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MONEY MATTERS

MICHAEL AND
SUSAN PARKER

SAMUEL FRENCH

Money Matters

Michael and Susan Parker

SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830

UNITED STATES & CANADA
Info@SamuelFrench.com
1-866-598-8449

UNITED KINGDOM & EUROPE
Plays@SamuelFrench-London.co.uk
020-7255-4302

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For Production Enquiries

United States and Canada
Info@SamuelFrench.com
1-866-598-8449

United Kingdom and Europe
Plays@SamuelFrench-London.co.uk
020-7255-4302

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TIME

The Present

PLACE

Monet Manor. A Country Mansion…Somewhere USA.

ACT 1: A late summer afternoon.
ACT 11: The action is continuous.

CHARACTERS.

GEORGE (Age 50+) A kind, good natured soul who has worked almost twenty years for the owners of Monet Manor, Mr. Hammond, who passed away ten years ago and his widow who passed away two weeks ago. He works in the basement printing twenty dollar bills on and old press built many years ago by Mr. Hammond. He is a gentle person, who is, perhaps, influenced too much by his daughter Annie. He probably has never thought much about the fact that he breaks the law every day of his life, but feels he is not doing anyone any harm. He is a total hypochondriac, with every ailment imaginable, *(and some unimaginable*). At first, flattered by Charmaine's attentions (*His daughter's friend*), he begins to realize that he is attracted to their neighbor Marilena, which eventually evolves into a tender love story.
(Caring, thoughtful, always the gentleman.)

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ANNIE (Age 30+) George's daughter. A take charge type, who is probably responsible for the fact that they have got away with their counterfeiting year after year, by rigidly following the credo of Mr. Hammond. She is totally lacking in any sense of humor, but continues to listen patiently to George's jokes, which she never understands. When the manor is unexpectedly bequeathed to a stranger, Bud Davis, she cooks up a plot to persuade him to sell the manor to her and George. When things begin to fall apart, it is Annie who keeps her cool and finds a way out of their predicament.
(Competent, resourceful, quick thinking)

MARILENA. (Age 50+) The neighbor of George and Annie, Marilena is a self-professed psychic. She is The Contesa de Buzau Si Severin *[SEE AUTHORS' NOTES]* from Transylvania, but George refers to her as "The Romanian Fruitcake". She speaks with an accent and occasionally uses Romanian phrases. Her flamboyant personality shines through in manner, dress and movement. She speaks to spirits, and feels the presence of "money" when visiting George and Annie. She is overwhelmed by the attention given to her by "Bud the Stud" Davis, but can she deny her feelings for George?
(Flamboyant, mysterious, eccentric)

CHARMAINE. (Age 30+) An old college friend and sorority sister of Annie's, she is the quintessential Southern Belle. Beautiful and voluptuous, with an over active libido, on principle she puts a move on all men. She has been invited to Monet Manor by Annie to play the role of a ghost, in order to convince Mr. Davis the house is haunted. She quickly realizes that she knows who Davis is, and admits that she had an affair with him years before, and dumped him because he was two-timing her. She embraces her role, eager to help her friend and to thwart the plans of Davis.
(Out going, gushing, demonstrative)

BUD DAVIS. (Age 60+) The current owner of Monet Manor, which was bequeathed to him by Mrs. Hammond, a former paramour. He has little interest in Annie and George's proposal to purchase the manor from him, and never really believes that it is "haunted." Bud's intention for the Manor is to convert it into a retirement home for women, which will only further his hobby, sex. Bud sees himself as a geriatric sex machine, who is more interested in his next conquest then the cash Annie and George are prepared to offer him. *(Slight and frail, charismatic, brazen but likeable)*

BERNARD. (Age 30+) A freelance property appraiser and design consultant hired by Bud to do a cost analysis on the feasibility of turning the Manor into a retirement home for women. He appears to be very motivated by money and making deals. He is never far from his cell phone and becomes very secretive at times. When he discovers the printing press, he forces George and Annie into a deal. At first there appears little they can do to protect themselves from his evil intentions, but in the end, with Charmaine's help, the tables are turned on him. *(Mercenary, self-involved, unscrupulous)*

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ACT I

(It is a late summer afternoon in the main reception room of Monet Manor, Somewhere U.S.A. Monet Manor was owned by the recently deceased widow, Hilda Hammond. Downstage left is an open archway leading to the front entrance. Above it is a table with two chairs, and above that, on the left wall, is a pair of French doors leading to the garden, and Marilena's house. Right is a small bedroom, converted from an office, downstage right in the bedroom is a double bed with side tables. Above the bed is a door to a bathroom. Upstage of the bedroom door is a double hinged door to the kitchen and basement. The entire upstage area is a platform, with a railing, raised perhaps two steps in the center, with an exit left leading to to other parts of the manor. Left will be Annie's, George's, and Bernard's rooms. On the back wall center a bookcase at least six feet tall, with books and a personal computer. On each side of the bookcase is a bedroom door. The right is guest room one, and will be Charmaine's. The left is guest room two and will be Bud's. Center right in the living room is a couch and chair, with a small end table between them.)

(As the curtain rises, ***ANNIE*** *is sitting at the table.* ***ANNIE*** *is age 30+ and a take-charge type who tends to boss her father around. She does not have a great sense of humor, as we shall see. She is rapidly counting out money and putting it into piles. She is dressed casually in a blouse, and either blue jeans or blue jean skirt. The table is covered with stacks of one, five and ten dollar bills in bundles with rubber bands around them. There should appear to be about $80,000 on the table.)*

ANNIE. *(rapidly counting like an experienced bank teller*) Ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty, ninety, one-hundred. *(places the bills in a stack on the table and grabs another handful out of a bag next to her on the floor. This bag should be quite distinctive in design and color with the Greek letters Delta Mu embroidered on it)* Ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty….

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(Enter ***GEORGE*** *from the kitchen with an oil can in his hand.* ***GEORGE*** *is 60'ish and is wearing a checkered shirt, overalls, work boots and a tool belt. He is easy going, with a wry sense of humor. A "gentle" soul, who doesn't see that what he is doing is criminal. He believes it doesn't really hurt anyone.)*

GEORGE. Hi Annie.

ANNIE. *(doesn't stop counting)* Hi Dad, eighty, ninety, one-hundred. *(stops and places the pile on the table)*

GEORGE. *(moves left.)* So, how much did we net on your trip to Boston?

ANNIE. I haven't quite finished counting, but it looks to be almost the same as the eighty-five thousand we printed last month.

GEORGE. Way to go.

ANNIE. It was a good trip, but we've still got to make the most of what little time we may have left. We always assumed Mrs. Hammond would leave us the house when she died and we would be able to go on working the printing press forever. What in heaven's name made her change her mind and leave the house to this Bud Davis guy and not us, I will never understand.

GEORGE. I have to admit it was a shocker when we read the will. After all, Mr. Hammond said he'd always take care of us, and Mrs. Hammond said the same after he died. I always assumed it meant leaving us the house.

ANNIE. What could she have been thinking? She knew about the printing press. Do you suppose she told him about it?

GEORGE. Who? That Davis guy? I don't think she was that foolish. Maybe she thought leaving us the rest of her money was better than the house.

ANNIE. Lot of good that does us. If we had the press we wouldn't need the money. Are you absolutely sure we can't move it?

GEORGE. That's impossible, Mr. Hammond built it thirty years ago, it weighs over a thousand pounds, and it's built in behind a fake brick wall in the basement.

ANNIE. Well if this Davis guy finds it we would be in huge trouble. That's why we have to persuade him to sell us the house. We've got enough money saved up, especially after this last trip.

GEORGE. Tell me again exactly what this Bud Davis said to you when you spoke to him on the phone last week.

ANNIE. Not a whole lot, except he wants to turn the manor into a retirement home for ladies. He is not interested in selling at all, he's hired some sort of designer or architect to advise him about the changes he'll have to make, and they're both coming here later today.

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GEORGE. O.K. then let's get all this cleaned up in case he arrives early. *(sits at the table and grabs a handful of bills and starts to laboriously count)* Ten, *(pauses*), twenty, *(pauses)*....

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ANNIE. *(reaches over and takes the money from him)* Dad please, you do the printing I'll do the passing… and the counting. *(she continues to count)* Thirty, forty, fifty...*(quietly finishes and rubber bands the stack)*

GEORGE. Sure, sure…you get to have all the fun. You traipse all over the country visiting exciting, major cities, while I'm stuck in a dirty, stinky basement working that old printing press getting ink all over my hands. Do you have any idea of how long is takes to get the watermarks on the paper just right? It's terribly hard on my hands. You know I have rheumatoid arthritis, and a constant back ache from working that old press, then there's my bunions….have I told you lately about my bunions?

ANNIE. Not since yesterday Dad, and it's not as glamorous as you think. It's hard work spending eighty-five thousand dollars. It took me three weeks to get rid of all those fake twenties. It's not like I can go and buy a thousand dollar painting and pay for it with twenties and then return it the next day. Stores that give cash refunds are getting harder and harder to find. I sometimes wish we could print fifties and hundreds.

GEORGE. Ah, just remember Mr. Hammond's credo: First, never print more than a twenty, because no one ever checks twenties, and second, never use one of them in your own home town. That's why we've been able to get away with it for ten years, and Mr. Hammond was able to do it for twenty years prior to that.

ANNIE. I know, I know…it's the credo we live by and if we're going to continue to live this lifestyle then Mr. Davis has to be persuaded to sell us the manor.

GEORGE. Annie, indulge me, explain again how this weekend is going to work.

ANNIE. Sure Dad. When we got the phone call from Mr. Davis saying he intends to turn this manor into a retirement home for women, I knew that our first option was to make him a huge offer to buy the house, but he wouldn't even listen. So, I figured that if we could convince him it was haunted, he'd give up his idea of turning it into a retirement home, and then we could buy it. That's why I've invited my old friend, and sorority sister, Charmaine Beauregard, to come here and play the role of a ghost. She's a retired actress and says she is more than happy to help me out.

GEORGE. Where did you ever get the idea of a ghost?

ANNIE. From our neighbor, Marilena. She claims to have psychic powers and she's always going on about how she feels presences in the manor.

GEORGE. Oh you mean the Romanian Fruitcake.

ANNIE. Dad! I know you really like her a lot and she really is The Contesa Marilena de Buzau Si Severin.

GEORGE. That's what I said, The Romanian Fruitcake. Seriously, you don't believe in any of that spirit stuff do you?

ANNIE. No Dad, I don't, but some people do.

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GEORGE. But a ghost? Are you sure this is going to work?

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ANNIE. It will when Charmaine looks like one and disappears into the wall. Now, have you wired up the dimmer switches?

GEORGE. Yep.

ANNIE. Is the bookcase working properly? *(starts to silently count out another pile and rubber band it)*

GEORGE. *(moves upstage to the bookcase with the oil can)* Let me just check it out. It has to be smooth and silent. *(turns it)* Maybe just a drop of oil on the pivot. *(he then tests the turn-table)* It's pretty smooth. *(he closes the bookcase and turns down stage, clutches his tummy and moans and groans, then doubles over on the rail)*

ANNIE. *(looks up)* Dad, whatever are you doing?

GEORGE. Resting.

ANNIE. Resting?

GEORGE. Resting. You know I almost have a ruptured spleen.

ANNIE. Dad, there's nothing wrong with your spleen.

GEORGE. I know, that's why I said almost.

ANNIE. *(grabs another handful of bills from the bag)* Come on Dad, we've got Charmaine, the designer fellow and Mr. Davis all coming later today, we have to make sure everything is ready. We don't have time for your shenanigans. *(starts to count)* Ten, twenty, thirty, forty…

GEORGE. Annie,*(comes down left to the table)* Did I ever tell you the story of the boy ghost and the girl ghost?

ANNIE. No Dad, but I know you're going to. (p*laces the last pile in a stack and starts to gather them up and rubber bands them together*)

GEORGE. *(now behind the table)* OK. The boy ghost says to the girl ghost, "What are you doing tonight?" She says, "Are you trying to pick me up?" He says, "Yes, but you always seem to slip through my fingers." Then the girl ghost says, "Oh, you're so transparent, and it's not going to work." And the boy ghost says, "Why not?" She says, "Because I can see right through you."

*(There is a long pause as **ANNIE** looks at him.)*

ANNIE. I don't get it. Of course she can see through him, he's a ghost.

GEORGE. It's not supposed to be….oh never mind.

(The doorbell rings.)

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ANNIE. I'll put the money away while you get the door. *(**GEORGE** crosses left to the entrance, while **ANNIE** pushes the stacks of money into the sorority bag. She places it on the floor behind her chair and moves center stage)*

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*(**CHARMAINE** enters from the down left entrance way, followed by **GEORGE** carrying her suitcase. He stops just inside the entrance way and puts the bag down. **CHARMAINE** age 30+,is a true southern belle, complete with femme fatale southern charm. Her libido is most definitely working and never stops. She is wearing an elegant, low cut summer dress with matching purse and high heel shoes, and is carrying a sorority bag identical to Annie's.)*

ANNIE. *(steps forward to hug **CHARMAINE**)* Charmaine, it's been far too long. Why you haven't changed one bit, I see you still have your old sorority bag. Me too, I still use mine.

CHARMAINE. Annie, it's great to see you. I agree, it's been far too long.

ANNIE. I'm so glad you're here. Let's sit down. *(motions for her to sit on the couch)* I see you met my dad, George.

CHARMAINE. *(sits on couch left side)* Annie you never told me you had such a handsome hunk for a father. Why! I think he's just the tomcat's kitten.

GEORGE. *(visibly flustered, picks up Charmaine's suitcase)* Annie, where do you want Charmaine's bag?

ANNIE. In the guestroom. Thanks Dad.

GEORGE. O.K. I'll be in the basement if you need me. Nice to meet you Charmaine.*(he crosses left, picks up the bag of money, goes upstage and drops the suitcase in bedroom one, then exits to the kitchen)*

CHARMAINE. The pleasure's all mine. Now don't you be gone too long honey lamb.

ANNIE. *(crosses to the chair)* Charmaine, you really haven't changed. You wouldn't be putting a move on my dad, would you?

CHARMAINE. Well, older men have more to offer.

ANNIE. Just not as often.

CHARMAINE. Why he's cuter than a sack full of puppies, but don't y'all worry, it's just habit. I just can't help myself.

*(Enter **MARILENA** age 50'ish, a Romanian gypsy type. She is wearing a peasant blouse and long skirt , sandals, and has a scarf around her head, tied to the side. Her outfit is flamboyant with bright colors. . Despite her somewhat unorthodox manner and dress, she is in fact a very handsome woman, almost beautiful in a mysterious sort of way. Her movements are always flowing and graceful, as if she is floating rather than walking. From the French doors we see her head peak around and into the room. She speaks with a Romanian accent.)*

MARILENA. *(in a sing-song voice)* Hellooooo.

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ANNIE. Hello Marilena.

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MARILENA. *(steps into the room)* Buna seara*,[SEE AUTHORS NOTES]* Annie. *(takes a few steps towards center stage then suddenly stops and slowly spins around arms outstretched, totally ignoring **ANNIE** and **CHARMAINE**)* The vibrations, the vibrations….I feel a presence in this room.

CHARMAINE. Why, she must mean me, I often have that affect on people, but it's usually men.

MARILENA. *(now moving right)* The vibrations, they're very strong today…I'm sensing something…*(she opens the door of the bedroom and looks in and stays in the doorway*) ooh, there is something or someone here. What is this room?

ANNIE. Well, it used to be an office, but a few weeks before Mrs. Hammond passed away, she was having difficulty negotiating steps, and we turned it into a little bedroom for her. We just haven't had time to change it back.

MARILENA. Perhaps it is her presence I feel. No, no, no…*(she pauses, gasps, turns and sweeps into the living room)* wait there is more...money…money, it has to do with money. *(she moves down left and places her hands on the top of the table*) much money…

ANNIE. *(quickly moves towards MARILENA who appears to be in a momentary trance)* Marilena please come and sit down and meet my friend. *(ANNIE is almost pulling MARILENA towards the couch)* Marilena, this is my friend, Charmaine Beauregard.

CHARMAINE. *(stands and offers to shake Marilena's hand)* Pleasure to meet you.

MARILENA. *(acknowledges **CHARMAINE** with a slight head bow)* The spirits, they are restless, they call me, I must go now. Please excuse me. La revedere*[SEE AUTHORS' NOTES} (she floats across the room and exits through the French doors)*

CHARMAINE. *(sits back down on the couch)* Who or what was that?

ANNIE. *(closing the French doors left open by **MARILENA**)* That was the Contesa Marilena de Buzau Si Severin from Transylvania, our new neighbor.

CHARMAINE. She acts like she fell out of the loony tree and hit every branch on the way down, bless her heart.

ANNIE. *(stands behind the chair, laughing)* My Dad calls her the Romanian Fruitcake, she's a bit extreme, but harmless enough. She claims to be a psychic medium. After the new owner arrives, I've asked her to hold a séance later today, and that's where you come in, you're going to play the role of the ghost.

CHARMAINE. Slow down, you'd better explain to me what this is all about.

*(Enter **GEORGE** from the kitchen.)*

ANNIE. *(stands)* Hi Dad, good timing. Why don't you explain how the ghost and the bookshelf are going to work, while I go and fix us a snack. I leave you in capable hands Charmaine. *(exits to the kitchen)*

CHARMAINE. *(stands)* Why Georgie, why don't you come on down here and sit right next to little ol' Charmaine and tell me exactly what it is you want me to do. *(sits and pats the seat next to her)*

GEORGE. *(moves down to the couch and sits about two feet to her left*) Well there's not much to tell really, you're a ghost.

CHARMAINE. *(moves left a little closer to **GEORGE** and he moves a little further left, keeping the space between them)* What will I be wearing?

GEORGE. Well, a sheet I guess, don't all ghosts wear sheets?

CHARMAINE. *(moves a little closer as he moves further away)* Why I don't know Georgie, I've never been a ghost before, but I sure do like the idea of wearing nothin' but a sheet.

GEORGE. Nothin'?

CHARMAINE. *(moves a little closer)* Nothin' at all. *(**GEORGE** tries to move away, but has no where to go and eventually is tottering on the arms edge of the couch)* Georgie , are you all right? *(she tries to grab him to steady him, but ends up falling backwards onto the couch with **GEORGE** on top of her)* Oh my!

GEORGE. I'm so sorry. *(gets up)* I think perhaps I'd better show you the bookshelf.

CHARMAINE. Now that's a line I haven't heard before. O.K. Georgie, show me the bookshelf.

GEORGE. *(heads up stage and stops by the bookshelf, followed by **CHARMAINE**)* This bookshelf is on a swivel in the middle and when you're the ghost, this is where you're going to disappear. Annie says, if

the lights are right, it will look like you went straight through the wall. By the way, the other side of the bookshelf is the closet in your room.

CHARMAINE. Well bless my stars and garters, you can come through my wall anytime Georgie Porgie. Why don't you show me how it works. *(**GEORGE** opens the bookcase.)* Where do I go?

GEORGE. Follow me, I'll show you. *(he goes in the right side of the bookcase. **CHARMAINE** follows. There is a loud off stage* "Who.o.o.o.o" *from **GEORGE**, who then appears on the left side of the bookcase with **CHARMAINE**'s hands firmly grabbing his derriere)*

ANNIE. *(enters from the kitchen with a tray of sandwiches and a pot of coffee and mugs, just in time to see **GEORGE** enter and disappear back into the right side of the bookcase the second time)* Oh, good, Dad……(s*he watches as they go around with **CHARMAINE** still attached to George's derierre.. **GEORGE**. continues his" Who.o.o.o noises)* you're showing Charmaine the bookshelf. *(they reappear)* Dad???….(s*he watches as they go around a third time. She quickly puts the tray down on the end table, and runs up the stairs to the bookcase. As they reappear she grabs **GEORGE** by the arm and pulls him forward, followed by **CHARMAINE***) What's going on here?

CHARMAINE. *(quickly lets go of **GEORGE**'s derriere)* It was dark in there, I was just feeling my way around.

ANNIE. Feeling your way around? Dad?

GEORGE. Er…er…

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CHARMAINE. Georgie was going too fast and I got a little behind. *(starts to giggle)*

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ANNIE. A little behind? Dad?

GEORGE. Well, it was definitely a hands-on experience.

ANNIE. Dad, for heavens sakes, close the bookshelf and come and sit down, I made some coffee. I need to fill Charmaine in on what's going to happen tonight. ***(CHARMAINE** comes down and sits on the couch right side. **GEORGE** follows close behind her, intending to sit next to her. He sees **ANNIE** looking at him and quickly sits in the chair while **ANNIE** stands behind the table and pours the coffee. She then hands a mug to **CHARMAINE** and **GEORGE**, then sits on the couch left side)*

CHARMAINE. Annie, you never did tell me who Mrs. Hammond left the house to.

ANNIE. A Mr. Bud Davis.

CHARMAINE. That name sounds very familiar. Who is he?

GEORGE. We don't know.

CHARMAINE. You mean you've never met him?

ANNIE. He's never been here. I guess she met him on one of her trips. It was really strange though, because in the will she referred to him as her Budly, Studly, Do-right.

CHARMAINE. *(leaps to her feet and says in a slow, loud deliberate voice)* Oh, my dear Lord, I think I know him.

ANNIE & GEORGE. WHAT?

CHARMAINE. It's Bud the stud.

ANNIE & GEORGE. Bud the stud?

CHARMAINE. Bud the stud.

ANNIE. How do you know him?

CHARMAINE. It was a few years ago, when I was on vacation.

ANNIE. What happened?

CHARMAINE. Well he's quite a charmer and I succumbed to his charms.

ANNIE. Now Charmaine, be honest, who was chasing who?

CHARMAINE. Well, perhaps it was a little bit of both, but when I found out he was chasing after two other women, at the same time, in the same house, well...

ANNIE. *(laughing)* That seems a bit much, even for you.

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CHARMAINE. Bud was behaving like a rooster on a hen house roof.

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GEORGE. But why would he want to turn this manor into a retirement home for women?

CHARMAINE. Oh my Granny's garters, that's it! *(pauses)* Why, that little weasel is trying to create his own personal harem. Give him a chance he'll be busier than a one legged man in a butt kicking contest.

ANNIE. Now I understand why he wouldn't even listen to an offer to buy the place.

CHARMAINE. Well, I can tell you that Mr. Bud Davis is not interested in money, only sex. We call his brain Mr. Zipper.

ANNIE. Oh, dear, so, do you think my idea of holding a séance to convince him it's haunted will work?

CHARMAINE. Knowing him, he'll probably try to seduce the ghost, but we all know that's not going to happen.

GEORGE. *(looking at Charmaine)* Are you sure?

ANNIE. DAD!

CHARMAINE. Georgie, my engine may be running, but I can assure you that my front wheel drive is only aimed at one man at a time.

ANNIE. CHARMAINE!

GEORGE. But how can we be sure it will work?

CHARMAINE. To knock him off his perch, I will give the performance of a life-time. Why, that little skunk will rue the day he messed with a Beauregard. Believe me, it will work. So, if you'll excuse me, I need to go and prepare for my starring role in tonight's play….Bud the Stud's Last Stand. *(exits to bedroom one)*

ANNIE. I forgot what a character she is.

GEORGE. Speaking of characters, did I ever tell you the story of the baby that was born without ears?

ANNIE. No Dad, but I have a feeling you're about to.

GEORGE. OK. There's this couple and the wife is telling the husband that her sister has given birth to a baby without any ears, and they're going 'round there tonight and she doesn't want him to mention that the baby has no ears. The husband says, of course I won't. The wife says, I know you, you'll find a way. Anyway, they get around to her sisters and they're all looking at the baby. The husband says, how's its nose? The mother says, it's perfect, look at that little button of a nose. The husband says, how's its mouth? The mother says, it's perfect, look at that cherub mouth. The husband says, how's its eyes? The mother says, perfect, look at those big, blue eyes. The husband says, well that's good, cause it isn't ever going to wear glasses, is it?

ANNIE. *(long pause)* I don't get it. Why would it have to wear glasses if its eyes were perfect?

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GEORGE. Don't you see……Oh never mind. I'm going to go lay down for awhile. All that work in the closet has worn me out, My sciatica is really starting to flare up again.

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ANNIE. You've never had sciatica Dad.

GEORGE. Who are you going to believe, me or those doctors? *(exits up left)*

ANNIE. Always you Dad, always you. *(exits to kitchen)*

*(Enter **MARILENA** who has been waiting outside the French Doors for the room to be empty. She floats around the room, once again "checking for vibrations and spirits", which she felt earlier.)*

MARILENA. I must make sure the room is cleansed for tonight. That the spirits will accept our eagerness to communicate with them. Oh my, I am feeling a strong presence. ***(BUD** knocks on the front door.)* Yes spirits, I hear you, I am here. The presence, it grows stronger. ***(BUD** knocks louder)* I hear you oh spirits, what do you need, what do you want? ***(BUD** knocks again)* Spirits?*...(one more knock from **BUD.** She looks around, but sees no one)* Oh, it's the front door. *(She exits briefly down left to answer the front door returning immediately with **BUD)***

*(**BUD** is a slight frail looking man, age perhaps 60+. **BUD** only ever has one thing on his mind…his next conquest. He is wearing a short sleeve plaid shirt and khaki pants, which are pulled up high on his waist, a sweater vest and a golf cap.)*

BUD. I have never seen such a vision of loveliness, such beauty, such charm. I have dreamed of love many times in my life, but the face in my dreams was never as beautiful as the one I see before me now.

MARILENA. *(looks around the room to see who he's talking to, then realizes it's her)* Me?

BUD. I see no other vision before me.

MARILENA. You too see visions?

BUD. Only the figure I see before me, the smile, the grace, the unparalleled beauty of a woman….

MARILENA. O doamne, *[SEE AUTHORS NOTES] (my goodness!)*

BUD. Oh yes, you have the face that launched a thousand ships, Helen of Troy, you have the body of the Venus De Milo, and clearly the mind and spirit of Cleopatra.

MARILENA. Cleopatra? Oh, the spirits must be playing games with me.

BUD. *(to himself)* I know one spirit who'd like to play with you.

MARILENA. Sir, I am honored by your words, but I am merely the Contesa Marilena de Buzau Si Severin, Annie's neighbor, and you are?

BUD. *(with a slight bow)* Bud Davis, at your service madam.

WORKING DRAFT NOT A FINAL VERSION

MARILENA. Your words are like magic, you have a gift…

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BUD. Gift! I have in my car, French wine and Swiss chocolates which will be my gift to the beautiful vision I see before me.

MARILENA. You travel with French wine and Swiss chocolates?

BUD. Of course, I don't leave home without them. I shall return. *(exits the front door)*

MARILENA. *(left alone on stage, takes a few steps towards the front door, as if she is drawn towards **BUD.** She stops and blows kisses after him*) Aoleu, *('Oh my'.) [SEE AUTHORS NOTES]* who is that enchanting man? *(twirls and clutches her hands to her heart*) Be still my beating heart. Spirits, you have brought me a man, no not a man, a God like creature, whose words are music to my ears. Thank you spirits. *(floating around the room)* Me? Helen of Troy? Venus Di Milo? Cleopatra? Me? *(looks down at her appearance)* Oh, I must prepare myself for him. *(blows another kiss towards the front door)* Mai tarziu.*('Later'.) (exits French doors)*

*(**BUD** enters through the front entrance with wine and chocolate. He stops, seeing no one in the room, as **ANNIE** enters from the kitchen.)*

ANNIE. *(comes down)* Oh, hello, can I help you?

BUD. Oh, I hope so.

ANNIE. What?

BUD. I have never seen such a vision of loveliness, such beauty, such charm. I have dreamed of love many times in my life, but the face in my dreams was never as beautiful as the one I see before me now.

ANNIE. Ah, you must be Mr. Davis.

BUD. At your service madam. *(he gives a very geriatric bow)* but, please, call me Bud.

ANNIE. I'm Annie Seville, we talked on the phone.

BUD. Your name is of no importance. I see only the figure before me. The smile, the grace, the unparalleled beauty of a woman.

ANNIE. *(flustered)* Oh, thank you. You wouldn't be playing fast and loose with me would you?

BUD. Madam, at my age you have to be loose to be fast, and I am neither. But believe me when I say, you have the face that launched a thousand ships, Helen of Troy, the body of the Venus de Milo, and clearly the mind and spirit of Cleopatra.

ANNIE. Mr. Davis, you are good.

BUD. ***(*** *hands* ***ANNIE*** *the wine and chocolates, which she puts on the end table)* Please accept these as a token of my sincerity in our future relationship.

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ANNIE. Thank you, Mr. Davis.

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BUD. Please, call me Bud.

ANNIE. Alright. Bud would you mind if we had a little chat, there's something I'd like to discuss with you.

BUD. Not at all, I'd love to spend time talking with someone as beautiful as you.

ANNIE. *(motions for* ***BUD*** *to sit on the couch left as she crosses to sit on the couch right)* Bud, I'd like to make you a very serious offer to purchase Monet Manor.

BUD. Oh, Ms. Seville, for reasons that have little to do with money, I am determined to turn the manor into a retirement home for ladies, and unless the architectural adviser I have hired to conduct a feasibility study tells me that the conversion cost will be totally prohibitive, that is what I intend to do. Of course, if you would like to stay, I will be more than happy to reserve you a room.

ANNIE. I see, well, in that case, there is something about the manor, you don't know, that I feel obligated to tell you. It's haunted. *(****BUD*** *laughs as* ***GEORGE*** *enters.)* Hi Dad, come meet Mr. Davis, I was just telling him about our resident ghost.

GEORGE. *(shakes hands with* ***BUD.)*** Hello, Mr. Davis, I'm George. *(sits in the chair)*

BUD. Hello, please call me Bud. Surely you two don't believe all that malarkey about ghosts?

ANNIE. But Dad and I have both seen the ghost, haven't we Dad?

GEORGE. What Annie says is true, I've seen her.

BUD. Her?

GEORGE. Yes, uh. Er...er...the lady in white.

ANNIE. I have arranged to have a seance this evening, conducted by the Contesa Marilena de Buzau Si Severin, our neighbor. She is a well known psychic, who is convinced there are spirits in this house. We'd like you to attend so you can see for yourself.

BUD. I don't believe a word of it, but as I met the Contesa earlier, and if you, and a female ghost are going to be present, count me in.

GEORGE. I'll be there too.

BUD. I'd also like my adviser, Mr.Oppenheimer to be in attendance if that's alright. That way we can have an impartial eye witness. Not that I believe they'll be anything to see.

GEORGE. Ah but you haven't seen this ghost Mr. Davis.

ANNIE. ***(g****ives* ***GEORGE*** *"a look")* I have no problem with Mr. Oppenheimer attending.

(They hear a car outside.)

BUD. That's probably him now, I'll just go and see. *(exits front entrance)*

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ANNIE. Boy, he's quite a character.

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GEORGE. Talking of characters did I ever tell you the story of the two hunters?

ANNIE. No Dad, but I'm sure I'm about to hear it.

GEORGE. Well, there are theses two hunters out in the woods and one of them seems to have a heart attack and collapses on the ground. The other guy doesn't know what to do, so he whips out his cell phone and calls 911. He describes what happened to the operator, and tells her he thinks the guy is dead. Then he asks: what should I do? The operator immediately responds: The first thing we need to do is make absolutely certain he's dead. The guy says, OK, hold on a minute, there's a pause and then the operator hears a gun shot. The guy comes back on the phone and says, OK. He's definitely dead. Now what?

ANNIE. *(long pause).....* OK., go on.

GEORGE. What do you mean go on?

ANNIE. You didn't say what happened next.

GEORGE. Nothing happened next...he's dead. You don't get it do you?

ANNIE. How am I supposed to get a joke if you only tell half of it?

GEORGE. Annie, I...oh never mind. I'm going to go lie down, I feel a shin splint coming on, must be from going up and down those damp, basement stairs. *(exits up left)*

*(Enter **BUD** followed by **BERNARD OPPENHEIMER** carrying a suitcase in one hand and his cell phone in the other. **BERNARD** puts his suitcase down, just inside the front entrance. They move towards **ANNIE.**)*

***(BERNARD**, age 30+, is a free lance property appraiser and architectural adviser, hired by Bud to do a cost analysis on the feasibility of turning Monet Manor into a retirement home for women. He is overtly motivated with financial matters, to the point of appearing very mercenary. He has an obsession with his cell phone as he is constantly answering calls at all times. He is wearing a button down shirt, tie and khaki pants.)*

BUD. Annie I'd like you to meet Mr. Oppenheimer, my architectural adviser.

ANNIE. Pleased to meet you. *(reaches out to shake hands, but just as she does **BERNARD**'s cell phone begins to ring.)*

BERNARD. *(nods to **ANNIE** as he answers the phone)* Hello, B.O. here. *(he moves slightly up stage to finish the call as **ANNIE** looks at **BUD** and starts to laugh)*. Right, well, watch that situation closely, and call me if there's a change. *(hangs up and moves toward **ANNIE**)* Sorry about that, please call me....*(his cell phone rings again, he looks at it and answers)* Hello, B.O. here. *(moves slightly up stage*) OK. I'll call you back later. *(hangs up and moves toward **ANNIE***) Hello An....*(his cell phone rings again, he looks at it)* Excuse me, important. *(moves upstage)* Hello, B.O. here.

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ANNIE. *(to **BUD**)* Why don't you introduce me to Mr. B.O. later, I'll just go make sure his room is ready. (e*xits up left, taking the wine and chocolates with her)*

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***(BERNARD** hangs up his phone.)*

BUD. Really Bernie, don't you think ....

BERNARD. It's Bernard *(he pronounces his name the French way, Bearnard)*

BUD. Right. O.K. Bearnard, *(he over accentuates the name)* Ms.Seville is a beautiful woman, if you haven't noticed, and beautiful women do not deserve to be ignored.

BERNARD. Ah yes, I forgot. You and women. I am sorry about the calls Mr. Davis and I do agree with you that it was wrong of me not to pay more attention to the lovely Ms. Seville. However, they were important calls. I will try to correct that later when we meet again. *(his phone rings)* Excuse me please.

BUD. Here we go again....

BERNARD. Hello, B.O. here. I'm in a meeting, if it's an emergency, text me. *(quickly hangs up*) O. K., we shouldn't be disturbed.

BUD. I hope not. Remember, I'm paying you a big fat fee to find out what it will cost to turn this place into a women's retirement home. Not to answer your phone.

BERNARD. Mr. Davis, I may be expensive, but I can assure you that you will find my work very thorough.

(looks around) Are you quite sure you want to go through with this? This house is quite old, and the cost to bring a place like this up to code, not to mention the design aspect, could become quite costly.

BUD. You just do your job, and find out how many chicks can stay here. Don't you concern yourself with the money.

BERNARD. *(he takes out of his pocket a small machine which looks exactly like a stud finder, complete with flashing lights. He then places it on the wall left, by the table, and slides it around)* Mr. Davis, where money is involved, I'm always concerned.

BUD. What is that? What are you doing?

BERNARD. It's an electro-magnetic field transducer.

BUD. A what?

BERNARD. It's like a stud finder but it locates electrical wiring in the walls. This little machine will save you many hours of my time. In layman's terms it locates live wires.

BUD. Really? I'm impressed. Just keep it away from me, I'll have it lighting up like Coney Island. Oh by the way, I almost forgot, I need you to come to the seance tonight.

BERNARD. The what?

BUD. The séance.

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BERNARD. I wouldn't be caught dead at a séance.

WORKING DRAFT NOT A FINAL VERSION

BUD. Very funny Bernie.

BERNARD. *(reacts to the Bernie)* It's Bernard.

BUD. *(ignores Bernard's reaction)* Listen, supposedly the place is haunted, and they're holding a seance to see if anything happens. I want you there as an impartial witness.

BERNARD. That will cost you extra, it wasn't in our original contract.

BUD. How much extra?

BERNARD. Do I have to turn off my phone?

BUD. I'm not sure, but I think so.

BERNARD. Then the price just went up. Two hundred dollars.

BUD. That's outrageous Bernie.

BERNARD. It's Bernard and take it or leave it.

BUD. I'll take it I suppose. Just make sure you're there.

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