

"GRACIE'S GHOST"

A screenplay by

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FADE IN:

EXT. NORMAN AND MIRIAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Gusting winds of an impending storm moves the trees in front of the darkened upscale, two-story house.

Lightning flashes, illuminating a DARK FIGURE dressed in black as it climbs up a trellis on the front of the house, toward a window above. Thunder rumbles.

INT. JENNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A smiley face poster hangs on the wall over the large bed. Stuffed toy animals sit on nearby shelves. The window stands open and wind blows the curtains.

The Dark Figure sits in a chair in the shadows near the bed.

JENNY WILDER (18), girl-next-door pretty, lies asleep in the bed on the side furthest from the window. She wears colorful pajamas and hugs a stuffed toy to her chest.

A flash of lightning outside illuminates the bed. Thunder rumbles and Jenny stirs. She rolls over to face the window. A gust of wind moves her hair. Sleepily she opens her eyes.

A large black RAT sits on the pillow next to her.

Jenny jerks back with a gasp and scrambles out of bed in a panic.

The Dark Figure leans forward. Lightning flashes again, illuminating the pale face and dark lips, eyes and hair of sexy goth chick ZOË (18). She wears black lace and leather.

Jenny stares at Zoë. She slumps with relief.

JENNY

Jesus, Zoë! You scared the hell  
out of me!

ZOË

You're such a chicken, Jenny.  
Fenris wouldn't hurt a fly.

Zoë stands up and goes to pick up the rat, FENRIS. She cuddles him and scratches him behind the ears.

Jenny stares at the rat with a mixture of suspicion and disgust.

JENNY

It's a perfectly rational fear.  
Rats carry the plague and they eat babies.

Zoë smirks.

ZOË

Oh, come on. You know he hasn't given anyone the plague or even eaten a baby in at least two weeks.

JENNY

What are you doing here at this hour?

ZOË

Fenris isn't feeling well. He's listless and isn't eating.

JENNY

So why bring him here? I don't know the first thing about rat medicine.

ZOË

I need to take him to the twenty-four hour vet clinic.

Jenny crosses her arms and sighs.

JENNY

And you need me to take you.

ZOË

Because you're my bestest friend in the world.

Jenny smirks.

JENNY

And I'm your only friend who owns  
a car.

Zoë smiles. Jenny shakes her head.

JENNY

I'm sorry, Zoë, but my Beetle's in  
the shop. It won't be ready until  
tomorrow. I can take you to the  
vet then.

Zoë's smile fades.

ZOË

Noooo ... I can't wait that long  
-- Fenris could be really sick!  
Can't you call your boyfriend and  
have him come over?

JENNY

Marshall? We've only just started  
going out. I can't let him know  
my friends are completely insane  
yet!

ZOË

Okay, then what about your new  
stepdad? He'd be willing to take  
us, wouldn't he?

JENNY

My mom's latest one and only?

She shakes her head.

JENNY

I've known him less than a month,  
but I've already learned he's  
grumpy when woken up in the middle  
of the night.

Zoë growls with exasperation.

ZOË

Your mom, then?

JENNY

You know she doesn't like you,  
Zoë. You scare her.

ZOË

Hmm, that leaves us with only one  
option: we have to borrow one of  
your parents' cars.

JENNY

What?

ZOË

It won't take long. We'll be back  
before they even notice we're  
gone.

Jenny snorts.

JENNY

Like there's any way that's going  
to happen.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

Norman's expensive luxury car drives through heavy rain.

INT. NORMAN'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Jenny drives. She wears her hair in a bouncy ponytail.  
Zoë sits beside her with Fenris on her shoulder. Jenny  
shoots the rat a sullen glare.

JENNY

(mutters)

I'm risking getting grounded for a  
rat with a tummy ache.

Zoë cuddles Fenris and scratches him behind the ear.

ZOË

You really should let him sit on  
your shoulder, you know. If you  
don't keep an open mind and face  
your fears, you could miss out on  
making a new friend.

JENNY

Profound, Zoë. Friends don't tell friends to make friends with scary things.

Zoë frowns at Jenny and looks at Fenris.

ZOË

Pay no attention to her, Fenris. She's just a rataphobe. And she wouldn't know true friendship if it bit her in the ass.

JENNY

Your idea of true friendship is something that bites you in the ass? That explains a lot.

EXT. VETERINARY CLINIC PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Norman's car drives into the parking lot and turns into a parking space. The rain continues to fall.

INT. VETERINARY CLINIC - NIGHT

A bell jingles as Jenny and Zoë hurry into the brightly lit entry room. Jenny closes a dripping umbrella. Zoë holds Fenris close to her chest.

A VETERINARY ASSISTANT behind the desk looks up.

VETERINARY ASSISTANT

Can I help you?

JENNY

There's a sick rat here who needs help. She also has a pet she'd like you to check out.

Zoë shoots Jenny a dark look.

MONTAGE

-- The Veterinary Assistant shows Jenny and Zoë into an examination room.

- A VETERINARIAN uses a stethoscope to examine Fenris on a stainless steel table.
- Back at the front desk, the Veterinary Assistant hands Zoë a credit card receipt to sign.

END MONTAGE

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

The car rushes through the driving rain.

INT. NORMAN'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Jenny drives, her gaze fixed on the blurred, watery view through the windshield. Fenris sits on Zoë's shoulder.

JENNY

I told you it was just an upset stomach. I can't believe you fed him a slice of birthday cake.

Zoë crosses her arms and sulks.

ZOË

Well, it is his birthday.

Jenny shakes her head.

The headlights illuminate a dog as it dashes across the road through the rain. Jenny stamps on the brakes and yanks the steering wheel to the side.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

Tires screech as the car spins out of control.

INT. NORMAN'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Jenny yanks the steering wheel into the turn and the car jerks back under control --

-- a moment too late. A large tree looms up ahead. Jenny stomps on the brakes. She and Zoë scream.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

The car crunches into the tree, buckling the hood. White flashes through the windshield as the airbags deploy.

INT. NORMAN'S CAR (PARKED) - NIGHT

Jenny and Zoë sit motionless in the car, staring ahead with wide, dazed eyes. The deflated airbags hang in front of them.

ZOË

Uh-oh.

Jenny shakes her head to clear it. She looks at Zoë.

JENNY

You okay?

Zoë looks at Fenris clinging to her shoulder.

ZOË

I think we're fine.

JENNY

We're only a couple blocks from your house. Take the umbrella.

ZOË

What are you going to do?

She glances at the buckled hood. Jenny fishes a cell phone from her pocket.

JENNY

I'll call Gracie. She'll know what to do.

ZOË

Your step-grandmother? The one you've never even met before?

Jenny scrolls through the list of numbers on her cell phone.

JENNY

I met her at my mom's and Norman's wedding and she calls me practically every day. She pays more attention to me than my mom does.

ZOË

Why?

Jenny shrugs.

JENNY

I think she misses not having any grandkids of her own.

Jenny pushes a button and holds the cell phone to her ear.

ZOË

Hm. Getting so close to someone she's barely met ain't natural.

She gives Zoë a sideways look.

JENNY

So says the girl whose best friend sits on her shoulder and eats babies.

Zoë rolls her eyes.

JENNY

Go on, get going. No sense in both of us getting into trouble.

Zoë gives her a grateful smile and reaches for the umbrella. She opens the car door and steps out into the rain.

INT. GRACIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

A telephone rings in the dark room.

GRACIE BRIDGES (70s), sweet, frail and frumpy, sits up and switches on a nearby light, revealing a large room with antique furniture.

Gracie sits on the edge of her bed and answers the antique French-style telephone on a bedside table.

INTERCUT - TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

GRACIE

Hello?

Jenny hangs her head and closes her eyes.

JENNY

Hiya, Gracie. It's Jenny. I'm sorry to call you so late, but ...

GRACIE

Jenny! What's wrong?

Jenny winces.

JENNY

I had to borrow Norman's car to help a friend. But ... I hit a tree.

GRACIE

Oh my goodness. Are you all right?

JENNY

Oh, I'm fine. It's just ... Norman doesn't know I borrowed his car.

Gracie smiles sadly and shakes her head.

GRACIE

Oh dear. Well don't you worry. I'll just let Norman know that ... that ...

Gracie grimaces with pain and clutches at her chest. She gasps for air.

She looks toward a prescription bottle of pills sitting on a dresser across the room. She reaches toward them.

The telephone handset slips from her fingers and drops with a thud on the floor. Jenny's voice sounds faint through the receiver.

JENNY (V.O.)

Gracie?

The bottle of pills trembles and then flies through the air directly to Gracie's hand.

Gracie grasps the bottle and desperately fumbles with the childproof cap. Another spasm of pain doubles her over and she grasps her chest again.

The bottle drops from her hand. Pills spill across the floor.

JENNY (V.O.)

Gracie!

Gracie topples out of bed and sprawls on the floor. She lies still, her eyes glazed open and staring at the ceiling.

Jenny's voice sounds like a frightened child's.

JENNY (V.O.)

Grandma?

INT. FUNERAL HOME CHAPEL - DAY

An open casket sits on a stand, surrounded by flowers. Gracie's body lies in the casket.

Jenny's stepfather, NORMAN (50), plain-looking and balding but tall and strong, stands at a podium near the casket, reading a eulogy. A REVEREND stands nearby.

NORMAN

My mother ... she knew her share of hardship. She lost her husband to a drunk driver and had to raise me and my little sister, Katrina, all by herself. Then ... Katrina ran away from home the same day I went into the Navy. My mother ...

(chokes)  
 ... her whole family had  
 dissolved.

A few mostly aging mourners sit in rows of seats facing the casket.

Jenny's mother, MIRIAM (40s), a prim, fading beauty, sits straight-backed in the front row. She sneaks an impatient peek at her watch.

Next to her sits Jenny. She gazes sadly at Gracie.

NORMAN (O.S.)  
 But she was a strong, courageous woman. She never complained. She always seemed content, even happy. She lived alone but she never seemed lonely.

EXT. CEMETERY, GRACIE'S GRAVE - DAY

Beautiful, peaceful and sunny. Birds chirp.

The headstone reads:

"GRACIE BRIDGES  
 1932-2007  
 Cherished and beloved  
 wife and mother"

The reverend and the mourners stand respectfully around the open grave.

REVEREND (O.S.)  
 Although we lay her remains to rest, we should take comfort in the knowledge that her soul has gone to a better place. And that one day we shall meet her again.

The reverend tosses a handful of dirt into the grave.

REVEREND  
 Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

Jenny sobs quietly into a handkerchief.

INT. MIRIAM'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY

Norman drives. Miriam sits beside him with a cell phone to her ear. Jenny sits in the middle of the back seat, gazing sadly ahead with eyes red from crying.

Miriam sighs into the phone.

MIRIAM

All right, then. Bye.

She hangs up and turns to Norman.

MIRIAM

No will or bank account. Just the house, and it's a mess. I thought she received a big settlement from your father's accident.

Norman shrugs and shakes his head.

NORMAN

Don't know what to say, darlin'. She was always giving to charities. Maybe she gave it all away.

Miriam scowls.

MIRIAM

Well, at least I've found a buyer who is interested in your mother's property.

Jenny looks sharply at Miriam.

JENNY

You're selling the place?

MIRIAM

Of course. Why wouldn't we?

JENNY

But Gracie just ... It just  
wouldn't be right, mom.

MIRIAM

Well I'm sorry, Jenny, but the  
buyer made an excellent offer. It  
would be foolish not to take  
advantage of such an opportunity.

JENNY

But ... Norman, you grew up in  
that house!

Norman shrugs.

NORMAN

I really never liked the place.  
In fact I haven't even been back  
there in, what, thirty years?

Jenny grimaces and shakes her head in disbelief.

A ring tone sounds. Jenny pulls a cell phone from her  
purse and answers it.

JENNY

Hey, Zoë.

She listens for a moment, then glances at her watch.

JENNY

Yeah, I'll be ready in half an  
hour.

MIRIAM

(sharp)

Ready for what, Jenny?

Jenny puts her hand over the mouthpiece.

JENNY

Zoë's going to help me look for a  
place to stay this summer.

MIRIAM

You're not going anywhere with  
her, young lady. You're still  
grounded.

JENNY

But --

MIRIAM

Besides, you're living at home  
this summer.

JENNY

What?! Mom, you promised I could  
get my own place!

MIRIAM

That was before you wrecked  
Norman's car.

JENNY

But --

MIRIAM

Your little joyride caused ten  
thousand dollars worth of damage.  
You're not moving out until you've  
paid back every penny.

JENNY

But his insurance --

MIRIAM

-- has nothing to do with it.  
This is about learning  
responsibility and being  
accountable for your actions. You  
should know better, sweetheart.

Jenny grimaces with dismay.

JENNY

(into cell phone)

I can't go today, Zoë. I'm sorry.  
I'll call you later.

She hangs up and throws the cell phone in her purse.

JENNY

All I have in my savings account  
is the four thousand dollars I've  
saved up for college.

MIRIAM

That's a good start. You're almost halfway there.

Jenny stares at Miriam in dismay.

JENNY

You're going to make me use my college money?

MIRIAM

Responsibility and accountability, Jenny.

Jenny closes her eyes and grimaces.

JENNY

How am I going to make ten grand over the summer working at a McJob?

NORMAN

Actually, I can help you there, darlin'. I got a clerical job lined up for you through one of our affiliates. It's probationary -- you gotta show you're a reliable worker -- but the pay's decent.

MIRIAM

Well, what do you say, Jenny?

Jenny slumps in her seat, defeated.

JENNY

Thanks, Norman.

EXT. NORMAN AND MIRIAM'S HOUSE - DAY

Miriam's car pulls into the driveway and parks next to a yellow VW Beetle. Norman, Miriam and Jenny exit and walk toward the front door.

MIRIAM

By the way, Norman, we should probably go by your mother's house this weekend to see if there's anything worth salvaging before they bulldoze the place.

Jenny and Norman stop walking.

JENNY

Bulldoze?!

NORMAN

Bulldoze?

Miriam turns and blinks at them in surprise.

MIRIAM

Well, yes. The buyer plans to build a condo or something.

Jenny shakes her head in dismay. Norman frowns.

NORMAN

I don't know if I like that. Tearing the place down, I mean.

MIRIAM

Why not? You said you don't like the place.

Norman gives her a wry smile and a shrug.

NORMAN

Doesn't mean I think it should be torn down. It's practically an antique. Actually ...

He pauses to think for a moment.

NORMAN

Y'know, if the place was cleaned up some, given some fresh paint, maybe we could find someone interested in restoring it instead of tearing it down. They'd probably pay a lot more for it, too.

He looks at Jenny with an evaluating gaze.

NORMAN

Jenny, you want to pay off that ten grand this summer? Show us you're responsible enough to clean up and take good care of my mother's house, and I'll consider the debt paid.

Jenny's eyes widen.

JENNY

Really?

NORMAN

You wanted to live on your own this summer. This is your chance.

JENNY

Yes! It's a deal!

Norman smiles.

NORMAN

Just don't overdo it. Cleaning, painting, that's it. I don't want you digging up the place and trying to renovate it yourself. Can I trust you to do that?

JENNY

Yes, definitely!

NORMAN

What do you think, Miriam?

Miriam frowns.

MIRIAM

Well, I don't know....

JENNY

Please, mom? I promise I'll behave and take really good care of the place.

Miriam gives Norman a dark look. She shrugs.

MIRIAM

Well, all right. But I still expect you to do well at that clerical job so you can pay for your own living expenses. No mistakes, young lady, or the deal is off. Do we have an understanding?

Jenny grins.

INT. JENNY'S OFFICE - DAY

A large office space filled with cubicles. Employees in business suits hurry about their work.

Jenny, her bouncy ponytail contrasting her business attire, sits at her desk in one cubicle working on a computer. She focuses on a complex spreadsheet and types in a few numbers.

Zoë breezes in, her black makeup, black leather, black lace and combat boots in stark contrast to the button-up business environment. She carries a paper bag.

ZOË

Heya, Jen!

Jenny gives Zoë a brief wave but she continues to concentrate on the spreadsheet.

Zoë pulls up a seat and looks over the spartan cubicle with a dubious frown.

ZOË

Charming. Where do they make you keep your soul during work hours?

JENNY

In little padlocked metal storage boxes in the basement. They're kept down there so you can't hear them wail in anguish.

Zoë chuckles. She raises the bag and shakes it.

ZOË

I brought lunch!

Jenny glances at a clock.

JENNY

At ten fifteen? My lunch hour is between twelve and one.

ZOË

Gah! You work for fascists. You're a writer, Jenny. If you want to become a professional novelist you can't keep normal hours.

JENNY

And I have to be an alcoholic and own at least two cats, yes I know. But if I want to keep this job so I can pay for my own living expenses, I have to take my lunch between twelve and one.

ZOË

What if you're starving to death?

Jenny smiles.

JENNY

I think there's a form I can fill out for that.

Zoë clutches her chest in mock pain. Jenny continues to type.

ZOË

So ... are you still moving into your step-grandmother's place this weekend?

Jenny turns to face Zoë.

JENNY

Yes! Want to help me move in?

ZOË

Can't. Much as I relish the idea of cleaning someone else's house and moving their stuff into it, Mom's making me visit my grandparents.

Jenny gives a wistful sigh.

JENNY

You're lucky you have grandparents.

ZOË

Are you kidding? They live on a sheep ranch in the Australian outback. They don't even have electricity or running water! I'm going to have to put up with that for a whole month!

Jenny stifles a laugh.

JENNY

You on a sheep ranch? What did you do to piss off your mom?

Zoë gives a pained sigh.

ZOË

She says I need more exposure to "cultural diversity."

JENNY

It'll be good for you. I just hope sheep don't scare easily.

Her eyes widen in realization.

JENNY

A whole month? Who am I going to hang out with all that time?

ZOË

What about Marshall? He's gotta be better than sheep.

Jenny smiles grudgingly.

JENNY

True. I'll ask him if he'll help me move in this weekend.

ZOË

Help you? The guy's filthy rich! Get him to hire someone to clean up that ratty house and move you in. Maybe he'll even give you the money to pay off your stepdad.

Jenny smirks.

JENNY

I don't think Mom and Norman would let me get away with that. Speaking of ratty houses, what are you going to do with Fenris while you're gone?

ZOË

Yeah ... about that. I need you do me a favor.

Jenny's eyes widen in dismay.

JENNY

Oh, no....

Zoë smiles.

Jenny's boss, MR. WILSON (50s), overweight, aggressive, steps into the entrance of Jenny's cubicle. He scowls at Zoë.

MR. WILSON

Who's this?

JENNY

Oh, good morning, Mister Wilson. This is Zoë. She's, um, just here to drop off my lunch.

She takes the bag from Zoë.

MR. WILSON

Uh-huh. How do you like the job so far, Jenny?

JENNY

I like it just fine, thanks.

Mr. Wilson gives her a humorless smile.

MR. WILSON

Then get back to work and maybe  
can keep it.

Jenny blanches. She turns to her computer and begins typing as quickly as she can.

Zoë stands and straightens her clothing. She gives Mr. Wilson a forced smile and walks out of the cubicle.

INT. NORMAN AND MIRIAM'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Neat and clean with expensive furniture. A staircase leads up. Several packed cardboard boxes and suitcases sit in a pile near the stairs.

Jenny walks down the stairs carrying a cardboard box. Norman, casually dressed, enters through a doorway.

NORMAN

Oh. Packing already?

Jenny places the box on the pile. She beams at Norman.

JENNY

I'm moving in tomorrow!

NORMAN

Then I guess you'll be needing  
this.

He pulls a key from his pocket and holds it toward Jenny. When she reaches for it, he pulls it back.

NORMAN

Remember, Jenny ... this is a big responsibility. We're letting you stay at my mother's house on the condition that you behave like a responsible adult and take good care of the place.

Jenny rolls her eyes.

JENNY

I'm eighteen, Norman. I'm not a child anymore.

Norman smiles and hands her the key.

NORMAN

Your mother made me promise to remind you. I know you'll do just fine.

Jenny smiles brightly and turns to run back upstairs.

JENNY

Thanks, Norman!

NORMAN

Hey, are you going to need a hand with your stuff?

JENNY

No thanks, Marshall's going to be helping me move in.

Jenny disappears upstairs. Norman thinks for a moment, shrugs, then walks out.

EXT. GRACIE'S STREET - DAY

Gracie's quaint but neglected two-story wood house sits back from the road. Fifty-yard intervals separate the houses in the wooded rural neighborhood.

The mailbox has "Gracie Bridges" stenciled on it.

A bright yellow Volkswagen Beetle pulls up in front of Gracie's house. Suitcases and cardboard boxes fill the car's interior, with more items strapped to the roof rack.

INT. JENNY'S CAR (PARKED) - DAY

Jenny wears casual clothes suitable for cleaning. Fenris sits in a wire cage on the front seat. Jenny gives him a dubious frown.

JENNY

You behave while I'm gone, okay?  
No eating babies.

She opens the car door and climbs out.

EXT. GRACIE'S STREET - DAY

Jenny gazes up at the house and smiles.

An expensive sports car pulls in behind Jenny's car.  
MARSHALL (21), rakishly handsome, climbs out of the sports car. He wears a stylish leather trench coat.

Marshall removes his driving gloves and smiles as he walks over to Jenny. He puts his arm around her and gives her a big kiss on the cheek. He looks up at the house.

MARSHALL

Ratty-looking place, isn't it?

JENNY

Oh, I wouldn't call it that,  
Marshall. I'd call it "rustic."

MARSHALL

Can we settle on "rusty"?

Jenny gives him a lighthearted jab in the ribs with her elbow.

JENNY

Come on, let's take a look.

She heads up the walkway to the house. Marshall follows.

EXT. GRACIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Jenny unlocks the front door. Brass numbers above the door show the address as 496.

INT. GRACIE'S FOYER - DAY

Dimly lit, dusty and untidy. Openings lead to a hallway and a living room. A flight of stairs with worn carpeting leads up.

Jenny peers around with curiosity and walks into the living room. Marshall grimaces and follows.

INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Antique furniture, including couch, coffee table and dining table. Dusty bookshelves stuffed with old books line the walls. Paint peels from the ceiling and one wall. Closed drapes darken the room.

Marshall frowns and shakes his head.

MARSHALL

Are you sure you want to stay here?

JENNY

Of course! It just needs a little sunshine and some cleaning.

Jenny walks over to a window. On the way she steps on a loose floorboard in the middle of the room. The floorboard creaks loudly.

Jenny throws open the drapes. Weak sunlight filters through dirty windows. Dust billows around her. She coughs.

JENNY

See? It's looking better already.

MARSHALL

Oh. Did they redefine the word "better"?

Jenny gives him an exaggerated sideways look.

JENNY

Come on, grumpy, let's take a look at the rest of the place.

She heads toward the kitchen.

INT. GRACIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Dusty, disorderly, with a 1950s look. Paint peels from some of the cabinets.

Jenny opens a few cabinets and looks inside. Marshall opens the refrigerator. He takes a sniff and quickly closes the door.

MARSHALL  
That's a death trap.

Jenny laughs.

JENNY  
I prefer to think of it as a  
cleaning challenge.

She takes his hand and leads him into a hallway.

INT. GRACIE'S DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

An open doorway leads to a laundry room with old  
appliances. A second door stands closed.

Jenny and Marshall enter. They glance into the laundry  
room and approach the closed door. Its frame and lock  
appear solid and strong.

JENNY  
Where do you suppose this goes?

INT. GRACIE'S ROOT CELLAR - SAME

Dark except for some light leaking through a gap under the  
door.

A large brass key protrudes from the door lock. On its  
own, the key turns with a soft click.

INT. GRACIE'S DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - SAME

Jenny tries the doorknob.

JENNY  
It's locked.

MARSHALL  
Oooh, maybe that's where she kept  
her skeletons in the closet.

INT. GRACIE'S FOYER - DAY

Jenny and Marshall climb the wood stairs. The steps creak  
loudly as they walk.

MARSHALL

Oh this is good. It's late at night, and suddenly you hear the stairs creaking and footsteps clomping through the house toward you.

He walks like a lumbering monster, treading heavily to make the creaks sound louder. Jenny chuckles.

MARSHALL

They come around the corner and it's just a pair of shoes with nobody in them!

JENNY

You watch way too many horror movies, Marshall.

INT. GRACIE'S UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

One open door near the stairs and three closed doors at the far end. Another open doorway bisects the hallway into two sections.

Jenny and Marshall approach the first open doorway.

INT. GRACIE'S BATHROOM - DAY

Antique fixtures and an old-fashioned tub with a shower curtain. Mildew smudges the walls.

Jenny and Marshall step into the doorway and look around. Jenny wrinkles her nose with distaste.

JENNY

Looks like the bathroom needs a bath.

MARSHALL

Maybe with a fire hose. Or just a fire.

Jenny rolls her eyes at Marshall. He laughs.

MARSHALL

Seriously, Jen, it's creepy. I can just imagine you getting out of the shower and seeing the words "Get out" scrawled on the fogged mirror.

JENNY

Seriously, Marshall, you need to start renting more comedies.

Marshall laughs.

INT. GRACIE'S UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Jenny opens the first of the three closed doors.

INT. KATRINA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jenny stands in the doorway. Marshall comes up behind her.

JENNY

Oh, my. This must be Katrina's bedroom.

A young girl's room with 30-year-old furnishings. Neatly arranged but dusty. An open book, the pages covered with dust, sits on a small pink desk. An old rag doll lies on the bed.

JENNY

This is --

MARSHALL

Creepy?

Jenny gives him a dark look.

JENNY

I was going to say "touching."

MARSHALL

Can we settle on "touched"?

INT. NORMAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jenny opens the door and looks inside. Marshall stands behind her.

A teenage boy's room with 30-year-old furnishings, including a heavy wood dresser. Also neatly arranged but dusty.

MARSHALL

Norman's old bedroom, I presume.

Jenny gives a sad frown at the preserved moment in time.

JENNY

Gracie must have been so lonely.

Marshall just nods.

INT. GRACIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

The door opens. Jenny and Marshall wander in and look around. Closed curtains. The spilled pills have been cleaned up.

MARSHALL

At least this room isn't as dusty.

JENNY

That's because it's Gracie's room.

She throws open the curtains and looks down from the second floor toward her car. Picturesque trees line the opposite side of the road.

JENNY

Oh, look at the view! I'm going to love sleeping here.

Marshall surveys the room with a dubious frown. He gives a resigned sigh.

He pulls a colorfully wrapped package from under his coat. He dusts off the edge of the bed and takes a seat, placing the present on the bed.

MARSHALL

Here, Jenny, this is for you.  
Consider it my housewarming gift.

Jenny turns and sees the gift. She smiles and shakes her head.

JENNY

Marshall, you didn't have to get me anything.

She walks over to the bed and takes a seat. Marshall shrugs.

MARSHALL

I wanted to. I thought this would be something good for you to have in your new place.

Jenny picks up the gift. She smiles and gazes at Marshall with adoring eyes.

JENNY

You're so sweet.

MARSHALL

Go ahead. Open it.

Jenny carefully unwraps the present, revealing a flat, polished wood box. She flashes Marshall a smile of anticipation and lifts the lid.

A brand new, gleaming revolver lies on a bed of red velvet.

Jenny's smile fades.

MARSHALL

If you're going to be living alone, you need to have some sort of protection. You do know how to use a gun, don't you?

He takes the case from Jenny's hands and picks up the revolver. Jenny stares at him as he cocks the hammer and aims across the room at an imaginary target. He thumbs the hammer down gently and lowers the weapon.

MARSHALL

It's already loaded, so be careful.

He replaces the revolver in the box and closes the lid.

MARSHALL

Keep it close to your bed at all times, okay?

He puts the box into the top drawer of a bedside table. Jenny stares at the drawer in dismay.

JENNY

I don't have a clue how to shoot a gun, Kevin, and --

Marshall's eyes widen and he stiffens.

MARSHALL

Who the hell is Kevin?

JENNY

I mean Marshall, I --

Marshall glares at her.

MARSHALL

That's your old boyfriend's name, isn't it? I just gave you a gift. What the hell kind of thanks is that?

He stands up. Jenny grabs his arm.

JENNY

Wait, I'm sorry, Marshall. Kevin and I used to argue all the time. I guess I'm just used to saying his name whenever I'm upset.

Marshall shrugs off her hand.

MARSHALL

What do you have to be upset about? I just gave you a present, for Christ's sake!

JENNY

I'm sorry, I just ... I didn't expect it to be a gun. I honestly didn't mean to call you Kevin.

Marshall clenches his jaw but the fury in his glare subsides.

MARSHALL

Don't call me that name again.

JENNY

It won't happen again, Marshall.  
I promise. I'm sorry.

Marshall nods and takes a deep breath.

MARSHALL

Okay.

He glances at his watch.

MARSHALL

Well, I need to get going.

JENNY

You're leaving? But ... I thought  
you were going to help me move in.

MARSHALL

Sorry, Jen, but I have an  
appointment in an hour. I'll talk  
to you soon, okay?

He gives Jenny a quick kiss on the cheek, then walks out.  
Jenny watches him go. She sighs.

MONTAGE

- Jenny struggles to carry Fenris's cage and a suitcase from her car to the house.
- Jenny unpacks a cardboard box in the bedroom and places some clothing in an antique dresser drawer.
- Jenny hangs some clothes in an antique armoire. Below the clothes she places some shoes, including a pair of pink bunny slippers. The armoire still contains some of Gracie's clothes and a pair of her old-fashioned shoes.
- Jenny moves the antique telephone to a table in the foyer and hooks up an answering machine.
- Jenny throws open drapes, kicking up dust. She coughs and waves her hand.
- Jenny scrubs a dirty window with soapy water.
- Jenny sweeps the dusty kitchen floor.

-- Jenny holds her nose as she scrubs out the refrigerator with lots of soap and water.

-- Jenny vacuums the living room couch.

END MONTAGE

INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

As Jenny runs a feather duster over the bookcases, she spots a thick leather-bound photo album.

She flips through the photo album and looks over the various pictures of YOUNG GRACIE (40s), a plump brunette; YOUNG NORMAN (18), a rocker with a ponytail; and KATRINA (9), a pretty girl with big, shy eyes.

Jenny removes a recent picture of Gracie from the photo album. She looks at the picture and smiles.

INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

The photo of Gracie now rests inside a tasteful picture frame. Jenny places it on the mantelpiece.

INT. GRACIE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Jenny turns on the water in the shower. Steam billows up. Tired, smudged, sweaty and grimy, Jenny strips off her work clothes.

With a sigh of relief, she steps into the hot stream of water. She lathers her body and face with soap.

THUMP.

Jenny starts at the faint sound. She quickly rinses her face and peeks out from behind the shower curtain.

Nothing. Jenny returns to her washing.

Steam billows throughout the room. The words "Get out" appear in the fogged glass.

Jenny turns off the water. She opens the shower curtain and reaches for a towel. She waves her hand through the steamy air, then steps out of the tub and opens the bathroom door. She towels off as the steam dissipates.

The mirror defogs and the writing fades. When Jenny turns to look at herself in the mirror, the writing has disappeared.

INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The room is clean and livable now, although the wall and ceiling could still use a new paint job.

Jenny sits at the table working on a desktop computer. She wears pajamas and a bathrobe.

The computer screen displays a charity website donation page for hungry children. Jenny frowns and shakes her head in pained sympathy.

She types \$40 in the donation amount field. She picks up a credit card, scrolls down the page and types in her credit card information.

She clicks the Submit button, then sits back and smiles with satisfaction.

INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jenny sits on the comfortable couch, a blanket draped over her lap. She pores over a printout of a novel, crossing out some lines and scribbling notes in the margins with a pencil.

She transfers the page to a pile of already edited pages sitting on the coffee table.

She briefly switches on a miniature voice recorder.

JENNY

(into recorder)

Develop Amelia's background a bit more. Maybe make her more streetwise?

She adds another page to the pile and reads over the next page.

JENNY

(into recorder)

Find out the name of a good,  
really expensive wine. And think  
of something to go with it.

Across the room a closed curtain briefly moves as if  
someone is walking along behind it.

Jenny just barely catches the movement in her peripheral  
vision. She looks up but the curtain has already stopped  
moving.

She turns back to her reading. She crosses out a line.

JENNY

(into recorder)

Check to see whether there really  
was a full moon on that date.

THUMP.

Startled, Jenny looks toward the foyer. She puts down her  
work. She gets up and walks warily into the foyer.

Jenny's pencil floats up off the table. Slowly and  
awkwardly it scratches the words "GET OUT" on the top page  
of the pile Jenny has already edited.

INT. GRACIE'S FOYER - NIGHT

Jenny peers around the foyer. She sees nothing. She  
frowns, shakes her head and returns to the living room.

INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jenny enters. She walks past the coffee table toward the  
kitchen.

She steps on the loose floorboard in the middle of the room  
as she passes. It creaks loudly.

The pencil lies where Jenny left it.

INT. GRACIE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

The room is now neat and clean. The cabinets still need  
repainting.

Fenris sits in his cage on the kitchen table, contentedly munching on some food pellets. A protective sheet of cardboard lies under the cage.

Jenny gives Fenris a suspicious frown as she enters. She pours water into a kettle and places it on the stove. She adds a spoonful of sugar and a teabag to a cup. She places the cup on the counter.

Jenny returns to the living room.

INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jenny crawls back under her blanket. She picks up her novel and continues editing.

INT. GRACIE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

A container of salt on a shelf over the counter topples forward. A stream of salt pours into Jenny's cup for several seconds before trickling to a halt.

INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jenny finishes editing a page and transfers it to the edited pile, covering up the page with "GET OUT" written on it without ever glancing at the message.

The teapot whistles. Jenny gets up.

INT. GRACIE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jenny pours the hot water into the cup. She keeps an eye on Fenris as she idly stirs her tea. She squeezes out the teabag and discards it, then returns to the living room with the cup.

On its own, the door to Fenris's cage slowly opens.

INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jenny slides back under the blanket and resumes editing her novel. She concentrates on a page and takes a sip of tea.

Her eyes go wide and she sprays the tea from her mouth. She stares at the cup.

INT. GRACIE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Frowning, Jenny rinses out her cup in the sink.

She glances at Fenris's cage and does a double-take as she notices the door stands open. Fenris is gone.

Wide-eyed, Jenny peers around the kitchen.

JENNY

Fenris?

THUMP.

She looks up at the ceiling as heavy, muffled footsteps sound from above. They walk steadily toward the stairs: THUMP ... THUMP ... THUMP ...

Jenny's wide-eyed gaze follows the sound of the footsteps. They tromp along the upstairs hallway and down the creaky stairs.

JENNY

(calling)

Whoever you are, I have a gun!

The footsteps walk through the downstairs hallway toward the kitchen. Their pace quickens as they approach.

Jenny looks around in desperation. She pulls open a drawer and picks up a knife. She faces the hallway and holds the knife defensively.

Gracie's old-fashioned shoes stomp into the kitchen ... with nobody in them.

Jenny gapes in horror as the shoes march toward her. She drops the knife, turns and bolts through the swinging door.

INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jenny runs toward the foyer.

The shoes follow her out of the kitchen.

INT. GRACIE'S FOYER - NIGHT

Jenny grabs up her car keys from the table. She runs to the front door and tries to yank it open. It's locked. She struggles to work the lock.

The shoes walk into the foyer and head directly toward her.

Jenny finally yanks the door open.

EXT. GRACIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jenny dashes out the front door and runs down the walkway.

The shoes continue to follow her.

EXT. GRACIE'S STREET - NIGHT

Jenny runs up to her car. She fumbles with her keys and drops them. She scoops them up and tries again. She finds the correct key and opens the lock.

INT. JENNY'S CAR (PARKED/MOVING) - NIGHT

Jenny slides into the driver's seat and slams the door shut. As she struggles to insert the key, she steals a glance out the window.

The shoes continue to approach. They have almost reached the car.

The engine roars to life. Jenny stomps on the accelerator and the car surges away, tires squealing.

EXT. GRACIE'S STREET - NIGHT

Gracie's shoes cease moving and just sit side-by-side on the curb.

INT. NORMAN AND MIRIAM'S FOYER - NIGHT

The doorbell rings. Footsteps thump on wood stairs. The doorbell rings again.

NORMAN (O.S.)  
(sleepy, grumpy)  
Coming! Hold your horses.

Norman shuffles in from the living room in pajamas and a robe, his hair disheveled. He unlocks and opens the door.

Jenny stands outside in her pajamas and robe. Norman comes fully awake.

NORMAN

Jenny? Are you all right?

Jenny fidgets with her robe.

JENNY

Hey, Norman. I'm fine. Sorry to come over so late but ... could I stay the night?

NORMAN

Uh. Of course.

He steps back and opens the door wide.

NORMAN

What happened? Why are you here so late? And in your pajamas!

Jenny enters.

JENNY

I, uh, locked myself out. I went to take out the trash and the door closed behind me. Stupid mistake.

INT. NORMAN AND MIRIAM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jenny enters and Norman follows.

NORMAN

So you drove all the way here?  
How did you even get inside your car?

JENNY

I, uh, keep a hide-a-key under the wheel well. I didn't want to break a window to get into the house and I knew you had extra keys, so ... I decided to come here.

Norman shakes his head and heads for the stairs.

NORMAN

Well, you know where your bedroom is. I'll let Miriam know you're here. And I'll get you another key in the morning.

JENNY

Thanks, Norman. Sorry for waking you up.

Norman grunts and waves a hand dismissively as he climbs the stairs.

INT. NORMAN AND MIRIAM'S KITCHEN - DAY

Large, stylish, sunny, with expensive appliances.

Jenny wears casual clothing. She stares at the wall, lost in thought, as she chews on a piece of toast.

Miriam enters wearing an elegant silk robe and slippers.

MIRIAM

Jenny, you locked yourself out?  
How on earth did you manage that?

She opens the refrigerator and selects ingredients for an omelet. Jenny continues staring at the wall, thinking.

JENNY

'Morning, Mom.

Miriam places the ingredients on the stove and goes about cooking her omelet.

MIRIAM

Honestly, darling, I'm not sure you're ready to be living alone.

Jenny blinks and focuses on Miriam.

JENNY

It was a simple mistake, Mom.  
Anyone could have made it.

MIRIAM

Don't you have an extra key you  
can hide somewhere outside, for  
just this sort of --

NORMAN (O.S.)

She does now.

Norman enters wearing a business suit. He carries a glass jar full of keys.

He selects a key from the jar and hands it to Jenny with a smile.

NORMAN

Here you go, Jenny. I suggest you  
keep that one in your hide-a-key  
too.

JENNY

Thanks, Norman.

She puts the key in her pocket.

JENNY

Oh, by the way, do you have a key  
to the door in the downstairs  
hallway? It's locked.

Norman snaps his gaze toward her.

NORMAN

Why do you want to go in there?

Jenny shrugs.

JENNY

It's the only door I couldn't  
open.

NORMAN

It's locked? Well, that's  
probably for the best.

JENNY

Where does it lead to?

NORMAN

Just an old root cellar. My mother used to store old stuff in there.

JENNY

Old stuff? Like antiques?

Norman shrugs.

NORMAN

Not unless you consider an old Ouija board, a broken TV and my old torn-up teddy bear antiques. My mother hated throwing out even worthless junk.

JENNY

Oh. Well, maybe I should clean it out.

Norman shakes his head.

NORMAN

Best not mess with it. My mother also used to store a bunch of hazardous cleaning supplies in there. Besides, I don't have a key.

JENNY

Oh. Okay.

She puts down the remains of her toast.

JENNY

Well, I'd better get going.

Miriam pauses from cooking omelets to give Jenny a quick kiss on the cheek.

MIRIAM

Don't get locked out again, Jenny, or don't be surprised if I insist you move back home.

Miriam turns away and Jenny gives her a long-suffering grimace.

EXT. GRACIE'S STREET - DAY

Gracie's shoes remain sitting on the curb.

Jenny's car slowly pulls up to the curb on the opposite side of the street.

INT. JENNY'S CAR (PARKED) - DAY

Jenny turns off the engine. She peers warily out the window at Gracie's shoes as she fishes her cell phone out of her purse.

She speed-dials and holds the phone to her ear. She listens for a moment, then slumps in her seat.

JENNY

Zoë, why did you have to go  
somewhere with no cell service?  
C'mon, girl, freaky things are  
happening and I could really use  
the help of a freak!

She hangs up.

EXT. GRACIE'S STREET - DAY

Jenny steps out of her car and stares at Gracie's shoes for a moment. She looks up at the house, then glances over at the nearest neighbor's house 50 yards away.

The face of HENRIETTA (70s) peers out at Jenny from behind a curtain in a downstairs window. The curtain drops back into place and Henrietta disappears from view.

Jenny glances back and forth between the two houses, then she turns and walks toward Henrietta's house.

EXT. HENRIETTA'S HOUSE - DAY

Smaller than Gracie's house, neater and cleaner with a perfect garden.

Jenny rings the doorbell.

The door opens slightly and Henrietta, a neatly dressed old lady with a suspicious face, peers out from behind the door. She wears a small silver crucifix around her neck.

HENRIETTA

Oh, hello. You're the girl who moved in next door, aren't you?

JENNY

Hi. Yes, I moved in yesterday. My name is Jenny.

HENRIETTA

Oh. I'm ... Henrietta.

JENNY

I was hoping you might answer some questions for me.

Henrietta opens the door wider and steps forward to peer at Jenny more closely.

Jenny glances into the room beyond. The place is neat, clean and filled with religious figurines and tacky collectibles.

HENRIETTA

Questions about what?

JENNY

About the woman who used to live in my house. Gracie Bridges. Did you know her?

Henrietta crosses her arms and shifts uncomfortably.

HENRIETTA

Oh. I didn't know her that well. I only ever visited her once. We had tea together.

She gives a slight shudder. Jenny notices.

JENNY

What? Did you see anything ... strange happen?

Henrietta fingers her silver crucifix.

HENRIETTA

No, nothing....

Jenny studies her for a moment.

JENNY

Henrietta, this is really important to me. Did something strange happen when you visited Gracie?

Henrietta gives Jenny a forced smile.

HENRIETTA

Well, I'm awfully busy. It was nice to meet you.

She steps back and starts to close the door.

JENNY

Please, Henrietta. Something happened to me last night that --

Henrietta focuses sharply on Jenny. She opens the door wider and leans forward.

HENRIETTA

What? What happened?

JENNY

I ... heard noises and saw some things move on their own.

Henrietta takes a sharp intake of breath. She reflexively clasps her crucifix.

HENRIETTA

(whispers)

Unholy!

JENNY

What?

Henrietta glares at Jenny with a fierce intensity.

HENRIETTA

I saw her make a cup fly right into her hand!

Jenny's eyes widen.

HENRIETTA

She was touched by the devil! And now she still haunts the place?

Henrietta moves to close the door again.

HENRIETTA

If you know what's good for you,  
you'll leave that place and never  
come back.

She closes the door. Locks click shut.

Jenny stares at the closed door with her mouth open.

EXT. GRACIE'S STREET - DAY

Jenny walks up to her car. She warily eyes Gracie's shoes.

INT. JENNY'S CAR (PARKED/MOVING) - DAY

Jenny slides into the driver's seat and starts her car.  
She takes one last look at the shoes, then drives off.

EXT. MADAM NATALYA'S SHOP - DAY

A small, old-fashioned, house. A sign out front reads:

"Madam Natalya, Psychic."

Jenny's car parks out front. Jenny climbs out.

She frowns at neon signs in the window that read "Fortune  
Telling," "Palm Reading" and "Tarot Reading."

INT. MADAM NATALYA'S SHOP - DAY

Dimly lit and crowded with psychic and occult  
paraphernalia.

A bell above the front door jingles as Jenny enters.

JENNY

Hello?

MADAM NATALYA, 50s, dressed like a gypsy, parts a veil of  
beads as she enters from a back room.

MADAM NATALYA

(strong accent)

Good morning, young lady. I am Madam Natalya. How can I help you? Would you like your fortune told?

JENNY

Oh. No, no thanks. I was wondering if you know anything about, um, ghosts.

MADAM NATALYA

Ghosts?

JENNY

Or whatever can move things around with no visible source.

MADAM NATALYA

Ah, it sounds like you are describing a poltergeist. They are known for making objects float through the air and manifesting noises such as rapping and footsteps.

JENNY

Footsteps?

Madam Natalya nods.

MADAM NATALYA

Footsteps, raps, thumps, knocks....

She gestures toward a small round table with a crystal ball in the center and two chairs. They both sit down.

MADAM NATALYA

Tell me ... why the interest in poltergeists?

Madam Natalya smiles as Jenny fidgets uncomfortably in her seat.

JENNY

Well it's, um, research. I'm writing a novel, you see.

Madam Natalya's smile fades.

MADAM NATALYA

Oh.

JENNY

I hope you don't mind my asking a few questions.

MADAM NATALYA

No, of course not. But I will have to charge you the same price as for a reading. Sixty dollars.

Jenny winces.

JENNY

Oh. Okay.

She reaches into her purse and counts out \$60. Madam Natalya tucks the cash into her bra.

MADAM NATALYA

So, what else can I tell you about poltergeists?

JENNY

Well ... they aren't the only way things can move around without any visible cause, right? What about moving objects with your mind? That's called, um, telekinesis, right?

MADAM NATALYA

It is usually called psychokinesis now. But yes, some people have the ability to influence matter through sheer force of will.

JENNY

Uh-huh. Is there any way to tell whether something is caused by a poltergeist or psychokinesis?

Madam Natalya shrugs.

MADAM NATALYA

In truth, it can be confusing.  
Some poltergeist activity is  
actually caused by persons who are  
unaware they possess psychokinetic  
powers.

JENNY

And can such powers survive after  
death?

Madam Natalya raises an eyebrow.

JENNY

I mean, if a person with  
psychokinetic powers died, could  
she become a poltergeist?

MADAM NATALYA

If there were a reason for her  
spirit to remain behind, then  
certainly. That would be true  
regardless of whether she was  
psychokinetic or not.

She pauses to consider.

MADAM NATALYA

Although I imagine she would  
become quite a strong poltergeist  
indeed!

JENNY

What kind of reason would she need  
to become a poltergeist?

Madam Natalya shrugs.

MADAM NATALYA

Oh, dying a wrongful death, dying  
before a terrible wrong can be  
made right ... some spirits may  
just feel the need to protect a  
particular person or place.

Jenny sits back and nods slowly, deep in thought.

EXT. GRACIE'S STREET - DAY

Jenny's car parks across the street.

Jenny climbs out. She frowns at Gracie's shoes, then up at the house.

A movement beside a trashcan on the curb catches her eye. A large black rat pokes around in the grass.

JENNY

Fenris!

Jenny glances back at Gracie's shoes and then back at the rat. She takes a deep breath.

With a determined stride she walks up to the shoes and picks them up. She walks over to the rat, picks it up and puts it on her shoulder.

Her jaw set, she turns and walks up to the house.

INT. GRACIE'S FOYER - DAY

Jenny enters and puts Gracie's shoes down beside the front door. She places the rat on a table.

JENNY

You stay there.

THUMP.

She looks up at the ceiling.

Muffled footsteps sound from above. They tromp down the upstairs hallway toward the stairs: THUMP ... THUMP ... THUMP ...

Jenny takes a step back, her eyes wide with fear. She takes a deep breath, stands straight and throws back her shoulders.

JENNY

(loud)

I know you're just protecting your home, Gracie!

She pauses and listens. The footsteps continue walking down the hallway.

JENNY

But I'm not an intruder. Don't  
you recognize me? It's me, Jenny!

The footsteps approach the top of the stairs.

JENNY

I'm not going to be scared away!  
I'm part of your family now and  
here to stay, no matter what. But  
I promise to take good care of  
your house.

The footsteps halt just before reaching the stairs.

Jenny eyes the top of the steps. She takes a deep breath  
and slowly climbs the creaky stairs.

INT. GRACIE'S UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Jenny stares at a pair of pink bunny slippers sitting on  
the top step.

JENNY

You were going to try and scare me  
off with those?

She bursts out laughing. She sinks down to sit on the step  
and roars with laughter. She wipes away tears of mirth and  
shakes her head.

JENNY

I'm sorry, Gracie, I couldn't help  
myself.

She looks at the bunny slippers and smiles.

JENNY

I wish we'd spent more time  
together when you were alive. But  
at least your spirit's still here,  
and that's gotta be nearly as  
good.

She looks around.

JENNY

Gracie?

Nothing.

JENNY

Hello?

She stands up.

JENNY

Gracie, please don't go away! I'm  
sorry I laughed!

Still nothing. Jenny gazes around with a puzzled frown. She glances downstairs and sees the rat wandering around the table.

She walks down the stairs and picks up the rat. She puts it on her shoulder.

JENNY

Come on, Fenris, let's get you  
back in your cage.

She walks toward the kitchen.

INT. GRACIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Jenny enters and walks over to the table where Fenris's cage still sits with the door open.

Fenris sits inside his cage nibbling on a food pellet.

Jenny's eyes go wide. Without moving her head, her gaze shifts to the rat on her shoulder.

INT. GRACIE'S KITCHEN - LATER

A brand new rat cage now sits on the kitchen table next to Fenris's cage, with its own sheet of cardboard underneath.

Fenris sniffs through the bars of his cage at the rat sitting in the new cage.

Jenny sits at the table, her chin resting on her hands lying flat on the table. She watches the new rat.

JENNY

Did you escape from a cage too?

She continues to watch the rats wander about their cages.

JENNY

Rats and ghosts sort of go  
together, don't they? Either of  
you know how I can get Gracie to  
talk to me?

She stares off into space for a moment, lost in thought,  
then glances toward the downstairs hallway.

Jenny opens a drawer and pulls out a flashlight.

INT. GRACIE'S DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Jenny switches on the flashlight and kneels before the root  
cellar door. She uses the flashlight to peer into the  
keyhole.

JENNY

(murmurs)

Blocked.

She thinks for a moment, then gets up and returns to the  
kitchen.

INT. GRACIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Jenny rummages around in a drawer and pulls out a long  
skewer. She slides the cardboard sheet out from under  
Fenris's cage.

INT. GRACIE'S DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Jenny kneels in front of the root cellar door. She slides  
the cardboard sheet under the door as far as she can. She  
inserts the skewer into the keyhole and pushes.

From the other side of the door comes the muffled clink of  
a falling metal object.

Jenny withdraws the cardboard. The large brass key lies  
upon it.

Jenny inserts the key and unlocks the door. She pulls and  
the door opens with a loud, dry creak. Old wood steps lead  
down into darkness.

Jenny sniffs the air. She shrugs.

She feels for a light switch and flips it up. A dusty bare bulb dangling from the middle of the ceiling switches on.

Jenny cautiously walks down the stairs.

INT. GRACIE'S ROOT CELLAR - DAY

Boxes, crates and stored household items line most of the walls. Dust and cobwebs cover everything. The floor is packed dirt.

Jenny pokes through various boxes and finds lots of old, broken junk.

She opens a cardboard box and discovers old children's toys. She moves aside a limbless teddy bear and uncovers an old Ouija board set.

She snatches up the Ouija board and heads for the stairs.

INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

The room is dimly lit with the curtains closed.

Jenny sits at the dining table. The Ouija board lies on the table in front of her. She closes her eyes and rests her fingertips on the planchette.

JENNY

Gracie, are you there?

Jenny sits quietly for a moment. The planchette doesn't budge.

JENNY

Speak to me, Gracie, please. Say anything!

Nothing happens. Jenny peeks with one eye.

INT. MADAM NATALYA'S SHOP - DAY

The bell above the front door jingles as Jenny enters.

Madam Natalya sits at the crystal ball table, laying out tarot cards. She looks up.

MADAM NATALYA

Ah, the young lady writing about poltergeists and psychokinesis.

JENNY

Do you have a moment?

Madam Natalya shrugs and gestures to the empty seat across from her.

MADAM NATALYA

What are you researching now?

Jenny takes a seat and leans forward, her gaze intense.

JENNY

Why would a poltergeist go away?

MADAM NATALYA

Go away? You mean cease haunting its home?

Jenny nods. Madam Natalya studies Jenny for a moment.

MADAM NATALYA

You're not really writing a story about a poltergeist, are you?

JENNY

Huh?

MADAM NATALYA

Your home is haunted, am I right?

Jenny shifts uncomfortably.

JENNY

Well ... not anymore.

Madam Natalya raises an eyebrow.

JENNY

There was a poltergeist. The ghost of my step-grandmother.

Madam Natalya's eyes glitter with interest.

MADAM NATALYA

You saw objects moving about on  
their own?

Jenny nods.

JENNY

I heard weird noises, too. And I  
think she poured salt in my  
tea....

MADAM NATALYA

And then the phenomena just  
stopped?

JENNY

Well, she tried to scare me away.  
I explained to her that I'm her  
stepgranddaughter and that I was  
taking care of her house. Then  
all the activity just stopped.  
Nothing's happened since then.

Madam Natalya leans back and studies Jenny.

MADAM NATALYA

It appears you may have exorcised  
the poltergeist all on your own.

JENNY

Huh?

MADAM NATALYA

If she was protecting her house,  
perhaps your saying you were  
family and that you would take  
care of the place made her feel  
she was no longer needed. So she  
moved on.

Jenny slumps, crestfallen.

JENNY

Oh, no.

Madam Natalya blinks.

MADAM NATALYA

You didn't want her to move on?

JENNY

I hardly got the chance to know her before she died. When I realized her spirit still remained I ... well, I kind of hoped we could still get to know each other better.

Madam Natalya raises her eyebrows.

MADAM NATALYA

So you want the poltergeist brought back. That is a new one for me.

JENNY

Is there any way to do that?

Madam Natalya shakes her head.

MADAM NATALYA

Once a poltergeist has moved on, I don't think there is any way to bring it back.

Jenny sighs.

INT. GRACIE'S UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jenny walks out of the bathroom and heads toward Gracie's bedroom. She wears her pajamas and robe.

As she reaches Katrina's bedroom, she pauses to gaze at the closed door. She opens the door.

INT. KATRINA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jenny walks over to Katrina's bed. She picks up the rag doll and looks at it.

INT. GRACIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jenny lies asleep in Gracie's bed. She hugs Katrina's rag doll to her chest.

The rag doll's head turns very slightly.

INT. JENNY'S OFFICE - DAY

Jenny enters information into a spreadsheet on her computer.

The telephone rings, and Jenny answers it.

JENNY

Jenny Wilder speaking.... Oh,  
hiya, Mom.

She continues to work on the spreadsheet as she listens.

JENNY

(mild irritation)

Yes, it's going just fine.  
Everything's cleaned up and I plan  
to start repainting this weekend.

She listens for a moment.

JENNY

Marshall? No, I don't think he'll  
want to help. I called him by my  
ex-boyfriend's name by mistake.

She grimaces and shakes her head.

JENNY

Yeah, I know. He accepted my  
apology but I think he's still mad  
at me.

She listens, then pauses from her work and sits back.

JENNY

Oh, that's a good idea! He's  
never tried my cooking before. I  
think he'll like the pork loin  
recipe. Thanks, Mom, I'll give  
him a call.... Okay, bye.

She hangs up and returns to her work.

Mr. Wilson sticks his head into Jenny's cubicle.

MR. WILSON

Ah, Jenny, I may need you to work  
this weekend.

JENNY

Oh. I was kind of hoping to paint my house then.

Mr. Wilson narrows his eyes.

MR. WILSON

Priorities, Jenny. What's more important, your job or painting your house?

Jenny sighs.

JENNY

My job, of course. I'll come in, Mister Wilson.

Mr. Wilson chuckles.

MR. WILSON

Don't sweat it, Jen. I just need you to be on call in case the Sanders account has to be completed over the weekend. I won't know until sometime Saturday, so I'll call you if I need you to come in.

JENNY

Oh. Okay.

MR. WILSON

So go ahead and paint all you want, but stay near the phone.

JENNY

No problem, Mister Wilson.

EXT. GRACIE'S STREET - DAY

Jenny climbs out of her car. She opens the trunk, revealing a bag of groceries, various painting supplies, wrapping paper and a stylish but inexpensive wristwatch in a plastic box.

She picks up an armload of items and heads up the walkway toward the house.

INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

White sheets cover the furniture and floor. Paper covers windows and wall fixtures, masking-taped in place. Paint rollers, paint trays and buckets of paint sit on the floor. A portable stereo plays loud, upbeat pop music.

Jenny wears coveralls. She runs a long paint roller across a wall.

The telephone rings. Jenny grimaces. She puts down the paint roller and heads for the foyer.

She steps on the loose floorboard in the middle of the room. The creak is barely audible above the music.

INT. GRACIE'S FOYER - SAME

A vase with freshly-cut flowers now sits beside the antique telephone and answering machine.

The telephone finishes its first ring.

On its own, the handset lifts off the cradle and then sets back down, hanging up on the caller.

INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - SAME

Jenny pauses as the next ring fails to come. She shrugs and returns to her painting.

INT. GRACIE'S FOYER - SAME

The handset lifts off the cradle and sets down off to the side.

INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jenny stands on a stepladder. She runs a paint roller across the ceiling. The stereo continues to blare.

INT. GRACIE'S FOYER - DAY

The handset remains lying beside the telephone. A muffled voice recording plays over the line.

## VOICE RECORDING (V.O.)

If you'd like to make a call,  
please hang up and try again. If  
you need help, hang up and then  
dial your operator.

## INT. GRACIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

The rats sleep in their cages as the music continues to play from the other room.

Jenny, a smudge of paint on her face, carefully paints the trim along the cabinets.

## INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jenny turns off the stereo and steps back to look over the finished paint job. She nods with satisfaction.

She replaces covers on the paint cans, gathers up the sheets and peels away the masking-taped paper.

She heads to the kitchen with an armload of torn paper and masking tape.

## INT. GRACIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Jenny stuffs the paper into a garbage bag. It's full. She picks up the bag and heads down the hallway.

## INT. GRACIE'S FOYER - DAY

Jenny's footsteps approach.

The telephone handset lifts itself up and sets itself back on the cradle.

Jenny passes by on her way out the front door. She glances at the telephone. Nothing looks out of place.

## EXT. GRACIE'S HOUSE - DAY

The door swings shut behind Jenny as she walks down the walkway to the trashcan at the curb.

She stuffs the garbage bag into the trashcan.

INT. GRACIE'S FOYER - SAME

The telephone rings three times. The answering machine picks up and Jenny's recorded voice answers.

JENNY (V.O.)

Hiya, this is Jenny! I'm not here right now. Please leave a message and I'll get right back to you.

The answering machine beeps.

MR. WILSON (V.O.)

You spend the whole day yakking on the phone, and when I finally get through you don't even answer? What the hell is wrong with you, Jenny?

EXT. GRACIE'S HOUSE - SAME

As Jenny approaches the house, the trashcan behind her noisily topples off the curb. The lid falls off and trash spills out.

Jenny turns and frowns. She returns to the trashcan and pulls it upright. She picks up the spilled trash and stuffs it back into the can.

INT. GRACIE'S FOYER - SAME

MR. WILSON (V.O.)

You've got one last chance. Call me back by four o'clock today or you're fired. Got that Jenny?  
Fired!

He hangs up.

EXT. GRACIE'S HOUSE - SAME

Jenny heads back toward the house.

INT. GRACIE'S FOYER - SAME

The answering machine blinks to indicate it has a message.

Jenny's footsteps approach.

One of the flowers in the vase beside the answering machine bends down and covers the blinking light.

Jenny enters and walks past the answering machine.

INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jenny sits at the dining table, gift-wrapping the wristwatch. She attaches a bow and admires the results.

She writes on a gift card with elegant handwriting:

"Here's to hoping we get to spend more time together, Kevin."

She does a double-take. She stares in shocked dismay at the word "Kevin."

JENNY

Oh my God, Jenny, are you an idiot or what?

She crumples the card and tosses it into a wastepaper basket. She fills out a fresh card:

"Here's to hoping we get to spend more time together, Marshall." She underlines "Marshall" twice.

She smiles with satisfaction at the card.

The telephone rings.

Jenny slips the card into its envelope and tucks it under the ribbon of the wrapped present. She hurries to the foyer.

INT. GRACIE'S FOYER - DAY

Jenny picks up the telephone.

JENNY

Hello?

She listens and her face lights up.

JENNY

Marshall! I was just thinking about you. I hope you're still on for dinner tonight. I'm moved in and the place is all cleaned up and freshly painted. The only thing missing is you!

She listens, then smiles.

JENNY

Oh, good!

INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - SAME

The envelope tucked into the present flips open. The card slides out and floats into the wastepaper basket.

Jenny's voice travels from the foyer.

JENNY (O.S.)

And ... again, I'm sorry about what happened last time. But don't worry, I promise I'll make it up to you. We're having a pork loin roast. It's my best recipe.

The card with "Kevin" on it floats out of the wastepaper basket. It uncrumples and slides into the envelope.

The envelope closes.

INT. GRACIE'S FOYER - SAME

Jenny continues speaking into the telephone.

JENNY

Okay, see you at eight forty-five. Bye!

She hangs up. Her smile lingers.

JENNY

Good thing Mister Wilson didn't call.

She glances at the answering machine and notices the blinking light. She raises an eyebrow and presses the "Play" button.

MR. WILSON (V.O.)

You spend the whole day yakking on the phone, and when I finally get through you don't even answer? What the hell is wrong with you, Jenny?

Jenny stares at the answering machine in open-mouthed shock.

MR. WILSON (V.O.)

You were supposed to be on call! I didn't get the Sanders account done in time because you weren't available! You've got one last chance. Call me back before five o'clock today or you're fired. Got that Jenny? Fired!

Jenny looks at her watch. The time is 5:15.

JENNY

Oh, no.

She stares numbly at the answering machine. She takes a deep breath and forces a brave smile.

JENNY

I guess my work won't be interfering with my dinner date after all.

INT. GRACIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Jenny puts the finishing touches on a pork loin in a roasting pan. She slides the pan inside the oven.

She sets the temperature to 325 degrees, turns the oven knob to "Bake" and sets the timer for three hours.

Jenny exits the room.

On its own, the oven knob switches from "Bake" to "Off."

INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jenny sits at her computer. The screen displays a charity website donation page for homeless people.

She types \$40 in the amount field. She pauses and sits back.

JENNY

Jenny, what are you thinking? You don't have a job anymore.

She opens a checkbook sitting beside the computer and looks up her balance: \$4,000.

She sighs and backspaces over the amount field.

JENNY

Not until I get a new job.

For a moment she stares at a picture of flood-displaced children on the screen. She then types \$10 in the amount field. She smiles wanly.

She scrolls down the page and starts typing in her credit card information.

A knock sounds at the front door. Jenny gets up and heads toward the foyer.

INT. GRACIE'S FOYER - DAY

Jenny opens the front door. There's no one there.

JENNY

Hello?

She sticks her head out and looks around. No one in sight.

INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - SAME

The computer mouse moves and clicks. The web page scrolls up one screen. The cursor moves to the amount field and highlights the \$10. \$4000 types in its place.

The mouse moves and clicks again. The web page scrolls down one screen. It looks just how Jenny left it.

Jenny returns and sits down. She types in the last of her credit card information. She presses the Submit button.

A "thank you" page appears on the screen. It confirms that she has submitted \$4,000 to help the homeless.

Jenny does a double-take. She chokes and grabs the monitor with both hands.

JENNY

Oh, no ... Oh, no.

She stares helplessly at the screen.

JENNY

What do I do now?

INT. GRACIE'S FOYER - DAY

Jenny holds the telephone to her ear. She nervously chews on a thumbnail.

JENNY

Hiya, Norman. Do you know how one would take back a donation made online? It's, um, research for my novel.

She listens, chewing her lower lip.

JENNY

O-kay. Nevermind, then. Thanks anyway.

Jenny hangs up.

INT. GRACIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Jenny enters. She slouches against the counter, hugging her arms as she stares at nothing. She looks at the rats.

JENNY

What do you think, guys? Should I ask Marshall to lend me some money?

She sighs. She stands straight and takes a deep breath.

JENNY

I'd better make sure this is the  
best damn dinner he's ever had.

Jenny opens the oven door to check on the pork roast.

The meal is completely uncooked.

Jenny's jaw drops with dismay. She checks the oven knobs  
and discovers the oven is off.

JENNY

Oh, no....

INT. GRACIE'S FOYER - DAY

Jenny hurriedly flips through a telephone directory. She  
runs a finger down the page and stops at the number for an  
emergency gourmet catering service.

She dials the number and waits impatiently, staring at the  
ceiling with the handset to her ear.

JENNY

Hello. Would you be able to  
prepare --

On its own, the handset cradle presses down briefly,  
hanging up the telephone.

JENNY

Hello? Hello?

She looks at the handset. She dials the number again and  
waits impatiently.

JENNY

Hello. Would you --

Again the handset cradle presses down and hangs up on her.

Jenny cries out in frustration and slams the handset back  
on its cradle. She hurries into the living room.

INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jenny rifles through her purse on the coffee table. She  
pulls out a cell phone.

She punches in the number of the catering service and holds the phone to her ear.

JENNY

Hello. Can you hear me?

She pauses to listen.

JENNY

Oh good. Look, I'm desperate here. I need to have a pork loin roast dinner delivered tonight. Is there any chance --

She pauses, listening.

JENNY

Oh. Well is there anything else that --

Again she listens.

JENNY

Filet mignon? That'll do fine. How much for two dinners?

She winces at the response, then sighs.

JENNY

All right, fine.

She fishes through her purse for her credit card.

JENNY

The address is four ninety-six Elm Avenue. And can you have it here no later than eight-thirty?

She listens, then sighs with relief.

JENNY

Good. Thank you.

INT. GRACIE'S FOYER - DAY

Jenny dashes up the stairs.

INT. GRACIE'S BATHROOM - DAY

Jenny lathers up in the shower.

EXT. GRACIE'S HOUSE - SAME

The 9 in the 496 above the door rotates around, making the address 466.

INT. GRACIE'S BATHROOM - SUNSET

Jenny stands in a towel before the mirror, blow-drying her hair.

EXT. GRACIE'S STREET - SAME

A catering service van drives up and parks behind Jenny's car.

A portly DELIVERY MAN carrying food delivery boxes and a clipboard climbs out. He heads up the walkway.

EXT. GRACIE'S HOUSE - SAME

The delivery man looks up at the numbers over the front door and then looks at his clipboard. He scowls.

He turns and heads back down the walkway.

EXT. GRACIE'S STREET - SUNSET

The delivery van drives away.

INT. GRACIE'S BEDROOM - SAME

Jenny pulls on a beautiful evening dress. She applies makeup to her face.

EXT. GRACIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jenny stands at the open front door. She checks her watch with a worried frown.

EXT. GRACIE'S STREET - NIGHT

The delivery van drives up and parks behind Jenny's car.

The delivery man steps out with his packages and clipboard. He looks up at the house uncertainly.

EXT. GRACIE'S HOUSE - SAME

Jenny beckons at him.

JENNY  
(calling)  
Yes, you're in the right place!

The man heads up the walkway.

JENNY  
What took you so long? It's eight  
forty-five already!

DELIVERY MAN  
I was here earlier but your  
numbers are messed up.

He points at the numbers over the door. Jenny looks up.

JENNY  
Oh, God.

She reaches up and rotates the 6 back into a 9.

Jenny signs the man's clipboard.

JENNY  
(mutters)  
For once I'm glad Marshall's late.

She collects the packages and hurries back into the house.

EXT. GRACIE'S STREET - NIGHT

The delivery van drives away. A moment later Marshall's car drives up and parks behind Jenny's car.

INT. GRACIE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jenny opens the packages and touches one of the steaks. She groans.

JENNY  
Cold already.

She transfers the steaks to fancy dinner plates. She puts one plate in a microwave oven and turns it on.

She hurries over to the stove and checks several saucepans keeping warm on the burners.

The doorbell rings.

INT. GRACIE'S FOYER - NIGHT

Jenny opens the door. Marshall stands there wearing stylish clothes and a handsome smile.

JENNY  
Marshall! Hello!

She gives him a big kiss. Marshall steps back and looks her over.

MARSHALL  
Damn, you look good, Jenny.

Jenny smiles brightly.

JENNY  
Go ahead and take off your coat.  
Dinner's just a little late.

She starts to go, then turns back.

JENNY  
Oh, and we're having filet mignon.  
I hope that's all right -- the  
pork wasn't, um, right. Let's eat  
first and then I'll give you the  
grand tour.

Marshall watches Jenny walk out. He grins.

MARSHALL  
Looks good to me so far.

Marshall removes his trench coat and hangs it up on a wall coat rack.

He looks down and notices the wrapped gift sitting beside the telephone. He glances toward the kitchen, then opens the envelope and slides out the card. He reads over it, smiling slightly.

His smile disappears and he glares at the card.

MARSHALL

Kevin?

With a snarl of rage, Marshall hurls the gift across the room. It smashes against the wall.

He grabs his coat, throws open the front door and storms outside.

INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The table has been set perfectly with linen tablecloth, napkins and lit candles.

Jenny enters from the kitchen carrying a plate of food.

JENNY

Marshall?

She places the plate on the dining table and heads toward the foyer.

INT. GRACIE'S FOYER - NIGHT

Jenny enters.

JENNY

Marshall?

She sees the damaged gift lying on the floor, and the open front door. Alarmed, she runs to the front door.

She sees Marshall's car roar away with a screech of tires.

EXT. GRACIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jenny runs down to the curb.

JENNY

Marshall!

INT. MARSHALL'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Marshall angrily punches buttons on his cell phone.

INT. GRACIE'S FOYER - NIGHT

The telephone rings and the answering machine picks up:

JENNY (V.O.)

Hiya, this is Jenny! I'm not here  
right now. Please leave a message  
and I'll get right back to you.

Jenny enters the house just as the answering machine beeps.

MARSHALL (V.O.)

I'm not putting up with your two-  
timing bullshit. We're through.  
Got that, bitch?

He hangs up.

Jenny stares at the answering machine in shocked disbelief.  
Her gaze drops to the card lying on the floor.

She picks up the card and sees it's the one with "Kevin" on  
it. She puts her hand to her mouth.

INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jenny stands before a window, facing out toward Henrietta's  
house.

She starts to cry. Her shoulders shake and tears trickle  
down her cheeks.

INT. GRACIE'S BEDROOM - SAME

The drawer in the bedside table slides open. The wood box  
lifts its lid.

The revolver floats out of the drawer. It floats toward  
the bedroom door, muzzle pointed in the direction of  
travel.

INT. GRACIE'S UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUING

The revolver floats down the hallway.

INT. GRACIE'S FOYER - CONTINUING

The revolver floats down the stairs and heads into the living room.

INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUING

The revolver floats up behind Jenny as she continues to cry.

Jenny turns and walks toward the kitchen.

As soon as she steps out of the line of fire, the revolver fires: BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

Jenny screams and falls to the ground, covering her ears.

The bullets blast through the window, shattering the glass.

INT. HENRIETTA'S LIVING ROOM - SAME

Neatly organized and filled with religious figurines and tacky collectibles.

A window shatters. A bullet blows apart a vase. Another bullet blasts a crucifix off a mantelpiece.

Henrietta screams and drops to the floor.

INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - SAME

Jenny scrambles across the floor to get away from the floating revolver.

The gun drops to the floor and lies still.

INT. HENRIETTA'S LIVING ROOM - SAME

Trembling with fear, Henrietta glances out the broken window. She reaches for her telephone and dials 911.

EXT. GRACIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

OFFICER VARGAS and OFFICER SIMMONS escort Jenny out of the house in handcuffs. They walk toward two waiting police cars with flashing lights.

Jenny's makeup is smeared from crying.

JENNY

Wait, you don't understand! I didn't shoot the gun, I swear!

VARGAS

Oh yeah? Then who did shoot it?

JENNY

It was ...

She slumps her shoulders in defeat.

JENNY

I mean I didn't mean to shoot the gun at Henrietta's house. I, uh, saw someone at the window. A burglar, trying to break in. So I fired warning shots.

SIMMONS

Right. We'll check it out but you're still coming with us.

EXT. GRACIE'S STREET - NIGHT

Officer Simmons guides Jenny into the back of a squad car.

INT. POLICE DEPT. HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

A cold, sterile cell.

Jenny sits alone, staring at nothing, her evening dress rumped, her hair mussed, her makeup a smeared mess.

Officer Vargas leads Norman and Miriam to the cell. Miriam sees Jenny and puts her hand to her mouth.

MIRIAM

Oh my God....

VARGAS  
 (to Jenny)  
 Bail's posted.

He unlocks the door and opens it wide.

VARGAS  
 (to Norman and  
 Miriam)  
 She's all yours.

INT. NORMAN'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Jenny sits sullenly in the middle of the back seat. Norman drives and Miriam sits beside him.

Miriam turns and glares at Jenny.

MIRIAM  
 What in the hell were you  
 thinking, Jenny?

NORMAN  
 Calm down, dear.

Miriam glares at Norman.

MIRIAM  
 Calm down? She had a gun, Norman.

She looks back at Jenny.

MIRIAM  
 What in the world were you doing  
 with a gun, Jenny? I thought I  
 taught you better than that!

JENNY  
 (sullen)  
 It was a housewarming gift.

MIRIAM  
 Someone gave you a gun? Why on  
 Earth would anyone do such a  
 stupid thing?

Jenny just shakes her head and looks sadly out the window.

MIRIAM

Well one thing's for certain:  
you're obviously not ready to be  
living on your own.

JENNY

But Mom, I didn't --

NORMAN

Your mother's right, Jenny.

Miriam sits back and crosses her arms.

MIRIAM

I still think we should just sell  
the place.

NORMAN

I agree.

Miriam looks at him, surprised.

MIRIAM

You do?

NORMAN

Yes. Go ahead and let the buyer  
know the place will be available  
on Tuesday.

JENNY

Oh, Norman, please don't --

NORMAN

And Jenny, you're going to start  
packing tonight. I want you  
completely moved out of the house  
by nightfall tomorrow. You've  
really disappointed me.

Tears roll down Jenny's cheeks.

JENNY

Can't you at least give me a  
couple of days? You're not even  
selling the house until Tuesday.

NORMAN

Sunday by nightfall, Jenny. I  
mean it.

(mutters)

First the police, then the press  
and the curiosity seekers ... just  
terrific.

Jenny closes her eyes in anguish.

INT. NORMAN'S CAR (MOVING/PARKED) - LATER

Norman parks behind Jenny's car. He turns in his seat to  
look at Jenny.

NORMAN

I'd better not see your car here  
tomorrow night. I'm serious.

Jenny slowly climbs out of the car.

EXT. GRACIE'S STREET - NIGHT

Norman's car drives off.

Jenny stands on the curb, looking up at the house with  
sullen eyes, red from crying. She sets her jaw.

INT. GRACIE'S FOYER - NIGHT

Jenny storms in through the front door.

JENNY

(loud)

You fired that gun, Gracie! You  
wanted me out of here, and when I  
refused to be scared away you  
sabotaged my life!

She looks around, glaring.

JENNY

(loud)

Well good job, you got your wish!

Her shoulders slump and she struggles to contain her tears.

JENNY

Why did you do it, Grandma? I thought you liked me! All I wanted to do was take care of your house. I wanted to ...

She hugs her arms and looks sadly at the ground.

JENNY

Now Norman's going to sell this place, and it's going to be torn down and replaced with condos. Is that what you really want?

She sighs and turns to go.

JENNY

Good-bye, Gracie.

The front door slams shut in her face. Startled, Jenny steps back.

THUMP.

Jenny glances toward the living room. She slowly turns and follows the sound.

INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jenny walks into the room. She looks at the dining table, still tastefully set for her dinner date except for the candles having burned down. She shakes her head.

JENNY

Why did you have to ruin my relationship with Marshall?

The answering machine in the foyer clicks on.

MARSHALL (V.O.)

I'm not putting up with your two-timing bullshit. We're through. Got that, bitch?

Jenny winces.

JENNY

Okay, maybe it's better that he's gone. But ... you got me fired and gave away all my money. That was my entire college fund!

The loose floorboard in the middle of the room creaks as if someone stepped on it. Jenny looks at it. The floorboard creaks again.

Jenny walks over to the board and cautiously steps on it. It creaks. She kneels down to peer between the floorboards.

She gets up and hurries over to the dining table to fetch a knife. She returns to the loose floorboard and uses the knife to pry it up.

The floorboard clatters to the side, revealing a dark space underneath. Jenny cautiously reaches into the hole.

She pulls out a stack of hundred dollar bills. Wide-eyed, she reaches in again and pulls out several more stacks of money. Then a handful of antique jewelry. Again and again she reaches in, pulling out more and more treasure.

She glances at the growing pile of money and jewelry sitting beside the hole, and shakes her head in disbelief.

Jenny pulls an envelope out of the hole. She opens the flap and removes several pages.

Across the top of the document are the words "Last Will and Testament of Gracie Bridges."

As Jenny reads through the pages, her expression changes to wide-eyed shock.

GRACIE (V.O.)

... and to my stepgranddaughter  
Jenny Wilder I bequeath the house  
and all its contents.

She looks up.

JENNY

Oh wow, is this for real? I'm ...

She struggles for words. She looks back at the will.

JENNY

Thank you, Gracie. Thank you.

A broad smile spreads across her face.

JENNY

I guess I can afford to go to college after all.

She folds the pages and returns them to the envelope. Her smile fades as she thinks.

JENNY

Gracie ... you put me in your will. So why did you do all those mean things to me? I don't understand.

THUD.

Jenny jumps at the sound. She stands and turns to look at the dining table.

The dusty, leather-bound photo album now sits on the table, contrasting against the beautifully arranged table settings.

Jenny approaches and slowly opens the photo album cover. All by themselves, the pages flip ahead.

Startled, Jenny steps back. Her alarm turns to curiosity, and she inches forward to look at the page the photo album has opened to.

The page displays only a single photograph of Katrina. The waif-like girl stares unsmiling into the camera. The handwritten caption "The last picture of Katrina" appears below the picture.

Jenny stares intently at the photo as she takes a seat at the table.

JENNY

Not Gracie ... Katrina.

She looks up.

JENNY

Katrina?

THUMP. Jenny jumps slightly at the loud knock on the table.

JENNY  
Is that a yes?

THUMP.

Jenny stares open-mouthed at the photograph.

JENNY  
Gracie ... Gracie never had psychokinetic powers, did she? That was you helping her all along, wasn't it?

THUMP.

JENNY  
And it was you who messed up my life. Why didn't you want me here, Katrina? Did you think I wouldn't take good care of the house?

She pauses for an answer. Nothing happens. Jenny thinks for a moment, and her eyes widen with realization.

JENNY  
Were you upset that Gracie put me in her will? That she willed the house to me?

After a short pause, she hears a soft thump.

JENNY  
You think the place should have gone to your brother Norman.

No response. Jenny raises an eyebrow.

JENNY  
Not Norman? Who, then? You?

Another soft thump. Jenny gives Katrina's photograph a sad smile.

JENNY

Oh, Katrina. She had to will it  
to someone who's alive, and ...

Her eyes widen in dismay.

JENNY

Oh, no. You didn't run away from  
home, did you? You ... died here.

An extra loud THUMP.

Jenny looks around nervously.

JENNY

Are you still ... here? I mean  
... your remains?

THUMP.

JENNY

Where?

A moment later Jenny hears a faint scraping sound. She  
looks in the direction of the downstairs hallway.

She stands and walks into the foyer.

INT. GRACIE'S DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jenny enters from the foyer. The loud scraping sounds like  
fingernails on wood. Jenny stares wide-eyed at the root  
cellar door.

The scraping stops.

Jenny takes a deep breath and swallows.

JENNY

Your body's buried in the root  
cellar?

THUMP. The knock comes from the root cellar door.

JENNY

What happened, Katrina? Was it an  
accident?

She waits, listening. Nothing happens.

JENNY  
(whispers)  
You were murdered.

THUMP.

JENNY  
Who killed you, Katrina?

Her eyes widen in horror and she shakes her head.

JENNY  
Not Gracie!

She waits but hears no knock. She slumps with relief.

Jenny thinks for a moment, then her eyes widen with realization.

JENNY  
You didn't run away when Norman  
went into the Navy. He ... he  
killed you, didn't he?

THUMP.

Jenny stares at the door.

EXT. GRACIE'S STREET - NIGHT

No moon out. Jenny's car is gone. The house is dark.

A pickup truck approaches. The headlights switch off while still a hundred yards away. The truck quietly pulls up in front of Gracie's house.

Norman steps out of the truck wearing jeans, a T-shirt and work boots. He scans the area as he quietly pushes the truck door closed. He heads to the back of the truck.

Norman lowers the tailgate and picks up a shovel, a plastic garbage bag and a flashlight. He looks around again, then he heads up the walkway to the house.

INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A lock clicks, followed by the sound of a door creaking open.

Norman enters from the foyer. He shines the flashlight around. All Jenny's belongings are gone. The loose floorboard is back in place.

Norman heads for the kitchen.

INT. GRACIE'S DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Norman walks up to the closed root cellar door. He tries the doorknob and finds it locked. He produces a key and unlocks the door. It creaks loudly as he pulls it open.

INT. GRACIE'S ROOT CELLAR - NIGHT

Norman switches on the bare bulb. He turns off the flashlight and tromps down the stairs.

Norman tosses the flashlight and the plastic garbage bag to the side. He heads to the back of the room and begins clearing a pile of crates and cardboard boxes.

He jams the shovel into the newly exposed patch of dirt near the wall and starts digging.

INT. GRACIE'S ROOT CELLAR - LATER

Norman digs in a hole waist-deep and four feet wide. He's stripped off his shirt. Dirt and sweat streak his skin.

The shovel strikes something hard. Norman tosses the shovel to the side. He bends down and starts digging with his bare hands.

He stands and holds up a small, discolored skull.

JENNY (O.S.)

I wondered why you were so  
insistent that I clear out of here  
by nightfall.

Norman looks up, startled. Jenny sits on the top step. She looks at Norman without expression.

JENNY

I know you killed Katrina. I just  
don't know why.

Norman evaluates her, his face an emotionless mask. He places the skull on the root cellar floor.

NORMAN

How did you find out? And who else knows?

Jenny smiles without humor.

JENNY

Tell you what ... you tell me why you killed Katrina and I'll answer both your questions.

Norman wipes dirt off his hands as he warily appraises Jenny.

NORMAN

Fair enough.

He starts to climb out of the hole.

Jenny half stands, preparing to run.

JENNY

Uh-uh, Norman! Stay in the hole or I'm out of here!

Norman pauses. He leans back against the edge of the hole.

NORMAN

Fine.

Jenny eases back down on the step.

JENNY

I'm listening.

NORMAN

All right. After our father died, Katrina was scared to death that I would leave her too. She hung around me all the time, afraid to let me out of her sight. It got kind of irritating.

JENNY

You killed her for that?

NORMAN

No, of course not. But she pushed  
it too far....

INT. NORMAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

Katrina sits on the edge of Norman's bed. She clutches her  
rag doll. Young Norman, his hair in a ponytail, packs an  
open suitcase on the bed. A packed duffel lies nearby.

KATRINA

You can't go, Norman. You could  
get killed!

Norman continues packing.

YOUNG NORMAN

The Navy's the safest branch in  
the military, Katrina. Look, we  
already talked about this. Enough  
already.

Katrina hops off the bed and moves closer to Norman.

KATRINA

But you can't go, Norman! You  
promised to take care of us.

Norman picks up a large cassette deck.

YOUNG NORMAN

I said enough! I'm eighteen now  
and I can do what I want. I'm  
getting out of this Podunk town  
and living my own life. Nobody's  
getting in my way, got that?

He turns away to pack the cassette deck.

KATRINA

I'll tell the police you were the  
one who stole Mister Marconi's  
car.

NORMAN

The hell you will. You know what  
I'd do to you.

KATRINA

Please, Norman! I'll run away!

She grabs Norman's arm, causing the cassette deck to slip from his grasp. It hits the ground with a crash.

YOUNG NORMAN

Damn it, Katrina!

Norman shoves Katrina away from him. She loses her balance and falls.

Her head strikes the corner of the dresser. She drops to the ground, blood welling from her temple. Her eyes roll up and her eyelids flutter. She falls limp.

NORMAN

Oh, shit!

He bends down and feels for a pulse in her neck. He shakes his head.

YOUNG NORMAN

Goddamnit. I can't believe this.

He stares at Katrina for a moment, then pulls the sheet off his bed and wraps it around her body. He throws her over his shoulder.

INT. GRACIE'S ROOT CELLAR - NIGHT

The door opens and Young Norman enters. He closes the door and switches on the light, then inserts the brass key and locks the door. He turns and walks down the stairs.

Norman dumps his wrapped bundle on the dirt floor. A red stain slowly spreads where the sheet presses against Katrina's head.

Norman rummages around in one of the boxes and comes up with a shovel. He moves boxes and crates away the back wall to clear a space.

He begins to dig.

INT. GRACIE'S ROOT CELLAR - LATER

Young Norman stands in a hole more than waist deep and four feet wide. He's now shirtless and his long hair hangs loose, no longer in a ponytail.

Norman tosses the shovel onto a pile of dirt beside the hole and climbs out. He drags Katrina's wrapped body feet-first over to the hole. He dumps her in.

A muffled moan. Startled, Norman looks into the hole.

Katrina's head moves slightly under the sheet.

For a moment Norman just stares at Katrina. Then he scoops up a shovelful of dirt and tosses it over Katrina.

He shovels dirt quickly back into the hole.

INT. GRACIE'S ROOT CELLAR - LATER

The hole is filled in. Young Norman shifts crates and boxes to cover the freshly-turned earth.

BACK TO SCENE

Norman slouches with his arms crossed. He shrugs.

NORMAN

Katrina was always threatening to run away, so everyone assumed she had. The next morning I left for the Navy. I never came back to this house again.

Jenny stares wide-eyed at Norman.

JENNY

Until tonight. You were worried someone would dig up Katrina's remains when they tore the place down.

NORMAN

I figured I'd move the remains someplace else. No sense in letting the cops know I killed my sister.

He grits his teeth.

NORMAN

This wouldn't have been a problem  
if you hadn't shot up the  
neighbor's house.

His eyes narrow as he looks at Jenny.

NORMAN

So ... who else knows about  
Katrina?

JENNY

Just me. But now that's going to  
change.

She opens her hand and reveals her miniature voice  
recorder. She briefly presses rewind, then presses play.

NORMAN (V.O.)

... someplace else. No sense in  
letting the cops know I killed my  
sister.

Jenny presses the stop button. She smiles with grim  
satisfaction.

JENNY

Oh yes, there's sense in letting  
them know.

Norman glares at her for a moment.

NORMAN

Do you think I would have told you  
what I did if it made any  
difference?

He smiles.

NORMAN

You're going to "run away" too,  
Jenny.

He reaches for the shovel as he scrambles out of the hole.

Jenny jumps to her feet and steps back into the hallway.

INT. GRACIE'S DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jenny slams the root cellar door shut as heavy footsteps pound up the stairs on the other side of the door.

She turns the key, locking the door. She steps back.

The door shudders as a heavy weight slams against it from the other side. The doorknob rattles.

JENNY

(loud)

Don't bother, Norman! I made sure  
the lock was strong enough to hold  
you. I knew you'd come after me.

She reaches into her pocket and pulls out her cell phone. She starts dialing.

Norman's shovel smashes right through the door. The door's thin middle section splinters easily.

Startled, Jenny leaps back. She bobbles the cell phone and voice recorder.

The shovel jerks back through the hole in the door, tearing out more wood.

The voice recorder slips from Jenny's fingers. It lands in front of the root cellar door. It clicks on.

NORMAN (V.O.)

This wouldn't have been a problem  
if you hadn't shot up the  
neighbor's house.

As Jenny reaches for the voice recorder, the shovel smashes another hole through the lower half of the door.

The blade almost hits Jenny in the face. She jerks back.

NORMAN (V.O.)

So ... who else knows about  
Katrina?

Norman shoves his way through the door, pushing and kicking the broken wood out of the way.

With a look of dismay, Jenny turns and runs toward the foyer.

Norman steps through the hole in the door.

JENNY (V.O.)

Just me --

Norman's heavy boot heel lands hard on the voice recorder, crushing it to pieces and cutting off Jenny's recording.

He turns and stalks down the hall after Jenny, gripping the shovel with both hands.

INT. GRACIE'S FOYER - NIGHT

Jenny runs to the closed front door and falls against it. She struggles to open it but it won't budge.

She cries out in dismay, and turns and runs for the stairs.

As she runs up the stairs, she begins dialing 911 on her cell phone.

She stumbles and falls near the top step. The cell phone flies from her hand. It bounces off the step and drops through the banister supports.

The cell phone narrowly misses Norman as he steps into view in the hallway below. He looks up at Jenny with a malevolent glare.

Jenny scrambles to her feet.

Norman rounds the banister and starts climbing the steps two at a time.

INT. GRACIE'S UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jenny runs down the hallway. Norman charges up behind her, closing the gap.

The hallway rug bunches in front of Norman. His foot catches on the fold in the rug and he crashes to the floor.

Jenny continues running past the closed bathroom door and through the open doorway bisecting the hallway.

She trips over her own feet and falls.

Norman surges to his feet and accelerates after her.

The door bisecting the hallway moves partly closed, shifting the edge of the door into Norman's path.

Norman's face slams into the edge of the door. He bounces off it and lands on his back. For a moment he lies there, stunned. Blood trickles from one nostril.

Jenny stumbles to her feet and continues running.

Norman shakes his head. He grabs up the shovel and stumbles to his feet.

NORMAN

Enough!

Jenny runs through the only open doorway: the one to Gracie's bedroom.

INT. GRACIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Katrina's rag doll lies on the bed.

Jenny runs to the window and struggles to lift it open ... but it's stuck tight.

She turns, her back pressed against the window.

Norman appears in the doorway. His blood-streaked face turns toward Jenny. He lurches after her, raising the shovel.

Jenny screams.

As Norman passes the bed, the rag doll flies off the bed behind him. The rag doll wraps its arms and legs around Norman's ankles. He trips.

Norman's head smashes against the corner of Gracie's dresser.

He falls to the ground and lies still. His glazed eyes stare unseeing at the ceiling.

Jenny stares at Norman's corpse as she slowly slumps to the floor.

EXT. GRACIE'S STREET - NIGHT

An ambulance and two police cars with flashing lights are parked near Norman's pickup truck.

Two paramedics wheel a body bag on a gurney from the house toward the ambulance.

INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jenny sits on the couch, a blanket around her shoulders.

Officer Simmons sits next to her jotting notes in a notebook. He shakes his head.

SIMMONS

Too bad for Mister Bridges you had to go back for something. But you're lucky to be alive.

Jenny nods.

SIMMONS

Are you going to be okay?

She smiles wanly.

JENNY

I'll be just fine.

Officer Simmons jots another note and stands up.

SIMMONS

I think that's enough for now, ma'am. We'll be in touch if we need you.

JENNY

I'll be here. I'm not going anywhere.

INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Jenny sits on the couch, a blanket draped over her lap. She reads over the printout of her novel, pencil in hand.

The two rats meander about their cages, which sit on a nearby table.

Outside lightning flickers. Thunder rumbles.

EXT. GRACIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Gusting winds of an impending storm moves the trees in front of the house.

Lightning flashes, illuminating a DARK FIGURE dressed in black as it runs up to the front door. Thunder rumbles.

The Dark Figure's black-gloved hands insert lockpicks into the front door's lock.

INT. GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jenny crosses out a line in her manuscript and reads aloud as she writes:

JENNY

"The shards of broken glass  
crunched under her shoes like ..."

She frowns as she thinks.

A bag of potato chips sitting on the coffee table rises up and hangs in the air.

Jenny glances at the bag. She smiles. She turns back to her novel and reads aloud as she adds the last words:

JENNY

"... like potato chips."

She glances at the bag of potato chips and smiles again.

JENNY

Thank you, Katrina.

The Dark Figure strides in from the foyer. Startled, Jenny looks up to see that it's Zoë.

Zoë carries a boomerang and a toy stuffed koala and wears an impish smile.

ZOË

I'm back! Didja miss me?  
Anything exciting happen while I  
was gone?

Her gaze shifts to the bag of potato chips floating in the air. Her grin fades and her eyes widen.

FADE OUT.