIE: Well, clearly you're all discombobulated—I love that word by the way—-it's one of my favorite words—I can't say it enough times.

JACK: Oh... yeah... it's a very good word—rolls right off the tongue. No. Wait. Why am I discombobulated?

BRIE: Obviously, because Kaitlin broke up with you last night. I'm assuming that's why you're here—to talk to her. Are you going to try and win her back? Make sure she drinks the coffee first. She loves coffee and she is better fully caffeinated. She's kind of growly without it.

JACK: What!? Kaitlin is going to break up with me!?

BRIE gasps and shoots her hands up to her mouth.

BRIE: You didn't know? She hasn't done it yet? She told me yesterday that she was going to break up with you when you called that evening.

JACK: I dropped my phone, walking home from school yesterday, when I was crossing a street and then a car ran over it. It didn't survive. I was coming over today to tell her that I wouldn't have a phone for a while. Dad says: "If I can't take care of it I don't deserve it." So, I'm not getting a new one anytime soon.

BRIE: I'm sorry about your phone.

JACK: Thanks... apparently that's the least tragic thing that's going to happen to me today.

BRIE: And I'm really sorry I told you Kaitlin's plans to break up with you. That was not my news to share. I didn't realize… I mean... it only made sense to me, at least... you knocking on my door and all... if you...

JACK: Already knew. *(Finishes the statement for her.)*

BRIE: Well... yeah.

Beat. Awkward pause between the two of them.

JACK: I'm sorry... can I ask you how you know this... that Kaitlin is going to break up with me that is.

BRIE: I'm sorry I'm Brie. I'm Kaitlin's friend. We've been friends all of grade school... you know living on the same street and all.

JACK: So you know I'm....

BRIE: Jack... yeah. *(Finishing his statement.)* Kaitlin has talked to me about you quite a lot.

JACK: Yeah. It seems like she's talked to you more than me recently.

BRIE: Well, you know. I am the best friend so I should know more.

JACK: That actually doesn't make any sense you know. Because, if there's something wrong with us—I mean not you and me—her and me—that us—I think I should be the one she talks to. Don't you think?

BRIE: Yes and no. I see where you're coming from, I do... but sometimes you need another perspective, someone who is not a part of the situation to give advice—to see the relationship more clearly.

JACK: No... I get that... but she has decided to break up with me.

BRIE: Yes… she has.

JACK: And she was going to do it over the phone.

BRIE: That's what she told me.

JACK: Well, don't you see the problem there. She wasn't going to talk to me... she was going to break up with me. That's not talking... that's announcing a decision. She wants to do it over the phone so she can have all the control—be able to hang up on me, at any moment it got uncomfortable for her.

BRIE: Oh. That sounds like Kaitlin all right. Always trying to avoid conflict. Anytime we got into an argument when we were kids, she would just run home or tell me to go home. It didn't happen often but when it did she would make sure to disappear. Then in a day or two, she would call to see if we could play again, like nothing ever happened. And as long as we never talked about the incident—whatever it was—we were good. She would just pretend... okay, we would both pretend that nothing ever happened. That's why we're still friends.

JACK: But I don't think it is fair to me. I don't get a voice. I should be able to at least know what went wrong. I would try to fix it—if the problem was me. I would certainly do my part if the problem was us... her and me again... I would honestly work on it.

BRIE: I believe you.

JACK: Thanks. Kaitlin is going to break up with me. *(Pause.)* It doesn't come as a surprise. It really doesn't now that I'm looking back at it.

Kaitlin has been acting strange for the last couple of weeks—more distant. I was wondering what was going on. Clearly, I should have asked—-that's my fault—that's on me. I just thought... I guess I thought she was just in a mood or it was something personal at home. I thought she would say something to me, if she wanted to talk about it. I should have said something.

BRIE: Just for the future, when dealing with girls, always say something. Guys are notorious for not talking enough about the things that are important.

JACK: I talk. I talk all the time. In fact, my problem is I talk too much. I can tell you about fire ants, and I can name half the moons of Jupiter and I can....

BRIE: Stop right there. Your problem isn't talking. Your problem is you're not saying anything.

JACK: What...? I don't understand the difference. I'm saying all kinds of great stuff. I'm giving all kinds of great facts. I'm giving all kinds of great details on all kinds of great facts. You can look them all up.

BRIE: Whoa... I'm not calling you a liar or anything.

JACK: Sorry... I wasn't saying you were.

BRIE: But what I was saying was that you still weren't saying anything.

JACK: You said that before....

BRIE: You weren't saying anything about you, about you personally.

JACK: Well... no... but I was giving good information. I was informing. I was expanding someone's mind.

BRIE: No offense... that's great and all but... girls don't want to always hear that... they want to know about you. And I mean the real you. How was your day? And don't you dare answer it was "fine" or "okay". Tell us what was good, what was bad and give us the details. Then ask for our opinion... and ask us about our day and let us tell you about it.

JACK: Yeah... okay. I get that.

BRIE: The most important question a girl ever asks you is: "What are you thinking?" The worst answer a guy will give, is by far the most popular….

JACK: Nothing. The actual word "nothing". *(Finishing her statement.)*

BRIE: That's the answer. The one answer that frustrates us girls more than any other answer. When we ask you that question... we really want an answer. Normally, we're searching for an answer—-we're

confused in those moments, looking for some sort of clue to know where to go from there. and all we get is...

JACK: Nothing. No details. No emotion. No anything. Nothing.

BRIE: You see how awful that answer is.

JACK: I do... at least, I do now. Are you saying what I think you're saying?

BRIE: I'm saying, what I'm saying. For any guy, this is like opening a treasure chest and finding gold.

JACK: Actually... more like opening a hidden chamber and finding a great secret... something unexpected. Something you really weren't looking for and yet ecstatic that you found. The most important thing you ever needed and never knew you did.

BRIE: Yes, exactly.

JACK: So again are you trying to tell me something?

BRIE: Maybe... it's probably best that you ask a specific question.

JACK: Okay... I'll ask... because I don't know. It makes me so frustrated that I don't know—because if anyone should know, I should know... but I don't know.

BRIE: What don't you know?

JACK: I don't know why Kaitlin is breaking up with me. Are you telling me why she is breaking up with me or giving me some kind of clue?

BRIE: *(Thinks a moment.)* Yes and no. I'm telling you a big contributing factor to it.

JACK: I said "nothing" too many times. Really?

BRIE: It's not the only reason... maybe the single biggest reason... but not the only one.

JACK: I did more wrong things. Like what?

BRIE: *(Shaking her head.)* I'm sorry Jack... I really shouldn't be the one telling you this. It should really be Kaitlin…. You're her boyfriend... I mean ex boyfriend... I mean... you know what I mean.

JACK: I'm somewhere in a very unusual limbo. I'm almost like Schrödinger's cat.

BRIE: Do you mean, the cat that's in the box and it might be alive and it might be dead and so it is both until somebody opens the box.

JACK: The very same, only in this instance, I'm both Kaitlin's boyfriend and her ex boyfriend until I talk to her.

BRIE: I admit, that is a pretty goofy—a tough situation.

JACK: *(Holds up on hand.)* Rock. *(Holds up another hand.)* Hard place. *(Sticks his face between both hands.)* Me.

BRIE laughs.

BRIE: That's about right.

JACK: That's why you have to tell me.

BRIE: I've already said too much. I can't say anything more. I've given you a big hint and be happy with that. It's Kaitlin's responsibility to tell you the rest not me. I shouldn't be involved at all.

JACK: I know. That's true but... if I thought Kaitlin would actually tell me, I wouldn't be asking... but she's not going to tell me. Do you think she will?

BRIE: She might.

JACK: Really? I don't think so, but you know her better than I, apparently.

BRIE: You're right. She won't tell you. She'll do the deed without the details.

JACK: That's the thing about girls.

BRIE: What do you mean?

JACK: They're not communicating much better than we are. You all imply rather than state.

BRIE: That's not true.

JACK: Here's an example: when driving on a long trip—like a vacation or something, if a girl asks "do you need to go to the bathroom? Do you want to stop there? Are you hungry?" You're not asking the question for us. You're saying that you need to go to the bathroom or you want to stop there or you are hungry.

BRIE: Oh, that's totally true.

JACK: I know... and it's confusing.

BRIE: I can understand that.

JACK: I know that us guys don't understand you girls... and that's mostly our faults. But you don't make it easy on us either.

BRIE: That's us girls being mysterious.

JACK: That's you girls being confusing.

BRIE: I can give you that one. I personally try not to be confusing.

JACK: That's the golden nugget from me. ...I will tell you that Kaitlin kept me dazed and confused all the time. I never knew where I was going in the relationship or what I should say or what I should do. I never got comfortable with her. I mean she was my girlfriend and all... so she was both the most comfortable person and the most uncomfortable person to be around.

BRIE: Oh, believe me, I know, Kaitlin is different. Let me just say she's unique.

JACK: I think it was that difference—that uniqueness—that really attracted me to her. At least, at first. She wasn't like everyone else.

BRIE: Apparently, you were. *(Covers her face.)* Oh I'm sorry, that just kind of blurted out.

JACK: I'm like everyone else? *(Disappointed by the realization.)* Is that how she described me?

BRIE: If you're an ice cream flavor at Baskin/Robbins, you're vanilla.

JACK: I'm vanilla... really that bad... I'm not at least French Vanilla?

BRIE: I'm sorry to say it... that's not my opinion now...

JACK: I know... it's Kaitlin, my girlfriend's opinion... well... I guess not my girlfriend's opinion. Is that really what she said? Really how she described me?

BRIE: Actually, it was worse.

JACK: What's worse?

BRIE: She called you boring.

JACK: Oh, that is worse. That's a lot worse. I was boring?

BRIE: This is not me saying this...

JACK: I know.

BRIE: But according to her you were.

JACK: Well, that's the kiss of death.

BRIE: Pretty much.

JACK: I might have survived the miscommunication thing but I will never survive being boring. I'll be lucky to ever date again in high school.

BRIE: It was even worse than that...

JACK: Oh no. Don't tell me! Don't tell me! *(Pause.)* Okay... curiosity is going to kill me... tell me.

BRIE: Are you sure?

JACK: I'm sure.

BRIE: Are you sure sure because it's ugly.

JACK: Ugly? How ugly?

BRIE: Really ugly.

JACK: *(Takes a deep breath.)* Okay... just tell me.

BRIE: Kaitlin said you were a nice guy.

JACK: *(Stomps around.)* That's the worse. It sounds like I never stood a chance. Why did she ever go out with me? Boring, nice, closed off... I sound like a total loser.

BRIE: Not a total loser...

JACK: I think I hit the trifecta... I'm a total and complete loser.

BRIE: There are some girls who like nice guys.

JACK: Yeah... but not many.... Can you explain that one to me?

BRIE: Confidence. The nice guys seem so unsure of themselves. The complete idiots are confident. It's a real turn on.

JACK: I don't want to be an idiot.

BRIE: I understand that.

JACK: I really don't. I see these guys and they're jerks.

BRIE: Yeah... in the end... they usually prove to be.

JACK: What's wrong with the nice guy? I'll be honest on this one... and I will stand my ground on this one. I am a nice guy. And I'm always going to strive to be a nice guy. I don't want to be a jerk and I don't ever want to be a jerk. I would rather be a nice guy all my life and go without a girlfriend than be a jerk.

BRIE: That's not true.

JACK: *(Thinks a moment.)* You're right it's probably not true but I wish for both. I wish I could be a nice guy and still get a girlfriend. I don't want to be a jerk, just to get a girlfriend.

BRIE: I appreciate that.

JACK: I wish more girls did... I wish Kaitlin did.

BRIE: Do You?

JACK: I don't know now... yes... no... is there some sort of third answer. I really liked her. And I kind of thought she really liked me.

BRIE: Jack, I don't know if that was ever the case—she really liking you. She told me she did, yet I always got the impression that you were much more of a place holder...

JACK: A place holder?

BRIE: You know you are the boyfriend that she has until the next more interesting one comes along.

JACK: She said that?

BRIE: Well... not in so many words but it certainly is the impression I got. She's constantly telling me how cute other boys are.

JACK: Really? Constantly? Like all the time?

BRIE: Maybe not like every hour or something like that but certainly every week.

JACK: Oh... well... that's not good.... I guess... *(Disappointed.)*

BRIE: I didn't mean to upset you.

JACK: It's okay.

BRIE: But you're upset. I hate to make anyone upset. I hate being upset. I hate the headache I get. My stomach turns or tries to flip upside down, and my heart just races. I hate to feel any of those things let alone all those things at once.

JACK: When do you feel those things?

BRIE: Only when I like someone... and they hurt me.

JACK: *(Nods.)* It happens. It's apparently happening to me right now.

BRIE: And I'm sorry about that.

JACK: No need to be it doesn't involve you.

BRIE: *(Sardonic chuckle.)* But seemingly, I am involved. I'm the one who broke up with you. I'm the one who saw your surprise on your face, your confusion and your pain. For someone who's not involved, and should not be involved, I clearly got the worst end of the deal.

JACK: The breaking up part is always the worst.

BRIE: Yes. But that's all I got. I didn't get the flutters. I should have got, at least, some flutters.

JACK: The flutters? I don't know that one.

BRIE: Don't worry about that one—-the "flutters" is kind of my own term for it.

JACK: For what exactly?

BRIE: You know those "feelings"....

JACK: Which feelings exactly....?

BRIE: The flutters... when you get lightheaded, those moments when you smile for no apparent reason, just because you're thinking about that one particular someone or a particular special moment. What you feel when you hold hands with someone or hug them or kiss them. All those moments that make being in a relationship wonderful.

Someone who will listen to you.

Someone who will let you cry on their shoulder.
Someone who will make you smile.
Someone who will make you laugh
Someone who will be happy or even excited to see you.
And the wonderful feeling you get when one of those moments happens. It's the wonderful early part of the relationship.

JACK: Before anything goes wrong. Before mistakes get made.... Man, I can't believe I screwed it up.

BRIE: I'm not sure you did.

JACK: I must have and I feel terrible about it.

BRIE: Still, it wasn't just you. Kaitlin had a lot to do with it. Fault has to go both ways.

JACK: I'm just going to be depressed for a while.

BRIE: Yeah, I understand. I am too a little... not to the extent you will be of course, but I'm still the one who broke the news to you.

JACK: Sorry about that... I should go down there... *(Motioning to the end of the street to KAITLIN'S house.)* ...and get it over with. *(Takes a couple of steps down the street, stops.)* I guess I don't want to.

BRIE: Would you like a hug?

JACK: That would be nice.

BRIE and JACK come together for a hug. Enter KAITLIN who witnesses the hug.

BRIE: Stay strong you can do this. Good luck.

JACK: Thanks.

The hug stops. JACK turns around to walk down the street and sees KAITLIN.

JACK: Kaitlin, I was just coming down to your....

KAITLIN walks up to JACK and slaps him.

JACK: *(Shocked.)* What was that for?!

KAITLIN: What do you think. You're cheating on me!

JACK: No I'm not, with who?

KAITLIN: That's what makes it even worse it's with my best friend.

BRIE: No... No... No... that's not....

KAITLIN puts up a hand to silence BRIE. JACK looks back at BRIE, realization comes to him.

JACK: Oh the hug. Between Brie and I.... Oh I see.... Yeah that probably didn't look good.
KAITLIN: You think! How long have you been cheating on me? I can't believe you've been cheating on me with my best friend.
BRIE: He hasn't.... I mean we haven't.... I swear nothing has been going on.
KAITLIN: All evidence to the contrary... I saw you hug. Everyone on the street saw you hug.
BRIE: It's not like that.
JACK: Kaitlin, it really isn't.
KAITLIN: *(To JACK.)* You shut up.

JACK puts his hands up in surrender.

KAITLIN: *(To BRIE.)* How can you do this to me?
BRIE: It wasn't that kind of hug.
KAITLIN: It sure looked like that kind of hug.
JACK: It wasn't a boyfriend/girlfriend kind of hug.

KAITLIN spins to face JACK.

KAITLIN: I told you to shut up. I'm not talking to you now. And when I am talking to you again, you will know it because I will be yelling at you.
JACK: Hey... Hey… *(Somewhat wounded.)*

JACK puts his hands back up in the air.

BRIE: He's right though... that wasn't a boyfriend/girlfriend hug... that was more a friend-to-friend hug.
JACK: Completely just a friend hug.

KAITLIN puts up a warning finger to JACK.

KAITLIN: I didn't know you knew each other. You told me you've never met him.

BRIE: Well... I knew of him... I mean we had English class last year together.

KAITLIN: But you said you never talked to him.

BRIE: Yeah... that's true. We sat on opposite sides of the classroom.

KAITLIN: So have you been lying to me? You two have been friends this whole time?

BRIE: No. No. I haven't been lying to you... I haven't. I promise.

KAITLIN: Alright... So how long have you been friends?

BRIE: Well... we... really....

KAITLIN: *(To JACK.)* How long have you been friends?

JACK points to himself, to confirm she is talking to him.