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SCRIPT SAMPLE

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The Exterminator
By Robert Margolis

Cast Of Characters

Daisy: A woman in her sixties.

Harry: Daisy's husband. A man in his sixties or seventies.

Benjie: Their son. In his thirties.

Samantha: Benjie's wife. In her thirties.

The Exterminator: A man in his sixties or seventies.

Scene

A house in the country. Stage Right is the living room. A section of the wall and ceiling has caved in, as if from an explosion. Water runs slowly into a large hole in the floor. There are two sofas, Stage and Upstage Right. A high-backed, cushioned chair. A bar with assorted liquor and glasses. A stairway winds to an upstairs balcony, off of which are two bedroom doors. A number of dead cats hang in nooses from the living room ceiling. Also empty nooses. There is a pile of dead cats in the Upstage Right corner. Stage Left is the dining room. Large rectangular mahogany table. Four high-backed chairs. The table is set for a party: Hats, favors, balloons, dishes, etc. Hanging from the rear wall is a large banner that reads: Welcome Home Benjie. A window beneath the banner. Stage Left has a doorway that leads to the kitchen and the out-of-view entrance. Upstage Left is a closet door. The house is in a state of meticulous decay. Even the rubble seems organized.

Time

The near future. Act I takes place in the afternoon. Act II takes place in the evening.

NOTE: The characters are always operating from a position of very specific needs and intentions.

(If a balcony is not feasible, the bedrooms can be Upstage Right)

ACT ONE

Scene 1

AT RISE: Afternoon. Daisy is cleaning in the living room: Vacuuming, dusting, spraying, sweeping. She wears a dress, black shoes, surgical gloves. Harry enters from the kitchen. He wears a raincoat, hat, boots. He walks, slightly stooped, with the help of a cane. He is carrying a dead cat by the scruff of the neck. DAISY ignores him. Harry brings over a chair and hangs the cat from one of the empty nooses.)

HARRY

I found another one. Poor little kitty.

DAISY

(Still vacuuming.)

What was that?

HARRY

(Raising his voice.)

I said I found him by the lake.

DAISY

(Looking up.)

You didn't go in, did you?

HARRY

Go in? Do I look like a complete idiot?

(Daisy stops cleaning and looks at him.)

DAISY

No.

(She returns to her vacuuming.)

HARRY

Do you think I've lost my mind? Well, I haven't. Not yet. Not by a long shot. I'm still on the ball. Still ticking. I can still see the forest from the trees. Don't forget who's who around this place! Do you hear me?! I'm talking to you!

(She ignores him.)

What time's he coming?

DAISY

What's that?

HARRY

I said, when's he...

DAISY

(Shouting.)

I've got a cake in the oven!

HARRY

Good.

DAISY

Chocolate.

HARRY

That's my favorite.

(DAISY looks at him.)

DAISY

You're dripping.

(He looks down. Starts to remove his rain gear. Underneath he wears a wet suit. Flippers hang from his belt. He removes this. Underneath the wet suit he is wearing bermuda shorts, a bright hawaiian shirt, black socks and sandals.)

HARRY

Not that I didn't want to go in. It looked so appetizing. To just dip my toe, for a second, would've been...

DAISY

Shut up, Louis! Will you please shut...up! Stop blabbering and just settle down until I finish. I've heard enough out of you for one lifetime. (A beat.) Why don't you have a drink. You're all...strung up.

HARRY

That's a good idea. I think I'll do just that.

(He goes to make himself a drink. DAISY puts away the vacuum. HARRY sits in the large chair, sipping.)

Who's Louis?

DAISY

What's that?

HARRY

I said, who's Louis?

DAISY

Louis?

HARRY

Yeah. You called me Louis.

DAISY

Did I?

HARRY

Yeah.

DAISY

A friend. He...knew me...a long time ago.

HARRY

I don't remember him.

DAISY

(Becomes caught up in the memory.)

I met him at a party, years ago. Too much to drink. Stumbling. I tried to stop him but someone had pulled the plug. Louis knew that. His hands wet, sticky. Each finger alert, almost knowledgeable. I cried out. My god, he was tall then. His hands aching, ready, tried to move me. It was over too rapidly, even for someone as carefree as I was back then. But he held me tight, tight, my frail body gripping the air.

(Beat)

Funny how these things linger, years later.

(Beat)

Hand me that broom, will you?

HARRY

The name doesn't ring a bell.

(He hands her the broom.)

DAISY

Give me a hand with the couch.

(They move the Stage Right couch so DAISY can clean. They find a dead cat. DAISY tosses it on the pile. She begins to sweep.)

HARRY

This sofa's a tough old bird.

(He strokes the couch tenderly.)
Good value. Last a lifetime. I remember this couch.

(He slowly looks up from the couch to where DAISY is bent over, cleaning. He creeps up behind her. He pinches her bottom.)

DAISY
Aaaah! What the hell...?

HARRY
C'mon Mary, and do your penance.

(He grabs her. Kisses her. She tries to squirm free.)

DAISY
Get away from me you old sick bastard! Get your disgusting paws off of me.
(HARRY tears open the front of her dress.)
Aaaah!

HARRY
Oh...my! C'mon Mary...

DAISY
(Interrupting.)
I'm not...

(She knees him in the groin.)

HARRY
Uhhh!

DAISY
...your Mary
(HARRY falls to his knees.)
You snake!
(HARRY glares up at her, his mouth open, breathing heavily. The doorbell rings.)
Oh, god. He's here.
(Pause.)
Get up, you idiot!

(HARRY painfully tries to get up. He is too slow for her. DAISY grabs his arm and drags him behind the couch. They crouch there, hiding. The bell rings again. No response. Then twice more, rapidly. Sound of an outside door opening & closing. Dining room door squeaks slowly open. BENJIE sticks his head in. DAISY sneaks a look over the couch. She remains watching throughout the following.)

BENJIE

Hello? Anybody home? That's funny.

(BENJIE places a suitcase and a duffel bag inside the dining room. He is thin. Short hair. He leaves. Returns carrying SAMANTHA in his arms. She is wearing a short skirt and black tights. She is holding a dead cat. BENJIE places her on the edge of the dining room table.)

BENJIE (Continued)

(Whispering.)

There. Now it's official.

SAMANTHA

Not yet it isn't.

BENJIE

What do you mean? Oh.

(His eyes light up. He moves to her.)

SAMANTHA

Wait.

(He starts to kiss her.)

Oh, god. Wait.

(He hikes up her dress and climbs on the table with her. She begins to unbuckle his pants.)

Oh, don't. Not here.

BENJIE

Shhh!

(They begin to make love on the table. BENJIE shoves all the plates, party favors, etc. onto the floor to make room.)

SAMANTHA

Oh, god.

BENJIE

Yes.

SAMANTHA

Oh.

BENJIE

Uh-huh.

SAMANTHA

Yeah.

BENJIE

Uh-huh. Uh-huh. That's it. That's...it.

SAMANTHA

Oh, oh, oh, yes.

BENJIE

Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

SAMANTHA

Yes.

BENJIE

Uh-huh.

SAMANTHA

Yes.

BENJIE

Uh-huh. That's right. That's...right!

(Beat)

SAMANTHA

(Whispering.)

Tell me I'm a slut.

BENJIE

What?

SAMANTHA

Tell me...I'm a slut.

(The following is like a game they've played before. Tenderly.)

BENJIE

You're a slut.

SAMANTHA

Tell me I'm a slut and a whore.

BENJIE

You are. You are.

SAMANTHA

Am I?

BENJIE

(Tenderly.)

Yes. You're my slut. You're my whore.

SAMANTHA

Am I bad?

BENJIE

(Tenderly.)

Very bad. Very, very bad.

SAMANTHA

Say it!

BENJIE

(Whispering.)

Bad girl. Bad girl.

SAMANTHA

No. I'm not.

BENJIE

Yes. You're bad.

SAMANTHA

Noooo!

BENJIE

(Whispering.)

Bad, bad, bad!

SAMANTHA

No, I'm not. I'm not bad. I'm not. Noooooh, god! I'm... Oh, god! Oh, god!!!

BENJIE

Yes...Yes!!

SAMANTHA

Oh, god! Ooooooh!

(She drops the cat.)

BENJIE

Nn...Nnn!...Nnnn!...Oh...Oh!...Ooooh!!

(He breaks into laughter. They both laugh. Breathing heavily.)

Well, how was that?

SAMANTHA

Now, its official.

BENJIE

Good.

SAMANTHA

Help me up.

(He gets up. HE lifts her off the table. They adjust their clothing. They kiss. She lights a cigarette. HARRY emerges from behind the couch. He stands there. BENJIE sees him. BENJIE and HARRY walk slowly towards each other. DAISY watches from behind the couch. When they get within a few feet of each other, they fall into wrestler's crouches, and warily circle each other. A moment. They pounce. Grab each other's head and kiss on the lips. Slowly slide to the ground while still kissing. When they reach the ground, they break momentarily. Then start to wrestle violently. DAISY comes out from behind the couch, her fists and teeth clenched, shouting encouragement to HARRY. SAMANTHA leans against the dining room table, smoking and watching.)

DAISY

C'mon Harry. That's it! That's it!! C'mon, you old slug. Give it to him! Hit him where it hurts! Hit him where it... Goddamnit! Move your...little lard ass. Kill him!...Kill the son of a...

(BENJIE has gotten HARRY onto the ground and is trying to pin him. DAISY drops to her knees and leans in, screaming in HARRY's face.) C'mon, get up! You old...You can do it!

Don't give up! Don't give...C'mon Harry! Fight!! Fight!! C'mooooon!! You stupid...old...

(BENJIE pins HARRY and smacks his hand on the floor. DAISY simultaneously smacks her hand on the floor.)

Shit!!!

(DAISY gets up in disgust and moves away. BENJIE lies there for a moment. Then slowly gets up and walks towards DAISY. HARRY sees this. Starts to get up and sneak towards BENJIE from behind. He rises up to pounce on BENJIE with his cane. BENJIE, without looking back, kicks HARRY in the groin. HARRY doubles over, onto his knees.)

HARRY

Uhhh!

BENJIE

(Slowly turns his head. Gently.)

C'mon, dad. You always taught me to play by the rules, didn't you? You always taught me that. Now fair is fair.

(He slaps HARRY violently with the back of his hand. Harry is knocked to the floor.

Unconscious. BENJIE turns back to DAISY.)

Hello, mother.

DAISY

Hello, Benjie.

(He reaches out his hand. They move to shake but don't touch.)

BENJIE

Long time, no see.

DAISY

Welcome home, Benjie.

BENJIE

Oh. I'm sorry. I haven't introduced you to my wife. This is Samantha.

DAISY

Your wife?

BENJIE

Yes. It happened recently. We're actually just newlyweds.

DAISY

(Expressionless.)

Congratulations.

(SAMANTHA walks over to DAISY.)

SAMANTHA

It's a pleasure to meet you. Benjie has told me so much about you that I feel as if we're already aware of each other.

DAISY

Oh?

SAMANTHA

He told me that you kept the cleanest house in the neighborhood. That you were very...thorough.

DAISY

Thank you, Benjie.

BENJIE

The place was always spotless. I can testify to that.

(He raises his right hand as if being sworn in.)

DAISY

I run a tight ship around here. There is no room for error in our continuing search for human perfection, especially during these unsettling times.

BENJIE

Why thank you, mother.

DAISY

What?

SAMANTHA

Oh, I just remembered. (She goes and gets the dead cat.) I found this outside. I didn't know...

END OF SAMPLE.