

LOST (AND FOUND) IN IKEA

By Gary Ray Stapp

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SYNOPSIS: Can two strangers find love at IKEA? Possibly—with a playful ghost involved. Winifred and Lex are both lonely hearts, but neither of them is convinced that true love can be found while shopping. Winifred’s brother and Lex’s deceased wife think differently and have decided to play cupid for their reluctant loved ones, who unexpectedly find themselves wrestling with love-at-first-sight. Unfortunately, the budding romance is distracted by mayhem of all sorts when a homeless man and a shopaholic ex-con fight over an alarm clock, while a snarky, bitter married couple play a convoluted game of hide-and-seek that eventually leads to several of them literally losing their shirts. Luckily, the store security guard has words of wisdom for all, but even his hands are full when a protest organizer launches into the National Anthem. But when push comes to shove, all is well that ends well when those who are lost in IKEA find love where they least expected it.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 females, 5 males)

DEAR WIFE (f).....	An unpleasant woman. <i>(98 lines)</i>
DEAR HUSBAND (m).....	A man whose mouth gets him into trouble with his wife. <i>(79 lines)</i>
ISAIAH (m).....	A homeless man who has found refuge at IKEA. <i>(97 lines)</i>
DOT (f).....	A loyal IKEA customer with determination and a degree of notoriety. <i>(44 lines)</i>
WINIFRED (f).....	A not-so-ordinary young woman reluctantly looking for love. <i>(326 lines)</i>
STEFFAN (m).....	Winifred’s brother. Likeable, but has a history of irresponsibility. <i>(78 lines)</i>
LEX (m).....	A likeable, unpresuming clinical psychologist, recently widowed. <i>(407 lines)</i>
MAGS (f).....	Lex’s deceased wife, who even in death doesn’t take things too seriously. <i>(172 lines)</i>

- OZ (m)An IKEA security guard with celestial wisdom. (123 lines)
- MRS. PEALE (f).....A candidate for the looney bin. (37 lines)

Extras of any number that can wander through the background “shopping.”

DURATION: 90 minutes

TIME: The present

PLACE: An IKEA store in a city near you.

SET

A “bedroom showcase” of an IKEA furniture store, complete with various product displays and inventories (i.e. pillows, linens, etc.) at stage right and stage left. At center stage is a bed, covered with an extremely plush, attractive comforter and multiple pillows flanked by a night table with a small lamp and an alarm clock. Up stage on the back wall is a pair of dressers. One of the dressers contains Isaiah’s clothes. At up stage right is an entrance that opens upon a painted pathway on the floor that meanders down stage, around the bed, then up stage to a similar entrance/exit at upstage left. At stage left is an emergency exit door, complete with an exit alarm.

PROPS

- Purse with cell phone and \$100 bill (Dear Wife)
- Shopping cart (Dot)
- Purse with journal (Winifred)
- Waste basket (Lex)
- Bar stools (Lex)
- Shopping list (Lex)
- Hangers (Lex)
- Luggage (Lex)
- Cell phone (Oz)
- Clipboard and pen (Mrs. Peale)
- Picket signs (Mrs. Peale)
- Duffel bag, paint can, roller, extension handle (Mrs. Peale)
- Alarm pass (Oz)

PREMIERE PRODUCTION

LOST (AND FOUND) IN IKEA was originally produced by the *Chamber Players Community Theatre* in Garnett, KS, under the direction of Gary Ray Stapp and with the following cast:

DEAR WIFE	Lori Barcus
DEAR HUSBAND	Chuck Hampton
ISAIAH	Les Thomas
DOT	Tracey Welch
WINIFRED.....	Kristina Hamilton
STEFFAN.....	Chad Betts
LEX	Jamison Brummel
MAGS	Casey King
OZ.....	Gary Rommelfanger
MRS. PEALE	Wanda Taylor

Dedication

For our dear friends, Gary and Kathy Rommelfanger

ACT ONE

AT RISE: DEAR WIFE (DW) and DEAR HUSBAND (DH) are browsing.

DW: What do you think of this? Isn't it cute?

DH: (*Monotone.*) It's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen. (*Looks at the price tag.*) Especially for \$38.99.

DW: (*Hands DH her purse and picks up another item.*) I'm not sure which I like best, the blue or the green. What do you think? Blue or green?

DH: I don't care.

DW: (*Spies the bedspread, takes her purse back, then rushes over to the bed.*) Look at this comforter! It's gorgeous! Don't you think?

DH: It's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen.

DW: Watch yourself, Dear Husband. If you put me in a bad mood I won't play nice.

DH: Dear Wife, you don't play nice when you're in a good mood.

DW: And whose fault is that? Who likes to get me wound up with little remarks like "Pump the brakes on your broomstick," or "Satan called—he wants his pitchfork back," or that "kaaw-kaaw-kaaw" mocking parrot mimicry that really rattles my cage? Any guesses who that might be?

DH: I'm thinking that's probably me. But, at least you admit to having a cage.

DW: Do you know what your problem is, Dear Husband?

DH: Yes, but I'd be positively tickled pink to hear your version.

DW: You enjoy annoying me, that's your problem.

DH: A guy has to have a little fun.

DW: And as usual, your fun is steadily shifting my mood toward the dark and ugly side of my psyche, from which unimaginable pain and suffering will soon be unleashed upon you.

DH: Not really unimaginable. I've experienced your wrath before. At least we BOTH get to suffer for a change.

DW: (*Laughs.*) Oh, you silly man. I've been suffering with you since our wedding day!

DH: (*Dryly.*) God I love spending time with you!

DW: No you don't.

DH: No, I don't.

DW: See! There you go again, Dear Husband, intentionally trying to irritate me.

DH: I don't try... it just kind of escalates in that direction.

DW: Well, stop it. And I'm serious! I have really had about all I can take for one day.

DH: Sorry, I had planned to ration your irritation. I'll try to be good. No more pleasure for me for the rest of the day. I promise.

DW: (*Remembering.*) Speaking of pleasure! (*Hits DH with her purse.*)

DH: Ow! What was that for? (*Pause.*) Specifically?

DW: I just remembered a dream I had last night and you were in it and you made me mad!

DH: Wow, I'm good. I can make you mad without even participating. So, what did I do? Did I dress up like a sheep and throw off your count?

DW: You were no sheep. You were ... drunk, barely clothed, and shamelessly – engaged – with some bimbo and having way too much fun for a married man.

DH: Why can't I have dreams like that?!

DW: Do you really want to go there? (*Exasperated.*) Let's just stop all this bickering and make the best of our shopping day here.

DH: Day? A whole day... of shopping... with ME?!

DW: (*Pinches his check.*) Yes, my precious!

DH: Yippy. (*Looks at his watch.*) And look at the time! We've only been here for an hour and a half, and yet it feels like I've been here long enough to start drawing social security. I'm going to wait in the car.

DW: No, you're not.

DH: Please? We'd both be happier.

DW: We're married, we're not supposed to be happy. (*Hands DH her purse to carry.*) And besides, we haven't found what I'm looking for yet.

DH: What are you looking for?

DW: I don't know, exactly, but I'll know it when I find it. Oh! Look at that! (*Hurries to a table of items and picks one up and admires it.*) What do you think, dear? Do you like it? And don't you dare say "it's the most beautiful thing you've ever seen."

DH: Is... Is that what you've been looking for?!

DW: Uh... no.

DH: Then it's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen.

DW: That's it. I've had enough! (*Swipes her purse back.*) We're leaving. I was an idiot to bring you shopping with me. (*Crosses stage left.*)

DH: I couldn't agree with you more. (*Follows DW.*)

DW and DH exit upstage left. At once, an alarm clock goes off. A hand reaches out from under the comforter and shuts off the alarm. Then ISAIAH sits up in bed, stretches and crosses to a dresser and gets his pants and shirt and socks and shoes and begins to get dressed as DOT enters upstage right pushing a nearly empty cart. She spies the alarm clock and picks it up and looks it over. ISAIAH sees her put the clock in her cart.

ISAIAH: Hey, lady! (*Rushes to DOT and takes the alarm clock from her cart.*) This clock is mine!

DOT: (*Snatches the clock back.*) I don't think so. I found it first.

ISAIAH: You didn't find anything. This is where I put it.

DOT: (*Reluctantly giving in.*) I'm sorry. I didn't know you were buying it. (*Hands clock back to him.*)

ISAIAH: I'm not buying it. It's already mine.

DOT: Prove it.

ISAIAH: I don't have to prove anything.

DOT: Fine. (*Swipes clock back.*) Then it's for sale!

ISAIAH: (*Takes it back from her.*) It's not for sale!

DOT: (*Getting nose to nose with him.*) Everything in here is for sale... SIR. That's why they call this place a store. And in a store, one does shopping. And I'm a shopper... who just happens to be shopping for a clock.

ISAIAH: Not this clock. Do you see a price tag on it? Hum? (*Shows DOT all sides of the clock.*) No? That's because it's not for sale. It's mine.

DOT: Are you telling me you brought an alarm clock from your house to IKEA? Most people just wear a watch.

ISAIAH: Who said I brought this clock from home?

DOT: Well, if you didn't buy it and you didn't bring it with you, then how is this clock yours?

ISAIAH: Because, possession is seven-tenths of the law.

DOT: It's nine-tenths of the law, not seven.

ISAIAH: Whatever. Now if you want one like it, just follow those quirky little arrows. Eventually you will come upon a display of 50 alarm clocks just like this one, except they will have price tags. Now, go... just scoot along. Go... that way.

DOT: Not so fast. There's something not right about you.

ISAIAH: I was thinking the same thing about you.

DOT: I saw a security guard earlier, and if I see him again, I'm going to tell him about you.

ISAIAH: Spill your guts. No skin off my teeth.

DOT: Uh-huh. We'll see. So, 50 clocks... that way, you say?

ISAIAH: Sure. Cross my heart.

DOT: I don't believe you!

ISAIAH: I don't care.

DOT: I'm going to have that clock.

ISAIAH: Seriously, lady, there are other clocks like this one in the store!

DOT: I don't want other clocks, I want that one.

ISAIAH: Well, you're not getting it.

DOT: We'll see.

ISAIAH: Lady, I'm bigger, stronger, and... and a lot better looking than you. What makes you think you're going to leave IKEA with this clock?

DOT: *(Offers him her hand.)* My name is Dot.

ISAIAH: *(Suspicious.)* So?

DOT: You've probably heard of me.

ISAIAH: I doubt it.

DOT: I'm sure you have. It was a big news story.

ISAIAH: *(Unimpressed.)* Really. *(Finishes getting dressed.)*

DOT: Last Christmas, an altercation developed between two women over the last Owlicorn Hatchimal to be found anywhere in the five-state area.

ISAIAH: Owlicorn Hatchimal? What the hell is that?

DOT: Doesn't matter. The point is, these two women, normally rational, started a brawl right in the store. There was punching and screaming and cursing and clawing—a bar fight would have been less violent.

ISAIAH: *(Doubtful.)* Really?

DOT: Yes, REALLY. It was an eye-gouging, clothes shredding, hair-pulling wrestling match on the floor of that toy aisle that drew a crowd of frenzied spectators recording every gruesome detail on their cell phones. That fight lit up the internet! Facebook, Instagram, viral videos everywhere!

ISAIAH: OK. I did hear about that. So what? You made a video and uploaded it to YouTube. Big deal.

DOT: I didn't upload anything you dope. I was the star.

ISAIAH: The star?

DOT: Unfortunately, my co-star happened to rise from the floor with victory in her hands. But, *(Smiling devilishly.)* she did lose most of one ear. *(Bites the air.)* Did I mention blood was everywhere? I left that store in handcuffs, but worse than that, I left without a completed shopping list. So, Mr. Big Shot, do you know what that makes me?

ISAIAH: Un-dateable.

DOT: It makes me an ex-con. And just so you know, I don't intend to EVER lose a shopping battle again.

DOT bites at ISAIAH, then crosses to exit upstage left as WINIFRED enters upstage right.

DOT: Have a nice day.

ISAIAH: *(Touches his ear and watches as she leaves.)* You ... you don't scare me!

WINIFRED: *(Seeing ISAIAH from the back she quickly walks up behind him and taps him on the shoulder.)* Steffan? Steffan, is that you?

ISAIAH: AHHHH! *(Turns around and looks at WINIFRED.)*

WINIFRED: Oh sorry, I thought you were Steffan. Of course you're not Steffan. Actually, you don't look anything like him. I'm sorry, I frightened you. *(Starts to cross stage.)*

ISAIAH: You didn't scare me. I was – I was just – distracted. *(Recognition.)* Hey, lady! Didn't I see you in here yesterday?

WINIFRED: Yes, you did. You had assumed I needed help finding my way out of this store.

ISAIAH: Uh-huh. And you were here the day before that.

WINIFRED: Correct.

ISAIAH: And the day before that.

WINIFRED: I, I was here... for... for several days, I suppose. I've lost track, actually.

ISAIAH: Ah, I thought so. You are lost, aren't you?

WINIFRED: Lost?

ISAIAH: You've been trapped here in IKEA for days. And you can't find your way out of the store, am I right?

WINIFRED: Uh... no.

ISAIAH: Nailed it. So, if you want, I can help you get out of here. It'll just cost you \$5 bucks.

WINIFRED: I—I don't want to get out of here.

ISAIAH: Why not? You gotta be dyin' to get out of this place. And you can't just live here day and night. Besides, if you stay here around the clock, you'll ruin it for me. No joking, I gotta good thing going here, but I don't need a roomie. You know what I mean?

WINIFRED: I—I have no idea what you're talking about.

ISAIAH: Lady—

WINIFRED: Please, don't call me lady. My name is Winifred.

ISAIAH: Seriously?

WINIFRED: Yes.

ISAIAH: Whatever. So, Winnie—

WINIFRED: Don't call me Winnie. My name is Winifred.

ISAIAH: Alright, alright. Winifred it is. So, like I was saying, since you said you were lost—

WINIFRED: I'm not lost.

ISAIAH: Lady—

WINIFRED: Winifred.

ISAIAH: Winifred, you just told me you were lost when I asked if you couldn't find your way out of this store!

WINIFRED: I did not. You said, and I quote: "You've been trapped here in IKEA for days." Unquote.

ISAIAH: Yeah, you're right. That's what I said.

WINIFRED: And I answered you with "No" because you weren't right. I have not been trapped here. I did not answer "No" as an acknowledgment to your question, I quote, "You can't find your way out of this store, am I right?" unquote.

ISAIAH: *(Looks at her blankly for a beat.)* I'm sorry.

WINIFRED: Apology accepted.

ISAIAH: No, no, no. I'm not apologizing. I'm just sorry I talked to you in the first place.

STEFFAN enters and WINIFRED hurries to him.

WINIFRED: Steffan!

STEFFAN: Winifred, what's wrong?

WINIFRED: Please, tell me it's not him. *(Points at ISAIAH as he looks at her dumbfounded.)*

STEFFAN: It's not him.

WINIFRED: Thank god. I think that man is a little mad.

ISAIAH: Oh, I'm a little mad alright. But you, LADY, are nuts. *(Looks at his clock and peers off upstage left.)* Along with another broad I just met. *(Replaces the clock on the night table then exits upstage right.)*

WINIFRED: Steffan, I've been to IKEA every day this week. You said I would meet someone special. But I haven't. Not anyone.

STEFFAN: Patience, dear sister. Patience.

WINIFRED: This is ridiculous. I'm not going to meet anyone here! You know it, and I know it.

STEFFAN: No you don't. And yes, I do. Come on, have a little faith.

WINIFRED: In you?

STEFFAN: Yes.

WINIFRED: Why should I? You have let me down before. On our father's last birthday, you promised me you'd come and spend time with him, but you didn't.

STEFFAN: Okay. One time.

WINIFRED: High School prom. It was supposed to be my dream date with Conrad Covington, and you were supposed to take me shopping for a dress. But you didn't! Instead you just disappeared for five weeks. I missed my prom.

STEFFAN: Conrad? He was a nerd. You didn't miss anything, trust me.

WINIFRED: And then when I was about to enroll in college, you let your addiction nearly kill you. Dad had to spend his savings, my college tuition, on getting you well.

STEFFAN: Okay, so I've disappointed you a few times.

WINIFRED: Steffan, I have a list!

STEFFAN: Okay, okay. I'm sorry. But I'm trying to make it up to you now.

WINIFRED: By setting me up on a blind date?

STEFFAN: It's not a date, really.

WINIFRED: That's what you said it was. And I quote, "Think of it as a blind date, Winifred. An adventure. And you need some adventure in your life." Unquote.

STEFFAN: Okay, so I implied it was a date.

WINIFRED: Not implied. Said. Quote "a blind date" unquote.

STEFFAN: Okay, okay. But an adventure... that was my point. You need adventure in your life, Winnie.

WINIFRED: Don't call me Winnie. I hate that.

STEFFAN: Sorry, sis. But come on, you must admit it's been nice for you to get out of the house and have some fun! Right?

WINIFRED: This isn't fun.

STEFFAN: Well, at least it's something out of the ordinary.

WINIFRED: Shopping for a husband. That is certainly out of the ordinary for me.

STEFFAN: Dad's gone now. It's time you started living your own life.

WINIFRED: But here? In IKEA? Steffan, this is just too... weird.

STEFFAN: Maybe it is weird. But it can happen. Trust me, I know. Just think positive.

WINIFRED: What I think is... that you are delusional. Delusional. That's a good title for today's entry in my journal. *(Sits on the edge of the bed and takes a journal from her purse.)*

STEFFAN: Fine. Call me delusional. I will try to be gracious when my plan proves you wrong.

WINIFRED: Plan? This is a plan?

STEFFAN: Just work with me, OK? Now, while you are wasting your time writing in that book of yours, I'm going to have a look around and see if I can spot him.

WINIFRED: I won't hold my breath.

STEFFAN: He's your soulmate, sis. You gotta believe me. *(Exits upstage left.)*

WINIFRED: Uh-huh. And I quote "he's your soulmate, sis. And you're going to meet him in IKEA." Unquote. *(Takes her pen and opens the journal and begins to write.)* Delusional ...

LEX enters upstage right carrying an IKEA shopping bag and a pair of bar stools. He is distantly followed by MAGS, who watches his every move.

LEX: *(Sighing, he sets the bar stools down.)* I'm glad sofas weren't on her list. *(Takes a shopping list from his pocket.)* Let's see. I've got the waste basket, the plastic cupcake molds, the pink picture frame – I don't know why pink? – a set of chrome drawer knobs, the pair of bar stools. Hangers? *(Looks up and spies the hangers, then tucks the list back in his pocket and crosses to downstage left table stacked with a variety of clothes hangers. He looks them over, picking up one bundle, changing his mind and picking up a different hanger bundle.)*

MAGS: *(Steps up beside him.)* The wooden ones are nicer. I'd chose those.

LEX: Thanks. *(Takes the bundle of hangers without looking at her.)*

MAGS: Don't forget to mark them off my shopping list, Lex.

LEX: Don't worry, Mags. I'll mark them off. *(Takes a few steps away as he takes the list from his pocket. Suddenly, reality hits him like a train. His looks out, his eyes wide. Slowly he turns to her.)* Mags?!

MAGS: Hello, Lex.

LEX: You're...you're—

MAGS: Here? Yes, I'm here.

LEX: No—you're... you're dead!

MAGS: Oh, that! Yes, that's true.

LEX: But you don't look dead.

MAGS: Well, maybe it's the lighting in here. Don't get too close!

LEX: How—?

MAGS: How what?

LEX: How... how are you here?

MAGS: It's complicated.

LEX: Why are you here?

MAGS: Now that's a secret. *(Indicating the chairs.)* Oh, Lex, you did good. I love these chairs! They have carts you know.

LEX: I know. But for now, they're no bother. I'm not sure I'm going to buy them anyway.

MAGS: You won't.

LEX: How do you know?

MAGS: They're not your taste. They're mine. And I don't need them.
And you don't like them.

LEX: But they're on your list.

MAGS: To hell with my list.

LEX: To hell with your IKEA shopping list? Then why did you leave it?

MAGS: It's been pinned to the bulletin board for months. You just didn't notice it, like a lot of other things. And you know what I mean.

LEX: No, I don't. And I don't understand this, either!

MAGS: This? What this?

LEX: You. Are you a ghost? Is that what you are? A spirit of some sort? Except, you look so real... as if I could reach out and touch you. *(Begins to reach out to MAGS.)*

MAGS: No, no, no. You don't want to do that. My body is in some sort of half-here-half-not-here dimension. I think I might be a little gooeey to the touch, and we both know that would trip you out.

LEX: Are you saying you're a poltergeist?

MAGS: I'm not sure. Maybe I am a poltergeist! I actually like the sound of that!

LEX: I don't.

MAGS: Don't worry, I'm not going to start throwing things. I haven't quite figured out how to move objects... yet. Besides, I'm actually here to do something nice... for you.

LEX: Nice? Like... like what?

MAGS: I'm here to help you find someone!

LEX: But I'm not looking for anyone.

MAGS: I know. And that's part of the problem.

LEX: Problem?

MAGS: Yes. The problem of helping you find someone.

LEX: Mags, there is no one to find. I haven't lost anyone. Besides you.
And that happened twice.

MAGS: I'm sorry.

LEX: I got over it.

MAGS: Did you?

LEX: Mags, why are you here?

MAGS: Answer my question first. Did you get over it?

LEX: By it, you mean your death?

MAGS: No, Lex, I'm talking about the first time you lost me.

LEX: I don't know what you're talking about.

MAGS: Yes, you do. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to know what was going on. It was as obvious as my IKEA shopping list—right under your nose. You just didn't want to admit it.

LEX: Are you psychoanalyzing me?

MAGS: You have to come to terms with it sooner or later.

LEX: Then I choose later.

Suddenly, DEAR WIFE and DEAR HUSBAND burst in onstage left. MAGS moves away and sits next to WINIFRED on the bed and watches her write.

DW: *(Bumping roughly into LEX as she waves her purse.)* THIS is ridiculous! I told you, we've been this way before.

DH: *(To LEX.)* Sorry.

DW: Yes you are! A sorry excuse for a man. Now swallow your pride and ask someone for help! *(Points to LEX.)* Like him!

DH: *(Turns to LEX.)* Pardon me, but we're having a bit of trouble finding the exit. Do you know which way we need to go?

LEX: I – uh—I have no idea. This is my first time in IKEA. Have you tried following the arrows on the floor? I imagine they lead to somewhere.

DW: Those arrows are all over the place, you moron, and they lead to nowhere!

DH: Dear, calm down. *(Leads her away from LEX.)* I'll ask someone else for directions. I saw a security guard earlier. I'm sure he'll help.

DW: That oaf! I saw him too, standing around talking to himself like some idiot.

DH: He was talking on a cell phone.

DW: Trust me, he couldn't find his way out of an elevator with the doors wide open. I have a better idea.

DH: When haven't you?

DW: We will split up. *(DEAR HUSBAND celebrates with a fist-pump.)* You go that way. And I'll go this way. You have your cell phone, so whichever one of us finds the exit, calls the other. *(Takes her phone out of her purse, as she does, a hundred-dollar bill falls on the floor unnoticed by either of them, but is noticed by WINIFRED. DEAR WIFE checks her phone.)* So, you'll call me, right?

DH: Right.

DW: I'm serious. (*Exits upstage right.*)

DH: So am I. I'll call you... (*Under his breath as he begins to exit opposite.*) I'll call you something.

WINIFRED: Oh, sir! (*Hurries and picks up the money.*) Sir!

DH: Yeah?

WINIFRED: Your wife dropped this money.

DH: (*Hesitant.*) Are you sure?

MAGS: Of course, she's sure.

WINIFRED: Yes, quite sure.

DH: Oh! (*Takes the money.*) Well, that's—that's very kind of you. Wow, a hundred dollars. I had no idea we had that kind of cash. I had better find her before she realizes she's lost this and finds some way to make it my fault.

WINIFRED: Your wife—I noticed she's not feeling well today.

DH: You mean, you noticed she's a little cranky.

MAGS: Oh, yeah. We noticed alright. Who wouldn't?!

WINIFRED: I'm sorry. I just meant—well, you seem like a very nice man.

DH: Thank you. And you are very polite—

MAGS: And she's honest, too—

DH: (*Holds up the money.*)—and a very honest young lady as well.

MAGS: Polite and honest. Two very nice qualities in a woman, don't you think, Lex?

LEX: (*Anxious MAGS is going to reveal herself as a ghost.*) Shsssss!

DW: (*From offstage.*) I KNEW IT! (*Enters upstage right with a charge.*)

How on earth did you manage to get my money from my purse?!

DH: I didn't.

WINIFRED: He didn't.

MAGS: Yeah, lady, he didn't.

DW: (*To WINIFRED.*) How do you know?

WINIFRED: Well, it appeared to have fallen from your purse.

DW: Really? Hmmm, you know you remind me of someone I dreamt about last night. (*Smacks DEAR HUSBAND. Looks around.*) SECURITY! PICK-POCKET HERE!

DH: Are you mad?! Darling, this nice young woman merely saw you drop the money from your purse and kindly returned it to me. So calm down! (*To WINIFRED.*) I'm very sorry.

DW: An unlikely story. And you, don't call me darling. There is nothing darling about me, and we both know it.

MAGS: Lex, do something!

LEX: *(To the rescue.)* Pardon me. I couldn't help overhearing—

DW: Well—spies, too! Pick-pockets and spies. I've had enough of this place!

OZ: *(Enters upstage left.)* Did somebody call for security?!

DW: I did.

OZ: What's the problem, ma'am?

DW: She stole my money, right out of my purse!

WINIFRED: I did not!

MAGS: She did not!

DW: Your word against mine.

MAGS: And my word against yours.

LEX: Uh, Mags, you should probably stay out of this.

DH: Officer, my wife is mistaken. This young lady did not steal anything.

DW: *(To DH.)* You stay out this. *(To OZ.)* My dear husband is obviously under the influence of this little tart.

MAGS: Hey! It's not nice to call someone a name like that, you old hag!

LEX: Mags... please! Officer, there has been a misunderstanding. I witnessed the entire incident. This pretty lady merely picked the money up from the floor and was returning it.

DW: Officer, are you going to believe them or me?

OZ: Actually, I'm not an officer. I'm a security guard.

DW: Tweedle-DEE, tweedle-DUM. Just answer me.

OZ: Well, actually, I saw what happened. It was just as this gentleman said.

DW: And you saw that from way over God-knows-where?

OZ: Pretty much. I have extraordinary eyesight.

DW: *(Glares at OZ, then examines his name badge.)* Oz, is it? *(Flicks the badge.)* I'm going to speak to your manager! *(Storms off, exiting upstage right.)*

DH: *(To OZ.)* Sorry, sir. My wife, she's been in a very bad mood lately... well, quite a while, actually.

MAGS: Probably since birth, I'm guessing.

DH: I'm sure your job is safe. She's mostly just bark, very little bite. Usually.

OZ: I'm not worried about my job. But, you might want to catch her before you lose her.

DH: *(Thinks for a beat.)* No thanks. I'll go this way. *(Exits upstage left.)*

OZ: Now, if you good folks will excuse me. *(Exits upstage right.)*

WINIFRED: *(To LEX.)* That was very nice of you... what you did. For him. And for me. Thank you.

LEX: You're welcome.

MAGS: You're a nice guy, Lex. I suppose I should have appreciated that more than I did.

LEX: Your kindness is also noted. Although that—woman—didn't at all appreciate it.

WINIFRED: It's often a greater gesture to be kind to someone who doesn't deserve it than to be kind to someone who does.

LEX: That's quite profound.

WINIFRED: I can't take the credit. I'm actually quoting my father. *(Beat.)* Again, it was very kind of you to intervene on my behalf.

LEX: I'm sure others would have done the same thing. I'm nothing special.

WINIFRED: *(Suddenly suspicious.)* You? You could be special.

LEX: I – I suppose.

MAGS: Stop being so modest. Of course, you're special.

WINIFRED: I have a feeling you may know my brother.

LEX: Your brother?

WINIFRED: Yes. His name is Steffan. With two Fs.

LEX: I don't know anyone named Steffan. Two Fs or otherwise.

WINIFRED: Are you sure?

LEX: Pretty sure.

WINIFRED: Speaking of pretty. You said I was pretty.

LEX: *(Playing coy.)* I did?

MAGS: Don't play dumb, Lex. We all heard you.

WINIFRED: Yes, you did. And I quote "This pretty lady picked the money up from the floor," unquote.

LEX: OK, I did say that, but the point I was trying to make was that you appear to be a nice person.

WINIFRED: *(Smiles.)* And pretty.

LEX: Pretty nice.

WINIFRED: Well, you described me as pretty. You could have just said “this nice young lady picked the money up from the floor.”

LEX: Well, I guess I described you the way I saw you, particularly your action of being nice. I suppose pretty just slipped in by accident.

WINIFRED: Oh, so you don’t think I’m pretty.

LEX: I didn’t say that.

WINIFRED: It sounded that way.

LEX: No, I mean I mainly saw you being nice, then, subconsciously noticed you were attractive. But it was your kindness that I found most appealing.

WINIFRED: Are you trying to pick me up?

MAGS: *(Crossing to stand behind LEX.)* Wow, that does sound like a pick-up line, Lex. A poorly constructed pick-up line, but a still—

LEX: That wasn’t a pick-up line! You know me better than that!

WINIFRED: Excuse me, but I don’t know you at all.

LEX: I’m sorry. I didn’t mean that as a response to you. I was telling *(Points to MAGS.)* her.

WINIFRED: Her?

LEX: My wife.

WINIFRED: You’re married?

LEX: Well, no. Not anymore—

MAGS: Whoa, whoa, whoa lover boy. You better start backpedaling, and fast. She can’t see me.

LEX: She can’t?

MAGS: *(Shakes her head.)* Nope.

WINIFRED: She can’t what?

LEX: Uh... uh... she can’t... can’t breathe.

MAGS: Good save.

WINIFRED: She can’t breathe? Your wife can’t breathe?

LEX: Right.

WINIFRED: Your wife can’t BREATHE.

LEX: Well... well, don’t take this the wrong way—but she’s dead.

WINIFRED: She’s dead? Your wife is dead?

LEX: Correct.

WINIFRED: Then what exactly did you mean by, I quote, “don’t take this the wrong way?” unquote.

LEX: Well, uh—uh—

MAGS: She’s not among the living.

LEX: She's not among the living.

MAGS: But it's loads of fun to suddenly have her hanging around.

LEX: But it's loads of fun to suddenly have her hanging around.

WINIFRED: Really?

LEX: (*Laughs nervously.*) No! ...not really. To be perfectly honest, she—she just showed up here a few minutes ago, which I'm sure makes me look positively insane.

WINIFRED: Insane? No. No. Oh! Look at the time. I need to go.

LEX: Why?! We've just met!

WINIFRED: What difference does that make?

LEX: I'm not sure. But in spite of your playfully sharp tongue—

MAGS: Oh, Lex, poor choice of words.

WINIFRED: My sharp tongue?

LEX: (*To MAGS.*) No kidding! (*To WINIFRED.*) Well, what I meant was you're kind of sassy—

WINIFRED: Oh, so now I'm sassy!

MAGS: Sassy?! You actually said sassy?!

LEX: Sassy, in a playful way. Uh, that's a good thing. I mean, I like that characteristic in women. My wife was that way—

MAGS: Oh, so now I'm sassy?

WINIFRED: Oh, here you go again with the wife. Listen, I really, really, really need to go. (*Steps away.*) Besides, I'm here with someone else. And he's big, and burly, and has tattoos. Lots and lots of tattoos. And he's probably wondering if I've gotten lost. Bye! (*Exits upstage left.*)

LEX: Nice meeting you!

MAGS claps slowly.

LEX: I'm an idiot.

MAGS: That's because you have a Y chromosome. So, what do you think?

LEX: About what?

MAGS: Her! She's pretty and she seems like a very nice girl.

LEX: Yeah... she does, doesn't she? Very... (*Looking the way WINIFRED has gone.*) very nice. And pretty, too.

MAGS: (*Laughs.*) Oh, Lex. You like her! I knew you would! (*Gasps.*) Lex, did you hear that?

LEX: Hear what?

MAGS: The twang of Cupid's bowstring, the swoosh of his arrow, and the thud of it penetrating your heart. You're in love!

LEX: No I'm not. I just met her.

MAGS: I just witnessed love at first sight!

LEX: You didn't witness anything. And thank you for the belated revelation that I'm the only one who can see you!

MAGS: You're welcome.

ISAIAH enters.

LEX: She thinks I'm a kook.

MAGS: You should know. After all, your patients are kooks, too, right?

LEX: Did you see how fast she left?

MAGS: She who?

LEX: Her! What's her name! (*Looks at MAGS.*) What is her name?

MAGS: Don't ask me. Ask her yourself.

ISAIAH: Hey man. You're pretty stressed out, aren't you?

LEX: Pardon? Are you speaking to me?

MAGS: Well he sure as hell isn't speaking to me.

ISAIAH: Yeah. I heard you talking to yourself.

LEX: No, no I wasn't.

ISAIAH: Don't sweat it. I've seen it before. People talking to themselves is usually the first sign.

LEX: The first sign?

ISAIAH: Yeah. The first sign that you need some help.

MAG: What is he, a psychologist like you?

LEX: What are you, a psychologist?

ISAIAH: (*Scoffs.*) No, are you?

LEX: As a matter of fact—

ISAIAH: You're lost dude, admit it.

LEX: Lost? No, I'm not lost. Do I look lost?

ISAIAH: Well, yeah. But, then you are here.

LEX: Well, if I'm here, then I'm not lost.

ISAIAH: No, I mean here... in IKEA.

LEX: I know that.

ISAIAH: (*Offers his hand.*) Name's Isaiah. Nice to meet ya.

LEX: I'm Lex. And likewise... I think.

ISAIAH: So Lex, I'm betting you can't find your way out of here. Am I right?

LEX: No.

ISAIAH: Nailed it. Well, Lex, I'll be happy to escort you to the exit, and it will only cost you five bucks.

LEX: I don't need an escort.

ISAIAH: But you said you couldn't find your way out.

LEX: No, you said that.

ISAIAH: Oh, jeez. What is this, Groundhog Day?

LEX: *(Takes a business card from his wallet.)* Listen, Isaiah, here's my business card. I have an office downtown. Come see me sometime. Your first visit will be free, on me.

ISAIAH: *(Takes the card and puts it in his pocket.)* Yeah, yeah, whatever. Listen, Lex, when you change your mind about needing my help, look me up. It will be the best ten dollars you spend today.

MAGS: Ten dollars?! He quoted you five dollars. Don't let him gouge you, Lex.

LEX: No one's going to gouge me.

ISAIAH: Not a gouge, dude. This is free enterprise.

LEX: But you said your fee was five dollars.

ISAIAH: Yeah, that's the cost for your first opportunity. But with every additional offer of assistance, the price doubles.

LEX: Doubles? That doesn't seem fair.

ISAIAH: Supply and demand, my friend, supply and demand. One time, I had a guy finally begging me to get him out of here. But it happened to be his sixth chance at escape, so my services cost him 160 bucks.

MAGS: Lex, he's looney. And besides, you won't need any help getting out of here because you have a diploma hanging on your wall.

LEX: Out of curiosity, Isaiah, what makes you think I'm going to need help finding my way out?

ISAIAH: Ahhhh... this is your first time here, right?

LEX: Yes.

ISAIAH: Well, keep shopping and then when you're ready to leave, just follow these arrows here on the floor. Then later, when you realize you aren't going anywhere but in circles, you'll come begging me to help navigate your ass out of here.

LEX: I doubt it.

ISAIAH: (*Laughs.*) Lex, Lex, Lex. Trust me, this place is like the granddaddy of all mazes. I just happen to know the shortcuts and the secret passages. And that knowledge can now be yours for the low price of 20 dollars.

LEX: Thanks, but no thanks. By the way, where's your IKEA name badge?

ISAIAH: I don't need one of those.

LEX: I'm pretty sure all the other employees are wearing one.

ISAIAH: I don't work for IKEA. I'm what you call free-lance.

LEX: Freelance? So you don't actually work here.

ISAIAH: Oh yeah. I work here. I am providing a service to IKEA customers.

LEX: A service?

ISAIAH: Yeah, an escort service.

MAGS: He's a pimp! I knew there was something fishy about this guy.

ISAIAH: Well, not an escort-escort service. That would be illegal. I'm what you call customer service. What I do is legit.

MAGS: Uh-huh. I'm not buying it.

ISAIAH: Well, maybe not legit-legit. But anyway, you would be amazed by the number of people who appreciate my assistance. I'm kind of like that biblical Moses—I part the seas of product displays and lead the lost IKEA customers to the promise land of the checkout counters.

LEX: People really pay you to do that?

ISAIAH: Oh, yeah. I bring down a couple of C-notes a day!

LEX: Two-hundred dollars a day. Just for leading people to the exit.

ISAIAH: Brilliant, isn't it? And the best part is the IRS don't know nothin' about it. It's all cash. Well, sometimes there is a trade involved. One time a guy needed my help but he didn't have a dime on him. Only plastic. But since he was about my size, and I needed a change of clothes, we negotiated. He walked out of this place wearin' nothin' but his Fruit-of-the-Looms and his Reeboks. By the way, I happen to like your shirt – just so you know. Oh, and, Lex, what are you? Boxers or briefs?

MAGS: Tightly-whities.

LEX: I'm not leaving here without my underwear.

ISAIAH: I go commando sometimes, you should try it.

MAGS: That means he's wearing nothing under his pants.

LEX: *(To MAGS.)* I know what commando means.

ISAIAH: Yeah, not an easy thing to get used to. Listen, Lex, I gotta run. I can't make a dime if I'm just standin' here jawin' with you all day. Remember, when you're ready to leave, I'll be here.

ISAIAH exits upstage left as DOT enters upstage right pushing her cart that is over-loaded with items. An item falls out of the cart as she passes LEX, and he picks it up.

LEX: Ma'am? Excuse me, ma'am. You lost this. *(Hands it to DOT.)*

DOT: Oh, thank you! I've found so many good buys here, I can't keep them all in my cart! *(Laughs.)* And so many things to choose from! Have you been to the bathrooms?

LEX: Uh, no.

DOT: Well, I don't mean the bathroom bathrooms. I'm talking about the display bathrooms.

LEX: Same answer.

DOT: They are marvelous! And I love, love, love this bedroom! You know I think I could just live here!

LEX: It appears, you may not be the first.

DOT: *(Sees alarm clock.)* Excuse me. I see something I must have! *(Hurries to snag the clock.)*

MAGS: Look at all this stuff! She's clearly compensating for something.

LEX: Clearly.

DOT returns and stuffs the clock in her cart.

LEX: Nice clock.

DOT: *(Protectively positions herself between him and her cart, spreading her arms and thrusting out her chest.)* Don't get any ideas. It's mine!

LEX: Don't worry, I'm not interested. In the clock, or otherwise.

DOT: *(Studies him for a second.)* You don't appear to be buying much?

LEX: Well, these chairs are mine.

DOT: *(Suspicious.)* They are?

LEX: Well, for now. I'm not entirely sure I want them.

DOT: I see. Well, I like them. (*Looks at price tag.*) Good! They have price tags!

LEX: Doesn't everything?

DOT: You would think. Hmmmm \$99.99 ...not bad! Where in the store did you find them?

LEX: (*Pointing.*) That way, somewhere... I think.

DOT: OK, then. I'll see if I can find them! Fun! Fun! Oh, and if anyone asks, you haven't seen me, ok? (*Quickly exits upstage right nearly colliding with MAGS.*)

MAGS: Watch out roller derby queen! Now Lex, don't be getting any ideas about that woman. She's totally not the right one for you. However, little miss what's-her-name is perfect, don't you think?

LEX: I admit, she does have me intrigued. But, she likes to quote, which is odd—

MAGS: Uh-uh-uh—no judging.

LEX: But frankly, I would like to know more about her.

MAGS: Then go. Move your feet. Find her. Talk to her. Ask her out on a date!

LEX: Sure! Why not stalk her? She already thinks I'm creepy, thanks to you. (*Sits on one of the stools.*)

MAGS: (*Sits next to him.*) I'm sensing hesitation.

LEX: Well, as you know, I don't have the best track record when it comes to relationships.

MAGS: Lex, don't try and predict your future based on your past. Our problem was that we didn't have enough in common. At least anything that was important. I'm not sure why you wanted to marry me in the first place.

LEX: I wanted to marry you so that we could have more "us" time, just you and me staying home, cuddling on the sofa under a warm blanket and watching old Bob Hope and Garry Cooper movies.

MAGS: Boring.

LEX: Instead you wanted to go out and party every weekend.

MAGS: A girl's gotta have a little fun!

LEX: I wanted a stable, grounded relationship. I wanted financial security. I wanted a suburban home just a short train ride outside the city.

MAGS: The suburbs? If I were alive I would throw up.

LEX: I wanted to have a family, Mags. Kids. A girl and a boy... a little you and a little me.

MAGS: That was never going to happen with me. But it could happen with her.

LEX: You're not going to let his match-making thing go, are you?

MAGS: Nope. Your mystery lady is perfect for you.

LEX: How do you know?

MAGS: Because she's opposite of me. Except that we're both sassy, which you apparently find very attractive.

LEX: I didn't say it was attractive. However, there is something about her that I'm strongly drawn to... she probably already has a boyfriend.

MAGS: She doesn't.

LEX: Or here's a thought, what if she has girlfriend?

MAGS: Oh, well if that's the case, you're toast. But you'll never know unless you go talk to her again! What have you got to lose?

LEX: My dignity.

MAGS: That's not risking much.

LEX: (*Looks pointedly at Mags.*) OK, (*Stands.*) I'm going.

MAGS: That's the spirit! Uh, no pun intended. (*Stands.*) Now, come on, let's go!

LEX: You are staying here. Your participation has already made me appear schizophrenic, and given I'm standing here listening to my deceased wife's advice on hooking up, schizophrenia would be a reasonable diagnosis if I do say so myself. In fact, I'm not even sure you're really here. You could just be a hallucination. That's it. Isaiah is right. I am talking to myself.

MAGS: Are you done?

LEX: Apparently, I have a hallucination that can't stop jabbering.

MAGS: Lex, you're beginning to stress out, so I'll tell you what. If it makes you happy, I'll stay here while you go look for her.

LEX: That would make me tremendously happy.

MAGS: Fine. I'll just wait here.

LEX: Fine.

MAGS: Fine.

LEX: Although, I'd rather you just leave—from here.

MAGS: You mean go away?

LEX: Yes. No offense, but I've gotten used to you being gone.

MAGS: Well, I'd leave if I could, but I can't, so I won't. But I promise, I'll wait here. Cross my heart and hope to die. Oh, wait—ha! Trust me. I'll wait here and root for you from afar. I'll be like your cheerleader standing on the sidelines, completely outside your game. How would that be?

LEX: That, that would be OK, I guess.

LEX exits upstage left, as MAGS begins a cheer routine.

MAGS: Ready—ok! L-E-X! Go Lex! L-E-X! Gooooo--Lex! Woo!
(*WINIFRED enters upstage right, MAGS sees her.*) Oh, good grief! Lex, you went the wrong way!

MAGS quickly exits after him, just as STEFFAN enters upstage right, hurriedly.

STEFFAN: Hey sis!

WINIFRED: Steffan! I've been looking for you!

STEFFAN: And I've been looking for you! This place is crazy, isn't it?!

WINIFRED: You don't know the half of it. Although I did meet someone interesting, just like you said I would.

STEFFAN: Told you so.

WINIFRED: But Steffan, the man talks to his dead wife.

STEFFAN: Oh really? Describe him.

WINIFRED: Well, he's this tall, sandy-blond hair, intoxicating blue eyes, and he has a smile that's kind of boyish and charming in the way his mouth first curls up just on one side. And he's compassionate, and he's chivalrous—

STEFFAN: That's got to be him! Your description is spot on.

WINIFRED: You're not serious!

STEFFAN: So, what do you think?

WINIFRED: I think you're nuts.

STEFFAN: Why?

WINIFRED: Because he is nuts.

STEFFAN: Why do you say that?

WINIFRED: Because he talks to his dead wife.

STEFFAN: Really? He's psycho because he talks to his dead wife?

STEFFAN and WINIFRED stare at each other.

WINIFRED: I know, I know. Who am I to judge, right?

STEFFAN: Right. And, for the record, I think he's perfect for you.

And you obviously find him attractive.

WINIFRED: I never said that.

STEFFAN: No? What did you say about his eyes? Intoxicating, was that it?

WINIFRED: I don't think—

STEFFAN: Uh-uh-uh. Don't deny it.

WINIFRED: OK! He has intoxicating eyes. There I said it. That could mean anything. They could have been intoxicatingly bloodshot. And judging from the conversation I had with him, I suspect he's an alcoholic.

STEFFAN: Liar. You found him attractive. Admit it.

WINIFRED: I want you to know, Steffen, I'm very disappointed in you. Last week you assured me that you had found the man of my dreams. Well, if you think what's-his-name is my dream lover, then please wake me up!

STEFFAN: What's-his-name? Oh, that's not good. You need to know his name.

WINIFRED: Then what is it?

STEFFAN: I can't tell you that.

WINIFRED: Can't or won't?

STEFFAN: Sis, this husband-hunting plan is going to require you to make some effort.

WINIFRED: I'm here, am I not? And I chose to believe you. That certainly took effort. After all, you were never very trustworthy.

STEFFAN: I know. And I'm sorry. But, come on, trust me on this, OK? Winifred, I'm trying to make it up to you.

WINIFRED: Well, that's what you keep telling me. Guilt is a terrible thing, is it not?

STEFFAN: That's for sure. It's been hell, quite frankly.

WINIFRED scoffs.

STEFFAN: *(Laughs.)* Now, go find that man.

WINIFRED: Steffan, I have already been wandering around this place for three hours. Odds are he will be wander back through here.

STEFFAN: But what if he leaves the store instead of coming back through here first?

WINIFRED: Then it wasn't meant to be. But I'm not going to stand around here and wait all day. I'll give him, and you, ten minutes, then I'm leaving. In the meantime, I'll sit here and write in my journal.

STEFFAN: Your journal, your journal! You know, sis, people are going to think you are a little wacky-doodle sitting around here in IKEA writing in that dumb diary.

WINIFRED: Journal. And it's not dumb. Besides, given the personalities I've met here today, who would notice me?

STEFFAN: So, am I in there? In your journal?

WINIFRED: Oh yes. You are in here quite often.

STEFFAN: Sorry I asked. By the way, do you have any lipstick in your purse?

WINIFRED: Why? Do you want some?

STEFFAN: Just saying, you might want to touch yours up a little.

WINIFRED: Go—away!

STEFFAN: And your hair—maybe you could—

WINIFRED: Nine minutes and counting, Steffan.

STEFFAN: OK, but since you're just going to sit around here and do nothing, I'll go look around and see if I can find him for you. *(Exits upstage left.)*

WINIFRED: Then you had better hurry. *(Sits and takes her journal from her purse, then finds her lipstick and begins to re-apply it.)*

ISAIAH enters upstage right now wearing a cap with a popular sports logo and counting a hand of full of dollar bills. He stuffs the money in his pocket, then removes his cap and looks at the cap, smiling.

ISAIAH: Nice!

WINIFRED: Pardon me?

ISAIAH: *(Looks at her suspiciously.)* Nothing.

DH enters upstage right. ISAIAH watches him as DH crosses down center, looks hopelessly left, then right, then turns around in a circle.

ISAIAH: *(Laughs.)* Easy money. *(Crosses to DH.)* Hey, my man. I can see it in your eyes. You need help out of here, am I right?

DH: Yes! Help me! And hurry! I need to get out of this building before my wife finds me! I've been ignoring her calls. She's going to be pissed.

ISAIAH: Not a problem. I understand the urgency. But first my fee—

DH: A fee? I don't have any money. My dear wife doesn't let me carry cash.

ISAIAH: That's not a problem ... *(Takes him by the shoulders, and turns him around as he looks him over.)* I'm always happy to negotiate alternative payment.

DH: Alternative payment?

ISAIAH: Yeah. I like your shoes. What size do you wear?

DH: Ten and a half.

ISAIAH: Perfect. *(Crosses to the nightstand.)* Hang on a second.

DH: OK, but hurry!

ISAIAH: *(Stuffs his new cap into the night stand drawer. Turns away, then realizes his clock is missing.)* HEY! WHERE'S MY CLOCK? *(Hurries to look under a pillow, then opens a night table drawer, then slams it shut. He turns to WINIFRED.)* I'VE BEEN ROBBED! Did you happen to see a woman sneak away from here with an alarm clock?

WINIFRED: Specifically?

ISAIAH: Yeah!

WINIFRED: Well, give me a description—

ISAIAH: It's about this big, with a face and hands and twelve numbers on it— *[Or insert description that fits the prop.]*

WINIFRED: No, I meant the woman. What does she look like?

ISAIAH: *(With over-dramatic gestures.)* She's about this big, with hands and a face, and a massive cavity beneath her nose.

DH: That sounds like my wife.

ISAIAH: *(Looks off, left and right.)* That crazy broad stole my clock! I've got to find her!

DH: No! First you have to help me escape my crazy broad!

ISAIAH: OK, OK! This way!

ISAIAH exits upstage left, followed by DH. MRS. PEALE enters upstage right carrying a clipboard. She pauses for a moment to glance behind her. She sees WINIFRED and crosses to her.

MRS. PEALE: Hello.

WINIFRED: Hello.

MRS. PEALE: May I have something from you?

WINIFRED: Such as?

MRS. PEALE: Two things, actually.

WINIFRED: *(Sees clipboard and offers her a pen.)* Do you need a pen?

MRS. PEALE: No thank you, I have my own. Your opinion and your signature.

WINIFRED: Pardon me?

MRS. PEALE: *(Exasperated.)* Your opinion and your signature. Those are the things I need from you. What do you think of them?

WINIFRED: Them?

MRS. PEALE: The arrows! *(Points to the floor.)*

WINIFRED: The arrows? Well—*(She studies the floor.)*—they're very large.

MRS. PEALE: *(Exasperated.)* Obviously. What else?

WINIFRED: I suppose the arrows are helpful?

MRS. PEALE: No, they are not! They simply lead one around, and around, and around, and around—

WINIFRED: In circles?

MRS. PEALE: Yes! In circles! I'm so glad you agree. Here *(Extends clipboard.)* sign my petition.

WINIFRED: Petition? A petition for what?

MRS. PEALE: To remove these deceitful symbols from the floors of this establishment!

WINIFRED: But the arrows have a purpose—

MRS. PEALE: Ohhhh—yes! —they! —do! Their purpose is subterfuge! Just like Hamlet!

WINIFRED: Hamlet?

MRS. PEALE: King Claudius is using us as pawns, can't you see that? Pushing us across this chessboard of arrows and leading us to no place but back to where we started. But I'm not fooled. Which is why I have taken up the battle flag of civility. To be or not to be, that is the question. Is it nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, or to take arms against a sea of troubles and thereby opposing them? A pox I say! A pox on that phony King of England! Oo-de-lally! Oo-de-lally! (*Singing forte.*) AL – AL – AL – LE – LU – UI – UI – UUUU – UI – IA!!!

WINIFRED stares at her for several long beats, then looks around to see if anyone else was a witness. OZ enters upstage right.

MRS. PEALE: (*Sees OZ.*) Curses! The Sheriff of Nottingham! (*To WINIFRED.*) I must go! (*Hurries away, stage left.*)

WINIFRED rises and stares after her as OZ crosses to her.

OZ: I see you've met Mrs. Peale.

WINIFRED: Is she—?

OZ: Muddled?

WINIFRED: Dangerous?

OZ: (*Chuckles.*) No. She shows up here from time to time, but doesn't really bother anyone. I just try to keep a close eye on her. She might be a little un-hinged, but she's not a threat to anyone.

WINIFRED: How do you know?

OZ: You might say I have "inside information."

WINIFRED: In other words, mind my own business, is that it?

OZ: No, no. You're not being intrusive at all. (*His cell phone beeps and he takes it from his pocket.*) Excuse me. (*He begins to scan the phone display.*) Hmm... Tim, Tim, Tim... The trouble you've gotten yourself into. (*Slips phone back into his pocket.*) My work is never done.

WINIFRED: A problem with someone in the store?

OZ: Now you are being nosy.

WINIFRED: Sorry. My curiosity often forgets its manners.

OZ: That's alright, Winifred.

WINIFRED: (*Startled.*) How do you know my name?

OZ: Uh – from earlier. The incidence with the woman who accused you of being a pick-pocket.

WINIFRED: I don't recall saying my name.

OZ: Didn't you?

WINIFRED: I suppose I must have. No one else here knows who I am. Except for my brother.

OZ: Oh? Your brother is here with you?

WINIFRED: Uh... sort of. He's somewhere looking for...

OZ: For what?

WINIFRED: Apparently something that can only be found in IKEA.

OZ: Lots of unique things can be found here. By the way, my name's Oz.

WINIFRED: Oz? That's unusual. Are you also "great and powerful"? You know, like that wizard?

OZ: (*Chuckles.*) I may have something in common with him. Part of what I do is helping people find their way back.

WINIFRED: Back? Back to where?

OZ: To Kansas. Where else?

WINIFRED: (*Laughs.*) A sense of humor. I like that.

OZ: Thanks. I surprise people on occasion. I'm not just a no-nonsense kind of guy. I like funny too. After all, I did put the knees of a flamingo on backwards.

WINIFRED: Pardon me?

OZ: So, are you also here like your brother, shopping for a special one-of-a-kind item?

WINIFRED: Actually, I'm not shopping for anything. I'm mostly just waiting here and writing in my journal.

OZ: Oh. I'm sorry to hear that.

WINIFRED: Why?

OZ: Well, unfortunately part of my job is to escort loiterers out of the premises. So, I'm sorry, but I'm going to have to ask you to leave.

WINIFRED: Actually, Mr. Oz, if you must know, I am here to shop... sort of.

OZ: Sort of?

WINIFRED: Well, this is a little embarrassing, but my brother convinced me to come here to... to look for a husband.

OZ: I'm single.

WINIFRED: (*Laughs.*) That's hard to believe.

OZ: But, I'm also unavailable.

WINIFRED: Just my luck! Sorry, I should be leaving. I suddenly feel quite ridiculous.

OZ: Stay. Sit. Hang around as long as you like. I look the other way for other folks, why not you?

WINIFRED: Others? Like Mrs. Peale?

OZ: Yes. Like Mrs. Peale. She's really a very kind soul. Just misunderstood. *(His phone beeps again and he takes it from his pocket and scans it.)* Children. Children. Children. When will you learn?

WINIFRED: You have children?

OZ: I have... you might say I have a very large family. Luckily for me this app helps me keep up with them.

WINIFRED: Must be a great app.

OZ: A Devine creation, I can tell you that much. Well, I've got to go. Good luck with your shopping. Although you won't need it.

WINIFRED: I won't need luck?

OZ: Nope. You just need patience... and faith. I promise, somebody is going to come along who turns out to be exactly who you need them to be.

WINIFRED: You think so?

OZ: Why not? This is IKEA after all. A place where there is something for everyone.

WINIFRED: The woman, Mrs. Peale? You seem to know a lot about her. Is she here to find something too?

OZ: Yes. Acceptance. *(Exits upstage left.)*

LEX enters upstage right. He sees WINIFRED.

LEX: *(Crosses to WINIFRED.)* Hi.

WINIFRED: *(Looks up, startled.)* Oh! Uh... hello ... and good-bye. *(Quickly rises and moves to leave.)*

LEX: Wait! Please? Listen, I don't want you to think I'm any weirder than you already think I am, but earlier... we didn't really get properly introduced.

WINIFRED: No, we didn't. *(They stare at each other for a moment.)*
Go on.

LEX: Oh, sorry. (*Offers WINIFRED his hand.*) My name is Lexington.

WINIFRED: (*Takes LEX'S hand.*) I'm Winifred. I'm glad to know your name, Lexington.

LEX: Me too. Well, not my name, I already knew that. It's—it's your name—I mean, I'm glad to know your name, Winifred. That's—

WINIFRED: That's what?

LEX: Very pretty. Your name. It suits you.

WINIFRED: Thank you. As does your name, Lexington. I like it.

LEX: Yeah, me too. Only Mags didn't like it at all. Thought it sounded too pompous.

WINIFRED: Mags?

LEX: My wife. Dead wife. Dead wife. Sorry, sorry. I had no intention of bringing her with me.

WINIFRED: Bringing her with you? (*Looks behind him.*)

LEX: No! What I meant was bringing her into my conversation... with you. I apologize. Sincerely.

WINIFRED: Apology accepted. (*Beat of awkward silence.*) Well, since the elephant is already in the room—

LEX: Elephant?

WINIFRED: Your deceased wife, Mags. Is that short for Maggie?

LEX: (*Looks around nervously.*) Oh, yeah, you don't want to call her that. She doesn't like Maggie.

WINIFRED: *Doesn't?* That isn't past tense. Lexington, you're starting to worry me again.

LEX: I'm not weird, I promise. I'm just an idiot. (*Sighs and shakes his head.*) Winifred, I'm sorry I bothered you. I should just leave—

WINIFRED: No! No, stay... please. I have an idea. Why don't you tell me a little bit about your wife—

LEX: Dead wife.

WINIFRED: Just maybe a minor detail or two. Then perhaps we can set her aside long enough to talk about something else.

LEX: OK. I—I can do that. (*Sits.*)

WINIFRED: So, your wife doesn't—didn't—like being called Maggie?

MAGS enters stage left via the emergency exit door and an alarm immediately sounds. Others react.

MAGS: Wow! I can't believe it! Lex, I can open doors! (*Celebrates with a little dance.*) I can open doors... I can open doors—

LEX: (*Shakes his head and shouts over the melee.*) Not now!

WINIFRED: (*Holding a hand over one ear.*) That noise is most irritating.

OZ quickly enters upstage left, and crosses to the emergency door.

OZ: Sorry folks! (*Uses his pass key to disengage the alarm and opens and peers through the door, as MAGS continues to dance.*) Did either of you see someone leave through this emergency-exit-only door?

MAGS waves at Oz.

LEX: Uhhhh... no. (*Glares at MAGS.*) No, I didn't see anyone leave through there.

WINIFRED: No, Oz, I didn't see anyone, either

OZ: A malfunction I suppose. (*Takes out his cell phone.*) I should let maintenance know of the issue.

LEX: (*Wanting to get rid of him.*) If there are other emergency exit doors, you might want to check them as well.

OZ: Good idea, Lexington.

OZ exits upstage left, as LEX looks after him curiously. STEFFAN enters opposite and sees WINIFRED with LEX and gives her a thumbs-up.

MAGS: Lex! Am I impressive, or what?!

LEX: (*To WINIFRED.*) Uh... excuse me for a minute. I need to—uh-- make a quick phone call.

WINIFRED: (*Glances back at STEFFAN.*) Not a problem.

LEX crosses to MAGS as WINIFRED crosses to STEFFAN.

LEX: (*Placing his cell phone to his ear.*) Mags, what are you doing?

MAGS: Opening—doors!

LEX: I didn't think you could do things like that?

MAGS: I didn't either! But I was just over in the bathroom section of the store and there was this stunning bowl sink with designer facet knobs and I wanted to turn them so badly. Then suddenly, they moved! It was soooo amazing!

LEX and MAGS pantomime conversation as WINIFRED and STEFFAN talk.

WINIFRED: What is it, Steffan?

STEFFAN: You found him!

WINIFRED: I wouldn't say I found him. He happened to meander his way back to here, just as I predicted he would.

STEFFAN: So, what do you think of him?

WINIFRED: Well, he's breathing, which makes him better off than his wife. Or other people I know. But I've only had ten minutes of conversation with him, and nine minutes of that was uneventful and unimpressive. I don't know if he's my soulmate, but I admit Lexington seems nice.

STEFFAN: Who?

WINIFRED: Him. Lexington.

STEFFAN: Lexington? That doesn't sound right. I'm not sure he's the right guy.

WINIFRED: You're not sure? Don't you know him?

STEFFAN: No. I know of him. I've only seen his picture.

WINIFRED and STEFFAN pantomime conversation as LEX and MAGS talk.

LEX: Well stop touching and moving things. People are going to freak out. And as you can see, I'm trying to get acquainted with a very interesting young woman and if you keep opening doors and setting off alarms and making me scold you, there will be no way I'll be able to calm my nerves enough to improve upon Winifred's impression of me.

MAGS: Winifred! You know her name!

LEX: Yes, I know her name. Now, just run along, or float along, or whatever it is you do.

MAGS: I don't want to leave. I want to watch you "put the moves" on Winifred.

LEX: I'm not putting moves on her.

MAGS: Too bad.

LEX: I'm serious! I need you to keep your distance.

LEX and MAGS pantomime conversation.

WINIFRED: Steffan, why would you think for even one second that a man who you've, and I quote, "only seen his picture," unquote, would be someone you presume I would enjoy a conversation with, much less convince you that he is my soulmate?

STEFFAN: It's a long story.

WINIFRED: I'd love to hear it. I have all the time in the world.

STEFFAN: I used to think that, too. But I was wrong. Anyway, I don't want you to waste any more of your time. So, be a good girl and give the man a chance.

WINIFRED: I'm giving him a chance. Is it my fault he's not making the most of it?

STEFFAN: Give him a chance, Winifred. A real chance.

WINIFRED: OK, OK.

WINIFRED and STEFFAN pantomime conversation.

MAGS: OK, OK. If I promise not to talk, can I be close and listen?

LEX: Don't pout. Pouting was never a good look for you.

MAGS: OK, then I'll beg. Please?!!!

LEX: *(Sighs, realizing he can't win this battle.)* Alright. But promise me you will not interfere?

WINIFRED: But promise me you will not interfere?

MAGS: I promise.

STEFFAN: I promise.

LEX: Or touch anything.

WINIFRED: And don't stand here and watch me.

MAGS: *(Spoken simultaneously with STEFFAN.)* OK, OK.

STEFFAN: *(Spoken simultaneously with MAGS.)* OK, OK.

LEX and WINIFRED return to their chairs as MAGS moves to sit on the foot of the bed, and STEFFAN slinks around to spy.

WINIFRED: Is everything, alright?

LEX: Yeah, fine.

DW enters upstage right angrily punching buttons on her cell phone.

DW: *(Yelling into her cell phone and looking around.)* WHERE ARE YOU?!!

LEX: Uh-oh, I think we may be about to witness a meltdown.

WINIFRED: Oh? Well, what should we do?

LEX: In my professional opinion, we should run.

DW: CALL—ME—BACK!! *(Storms to stand in front of LEX and WINIFRED.)* I HAVE LEFT YOU 15 MESSAGES, ANSWER ME!
(Plaps down on LEX'S lap.)

LEX: Pardon me?!

DW: *(Turns to look at LEX over her shoulder.)* Is there a reason you are parked beneath my rumpus?

LEX: Well, yes. I was already sitting here.

WINIFRED: *(Rises.)* Here, ma'am, you can have my chair.

LEX: That's OK. I'll be the gentleman and give her my seat. Uh — ma'am? If you would kindly stand up, I'll let you sit here.

DW: Oh, you'll LET me sit HERE. I can SIT anywhere I choose.
(Stands.) Now, get up!

LEX: *(Stands, and steps away toward the bed.)* My pleasure.

WINIFRED: *(Warily looks at DW.)* Are... are you OK?

DW: No, I'm not OK! Do I look OK? I'm very, very, VERY ANNOYED!
Can't you see that?

WINIFRED: Of course you are.

LEX: *(To MAGS.)* I had a feeling she was annoyed.

DW: *(Crosses to LEX and gets in his face.)* And I have a feeling you should mind your own business.

LEX: That's a reasonable feeling.

WINIFRED: Perhaps I can help.

DW: What makes you think you could help me?

WINIFRED: You're looking for your husband, right?

DW: What's it to you?

WINIFRED: Well, I just saw him here, a short time ago.

DW: (*Scowling.*) Did you really?! Was he with someone?

WINIFRED: Yes, as a matter—

DW: Another woman! I might have known! She was a skank, wasn't she?

WINIFRED: Well, no. He was with another man—

DW: Another man?

WINIFRED: Yes.

DW: WITH another MAN?

WINIFRED: Well, not in the way—

DW: Which way did they go?

WINIFRED: That way. (*Points.*)

MRS. PEALE enters upstage left carrying an armful of large picket signs in the shape of arrows with the "NO" symbol emblazoned across them. She quickly steps downstage and blocks DW from exiting.

MRS. PEALE: Here! (*Shoves a sign into DW's hands.*) Take one.

DW: (*Momentarily dumbfounded.*) What is this?!

MRS. PEALE: A demonstration, sister. A demonstration! (*Crosses to WINIFRED and LEX and hands each of them a sign.*) One for you... and here's one for you.

LEX: What the heck?

WINIFRED: Just play along.

MRS. PEALE: (*Crosses downstage right, then turns to address the others.*) Hear-ye, hear-ye! Now is the time, my brothers and sisters, to come together and stand united against the tyrannical controls of this establishment. We must appeal to their conscience, shine a light of revelation upon their inhumanity. We must join arm in arm, chin up, chest out, and feet forward. Then, with great haste, put your left foot in, take your left foot out, put your left foot in and shake it all about.

OZ enters upstage left, stepping behind DW.

DW: *(To herself.)* That woman is crazier than I am! *(Turns and is face-to-face with OZ.)* You, again!

OZ: Hello.

DW: *(Glaring at him.)* Out of my way you oaf.

OZ: May I help you?

DW: Why start now?

MRS. PEALE: *(From her bosom she retrieves a small American Flag and waves it as she sings under the dialogue.)* Oh, say can you see, by the dawn's early light—

MAGS rises and places her hand over her heart as DW pushes past OZ, but then stops at the emergency exit door and looks it over.

MAGS: Lex! ...Lex!

LEX glances at MAGS and sees her nodding to him to mimic her. Hesitantly he places his hand over his heart.

DW: *(Turning back to OZ.)* This door? Where does it lead to?

OZ: The parking lot.

DW: Does it?

MRS. PEALE: *(Singing.)* What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming—

DW turns to listen to MRS. PEALE, giving OZ the opportunity to position himself between DW and the emergency exit.

DW: *(To OZ.)* You know, you could make yourself useful and do something about that woman.

OZ: Such as?

DW: Arrest her for starters.

MRS. PEALE: *(Singing.)* Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight—

DW: She's clearly on opioids or something.

OZ: Sorry. I don't have the authority to arrest anyone.

DW: Then what good are you?

OZ: You'd be surprised.

DW: *(Shoves the picket sign into OZ's hands.)* Here. This is hers.

MRS. PEALE: *(Singing.)* O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming—

Distracted by MRS. PEALE, DW turns to listen to her as DH hurriedly enters upstage left, wearing only an undershirt, boxers and socks. He is looking over his shoulder, turning just before bumping into the back of DW. Immediately, OZ hands DH the picket sign.

DW: She's a lunatic.

DW turns back to OZ as DH instantly raises the picket sign to hide his face.

OZ: But she does know how to command an audience.

DW: *(Glancing at DH's bare legs, she then glares at OZ.)* I'm leaving.

OZ: Not through the emergency exit, you're not.

MRS PEALE: *(Singing.)* And the rocket's red glare—

DH begins to carefully back away upstage left, still hiding behind the picket sign.

DW: *(Feigning innocence.)* Who said I was leaving that way?

OZ: It's for emergencies only.

DW: This IS an emergency, you imbecile. I need to find my dear husband and get the hell out.

OZ: Sorry, that doesn't count.

MRS. PEALE: *(Singing.)* The bombs bursting in air—

DW: Fine. *(Steps upstage toward DH, who is blocking her way.)* Out of my way! *(Simultaneously they step left. Then step right. Then left again.)* What are you, an idiot? I said out of my way!

DH: Sorry. *(Steps aside.)* No speak-a En-gless.

DW begins to leave but turns and suspiciously glances at DH, who is now slowly backing downstage. DW confronts DH, pushing the sign away from his face.

MRS. PEALE: *(Singing.)* Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.

DH: Hola, Senora.

DW: WHERE have you BEEN!

DH: Well—

DW: *(Looks him over in astonishment.)* WHERE ARE YOUR CLOTHES!?

DH: Uh, he has them. *(Points off.)*

DW: He?

DH: I think his name is Isaiah.

DW: Why does he have your clothes?!

DH: You're not going to like the answer.

MRS. PEALE: *(Singing.)* Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave—

DW: *(Begins to back him downstage left.)* Why didn't you answer your phone?

DH: Bad reception?

DW: I have been calling, and calling, and calling you!

DH: I was in the bathroom... with Isaiah.

DW: What were you doing in the bathroom with Isaiah?

DH: Well ...

ISAIAH enters upstage right in a run carrying DH's pants, shirt, and shoes, and the stolen alarm clock. He stops and looks off, breathless.

DH: There he is now! Isaiah!

ISAIAH: What?!

DH: Tell my wife I was in the bathroom with you.

ISAIAH: I don't have time! *(Glances off right.)* I've got to hide!

MRS. PEALE: *(Singing.)* O'er the land of the free—

DH: Please!

ISAIAH: Alright, alright! Lady I was in the bathroom with your husband.

DW: WHY?

ISAIAH: Because he's just the right size.

DW is shocked speechless. At once, DOT enters upstage left in a run. She sees ISIAH and clambers across the bed for him.

DOT: GIVE ME MY CLOCK!

ISIAH screams. DW screams.

MRS. PEALE: *(Singing loudly.)* And the home of the brave...

Blackout. Curtain.

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