

---

Senior Projects Spring 2021

Bard Undergraduate Senior Projects

---

Spring 2021

## Roomies

Hunter Lucian Lustberg  
*Bard College*, hl5482@bard.edu

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj\\_s2021](https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj_s2021)



Part of the [Playwriting Commons](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 License](#).

---

### Recommended Citation

Lustberg, Hunter Lucian, "Roomies" (2021). *Senior Projects Spring 2021*. 337.  
[https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj\\_s2021/337](https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj_s2021/337)

This Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Bard Undergraduate Senior Projects at Bard Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Senior Projects Spring 2021 by an authorized administrator of Bard Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@bard.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@bard.edu).

Roomies

Senior Project Submitted to  
The Division of the Arts  
of Bard College

by  
Hunter Lustberg

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

May 2021



## Acknowledgments

*For my mom, who taught me almost everything I know about how to be a person. I'm sorry I didn't call home more - please accept the following 70 pages as my excuse.*

*For my dad, who taught me everything specifically related to the design and installation of light fixtures. It's come in handy more often than you'd think.*

*For my girlfriend, who taught me how to have standards. That was a biggie.*

*For my brother, who taught me how to get away with war crimes, based on his extensive historical knowledge sourced entirely from YouTube. Thanks, I guess.*

*For my advisor, Gideon, who taught me the magic trick that is making theater from thin air.*

*And for all the friends that helped me through a never ending series of once-in-a-lifetimes.*



## Introduction

### I. THE RED BOW

I wrote an adaptation of George Saunders' *The Red Bow* in Gideon Lester's Adaptation class, back in 2019. My interest in the story stemmed from its themes - particularly the rise of totalitarianism in the face of a crisis, and the misappropriation of innocence to motivate violence. The plot revolves around the development of zoonotic plague that devastates a small town. This story lent itself to a theatrically rich adaptation, featuring a large cast of characters, meant to be portrayed by a small group of actors.

I returned to this piece for my Senior Project, mostly because I was interested in expanding upon and directing it for the stage. However, in my attempts at revision, I found it difficult to write about a fictionalized plague, while living through a very real one. The themes which had previously interested me now felt irresponsible to make the center of my art. The antagonist of *The Red Bow* takes power during a crisis and uses it to erode the personal freedoms of those in his community. I worried about the connections that could be drawn to the Covid-19 pandemic, in particular those freedoms which must be relinquished for the sake of public safety. Within the real-world context, the play came across as critical of social distancing, masking and other such measures, none of which reflects my actual outlook.

### II. THE RENEGADE

Struggling to find the right direction in which to take this piece, I decided to append a second, separate adaptation. This was a theatrical rendition of *The Renegade*, by Shirley Jackson. Jackson's novel *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* was the basis for my moderation project, so this felt like an evolution of that. *The Renegade* is about a housewife whose family dog escapes and kills the neighbor's chicken. The various ways she might opt to put the dog down then

become the talk of the town, even reaching her children at school. They return home, excited to decapitate their beloved pet, not understanding what that means.

Similarity of plot and theme served me well in the marriage of these two literary works, allowing me to dive from the political drama of *The Red Bow* into the domestic drama of *The Renegade*. Unfortunately, I became caught up in making them fit neatly into the same plot. I found it difficult resisting the urge to give both stories an original, unified ending. Beyond this, I still couldn't figure out how to make the piece resonate with current events. It still felt empty and uncontemporary. This was where I was stuck for the larger part of my first semester of Senior Project.

### III. ROOMIES

I can't place what exactly served as the initial spark of inspiration for *Roomies*, though there is a good chance it was the song *Ghosting* by Canadian indie rock band Mother Mother. It's a song about disappearing from someone's life, employing the metaphor of a ghost moving on, rather than haunting someone dear to them. I took a literal interpretation and ran with it.

While most of the themes of *The Red Bow* and *The Renegade* didn't fit this new piece, *Roomies* wound up answering a lot of the questions I had when trying to update them for 2020. Most importantly: how does one write a play about a plague, during a plague? What I discovered is that everything has to be taken to extremes in a way only the stage will allow. Isolation, loneliness, compartmentalization, the chaos and uncertainty Covid has forced upon us: all these are things Kenny has been coping with for the past forty years of his afterlife. He has been torn down by them. When the curtain rises, he is little more than set dressing, reacting to the world around him but powerless to act upon it. He has put himself away somewhere reality can no

longer hurt him. I see this happening all around me, and have had the same instinct myself. This play is about how we cope when the world becomes too absurd, too fast.

#### IV. AUTHORIAL PROCESS

*Roomies* is fairly autobiographical, and is the first time I've written something that derives so much from my life. No single character is meant to be a self-insert. Each is a collage of different people in my life, usually relating to me in roughly the same way they relate to James. It also draws heavily on my experience living through 2020, and the different ways myself and the people I care about responded to weekly "once-in-a-lifetime" events. I think this is why writing *Roomies* felt so much easier than the other plays I've attempted. Rather than having to create characters from scratch, I simply imagined people I already know in absurd scenarios, not unlike those we were already experiencing.

As for the structure of the piece: the act, scene and interlude placement was mostly for my own benefit. I prefer my work to be highly structured. It helps me assure the piece doesn't become lopsided, taking too long to start or dragging along where it should be wrapping up. Each act has a different little arc of its own: James settling into the house, Candi moving in, The Roomies growing closer, Candi moving out, and Kenny moving on. Every scene represents a new moment in time, be it thirty minutes from the last scene or thirty days. For acts I, II and IV, three scenes felt right, but where the action was dense in act III and where it was sparse in act V, shortening that to two scenes prevented things from dragging on.

The interludes which conclude the first four acts are there to give characters space to breathe and grow, separate from the plot. Often they're where the events of the real world shine through the forcefield of Kenny and James' isolation. They are meant to feel somewhat removed from the play. They are those moments in which time moves differently, leaping forward or



standing still. If I were to stage this piece, I would want the lighting to reflect this somehow. The absence of an interlude from act V is meant to imply continuity, and remind the audience that James' journey is only just starting.

The first criticism I received on my playwriting at this school was Jorge Cortiñas' note that I have a tendency to focus too much on plot, and wind up losing track of my characters. I think, for the most part, I've overcome that with *Roomies*. These characters are the most thoroughly developed of those I've written, especially in relation to each other. Kenny is a Lost Boy, who despite being horribly outdated, never actually matured past the day he died. He connects to people with humor and is hurt when his jokes miss their mark. James thinks he knows where maturity comes from, that being emotional vulnerability and psychological self-awareness. He can't accept that there are other healthy and valid ways of existing and connecting to others, maybe even after the play ends. Candi is determined to have her life together, even as the world is falling apart. She's capable of connecting through humor or emotion, and becomes a sort of bridge between Kenny and James.

Going into most scenes, I had next to no idea where things would end up. Unshackled by a strict plot, I wound up able to tie in elements of farce, intense drama and historical detail. Never knowing what would come next, I think I managed to capture a piece of the neverending tumult that was this past year.

#### V. READTHROUGH

Towards the end of the writing process, I was left with a lot of questions that all boiled down to, "does the desired tone come across in performance?" Having revised several times, I felt the best way forward was to get a sense of how the play felt and sounded in the hands of actors. The readthrough was more chaotic than I would have liked. People hopped in and out of

the Zoom call as nearly no one was available for the full reading. The benefit to this was that I got to see different interpretations of the same character, some of which were very different from my own. The most glaring example was the opening monologue, which I had intended to be a comedic and playful phone call between an absent minded boyfriend (James) and his loving girlfriend (Amy). When the reader began, their tone was one of sadness, apathy, and frustration. It made the dynamic between James and Amy feel toxic, as though his motivation for staying with her was to avoid her anger. I wrote in some simple stage directions to help clarify the tone.

The actors only noticed one distracting absence from the plot. As it stood, Candi never had time to get to know James and Kenny, and as a result her departure felt unearned. Thankfully, there wasn't yet an interlude between acts III and IV, and that space provided the perfect opportunity to develop their relationships. When I finally wrote Interlude III, I knew I had to set it during election week. I'll never forget the immense stress everyone felt, followed by the mix of relief, celebration, apathy and frustration. The scene begins in that prolonged uncertainty that followed election day, Candi still struggling to make conversation with the housemates she never wanted. She tries to parse the rules of the afterlife, but James protests that they're completely arbitrary and it's best not to fixate on them. This results in a conversation which parallels the development of James and Kenny's friendship, and causes Kenny to discover that his sense of humor closely aligns with Candi's. At this point, humor is still his best and possibly only method of connection. It allows them to become close in a way that James, for all his attempts to connect with Kenny, still cannot.

## VI. CHALLENGES

One of the major challenges when working with this piece was figuring out how to prevent the dynamics between Kenny, James and Candi from becoming creepy. Given that they

are two male ghosts living in her house, there's a way in which their relationship can be read as voyeuristic. Having Kenny and James address that aspect of their own relationship before Candi even arrives was intended to relieve that tension.

Another thing I wanted to avoid was painting James as the perfect, liberal ideal while reducing Kenny to his flawed, conservative foil. James was never meant to be perfect and a lot of his flaws stem from his idealism. He believes so strongly that he is correct that he's never willing to reexamine his allyship or consider that his vocabulary may be flawed or incomplete. His belief that empathic connection is the only way to approach a relationship does more to push Kenny away than it does to bring him closer. I believe Candi's presence helped a lot with this. She's more willing to help Kenny make progress than to hold his initial beliefs against him, and even goes so far as to turn James' tactics of shame back on him.

## VII. CONCLUSION

I decided not to stage this piece because there was simply too much on my plate. This allowed me to focus my efforts on writing a script I'm proud of. If the opportunity ever arises to stage this piece, I won't pass it up. I'd be specifically interested in seeing how the temporality of the play influences its themes and resonances as we move farther from the events of 2020 and eventually out of the pandemic.

ROOMIES  
By Hunter Lustberg

**A note on structure:**

Between the end of each act and the start of the next is an interlude. These are the moments you will remember forever. They are the days that stand out when the rest bleeds together, be that because of the events that transpired or the people you experienced them with. Time moves differently. Light travels strangely through the air. Convention is suspended, and magic is allowed to seep through the flats and pour in from the wings. Let this appear in the stage picture, the acting, the blocking, through song, through dance, however you see fit. Embrace the medium. There's none other like it.

**Characters:**

JAMES McIntire - 21 years old, senior in college. Solidly upper-middle class but dresses exclusively in thrifted finds. Is very good at correcting others on their allyship, and not so good at practicing it himself. Connects

KENNY Deaton - 61 years old, 40 years dead, looks 21 years old, was a senior in the early 80s. Theater major and somehow also a Reaganite? Doesn't care much about anything anymore, or can't admit to caring.

AMY Hindt - 21 years old, senior in college. James' girlfriend of almost a year, up until his death.

THERESA McIntire - James' mom. Doesn't "see color" or "get the whole gender thing." Thinks she's trying her best.

CANDI Stanton - 20 years old, junior in college. A tried and true ambivert. Loves her friends, but is quick to get overexposed.

VICK(Y) - Candi's friend. Undeclared, but probably going to have a religion minor. Always a bit at odds with Malorie.

MALORIE - Candi's friend. Definitely in STEM. Always a bit at odds with Vicky.

MARTHA Deaton - Kenny's mom, a current professor.

HENRY - Fuckboy. In his fourth year with the credits of a Junior. It's fine though, he's not there to go to school.

## ACT I

## Scene I. (1999-2021)

(JAMES walks down the stairs, speaking on the phone. He's happy, laughing at himself all the while. He walks into the kitchen, grabs a handful of nuts, and starts eating them while he talks, pausing between lines. KENNY sits on the couch, watching him, and occasionally mocking his conversation. JAMES does not yet see KENNY.)

J: Yes! YES! I made the reservation I swear to god! I know, last time, I know. I'M SORRY. Because I'm a bad boyfriend. And you are the best girlfriend. Okay! OKAY! I love you, I'm gonna go get dressed. Pick you up in a half hour? Right! Um, meet you at the restaurant then? YES, I'll order something this time. I had a small lunch. Because I learn from my mistakes. I'm so hungry I could eat an elephant. No I... babe I know they're endangered I wouldn't... I wouldn't... It's a turn of phrase. Okay I love you too. Love you more! Bye. Okay, bye.

(JAMES hangs up and dials another number.)

J: Hi! Hi, I don't suppose you'd have an open reservation for seven thirtyish? (*whispers aside*) Fuck. (*into the phone*) Okay how about...

(JAMES begins to choke on a nut as he walks back towards the stairs. KENNY stands up, eyes wide but not as wide as JAMES's.)

K: Fuuuuuuuck...

(JAMES drops his phone on the floor and falls behind the couch, completely out of view. The sounds of choking slow and diminish until all that can be heard is a muffled, "Hello? Sir?" coming from the phone. This continues for a while, until the call is ended with the signature *CLICK*.)

K: Huh.

(JAMES pops up from behind the couch, coughing and gasping for air.)

J: God... damn... my phone.

(JAMES goes over to get his phone but can't pick it up off the floor.)

J: What the...

(He turns around and sees KENNY standing behind the couch.)

J: AHHHH.

K: AHHHH.

(They jump in separate directions, KENNY towards the stairs, JAMES towards the kitchen.)

J: WHO THE FUCK ARE YOU?

K: KENNY!

J: What are you doing in my house, Kenny?

K: I lived here.

J: Cool, well, I live here now! It's my house, and you need to leave!

K: Ehhh. You *lived* here.

J: No, live here. My name's on the lease.

K: I'm sure it is, James.

J: How do you know my name? What the fuck are you doing in my house?

K: Just, uh... (*KENNY points behind the couch.*)

J: I'm not sitting down! Get out of my-

K: Shhhhh. Look behind the couch.

J: What?

K: Look... but don't scream... there's no reason to scream...

(JAMES creeps slowly towards the couch and looks at the floor. He starts to hyperventilate.)

J: Is... is that?

K: Yeah.

J: Who... who is that?

K: That's you.

J: No.

K: Uh, yeah. Sorry man.

J: This isn't real. My brain, the lack of oxygen. I'm hallucinating.

K: Sure!

J: No! Fuck off! There's no way I'm... (*he points at the body*) And who the fuck are you?

K: Kenny.

(JAMES hums in frustration.)

K: Oh! Um... I'm Kenneth Deaton. Athens resident all my life. Went to Athens High, then OHU. I lived here my Senior year. Um... registered republican. My birthday was last Tuesday?

J: Happy birthday.

K: Thank you!

J: So what the fuck are you doing in my house?

K: Well... about forty years ago... I died here. Now I... haunt the place.

J: Hold on, no way you're over forty years old.

K: Sixty-two actually.

J: That's not...

K: Okay, we're both dead and any further conversation between us is going to require a mutual understanding of that fact as a baseline.

J: Okay. Okay. So what, you're a ghost then? You expect me to believe that.

K: Mmm.

J: Okay. And you've been here for forty years?

K: Yes.

J: In the background of my life. Ever since I moved in. Just watching me sleep and piss and masturbate?

K: Well, it's not like I'm *actively* watching...

J: I... I need some air.

K: Oh...

(JAMES walks over to the door and grabs the doorknob, but it won't turn. He puts all his weight into it but can't even seem to grab the thing.)

K: You can't really interact anymore. You're discorporate. No muscles, no mass. It's why you couldn't pick up your phone.

J: Okay. I think I left a window open upstairs, I can squeeze out.

K: That you cannot. You can't stray too far from where you died. I was lucky to croak where I did. I can make it all the way upstairs, almost to that window in the hall. I go up and sit on the top step when I need a change in scenery. Or when I need to think. But since you died near the couch I'm not sure you could get that far.

J: So I'm trapped here? In this room.

K: Sartre-esque, isn't it?

J: What?

K: Jean-Paul Sartre, French playwright? I was a theater major.



J: You were a republican theater major?

K: We exist.

J: Yeah, hate to break it to you, but you may have been the last of your kind. So if I try to go upstairs... or out the window... then what?

K: You'd wind up back here on the floor behind the couch seeing sparks and dizzy as hell. I will tell you, one time when you left the window open, I spent the whole day running from the staircase out the window, from the staircase out the window, from the staircase out the window. You wind up on quite the trip, feels almost like LSD.

J: You've done LSD?

K: Yeah, why?

J: You don't look like you've done anything.

J/K: Theater major.

J: Right. So I am trapped.

K: Hey, it's not like you were going out much anyway, with the pandemic and all that.

J: But I've gotta... Amy... I'm not gonna make it to dinner. Fuck, she's gonna break up with me.

K: James.

J: I KNOW! Okay? I know. Just... let me pretend to have real people problems still and not...

K: Hey, buddy, everybody copes in their own special way. But please, stop shouting.

J: So what... how does this work? Are there more of you here? Does every household secretly have its own pet ghost?

K: Well, I assume the older ones do...

J: What about, like, car accidents?

K: What about them?

J: Are you forever trapped haunting a totaled car? Or some stretch of open road?

K: I dunno James. I don't get out much or I'd ask around.

J: Have you ever even seen another ghost?

K: I think there's one in the house across the street.

J: You *think*?

K: Well yeah, sometimes I see her through the window. She's pretty cute. I wave, she waves back. She's either dead and a ghost or alive and just freaky.

J: Winona Ryder, *Beetlejuice* style freaky?

K: I'm sorry?

J: Like Winona Ryder in *Beetlejuice*.

K: Is that a...?

J: You didn't see *Beetlejuice*? When did that come out? You must have been dead then. Uh, it's a movie. With color and everything!

K: Funny.

J: Family moves into a new house, parents die in an accident...

K: Hmm, sad.

J: Yeah, but not really. The daughter can see and speak to the dead.

K: Oh. Yeah I guess this'd be like that. Or like the little boy from *The Sixth Sense*.

J: How have you seen *The Sixth Sense* but not *Beetlejuice*? That came out in the nineties.

K: There was a film major that lived here in the aughts. He had a Shyamalan obsession. When he unknowingly made me watch *The Sixth Sense* for the sixth time, I realized hell *is* other people.

J: I'm so sorry.

K: Me too. But, yeah, I don't really know how any of this works. I died here and I'm a ghost, and you died here and here you are. Maybe it's just this house. Maybe it was built on an ancient Indian burial ground.

J: Ehhhh... that's not... When did you say you died?

K: 1980.

J: That tracks. So you know, people say Native American now.

K: (*Completely ignoring JAMES.*) Or you know, maybe it's us. Maybe we have unfinished business. Or maybe you're right and everyone turns into ghosts and we're the only ones that have died here. I don't know. Either way, welcome to eternity Roomie.

J: Roomie?

K: Room mate?

J: I know what it means just...

(A long, uncomfortable silence.)

J: So I'm dead. What now?

K: You wait. Not much happens for us dead folk. Eventually somebody will come in and find your body. That oughta be interesting.

J: My girlfriend... I don't want her to see me... this. She won't find me at the restaurant, she'll probably get worried and come check on me in a couple of hours.

(Lights down, then quickly back up on...)

## Scene II. ROTTEN LUCK

(JAMES and KENNY sit on the couch. JAMES is curled up into a ball with his head on his knees.)

K: Hey, when's the last time you showered? You're really starting to smell.

J: Shut the fuck up.

K: God, it was just a joke, James. Good old gallows humor. When did everyone get so damn sensitive. *(pause)* You'll have to get used to this eventually.

J: How long did it take them to find you?

K: Three hours.

J: Really? It's been a week.

K: Yeah, it sure has. And somehow you've spent all of it moping.

J: God, Amy must have been pissed when she found out I didn't make a reservation. Can't even blame her for not checking in.

K: And hey it's not like anyone's gonna drop in to say hello during a pandemic. I wouldn't beat yourself up about it. I mean some people must go months without being found.

J: Thanks. Well, I'm... I *was* supposed to move home in a week. So probably one of my folks will come find me soon.

K: Oh. Damn.

J: Yeah. They wanted me to move home when Covid shut things down but I wanted to stick it out in case graduation happened.

K: Probably should have gone home.

J: Fuck. I guess so.

K: Hey, you mind if I head upstairs when your parents get here?

J: Huh? No, yeah go ahead. Why?

K: I just... I died with a headache... So loud noises, and crying just...

J: I gotcha. Yeah, no problem. (*pause*) Seems so unfair, doesn't it.

K: What? How I died?

J: No, that you died and rather than getting time to process all the shit you went through in life you wind up with fun, new, post-mortem trauma.

K: Well, I don't know if I call it trauma, just... an annoyance. And it's loud noises of all things. AND I died in the party house.

J: This was the party house?

K: Yeah, until you moved in.

J: Hey! I go out to parties!

K: No, I'm sure! I mean I'm just happy it's quiet around here.

J: I mean I would if it weren't for this damn plague!

K: I've been dead forty years James. To whom are you trying to prove that you have a life?

J: Okay. Point taken.

(There's a knock on the door. A voice from outside calls:)

T: James? Honey? Are you home?

J: Mom.

K: That's my que. I'll be on my step. Good luck.

J: Thanks.

(Lights down, then quickly back up on...)

### **Scene III. SAYING GOODBYES**

(The room has been stripped bare. JAMES sits on the couch watching while THERESA and AMY pack his things into boxes. They have been crying. KENNY comes down the stairs.)

K: Is it safe?

J: Yeah, I think they've gotten most of it out.

T: (*holding up a potted plant*) Do you want this?

A: That's okay, you should take it. I'm not great with plants.

T: I packed up a few shirts into another bag if you want them.

A: Are you sure?

T: Of course. If there's anything else you want you can take another look, the rest are just getting donated.

A: Thank you so much.

T: Thank you. I didn't want to do this alone.

A: Um, what do you think you're gonna do with his computer?

T: I've been needing a new one for a while and we just got his last year. I'll probably scrap mine and use his.

A: Mind if I send myself some pictures he had saved on there?

T: Not at all. Do you know his password?

A: Yeah.

(AMY goes into the kitchen and puts the laptop on the counter so THERESA can't see the screen. KENNY glances over her shoulder.)

K: Oh my god.

J: What? What's wrong?

- K: Nothing. She's clearing your search history.
- J: Damn. I never deserved her.
- K: I don't know if she's doing it for you. I can't imagine Theresa MacIntire would enjoy finding *Busty Milfs Compilation 4* on-
- J: Yeah, yeah, okay, point taken.
- K: What? You're embarrassed?
- J: No... I just...
- K: James, my friend, don't feel embarrassed. You should feel blessed. You know, back in my day // we didn't have the Internet to turn to. If I wanted to acquire entertainment of a pornographic nature // I had to go to my local adult video store and rent *Busty Milfs Compilation - 1*. That's the original. We didn't have such variety back then // either.
- J: / Here we go. / Please stop. / Thank you, Kenny.
- K: I just want you to understand the privilege you enjoy. Well, *enjoyed*.
- J: Yes Kenny. Thank you for that fascinating history lesson.
- K: You're welcome. (*long pause*) *Busty 3* was my personal favorite.
- J: You just don't know when to... How would you have even seen the third one?
- K: Well... James... um... remember that film major with the Shyamalan thing... well he...
- J: Wait, I thought you were joking. You actually saw it? Holy shit. You watched me, didn't you? What the fuck, Kenny? You said you look away!
- K: Well I don't watch you! Sometimes... sometimes I watch the screen.
- J: You dead, voyeuristic fuck.
- K: You are being so dramatic about this! I didn't think you'd ever know I existed!
- J: Oh so it's okay to watch someone jack off if they don't know you're there?

K: No harm, no foul! I wasn't expecting you to kick the bucket.

J: I can't believe you.

K: I can't believe all this drama was caused by a little nut.

(JAMES gives him a disappointed look but can't manage to keep a straight face. KENNY starts to break and chuckle at his own joke.)

J: You are a child.

K: I'm a senior citizen, and you will treat me with respect.

A: Did you ever figure out what you're doing with the furniture?

T: Yeah, the girl moving in bought them off us.

A: That's convenient. Who is it?

T: A nice girl, Candi Stanton.

A: Oh!            J: Oh.

A: I know her. She's great.

K: What's wrong.

J: I know her.

T: How?            K: How?

A: We had a class together. J: We hooked up at a party.

K: Oh!

T: Can I ask, is Candi her real name, or is that one of those chosen names the kids are doing these days?

(AMY barely prevents herself from wincing.)



A: Um... I don't know. I haven't asked her.

T: Hmm.

(THERESA finishes packing and looks around.)

T: Well, that's everything I think.

A: I'm done here too.

T: That's it for this place then.

A: It was a nice little house.

T: I'll go get the car started. Help me with the last of this?

(AMY nods but doesn't move.)

T: Amy?

A: Sorry, I'm...

T: Is everything okay?

(AMY starts to cry again. KENNY turns to head up the stairs but catches sight of JAMES who looks defeated.)

A: I feel so guilty.

J: Amy...

A: I was so mad at him. I was so mad when he didn't show up, I thought he was late... I didn't even try to call him but if I had he...

J: No...

T: No, sweetie no.

(THERESA goes over to comfort AMY. She holds her like a child. As she speaks, she too begins to cry.)

T: You can't beat yourself up. There's nothing you could have done, even if you'd called, even if you'd rushed right over. I miss him too sweetie, I miss him so much. But it's not your fault, I promise you, it's not your fault.

A: I know I... thank you.

J: I wish I could help. I want to comfort them... this is so...

K: It hurts. I'm sorry. I remember this part too well.

(JAMES is surprised at KENNY's support.)

J: I'm so happy they have each other... that they're here together.

T: I miss him too. (*pause*) Come on, I'll drive you home.

(THERESA and AMY carry out the last of the bags and boxes. JAMES watches them go from the window. The engine starts and the car pulls away.)

J: Bye Amy. Bye mom.

(KENNY walks over to where JAMES is standing and almost puts a hand on his shoulder. JAMES doesn't notice.)

K: How are you doing?

J: I'm not going to see them again. That was the last time. Ever.

K: I know.

J: I didn't really get it until now. I just kept going. But to them, I'm over, I'm gone. I don't know... I finally feel... dead.

(Lights down. Eventually, lights back up on...)

## **INTERLUDE I: DISTANT MEMORIES**

(KENNY and JAMES sit on the couch. It is nighttime, sometime in the future. The room has been stripped bare. Time has stopped, just for a bit. Sound and light travel differently in this moment.)

J: Your turn.

K: Okay, what's your earliest memory?

J: Um... it was summertime... drawing with pastel chalk on the driveway of my house, and watching it melt when the rain started coming down. It was warm rain, it drew out all the worms and when the storm parted they all shriveled and flattened on the asphalt. I stayed out in the rain and let my clothes soak through so I could watch the colors wash away. I don't remember what I was drawing.

K: They feel different now, don't they? Memories.

J: Yeah. Just a little farther away than they're supposed to be. Like I have to reach for them. What's your earliest memory?

K: You can't just steal my question.

J: Okay, outside the game then, I just want to know.

K: Hmm... junior high...

J: Wait, middle school? That's the earliest you can remember?

K: You gonna let me finish?

(JAMES waves him ahead apologetically.)

K: Fuckin' whippersnappers, no respect.

(They share a chuckle.)

K: Middle school. There was this bully, Zander Hylin. Haven't a clue what they fed that kid but he hit his growth spurt in the sixth grade. Twice the height he should have been for his age and triple the muscle. Kid was huge, I think he went on to be quarterback in High School. Anyway he did the classic bully thing, taking what he wanted from who he wanted, knocking them silly if they didn't want to give it up.

J: Sounds like quite a guy.

K: You haven't got a clue. So I was super into Green Lantern at the time, my mom got me this limited edition backpack. Probably should have known better than to take it to school with me but I was so proud of this stupid little bag. Zander comes up to me at lunch and he's decided he wants it more than I do. That's the day I decided to stand up to the guy.

J: Hey, good for you!

K: Nope! Feel here.

(KENNY pulls his hair back and points at a spot on his head.)

J: I'm sorry?

K: Feel my head.

J: I...

(JAMES feels the spot on KENNY's head.)

J: WHAT?

K: Pretty bad right?

J: It's dented! Your head has a dent! How are you even alive?

K: I'm not.

J: You know what I mean.

K: I don't know. But I probably should have taken a hint and just worn a helmet from then on out.

J: Would have saved you some trouble down the line.

K: (*sarcastic*) Well yeah, but then I'd never have met you.

J: (*laughing*) Fuck off.

K: I used to remember more. I don't know how much more, obviously, but things fade after a while.

J: What do you mean?

K: Those memories you said feel far away now, they don't get closer. Actually, the opposite. After a while it's like hearing a familiar tune and trying to place the song, but it just won't come to you. The more you focus on it the farther it gets. It's awful. Maddening.

J: Kenny... it's been almost fifty years...

K: No, I know. But trust me, it's not like forgetting things normally is. You don't re-remember them farther down the line when you get a whiff of that perfume some relative used to wear to every Christmas gathering, or catch a sight of a dog that looks just like your first family pet. When it's gone, it's gone, no bringing it back. All you know is that you once had it and now it's gone.

J: Fuck.

K: Yeah. Sometimes I wonder if that's how it'll end. What if there is no afterlife just... entropy. We're just energy that will scatter and fade until there's nothing left of us, or... shells. There, but... nothing like we used to be, nothing that made us... us.

(A long, heavy silence weighs on them.)

K: Your turn.

J: Huh. Okay. Have you ever been in love?

(KENNY raises an eyebrow at him.)

J: What?

K: That's the best you can do?

J: It's a fine question.

K: Mhm... I don't know.

J: You don't know?

K: How do you even know?

J: How do you know? You just... you feel it.

K: Then I guess not.

J: Not once?

K: You know I don't do that mushy shit.

J: You... you were an actor. Isn't that all about the mushy shit?

K: It's different when you're being someone else.

J: Right.

K: Your turn.

J: No it's not.

K: I'm gonna need a better question.

J: Do you just want to talk about yourself?

K: Different question.

J: What's your favorite Shyamalan film?

(KENNY gives JAMES an indignant look.)

K: Okay. My turn.

(Lights down, then quickly back up on...)

**ACT II****Scene IV. MOVING IN**

(KENNY and JAMES are sitting on the couch. CANDI walks in with a suitcase in one hand and a lamp in the other. The room has been decorated again, this time to her sensibilities.)

C: That's the last of it.

K: Gotta say, I don't mind what she's done with the place.

J: It looks like a grandma lives here.

K: I like it.

J: Didn't say you shouldn't.

K: Guess it's about having mature sensibilities.

C: Hey Vick! Yeah, I just got moved in! It's a cute little place, I mean the ceilings have some cracks in them and I'm a little worried my bed's gonna come crashing into the living room. But otherwise it's lovely.

(KENNY and JAMES look up, then to each other.)

C: You should come over and see the place when you can. Bring Malorie along! No, she still doesn't have a car. You need to be nicer to her. She needs to be nicer to you too!

(She walks upstairs, carrying a bag.)

K: You think it'll be like this all the time?

J: Like what?

K: The phone calls and the friends...

J: She has friends, so what? I had friends.

K: You weren't on the phone with them all the time.

J: I think you have a problem with her that you don't want to tell me.

- K: Did you know she's the first girl that's lived in this house in over forty years?
- J: Oh, I get it.
- K: What?
- J: You don't like women.
- K: I love women! If you're trying to call my sexuality into question I'll have you know-
- J: I think you love *sleeping* with women. That's a different thing than being friends with them.
- K: You're one to talk! You actually slept with her! I think that's why you're taking her side. What's that word the kids are calling that?
- J: Are you trying to call me a simp?
- K: Yes! That's what you are, a simp!
- J: And here I thought I was a capricorn.
- K: Funny.
- J: If you want a reason to be mad, let it be that she's inviting friends over during a pandemic.
- K: Why would I be mad at that? It's her life.
- J: People could die.
- K: Ah, dead's not that bad.
- J: Certainly not with company like this.
- K: Careful Roomie. We've gotta get along for eternity remember?
- J: She's probably just trying to settle in. She's living all alone in a haunted house, it must be a little worrying. She'll get comfortable, then the calls will stop.



(Lights down, then quickly back up on.)

**Scene V. THE POLTERGEIST**

(CANDI walks down the stairs, speaking on the phone. She's happy, nervous, exasperated. She walks into the kitchen, grabs a handful of nuts, and starts eating them while she talks, pausing between lines. KENNY and JAMES sit on the couch, watching her, and occasionally mocking her conversation.)

C: I don't like this place Vicky, I'm telling you it's haunted. My bedroom door just keeps swinging open on it's own, it's freaky! Yes, I'm closing it all the way!

J: Wasn't me.

K: Nor I.

C: I swear to god! You're coming over to stay the night this weekend, you'll see what I mean. I know you say you believe me, but I want you to see it!

K: Vicky has spent the night four times in two weeks, if he doesn't see by now...

(JAMES eyes the peanuts in her hand, ruefully.)

J: She'd better be careful. Those things are...

(CANDI begins to choke on a peanut, and stumbles towards the couch where JAMES and KENNY are sitting. She drops her phone to the floor and they jump up as she tumbles down.)

J: ARE YOU FUCKING KIDDING ME?

K: Fuck, fuck, fuck. Do something!

(JAMES panics and performs an extreme, uncoordinated version of the Heimlich maneuver on CANDI, lifting her into the air.)

K: DO NOT - I REPEAT - DO NOT LET HER DIE HERE. I refuse to spend eternity in a house with this woman.

J: I'm trying!

(With a final squeeze, the peanut comes flying out and CANDI gasps for air on the floor. JAMES steps back. CANDI looks around, terrified and runs out the front door.)

J: Well now she's really going to think the place is haunted.

K: James...

J: Was that a bad idea? I mean I couldn't just let her die... Kenny why are you looking at me like that?

(A long, revolutionary pause while JAMES calms down and realizes what he's done. He gasps.)

J: Holy shit...

K: You're a...

J: I just... I can... I'm a fucking poltergeist?

K: You're a fucking poltergeist! (*suddenly angry*) How? How the fuck did you do it?

J: Whoa! Calm down! I... I don't know!

K: Like hell, you don't know! I've been trying for forty years to do what you just did in your first month! What did you do differently? There has to be something!

J: I don't know... I just, I panicked!

K: Oh, well sure I'll give that a try.

J: Hey! Ease up! I didn't ask for this-

K: Well I did! I did for forty years! I've wanted... for so long... I've wanted to be able to actually do things again and you just up and made a girl fly on accident...

J: That must hurt.

K: Don't act like you know how it feels, James. (*Long pause*) Can you do it again?

J: Huh?

K: Can you do it again? Can you control it?

J: I don't know.

K: Well you've gotta try! Fuck, man, you don't even know what you've got!

J: Okay, okay! Phew. Here goes nothing.

(JAMES wanders over to the switch and turns off the lights. JAMES and KENNY lose their shit.)

K: DO IT AGAIN! DO IT AGAIN!

(JAMES flips the lights on and off rapidly while the two of them laugh. He dashes around the room, wildly opening and closing cupboards, windows, drawers, the oven, turning things on and off, doing backflips and somersaults while KENNY whoops and cheers. They stop in their tracks, eyes wide with wonder, and turn simultaneously to the television. Lights down... then slowly back up on...)

### **Scene VI. OUIJA**

(KENNY sits on the couch watching television while JAMES stands in the kitchen teaching himself to juggle produce - it's not going well. Something is said on the news which makes KENNY bounce with nervous excitement.)

K: JAMES! JAMES COME HERE!

J: WHAT?

K: THE MAN ON THE TV! HE SAID WE CAN VOTE?

J: WHAT?

K: HE SAID DEAD PEOPLE ARE VOTING! DID YOU KNOW WE CAN VOTE?

J: Kenny I... I don't think that's what that means.

K: Damn it! You know, the only presidential election I ever got to vote in, I helped get Ronald Regan into office and never even got to enjoy it.

J: What a shame.

K: ...You think we could try it though?

J: Voting? No.

K: Come on James, you can do your whole poltergeist thing, fill out an absentee ballot!

J: We would have to get online and apply for one using the name and social security of an actual living person.

K: Okay. You know some of those.

J: I'm not - NO I'm not stealing someone's vote. How would we even get it out to the mailbox? This isn't a good plan, this isn't even a plan.

K: You could make it work. I know you could do it, you just don't want to.

J: You're right I don't.

K: Please.

J: I'm sorry Kenny. You've been disenfranchised.

K: Damn you, James.

(A long pause.)

K: What if I promise to vote for // Biden.

J: / No.

K: And blue down the // ticket.

J: / Kenny.

K: FINE.

(CANDI walks in the door with two of her friends, VICK and MALORIE. CANDI has a ouija board tucked under her arm. VICK has a pile of electric candles that he starts placing around the space and turning on. MALORIE has vodka, and begins rummaging for shot glasses.)

J: Hey, look who's back!

C: I swear to god, you guys, I did not leave the television on. Or... change the channel?

V: What kind of ghost watches Fox News?

K: Is that... does she have... are you fucking serious?

J: Is that a ouija board?

K: Damn right it is.

M: Do you think this is gonna work with the electric candles?

V: Of course it is. They're just as valid as those old fashioned wax-and-wick sticks.

M: I've just never heard of anyone doing a seance with battery powered candles.

V: Maybe that's because big-candle doesn't want you to.

K: Big candle...

M: Big candle? Really...

V: Mhm.

(CANDI switches off the TV, then unfolds the Ouija Board on the coffee table. She takes the planchette and places it in the center of the board.)

C: You two get along and get over here.

(They sit around the coffee table on the floor, all placing their hands on the planchette.)

C: Everyone ready?

(They nod.)

C: Is anyone here?

V: CANDI!

C: What?!

V: You have to start with Hello.

C: Fine. Hello. Is anyone here?

K: Moment of truth, James. Decision time. Do we make contact? Do we pierce the veil?  
Or...

J: Do we fuck with them?

(They smile at each other. Evil chuckle.)

J: What do I say?

K: Start small, simple. *YES*. Do it. Move the platelet.

J: I don't think that's what that's called.

C: Guys this is silly, nobody's...

(JAMES jumps to move the planchette to *YES*. The Ouija players freak.)

C: Okay... okay... um.

M: Ask it what its name is. If it has a name.

(JAMES moves the planchette to spell out his name.)

C: J... A... M... James. His name is James.

M: Ask it's pronouns.

K: Is she serious?

J: It's 2020 Kenny, it's a perfectly valid question.

(KENNY scoffs.)

J: We are not getting into this again. Not now.

(JAMES spells out *HE* then *HIM*)

V: Oooh it's a boy ghost!

M: I wonder if he's cute.

K: He's fine.

(JAMES responds *YES*.)

C: Yes.

K: Ugh...

M: A cute ghost who saved your life.

V: Ask if he's single.

C: Vicky, of course he's single, he's dead.

J: Ouch.

K: She's right though.

J: I don't know, technically Amy and I never broke up.

K: Death did you part man, you're single.

V: He could have a ghost partner for all we know!

K: No. Nope. No.

C: Wait... James McIntire?

K: Ugh... you had to go and flirt! Now she's found us out!

J: What do I... ugh...

C: Guys this isn't funny. You know I knew him.

(They all take their hands off the planchette.)

M: It wasn't me! That's so fucked up Vicky!

V: No! No way I'd fuck with the board. I know better than to fuck with the board.

K: If they're just gonna keep shouting I'm going to my step.

(KENNY leaves up the stairs.)

C: Can you two just-

M: Oh, so you're saying it was me then?

V: I didn't say anything!

M: Well it clearly wasn't Candi! This is fucked, Vick. You knew he lived here.

C: He what?

M: He... you didn't know. Babe... how didn't you know?

V: It's not exactly a secret. Wouldn't the landlord have to tell you or...?

C: I signed the lease in January... I haven't spoken to anyone but my parents and you guys since like March. I didn't even know he was living here. I think I need you guys to go.

V: Candi...

C: Please? I'll call you tomorrow. I'm not mad. This was just... too much.

M: Yeah. Sure. Yeah.

(MALORIE and VICKY get up to leave.)

M: Um...



C: We're okay. I'll call you tomorrow.

(MALORIE and VICKY leave out the front door. VICKY's car can be heard pulling away. CANDI reclines on the couch and starts to scroll through her feed, distractedly. JAMES eyes the ouija board. JAMES grabs the planchette, and slowly spells out "HEY." He speaks the next lines slowly as he spells them out on the board. CANDI freaks out as the planchette moves on it's own.)

C: Fuck... James?

J: Yes.

C: I... hi, James.

J: Hey Candi.

C: How... how's it going?

J: Oh you know.

C: Sorry. Stupid, stupid question. I'm sorry this is just... I mean this year has been weird but this is a cut above. I think I... Hmm.

J: Take your time. It's a lot to take in.

(CANDI considers how to respond, opens her mouth as if to do so, then lifts the board to check for shenanigans.)

J: Could I get a pen? And paper?

C: Oh. Sure. That'd probably be easier wouldn't it?

(CANDI pulls these things out of her backpack, which is resting somewhere in the room. She puts them on the table. JAMES starts writing. CANDI watches the pen lift of the table and nearly faints.)

J: Are you okay?

C: Oh. Hah. Absolutely not.

J: I'm sorry if I scared you.

C: Oh no. That's okay. I guess you saved my life, so call it even?

J: How have you been?

(She starts to laugh.)

C: Sorry. I'm sorry, it's just... this is just a conversation. Just like a whole, normal conversation, except you're dead.

J: Yep.

C: I've been... I've been better! There's still a pandemic happening, and who knows when it'll end. Then there's police tear gassing and shooting at protestors in the streets. I've spent the last three months in a house with my parents who are now getting a long overdue divorce, and my best friends won't stop getting in each other's hair and I'm now dumping all my troubles on a person who is actually dead.

J: Don't worry about it. I'm sorry it's been such a tough few months.

(CANDI starts laughing again, resigning herself to the absurdity.)

C: Okay. Thank you. How about you, how have you been or... what are you doing here?

J: Wow. Where to begin?

(Lights go down, then quickly back up on.)

## **INTERLUDE II: SUMMER 2020**

(KENNY turns off the television, which has been airing footage of the Black Lives Matter protests which have been occurring over the past two months. Both JAMES and KENNY are sitting on the couch, and seem to have personalized what they saw, though for different reasons. It's the middle of the night and CANDI is asleep upstairs. JAMES mutes the television.)

K: Hey, I was watching that.

J: Don't want to wake up Candi.

K: I still can't believe you told her I'm here. Why didn't you ask me first?

- J: What, you wanted me to just talk around the fact that you're haunting her house?
- K: I wanted you to just leave the board alone. They were already blaming each other, you could have just stepped away and left it be.
- J: Why are you so against her knowing about us?
- K: I just don't want it to make things weird.
- J: How would it make things weird?
- K: Man, I don't know, what if she tells her friends about us, and then they tell their friends and this place becomes some tourist attraction where teenagers sneak in, get spooked by their own shadow and scream like they're being murdered. I don't want to deal with that.
- J: I already asked her not to tell anyone.
- K: And what, you trust her?
- J: Yeah, why not? Besides, now that she knows we're here, we can openly watch TV.
- K: Oh, yay.
- J: What?
- K: I don't know... this stuff on the TV is just putting me in a bad space...
- J: Okay. Do you want to talk about it?
- K: No. It's just exactly like it was when I was a kid. Nothing's really changed at all. These people on the news, they rioted, they burned down their own neighborhoods and nothing changed so now they're doing it again. This time they got some words painted on the street. Yippee.
- J: Okay first of all you can say Black people, it's not a bad word.
- K: I can't keep up. The politically correct term changes every two years, I swear to god.

- J: You don't get it because you've never been terrorized and murdered by the police for the color of your skin. What exactly do you think you'd do differently if you were in their shoes?
- K: I wouldn't... you know, we've had this conversation and I still don't get the point.
- J: The point is that you have no empathy, man. The point is knowing enough to say you'll never actually know what that's like and wanting to help-
- K: No, you're not talking about wanting to help, you're talking about being obligated to help. I'm not responsible for their situation. Also-
- J: But you are responsible because you still benefit from the systems that have caused these same problems for centuries.
- K: Benefiting from something and contributing to it are not the same. And-
- J: In a capitalist society, they might as well be-
- K: And I still don't get why I should care.
- J: Because-
- K: I know, apathy is violence. Inaction is violence. I know the talking points. You've said all of this before in exactly the same way. But James... We're dead. Why are you still trying to educate me?
- J: I...
- K: Exactly. It's not like if I change my mind the skies will suddenly open and down will fall a staircase to the pearly gates of liberal heaven. Look how well that worked for you. I'm stuck here. You're stuck here. We're impotent. Harmless. We don't benefit from or contribute to anything anymore. So I don't get it.
- J: It feels good to care, Kenny. If you care about something then you can hope for something, even if you can't change it from where you are right now. Isn't there anything you really care about?
- K: Just sounds like a lot of pointless worry to me.

(There is a long and strained silence between them.)

J: Do you think there *is* an afterlife? I mean like an after-afterlife. Something past... this.

K: I know there is.

J: Huh? What happened to entropy? Becoming nothingness?

K: That's... that's a fear. This is a certainty.

J: Huh. I've always envied the faithful.

K: It's not that. Well, it is that. I believe in a God, but I don't know anymore if there's a heaven or a hell waiting for me. I do know there's something though.

J: How?

K: When you've been at this whole death thing for a while, you'll get this sense sometimes, that there's something else, and it's just waiting for you if only you could...

J: What?

K: Who knows? There's nothing definite about it. Nothing you can hold on to. It doesn't pull you in, it just drifts in your periphery, just close enough to catch the light, and then when you turn to face it, it drifts away. But it's always there. It will always be there, waiting. It's not scary, it's not anything. It just *is*.

J: I think I know what you mean. I felt it there, when my mom and Amy left.

K: (*trying to lighten the mood*) Maybe I'll find out what exactly it is when I'm through with all this damn unfinished business preventing me from shuffling off this mortal coil.

J: You're joking, but what if you're right?

K: What do you mean?

J: What if it is about unfinished business. Not the revenge kind but... I don't know, something more... personal? I don't really know what I'm saying. What if this time is for us to work through all the shit we didn't work through in life, so that when we finally move on, we move on...

K: Perfect?

J: No. I don't really believe that I guess. I don't think we ever stop changing, for better or worse. But maybe this time is for us to figure out what better might look like. To start moving in that direction.

K: What's 'better' look like for you?

J: ...Learning how to be alone. I've always been really bad at sitting with my thoughts. I just get mired in regrets, things I might have done, might have said. Places I might be that aren't where I am. People I miss. It's obviously not the only thing I'd have to work on but it's the biggest I think.

K: Must be pretty tough to practice with me around huh?

J: I guess I'll have to start when you shuffle off.

K: Wouldn't count on it.

J: How about yours? What shark would you have to jump?

K: That is a complete misappropriation of that idiom.

J: Kenny...

K: Fonzie was my role model and I will not have you malign his achievements-

J: Kenny. Tell me, honestly. What do you think it would be?

(There's a pause. KENNY thinks about it, realizes he doesn't like the question, then jokes.)

K: I think I'm pretty perfect as is.

(JAMES smiles, disappointed and a little bit hurt. Lights down, then quickly back up on.)

**ACT III****Scene VII. INTERNET CONNECTION**

(JAMES and KENNY sit in front of CANDI's laptop, looking more serious than usual.)

J: Are you sure you want to do this?

K: Yes. I am. It's been forty years, I know what to expect.

J: Even if you know... it's still okay-

K: I know. Come on. Do it.

J: Okay.

(JAMES types names into google on CANDI's computer.)

J: Okay... Maurice Deaton... Athens, Ohio...

K: Look up my mom too, she's-

J: I can only do one at a time.

K: Ugh. What good are these things?

J: Here's something... um...

K: Obituaries.

J: Kenny...

K: M. Deaton.

J: That's your dad?

K: Or my mom. Her name was... is Martha.

J: Look, Kenny...

K: I just thought... They had me when she was twenty-five, he was twenty-eight. It's been sixty two years... They'd be old but... maybe?

J: I want you to know that we can come back to this // later

K: / Click it.

J: Are you sure?

K: Open it. I'm ready. I have to know.

(JAMES clicks the link.)

J: Maurice. Maurice Deaton, 1935 to 2020. He died just a couple days before me. Do you think he's...

K: A ghost? When I was a kid, he used to tell my mom that if he died first he'd haunt her, and if she died first he'd burn some sage. I wonder if she's burning sage right now. I wonder if she's even...

J: "Survived by his loving wife Martha Deaton." She's alive. And still in town.

K: Huh...

J: Are you okay?

K: Yeah I'm...

(KENNY goes to sit down on the couch and struggles to hold back tears.)

K: She's still alive, James. She's been... two miles away for the last sixty years. She's so close but... I don't know why this is harder than... can I have a hug?

J: (*holding back astonishment*) Of course.

(JAMES hugs KENNY as KENNY tries to stop himself from crying.)

J: It's okay, you can let it-



(KENNY starts bawling in JAMES's arms. When he finally calms down he breaks the hug and can't bring himself to look at JAMES.)

K: I'm sorry. I'm sorry, I don't know where that came from.

J: You have nothing to apologize for.

K: Thank you. For the hug. It was good.

J: Any time.

K: Do you mean that?

J: What? Yeah.

(KENNY hugs JAMES. JAMES is surprised, but hugs him back.)

K: It's... It's just been a really long time since I've gotten a hug. It's not a gay thing I promise.

J: That's not... alright, Kenny.

(KENNY breaks the hug again.)

K: Do you think... is there more about her on here?

J: We can look her up if you want.

K: Please...

(JAMES types her name into CANDI's computer.)

J: Here's something. Staff directory. She worked at the college?

K: She was a classics professor.

J: Still is, if this is up to date.

K: Is there a picture?

J: It's still loading. The school's website is almost as old as you, it's gonna need a second.

(CANDI starts walking down the stairs.)

J: Shit.

K: Candi.

(JAMES shuts the laptop right as CANDI rounds the corner on the stairs. CANDI pauses, seeing the screen close out of the corner of her eye.)

C: No fucking way.

(She walks over, opens the laptop, and types in her password.)

C: No way you two touched my laptop, you assholes! This is not okay! I... ugh! I'm changing my password and not letting this thing out of my // sight.

K: / NO! James you have to stop her!

J: It's her computer, Kenny, I'm not gonna-

K: Please!

J: I'm sorry, no!

(KENNY leaps up as CANDI starts walking out with her computer. He reaches out to stop her. JAMES leaps up to hold him back. The lights go out. Lights quickly back up on CANDI and JAMES, standing where they were. KENNY is nowhere. CANDI seems surprised and unsettled, looking herself up and down, and at the laptop in her hands. She turns around to look at JAMES.)

C: James?

J: Candi? You can see me?

(He looks around.)

J: Kenny?

C: James. Uh...

J: No. No. Fuck no.

C: Yes. Yeah. It's Kenny.

J: No, Kenny, you have to... I mean, this is so not okay. Just... stop.

C: I don't know how.

J: What do you mean you don't know how? Figure it out! Candi is a person you can't just treat her like a puppet!

C: Ugh! You're already up on your fucking soapbox again! Don't you see how amazing this is?

J: Kenny! Please.

(CANDI (KENNY) is no longer listening. He has an idea.)

J: What?

C: I'm thinking... Maybe if I step outside then I, Kenny will wind up at the base of the stairs and Candi will wake up.

J: Maybe. I don't know, we've gotta try something. Let me get the door for you.

C: No. I think I've got it.

(CANDI (KENNY) walks over to the door and turns the knob with a hesitant, victorious glee.)

C: Hah. God it's been so long since I... I can do things again.

J: Yeah, yeah. Just give Candi back her... Just go.

(CANDI (KENNY) walks across the threshold, turns back to look at JAMES, smiles, then dashes away. JAMES runs to the door and shouts down the street.)

J: KENNY! KENNY GET BACK... FUCK!

(Lights down, then quickly back up on...)

**Scene VIII: POSSESSION**

(JAMES sits on the couch with his head in his hands, exasperated. He looks up every once in a while, or stands and wanders to the window before returning to the couch. He fidgets. He's already placed CANDI's laptop back on the table. The door opens and CANDI (KENNY) walks in looking distracted and upset.)

J: Kenny! What happened? Where did you go?

(CANDI (KENNY) stays silent, and crosses the room. As she crosses behind the couch, her eyes close, and she falls out of sight.)

J: Kenny!?

(KENNY stands up and brushes himself off, then heads up the stairs without acknowledging JAMES. JAMES stands aghast, then looks down at CANDI, still behind the couch. She groans.)

J: Candi? Are you okay?

(CANDI grabs the back of the couch and pulls herself up, facing away from JAMES.)

C: What... happened?

(She looks around and catches sight of JAMES, her eyes go wide.)

C: James?

J: Candi? You can see me?

C: Yes. Yeah. I can. What's going on?

J: Um... I tried to stop him... Kenny possessed you.

C: He did what?

J: I think it was an accident. He didn't seem to know what he was doing.

C: How long was I out?

J: Just over thirty minutes.

C: What's he been doing?

J: I... I don't know. I think he took a stroll.

C: A stroll?

J: How do you feel?

C: Like I just slept for twelve hours.

J: Why don't you come sit down.

(CANDI sits down on the couch.)

C: Where is Kenny?

J: Probably on the top step, he... goes there to think.

C: Weird, but okay.

J: Weird? You see dead people now and that's the weird thing.

C: Actually this is pretty much in line with the rest of this year.

J: Valid.

C: What were you two doing with my laptop?

(There is a knock at the door.)

C: Would you get that?

J: Um... sure.

(JAMES walks over to the door and opens it. MARTHA stands outside, looking flustered. She looks suspiciously at the door, not seeing the ghost who opened it.)

M: Hello?

J: I think it's for you.

C: Uh... hello!

(CANDI stands up and walks over to the door.)

M: There you are! Do you want to tell me what it is you were doing on my lawn?

C: Uh... (*looking back at JAMES*) I guess I was taking a stroll.

M: Uh-huh. You strolled right up to my window and watched me make my lunch! Why are you stalking me?

C: I'm so sorry ma'am, I can explain.

M: Then explain.

C: ...Okay well actually I can't explain, but I can promise it will never happen again.

M: I know it won't! I'm calling the police and having them take you in for trespassing and window-peeping!

C: Please, ma'am, can we just-

J: I got this.

(JAMES walks into the kitchen, picks up an orange and throws it across the room.)

M: What? Did that citrus just...

(JAMES takes another orange and tosses it gently towards CANDI. She catches it.)

M: You... what? I... never come into my yard again! You hear me?

(MARTHA runs away. CANDI closes the door.)

C: Thanks. What the hell just happened? Who was that woman?

J: Ask Kenny.

C: Fine. KENNY!

(JAMES winces at the volume. KENNY comes down the stairs with his ears covered, looking flustered.)

J: Jesus.

K: There's no reason to yell! James, can you ask her what she wants? Who was that at the door?

C: Hi, Kenny. You're uh... actually you're exactly like I thought you'd be.

K: Thanks? Hold on, you can see me?

C: And hear you.

K: How'd this happen?

J: Actually, I think it's your fault.

K: Great.

C: What?

J: He's just... not great with company... or loud noises.

K: He's also right here, and you can stop talking like he's out of the room. Hey that picture loaded.

(He catches sight of the image on CANDI's laptop. He walks over to it, CANDI and JAMES follow.)

K: Wow, she looks so young here. This must have been taken a decade ago.

J: Wait, that's your mother?

(JAMES and CANDI exchange a look behind KENNY.)

- K: Yeah. That's her. I... I actually saw her earlier today. Um... sorry Candi.
- C: Hey, I haven't felt this rested since freshman year. Apology accepted, but maybe ask next time.
- K: Pretty sure she spotted me, and I didn't really know how or what to say. I just ran off. God, I'm such an idiot.
- C: No, Kenny. I mean, I think it's normal to panic a bit in that situation.
- K: I don't panic. I don't... I don't know what happened.
- C: Everyone does sometimes. That's okay, that's human. And look, if you ever want to give it another shot, just ask. We can work something out. Just uh, don't get me arrested okay? Like... knock on the door like a normal person.
- K: You'd do that?
- C: Dude, I am not lying when I say I feel *fantastic* right now. The movies really get this whole possession thing wrong.
- K: Thank you Roomie.
- C: Roomie?
- J: Room mate?
- C: No problem, Roomie.

(JAMES offers KENNY a hug and KENNY reluctantly, then enthusiastically accepts. Lights down, then quickly back up on...)

### INTERLUDE III. VICTORY

(KENNY, JAMES and CANDI sit together on the couch. It's a bit awkward. CANDI's still not used to having roommates, and KENNY and JAMES still aren't used to being seen. CANDI is mostly scrolling through her phone while KENNY and JAMES watch cartoons from the aughts.)

- C: So... just out of curiosity... ghost clothes?
- J: Ah yeah, we were actually talking about that... last week?



K: That was a month ago.

J: What? No it wasn't.

K: Yeah.

J: Damn. Yeah. We died in these clothes, so I guess we get to wear them forever now.

C: Weird. I don't know why but I'd expect ghosts to be like... naked.

J: Yeah, Kenny and I stopped trying to work out the Ghost Rules after he possessed you. It's all just too unpredictable, too arbitrary. We'd go mad if we kept trying to figure out all the cans and cants. Better to just accept that if you think shit's as weird as it's gonna get, that's when things are about to go full b-movie, haunted-house, horror flick. *(pause)* And you learn to count your blessings because, you're right, we could be naked.

C: That'd probably make this awkward.

K: Wouldn't be anything you haven't seen right?

J: Kenny!

C: What? James! I didn't know you told him?

J: I'm sorry it wasn't like that!

C: Like what?

J: I mean... it was before you moved in... I didn't think you'd ever know I was here.

K: No harm, no foul?

J: Shut up, Kenny.

C: Oh, so you think it's okay to treat me like I'm just a notch on your bedpost? What, were you bragging about it?

J: No I... I just...

(CANDI drops the act and starts laughing. KENNY finds this hilarious. JAMES is confused.)

C: Dude, it's fine! I'm messing with you. I mean, I told my friends about it. I kind of expected that you would too.

K: You should have seen the look on your face, oh my god.

J: I can't believe you two.

C: You were the one that made a big deal out of it, yelling at poor Kenny like that, I just decided to play along.

J: So you bragged to your friends about me?

C: Did I say bragged?

*(Her phone buzzes and she looks down at her phone.)*

C: Holy shit. He won!

J: Who?

C: Turn on the news!

(JAMES changes the channel to CNN. They've just called the election. Everyone is elated, even KENNY.)

J: Holy shit.

K: Good for him!

(JAMES looks at him, confused.)

K: What? I'd told you, I'd have voted for him if I could.

J: I thought that was just so I'd help you steal someone's ballot.

K: Nope. Probably wouldn't have gone blue down ticket though.

C: Didn't you vote for Ronald Reagan?

K: Yeah. Politically Regan is closer to Biden than Trump.

(JAMES and CANDI almost argue, but can't. Their excitement has waned. JAMES changes the channel, back to cartoons.)

K: I wish I'd been wearing something a bit snazzier when I died.

C: Yeah?

K: I mean, James here was dressed for a date, I was dressed to make myself pasta.

C: You look great!

J: Snazzier than I do when I'm cooking for myself.

K: That's true.

C: This is the part in the movie where I'd offer to take you shopping and give you a confidence boosting makeover.

J: I think we've hopped genres.

(CANDI's phone starts to buzz again.)

C: Getting a call from my mom. She's overjoyed. Back in a bit.

(She takes the call and runs up the stairs. KENNY and JAMES watch cartoons in silence.)

K: I'm glad she moved in.

(JAMES looks down at him.)

J: Yeah. Me too.

(Lights down, then slowly back up on.)

**ACT IV****Scene IX. THE PLAN**

(KENNY is looking out the window, waving across the street, then squinting to see if he's being waved back at. JAMES is in the kitchen, playing with knives, maybe pretending to sword fight some invisible opponent. CANDI comes down the stairs, phone in hand, and the boys snap to attention.)

C: House meeting.

K: House meeting?

J: This is new.

C: I thought it could be a thing. Since we're all Roomies now. Is it not a thing?

K: It can be a thing.

J: I'm cool with it. House meeting in session. What's up?

C: So I've been talking to this guy...

K: Oh?

C: Yeah. Goes to OHU, Henry Marrano.

J: Oh.

K: What?

J: Nothing! He's cute.

C: Bit of an airhead.

J: Your words!

C: You were thinking them pretty loud.

K: So you're talking to this guy...

C: On Tinder.

J/K: OH!

C: And... I want to have him over.

(KENNY and JAMES are silent, they look at each other.)

J: Candi... it's your house.

K: Why are you asking us?

C: You guys live here too... or...

J: Poor choice of wording, but let's move on.

C: I just wanted to ask you guys before I brought someone over. Out of respect.

K: Thank you! I'm cool with it.

J: Same here.

C: Cool. We're probably going to watch a movie together. You two are welcome to watch, since you can't exactly go anywhere else.

K: As long as it's not Shyamalan.

(Lights down, then quickly back up on...)

### **Scene X. DOUBLE DATE**

(CANDI and HENRY sit in the center of the couch. He is flipping through movies on Netflix, and she is trying to get him to put his arm around her.)

C: What do you want to watch?

H: Have you ever seen *The Village*?

K: NOOOOOOO!

(CANDI winces. Looks over at KENNY).

H: Everything okay?

C: Yeah... how about...

K: Anything but Shyamalan, please.

H: What?

C: I've just... I've seen *The Village*. How about something else?

K: I swear to god if this man says *Signs*...

H: Ooooh what about *The Poltergeist*?

J: What about him?

C: Seen it. (to JAMES) Wasn't impressed.

K: Damn.

H: Hmmmm. *Alien*?

C: Maybe not a horror movie?

H: Okay... how about *Ghostbusters*?

C: Am I gonna find out you have a thing for Sigourney Weaver? Cause that's three for four.

K: I have a thing for Sigourney Weaver.

H: Is that a no to *Ghostbusters*?

J: Did I ever tell you I met Sigourney Weaver.

K: You... dude! How have you never told me this?

C: What if we just go upstairs and have loud, bed-shaking sex?

H: Huh. Actually, you know I was really excited for this movie but...

C: Go upstairs. My room's on the left. I'll be up in a minute.

H: Yes ma'am.

C: Ew... don't... just go.

H: Yes, Candi.

(HENRY runs up the stairs, looking back at CANDI with that telltale fuckboy smirk. She smiles back at him with an impatient, 'go on' kind of glare. She stands up and looks down on KENNY and JAMES.)

C: We need boundaries.

K: Oh come on, Candi.

C: No. You guys were so obnoxious all through dinner and now this? I'm leaving. I'm going to enjoy this date come hell or two men that should probably be there.

(CANDI marches up the stairs.)

K: That was so unfair.

J: I don't know, Kenny. Maybe we should have just let her enjoy her date.

K: Where are we supposed to go?

J: We could just shut up for an hour or two, hang out in the kitchen or something.

K: Oh so just stand in a corner silently and really haunt the place. I thought I was the traditionalist but here you are wanting to act like cheap, classic, horror movie, jump-scare ghosts. Fuck no, it's been forty years since I got to chose the movie I think I should have some say.

J: I'm just saying-

K: And I'm just not caring.

(JAMES sighs. There is a long pause.)

J: You don't think she's actually going to...?

K: Just to spite us...?

J: Nah.

(A bed frame squeaks above them. JAMES and KENNY act like nothing's happening. A thin line of dust crumbles down from the ceiling.)

K: Hey, do you think ghosts would need // prophylactics?

J: / We're gonna stop talking.

K: Okay.

(Lights down, then quickly back up on...)

### **Scene XI. MOVING OUT II**

(CANDI walks down the stairs, to find KENNY and JAMES sitting on the couch.)

C: 'Morning ghosts.

J/K: 'Morning Candi.

(There is a long, long pause while CANDI starts making coffee.)

J: Uh... Candi. Kenny and I wanted to apologize for last night.

C: Oh. No need. I had a fine date after all.

(While CANDI is focused on the coffee, KENNY makes an eye rolling, suggestive kind of face, JAMES elbows him.)

C: I'm sorry for being so short with you.

J: No, we were being assholes interrupting your date.

C: It's not exactly like you can go anywhere, and I can't exactly ask you to just go stand silently in a corner. That actually sounds really creepy.



K: Doesn't it?

J: Yeah I guess it would be.

(CANDI continues to make coffee as a tense silence settles in.)

J: Why don't I feel like we've cleared the air at all.

(CANDI walks in from the kitchen and faces JAMES and KENNY, leaning against the counter.)

C: I'm moving out next month. Not because of last night... well a little bit because of last night, but not because I'm mad. I just... I got the internship back home in New York, and I can either wait until after graduation or start next month. All my classes are going to be online so I'm gonna take the offer and get started now.

(JAMES and KENNY are quietly devastated.)

J: Wow... um, congratulations.

K: Yeah.

C: Thanks.

(There is a long silence between them.)

J: So... when do you move out.

C: December 19th. Home for Christmas.

J: Okay.

(Another silence.)

K: Will you come back to visit?

C: I think there's already another renter lined up... so-

K: Yeah... I get it. Wouldn't really make sense.

(There is a long pause, then HENRY comes down the stairs with his backpack. He's smiling at Candi, she tries to smile back but mostly wants him to leave now. His next lines are needlessly, emphatically flirtatious.)

H: Hey.

C: Hey.

H: I've gotta get to class.

C: Okay.

H: Last night. Wow.

C: Yeah.

H: Cool. I'll see you around.

C: Sure.

(He leaves out the front door. CANDI, JAMES and KENNY are silent again until KENNY breaks the silence.)

K: *(to JAMES, mocking HENRY)* Hey.

J: Hey.

(CANDI tries her best not to laugh.)

C: Oh my god, stop! That guy...

K: So stupid.

C: Like, gorgeous sure, but nothing going on up there at all.

K: Terrible taste in movies.

C: Right? I'm so glad I could get out of that.

K: You're welcome.

C: (*genuine*) Thanks, Kenny.

K: So...?

C: So?

K: (*suggestively*) So how was it?

J: Kenny! You can't just-

C: It was pretty great.

K: Hell yeah!

J: Oh my god.

K: Go Roomie!

C: But then he wanted to talk...

K: Ooh...What about?

C: The unrecognized genius that is Quentin Tarantino.

(JAMES and KENNY gasp and groan in empathetic agony.)

J: Was it worth it?

K: Is anything?

C: Absolutely not. I'll be deleting Tinder for the third and final time.

J: Might be better in New York.

C: Yeah, but pandemic. Having to listen to Henry Marrano proselytize about the once and future King of Dialogue was disappointing, but getting Covid from a hook up would just be sad.

(There is a short pause.)

C: I'm gonna miss you guys...

K: We're gonna miss you.

(JAMES looks at KENNY, surprised but pleased. The lights go down then slowly come back up on...)

#### **INTERLUDE IV:**

(It's early in the morning and the house is festively decorated. JAMES and KENNY sit on the couch watching *Happy Days: Guess Who's Coming to Christmas*, while KENNY quotes all the lines.)

J: How do you remember all this after forty years?

K: When I said I was a fan...

J: You really meant it.

K: And this is my favorite episode.

(CANDI comes down the stairs, still wearing pajamas holding a wrapped gift-box.)

C: Ghosts! Merry Christmas!

J/K: Merry Christmas Candi!

C: Mind if I interrupt for a bit?

K: After this episode.

(JAMES pauses the television.)

K: I will haunt you.

J: What's up, Candi?

(CANDI leans against the counter. She's smiling, proud of herself.)

C: Nothing, I just got you something. For the holidays.

J: What? Really?

K: What is it?

C: Open it.

J: Candi you really didn't have-

C/K: Open it!

(JAMES opens the present slowly, trying to save the paper. KENNY rolls his eyes.)

K: Corporeality is wasted on the young! Go faster!

(JAMES complies and tears it open. It's a flip phone, the cheap kind that can only make and take calls and texts.)

J: Oh, Candi you really didn't...

C: It was only twenty bucks...

K: Can it go on the internet?

C: No but... you can send me a text every once in a while... if you want.

K: We can?

C: I already put my number in. It came with a charger too, but I couldn't figure out how to wrap it, so here.

(CANDI takes the charger from her back pocket and hands it over to JAMES.)

J: Thank you so much.

K: Yeah, thank you.

C: I'll check in too.

J: You're gonna be busy with that internship.

C: I'll find the time. Like I said, I'm gonna miss you guys.

K: We're gonna miss you.

C: Just, keep it well hidden. Don't let whoever moves in find it and take it away, you know? Unless you plan on making friends with them too.

J: Haven't thought about it much.

K: Yeah. I mean we don't want to force anything. If it happens organically...

C: You mean if they bring in a ouija board and try to make contact?

J: Something like that.

C: What are you watching?

K: *Happy Days!* The Christmas special. Watch with us?

C: Never seen *Happy Days*.

K: Get ready. This was the second golden age of American television.

(CANDI comes to sit on the couch and JAMES presses play. KENNY continues to speak the lines as they happen. CANDI looks to JAMES, impressed, he nods in agreement. The lights fade, then slowly come back up on...)

**ACT V****Scene XII. MOURNING**

(It's nighttime, during that stretch of winter when it might as well be nighttime all the time.

KENNY and JAMES are sitting on the couch, but the TV isn't on. They're zoned out. JAMES sits up suddenly.)

J: I need a hobby.

K: Whoa, where'd this sudden burst of energy come from?

J: It's been what, ten months I've been dead and I've done nothing. I learned to juggle, that's it.

K: Yeah, also you can literally exert your will on the material world from beyond the grave. You might be a god among ghosts.

J: We don't know any other ghosts.

K: That girl across the street still waves at me sometimes.

J: She's alive.

K: She's alive? How do you know?

J: Saw her leave the house the other day.

K: Guess she really is just weird then. Wonder if she's ever been possessed.

J: Who knows, man. I just need something to do, something to learn. Who says just because I'm dead I can't keep improving.

K: New year, new James?

J: Maybe I'll learn to play an instrument.

K: Where would you get an instrument?

J: Okay... I could teach myself to sing.

K: James. Please don't.

J: Okay... I miss Candi.

K: Me too. Have you texted her lately?

J: Yeah. She's super busy with this internship.

K: Good for her.

J: Very good for her. I just wish... I wish there were anything else to do, other than television.

K: This is the way it is James. This is death. Things keep going, keep moving but you're stuck. I did forty years of it, and I promise it gets easier. You've just gotta learn to be.

J: To be?

K: To be. Cause you're just gonna keep being, it doesn't stop, it doesn't get worse, it doesn't get better. Sometimes something amazing happens, like Candi. But for the most part, it's a lot of this.

J: How do you get there? How do you become okay with just being, when nothing happens?

(KENNY thinks about this.)

K: I don't know. I mean I know how I *did* it... I just kind of went away, turned it all off, didn't think about what was going on around me, what I was missing... that there was a world still spinning without me really on it... if I thought about that stuff, it'd never have stopped hurting. So I shut down. Watched with disinterest. Haunted silently, and never thought about... never thought.

J: I don't think I can do that, compartmentalize like that. I can't just shut myself off.

K: Well that's the part I don't get. How I'm doing it now. I can think about that stuff, all of it and... it's okay. It doesn't hurt the way it used to. I don't have to... compartmentalize, I can just... be.

J: Huh...

K: Hey, when's your birthday?



J: Uh, February second. Why?

K: Just wanted to make sure. I didn't want to miss it.

J: Not much to celebrate, I'm dead. I think that's when you stop counting.

K: No... no I won't have that.

J: What?

K: You're an amazing person and I'm not letting an opportunity to celebrate you pass us by.

J: You're a good friend, you know that Kenny?

K: The best.

J: Do you think Seasonal Affective Disorder still happens when you have no bodily need for vitamin D?

K: Seasonal... what?

J: Nevermind.

(Lights down, then slowly back up on...)

**Scene XIII. MOVING ON**

(KENNY is laying on the floor at the bottom of the staircase. He bolts upright, having just warped back from outside the house, and is disoriented. He stands up and gets his bearings, then looks around at his work. There are balloons and streamers, including a large, "HAPPY BIRTHDAY JAMES," hung about the room behind JAMES, who sits facing the television. JAMES grabs the remote and switches it off.)

J: What the hell have you been doing to make all that noise?

K: Huh? What's up?

J: Kenny. Can I please turn around, it's been two hours.

K: Um, okay! Yes! Go ahead, turn around.

(JAMES turns around to see the birthday decorations.)

J: What... This is amazing. How did you-

K: I possessed the mailman when he was putting mail through the slot... I don't think Candi's updated her address. Uh, don't worry it's all commercial offers and stuff, she's not missing anything important. The mailman's okay too, probably a little confused and way behind on his route... also he paid for the streamers and balloons and... maybe a little dizzy from inflating them... Okay the point is... ta-da! Happy Birthday!

J: Wait, you had another person in here for... hours? Possessed? Just behind my back?

K: Yes, okay yes... but-

J: Kenny this is probably the kindest thing anyone's ever done for me.

K: I just want you to know that you mean a lot to me. I may still look dashing and young but I'm an old, old horse, and you've somehow managed to teach me a few things. Look, when I first watched you choke to death I was mortified James. I hadn't spoken to another soul in forty years, I was so used to being alone, to only having to think or care about myself. I wanted you to spit out that nut, walk out the door and make your date with Amy.

J: It feels so long ago now.

K: It does. You know back then I thought I was fine, that I was just fine to be here alone in this house for eternity. That forty years had made me... I don't know, invincible somehow. But I was just numb, all the time, and I couldn't admit to myself that I was capable of not being fine. I don't know what you did but... it doesn't feel wrong... to say it anymore... that I wasn't... that I'm not fine. I... some fucking year. I just... I care about you, James. A lot. Not like... I mean... Okay. I didn't know I could care about a person this much... and I didn't know I could care for me this much. And... it feels alright. Thank you.

J: Of course Ken.

(KENNY is distracted by some distant sound coming from... the sky? Everywhere?)

J: Is everything okay?

K: Yeah I think I just... realized something. About myself. About things. Do you hear that?

J: I don't hear anything. Kenny? Are you sure you're okay?

K: I am. I really am. My god. You can't hear that? It's beautiful James.

(KENNY stands up and starts frantically, euphorically searching for the source of the noise. It might be bells, or chimes, but he can't shake the feeling that it's something living, breathing and singing.)

K: Would you get the door for me?

J: Yeah. What is it? What's going on?

(JAMES opens the front door and KENNY runs out, looking towards the sky.)

K: It's the most beautiful thing I've ever heard. And it's so loud! It sounds exactly like-

(The door slams shut. When JAMES opens it again, KENNY is gone.)

J: Kenny?

(He looks to the base of the stairs, waiting for KENNY to return.)

J: Bye Roomie.

(He goes and sits on the couch, leaving too much room on the other side. He looks at the empty space, then at the floor, then maybe at the audience. Lights stay up on JAMES, alone now, for a time. Lights go down, and stay down. End of play.)