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The House Where Nobody Lives
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Deadheading Roses

by Chris Cragin

3 Females, 1 Male

Synopsis: This play is about a rose gardener named JOHNNY who has been tragically discarded by the only man she ever loved. As she searches for healing and renewal, it is her love of nature which she rediscovers in the beauty of the desert, in her beloved animals, and finally through the earth's blessing of rain that gives her the strength to allow the inescapable and painful changes in her life to take their course. The set should be very minimal, the more that can be communicated through lights and sound the better. The location on stage shifts between a desert in Arizona, where JOHNNY and WILL lived for the first part of their marriage, a rose garden and home in Nashville, Tennessee, where they have lived since, and a small town in Arkansas, where JOHNNY was raised and where her mother still lives. Time is the present.

IceSPEAK

by Jeanette D. Farr

2 Males, 1 Female

Synopsis: Bee-Bee will do anything to be a rockstar. While walking across a frozen lake to meet the man who will lead her to success, she falls through the ice and struggles to survive. For the time she is trapped, she sees moments of her past, her dreams, and what may come of her life if she lives. A story asking how and why we speak, how smart we could be, and what happens when we lose it. For Bee-Bee, choosing between the one she loves and the one who will make her a star lies just beneath the surface.

The House Where Nobody Lives

By Paul North

CHARACTERS

Jim- an addict

Barnabus- a seaman

Marshall- an orphan

Lois- a librarian

Sarah- the caretaker

SETTING

A large room inside a House. An obtusely angled, overly large door is centered in the back wall. It has a presence. No windows. There is a small rowing boat, stage right. A chair, center stage. A typewriter on a small table with chair, stage left, with stacks of paper piled around it. A bench sits in front of the table.

The House Where Nobody Lives

ACT ONE

(MARSHALL sleeps, slouching in a chair, center. He looks worn, and is dressed entirely in white. LOIS sleeps on the typewriter in front of her. She is dressed formally; a pair of reading glasses hangs from her neck. An oar is outside the boat. SARAH enters carrying a box full of random household items, similar to what would appear at a garage sale. She walks upstage, drops the box, and begins to talk to the House with more than a slight attitude.)

SARAH: Begin with this, and end with that. Begin with this, and end with this. Begin with that and end with this! And in the meantime give them this? This is completely boring. Can't you just tell me what I'm supposed to do with all this stuff? We're running out of room. Every wall in this place has piles of junk on it. Everybody brings stuff in, but they never take it when they go. No, because that would make sense, wouldn't it? *(SARAH stands and busies herself. She puts the oar back in the boat.)* Couldn't you just make them take it with them? I really don't know what to do with it all. *(SARAH tries to fix MARSHALL's position in the chair. It doesn't work.)* Are you even listening to me? *(SARAH knocks at the door with a small defiance while making her way to LOIS. She fixes LOIS' hands on the typewriter.)* This is a real problem for me. I'm trying to do a good job here, and you're not helping. *(Pause.)* Am I doing a good job? I never know. You never tell me. I do everything by the book, and still you... wait, there isn't a book. I'm not making any sense, but that's your fault. I just get bored sometimes...

(JIM charges in wearing a leather jacket and jeans. He appears as if he has been awake for far too many days. He is loud and slightly dangerous.)

JIM: You think you can fool me? You think you can hide things, and I wouldn't know?

SARAH: *(to the House)* Look who's up. *(calmly, to JIM)* What's the matter, honey?

JIM: I can't find my keys!

(JIM begins searching the room.)

SARAH: Why do you need your keys?

JIM: Why do I need my keys? What sort of stupid question is that?
Keys unlock. They turn things on.

SARAH: You mean your car keys.

JIM: Yes, my car keys! Where are they?

SARAH: Why do you need the car?

JIM: I already told you. Today's the day.

SARAH: But it's nighttime.

JIM: It's only half-night, and that means they're coming. I have to be ready. I can't just let them march in here and take me. I have to be prepared. Always ready, like that. (*JIM snaps his fingers.*) And I'm gone.

SARAH: Where are you going?

JIM: Why do you want to know?

SARAH: I like to know where you are.

JIM: Well, I don't know yet...nowhere special.

SARAH: Then why leave? This is as good of a nowhere as any place is.

JIM: That's what you think! But they know that I'm here.

SARAH: Who, the cops? They don't know you're here.

JIM: They'll come and take me!

SARAH: No, they won't.

JIM: Are you sure?

SARAH: It's just a hunch, but...I think you're safe.

JIM: Then I can stay?

SARAH: If you want to.

JIM: Do you want me to?

SARAH: I want what's best for you.

JIM: If I stay, can I see the kids?

SARAH: You know you can't ask that.

JIM: Why?

SARAH: For the same reasons you're hiding here.

JIM: No, no. The kids'll understand. They'll think the law is funny; that it's something that daddy plays with. It's a game that daddy plays, that's why I'm always running.

SARAH: It's not the law, Jim. It's the habit.

JIM: I've quit. I told you that.

SARAH: You're lying.

JIM: No, I'm not. I've stopped. Really.

SARAH: Then let me see your arm.

JIM: No!

SARAH: How about your legs or your toes? Where are you putting the needle these days?

JIM: I'm clean. I promise.

SARAH: Daddy loves his candy a little too much. He eats it until he gets sick, until he doesn't remember who he is, or who his wife is, or how many kids he even has.

JIM: You're my wife.

SARAH: And you're children?

JIM: I miss them so much.

SARAH: Really? Then tell me their names.

JIM: Why are you asking me this?

SARAH: Your children's names, what are they?

JIM: I know them.

SARAH: Then tell me.

JIM: Um...well, first there was Michael.

SARAH: No.

JIM: Rachel?

SARAH: Wrong.

JIM: Ben?

SARAH: NO!

JIM: Samantha?

SARAH: Not even close.

JIM: But I miss them so much!

SARAH: Then you're going to have to change.

JIM: Let me love you.

(JIM approaches her.)

SARAH: No, we ended that a long time ago.

JIM: Please.

SARAH: What's my name?

JIM: Witch.

SARAH: Try again.

JIM: Wife.

SARAH: That's right, the mother of all your unnamed children.

JIM: Give them to me.

SARAH: I do, in all the stories I tell you about them, but you forget. You think they're only dreams, sweet memories of a calmer life. But dreams don't grow Jim. They don't age. They don't laugh or cry like your children do.

JIM: What do they think of me?

SARAH: Sometimes you're an important man, with many things to do. Sometimes you're far away and journeying towards them. Sometimes you're dead.

JIM: Do they love me?

SARAH: They love the idea of you.

(JIM kicks the box full of 'junk'.)

JIM: I want what I want!

SARAH: Do that again and you're in trouble.

JIM: Where are my keys?

SARAH: What would you do with them?

JIM: I would leave.

SARAH: How?

JIM: Through that door.

(JIM motions towards the angled door in the background. SARAH presents a set of keys.)

SARAH: Here you are then.

JIM: What?

SARAH: The keys, Jim. Here they are. Take them and you can go.

(JIM pauses in fear.)

JIM: No.

SARAH: What's the matter?

JIM: That ain't where I'm supposed to be.

SARAH: How do you know? Where's Jim's wild side, ready to do anything blindly, on the spot, just because it was there to do? If you keep being scared like this, you'll never get what you want.

JIM: I want you.

SARAH: Of course you do, because it's easy. I'm your domestic punching bag.

JIM: I love you.

SARAH: That's it! Go away. Go and hide in a corner somewhere. I don't want to see you.

JIM: NO!

(BARNABUS stirs in the rowboat.)

BARNABUS: What's all that noise?

MARSHALL: *(mumbling from the chair)* It wasn't planned or anything.

(LOIS drowsily lifts her head and begins to type.)

SARAH: You see! Now you woke everyone up.

JIM: I didn't mean to.

SARAH: Just go! Leave me alone.

JIM: I won't leave you. I'll just sit in a corner somewhere like you said and try...to change.

SARAH: Go away.

JIM: I'm...sorry.

(JIM exits, slouching. SARAH hurries over to LOIS and gently touches her, which puts her back to 'sleep'. The typewriter makes one last 'ding'. SARAH then goes to where MARSHALL is sitting, and touches his shoulders.)

MARSHALL: It was a little frightening.

(MARSHALL falls back asleep. SARAH goes over to tend to BARNABUS, but he has fully sat up in his boat. She backs away letting him to himself. He is dressed like a fisherman, with cap and beard. An older man, wisdom through experience.)

BARNABUS: Arghh, another day. No rain in the night, that's lovely. Sea looks calm. *(BARNABUS picks up the oars and begins to row.)* Last night a whale sang me to sleep with a pretty song. Told me that I'd never hit land again. So, I figure, I'll keep rowing until I become part of the blue. Did you hear that friends? Part of the blue. I've lost the will to be a man, which means I cannot stay on land. Ha. I'll have to write that one down. You'll have me as company. I won't be so old and tired. I'll be a swell, some foam on top of the water. *(SARAH approaches BARNABUS. He does not acknowledge her until she touches the boat.)* What was that? I heard something. Movement below me, and a smell of sweetness. My mermaid must be here.

SARAH: *(touching the boat)* She is.

BARNABUS: Lovely you.

SARAH: How is my Captain?

BARNABUS: My thoughts rest on the water.

SARAH: Have you cast your nets today?

BARNABUS: You know I've stopped that. I don't want to hurt my friends.

SARAH: But how will you eat?

BARNABUS: I don't need food any longer. My days as a man are retiring. I'll be able to go where you ask me to, very soon.

SARAH: You'll leave the boat?

BARNABUS: To follow you I will.

SARAH: But you can't swim?

BARNABUS: When it happens, that won't matter.

SARAH: You were always the sweetest.

BARNABUS: Was it you who made the whale sing?

SARAH: I only asked him. He was more than happy to help you sleep. You are well known in this ocean.

BARNABUS: And the rest? I see Seagull there, sleeping.

(BARNABUS motions to MARSHALL.)

SARAH: Yes. He's tired.

BARNABUS: And was it Shark making all the noise that woke me?

SARAH: Yes, he's been misbehaving lately.

BARNABUS: Give him time; he'll listen to you just as I did.

SARAH: I doubt that.

BARNABUS: Will you come into my boat? I have something for you.

SARAH: I will. *(SARAH 'climbs' in, and leans her back against BARNABUS as he continues to row.)* What is the surprise?

BARNABUS: A poem.

SARAH: Ah, something sweetly memorized.

BARNABUS: No, my own.

SARAH: An original?

BARNABUS: Yes, the first. Translated in your own language, so that you can understand exactly what I mean to say.

SARAH: I'm honored.

(BARNABUS pulls out a crumpled piece of paper and clears his throat.)

BARNABUS: It is her, and the night. *(BARNABUS takes a swig out of his canteen and gargles the 'translation' then swallows.)* And I have tried to understand. *(Another swig of water, gurgling and swallow.)* Which I love more.

(BARNABUS takes another swig, begins gurgling, but accidentally swallows, and begins to cough.)

SARAH: Beautiful!

(BARNABUS continues to cough.)

SARAH: Are you all right?

BARNABUS: Yes. Excuse me for that.

SARAH: No, no. It was lovely.

BARNABUS: Did I pronounce everything correctly?

SARAH: You need some work, but it was very nice.

BARNABUS: Of course, I should have practiced more.

SARAH: No, you did very well.

BARNABUS: I think of you often.

SARAH: You do?

BARNABUS: Yes.

SARAH: And how do you think of me?

BARNABUS: I fear your beauty, and I wonder once I become a part of it...

SARAH: Don't worry about those things. Everything that you see here, you'll become a part of. Not an old man anymore but a part of nature. I don't allow others to have this chance, but with you, with your strength-

BARNABUS: I'll be with you, won't I?

SARAH: Always.

BARNABUS: Then that is enough.

SARAH: Barnabus, tell me about the land.

BARNABUS: You've asked me this before.

SARAH: I have, but you never answer.

BARNABUS: You must know that when a man gives his life to one thing, wholly, it's his only thought. The decision I made is to be here. The rest is my past, and not worth my mind.

SARAH: Are you sure it's not that you've forgotten?

BARNABUS: If I choose my own thoughts, and don't dwell on the things I wish were forgotten, is there a difference than not being able to remember?

SARAH: Hard to say...but I still want you to prove me wrong. Tell me one thing, only one, about the land.

BARNABUS: It's no place your sweet shape should ever touch.

(MARSHALL begins to stir.)

MARSHALL: Squawk.

BARNABUS: Someone's awake.

SARAH: May I go and see him?

BARNABUS: If it will relieve me of your questions.

SARAH: I'm waiting for you Barnabus.

(SARAH stands in the boat.)

BARNABUS: Please don't stand. Why are you standing?

SARAH: Leave the boat and swim straight ...

BARNABUS: Please, you're making it rock. I can't swim!

SARAH: Swim straight and find the door.

BARNABUS: For now, can I sleep?

SARAH: Yes, for now. *(SARAH kisses BARNABUS' cheek and steps out of the boat. BARNABUS slumps back down unseen in the boat.)*
That was cute.

MARSHALL: What was?

SARAH: Sounding like a seagull.

MARSHALL: Completely unintentional. (*MARSHALL notices the clutter on the floor.*) Who made the mess?

SARAH: Jim did.

MARSHALL: He getting feisty again?

SARAH: You make me nervous.

MARSHALL: Why?

SARAH: One day you'll go too far, and the illusion will break.

MARSHALL: You mean I don't accurately portray a seagull?

SARAH: Funny. Will you help me pick this stuff up?

MARSHALL: Certainly.

(*They begin to place the objects back in the box.*)

SARAH: So what made you wear white today?

MARSHALL: There's a reason.

SARAH: Will you tell me?

MARSHALL: Possibly, but I'm not sure if you want to know.

SARAH: Why?

MARSHALL: It's very personal.

SARAH: Everything in here is.

MARSHALL: So that automatically means I should tell you?

SARAH: I'm not sure. Do you want to?

MARSHALL: I don't think it matters.

SARAH: But I thought it was personal?

MARSHALL: In the way that it pertains to my life, yes.

SARAH: Now I have to know.

MARSHALL: Do you?

SARAH: Well, since you keep such big secrets from me, yes, I'd like to know.

MARSHALL: My father is dead.

SARAH: Oh, that is personal.

MARSHALL: I know.

SARAH: But didn't he-

MARSHALL: Now, out of respect, I will wear white for an entire year. It shows sacrifice and honors his memory.

SARAH: Marshall.

MARSHALL: What?

SARAH: Your father died thirteen years ago.

MARSHALL: I'm aware of that.

SARAH: Then why are you choosing to do this now?

MARSHALL: I feel I've been forgetting him lately.

SARAH: So this is the first day?

MARSHALL: Yes.

SARAH: Well, only 364 left to go then.

MARSHALL: Well, actually, he died on a leap year.

SARAH: Oh.

MARSHALL: Yeah.

SARAH: So one extra.

MARSHALL: He always did make me do more than I was willing to.

SARAH: Not to worry, I will keep this place spotless so that you'll never have to worry about dirtying your clothes.

MARSHALL: I've never seen you clean?

SARAH: I'll start.

MARSHALL: Don't bother. I'm sure I won't be wearing this tomorrow.

SARAH: But I thought you've begun to "honor your father's memory."

MARSHALL: I have, but you can't expect me to go an entire year in only white.

SARAH: Won't that break the ritual of it?

MARSHALL: Who says it has to be consecutive?

SARAH: I don't know. It just seems that-

MARSHALL: This way I can space it out, a day here, a day there. The memory can survive without plaguing me. Designated times. Scheduled mourning. It will help me to focus on other things.

SARAH: I see. (*Pause.*) Did you do the same for your mother?

MARSHALL: My mother is not dead!

SARAH: She's not?

MARSHALL: No! I thought we agreed you'd be my mother.

SARAH: I thought I was supposed to be your sister?

MARSHALL: That was last week, pay attention!

SARAH: Hey don't blame me. You know it's harder with you than with the others.

MARSHALL: Yeah, yeah.

SARAH: Everyone else accepts what I create for them.

MARSHALL: So up the dose.

SARAH: You resist it.

MARSHALL: So?

SARAH: Better than anyone I've ever seen.

MARSHALL: I want to believe it.

SARAH: You think I haven't tried?

MARSHALL: Obviously not hard enough. I want to go in, so make it happen.

SARAH: You don't convince me. If you really did, you would.

MARSHALL: Whatever.

SARAH: No, seriously. I'm surprised that you stay here.

MARSHALL: Why?

SARAH: There has to be something out there that makes you want to return.

MARSHALL: Nope.

SARAH: Nothing?

MARSHALL: Should there be?

SARAH: I think so. I don't know. Everyone else who's been aware of what this place is has never stayed.

MARSHALL: So big deal, I figured it out. You want me to leave?

SARAH: No. You're good to talk to. It's just unfortunate that you're only visiting.

MARSHALL: Long visit.

SARAH: Yes, years if I'm not mistaken.

MARSHALL: I admire your work.

SARAH: There's no praise in it for me. You know that.

MARSHALL: But you've drawn so many people in, there's got to be some reward in it for you.

SARAH: They came on their own. I just showed them how. But they were ready; you're not.

MARSHALL: You brought me here.

SARAH: No, you followed me. You were crafty. I never even felt that you were there.

MARSHALL: But you've made me stay.

SARAH: I never make anyone do anything.

MARSHALL: I'm just as lost as the rest of those that you trick.

SARAH: There are no tricks.

MARSHALL: It's all tricks.

SARAH: Yes. Broken moons and cracked skies. What? Do you think I'm a witch or something?

MARSHALL: Why am I less of a prize?

SARAH: You have the ability to start again.

MARSHALL: No, I don't! I did a fair amount of damage to the things I had in my life.

SARAH: That doesn't matter.

MARSHALL: You don't understand.

SARAH: You have more than the rest in here do.

MARSHALL: Then take it from me! Disillusion me with your charms, the most powerful ones you have.

SARAH: I've already tried. Don't fool yourself. This place isn't for you.

MARSHALL: Why? What's different about me?

SARAH: You're too aware of yourself.

MARSHALL: That's shit.

SARAH: But it's true.

MARSHALL: How can you do what you do if you won't take someone who's willing to go?

SARAH: It doesn't work that way. It has to happen...naturally. For you it never has.

MARSHALL: Then how did I come here?

SARAH: You followed me.

MARSHALL: But you let me in.

SARAH: The doors don't lock here.

MARSHALL: I want to change, so change me.

SARAH: I already told you. I tried; you break through all my best attempts.

MARSHALL: So you're saying you can't?

SARAH: I'm saying you're not supposed to be here.

MARSHALL: So let me go.

SARAH: The door's right there.

(SARAH motions toward the large door in the back wall.)

MARSHALL: That's not the way out.

SARAH: You see! You already know that.

MARSHALL: Big creepy door tends to stick out.

SARAH: But you're the only one who sees it.

MARSHALL: I don't want to see it! I want to be lost in a dream like the rest of you are.

SARAH: Not all of us dream.

MARSHALL: What do you mean?

SARAH: Me. I don't dream. I don't sleep.

MARSHALL: How's that work?

SARAH: I have no idea.

MARSHALL: Sounds like you got the short end of the stick.

SARAH: Maybe, but I don't know who's holding the other end.

MARSHALL: What?

SARAH: It's not worth an explanation.

MARSHALL: I would like to know.

SARAH: I'm not like you.

MARSHALL: Yeah, I get that, but how'd you come to *be* here? This can't be something you apply for.

SARAH: I don't know how it works. This house...it's not like other places. I've never really known anything else though, just here.

MARSHALL: Were you born here?

SARAH: Not exactly...born.

MARSHALL: I'll need some more details.

SARAH: I was sort of made.

MARSHALL: Created?

SARAH: I guess.

MARSHALL: No mother or father.

SARAH: Nope.

MARSHALL: Strange.

SARAH: It's simple, really.

MARSHALL: Born out of nothing.

SARAH: Nothing?

MARSHALL: Well, yes. You said-

SARAH: I was not made out of nothing! I didn't just appear.

MARSHALL: Then where'd you come from?

SARAH: In there.

(SARAH points toward the door.)

MARSHALL: It's making more sense now.

SARAH: I've told you all this before.

MARSHALL: No, you haven't.

SARAH: Yes I have, and you're about to ask me-

SARAH/MARSHALL: *(simultaneously)* So that means you know what's inside.

SARAH: No, I don't.

MARSHALL: You're lying. They raised you in there, and sent you out to lure people in.

SARAH: Nope. That's not the story.

MARSHALL: Then what is?

SARAH: There is no story.

MARSHALL: Tell it to me anyways.

SARAH: There was light. It hurt my eyes. I looked up, and I was on this floor in front of that door.

MARSHALL: As a child?

SARAH: No, as exactly what you see. I don't change. I don't age. I'm not like you.

MARSHALL: I'm confused.

SARAH: Then you're making progress.

MARSHALL: No, it doesn't make sense. Why do you stay here?

SARAH: Because I have a job to do.

MARSHALL: You call this a job?

SARAH: What else should I call it?

MARSHALL: Beats me. But it doesn't seem to be worth your time.

SARAH: Well, what else am I supposed to do?

MARSHALL: Anything. Anything you want. If you're right about being different, then you're not attached to anything. You can go anywhere. Have anything you want.

SARAH: But I don't know what I want.

MARSHALL: So go find out. Leave all these junkies and sad-luck stories behind. Don't you want to know what's out there?

SARAH: I know what's out there. I leave this house all the time, and what I don't know I learn from the people that come in.

MARSHALL: You're talking about a small piece of the picture. You know there's more out there to see.

SARAH: Yes, but-

MARSHALL: But what? Don't you want to know?

SARAH: In a way, I do, yes. But...I don't know what happens to me if I leave this place...for good.

(LOIS raises her head and begins to type.)

MARSHALL: You mean—

SARAH: Excuse me. Someone's awake.

MARSHALL: Time to go to work then, isn't it?

SARAH: I have to take care of her, yes.

MARSHALL: Go ahead. Change the subject. But I'm going to ask you again.

SARAH: Please don't.

MARSHALL: *(indicating LOIS)* I like her. She's interesting. Why is she always at that typewriter though?

SARAH: She's writing a novel.

MARSHALL: A book?

SARAH: Yes.

MARSHALL: About what?

SARAH: Well, from the seven hundred pages I've read so far, I think it's about me.

MARSHALL: Really? You mean all those piles of paper actually have something on them?

SARAH: Yes.

MARSHALL: I must read it.

SARAH: No. That is for her only.

MARSHALL: Come on.

SARAH: No.

MARSHALL: At least tell me something about it.

SARAH: It's...lonely. (*SARAH slowly moves toward LOIS.*) Would you like to sleep now?

MARSHALL: No! Now that I know I share a room with an author, I'm dying to know what she's thinking about.

SARAH: All right, but don't disturb her. She's sensitive.

MARSHALL: To your illusions.

SARAH: No. The worlds she creates are entirely her own.

(*LOIS types sporadically.*)

LOIS: Her hand moves...she's thinking...

MARSHALL: So you didn't bring her here?

LOIS: Gentle thoughts. Different colors of wanting.

SARAH: Technically, yes.

LOIS: Be true-be true...don't wait for the after...

SARAH: She sort of discovered me, though.

MARSHALL: Like I did?

SARAH: No, completely different. You were a sneak.

MARSHALL: I am a keen observer.

LOIS: The ache is endurable.

SARAH: I was reading at the library-

MARSHALL: What?

SARAH: What?

MARSHALL: You read?

SARAH: Of course I do. What do you expect me to do, take week-long naps with the rest of you?

MARSHALL: It's just odd.

LOIS: There's no sound, but she still breathes.

SARAH: I like books. They keep my mind busy.

MARSHALL: Then you're as disillusioned as the rest of us.

(LOIS begins typing frantically.)

SARAH: I go there a lot. I could never check anything out of course, so I would read in the library. The first time I noticed her, she was peering over the bridge of Jane Eyre, trying not to look suspicious, but looking right at me. I couldn't help but notice how she was staring.

MARSHALL: And then you roped her in?

SARAH: No, that was very early on. Lois here, ended up getting a job at the library, and I could never bring myself to believe that it wasn't for me.

LOIS: She can't be real...

MARSHALL: Ah, I see. Obsession.

SARAH: Somewhat I suppose, but it was never agitated. Always kind, but there was longing.

(SARAH sits on the bench, reaches under it and picks up a book. The typewriter comes to a 'ding'. LOIS pulls the paper out, briefly examines it and puts it in a pile. She straightens herself up and comes around to face SARAH.)

LOIS: Hello.

SARAH: Oh, hello.

LOIS: May I...

SARAH: What? Sit down? Please, go ahead.

LOIS: I noticed that you're reading.

SARAH: Well, yes.

LOIS: What I meant was-I saw...

SARAH: What did you see?

LOIS: George Eliot.

SARAH: Oh, this book?

LOIS : Yes.

SARAH: It's not terrible.

LOIS: I love him...or her...well, you know what I mean.

SARAH: Yes, I do.

LOIS: You look very beautiful today.

SARAH: Thank you.

LOIS: You always do. It's like you never change.

SARAH: That's not...thank you. You're very sweet.

LOIS: I see you in here all the time.

SARAH: Yes, you introduced yourself a few weeks ago.

LOIS: You must have read every book in here; at least that's what it seems like.

SARAH: Not all that many.

LOIS: Yes, well...

SARAH : Lois, right?

LOIS: Yes, that's my name. You remembered? You remembered.

SARAH: It's not difficult.

LOIS : Miranda.

SARAH: Huh?

LOIS: You said I could call you Miranda.

SARAH: Of course you can.

LOIS: I have a question for you.

SARAH: Ok.

LOIS: May I ask it?

SARAH: Yes, go ahead.

LOIS: Are you real...I mean, are you really that interested in all these books?

SARAH: Yes, I am. Why?

LOIS: Why do you read them?

SARAH: The stories, they're dreams on paper. I take them, and use them. They are entire other lives, and I use them.

LOIS: Are you sure that's why you come here?

SARAH: Yes. Why do you come here?

LOIS: I work here.

SARAH: Oh, right. I forgot.

LOIS: It's just, well, because when I'm working sometimes I'll see people come in, and of course they're here because it's a library and all, but they're not here for the books. They're here because they want something. I've seen people wander the aisles, looking randomly at books filled with things that they know nothing about, but it doesn't matter to them. The reason that they're there is something entirely different.

SARAH: Is that the reason you're here?

LOIS: Uh, no-no. I work here.

MARSHALL: She's completely infatuated with you!

SARAH: Shhhhhh!

MARSHALL: She can't even admit it.

LOIS: What's wrong?

SARAH: People talking. It annoys me.

LOIS: Me too! Wow, that's amazing that you feel that way.

SARAH: It is?

LOIS: Well, I just mean that we both spend so much time here. It's almost like we're the same person.

SARAH: But that would mean that one of us isn't real.

LOIS: Oh, it would, wouldn't it?

SARAH: Pretty sure, yeah.

LOIS: That wouldn't work, but we can be good friends then, right?

SARAH: We already are.

LOIS: Oh, that's a relief.

MARSHALL: I can't believe this. What a sap!

SARAH: Would you excuse me a moment?

LOIS: Sure.

(SARAH touches LOIS' forehead and LOIS 'sleeps'. SARAH goes to MARSHALL.)

SARAH: I told you to be quiet!

MARSHALL: Please tell me that she's not doing this all to herself?

SARAH: You're an ass!

MARSHALL: Oh, come on. At least I have a reason to be here, she's floating around in some love dream.

SARAH: You don't get to say that.

MARSHALL: Why?

SARAH: The reasons that people are here are their own. The fact that you're judging them shows even more why you should leave.

MARSHALL: Oh, give it up. I wasn't being all that harsh.

SARAH: You were.

MARSHALL: She's just innocent...it annoys me.

SARAH: That's your problem.

MARSHALL: Was that the first time you ever met?

SARAH: No, but it was like that every time we met.

MARSHALL: So you just loop it. Make her live the same thing over and over again.

SARAH: Yes, something like that.

MARSHALL: Each time she believes it's original.

SARAH: It makes it easier for me, less work.

MARSHALL: Brilliant.

SARAH: I do it with all of you.

MARSHALL: No you don't. I remember everything perfectly well...

(JIM comes barreling in the room.)

JIM: WHERE ARE MY KEYS!

MARSHALL: Oh, Jesus, he's angry.

JIM: I will not be a victim!

SARAH: Great.

JIM: Who stole from me? Who did it?

(JIM begins searching the room.)

SARAH: What are you crying about now?

JIM: My candy's gone.

MARSHALL: He means his heroin.

SARAH: I know!

MARSHALL: Where do you get the supply from?

SARAH: I don't! He's been clean ever since he came in here.

JIM: Devils! Thieves!

MARSHALL: Really? You are good.

JIM: Who took it? I'll find you.

(JIM runs off stage.)

SARAH: He better calm down.

MARSHALL: Why?

SARAH: Well, I worry. He had a seizure once.

MARSHALL: And you saved him?

SARAH: He's no good to me if he's dead.

JIM: You!

(JIM runs back on stage and tackles MARSHALL to the ground.)

MARSHALL: Holy shit! Get him off me.

SARAH: Honey. Honey! What are you doing?

JIM: This little bastard stole from me.

(JIM ruffles through MARSHALL's clothes, searching his pockets.)

MARSHALL: I don't even know you!

SARAH: You see. He doesn't even know you. Why would he steal from you?

JIM: Everybody wants a piece. Don't they buddy?

MARSHALL: A piece of what?

JIM: The candy. The juice. The great sedative. It's in a limited supply, and everyone's scratching. That's why you grabbed it from me when I was sleeping.

SARAH: Honey, I was sleeping next to you. No one came in the room.

JIM: Shut up, bitch! You don't know. Hell, you're probably working together on this. Trying to reform me or something. I know how to get it out of you.

(JIM begins to choke MARSHALL.)

MARSHALL: Ok. This-needs....to-s-stop.

SARAH: That's it Jim! I'm calling the police!

(JIM stands, looking wild-eyed at SARAH.)

JIM: Oh, you are, are you? What good that do you last time? Huh? They never got me. Never put me in those handcuffs. Never put me in that jail.

SARAH: No, they never got you Jim, but they did get something. Your kids, they got your kids, and now someone else is raising them!

JIM: Don't you talk about my children!

MARSHALL: Maybe if you just calm down.

JIM: What'd you just say? (*JIM turns and punches MARSHALL, sending him to the ground.*) Don't tell me about being calm! I know how this all works. I know this is devil land. You don't fool me. And you do not steal from me. So who has it? (*JIM goes to the boat and pulls BARNABUS up.*) Wake up old man!

SARAH: Leave him alone!

BARNABUS: Arghh...what the...

(*BARNABUS falls back asleep.*)

JIM: I said wake up!

(*JIM smacks BARNABUS across the face.*)

BARNABUS: Ow. What's this? Shark! Why you hitting me? Go away! Swim somewhere else.

JIM: I'll swim where I damn well please. Now give me what's mine.

BARNABUS: I'll give you something. (*BARNABUS spits in JIM's face. JIM lets go. BARNABUS picks up an oar and jabs Jim in the stomach with it.*) You can't just do what you please. You should know better.

JIM: (*screaming*) God damn it! Give it to me!

(*LOIS wakes up and stands.*)

LOIS: I'm sorry you're going to have to keep it down in here. This is a library.

SARAH: Great, now we're all awake.

JIM: I'm not fooling around old man. I know you have it.

BARNABUS: Come and get it then.

(*JIM steps forward, but BARNABUS throws the oar at him. It hits and falls. MARSHALL picks it up off the floor and stands between JIM and BARNABUS.*)

MARSHALL: Situation is getting a little out of hand, don't you think?

SARAH: Yes. I'll take care of it.

JIM: I see. You're all against me. Just like I said. You see, I know. I'm not fooled by any of this.

SARAH: Honey, will you just relax. I have-

JIM: Out of my way witch.

(JIM moves towards LOIS.)

BARNABUS: *(to Marshall)* Thanks, Seagull. I was afraid he might try something there.

MARSHALL: Hey, no problem. Uh...I mean...squawk.

(JIM circles LOIS.)

JIM: What's your name?

LOIS: Lo-l-Lois.

JIM: I like the way you look, Lois.

LOIS: Can I help you with something?

JIM: Yeah. I'm thinking you got what I need.

LOIS: I have books.

JIM: I don't read.

LOIS: Then you'll have to leave the library.

(JIM begins to type with one finger on the typewriter.)

JIM: Will I? I think me and you are gonna be friends.

SARAH: Jim, honey, can we talk for a second?

LOIS: Honey? Miranda, you know this man?

SARAH: I...well...

JIM: Of course she knows me, she's my-

SARAH: Attorney!

LOIS: I don't understand.

SARAH: Well, as you can see this man is full of misconduct and needs legal representation quite often.

LOIS: I thought you painted?

JIM: She does but it's all black and darkness.

LOIS: Is that a boat over there?

SARAH: OK. That's it. *(SARAH touches both JIM and LOIS' heads. They fall to the floor. SARAH makes her way over to MARSHALL and BARNABUS.)* Sorry boys, show's over for today.

MARSHALL: Wait, wait. You don't need to. I can help.

SARAH: Sorry no exceptions.

(SARAH touches MARSHALL's forehead and he goes down.)

BARNABUS: It's not your fault. Sometimes the ocean makes everyone a bit temperamental.

SARAH: I know. Thanks for understanding.

BARNABUS: My greatest pleasure.

(BARNABUS lies down and SARAH touches his forehead. She takes a deep breath, sizes up the room, and begins to 'work', first picking up MARSHALL, dragging his dead weight back to his chair.)

SARAH: *(speaking to the House)* What was that? Everyone up and about like this was a freaking cocktail party. That's not how it's supposed to happen. You know that. Why did you let it happen? Did you change something? Did I do something wrong? *(SARAH positions MARSHALL on the chair.)* No answer of course. Damn you. *(Pause.)* What do you want? I'm not going anywhere, if that's what you're worried about. *(SARAH goes over and tends to LOIS.)* But I'm not your slave either. I could leave. I'd probably die, or something. I don't really know if I'm attached to you in some mystical way, or whatever... I don't mind the work. I really don't. But a little heads up would help. A compliment on how I'm doing or a complaint, either would be nice. *(SARAH picks up the oar and places it in the boat.)* Maybe it's my fault. Maybe I want too much, but I don't think so. I'm being reasonable. *(SARAH grabs JIM by the foot and tries to drag him.)* Jim. Honey. *(JIM won't budge or wake up.)* Ah, screw it. *(SARAH leaves him there.)* I could do just fine without all this, but you are my boss, at least that's the way I like to think about it. So, I'll stay, but I'd like a little reassurance, you know. It's really not much, I promise. Please try, for me. At least think about it. I'm going...out... somewhere, but I'll come back...I have to...don't I?

(SARAH exits and the lights go down.)