

THIS OLD *HAUNTED* HOUSE

A comedy in two acts

by Bill Gasper

THIS Old Haunted House

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by

Bill Gasper

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This Old *Haunted* House

Cast of Characters

7M-9W

Spats Giovanni	Small time hood
Bubbles Giovanni	His wife
The Ghost	An apparition
Brad Naylor	The show's host
Esther Baldwin	Historical Society Matron
Emma Baldwin	Another
Linda Snodgrass	The show's director
Charlene	Camera Operator
Snake Rooter	The plumber
Buzz Henderson	The electrician
George "Stumpy" Smith	Shop teacher
Brett	A student
Melissa	Another
Marcie	Another
Glenda	A town resident
Brenda	Her friend

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

TIME: The Present

PLACE: Littlebunkport, New York

ACT ONE

Scene One: Vito Giovanni's living room

Scene Two: The same, later that day.

Scene Three: The same, the next morning.

ACT TWO

Scene One: Vito Giovanni's living room - Later that night.

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ACT ONE

Scene One

SETTING: The living room of Vito Giovanni's living room. The main entrance into the room is a wide archway located UPSTAGE CENTER. DOWNSTAGE of the archway is a landing with railings on both sides and steps that lead down into the room. UPSTAGE of the archway is a hallway running UPSTAGE LEFT to another part of the house and UPSTAGE RIGHT to the front door. Just beyond the hallway is a stairway that transverses upward from STAGE RIGHT to STAGE LEFT to the second floor of the house. Stepping down into the living room, there is a WINDOW to the RIGHT of the landing in the UPSTAGE WALL. An arched opening is located in the STAGE RIGHT WALL. Another entry is located in the STAGE LEFT WALL. DOWNSTAGE of the STAGE LEFT ENTRANCE is a fireplace. On top of the fireplace is a vase and other decorative pieces. A sofa is placed DOWNSTAGE RIGHT with chairs placed DOWNSTAGE LEFT. End tables and lamps are placed next to the sofa and chairs. Other furniture pieces are placed along the walls as are paintings and other wall decorations. Much of the furniture is covered with sheets as if the place has been abandoned for a while.

AT RISE: The living room is dimly lit with the main source of light coming from the UPSTAGE window. SPATS appears at the window and peers through and then shakes the window to see if it is locked.

SPATS: *(Talks to someone out of sight.)* I think we can get in this way Bubbles. *(Works on the window.)* It ain't locked, but it sure is stuck tight. Hold on a second. *(Continues to struggle as BUBBLES ENTERS UPSTAGE RIGHT and files her nails as she watches Spats from the landing.)* There! I got it! I'm going in! Better watch your step up here Bubbles, it's kind of dark.

(As he steps through he loses his balance and fall flat.)

BUBBLES: *(Moves down into the room and over to Spats and looks down on him.)* Are you all right Spats honey?

SPATS: Bubbles? How did you get in here?

BUBBLES: Through the door. It was open.

SPATS: And you were standing there the whole time? Why didn't you say something?

BUBBLES: I guess I forgot.

SPATS: How could you forget that?

BUBBLES: I don't know. I just did.

SPATS: Whatever. We're inside...that's all that matters.

BUBBLES: Are you sure this is the place?

SPATS: Sure I'm sure. 1241 Applewood Grove. My uncle lived here for 20 years. I spent a lot of time in this house.

BUBBLES: It's pretty creepy.

SPATS: Yeah...now you know how I feel when I go over to your parents' house for Christmas. *(A big thump is heard.)*

BUBBLES: What was that?

SPATS: How should I know? It was probably nothing. Old houses make a lot of weird noises.

BUBBLES: I ain't so sure. I think we better get outta here, Spats. I'm scared.

SPATS: Not so fast. I wanna get that loot.

BUBBLES: Are you sure it's here?

SPATS: Sure I'm sure. It's right here in this letter I found in my pop's things.

BUBBLES: Oh yeah. I forgot.

SPATS: *(Rolls his eyes.)* I should've known. Anyways, Uncle Vito says he stashed ten million clams here before he went into that federal witness protection program.

BUBBLES: So how come your pop didn't come and pick it up?

SPATS: Because he never got a chance. After Vito spilled the beans, the rest of the families came after my old man. He had to lay low. Too bad he didn't lay low enough.

BUBBLES: Yeah well, let's go find the money and get out of here before somebody comes.

SPATS: Hey...don't worry 'bout it. Nobody's gonna come. This place has been deserted for years.

BUBBLES: I'll still feel better when we're someplace else.

SPATS: Just relax. This letter says he stashed the dough in a secret compartment somewhere in the house.

BUBBLES: *(Sarcastic.)* That narrows it down.

SPATS: Well, we ain't gonna find it standing around. Let's go. *(They proceed to move to the archway UPSTAGE CENTER when SPATS suddenly stops and whispers.)* What's that?

BUBBLES: What's what?

SPATS: Shhhhhhhhhh! I hear voices. Somebody's coming. We need to hide.

(The couple run to a small chair in the corner and crouch behind it before realizing it is too small. They then take refuge behind another small piece of furniture. Again too small.) The couch! *(They rush to the sofa, which is covered with a sheet. They crawl under the sheet just as BRAD, ESTHER and EMMA ENTER UPSTAGE RIGHT).*

ESTHER: Thanks for agreeing to look at the place Mr. Naylor.

EMMA: We think it will be a wonderful project for your television show, This Home Restored.

BRAD: *(Arrogantly.)* Yeah well...I'll be the judge of that. *(Steps down into the room and begins to look around.)* Hmm...very interesting architecture. It's kind of an odd mix between Gothic and Victorian. *(HE strolls to the fireplace left and runs his hand across it.)* Nice detail around the fireplace. *(HE looks at the ceiling as he strolls right.)* Interesting ceiling. *(Sees the lumps in the sofa, pauses, but shakes it off. Looks at the entrance right and points.)* And where does that lead?

EMMA: We call that the east wing. Guest bedrooms, library, bathrooms, sauna...

BRAD: *(Cutting in. Points at left entrance.)* And that door?

ESTHER: That leads to the kitchen, dining room, laundry and side entrance.

BRAD: The house is big, isn't it? What's upstairs?

EMMA: Mostly bedrooms and bathrooms.

ESTHER: There's a basement too.

BRAD: You don't say? How do you get to that?

ESTHER: The basement door is just down the hall from the front door.

BRAD: A guy could get lost in this place. I better stock up on bread crumbs. *(Chuckles. No response from ladies.)* So...you say this place once belonged to Vito Giovanni, the mob boss?

ESTHER: Yes it did. In fact, he bought the house as a summer...

BRAD: *(Interrupting.)* And what happened to him?

EMMA: Well...he testified against...

BRAD: And that was five years ago?

ESTHER: Uh...that sounds about right. It's been a good five years, wouldn't you say Emma?

EMMA: I do believe you're right Esther. If I recall, it was the summer of....

BRAD: And nobody's live it in since?

ESTHER: The house sat vacant for a couple of years, but then the city condemned the property and put it on the market.

BRAD: And nobody bought it?

EMMA: The problem was the city was asking for too much money, so it sat empty for another couple of years. By that time it was starting to deteriorate, so the city lowered the price. Since then, a couple of families have tried to live here, but they all left in a big hurry. They said the house is (*lowers her voice*)...haunted.

BRAD: Haunted? That's a load of horse hockey. Uh...excuse my French ladies. So tell me, how did the historical society get ownership of the property?

ESTHER: The city was going to tear the place down, but we put up a fight because of its historical significance. It was, after all, one of the first houses built in Littlebunkport.

EMMA: The city gave us deed to the property under one condition — that we restore it to its original grandeur. That why's we called you, Mr. Naylor.

BRAD: That was smart thinking, ladies.

ESTHER: Why thank you Mr. Naylor. We sure didn't want to see the house destroyed.

BRAD: I wasn't talking about the house. I meant it was smart thinking that you called me. I am, after all, the best there is. Frankly, I don't care about the house. As far as I'm concerned, it's just a big pile of firewood.

ESTHER: Oh dear.

EMMA: Oh my.

BRAD: Ladies, ladies...don't worry. I'll take on your project.

ESTHER: Oh thank you, Mr. Naylor. That's such a relief.

EMMA: And you're not worried about the house being haunted?

BRAD: Haunted smaunted. Let's go and work out the details.

ESTHER: Wonderful.

(THEY EXIT UPSTAGE RIGHT. BUBBLES and SPATS throw off the sheet.)

BUBBLES: Did you hear that?

SPATS: Of course I heard that. I was sittin' here the whole time.

BUBBLES: Oh yeah, I forgot.

SPATS: (*Worried. Begins pacing.*) I can't believe Uncle Vito's house is gonna be on TV.

BUBBLES: I think it's exciting. I love that show...and that Brad Naylor is such a

nunk.

SPATS: Exciting, huh? Did you already forget about the money? (*BUBBLES looks at him blankly.*) Uh...never mind...dumb question.

BUBBLES: Huh?

SPATS: I gotta get that money before they start tearing this house apart.

BUBBLES: What'd ya gonna do?

SPATS: I don't know. A little of this. A little of that. Badda boom, badda bing.

BUBBLES: Uh Spats...what does that mean exactly?

SPATS: Beats me. Us tough guys just say things like that. (*Another loud thud is heard.*)

BUBBLES: There's that noise again. Maybe this place *is* haunted.

SPATS: It ain't haunted. Even if it was, Spats Giovanni ain't afraid of no ghost. (*Another thud, much louder this time.*)

BUBBLES: Let's get out of here.

SPATS: Uh...yeah...good idea. We'll come back later for the loot.

(They hurriedly leave out the window. As they exit, an old man appears at the UPSTAGE ENTRY. He is gaunt and has a nearly white complexion. His white hair is long and unkempt and he sports a scraggly beard. His suit is worn and tattered. He is not wearing shoes. He is carrying an old, large suitcase, which he bangs against the floor a couple of times as the lights fade and the curtains close.)

ACT I

Scene 2

SETTING: The next day in the living room of Vito Giovanni's house. It is now the set of This Home Restored. BRAD holds a microphone and looks at the audience as if he is on television. EMMA, ESTHER and the show's director, LINDA SNODGRASS, are standing off to the left watching. LINDA is wearing a headset.

BRAD: Hello everybody. Welcome to This Home Restored. This is Brad Naylor in Littlebunkport, New York, a quaint little village located about 75 miles north of The Big Apple. Today is our first day on our new project, the complete restoration of an old house once belonging to reputed mob boss, Vito Giovanni. The house now belongs to the Littlebunkport Historical Society, which has been given the job of returning this old house to its original grandeur. Here with us today are two

members of the historical society, EMMA and ESTHER BALDWIN. (*EMMA and ESTHER join BRAD and stand to his left.*) Thank you for joining us today, ladies.

EMMA: Happy to be here, Mr. Naylor.

BRAD: So Esther, tell me a little about the history of the house.

ESTHER: Well...as you said Mr. Naylor, it once belonged to Vito Giovanni.

BRAD: And did you ever meet the man?

EMMA: Afraid not. We moved to Littlebunkport after he left. But everybody here said he seemed like such a kind and gentle man. They never believed what they said about him...that is until his car blew up in the middle of Littlebunkport one day.

BRAD: Somebody blew up his car?

ESTHER: That's what they say...but thankfully nobody got hurt. After that, nobody saw Mr. Giovanni again. The TV reported that he was placed in the federal witness protection program.

BRAD: I see. So...how did the historical society come into possession of this stately old structure?

EMMA: The city condemned the property and gave it to us to renovate.

BRAD: I understand that many people think this place is haunted.

EMMA: That's true, Mr. Naylor. Everybody who's lived here recently all told the same story. Apparently, they heard loud thumping noises at all hours of the day and night, and on occasion, they would see someone with long white hair and a beard wandering around the house. (*Just then the GHOST ENTERS RIGHT with suitcase and walks to the UPSTAGE ENTRANCE and disappears LEFT. EMMA still calmly.*) Kind of like that man who just walked through the room right now. (*Realizes what she has just said. Gasps.*) Oh my goodness! It's true! There is a ghost. (*BRAD whirls around, but nothing is there.*) Did you see it, Esther?

ESTHER: I most certainly did! It was hideous!

LINDA: (*Comes rushing on.*) Cut! Cut!

BRAD: (*Looking behind him.*) I didn't see anything. You old bittys are losing your marbles.

EMMA: I beg your pardon, you pompous putz! I saw it and so did Esther!

LINDA: I saw it too! (*Looks offstage towards the audience and an imaginary camera operator and talks into her headset.*) Did you get that on camera, Charlene? (*Beat.*) No? That's too bad. (*To Brad.*) She missed it.

BRAD: Okay, enough's enough. Ha, ha, ha. Very funny. The joke's on old Brad. Now...can we get back to work?

LINDA: It's no joke, Brad. I saw something that looked like...uh...uh...a corpse.

BRAD: A corpse? Yeah, whatever. Let's wrap this segment up so I can get out of here. Then, you can all have a good laugh at my expense. Linda, can you edit out that last part about seeing a ghost?

LINDA: Uh...sure Brad...but...

BRAD: No buts. Let's roll.

LINDA: Whatever you say, Brad. (*Looks into audience at imaginary camera person and talks into headset.*) Go ahead and roll it, Charlene. (*She moves to the LEFT.*)

BRAD: (*Waits a beat.*) Thank you ladies. (*Walks toward the RIGHT.*) So as you can see folks, we have our work cut out for us. Not only are we battling a rundown house, we also have to deal with the local myth that the house is haunted. Unfortunately, many people in Littlebunkport share that belief. As a result, all of the reputable contractors in this area have refused to work in this house. That's left us in kind of a bind, but my producer assures me he has found competent replacements. Stay tuned. It should be interesting.

LINDA: Cut! That's a take. Good job, Brad. Want to wrap it up for today?

BRAD: Well, it's still pretty early. Let's get another interview in. Any of the contractors here yet?

LINDA: Don't you think we ought see who...or what...just walked through here?

BRAD: Still trying to yank my chain, Linda? Well, I'm not buying it. Now, go see if you can round up one of the contractors.

LINDA: You're the boss. (*SHE EXITS LEFT.*)

ESTHER: Mr. Naylor.

BRAD: What is it this time ladies? (*Sarcastic.*) Want to report a sighting of the Loch Ness Monster in the downstairs toilet?

ESTHER: There's no need to mock us, Mr. Naylor. We saw what we saw. If you're finished with us, Emma and I are going to go home. We're a little shaken up.

BRAD: No problem. We'll be done here in a little bit.

EMMA: Will you make sure the house is locked up when you leave?

BRAD: Uh...sure.

ESTHER: And don't forget to turn out the lights. We're on a tight budget you know.

BRAD: Don't worry about it. I'll take care of it.

EMMA: Just make sure you do.

BRAD: Goodbye ladies. (*He watches them leave UPSTAGE RIGHT.*) Old bats.

ESTHER: (*Offstage.*) We heard that.

LINDA: (*ENTERS LEFT.*) I set up something with the plumber. His name's Snake Rooter. He should be here in just a little bit. Uh...Brad...just so you know, this guy's a little different.

BRAD: What'd you mean, different?

LINDA: Well...let's just say he's got a few leaky pipes.

BRAD: Huh?

LINDA: You'll see. (*WALKS LEFT as she talks into her headset.*) Let's roll, Charlene. (*To Brad.*) You're on, Brad.

BRAD: Uh...welcome back. We're just getting started on our renovation of Vito Giovanni's house in Littlebunkport, New York. We're scheduled to meet with our plumbing contractor, Snake Rooter, who has been busy inspecting the condition of the plumbing. (*Right on cue, SNAKE ENTERS UPSTAGE LEFT. He is carrying a metal detector and is wearing a headset. He begins to move the detector up and down the walls.*) Here's our plumber right now. Let's have a word with him and see how things are going. (*BRAD approaches Snake.*) Mr. Rooter. (*SNAKE doesn't hear him, continues to move detector up and down the wall. BRAD looks back and smiles at the camera. Tries again.*) Mr. Rooter. (*No response. Finally, BRAD taps him on the shoulder. SNAKE turns and joins Brad.*) Mr. Rooter, I'm Brad Villa.

SNAKE: (*Can't hear because of the headphones. Loudly.*) What?

BRAD: (*A little louder.*) I said...I'm Brad Naylor.

SNAKE: (*Loudly.*) I can't hear you! (*Begins to remove headphones.*)

BRAD: (*Now angry. He screams.*) I said...my name is Brad Naylor!

SNAKE: Gee whiz, Mr. Naylor. No reason to yell. I ain't deaf.

BRAD: I wasn't yelling. I was merely trying to...oh never mind. So Mr. Rooter...do you mind if I call you Snake.

SNAKE: I don't see why not. Everybody else does...except for my ex-wife. She calls me an ugly, cheap, no-good...

BRAD: (*Quickly cutting him off.*) Uh...that's fine, Snake.

SNAKE: It is? I find it kind of offensive.

BRAD: No...I meant that our viewers aren't interested in your personal life?

SNAKE: Viewers?

BRAD: Yes, viewers. You're on the nationwide television show, This Home Restored. (*Points towards audience.*) See the camera?

SNAKE: You mean we're on TV? I sure hope my ex-wife ain't watchin'. If she knows I'm working, she'll expect me to pay up.

BRAD: This isn't live TV. The show will be aired later.

SNAKE: Whew! That's a relief. Gives me a chance to get out of town.

BRAD: So....Snake...can you tell me what you were doing just now?

SNAKE: You mean before you interrupted me and yelled at me?

BRAD: (*Objects.*) I didn't...(concedes). Yes...before I interrupted you.

SNAKE: Well, it's pretty simple really. I was locating pipes.

BRAD: And I see you're using some unusual equipment to do that.

SNAKE: I'm glad you brought that up. You see, this piece of equipment is a product of my own design.

BRAD: Really?

SNAKE: Yes sir. I call it the Ready Rooter Pipe Locater Two Thousand.

BRAD: You don't say?

SNAKE: Nah...I was just funnin' you Brad. It's a metal detector. Duh!

BRAD: Hey...nobody comes on my show and...

SNAKE: You see, Brad...you move this end up and down the walls, and when it finds something made out of metal, it beeps.

BRAD: (*Irritated.*) I know how a metal detector works!

SNAKE: Then why did you ask me?

BRAD: That's it! I've had enough! Linda? Where're you at? Linda! (*LINDA comes into view. She's laughing.*)

LINDA: Uh...cut! That was precious, Brad.

BRAD: I'm glad you find it amusing, Linda. (*Turns to Snake.*) And you...I suggest you go do what you were doing...upstairs...downstairs...I don't care. Anywhere but here.

SNAKE: What'd I do? (*LINDA laughs at this.*)

BRAD: Just go!

SNAKE: Uh...sure whatever you say. (*SNAKE EXITS UPSTAGE LEFT.*)

BRAD: (*LINDA is still chuckling.*) Just keep on laughing, Linda. We'll see how funny you think it is when your contract comes up for renewal.

LINDA: (*Wiping tears from her eyes.*) I'm sorry, Brad. That was just too good. But don't worry, we won't use any of it.

BRAD: I should hope not. I think that's about all I can take for one day. Let's call it quits.

LINDA: Uh...before you go. There's a man and several kids outside waiting to see

you.

BRAD: Now what?

LINDA: I'll go get them. I think you'll be happy to see them.

BRAD: This better not be another one of your tricks.

LINDA: Don't worry. (*SHE EXITS LEFT.*)

BRAD: (*To himself as he paces RIGHT with his back to the left doorway.*) This project is turning out to be a disaster. First, a ghost...and then, Snake Rooter. (*STUMPY ENTERS LEFT with BRETT, MARCIE and MELISSA.*) What else could possibly go wrong?

STUMPY: Having a bad day, Brad?

BRAD: (*Turns.*) Stumpy? Is that you?

STUMPY: It's me. And you know I don't like being called that.

BRAD: Oh yeah, I'm sorry. Wow, it's good to see you. How long's it been?

STUMPY: Three years now. (*Looks at his foot.*)

BRAD: I hope you're still not mad at me for dropping that circular saw on your foot.

STUMPY: Why should I be mad? I only lost three toes and my television career, not to mention a perfectly good pair of boots.

BRAD: So you are still angry? I guess I can't blame you.

STUMPY: To tell the truth, Brad, I stewed over it for a while, but I'm past that now. Heck, I should have known better than to let you use my power tools. You always were a klutz.

BRAD: So what're you up to now? What're you doing here?

STUMPY: Believe it or not, I'm a shop teacher right here in Littlebunkport, and I couldn't be happier. I heard you were a little short on help out here, so I've here to volunteer my services.

BRAD: That'd be great, Stump...I mean George. You were the best contractor I've ever had, and this project needs somebody who knows what they're doing.

STUMPY: I also brought along three of my best shop students. Brad, this is Marcie, Brett and Melissa.

BRAD: Nice to meet you all.

MELISSA: Nice to meet you, Mr. Naylor. Mr. Smith has told us a lot about you.

BRAD: I'm sure he has.

STUMPY: Anyway, they're eager to work on this project and learn the ins and outs of the business. You don't mind if they lend a hand, do you?

BRAD: Not at all. If you taught them, I'm sure they're more than qualified. We were just wrapping things up here. You want to go get a cup or coffee or something? I'll fill you in on the project.

STUMPY: Sounds good. Let's go.

BRETT: Uh...Mr. Smith. Mind if we hang here for a while? Look around a bit?

STUMPY: How about it, Brad? Think that'd be a problem?

BRAD: Not at all.

GEORGE: All right then. I'm going to take Brad down to the Cozy Corner. If you need us, that's where we'll be.

MARCIE: Don't worry about us. We'll be fine.

BRAD: Well then...let's go. Nice meeting all of you.

MELISSA: You too, Mr. Naylor. (*STUMPY and BRAD exit UPSTAGE RIGHT as the students look around the room.*)

MARCIE: I can't believe we're going to be part of This Home Restored.

BRETT: I know...it's great. I can't wait to get started.

MELISSA: This place *is* awfully spooky. You don't think it really is haunted, do you?

BRETT: You've seen too many horror movies, Melissa. (*The lights flicker, followed by a blood curdling scream from OFF LEFT, which startles the students and prompts them to cower together near the couch, facing LEFT.*)

MELISSA: Too many horror movies, huh Brett? We're supposed to be the only ones here.

BRETT: How should I know? Well, how do you explain that?

MARCIE: Whatever it is, it's coming this way. Quick! Hide!

(The STUDENTS scramble behind the couch as BUZZ ENTERS UPSTAGE LEFT. BUZZ is the electrician and has just been zapped. His hair is standing straight up and he initially talks with a stutter until the effects of the shock have worn off.)

BUZZ: I ha...ha...hate....ol....ol....old....hous....ouses. (*Upon hearing BUZZ speak, the STUDENTS pop their heads above the couch. BUZZ notices them.*)

Oh....hi....hi.....ki....ki....kids.

(The STUDENTS STAND and walk around the couch.)

BRETT: Was that you that screamed just now?

BUZZ: Afra...a...a....aid s...s...so.

BRETT: See Melissa, I told you there was a logical explanation.

MELISSA: You did not! You were as scared as I was.

BRETT: Was not!

MELISSA: Was so!

MARCIE: Shut up you two. Are you all right, mister?

BUZZ: I'm fi...i...i....ine. Just a little sh...sh....shock.

MARCIE: Who are you?

BUZZ: I'm..I'm..I'm Bu...Bu...Bu...Buzz An...An...Anderson.

BRETT: You must be the electrician.

BUZZ: *(Shakes his head back and forth vigorously in an attempt to shake off his affliction. It works.)* That's right, young man.

MELISSA: Hey...you're talking normal again.

BUZZ: Thank goodness. Sometimes it takes a while.

MARCIE: Does that happen to you a lot?

BUZZ: Afraid so. The wiring in these old houses is brutal.

BRETT: Have you ever thought about turning off a breaker.

BUZZ: Hey, there's an idea. Thanks. See you kids later. *(HE EXITS UPSTAGE RIGHT.)*

MARCIE: I think that guy's been shocked once too often.

MELISSA: You can say that again.

BRETT: How about we check out the rest of the house?

MELISSA: I don't think so. Let's wait until there's more people here.

BRETT: Don't tell me you're scared?

MELISSA: As a matter of fact, I am.

BRETT: How about you Marcie? You up to it?

MARCIE: I think I'll stick with Melissa.

BRETT: Unbelievable.

(SPATS and BUBBLES ENTER UPSTAGE RIGHT. They are dressed in coveralls. SPATS carries a sledge hammer and BUBBLES carries a pickaxe. THEY WALK LEFT toward the LEFT DOORWAY, not noticing the students.)

BRETT: Hey you two. *(SPATS and BUBBLES jump. They turn.)* How's it going?

SPATS: Relax honey, it's just a bunch of kids. What are you guys doing here? I thought everybody went home.

MARCIE: We're part of the crew. I'm Marcie, and this is Brett and Melissa. Who are you?

SPATS: Uh...Uh...my name's Luigi and this is my wife...uh...Lucinda. Uh...we're the wrecking crew.

MELISSA: The wrecking crew?

SPATS: Yeah...you know...we have to tear out some walls.

BRETT: That's cool.

SPATS: Uh...we gotta get goin'.

MELISSA: Sure. We understand. Nice meeting you, Mr. and Mrs.....uh....

BUBBLES: Feldstein.

MARCIE: Feldstein? Luigi and Lucinda Feldstein?

SPATS: Yeah...have you heard of us?

MARCIE: Can't say that I have.

BUBBLES: That's a relief.

SPATS: Quiet Bub....I mean Lucinda. Uh...see you later, okay?

BRETT: Sure. (*SPATS and BUBBLES EXIT LEFT.*) They seem nice enough.

MARCIE: I'm not so sure. Something's not right about those two.

BRETT: Oh c'mon Marcie.

MELISSA: She's right, Brett.

BRETT: What're you talking about?

MARCIE: Are you serious? Luigi and Lucinda Feldstein? That should've been you're first clue.

MELISSA: And did you see her shoes? Open toed heels are a little out of place on a construction site.

MARCIE: And what about her nails? They were perfect. There's no way you can tear out walls and keep nails like that.

BRETT: Who do you two think you are? Charlie's Angels?

MELISSA: No.

MARCIE: We're much better looking. (*MELISSA and MARCIE laugh.*)

BRETT: Yeah...in your dreams.

MARCIE: All I can say is we better keep an eye on those two.

BRETT: Who's we? You gotta mouse in your pocket? *(A big thump is heard. And then another.)*

MELISSA: What was that?

MARCIE: I don't know, but I'm getting out of here!

BRETT: I thought you were going to keep an eye on what's their names...Luigi and Lucinda.

MARCIE: Tomorrow. Definitely tomorrow. Let's go.

MELISSA: Right behind you Marcie. *(MARCIE and MELISSA EXIT quickly STAGE LEFT.)*

BRETT: What a couple of 'fraidy cats. *(Yells after them.)* Charlie's Angels wouldn't run away. *(Another big thump. BRETT jumps. Wide eyed.)* Uh...wait up you two...I'm coming with you.

(HE hurriedly EXITS LEFT just as the GHOST appears in the UPSTAGE ENTRANCE. The GHOST throws the suitcase on the floor and begins to jump up and down on it and moans loudly as the lights fade and the curtains close.)

ACT I Scene 3

SETTING: The living room. The next morning. SPATS and BUBBLES are sitting on the sofa, obviously exhausted.

BUBBLES: Well, we spent all night looking, Spats, and didn't find nothing. There ain't no money.

SPATS: We've only scratched the surface. The money's here. I can smell it.

BUBBLES: The only thing I can smell is your breath. It's nasty.

SPATS: Uh...sorry Bubbles. I guess I shouldn't of ate that meatball sandwich.

BUBBLES: Yeah well...would you mind talkin' the other way, please?

SPATS: I ain't giving up yet. Ten million bucks is a lot of money, and I ain't gonna let that Brad Naylor be the one that finds it. Let's get outta here and come back later. Tonight, we'll start tearing out the walls.

BUBBLES: *(Sarcastic.)* Another romantic evening.

SPATS: You'll thank me when we're millionaires. Let's go.

(They get up and slowly EXIT UPSTAGE RIGHT. A beat later BRAD ENTERS

LEFT WITH EMMA and ESTHER on his heels.)

EMMA: (*Scolding.*) Don't you walk away from me young man. We're not done talking to you yet.

BRAD: What's there to talk about? I told you...this is a construction site. Things get messy around a construction site.

ESTHER: I'd watch that tone of voice, if I was you. If I was your mother...

BRAD: Well, you're not. So take a pill, woman, and let me do my job.

EMMA: All we're asking is that you have your crew clean up a little bit after they're done.

BRAD: The place isn't even messy yet. Wait 'til we really get started.

ESTHER: Nevertheless...we want this place kept clean.

BRAD: Okay, okay. I have better things to do than argue with you two.

EMMA: That's much better, Mr. Naylor. We'll be back later to check your progress.

BRAD: (*Sarcastic.*) I can hardly wait.

EMMA: (*Miffed.*) Let's go, Esther. (*THEY EXIT UPSTAGE RIGHT.*)

BRAD: Old hags.

ESTHER: (*Offstage.*) We heard that! (*LINDA and CHARLENE ENTER.*)

BRAD: About time you show up!

LINDA: (*Looks at her watch.*) It's not even eight o' clock yet. What's the big deal?

BRAD: The big deal is I just got my ears blistered by those two old bags from the historical society.

LINDA: You did? (*Laughs.*) I wish I would've been here to see that.

BRAD: It's not funny, Linda. Next time, I'm going to sic those two pit bulls on you.

LINDA: Now just calm down, Brad.

BRAD: Calm down? This job has gone from bad to worse in a hurry. We've got two crazy loons who think they've seen a ghost, not to mention this irrational desire to keep things neat and tidy. We have a plumber who's had entirely too much exposure to lead pipes. And then, there's you, my director, who finds all of this amusing. (*Looks at Charlene.*) Who are you?

CHARLENE: I'm the camera operator.

BRAD: I haven't seen you around before.

LINDA: She just started, Brad. This is her first job.

BRAD: Great. Just great. With everything else that's going on, I have a rookie operating the camera.

CHARLENE: I can assure you, Mr. Naylor, I am quite competent.

BRAD: Tell it to someone who cares. All I can say is you better get it right. I don't like doing a lot of takes.

CHARLENE: I'll do my best, Mr. Naylor.

BRAD: Just make sure you do. Now...go get your equipment so we can get started.

CHARLENE: Sure thing, Mr. Naylor. (*SHE EXITS LEFT.*)

LINDA: That's no way to treat the help, Brad.

BRAD: (*Doesn't hear her. WALKS RIGHT.*) Why me? Why do these things always happen to me?

LINDA: (*Under her breath.*) Probably because you deserve it.

BRAD: (*Turns back.*) What?

LINDA: Uh...nothing. I was just saying that you deserve better than this. Buy hey...quit your worrying. I'm sure things will go smoother today.

BRAD: You're probably right, Linda. I mean...what else could possibly go wrong? (*The lights flicker.*) I knew I shouldn't have asked that.

(*BUZZ ENTERS UPSTAGE LEFT.*)

BUZZ: Whoeeee! That was close! I could've been toast!

BRAD: Who're you?

BUZZ: I'm Buzz Anderson. I'm the electrician on this job.

BRAD: (*Sarcastic.*) I'm thrilled.

BUZZ: Glad to hear it. You must be Brad Naylor. It's nice to meet you.

BRAD: Sure Buzz. It's nice to meet you. This is my director, Linda Snodgrass.

LINDA: Nice to meet you, Buzz.

BUZZ: The pleasure's all mine, honey.

LINDA: (*Offended.*) Honey? Who're you calling honey?

BRAD: (*To Linda.*) Pretty amusing, wouldn't you agree, Linda? (*LINDA glares and walks away.*)

BUZZ: Whoeee! That lady's hotter than a two hundred and twenty volt circuit. And I should know...I've been jolted more than once.

BRAD: (*Dryly.*) Jolted or jilted?

BUZZ: Huh?

BRAD: Never mind. Uh...Buzz we need to shoot some footage. You have something to show me?

BUZZ: Give me a minute and I'll go open a circuit on that wall over there.

BRAD: Great. You do that. (*BUZZ moves to the DOWNSTAGE RIGHT wall.*) Linda, you ready to get some work done?

LINDA: (*Returns to Brad with microphone in her hand.*) I guess. But keep that pig away from me.

BRAD: I'll do my best. (*SNAKE ENTERS LEFT carrying a divining rod.*) Now what? (*LINDA and BRAD watch as SNAKE wanders around the room with the divining rod in his hands. After watching a while, Brad can't stand it anymore.*) For crying out loud, what're you doing now?

SNAKE: Duh! I'm trying to find the water main.

BRAD: With that?

SNAKE: Of course. This is the Ready Rooter Water Finder 3000.

BRAD: That's a divining rod.

SNAKE: It is!/? Well I'll be. I thought it was a willow branch.

BRAD: It doesn't matter what you call it, it's not going to work.

SNAKE: The heck you say. My daddy used this particular device, and so did his daddy, and so did his daddy before him.

BRAD: All that proves is the nut doesn't fall too far from the tree.

SNAKE: I'm telling you it works. It's all in the wrist action. Watch. (*He wanders around a bit. Nothing.*)

BRAD: (*Sarcastic.*) Uh...maybe you're not holding your mouth the right way.

SNAKE: Shhhhhhhh! I'm getting something. (*SNAKE makes the divining rod point downward.*) There...I told you it'd work. I guarantee there's water right here.

BRAD: What do you take me for? An idiot?

SNAKE: You said it, I didn't.

BRAD: Of course, there's water there! You're standing right above the downstairs bathroom!

SNAKE: (*Looks at the stick. Incredulous.*) Wow! It really does work. Amazing.

BRAD: (*Starting to lose his cool.*) You know something, Snake, I've had about enough of your...(Stops suddenly. Gets an evil glint in his eye and wicked smile on his face.) On second thought...you're right Snake. That was pretty impressive. Hey...do me a favor and see if you can trace the main water line under the highway.

SNAKE: Sure thing. (*He EXITS LEFT.*)

LINDA: You really think he'll go out on the highway?

BRAD: (*Smiles. Chuckles evilly.*) Not for long. There's lots of truck traffic on that road.

LINDA: Brad?

BRAD: Yeah?

LINDA: You feeling okay? You're acting a big strange.

BRAD: Never felt better. You ready to go to work?

LINDA: Uh...sure.

BRAD: (*Acting a bit looney.*) Well then...let's get rolling. (*Takes the microphone from Linda. Looks into the audience.*) You ready to roll Charlene 'cause....heeeerrre's Bradley. (*Moves RIGHT. A beat later.*) Action! I always wanted to say that. (*Laughs.*)

LINDA: (*Speaks into her headset.*) Uh...go ahead and roll it Charlene, but be ready to stop. I think Brad is losing it. (*To Brad.*) Okay Brad, you're on.

BRAD: (*Really looney.*) Helloooo America! Welcome to the continuing saga of This Home Restored. Today, we're on location at Vito Giovanni's house in Littlebunkport, New York. This is our second day on the job...uh...I think it's our second day. It could be our third or...maybe fourth. Who's counting? All I know is it feels like we've been here a long, long time. Today, we're going to meet with our electrical contractor, Buzz Anderson. He's inspecting the electrical circuits in the house to see if everything's up to code. (*Snorts.*) Hah! As if *he* would know. (*Laughs. Walks over to BUZZ on the DOWNSTAGE RIGHT wall.*) So Buzz...what're you up to, old buddy, old pal?

BUZZ: (*Looks at Brad a bit curiously.*) Well, Brad, I'm checking the circuitry in the living room.

BRAD: Finding any?

BUZZ: It's actually pretty interesting. See that wire right there?

BRAD: (*Reaches for wire.*) This one? (*Grabs the wire. He jiggles as the current runs through his body.*) Uhhhhh.....Uhhhhh.....(*Let's go of the wire.*)

LINDA: Oh my goodness. Cut! Cut! (*Comes rushing over.*)

BUZZ: I was just going to say that was the hot wire, but I guess he found that out.

LINDA: Brad? Are you all right?

BRAD: Um...um....um....um....um....um.

LINDA: We better get him to the hospital.

BRAD: Um...um...um....um...um...um.

BUZZ: Don't worry none, honey. He'll be all right. I've been shocked lots of times, and look at me...I'm normal.

BRAD: Um....um....um....um...um.

LINDA: I'm not so sure. Help me get him to the car!

BUZZ: Oh all right. *(THEY lead Brad LEFT.)*

BRAD: *(Continues to mutter as he walks.)* Um....um....um....um....um....um.

BUZZ: It was just one little jolt. What a weinie.

LINDA: Shut up, Buzz!

(THEY EXIT LEFT as STUMPY, MARCIE, MELISSA and BRETT ENTER UPSTAGE RIGHT.)

MARCIE: I'm telling you Mr. Smith. Something funny's going on around here.

STUMPY: I'm sure there's a perfectly reasonable explanation behind the noises you heard last night.

MELISSA: But what about that Luigi and Lucinda Feldstein? You have to admit that's a little strange.

STUMPY: I agree with you there. I'll check with Brad and see if they're on the payroll. By the way, have any of you seen him.

BRETT: Not yet.

STUMPY: I guess that shouldn't surprise me. Brad never did show up too early. Some things just never change.

MARCIE: I can't believe you're still not sore at him for cutting your toes off.

STUMPY: That was a long time ago, Marcie.

MELISSA: But you told us yourself it cost you your career.

STUMPY: Yeah, but it was partially my fault. I knew Brad didn't know one end of a hammer from another, but he was the star of the show.

BRETT: So?

STUMPY: Don't you see? We needed him to look like he knew what he was doing, even if he didn't.

MARCIE: So it's all just an act?

STUMPY: Well, not exactly. Brad's knowledgeable enough. He just doesn't have a lot of hands-on experience. The problem was that Brad wanted to do everything, and we just kept letting him. On the day of the accident, I just got too close. I was trying to keep an eye on Brad so he wouldn't cut his foot off. Instead, he cut mine

MELISSA: You never told us that before, Mr. Smith.

STUMPY: I've never told anybody that. I was too busy feeling sorry for myself. But seeing Brad again has brought back a lot of good memories. Boy, did we have some good times. You know, I wouldn't even be in this business if not for him. I was just a lowly 'ol carpenter trying to make ends meet and raise a family. Then I meet Brad. Oh sure, he's an arrogant cuss and thinks a lot of himself, but the fact is, he gave me a chance when nobody else would. (*BRETT sniffles and quickly wipes his eye.*)

MARCIE: Are you crying, Brett?

BRETT: Who me? No way!

MELISSA: Don't worry about it Brett. I like a man who shows his sensitive side. You know, maybe I will take you up on that offer and go to the homecoming dance with you.

BRETT: Really?

MELISSA: Yeah...in your dreams.

BRETT: Very funny, Melissa. I'll get you for this. (*He crosses his arms and looks away, steaming.*)

STUMPY: Okay...that's enough you two. I'm going to go find Brad and see what's going on around here. You three stay here until I get back.

MARCIE: Sure thing, Mr. Smith. (*HE EXITS LEFT.*)

MELISSA: (*Trying to make-up.*) Oh c'mon Brett...don't be mad. I was just teasing you. I'm sorry.

BRETT: Yeah...you're *real* sorry all right. (*This upsets MELISSA. SHE walks RIGHT towards the couch as BRETT walks LEFT to the fireplace.*)

MARCIE: Great. Just great. Hey guys...you're too good of friends to be acting this way.

BRETT: Yeah well...tell *her* that!

MELISSA: No...tell *him* that!

MARCIE: (*Shakes her head. Parental tone.*) Kids. (*BRETT picks up a vase off the fireplace.*) Brett...you better put that down before you break it.

BRETT: Hey Melissa! Catch! I betcha you can snag it with your big mouth.

MELISSA: Oh yeah...why don't you just try it and see what happens.

MARCIE: Brett...I'm warning you. Put that vase down.

BRETT: Yeah yeah. (*Looks inside.*) Hey guys...look at this. There's a piece of

paper rolled up in here.

MARCIE: What is it? (*Rushes over to Brett.*)

BRETT: (*Puts the vase down and pulls out the paper. MARCIE grabs it from him and walks back right unrolling the paper.*) Hey! (*BRETT follows.*) Give me that paper. I found it.

MARCIE: (*Ignoring him as MELISSA joins the group.*) It looks like a schematic of a house.

MELISSA: Wait a minute! It's this house!

BRETT: You're right, Melissa! (*Points.*) There's the living room, the kitchen, the dining room.

MARCIE: But what's this? There's a big X drawn on it.

MELISSA: That would be over there...behind the fireplace.

BRETT: But there's nothing behind the fireplace.

(The GHOST ENTERS UPSTAGE LEFT carrying suitcase and walks up behind the three students. However, they are so engrossed in the map that they do not notice. He watches and listens.)

MARCIE: You don't think that this is some kind of treasure map, do you?

MELISSA: Treasure map? You've seen too many pirate movies, Marcie.

MARCIE: Now hold on just a second. Vito Giovanni was a gangster right?

MELISSA: You mean *is* a gangster. As far as we know, he's still alive. He went into the federal witness protection program, remember?

MARCIE: Yeah...well maybe...just maybe...he stashed some money or jewelry here and left this map so somebody could find it.

MELISSA: Or maybe...he left the map so *he'd* remember where he put the money.

BRETT: (*Sarcastic.*) Or maybe...he put an X on the spot where he wanted to build a new john.

GHOST: Uh...actually you're all wrong, but a new downstairs john is not a bad idea.

MARCIE: Who said that?

BRETT: I didn't say anything, did you Melissa?

MELISSA: No.

MARCIE: If I didn't say anything and you two didn't say anything, who did?

GHOST: I did. (*The students all turn as one, see the Ghost, scream and run out LEFT. The GHOST watches them and turns back to the audience with a confused*

look. He is carrying the suitcase with a giant X marked across the front of it with masking or duct tape.) What did I do? (Blows his breath into his hand.) Was it something I ate? (He shrugs and begins to walk back to the UPSTAGE ENTRANCE as the lights fade and the curtains close.)

END OF ACT ONE

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