

little taste of what the case will be like on Court TV.

VOICE 1. (*Chatty, enthusiastic; he's not macho.*) We think it has great potential. We loved the Lorena Bobbitt case. We loved both cases, his and hers, and how juries found both of them innocent. In her trial, she seemed very sweet, like when she cut off his penis, she was just pushed too far, and he was abusive and horrible! And then in his case, he seemed falsely accused, she seemed like a real maniac. And so both of them got off, it was very amusing! (*All three of them laugh.*) It was a real exercise in switching your point of view.

VOICE 2. It really held our attention. And we were thrilled when several months later Lorena Bobbitt was arrested for beating up her mother! She constantly holds our attention.

VOICE 3. We're angry that Andrew Cunanan died and didn't have a trial on television. We weren't ready for his story to be over. We wanted a few more killings and then a long, disgusting trial. We're angry that Michael Jackson's child molestation case was settled out of court. We wanted it on television. We wanted months and months of humiliating, degrading revelations. We wanted to know if his penis is discolored or not. Is it? Is it?

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. I'm sure I don't know.

THE THREE FIGURES. Begin the trial please. (*Loud Court TV-*

THE THREE FIGURES. We are so intrigued by the case of the headless body with the penis in the refrigerator. We want this case to go on Court TV.

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. Oh, what a good idea. And Trudy darling, we'll hire a marvelous attorney who can get you off.

THE THREE FIGURES. We can't wait that long. We want the trial now.

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. But it's the middle of the night.

THE THREE FIGURES. Now. Gratify us now.

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. They're so demanding.

THE THREE FIGURES. Now, now! Court TV now!

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. (*Suddenly oddly willing.*) Alright.

BETTY. Wait a minute. Who are these creatures? Are they aliens? Should we call the police?

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. We can't keep calling the police every time some little thing happens. I mean, we're used to hearing them laugh all day long, now they've just shown up in person.

THE THREE FIGURES. Mrs. Siezmagraff, you are filled with wisdom. We love you!

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. Well, thank you. Now how shall we begin the trial?

BETTY. Well, it won't be binding. There's no judge, no jury, it's not a real trial.

VOICE 3. (*Angry, nasty.*) We know that, Betty! But it will be good practice for the real Court TV trial. And you'd all gone to bed and we had nothing to look at!

BETTY. Okay, okay. Don't be mad.

VOICE 3. Fucking cunt!

VOICE 2. (*Smiles, charming; she's kind of articulate and pleasant much of the time.*) But we don't want to offend you. We just want a

Betty / Trudy

BETTY'S SUMMER VACATION

ACT ONE

Scene 1

Sound of the ocean.

A summer cottage, breezy looking, inexpensive but functional summer furniture. Pleasant, soft colors, inviting.

An upstage door leads in from the front of the cottage. Inside there are a number of doors, leading off to bedrooms — four doors in a cluster, one by itself. (Some of the doors can be implied in an off-stage hallway, if need be.) There is a door off-left that leads to an outdoor deck and the outside.

Primarily a living room, but an open kitchen is also part of it.

A woman, Betty, age 29, comes in with her friend Trudy, age 28. They are carrying suitcases.

BETTY. Wow. This house is great.

TRUDY. Isn't it? I knew you'd like it.

BETTY. *(Going off to look.)* Oh, and it has a great deck. And you can almost see the ocean. *(Comes back inside.)*

TRUDY. I know. It's a comfy house. I love that. It's so great to be out of the city. The pace is so much slower here. Smell the air. There's salt in the air. It's from the ocean. I love the ocean. I am so sick of cement in the city. You smell the air in the city and you smell car exhaust and those fat unhealthy pretzels that those vendors

sell in Midtown. But here, it's all healthy. I can't wait to eat only healthy food. What is tofu exactly? Well, we don't have to eat tofu. We just have to eat vegetables and fish and maybe chicken, but not put butter on anything, well maybe on a piece of bread with some sugar on it, do you ever do that, my mother taught me to do it, isn't it gross, but it gives me energy, gee, I really love the seashore.

BETTY. *(Polite, trying not to offend.)* Trudy, I've told you I hoped you wouldn't talk too much on this vacation.

TRUDY. Really? *(Trudy tries for a few seconds to be quiet. Betty looks around, checking out the various bedrooms. Trudy starts talking again pretty soon.)* What day is today, Saturday? What a long ride it was in the car, traffic really freaks me out, everyone in these cars, trapped, unable to move, did you ever see Fellini's *8½*, that's what happens in the beginning of the movie, but then Marcello Mastroianni, he's so handsome, why aren't there any American men like him, I'd marry them in a minute if they'd have me, but lots of men don't like it if you talk too much, but I could probably have my mouth wired shut, at least if it was Marcello Mastroianni ... anyway, he's in this traffic jam, and nobody's moving at all, and eventually he just rises up and floats up out of the car and it looks like he's escaping the awful traffic jam, but then it turns out someone has attached a rope to his leg, and so he's really still tied to the earth, and it doesn't look like he's going to escape at all.

BETTY. Uh huh. Listening to you is like listening to the radio.

TRUDY. Really, I wonder if I should have a show?

BETTY. Now I want you to practice quiet. Pretend you're a monk or nun or something and you have to follow the Grand Silence. Can you do that?

TRUDY. Sure! Which bedroom should I have? Which one is closest to the sound of the ocean? I love to listen to the ocean.

KEITH. Here goes. *(Keith lights the match. Terrible flash. Sound of enormous explosions. Blackout.)*

Scene 2

Betty

Epilogue.

The beach, moments later. Betty comes running out, in her nightgown.

It's dark on the beach. We hear the sounds of waves, and we hear the sounds of explosions in the background. In the distance, behind the dunes, we see a red and orange glow of the house burning.

Betty is scared and out of breath. She looks back to where the house burning is. Then out front again.

BETTY. *(Speedy, upset; partly to herself, partly to the audience.)* Where am I going to sleep tonight? I don't know why the people in the ceiling let me leave. I don't think I could have saved Mrs. Siezmagraff. I don't feel too guilty about it. I mean, they all seemed really terrible. I feel bad for Trudy, sort of ... but well, I don't know what to think. *(Looks out to the audience; includes them directly now.)* Now, actually, I think I'd like to become a hermit. Or I might become a nun if I could live in a convent in an isolated area with no other people around, and where no one in the convent is allowed to speak ever. I'd like that if it was quiet, and peaceful, and if they didn't care if I believed in God or not. *(Another idea.)* Or maybe I could start my own community where people don't speak. And we'd plant our own food, and we'd watch the birds in the trees. And maybe I'm having a breakdown. *(Holds the sides of her head, as if it might fly apart.)* Or is it a breakthrough? *(Hopeful; another possibility.)* Maybe it's a bad dream I had, and am still having. *(Looks around her.)* But I seem to be on the beach. And the house seems to be smoldering somewhere behind me in the distance. *(Looks behind her; the glow is almost out*

now; the sound of explosions has stopped; we hear the sound of the ocean.) Isn't the sound of the ocean wonderful? *(Calming down slightly.)* What is it about it that sounds so wonderful? But it does. It makes me feel good. It makes me feel connected. *(Realizing what she said before was a little off.)* Well, maybe I don't have to join a convent where they don't speak. Maybe that's over-reacting. But it is hard to be around civilization. I don't like people. But there are nice people, though, aren't there? Yes. I'm sure you're very nice — although I'm just trying to ingratiate myself to you so you don't try to cut any of my body parts off. *(Laughs, then cries.)* Now I'm sad. *(Suddenly looks up, scared.)* Now I'm frightened. *(The emotions pass.)* No, now I'm fine. Listen to the ocean. That's why I wanted to come on this vacation, and have a summer share at the beach. I wanted to hear the ocean. But you know I forgot to listen to it the whole time I was with those people. But I'm going to listen to it now. *(Listens; she and the audience hear the sound of the waves; tension leaves Betty's face and body.)* Oh that's lovely. Yes. Ocean, waves, sand. I'm starting to feel better. *(Betty smiles at the audience. Closes her eyes. Continues to relax her body. Sound of the ocean continues. Lights dim.)*

End of Play

Buck, Trudy

Scene 2

Later that day. Trudy and Buck come in from outside, in wet bathing suits, drying themselves.

TRUDY. Oh, the ocean was so refreshing.

BUCK. Yeah, it was great.

TRUDY. Oh, I love being out of the city. It's so fresh here by the ocean. You know, where life began, with the fish crawling out of the water and developing backbones and then becoming monkeys or dinosaurs and then eventually humans.

BUCK. What? Yeah. You're real pretty, you know that.

TRUDY. Thank you. *(To herself.)* My father always thought so.

BUCK. Well, he was right.

TRUDY. He just died apparently.

BUCK. Really? That's cool. I mean, that's too bad. What do you mean apparently?

TRUDY. Well, Mrs. Siezmagraff told me.

BUCK. Uh huh. Wow, all this talk about the ocean is making me horny.

TRUDY. We weren't talking about the ocean, we were talking about death.

BUCK. Whatever. *(Laughter.)* Shut up!

TRUDY. Were you ever molested by your parents?

BUCK. Is this kind of foreplay talk? Wow, you're kinky.

TRUDY. No, it's not kinky, I'm opening up my soul to you.

BUCK. Don't do that. Open up your bathing suit to me.

TRUDY. It doesn't open up, it comes off. You're a pig.

BUCK. Oink, oink. You wanna brew?

TRUDY. Brew? You mean, beer?

BUCK. Whatever.

TRUDY. Cool, whatever, brew. I hate the way you talk. You're an idiot.

BUCK. I don't care. Let's just have sex, okay?

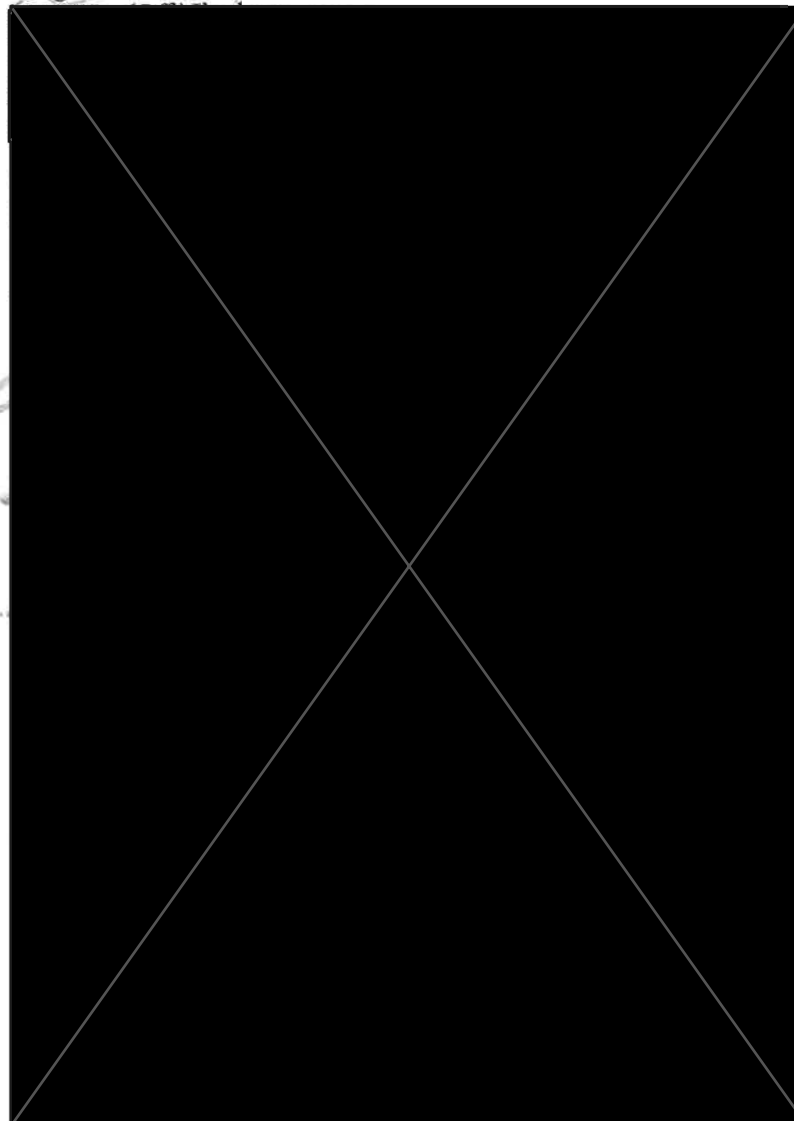
TRUDY. You're just like my father.

BUCK. Wow. Kinky.

TRUDY. It's not kinky, it's pathetic.

BUCK. Whatever turns you on.

TRUDY. Stop saying that. Nothing turns me on. I like Keith more than I like you. He's more sensitive. *(Knocks on Keith's door.)* Keith, do you want to come out and talk for a while. Buck is bothering me.



been so wronged, and her interesting, disturbed friend Keith, who if one of them has to be punished, I think I'll sacrifice him. *(Keith looks worried, but then goes and sits on the side, out of the way.)* Now. My first witness is Trudy Siezmagraff, accused of malicious assault and removing of genitals. *(Trudy sits in the witness chair. Mrs. Siezmagraff stands by her.)* How do you plead?

TRUDY. He raped me.

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. No, no, that's not a plea. Guilty or not guilty.

TRUDY. Guilty.

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. No, dear. We never say guilty. We say not guilty.

TRUDY. Well, I did cut his penis off, didn't I?

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. Darling, it's not your fault. He was raping you. And that was traumatizing. And you were also raped by your father, and both times your mother didn't help you or aid you, and you just had no choice except to cut his penis off. I mean, you did it as a statement, right?

TRUDY. Yes. It was a statement. *(Looks over and checks to see how the jury/Three Figures like this tack.)*

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. You didn't mean it to be irreparable. You intended that it would be sewn back on. Then it would have been fine, just like with Mr. Bobbitt, and he could have even made some pornographic films like Mr. Bobbitt. Right?

TRUDY. That's right. I wanted to teach him a lesson, but I knew they could sew his penis back on.

THE THREE FIGURES. We liked that pornographic movie showing John Bobbitt having sex. We're angry Tom Cruise doesn't show his penis!

BETTY. You know, if I counted the number of times I have heard the word "penis" used today, I could ... well, I don't know what.

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. I'm sorry, are you speaking as the prosecuting attorney, or as Betty?

BETTY. Well, Betty.

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. Well, we don't need to hear from Betty right now.

TRUDY. I'm not guilty. It was an impulse. I thought it could be put back on. I'm not responsible because I had a traumatic childhood.

VOICES 1 and 2. Poor Trudy. We feel sorry for her.

VOICE 3. Bitch, cutting off his dick.

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. Well, it seems to me I'll have to be the defense attorney and defend my darling daughter Trudy, who's

VOICE 2. (*Angry, passionate.*) She was raped. She was upset. She took a knife and did what any normal woman would do.

BETTY. I object.

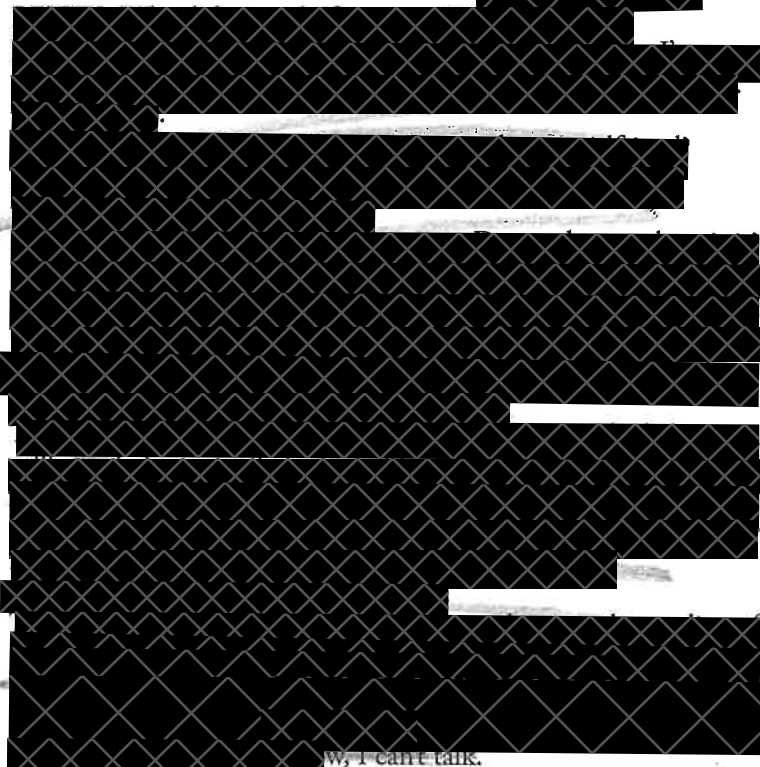
VOICE 2. Well, fuck you!

BETTY. (*Strong, clear-headed again.*) I just have to go on record saying I don't believe you are allowed to do anything you want just because you're upset, or you had a bad childhood. I don't mean to minimize the rape — that is terrible, but there are police and courts and you just don't take justice into your own hands. Look at the lynching of blacks when that was done. Mob rule is a bad thing whether it's done by a group of people, or by one person. Truly, I know it was awful, but you didn't have a right to do what you did. And, Keith, you really didn't have a right to do what you did. (*To everybody.*) We have to agree not to harm one another. That's one of the basic rules of civilization.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

magraff, Trudy, Betty



TRUDY. Why is he so weird? *(Laughter. Enter Mrs. Siezmagraff. She is 45 to 55, a vibrant woman in bright clothes. She has a large sunhat on, and sunglasses.)*

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. Hi, everyone. Isn't the cottage great? Have you chosen your bedrooms yet? I want the smallest one, I shouldn't really even be here, but my husband just died and we lost the house, and I don't really have anywhere else to live but here. Plus I love young people anyway. *(Laughter.)*

BETTY. *(Focused more on Mrs. Siezmagraff than on the laughter right now.)* What?

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. What was that laughter? Did you hear it?

TRUDY. I think it's laughter from a sitcom.

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. Oh. Well, that's alright then. So, are you surprised to see me?

BETTY. Well, yes, I mean, aren't you renting the house to us? Do you mean, you're going to be staying here with us?

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. Yes, isn't it a kick?

TRUDY. We're afraid Keith may be a serial killer.

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. Oh, well, I'll know when I meet him. I'm a very good judge of character, especially men's characters. My husband died of cirrhosis of the liver. Do you think he was an alcoholic? All my friends do. I could never tell. Sometimes he'd beat me, but you know, he was always sorry, so I always forgave him. Forgiving is important, don't you think?

BETTY. I'm sorry. I find that you and Trudy seem to talk similarly. Why is that?

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. Well, she's my daughter.

TRUDY. Oh, Mom, I didn't want anyone to know! *(Trudy slams off to her room. Laughter.)*

BETTY. You're Trudy's mother?

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. Yes. But we don't talk much because her father incested her when he was drunk, and I never did anything about it because I was codependent. I mean, what should I have done? Broken up the family and gone on welfare?

BETTY. Uh huh. You're Trudy's mother?

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. No, not really. Well, yes, but we haven't worked it through yet. She doesn't like to see me.

BETTY. Well, when you said your husband died, why didn't Trudy react?

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. She's very disconnected from her feelings. That's why she talks so much. Even in the cradle. Gee gee gee, ga ga ga. On and on she went, saying absolutely nothing. It was real annoying. We used to leave her alone for hours at a time, and just put this big clicking clock next to her. Wow, I'm starved, is there any food yet?

BETTY. No, we haven't gone to the store yet.

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. Well, when you go, get me about twelve bagels, I eat them all the time, there's no fat in them, you know.

BETTY. Bagels, right. You know, I just thought about something. Haven't you already met Keith? I mean the one you said you'd know if he was a serial killer when you met him. Didn't you meet him when he applied for a share in the house? I thought you met all of us.

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. Yeah, I met him. Which one was he? The big macho one or the sort of sensitive one with the hatbox.

BETTY. He's the one with a hatbox.

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. Oh, I don't think he's a serial killer. Do you?

Does he say he is? It isn't Trudy who thinks he's a killer, is it? She thought her father was a sex pervert, and he wasn't. He was just drunk. So she exaggerates. I don't believe anything Trudy says, she's worthless. *(Calls out toward Trudy's door.)* No, she's wonderful! *(Makes face at Betty — "well, I tried.")* But I think Keith is fine. Don't you? Is he here? *(Knocks on Keith's door.)* Hi Keith. How are you? It's Mrs. Siezmagraff, I'm here to share the summer with you all, isn't that great? Keith? *(Back to Betty.)* Well, he's quiet. Gosh, since I'm here, there'll be one less bedroom. Well, maybe one of the people due to be here will be killed in a car crash. Although traffic was moving very slowly. Maybe there'll be an earthquake. Except we're on the East Coast, not the West Coast. Of course, there are earthquakes on the East Coast.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

BETTY

[REDACTED]

BETTY

[REDACTED]

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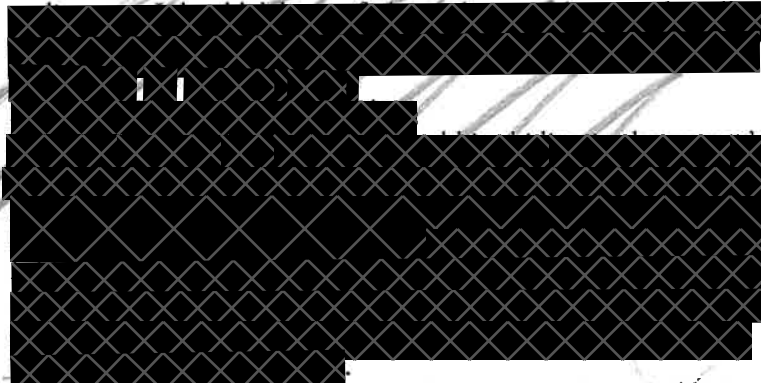
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Mrs. Siezmagraff, Mr. Vanislaw, Betty, Trudy



MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. Really? Well, everyone tells me I have bad taste in men. *(Looks out to deck; happy.)* Oh, here comes Mr. Vanislaw now. Yoo hoo, over here! *(Mr. Vanislaw enters. He is over 40. He is wearing a raincoat and nothing else except sneakers. He is maybe unshaven. Very unsavory.)*

MR. VANISLAW. Hi, there, baby, what's hanging? *(With his back to the audience, he opens up his raincoat and exposes himself to Mrs. Siezmagraff. She seems enchanted. Betty screams in horror. Laughter.)*

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. Oh, Mr. Vanislaw, you're a card. *(Looks closer, near his genital area.)* What an interesting tattoo. Is that the devil? I love where his pitchfork is pointing, it's very playful.

BETTY. Mrs. Siezmagraff, you've brought a derelict into the house. And a sex maniac.

MR. VANISLAW. Look at my dicky! *(He shakes himself at Betty; we still only see his back.)*

BETTY. Really, I can't permit this. Please close your raincoat.

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. Oh, Mr. Vanislaw ... not everyone has a sense of humor, so maybe you better keep your raincoat closed, at least for now. Oh, I want you to meet my daughter. She's taking a nap in her room. Why don't you go in there and introduce yourself to her?

MR. VANISLAW. Alright. *(With energy and purpose, Mr. Vanislaw goes into Trudy's room.)*

BETTY. Mrs. Siezmagraff, I must protest. Have you no sense of what's appropriate? *(Terrible screams from Trudy's room. Trudy comes rushing out, hysterical. Mr. Vanislaw follows behind, redoing his raincoat, laughing.)*

MR. VANISLAW. She didn't like my devil tattoo.

TRUDY. Someone broke into my room!
MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. Trudy, don't exaggerate. No one broke into your room, it wasn't even locked. And this is Mr. Vanislaw, he's our dinner guest.

TRUDY. Are you insane?

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. Why do people ask me that all the time? It's so rude. No, I'm not insane. Do I seem insane to you? And if I was insane, would I necessarily know it? I doubt it. So it's really a meaningless question. Mr. Vanislaw, do you think I'm insane?

MR. VANISLAW. Where's the person with the head in the box?

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. Well, now, we don't know that there's a head in the box. It could just be hats.

MR. VANISLAW. Where is he, where is he? *(Laughter. Mr. Vanislaw briefly notices the laughter, but then focuses on trying to find the room of the person he's been told about. However, he manages to go into all the wrong rooms.)*



TRUDY. Well, you know if I was hungry. I don't suppose there's food here, is there? We probably have to go to the store. I love to go to the supermarkets outside of the city, the aisles are so wide and comfortable, and the check-out people say "thank you" and so on.

BETTY. Yes, we'll have to go shopping. I think I need aspirin. And maybe ear stoppers.

TRUDY. Then you won't be able to hear the ocean. I love hearing the ocean. I'm so glad to be away from the sound of the city. Car alarms. Has a car alarm ever stopped a car from being stolen? I doubt it. It just goes on and on. *(She begins to imitate various car alarms.)* Oooooo-oooo. Oooooooo-ooooo. Waaahhhh-ahhhhh, waaaaaaa-ahhhhh. Wuuuuuu-uuuulp! Wuuuuuu-uuuulp!

BETTY. Why don't you take a nap?

TRUDY. I just got here, I'm too full of energy. *(Looks toward entrance door.)* Oh, look, here comes another roommate, or maybe he's a serial killer, I hope not. *(Enter Keith. He carries a large shovel, and a hatbox, and a suitcase. He's 28 to 32 years old, fairly attractive, dressed in khakis and a plain sports shirt.)*

KEITH. Hi, I'm Keith. Are you Helen and Susie?

TRUDY. No, I'm Trudy, and this is Betty.

BETTY. Hi.

TRUDY. I hope you're not a serial killer, and that shovel's for burying people. And what's in the hatbox? Not a head, I hope. That's another old movie I like, *Night Must Fall*, with Robert Montgomery, he's Elizabeth Montgomery's father from *Bewitched*, isn't it amazing how many children of people in show business go on to have successful careers, like talent is genetic for real, as well as, of course, it opens doors for you if your parent is in show business ... well, he keeps a head in a hatbox for the whole movie, and then you find out that's what he's been doing. Gosh, you look startled. Is it because I've said something outlandish, or is it because you really are a serial killer and you're guilty?

KEITH. *(Looking startled.)* No. I'm not looking startled. Please don't look in the hatbox, it's private. It has ... hats in it. And I go everywhere with a shovel because what if my car gets caught in a snow drift.

TRUDY. But it's summer.

KEITH. Well ... eventually it will be winter again. And plus, my car could get caught in a sand dune.

TRUDY. Uh huh.

TY. Why did you ask if we were Helen and Susie?

ITH. I'm sorry. I meant Betty and Trudy, I guess. I mean, I've never you, I've only met the owner of the cottage, Mrs. Siezmagraff.

TTY. Oh.

UDY. Wow. You're really cute. Do you have a girlfriend?

ITH. I believe in celibacy. *(Trudy stares at him. Silence.)*

TTY. Well, that shut her up.

ITH. I'd like to go to my room now. Do you know where it is?

TTY. We haven't chosen rooms yet. Why don't we go look and see what we want. *(Points.)* There are these four together, and then at one over there by itself. *(Keith kind of bolts over to the room by self, and goes into it, shutting the door behind him. Trudy sits down, unned. She starts to cry.)* What's the matter?

RUDY. I think he's horrible. What does he mean, he believes in elibacy. Is he a monk or something? And what's in the hatbox? And why does he have a shovel? Maybe he really is a serial killer. *(Sound of laughter, like on a television sitcom. Trudy and Betty hear it, and look disoriented.)* Did you just hear something?

BETTY. It sounded like a laugh track.

TRUDY. Oh, God, he's weird ... he's brought a taped recording of people laughing. What's the matter with him? *(Sounds of laughter.)*

BETTY. I don't think it's him. *(Knocks on door.)* Keith, you're not playing a tape of anything, are you?

KEITH. *(Off.)* I'm busy now, I can't talk.

TRUDY. Why is he so weird? *(Laughter. Enter Mrs. Siezmagraff. She is 45 to 55, a vibrant woman in bright clothes. She has a large sunhat on, and sunglasses.)*

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. Hi, everyone. Isn't the cottage great? Have you chosen your bedrooms yet? I want the smallest one, I shouldn't really even be here, but my husband just died and we lost the house, and I don't really have anywhere else to live but here. Plus I love young people anyway. *(Laughter.)*

BETTY. *(Focused more on Mrs. Siezmagraff than on the laughter right now.)* What?

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. What was that laughter? Did you hear it? TRUDY. I think it's laughter from a sitcom.

MRS. SIEZMAGRAFF. Oh. Well, that's alright then. So, are you surprised to see me?

BETTY. Well, yes, I mean, aren't you renting the house to us? Do you mean, you're going to be staying here with us?