Wrong Window!

by Billy Van Zandt
& Jane Milmore

A Samuel French Acting Edition



SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830
NEW YORK HOLLYWOOD LONDON TORONTO
SAMUELFRENCH.COM

Copyright © 2010 by Billy Van Zandt Living Trust
and Jane Milmore Living Trust

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Cover Photography by Danny Sanchez
Cover Graphic Design by Kevin Cosme
Actors: Billy Van Zandt and Jane Milmore

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that *WRONG WINDOW!* is subject to a Licensing Fee. It is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, the British Commonwealth, including Canada, and all other countries of the Copyright Union. All rights, including professional, amateur, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved. In its present form the play is dedicated to the reading public only.

The amateur live stage performance rights to *WRONG WINDOW!* are controlled exclusively by Samuel French, Inc., and licensing arrangements and performance licenses must be secured well in advance of presentation. PLEASE NOTE that amateur Licensing Fees are set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. When applying for a licensing quotation and a performance license please give us the number of performances intended, dates of production, your seating capacity and admission fee. Licensing Fees are payable one week before the opening performance of the play to Samuel French, Inc., at 45 W. 25th Street, New York, NY 10010.

Licensing Fee of the required amount must be paid whether the play is presented for charity or gain and whether or not admission is charged.

Stock licensing fees quoted upon application to Samuel French, Inc.

For all other rights than those stipulated above, apply to: Samuel French, Inc. 45 West 25th Street, New York, NY 10010.

Particular emphasis is laid on the question of amateur or professional readings, permission and terms for which must be secured in writing from Samuel French, Inc.

Copying from this book in whole or in part is strictly forbidden by law, and the right of performance is not transferable.

Whenever the play is produced the following notice must appear on all programs, printing and advertising for the play: "Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc."

Due authorship credit must be given on all programs, printing and advertising for the play.

ISBN 978-0-573-69832-3 Printed in U.S.A. #29621

No one shall commit or authorize any act or omission by which the copyright of, or the right to copyright, this play may be impaired.

No one shall make any changes in this play for the purpose of production.

Publication of this play does not imply availability for performance. Both amateurs and professionals considering a production are strongly advised in their own interests to apply to Samuel French, Inc., for written permission before starting rehearsals, advertising, or booking a theatre.

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means, now known or yet to be invented, including mechanical, electronic, photocopying, recording, videotaping, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

MUSIC USE NOTE

Licensees are solely responsible for obtaining formal written permission from copyright owners to use copyrighted music in the performance of this play and are strongly cautioned to do so. If no such permission is obtained by the licensee, then the licensee must use only original music that the licensee owns and controls. Licensees are solely responsible and liable for all music clearances and shall indemnify the copyright owners of the play and their licensing agent, Samuel French, Inc., against any costs, expenses, losses and liabilities arising from the use of music by licensees.

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of *WRONG WINDOW! must* give credit to the Author of the Play in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play, and in all instances in which the title of the Play appears for the purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production. The name of the Author *must* appear on a separate line on which no other name appears, immediately following the title and *must* appear in size of type not less than fifty percent of the size of the title type.

WRONG WINDOW! opened May 23, 2008, at the Brookdale College Performing Arts Center, in Lincroft, New Jersey, under the direction of Mark Fleming. It was produced by Noel Kubel and Jack Ryan. The assistant director was Francesca Vannucci, with set design by Noel Kubel, light and sound design by Chris Woolley, costume design by Kitty Cleary, and properties by Jen Lucero. Photography was by Danny Sanchez, graphic design was by Kevin Cosme, and the stage manager was Lauren Cervasio. The cast was as follows:

MARNIE ELBIES . . . . . Jane Milmore
JEFF ELBIES . . . . . Billy Van Zandt
ROBBIE . . . . . Glenn Jones
MIDGE . . . . . Susan Travers
THOR LARSWALD . . . . . .Art Neill
LILA LARSWALD . . . . . .Jennifer Bukavec
LOOMIS . . . . . Jeff Babey
DETECTIVE DOYLE THOMAS . . . . . .Geoff Shields

and the birds played themselves...

CHARACTERS

Marnie Elbies

Jeff Elbies

Robbie

Midge

Thor Larswald

Lila Larswald

Loomis

Detective Doyle Thomas

ACT ONE

Scene One

(Curtain rises on a New York high-rise apartment, tastefully furnished. An older building. An upstage left door leads to the apartment building hallway. A downstage left archway leads off to the kitchen area. An upstage right door opens to a coat closet. A downstage right archway leads off to the bedroom/bathroom area.)

(A large picture window takes the entire upstage wall, out of which we can see across a courtyard into a mirror apartment.)

*(**AT RISE,** it is dusk.* **MARNIE ELBIES** *is staring out the upstage window through a large pair of binoculars. She is dressed for a night on the town.* **JEFF ELBIES** *enters from the stage left archway to see her spying at window.)*

JEFF. Through her rear window and the eye of her powerful binoculars she was spellbound watching a great city tell on itself, exposing its cheating ways…

MARNIE. *(still looking out window)* Don't make fun of my hobbies. I have to tell you, not much has changed in the year I've been gone, Jeff. The bald guy in 6C still plays the piano with no pants on.

JEFF. Shame on you, spying on our neighbors. How would you feel if…

(taking out binoculars to spy on something across the way)

Whoa, Nellie.

MARNIE. Who is that?

JEFF. Nellie. In ten C. She moved in last month.

MARNIE. Wow. Those are not real.

JEFF. Of course they're real – they just knocked a lamp off the table.

*(***MARNIE** *laughs, looks at* **JEFF**.*)*

MARNIE. Oh, my. Don't you look handsome.

JEFF. Yes, yes I do.

(She looks him over with her binoculars.)

MARNIE. Best view in the building.

JEFF. Be careful with those things. Objects may appear larger than they actually are, so don't get too excited.

*(***MARNIE** *puts down the binoculars and straightens* **JEFF***'s tie.)*

MARNIE. Too late.

*(***MARNIE** *puts her arms around him and they kiss.)*

JEFF. I'm so happy you moved back home.

MARNIE. Me, too. Let's not do that ever, ever again.

JEFF. I believe it was you, Mrs. Elbies, who wanted some time apart. I was perfectly happy with us and our "predictable" marriage. But then again, I am an unexciting stick-in-the-mud.

MARNIE. I said that?

JEFF. I'm afraid you did.

MARNIE. Can we just blame it on a mid-life crisis?

JEFF. If you like. You know, I was thinking of having one myself. Can you see me? I could dye my hair blonde, buy a Porsche, and walk around the apartment in a Speedo.

MARNIE. *(giggling as she kisses his neck)* Please don't.

(They kiss.)

(SFX: BUZZER)

(It is loud and jarring.)

That's Robbie and Midge.

JEFF. Do they always sound like that? Remember where we left off.

*(***JEFF** *opens the door.* **ROBBIE** *and* **MIDGE** *enter. They are best friends and neighbors from the building. They are dressed for dinner.* **ROBBIE** *carries a bottle of champagne.)*

ROBBIE. Hey, what's the big idea? You look nicer than we do.

MIDGE. That's because they're madly in love.

ROBBIE. So are we.

MIDGE. We are? Oh, that's right.

JEFF. Champagne. Is that for us?

ROBBIE. Unless you have a boat for us to christen.

JEFF. I'll get some glasses.

*(***JEFF** *exits to the kitchen.* **ROBBIE** *starts to follow.)*

ROBBIE. Glad you're back, Marnie.

MARNIE. Me, too.

ROBBIE. We missed you.

*(***ROBBIE** *exits to the kitchen.)*

MIDGE. *(sotto)* You sure about this – getting back together?

MARNIE. Yes!

MIDGE. He still hardly ever leaves the building during the day.

MARNIE. He's going to therapy for that.

MIDGE. I know. It's just that he doesn't seem any different. If I were you I would have gone with that young editor who worked on your last book. What was his name, Ian?

MARNIE. Yes. He's too young. And I love Jeff.

MIDGE. You'd have to – to move back into New York City in July.

*(***JEFF** *and* **ROBBIE** *return with four glasses.)*

JEFF. Here you go, Midge. Come and get your Irish on.

ROBBIE. How was California?

MARNIE. Beautiful. Sunny. Lonely.

JEFF. A toast –

(Brownout)

(The lights flicker and go out, along with the air conditioner which whines down.)

(SFX: AC WINDS DOWN)

(Then the power pops back on.)

(SFX: AC BLOWER STARTS UP [fade out as scene continues])

JEFF. What the – Dammit.

MIDGE. Another brownout. Third one this week!

ROBBIE. Please don't let the AC go out. At least you didn't have brownouts in California.

MARNIE. Actually, we did.

ROBBIE. You did? Man, they steal everything from us out there. They stole the Dodgers. The movie business. Police brutality.

MIDGE. They can't steal our seasons.

MARNIE. Oh, they have their own seasons. Earthquake, fire, mudslide, and TV pilot.

(All laugh. **JEFF** *toasts.)*

JEFF. A toast – to great friends. And to coming home.

MAN'S VOICE. *(off)* Go screw yourself.

(They look around, confused.)

JEFF. Excuse me?

ROBBIE. Where'd that come from?

FEMALE VOICE. *(off)* Maybe I will! It'll be a lot better than waiting around for you to do something!

(They stop and try to place the direction of the noise. In the apartment across the courtyard. We see **THOR LARSWALD** *[50's], a huge threatening-looking man in a wife beater t-shirt and work pants. He argues with* **LILA LARSWALD**, *his sexy younger wife who wears a body hugging yoga leotard.)*

MARNIE. That's the Larswalds. And I don't think they're talking to us.

JEFF. I hope not.

MIDGE. That's pretty loud.

MARNIE. It's the courtyard. You know how it acts like a megaphone.

MIDGE. Hear anything juicy?

MARNIE. Not really. I try not to eavesdrop.

JEFF. She's such a liar.

(A bird appears unnoticed on the ledge outside the Elbie's window. The argument continues in the upstage apartment. Most of the following words are muffled.)

LILA. *(off)* I don't know where you're getting these stories from. Nothing happened!

THOR. *(off)* My ass, nothing happened! You know how this makes me look?

(Another bird appears on the ledge unnoticed.)

MARNIE. I can't hear everything they're saying.

MIDGE. I know. They're too far away.

ROBBIE. Move closer to the window.

(They all move in to hear better. **JEFF** *sees the birds and flips out.)*

JEFF. Birds!!

(The others react as the bird flies away. **JEFF** *is frozen solid, sweating and panicked.)*

(The light continues to grow darker throughout the scene.)

MARNIE. Omigod. Jeff. Jeff?

*(***JEFF** *can't breathe.)*

MIDGE. It's okay, Jeff. It's gone.

ROBBIE. Look at him. He's sweating like he has malaria.

MARNIE. Honey? Jeff? Are you okay?

JEFF. Can't…breathe.

MARNIE. Breathe slow. It's okay.

MIDGE. I thought he was seeing somebody about that.

ROBBIE. He is. But it doesn't mean that the guy's any good.

MARNIE. Jeff. Jeff? He's coming around.

JEFF. I'm okay. I'm okay. I'm sorry. Sorry. I have to sit.

MARNIE. You poor thing.

(They help him to the sofa. He still can't breathe.)

MIDGE. It's gotta be tough living in the City when you're afraid of birds. There are more birds per square inch here than anywhere on Earth – except the arm of that old lady in "Mary Poppins."

MARNIE. His therapist says he's doing better. Really.

JEFF. *(lightening the mood)* Yeah, I can eat Bird's Eye frozen peas now.

MIDGE. I can't imagine what it's like living with that.

*(***MIDGE** *shoots* **MARNIE** *a look that gives double meaning to her words.)*

MARNIE. Everybody's afraid of something.

MIDGE. Yeah. Normal things. Vertigo. Ventriloquist dummies. People with small hands. But nothing like that.

ROBBIE. Midge, if you were on vacation in Bodega Bay and a seagull flew inside your car causing a ten car accident and you wound up in a body cast for six months, I think you'd be afraid of birds, too.

*(***MARNIE** *gets his champagne. Behind them, the shades are lowered in the Larswald apartment.)*

MARNIE. Here. Drink this. There are no birds in here. That was five years ago and you are so much better now.

*(***MARNIE** *hands him his glass.)*

JEFF. Thank you. I'm sorry.

THOR. Shut up!

ROBBIE. There he goes again. Shut up yourself. Hey, they lowered the shades.

MARNIE. That guy creeps me out.

MIDGE. He's a psycho. And he's been acting even weirder since you moved back.

MARNIE. I noticed that, too. Why do you suppose that is?

ROBBIE. Maybe 'cause you stare at him with binoculars while he beats his wife.

JEFF. I think it's just that they wanted our apartment and were hoping we'd get a divorce and move out.

MIDGE. Why? They have the same apartment you do.

MARNIE. Yes, but we have the renovated kitchen and bath.

(They hear more of a fight. We can only make out every other word.)

THOR. I should have expected this. You were a whore when I met you and you're always gonna be a whore. Why don't you just get the hell out!

LILA. Who's gonna make me, big man? You? You're all talk! Nothing but talk!

THOR. Yeah? Here's some talk!

(A horrible thud.)

MARNIE. What was that?

(The argument continues in the Larswald apartment. Their dialogue is MUFFLED. The foursome plasters itself against walls to eavesdrop better.)

MARNIE. What's he saying?

ROBBIE. Can't make it out.

MARNIE. Open the front door. Maybe we can hear down the hallway.

*(***JEFF** *opens the front door. We hear more muffled arguing.)*

MARNIE. Can you hear them?

JEFF. Not really. He either said 'I'm going to kill you' or 'can you get me a glass of water.'

MIDGE. Something's going on over there, that's for sure. I wonder if it's about another man.

*(***JEFF** *spills his champagne.)*

MARNIE. Jeff! Are you all right?

JEFF. Fine. I'm fine. Sorry. Thought it was a bird.

MARNIE. Why do you think there's another man?

MIDGE. Oh, you know. Rumors around the laundry room.

JEFF. Rumors? You can't listen to rumors. God, I'd hate to hear what people say about Marnie and me.

MIDGE. Yes, you would.

ROBBIE. Hey, are we going to eat or what?

MARNIE. Okay. Let me get my earrings. I'll be right back.

MIDGE. I'm coming with you. I want to see the new furniture.

(to boys)

Keep an ear out.

*(***ROBBIE** *makes his ears stick out with his fingers.* **MIDGE** *laughs.* **MARNIE** *exits to the bedroom.* **MIDGE** *goes with her.)*

ROBBIE. Good, she's gone. Where's the new girl Nellie with the big fake bazookas?

*(***ROBBIE** *grabs the binoculars.* **JEFF** *grabs them back and sets them down, anxious to discuss something before the girls get back.)*

JEFF. Robbie. I have something to tell you. But you've got to swear not to tell anybody.

ROBBIE. Are you gay?

JEFF. What? No! Why would you say that?

ROBBIE. Sorry, I had a conversation with my brother that started the exact same way. Sorry. What did you want to tell me?

*(***JEFF** *looks off to the bedroom and back.)*

JEFF. All right. Here it is. Marnie can never know about this. But while she and I were separated and she was in L.A…I had an affair with Lila.

ROBBIE. Whoa.

JEFF. I know. It was very short-lived, and stupid. It should never have happened. But it did. I've been sick about

it ever since. I can't let Marnie know. She'd never forgive me. Promise me you won't say anything.

ROBBIE. I promise. I just have one question.

JEFF. What's that?

ROBBIE. Who's Lila?

JEFF. Lila Larswald. The woman we just heard fighting with her husband.

ROBBIE. The sexy yoga teacher? Wow. You *really* aren't gay.

JEFF. Shh!

ROBBIE. Who could blame you?

JEFF. Marnie. I think Marnie could blame me pretty good.

ROBBIE. Wow, you downward dog, you. Why didn't you ever tell me?

JEFF. She's married. I felt like a creep and I ended it. If I told you, you might tell Midge, and she might tell Marnie and…What's the difference? The point is, I think that's what they're fighting about over there.

ROBBIE. Man, she's hot.

(The girls return. There's a slight beat, and then **ROBBIE** *continues.)*

As I was saying…the only thing we see from our apartment is Mr. MacGuffin in 4D. He's always sitting on his toilet with the door open facing our dining room table. And sometimes he waves at me. I think there's something wrong with him.

JEFF. You think?

MIDGE. We eat out a lot now.

MARNIE. Jeff, have you seen my topaz earrings? I can't find them anywhere.

JEFF. Really? That's the second pair you've lost since you moved back. I'll buy you new ones. A new start. New earrings.

MIDGE. That's so romantic. When's the last time you bought me earrings, Robbie?

ROBBIE. You don't need them. Your ear lobes are long enough as it is. Besides, you get any more jewelry and our side of the building is going to tilt.

THOR. You think this is funny?

LILA. Yes, I do. You're the biggest joke I know!

MARNIE. There they go again.

(More muffled fighting between the upstage couple. Only a few words can be made out. But the tone is crystal clear. Ugly and abusive.)

THOR. Wipe that smile off your face!

FEMALE VOICE. *(off)* Shut up, up there!

THOR. Shut up yourself, down there, you sour bitch!

LILA. Happy? The whole building can hear you!

THOR. Let 'em! I'm through with you! I'll send you back to Dublin in a boat with your beer smellin' mother! See how you like that?

LILA. Leave me alone! Don't you touch me, you fat pig!

(The girls are mesmerized. At the same time they feel guilty and giggle.)

JEFF. So, are we going to go eat?

ALL. Shhh!

MARNIE. In a minute. I want to hear what happens.

JEFF. Marnie. Mind your own business.

MARNIE. Leave me alone. You can't go out until it's dark out anyway.

ROBBIE. No birds out at night.

MIDGE. What about owls?

*(***JEFF** *reacts.)*

ROBBIE. What are they fighting about?

MARNIE. Can't tell. But I bet it's about sex.

ROBBIE. It's definitely about sex.

MIDGE. You can't even hear them. How do you know it's about sex?

ROBBIE. I pretty sure I heard the words "up yours."

(SFX: A VASE SMASHES in the Larswald apartment.)

JEFF. Jeez. What was that?

(They stare and see nothing.)

MARNIE. Should we call someone?

JEFF. No. It's none of our business. Stop looking over there.

MIDGE. I love this. It's like a free show before we go to dinner.

(It is now completely dark out.)

(More muffled fighting. Suddenly we see the silhouette of a man lifting a woman's body and carrying her off.)

MARNIE. Omigod. What's he doing now?

MIDGE. Is she naked? She looks naked! Isn't that the silhouette of a naked woman?

ROBBIE. It certainly is. Jackpot!

(silence)

MARNIE. Ooh! Headed for the bedroom.

JEFF. Show's over, I guess.

MIDGE. What a gyp. Right when it gets to the good part.

ROBBIE. Looks like it's time for a little tantrum sex.

MARNIE. You mean tantric sex.

ROBBIE. Not the way they're doing it.

(They all laugh.)

(to **JEFF***, concerned, sotto)* You okay?

(The girls look befuddled.)

JEFF. Of course I'm okay. Why wouldn't I be okay? You okay?

ROBBIE. Yeah.

JEFF. Okay then.

MIDGE. Damn. You can't see in the bedroom from here.

MARNIE. Not from the bathroom either – even if you stand on the tub.

(off their looks)

MARNIE. *(cont.)* Not that I ever tried to do that.

*(***MIDGE** *studies other neighbors apartments.)*

MIDGE. Well, then who else have you got?

(All look off in a different direction.)

ROBBIE. Third floor down, the one with the torn curtain.

LADY. *(off)* Hey! What are you looking at?!

(Laughing, the foursome plasters itself against the sides of the window walls so as to not be seen. Once they are out of sight, **THOR LARSWALD** *stares out from behind his shade into their apartment. Seeing nothing he lowers his shade again. The foursome pops back out and sneaks one last look at the lady who yelled.)*

(off) Take a good look, you perverts!

(All react.)

ROBBIE. My eyes!

JEFF. Oh, that was ugly.

MIDGE. I can never look her in the face again.

MARNIE. That wasn't her face.

JEFF. Dinner?

MARNIE. God, yes.

(The girls grab their purses, and the foursome heads out the front door stage left)

ROBBIE. *(rubbing his eyes)* I think I'm gay now.

MIDGE. Yeah, blame her.

(The **FOURSOME** *exits. The silhouette of* **THOR***, looking remarkably like Alfred Hitchcock, goes by the upstage window and poses at center.)*

(blackout)

Scene Two

(JEFF & MARNIE'S APARTMENT – TWO DAYS LATER – AFTERNOON)

*(***JEFF** *enters from the front door returning from a trip to the downstairs mailbox. He goes through a bundle of mail. He finds a manila envelope. Curious, he opens it. He thumbs through some naked Polaroids.)*

JEFF. What the hell…?

(He checks the envelope for a return address. He looks inside the envelope. He reacts. Looks to the apartment behind him, and back to the Polaroids. **MARNIE** *enters the apartment all excited and carrying flyers. He hides the photos in the envelope.)*

MARNIE. Jeff! Jeff! Omigod. You are not going to believe this. It's all over the news. She's missing. She's missing!

JEFF. Who's missing?

MARNIE. Lila Larswald. Who do you think?

JEFF. What?

*(***MARNIE** *hands him a flyer.)*

MARNIE. Look at this. There are flyers up and down the street. I told you something happened the other night.

JEFF. Lila's missing?

MARNIE. What are we going to do about it?

JEFF. What do you mean? What are we going to do about what?

MARNIE. Well, we can't just sit here.

JEFF. We're standing.

MARNIE. Jeff.

JEFF. Sorry. What exactly do you expect us to do?

MARNIE. We should call the police.

JEFF. And tell them what? We don't know where she is.

MARNIE. That's because she's probably dead.

JEFF. Dead? What are you talking about? How did you jump to that?

MARNIE. It's an obvious conclusion. Thor Larswald killed her.

JEFF. Marnie, slow down. This isn't one of your books. Nobody killed anyone. We didn't witness anything.

MARNIE. Is she missing or what?

JEFF. Yes, but –

MARNIE. Coincidentally right after the big fight we saw.

JEFF. We saw them fight. But then we saw them go off to the bedroom to have sex.

MARNIE. No, we didn't. We saw him carry what looked like a lifeless body to the bedroom. And now she's missing. The police are going to want to know what we heard and saw.

*(***MARNIE** *goes to the phone.* **JEFF** *stops her.)*

JEFF. All we saw were shadows. And all we heard was *(inaudible mumbling).*

MARNIE. Are you making fun of me?

JEFF. Well, yes, I think I am.

MARNIE. But –

JEFF. I'm sorry, but you sound like a lunatic. We're having a argument right now. But that doesn't mean I'm going to kill you.

(in evil voice)

Or does it?

MARNIE. Jeff, 99 percent of the time when a woman is missing, it's because she's dead. And it's usually the husband who killed her. Or the boyfriend.

*(***JEFF** *reacts.)*

JEFF. That can't be true.

MARNIE. Yes, it is. I've sold nine best-selling gothic murder mysteries. I know how it works. Murder victims almost always know their murderers. I didn't imagine what happened the other night. The four of us might have been the last people to see Lila alive. Aren't you even concerned?

JEFF. Yes. About you over-reacting. You call the police now and they find out who you are and it'll look like some kind of bad taste publicity stunt. Maybe Lila and Thor had a fight and she went to her mother's. You ever think about that?

(SFX: BUZZER)

MARNIE. Then she'd be at her mother's. Not missing.

(The door opens, revealing **MIDGE** *who is carrying flyers, too.)*

MIDGE. Oh, my God. Did you guys see this – ?

MARNIE. Jeff won't let me call the police.

MIDGE. Neither will Robbie. He says we've called so many times about Mr. MacGuffin and his open bathroom door they'd just think I was a nutjob anyway.

JEFF. Is Robbie downstairs?

MIDGE. Yes. He's installing mirrors on our window to try and blind Mr. MacGuffin.

*(***JEFF** *takes the envelope off the desk.)*

JEFF. Good. I have to talk him about something. While I'm gone, feel free to let your imaginations run wild.

MARNIE. Sure. Make fun of my imagination. That's how I make a living.

JEFF. Yeah? Well, here's a good title for your next book: "Milady, Mind Your Own Business." And don't call anybody!

*(***JEFF** *exits. The girls look at the Larswald apartment and back to the flyers.)*

MARNIE. *(staring at the flyer)* Isn't it awful?

MIDGE. I've seen her look better.

MARNIE. I mean about her being missing.

MIDGE. I think something bad happened the other night.

MARNIE. So do I. I wish we could find some proof.

(They both look across at the apartment.)

MIDGE. Of what?

MARNIE. Where she is, where she went. If she's, you know, even alive.

MIDGE. You think she's dead?

MARNIE. Don't you?

MIDGE. Yes, but I didn't want to say it.

MARNIE. I wish we could get in there and look around.

MIDGE. In where?

MARNIE. Their apartment, what do you think? Thor's at work. I saw him leave this morning. I know his schedule. We're good for a few hours at least.

MIDGE. Oh, Marnie, I don't know.

MARNIE. I do.

MIDGE. How would we even get in?

MARNIE. Like this.

*(***MARNIE** *goes to the phone and dials.)*

MIDGE. Who are you calling? Jeff said not to –

MARNIE. Loomis? This is Mrs. Elbies in 10B. Could you come up here, please? It's an emergency. Thanks.

(She hangs up.)

MARNIE. He'll be right here. He's painting the empty apartment down the hall.

MIDGE. Loomis isn't going to let you in their apartment.

MARNIE. I know that. I'm going to slip their apartment key off his key ring. He uses his passkey anyway. He'll never know it's missing.

MIDGE. Won't he notice you grabbing at his pants?

MARNIE. Not if you're distracting him. All you have to do is flirt with him.

MIDGE. With Loomis?

MARNIE. Yes. You still remember how to flirt, don't you?

MIDGE. Yes. It's been a few years. But, yeah, I think I can catch a handyman's eye if I have to.

(SFX: BUZZER)

LOOMIS. Mrs. Elbies? It's Loomis.

*(***MARNIE** *lets in* **LOOMIS**, *a crusty, semi-retarded handyman. He is paint spattered.)*

MARNIE. Hello, Loomis. Thank you for coming up right away.

LOOMIS. No problem. So what's the problem? Forgive the pun.

MIDGE. What pun?

MARNIE. Oh. Uh…I was wondering if you could take a look at my closet doorknob. You know, the one you've been promising to fix since before I moved away.

LOOMIS. That's your emergency?

(makes game show buzzer sound)

No can do. I don't carry all my tools with me at one time. You know how many wrenches I have? How many paint brushes? How many screwdrivers?

(He waits for an answer.)

MARNIE. I'm supposed to answer that? No idea.

LOOMIS. *(makes game show buzzer sound)* Twenty-three. Thirty-four. And nine. Oh, look at the time. I'll have to come back another time. Forgive the pun.

(He starts to exit.)

MARNIE. Wait. While you're here, can you at least…check the radiator and make sure it's turned off? It's supposed to break a hundred today. I think it might still be on. Even with the air conditioning. Don't you feel how hot it is in here?

*(***MARNIE** *motions to* **MIDGE** *to get flirting.)*

MIDGE. *(in her best breathy sexy voice)* So hot.

*(***LOOMIS** *looks at* **MIDGE** *quizzically, then continues talking to* **MARNIE**.*)*

LOOMIS. I don't know. You know how many things I have on my to do list? Mr. MacGuffin hasn't been able to flush his toilet for two days.

MIDGE. Yes, I know.

MARNIE. Oh, please? You're already here.

MIDGE. Please? It's so hot.

*(***MIDGE** *unbuttons a button on her blouse and fans herself with it.* **LOOMIS** *stops to watch her.* **MARNIE** *moves behind* **LOOMIS**. **MIDGE** *starts to make flirting faces.)*

LOOMIS. *(to* **MARNIE***)* Well, only because I'm such a big fan and…

(to **MIDGE***)*

What's the matter with you? Constipated?

MIDGE. No. It's just that I'm sooooo hot.

LOOMIS. You don't have to tell me how hot it is. It's like a log flume ride in my pants.

(As **MIDGE** *fans herself again, behind* **LOOMIS***' back* **MARNIE** *gets the key ring off his belt.)*

MIDGE. Good job.

LOOMIS. What?

MIDGE. You always do a good job.

*(***MARNIE** *rifles through the keys looking for the correct one.)*

MIDGE. Every single time I pass you on the stairs and see you hauling out a big bag of garbage or hosing down the dog crap on the sidewalks, I have to stop and watch you. I don't know what it is.

LOOMIS. *(makes game show buzzer sound)* I do. It's the uniform. Makes the ladies shakes in their panties. We all affect women like that. Firemen, handymen, crossing guards. Wearing this, I could have had old Mrs. Villars on the second floor if she hadn't, you know, had a heart attack and croaked the day the Pope came to New York.

MIDGE. Right. …The radiator?

LOOMIS. I guess I could spare a few minutes.

(He hitches his belt.)

MIDGE. It's right over here.

*(***MIDGE** *poses seductively against the wall near the radiator* **LOOMIS** *swaggers over. She pretends to melt.)*

MIDGE. Ooh, look at those big strong hands.

LOOMIS. Little lady, you ain't seen nothing yet.

*(***LOOMIS** *bends over to feel the radiator, he exposes his butt crack.* **MARNIE** *and* **MIDGE** *react.* **LOOMIS** *feels all around the radiator.* **MARNIE** *moves behind* **LOOMIS**.*)*

That thing's as cold as old Mrs. Villars.

(As **LOOMIS** *bends over with* **MIDGE**, **MARNIE** *reaches past his plumber's crack and puts the ring back on* **LOOMIS***' belt loop without his noticing.)*

(She stands up and holds the key up behind his back to show **MIDGE** *she's finished. But as she does, she accidentally drops the key down* **LOOMIS***' plumber's crack.)*

*(***MARNIE** *cringes at the idea of retrieving the key.* **MIDGE** *motions "just do it".* **MARNIE** *goes to reach down his crack but can't bring herself to do it. She builds up her courage, holds her nose and reaches for it, but suddenly* **LOOMIS** *stands up.* **MARNIE** *checks the floor for the key to fall out – it doesn't.)*

See? I told you. It's off.

*(***MIDGE** *stares at* **MARNIE** *and shrugs.* **MARNIE** *slaps his back, then checks the floor – no key.)*

MARNIE. Hooray, it's off!

*(***MARNIE** *takes* **LOOMIS** *by the hands and jumps up and down.)*

It's off! It's off!

*(***MARNIE** *looks to the floor. No key. She does it again jumping harder.)*

It's off! It's off!

*(***MIDGE** *joins in the jumping.)*

MIDGE. Hooray for Loomis!

LOOMIS. Easy. Easy. I just ate a taco. Ooh. Just threw up in my mouth a little bit.

(The key falls out of his pant leg and hits the floor.)

LOOMIS. What was that?

MARNIE. It's nothing. I dropped a quarter.

*(***MARNIE** *quickly pockets the key and shoves him towards the door.)*

MARNIE. Well, you better get back to painting that apartment. I've got to get back to working on my new book.

LOOMIS. Hey. You know what you should write? A sequel to "Scent of a Pirate." Ever think about "Scent of a Handyman?"

MARNIE. I'm thinking of it right now.

(BLACKOUT)

Scene Three

(THE LARSWALD APARTMENT – later)

(This is a mirror image of Jeff and Marnie's place, but decorated in stark modern furnishings. The door upstage right leads to the apartment building hallway. The downstage right archway leads off to kitchen. The door upstage left is a closet. And the archway downstage left leads off to the bedroom and bath. At rise the apartment is empty.)

(Key rattles in the door. The door opens. **MARNIE** *and* **MIDGE** *sneak inside on tiptoes. They look around.)*

MARNIE. You look over there. I'll look over here.

MIDGE. What are we looking for?

MARNIE. Clues.

MIDGE. Here's a clue. They have terrible taste.

MARNIE. Smells like death.

MIDGE. That's me. Sorry. I'm a little nervous.

MARNIE. I'll check the bathroom. If he killed her, he probably did it in there and washed her blood down the bathtub drain.

MIDGE. Eww.

*(***MARNIE** *exits to the bedroom archway. Silence as* **MIDGE** *tiptoes around.* **MIDGE** *goes to open the closet door.)*

MARNIE. *(off)* No! Oh, no!!!

*(***MARNIE** *enters from the bedroom with a dress.)*

MARNIE. Look at this. I bought the same dress at Sak's. And she got it for $200 less!

MIDGE. What else did you find?

MARNIE. Lila's clothes are all over the room. Her good jewelry is still in her jewelry box. And her make-up kit is sitting on the sink. That proves she's not on a trip. She's just gone.

MIDGE. What now?

MARNIE. The kitchen. I want to see the knives.

MIDGE. Put the dress back first.

MARNIE. *(handing* **MIDGE** *the porn)* Here. You do it. I want to check the –

*(***JEFF** *and* **ROBBIE** *are seen at the upstage apartment window – staring, horrified that their wives are in the neighbor's apartment.)*

Look at those creeps in that apartment peeking at us.

MIDGE. That's your apartment.

MARNIE. Oh, my God, it is. It looks so different from here. That's Jeff and Robbie. Why are they waving at us?

MIDGE. They're not waving. They're trying to tell us something.

MARNIE. What?

(SFX: NOISE AT DOOR.)

MARNIE. Oh my God.

MIDGE. Shit.

MARNIE. Hide!

*(***MARNIE** *and* **MIDGE** *panic and scramble.* **MARNIE** *hides in the kitchen.* **MIDGE** *hides in the bedroom taking the porn magazines with her.)*

*(***THOR LARSWALD** *enters with a brown paper bag. He kicks off his shoes and starts taking off his shirt, revealing a wife-beater T-shirt, as he crosses for the bedroom.* **MARNIE***'s head pops out of the kitchen archway, then ducks back.* **THOR** *exits to the bedroom. Silence.* **MARNIE** *sneaks out a few feet waiting for the worst.)*

(SFX: SHOWER)

*(***THOR** *re-enters, still dressed, carrying a towel.* **MARNIE** *hides behind the sofa just in time.* **THOR** *tosses the towel on the sofa as he crosses to the kitchen with the paper bag.* **MARNIE** *pops up from behind the sofa.* **MIDGE** *enters from the bedroom, soaking wet – obviously she'd hidden in the shower.* **MARNIE** *grabs the towel and*

throws it on **MIDGE***'s head.* **THOR** *starts to re-enter from the kitchen.* **MARNIE** *quickly pulls* **MIDGE** *and the towel into the closet.)*

*(***THOR** *walks towards the bedroom archway. He slips on the water and falls. He rises, looks at the water on the floor.)*

THOR. What the…

*(***THOR** *looks for the towel, it's missing. He must have left it in the bathroom. He exits to the bathroom, wondering how the water out into the living room. After he exits, the shower goes off.)*

(SFX: SHOWER OFF)

*(***MARNIE** *and* **MIDGE** *peek out to see if the coast is clear. It is. They exit the closet and race to the front door.)*

(SFX: BUZZER)

(The girls panic and hide back in the closet.)

(SFX: BUZZER)

*(***THOR** *enters and goes to the front door.)*

Who is it?

JEFF. *(off)* Jeff Elbies.

*(***THOR** *hesitates, then:)*

THOR. What do you want?

JEFF. Can you open the door? Please. It's very important.

*(***THOR** *opens the door.* **JEFF** *tries peeking past* **THOR** *during the following. He holds a unopened newspaper rolled up in plastic.)*

THOR. What?

JEFF. Your newspaper's out here.

THOR. So? What do you want?

JEFF. What do you want?

THOR. What do you mean?

JEFF. What do YOU mean?

THOR. What's the matter with you? What are you doing here?

JEFF. *(trying to see past)* What are YOU doing here?

THOR. What do you mean, what am I doing here? I live here.

*(***MARNIE** *and* **MIDGE** *peek out of the closet, see* **THOR***'s back is to them.)*

JEFF. Did you get off work early?

*(***JEFF** *steps right.* **THOR** *follows stepping to the right of the door frame.)*

THOR. I didn't go to work. My wife is missing.

*(***JEFF** *signals the girls to exit behind* **THOR***'s back.)*

JEFF. Oh, you know about that?

THOR. Yeah, I know about that. What do YOU know about that?

(The **GIRLS** *start tiptoeing to the door behind* **THOR***'s back.)*

JEFF. Nothing. Why would I know anything about that?

THOR. You watch me. And now your wife is back and she watches me. You think I don't see you. But I see you.

*(***THOR** *points behind him to their apartment. The girls quickly duck down behind the sofa.* **THOR** *steps back in front of the door frame, blocking the girls' exit.)*

If you know what's good for you, you'll mind your own business.

*(***JEFF** *reacts.)*

Get the message?

JEFF. Yes. Yes, I did get your message. So what is it you want from me?

*(***THOR** *goes to close the door.)*

THOR. I want you to get the hell out.

*(***JEFF** *takes the newspaper back and drops it on the floor.)*

JEFF. Oh, sorry. Your paper.