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Devil Boys from Beyond

by Buddy Thomas
and Kenneth Elliott

Based on an original script by
Buddy Thomas

A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION



**SAMUEL
FRENCH**
FOUNDED 1830

NEW YORK HOLLYWOOD LONDON TORONTO

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Sound design and original score by Drew Fornarola
Original sound producer/co-sound design by John Fontein
Original song, "Sensitive Girl", music and lyrics by Drew Fornarola

DEVIL BOYS FROM BEYOND was first produced by MadCap Productions in association with Anna Ashton at the Actors' Playhouse in August 2009 as part of the New York International Fringe Festival, a production of THE PRESENT COMPANY. The performance was directed by Kenneth Elliott, with sets by Brian T. Whitehill, costumes by Gail Baldoni, original music, sound design and song by Drew Fornarola, and lighting design by Vivien Leone. The production stage manager was Matthew Karr and the sound producer/co-sound designer was John Fontein. The stage hands were Richard Duffy and Matthew Landen. The cast was as follows:

FLORENCE WEXLER Everett Quinton
 DOTIE PRIMROSE Andy Halliday
 MATTIE VAN BUREN Paul Pecorino
 GREGORY GRAHAM. Robert Berliner
 LUCINDA MARSH. Chris Dell'Armo
 GILBERT WIATT Peter Cormican
 JACK PRIMROSE. Jacques Mitchell
 HARRY WEXLER Jeff Riberdy

DEVIL BOYS FROM BEYOND was subsequently produced by David J. Foster at New World Stages in November 2010. The performance was directed by Kenneth Elliott, with sets by Brian T. Whitehill, costumes by Gail Baldoni, original music, sound design and song by Drew Fornarola, wigs and hair by Gerard Kelly, and lighting design by Vivien Leone. The production stage manager was Eileen Arnold. The assistant stage manager was Richard Duffy. The stage hand was Frank Boccia. The cast was as follows:

FLORENCE WEXLER Everett Quinton
 DOTIE PRIMROSE Andy Halliday
 MATTIE VAN BUREN Paul Pecorino
 GREGORY GRAHAM. Robert Berliner
 LUCINDA MARSH. Chris Dell'Armo
 GILBERT WIATT Peter Cormican
 JACK PRIMROSE. Jacques Mitchell
 HARRY WEXLER Jeff Riberdy

CHARACTERS

(In order of appearance)

FLORENCE WEXLER – A little Southern woman with a big secret.

GILBERT WIATT – A tough New York City newspaper editor.

GREGORY GRAHAM – Burnt out ace photographer and booze hound.

MATILDA VAN BUREN – Star reporter, and legend in her own mind.

LUCINDA MARSH – A headline chasing Grande dame with a nose for news.

DOTTY PRIMROSE – Ancient proprietor of The Evening Primrose Motor Lodge.

HARRY WEXLER – Florence's husband...or is he?

JACK PRIMROSE – Sheriff of Lizard Lick & Dotty's husband...we think.

SETTING

New York City
Lizard Lick, Florida
& beyond

TIME

One hot summer in 1957

PROLOGUE

(In the blackout we hear the sound of a space ship approaching, then an enormous crash. As the lights come up we see two alien creatures emerge, dazed from the wreckage. The first alien gestures to the second and they exit together.)

(A bright white spotlight rises on FLORENCE.)

FLORENCE. I'm not insane, I tell you. I'm not insane! There's something strange going on in this town. It all started last Saturday night when creatures from another planet crashed their spaceship into Harry's tool shed. You shoulda seen that man's face. He just retiled the roof that afternoon, and now, here was this big silver spaceship stickin' straight outa the middle of it, and hundreds of terra-cotta tiles smashed up all over the yard. Harry didn't care if they were from Neptune or Nevada. He went stompin' out to the back yard, madder than a spitball. I stood right here at this window and screamed for him to get back inside before they shot him with a laser beam. He didn't care. I might as well have been recitin' the yeller pages for all he listened. And then he started yellin' at the top of his lungs. "Who the Hell did they think they were, smashing up his fine new terra-cotta roof, and what the Hell did they think they were doing, flying that barge through a residential area at two in the morning, and who the Hell was gonna pay for all those tiles, and who the Hell was gonna clean up his backyard" and that man must have yelled at those poor suckers for fifteen minutes straight. And they just stood there, as polite as can be, just starin' up at him. Well that's when it happened, dear. All of a sudden the whole backyard lit up like the Fourth of July. Red lights. Green lights. Blue

lights. White lights. Flashin' on. Flashin off. I screamed at Harry to hightail it inside before they gave him an anal probe, but that geezer has about as much sense as a concrete wall. And then, ZAP! The light disappeared and everything went back to normal. Except that the little space guys were gone. And so was their spaceship. And the tool shed. And the dog. And Harry. My Harry's gone, gone! *(She bursts into hysterical tears.)* I'm not insane! Something evil has taken possession of the town of Lizard Lick!

(quick blackout)

(Lights up instantly on:)

Scene One

(The Newsroom)

(GIL WIATT, a hard boiled editor, and GREGORY GRAHAM, ace photographer.)

WIATT. You mean to tell me that's all we got?!

GRAHAM. I'm tryin' to explain –

WIATT. And you call yourself a photographer. I need pictures! I need a story! *(into an intercom:)* Get Mattie Van Buren in here!

GRAHAM. I hardly think you need to bring *her* into this.

WIATT. You hardly think because you're soused most of the time, Graham, that's your problem.

GRAHAM. I've been clean for ten days since I got out of Cascade. That shock therapy really did the trick!

WIATT. I hope you've dried out for good this time, but I don't have much hope. Once an alkie, always an alkie. I'm giving you one more chance Graham, but I expect you to deliver this time. And I'm sending you out with Mattie.

GRAHAM. I told you I can't work with her!

WIATT. Mattie Van Buren is the best reporter we've got.

GRAHAM. Mattie Van Buren is a hard-boiled bitch.

WIATT. You didn't feel that way when you were married to her.

GRAHAM. Our marriage was pure unmitigated hell!

(MATTIE VAN BUREN, star reporter, flies in.)

MATTIE. I heard that Gregory. But I understand. Gilbert, he only talks that way because I won't let him drink. This man could have been the next Margaret Bourke-White!

GRAHAM. Must you emasculate me in front Gil?

MATTIE. Maggie's a great photographer!

GRAHAM. She's a woman!

MATTIE. Well, I'm a woman – what of it? (*with deep concern*)
Darling, you know you have a drinking problem. I still care. Have you frisked him, Gil?

WIATT. Nah, what's the use?

GRAHAM. So I'm not to be trusted, is that it?

MATTIE. (*She pats him down.*) You know their tricks.

GRAHAM. (*to WIATT*) You see what I mean!

MATTIE. (*finds a flask in his pant leg secured by a string to his belt*) Aha! What's this?

GRAHAM. (*attempting to feign puzzlement*) I don't know how that got there. I haven't worn these pants in weeks.

MATTIE. Then you won't mind if I take it for safe keeping.
(*She puts it in her purse.*) Let me smell your breath.

(*hits him in the stomach and smells his breath*)

MATTIE. He's clean.

WIATT. Now listen you two! I sent you down to Lizard Lick, Florida for a story, a **STORY**, not this stinkin' drivel about some old bastard blown up in a tool shed!

GRAHAM. Mr. Wiatt, you don't understand –

MATTIE. Oh, clam up Gregory, of course he doesn't understand. This overgrown monkey calls himself an editor, but he can barely speak the English language –

WIATT. Now, Mattie, I'm warnin' you –

MATTIE. Don't warn me, Gilbert, I've got offers from every rag in this country! You don't like my style, I'll cross the street so fast it'll make your head spin –

WIATT. You ain't goin' nowhere, little lady, I'm the only editor in town who'll put up with you!

MATTIE. They'll put up with me, all right, when I flash them my Pulitzer!

GREGORY. That isn't the only thing she'll be flashin'.

MATTIE. That's right, Gregory, dear, I'm up for the Peabody this year, or haven't you heard? (*sympathetically*) I have options, unlike you! I don't burn my bridges, I build them, with the profound power of my poetic pen!

GREGORY. Your pen is as poison as the blood in your veins.

MATTIE. My blood's fine, it's yours that's 80 proof.

WIATT. Can the dramatics and pack your bags. I've booked you both on the nine forty-five.

MATTIE. Splendid, Gil. Where to this time? Budapest? Bombay? The Horn of Africa? I hear the Ivory Coast is absolutely divine this time of year!

WIATT. You're goin' straight back to Lizard Lick and you're gonna find out about these God-damned flying saucers, once and for all!!!

MATTIE. The only thing flyin' in that town is mosquitoes, and I'll be damned if I'm gonna go trudgin' through some bog, tearin' up my nylons!

GRAHAM. We already covered that beat. It's dry!

WIATT. You talked to one old lady!

MATTIE. You're speaking of one Florence Wexler. A simple minded old frump in a house dress babbling about creatures from outer space. Who does she think she is? Orson Welles?

GRAHAM. There's nothin' going on in Lizard Lick, Gil!

MATTIE. And I refuse to be humiliated by pursuing such a puerile and obviously phony story. No, I ain't gonna cover your flying saucers. I wouldn't cover the second coming for you! Even if they held it at the Astor Hotel. I quit!

WIATT. You can't quit without giving notice. I'll sue you!

MATTIE. I certainly can quit. I've got an offer from Henry Luce.

WIATT. Luce! You traitor! Ingrate!

MATTIE. Am I supposed to be grateful for being underpaid?

GRAHAM. Have you got any scotch in the office, Gil?

MATTIE. You see? You're driving him to drink. This is a new low even for you, Wiatt. You've always been a pompous blowhard, but you used to have some integrity. Why would you force me – me! – to cover the lunatic ravings of a desiccated swamp dweller? I'm a reporter, or haven't you figured that out yet?

WIATT. I'm gonna level with you. The newspaper business is on the skids. Mergers, competition from newsreels, radio, and now T.V. It's a rat race. Attention spans are shorter. Nobody's got the time anymore to relax with the evening paper. They'd rather get their news quick from the Camel News Caravan.

MATTIE. Television is not journalism.

WIATT. By the end of 1957 there may only be eight dailies left in New York City.

MATTIE. Oh, Gilbert. I had no idea it was that bad. It's the end of civilization as we know it.

GRAHAM. What's next?

WIATT. Have you every heard of the bread line?! You wanna stand in it? That's what's next! *The Bugle* is this close to going under. I've gotta increase circulation or we'll all be out of a job. I *need* this story! Will you help me?

MATTIE (*after a pause*) I'd like to help you Gil, but I can't pursue a story like this based on a hunch.

WIATT. Does this look like a hunch to you????

(*He pulls out a mayonnaise jar with "an alien baby" in it, suspended in a watery solution.*)

GRAHAM. (*gasping for breath*) What...what is this-this creature, this demon, this monstrosity-?!?!

WIATT. It's an alien baby, what the hell does it look like, you ninny?!

MATTIE. Oh Gil, put that phony lab specimen away.

WIATT. I thought *somebody* might wanna win herself another Pulitzer, but of course, if *somebody's* not interested, there's always Lucinda Marsh. That broad'd sell her right nipple for a crack at a front page story like this.

(**LUCINDA MARSH** *enters, unbeknownst to the others. She is a headline chasing grande dame with a nose for news, but she has seen better days. She lingers behind them for a moment.*)

MATTIE. You leave Lucinda Marsh of this, you hear me, you baboon?!?!

WIATT. What have you got against Lucinda Marsh?

MATTIE. Oh nothing, nothing at all. She gave my name to Joe McCarthy, started a whispering campaign against me at the Ladies Press Club, and told Mamie Eisenhower I was a muff diver.

WIATT. Nobody believes that –

MATTIE. As if that weren't enough, she went on a bender with my drunken husband that ended in our French provincial bed.

GRAHAM. You can't blame Lucinda –

MATTIE. Don't you dare defend her! After what I saw her doing to you in *our* bed – she should be on Ed Sullivan as a contortionist. (to WIATT) Why you continue to run her venomous column I'll never understand.

WIATT. She sells papers.

MATTIE. That right-wing cooze isn't a journalist! She's a fetid cesspool of bigotry, lies, and lascivious innuendo. She stinks, you hear? I could smell Lucinda Marsh and her ten cent toilet water (*She sniffs.*) if she were... (*She sniffs again, bigger:*) ...if she were five miles away.

(MATTIE whirls around. She is nose to nose with LUCINDA.)

LUCINDA. How bout five inches, dear?

MATTIE. (*Total change in personality. Dripping with fake affection*) Lucinda, darrrrling....wherever did you...*drop* in from?

LUCINDA. Simply slumming, dear. My interview with Audrey Hepburn's been delayed, so I thought I'd see how it goes in (*with icy disgust*) the *newsroom*.

MATTIE. It goes just swell, Lucinda, although I must admit I've suddenly been overcome with the most intense wave of nausea.

LUCINDA. Nausea suits you, dear. It goes with your dress. Whyyyyyy Greggory. It's been a long time...I haven't seen you since before your nasty, nasty divorce. Pity, that.

WIATT. Listen. Lucinda, we're in a meeting –

LUCINDA. So I see...and what is this little gargoye? Mattie, dear, mayonnaise jars are no place to preserve your stillborns.

MATTIE. (*charges at her:*) Now listen you home wrecking bitch-!

WIATT. All right, that's enough of that –

LUCINDA. I'll say. Mattie, dear, they have a remedy for that kind of behavior –

MATTIE. I have a remedy for you old lady, hemlock!

WIATT. Lucinda, I'm afraid I'm going to have to ask you to excuse us –

LUCINDA. No need, Gilbert, darling, I've got to fly. But I must say I'm quite intrigued by your little jarhead. Wherever did it come from?

MATTIE. Don't you tell her anything about this story, Gil.

LUCINDA. A *story*! Gilbert! Are you holding out on me?

WIATT. You got nothin' to worry about Lucinda, now if you'll excuse us –

LUCINDA. But of course, I must run. I'm cocktailing it at the Colony with Father Coughlin. He's hoping for a comeback and I'm going to help him. Ta, dears. Hope all goes well with your little jarhead.

(*She exits with a sinister look back at the jar.*)

MATTIE. I told you to keep her away from me!

WIATT. Forget Lucinda Marsh, you've got a case to crack.

MATTIE. I'd rather crack her skull and watch the marbles roll out.

GRAHAM. Gil, where, where did that jar come from to begin with?

WIATT. That's what you're gonna find out, Einstein! It came from Lizard Lick, Florida, air mail, no return address. Just this note.

(*MATTIE snatches it.*)

MATTIE. (*reading*) "They have landed."

GRAHAM. They have landed? Who have landed?

WIATT. It ain't Amelia Earhart, buddy boy.

MATTIE. Gil, I have to be honest with you. I think you've lost your mind. There's no such thing as flying saucers. There are no creatures. That is nothing more than a deformed frog in a mayonnaise jar. It's pure paranoia. But if you think this story will save *The New York Bugle*, I'll take the assignment! New York needs nine daily papers. But remember, you owe me one pal. Let's go Gregory!

WIATT. Wait, your itinerary!

MATTIE. Keep it, ya fat ape, after that last hotel you stuck me in, I'll make my own reservations!

(She is exiting across the stage, GRAHAM chasing her, WIATT chasing both of them. He has left the itinerary sitting on top of the alien baby jar.)

WIATT. But there's only one hotel in Lizard Lick!

MATTIE. Then it looks like I'll be campin' on the beach!!!

(They all exit, and at the moment they do, LUCINDA MARSH appears at the other side of the stage and slinks over to the jar. She picks up the itinerary, her eyes growing wide, and smiles with great cunning, an evil barracuda.)

(blackout)

Scene Two

(En route to Lizard Lick)

(The inside of the plane to Lizard Lick: a row of five chairs in a line parallel to the front of the stage facing right. MATTIE VAN BUREN is in the first seat. Next to her is GREGORY GRAHAM. The passenger furthest to the back is reading a large newspaper, which conceals her, totally.)

MATTIE. Its wonderful to be working together again, Isn't it darling? After we finish this assignment, I think we should take a vacation together, Greg, just the two of us. It'll be like old times. We'll go someplace where nobody knows us, where nobody knows about your "problem."

GRAHAM. Sounds marvelous. The nurse and the invalid. Spare me your infernal solicitude.

MATTIE. I just thought after what you've been through at Cascade –

GRAHAM. Where is the stewardess? If you'll excuse me I'm going to find the little boys room.

(He stands and walks to the back of the plane.)

A WOMAN FROM BEHIND A BIG NEWSPAPER.

Psssst!Psssst!

(The woman behind the newspaper throws it down, revealing....LUCINDA MARSH!!!)

GRAHAM. Lucinda! You're supposed to be...you ought to be...I mean you shouldn't be –

LUCINDA. Stop your sputterin' and sit down. I've got our favorite. *(She produces a flask from her purse.)* We'll make it a loving cup.

GRAHAM. *(As he speaks, LUCINDA is mixing two drinks.)* Can the act, Lucinda. You don't fool me anymore. I'm onto you and your wicked schemes. You slithered into my life like a poisonous snake –

LUCINDA. On the rocks, or straight up?

GRAHAM. Straight up, thanks...You wrecked my career, destroyed my marriage, your heart is cold, Lucinda Marsh!

LUCINDA. (*handing him a drink*) Oh, dear, dear Gregory, always the comedian.

GRAHAM. What the hell are you doing here, Lucinda? If Mattie finds you on this plane –

LUCINDA. But she won't find me, see?!?! I'm travelin' incognito! (*She slaps on a pair of huge dark glasses.*) She'll only find out if you tell her, and you wouldn't sing to the coppers now, would you, Gregory, dear?

GRAHAM. I have no loyalty to Matilda Van Buren anymore. She's so "good." So good she had me locked up in a sanatorium to dry out after she caught you and me in flagrante delicto. I can't tell you how sick I am of being watched all the time. Always suspected of taking a drink. (*He swallows the whiskey in a gulp.*) But you? You're a scorpion!

LUCINDA. Foolish boy. So little you know of the real Lucinda Marsh.

GRAHAM. I know you seduced me and wrecked my marriage!

LUCINDA. Oh, Gregory, I never meant to cause you pain. I only wanted to save you from the fangs of that pinko dyke – *thing* – you called a wife.

GRAHAM. Mattie and I were in love! You were simply jealous of an emotion you could never feel, and of a writer you could never be!

LUCINDA. Lies, all lies!!!!

GRAHAM. You haven't changed, Lucinda. Thanks for the drink.

(*He turns to go.*)

LUCINDA. But Gregory...I simply *must* speak to you! You haven't even asked me why I'm here!

GRAHAM. I may be drunk but I'm not stupid! You're here to scoop our story!

LUCINDA. (*slyly:*) Story? Why, I don't know what you're talking about, Gregory...unless maybe you're referring to...THIS!!!

(She has yanked the alien baby out of her purse. It is no longer in the watery solution, and it drips with slime.)

GRAHAM. Good God, are you mad, woman?!? What have you done?!?

LUCINDA. (*cackling crazily*) What have I done?! I've found the story that's going to make me the most famous reporter in the world!

GRAHAM. Have you lost your mind?! This vile beast was in a jar, Lucinda!

LUCINDA. That fat jar wouldn't fit in my purse!

GRAHAM. You don't know what you're dealing with! This could be some freak of nature, riddled with disease! Sweet Jesus! You may have exposed this plane, this planet, to a fate worse than death!

LUCINDA. The only fate worse than death is a marriage to Mattie Van Buren, and I already saved you from that!

GRAHAM. Lucinda, for the love of God, put it away! Put it away!

LUCINDA. First you tell me what this is all about, you sniveling lush!

GRAHAM. All right! All right! It's about space ships!

LUCINDA. Space ships?

GRAHAM. Space ships! Flying saucers! Creatures from another world! Mattie doesn't believe it, but I do.

LUCINDA. She didn't believe there were queers working in the State Department either, but I exposed them.

GRAHAM. They're here, Lucinda! They're here, and they've landed in Lizard Lick, Florida!

LUCINDA. Aliens from outer space...how absolutely perfect. It's the scoop of the century, and Lucinda Marsh is going to break it to the world!

GRAHAM. You can't! The story is ours!

LUCINDA. It's mine, you hear!?! Either you're with me or against me!

GRAHAM. What are you suggesting?!?! That I leave Mattie Van Buren and team with you?

LUCINDA. That's precisely what I'm suggesting! An alliance! Lucinda Marsh, star reporter, defender of the American way of life, and Gregory Graham, ace photographer. Together we'll touch the bottom of this treacherous swamp! We'll destroy the aliens and our names will be in history books! Awards will line our walls and cold hard cash will line our pockets! Join me Gregory! Leave Comrade Van Buren and meet your destiny!

GRAHAM. (*considers her for a moment, then*) I'll have to take a rain check on that. Thanks for the drink, Lucinda.

(*He starts to walk away.*)

LUCINDA. You'll regret this, Gregory. You'll regret the day you chose her over me! I'll break this story, you hear?!? And when I do, you two hacks'll be moppin' up your tears in a greasy diner, cause that's the only place you'll ever work again!!! I'm queen of the blacklist, baby, and you're gonna be on it!

(*Blackout. Ominous music. Lightning. Thunder. As the scene changes, we see the plane [a model plane on a string] flying wildly through a treacherous sky.*)

(*blackout*)

Scene Three

(The Evening Primrose Motor Lodge)

(DOTTY PRIMROSE, a very ancient and very faded southern belle, enters, followed by MATTIE and GREGORY, who is carrying a suitcase.)

DOTTY. I hope you like this room better. I aired it out, but it don't do much good with suffocating humidity, not a whisper of a breeze, and the swamp cooler on the fritz.

MATTIE. But you say you've seen these aliens?

DOTTY. Oh, I seen 'em, I seen 'em there's no denyin'. Devil boys, I call 'em, devil boys from beyond.

MATTIE. What did they look like, these devil boys?

DOTTY. They were real purty, if you can call a man purty: angel faces, rippling flank muscles, skin as smooth as baby's bottom. That's the way the devil comes, and I've seen the devil. I've had visions. They call me a visionary. Let me get your valise.

GRAHAM. *(the suitcase)* Please, let me help you with that –

DOTTY. Mr. Graham, honey, I wouldn't dream of it. I'm stronger than I look. Why, when I was a girl I used to arm wrestle all my gentleman callers at the Moon Lake Casino. And I always won. *(She attempts to pick up the suitcase.)* I got it...I got it...I got it. *(She drops it.)* I ain't got it. *(She tries again.)* I got it...I got it...I got it. *(She drops it.)* I ain't got it. *(She tries again, and this time she manages to lift it to the luggage rack with great effort.)* I got it...I got it...I got it! *(She gives GRAHAM a flirtatious smile.)*

MATTIE. But what do these so called devil boys have to do with Martians? Just sounds to me like a couple of handsome young fellas happened to walk down Main Street. Nothing unusual in that.

DOTTY. Oh, it was unusual, all right, because all the men in Lizard Lick are fat and ugly.

MATTIE. I see. Mrs. Primrose –

DOTTY. Call me Dotty.

MATTIE. Very well...Dotty. Have you noticed any other odd goings-on in town lately?

DOTTY. Odd...? Why everything is odd in Lizard Lick, Miz Van Buren. We are a town that cultivates its eccentricity like an exotic flower.

GRAHAM. You don't understand. What Miss Van Buren means is have you noticed anything out of the ordinary?

DOTTY. Anything ordinary would be out of the ordinary in Lizard Lick, Mr. Graham. Something about the toxic fumes makes daily routine of any kind difficult if not impossible.

MATTIE. I see. Have there been any unnatural occurrences of any kind?

DOTTY. Naturally there have been what you Yankees might call unnatural occurrences. Generation upon generation of inbreeding has made Lizard Lick a center for sexual perversions of the most extreme and unspeakable nature.

MATTIE. Can you elaborate on that?

GRAHAM. Oh, Mattie, she's useless. Can't you see her brain is pancake batter?

DOTTY. Now what's *unusual* is the invasion –

MATTIE. Invasion?

DOTTY. ...or should I say migration of all you New Yorkers to our quaint little backwater.

MATTIE. All us New Yorkers? All who? It's just Gregory and me.

DOTTY. It's not just you. Now I got that ol' bleach blonde crone in cottage C.

MATTIE. Bleach – what?!?

DOTTY. Jane Doe, she said her name was.

MATTIE. Lucinda Marsh is in that room! I'll stake my Pulitzer on it!

GRAHAM. Mattie, control yourself!

MATTIE. Mrs. Primrose, you are dismissed. I shall expect hot coffee and scones at seven a.m.

DOTTY. Sure, honey. And I shall expect Rock Hudson to eat my bald pussy at ten.

(She exits.)

MATTIE. How dare Lucinda follow us down here!

GRAHAM. Well what do you wanna do, Mattie??

MATTIE. *(opening the suitcase to unpack)* I want to stop that bitch dead in her tracks. There must be a story if she's hauled her ass down here. But what is it? Somebody's perpetrating a hoax. But why? Why? *(She discovers a bottle of bourbon in the suitcase.)* Oh Gregory, what's this?

GRAHAM. *(evasively)* I don't know. It looks like a bottle of bourbon.

MATTIE. Yes, that's what it is. How did it get here?

GRAHAM. I have no idea. I told you I haven't touched the stuff for ten days. I'm clean.

MATTIE. You're lying. You reek of the stuff. You were drinking on the plane.

GRAHAM. How could I be drinking? You were sitting right in front of me! You don't trust me.

MATTIE. I wasn't going to say anything, but I saw you knocking 'em back with that old battle axe in the last row.

GRAHAM. Will you stop watching me all the time! That's how you get your kicks. You don't need me. You don't need anyone or anything. You never have.

MATTIE. But you're wrong, Gregory, oh, can't you see how wrong you are? I need, Gregory. Ohhh, how I need.

(He almost gives in to her, then pushes her roughly aside.)

GRAHAM. So do I. I need a drink.

MATTIE. You always chose the bottle over me!

GRAHAM. And you always chose the newsroom over me. What do you care? You're the one who walked out, or don't you recall?

MATTIE. I left you all right, because you broke our sacred marriage vows.

GRAHAM. You know you were always first in my life!

MATTIE. Until you decided to sleep with a corpse!

GRAHAM. So I made a mistake.

MATTIE. Lucinda's old enough to be your mother! Really, Greg, how could you.

GRAHAM. One time! I was seduced!

MATTIE. It makes me sick to think about it.

GRAHAM. You were at the office working late on a deadline as usual, but you made damn sure I wouldn't fall off the wagon that night. Living with you was like being in Sing-Sing.

MATTIE. Let's not go over this again.

GRAHAM. You'd drained every bottle in the house, even the one I hid in the vacuum cleaner. Oh, you were ever so careful. You'd taken my keys, my wallet, and every pair of pants in the house. I was going mad. Then the doorbell rang. It was Lucinda, and she'd brought along her good friend Old Grand Dad.

MATTIE. For a sleazy night with Lucinda Marsh and a bottle of hooch, you threw our love away!

(She glares at him with hatred.)

GRAHAM. Don't look at me like that.

MATTIE. And by the time I got home you had the DTs. You were seeing bats, and rodents, pink elephants, and, oh yes, little green creatures popping up in the window!

GRAHAM. That's all in the past. We're here on business. I'm trying Mattie. I'm trying.

MATTIE. You're trying not to drink, and I'm trying not to love you.

GRAHAM. Do yourself a favor and clear out.

MATTIE. Oh Gregory...what happened to us...once we danced beneath a velvet midnight sky...moonlight in our hair, stars in our eyes, the future at our grasp... it was wonderful! But in the end our love was not enough, my darling.

GRAHAM. Can the dramatics, you're makin' me sick.

MATTIE. Oh, Gregory, we're all alone, you and I, in this cold and desolate town. We may not escape with our lives. Fuck me, Gregory!

(GRAHAM almost kisses MATTIE. Then, suddenly, he pushes her away.)

GRAHAM. It's too late, Mattie. What we had is through. How did you ever get mixed up with a guy who sops it up like me? I'm a hopeless alcoholic, and all I want is a drink.

MATTIE. And all I want is to make damn sure you don't have one. So if you don't object, I shall pour this down the toilet.

(She exits with the bottle.)

GRAHAM. Delighted. Why don't you take my keys and lock me in like a dog while you're at it?

MATTIE. *(offstage)* You'll thank me for this, darling!

(There is the loud and unmistakable sound of flying saucers outside the window. A hanging light over the bed begins to swing wildly back and forth. The bed begins to shake. The night-stand next to it rattles, and spills everything on top of it across the floor. GRAHAM runs to the window. Colored lights have now begun to blink turbulently outside the window.)

GRAHAM. There's something out there!

MATTIE *(offstage)* Can't hear you!

GRAHAM. *(staring out the window)* Mother of God! It's the size of a football field!

MATTIE. If you're hiding any other bottles, now is the time to fess up!

(Instantly, a huge disgusting alien pops up right outside the window and roars. GRAHAM screams. The flashing lights suddenly cease, as does the rest of the pandemonium, but GRAHAM continues to babble. MATTIE re-enters.)

MATTIE. Greg, what's wrong? What's happened

GRAHAM. (*writhing on the floor*) No, don't let them take me, don't let them give me the anal probe—!!! Or the nipple clamps! Or the-or the- hot wax!

(*He is writhing in ecstasy, at the thought. He sees MATTIE staring at him. And stops.*)

Well don't give me that look. Everyone knows aliens like to party!

MATTIE. Oh Gregory. Not the DTs again! You *have* been on a toot!

GRAHAM. It was an alien. A Martian. A green creature!

MATTIE. Of course, of course, I know. And pink elephants too.

GRAHAM. I've never seen anything so horrifying, so ugly.

MATTIE (*taking out a funnel*) I'm going to force-feed you a gallon of hot coffee and you'll see that it was all in your imagination. Promise me that you'll never take another drink!

GRAHAM. But it was real, I tell you! Right there! Right There!

MATTIE (*checking the window*) There's nothing there. Just the swamp. Now promise!

GRAHAM. Yes, yes, I promise. But we have to warn Lucinda – she's in danger!

MATTIE. Lucinda?

GRAHAM. We've got to warn her. (*as he exits*) They're here! They're here!

MATTIE. Greg, come back!

(*MATTIE runs out after him. Blackout.*)

(*Loud suspense music blasts up. Quick special up on MATTIE and GREGORY "running" frantically through the night. Lights fade out on them as they rise on:*)

Scene Four

(Lucinda Marsh's hotel room)

(It is the same room that Mattie and Graham used in the previous scene. Only difference is that this one has Lucinda's luggage.)

(LUCINDA enters from the bathroom in a flowing nightgown.)

(She begins to get ready for bed, turning down the sheets, putting on face cream, moisturizing her elbows, the whole works. She is humming, in a good mood.)

(There is a rough knocking at the door, then GREGORY enters.)

GRAHAM. Are you still alive?!? Is it too late?!?

LUCINDA. *(throwing herself into GRAHAM's arms)* Never too late for you. How about a cocktail, big boy?

GRAHAM. *(scoping out the room, frantically)* You mean you haven't seen any Martians? Flying saucers? Blinking lights?

LUCINDA. Blinking lights, of all the nonsense, Gregory, honestly –

GRAHAM. You've been here all night and seen nothing strange?

(MATTIE enters.)

LUCINDA. Unless you refer to this fungi before me –

MATTIE. My, my, if it isn't Jane Doe in the flesh. Clever alias Lucinda, it's almost as obvious as your writing. I've got a good mind to get on that horn to Gil Wiatt and blow the whistle on you!

LUCINDA. Blow away, dear. That's something you do well. And as far as Gil Wiatt is concerned, I came to this charming countryside for simple rest and relaxation. Lucinda Marsh is overworked, overstressed and needs to get back to basics and find herself.

MATTIE. Tell her to try lookin' in the morgue.

GRAHAM. (*stepping in*) Stop it! Stop it! Enough of this petty squabbling! Can't you two see we've got to put the past behind us and work together?!

LUCINDA. (*brimming with revulsion*) Work together...????

MATTIE. Don't tell her anything! She'll scoop us!

GRAHAM. This is bigger than a scoop! We've no clue what these fiends are after!

MATTIE. There aren't any fiends.

GRAHAM. They may be bent on world domination, or something even *more* sinister! Your prizes and awards will mean *nothing* when you're chained to a wall as an alien's concubine!

MATTIE. Darling, this is the worst I've ever seen you. It's the booze talking, can't you see!

GRAHAM. Get yourself dressed, Lucinda.

LUCINDA. My, my, Gregory, darling. That's the first time you ever asked me to put *on* my clothes, wherever do you think we're going?

GRAHAM. To pay a little visit to Florence Wexler. Something's fishy with that broad and it ain't shrimp cocktail.

LUCINDA. You imbeciles leave my room this instant or I'll call the authorities and have you both hauled to the clink!

MATTIE. Come Gregory, it's obvious the bag needs her beauty sleep.

LUCINDA. Ohh, I'm not going to sleep, Nancy Drew. While you fools gallivant through this hick town searching for clues, I'll be lounging in my silk nightie, waiting for the clues to come to me.

MATTIE. You're crazier than a barrel of monkies.

LUCINDA. Am I?

GRAHAM. Dammit, she's right! I never thought of this! It's brilliance! Pure brilliance!

MATTIE. What is she talking about, Gregory?! Damn you, TELL ME!!!!!!!!!!

GRAHAM. She's got that alien baby!!!

LUCINDA. Stop blubbering! I put it back in its jar

GRAHAM. She'll use it as bait, and those heinous beasts will fly straight to her doorstep!

LUCINDA. (*pulling out a huge net on a stick*) And when they dare show their mugs, I'll scoop them up in this butterfly net and sell them all to the Bronx Zoo.

MATTIE. How very resourceful of you. Come on, Gregory, let's follow up with Florence Wexler.

LUCINDA. Unless, of course, Gregory would rather stay with me and write love songs??

GRAHAM. I tried to warn you, Lucinda. Now you're on your own.

LUCINDA. What a heartbreak. How will I survive. Just me, myself, and two bottles of bourbon.

(*She whips a bottle out from behind her back. GRAHAM is transfixed. Crazy music up.*)

Come on, baby. You know you're a slave to my...jugs.

(*She is holding two bottles now, massaging them against her breasts.*)

MATTIE. You're out of luck, Bitch! Gregory's off the sauce, or didn't he tell you?!

(*LUCINDA is now slinking away, flicking little splashes of bourbon at GRAHAM, who follows like a puppy dog.*)

LUCINDA. Ohh, poor, baby boy. Jump off that rickety old wagon. You can take a ride on Lucinda's magic carpet.

(*Now she is massaging a bottle lewdly against her pelvis.*)

MATTIE. (*horried*) Gregory! For the love of God! What's come over you?!? You promised me!

LUCINDA. You know you want it. You know you need it. Come on baby!

(*GRAHAM is on his knees in front of her. She pours huge streams of bourbon into his mouth.*)

MATTIE. (*hysterical*) You're evil, Lucinda Marsh. You're a cold blooded vampire!

LUCINDA. Just tryin' to quench a man's thirst.

MATTIE. His liver's already the size of a Buick! You were trying to kill him, that's what you were trying to do! Is there nothing you won't stoop to for a story?!?

LUCINDA. (*advancing on them dangerously*) Darlin', you finally hit the nail on the head. There's nothing I won't stoop to for a story. *Nothing, ya hear?!?! This is my story, see?? I'm gonna crack it see?? And if I get to crack your skull while I'm at it, that'll just be the icing on the cake. So hit the road, shitface! And take this lousy sponge with ya. This town ain't big enough for the three of us!*

MATTIE. You're mad!

LUCINDA. (*She cackles hysterically.*) Deliciously!

MATTIE. Come on, Greg!

LUCINDA. Grow some eyes in the back of your head, cunt. You're gonna need 'em!

(And with that, she gives them a giant shove out the door and slams it with all her might. She picks up the jar, opens it, and addresses the "alien baby" inside.)

LUCINDA. If my hunch is correct, your mama and papa will come looking for you, and the story of the century will walk right into my room. You're really quite adorable
(She opens the lid of the jar. She sticks her finger in it.)

LUCINDA. Kootchie kootchie koo!

(Instantly, the creature pops up and roars a blood-curdling roar. LUCINDA screams a blood-curdling scream. But before she can save herself, the creature flings itself onto LUCINDA's face and attaches itself there, ala "Alien." LUCINDA falls back limply onto the bed, the creature hanging there from her face, making eerie sucking sounds. The music is filled with danger.)

(blackout)

Scene Five

(In front of Florence Wexler's house)

(MATTIE runs on, dragging GRAHAM behind her.)

MATTIE. Here we are. Six-twenty-five Oak Tree Lane, and look. There's a light on!

GRAHAM. It's almost midnight, for God's sake Mattie, let's come back tomorrow.

MATTIE. You're the one who wanted to come here in the first place. Now you want to go back to the hotel. What's going on? You're working with her, I can sense it in the marrow of my bones!

GRAHAM. Get over it baby, you're the only dame I work with.

(He pulls MATTIE toward him. She's not buying it.)

MATTIE. You're drunk! All a girl's gotta do is flash a bottle and you come runnin'!

GRAHAM. The only girl I'll ever run to's you, Mattie.

MATTIE. *(a million conflicting emotions)* You bastard. A belly full of booze and you toy with my fragile emotions, well you can't, Gregory! I won't let you!

(GRAHAM kisses her neck passionately. MATTIE swoons.)

How dare you! You – you good for nothing – you son of a bitch – you –

(He kisses her with enormous passion. MATTIE gives in. The kiss ends and GRAHAM wraps himself into her arms, puts his head on her shoulder, his eyes closed.)

MATTIE. Oh Gregory....oh darling, can it be true? Have you now at long last realized that our passion is an eternal flame, blazing through the night in the lighthouse of love? Oh Gregory, tell me it's true and we'll leave this wicked place at once! Let Lucinda have her prizes! All I need is you, my darling. You're all I ever needed... Gregory?...Gregory??

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