



Greg Elsassser

BIG DOG PUBLISHING

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BIG DOG PUBLISHING

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*For Kristie and Jeremy,
who harassed me until I did it.*

SANDORA'S BOX received was first produced at Griffiths Middle School in Downey, CA on January 26, 2001: Greg Elsasser, director.

DR. KEN SANDORA: Eric Adamson

KATHERINE SANDORA: Ashley Johnson

TONY: David Beltran

RICO: Jesus Ramos

FULGA: Lauren Carter

HAYDEE SANDORA: Amanda Boone

CHASE: Jon Casares

RACHEL BRICE: Leah Terrazas

JESSE: Danny Dutch, Jr.

KEVIN: Steven Partnoff

O: Kenny Struble-Searle

MORIAH: Kassie Ballesteros

LAZARO WHITNEY: Greg Nelson

SANDORA'S BOX

FARCE. Dr. Kenneth Sandora hopes that he will become the most promising and successful psychotherapist in the field once word gets out about his new invention—a box that can cure mentally ill people through hypnosis. To launch his new invention, Dr. Sandora has arranged a dinner party in which he has invited a writer from *Psychology Today* to observe the effects of the box on four mental patients: Kevin, who is obsessed with the book, *The Lion the Witch an the Wardrobe*; “O,” an extremely nervous patient who has seen one too many horror films; Rachel, who is so afraid of open spaces that she can only leave her house by sending herself through the mail; and Jesse, who has an extreme case of social anxiety disorder. But when Dr. Sandora’s plans start to unravel, what ensues is an evening of sheer madness!

Performance Time: Approximately 90-120 minutes.

CHARACTERS

(6 m, 7 f)

DR. KEN SANDORA: Psychotherapist; arrogant; wears a colorful suit.

KATHERINE SANDORA: Dr. Sandora's wife; a bit of a doormat; wears a black suit.

TONY: Rico's cousin; wears a chef's outfit.

RICO: Tony's cousin; wears a chef's outfit and a gaudy diamond necklace.

FULGA: Head housekeeper; domineering, authoritarian and has an icy glare; her voice is cold and without emotion.

HAYDEE SANDORA: 17, daughter; sassy, rude.

CHASE: 17, Haydee's current boyfriend; a nice guy.

RACHEL BRICE: Suffers from agoraphobia and roseacea.

JESSE: Suffers from social anxiety disorder.

KEVIN: Obsessive-compulsive.

OMAR "O" LIMON: Suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder and has definitely seen one too many scary movies; carries a backpack.

MORIAH: Chase's friend.

LAZARO WHITNEY: Writer from *Reader's Digest*.

Setting

The dining/living room of the Sandora household in Greenwich, CT. The living room is richly decorated. Up center right is a hallway leading to the front door and other rooms of the house. A small coat closet is up right, its dark-stained door tightly shut. A mammoth rock or brick fireplace sets impressively against the back wall, surrounded on both sides by dark oak bookcases, which go from floor to ceiling. Two glass angels sit atop the impressive fireplace. Center left is a swinging door leading directly to a kitchen. A sofa and an end table sit CS with a matching loveseat at an angle somewhere near it. On the top of the end table is what seems to be an out-of-place small white stereo speaker. It looks like a child might have fashioned it together; it has two buttons and a lot of wires sticking out of the back. There is a large speaker installed in the up left right wall; it's connected to a stereo system somewhere up on the third floor. Finally, an ornate dining room table surrounded by chairs is down left. The room is embellished with dark colors, and this area of the house is filled with costly treasures and furnishings. It is a showpiece for friends, relatives...and salesmen.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Act I: Saturday, 5 p.m. The dining/living room of the Sandora household, Greenwich, CT.

Act II: One hour later. The table is set for dinner.

Act III: A half hour later. The table is reset for dinner.

PROPS

Red tin	Pamphlet
Ashes	Long kitchen knife
Fireplace broom	Hand mixer or eggbeater
4 Suitcases	Small backpack
Small white box (stereo speaker) that has two buttons and a lot of wires sticking out of the back — looks like a child made it.	Ladle
Small white box (stereo speaker) that looks like the above box but is more professional looking.	Expensive looking suit jacket and matching pants, for Rico
Gaudy diamond necklace, for Rico	Can of mace
Blue prints	Bottle of Ranch salad dressing
Music CD	Bottle of Caesar salad dressing
Masks	Bottle of blue cheese salad dressing
Earmuffs	Rubber or stuffed lobster
4 Files	Dinnerware
Bag of groceries	Taser gun
Tablecloth	Eye patches
Hairdryer	Bandage
Bottle of vodka	Chia Pet
Hockey mask	Speaker
Hockey stick	Flashlight
Rollerblades, for Haydee	Toy gun
Huge box, large enough for Rachel to fit in	Cotton balls
Bell	Headband, for Rachel
Copy of <i>The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe</i> by C.S. Lewis	Place cards
	Dishes of food
	Remote control
	Freddy Krueger type knife
	Freddy Krueger type glove
	Napkins
	Sunglasses, for Haydee

Jell-O	Pajamas, for Haydee
Rice cakes	Baseball bat
Rope	Pen
Pez dispenser	Superhero costume and
Pez candy	cape, for Chase
Tray of food	Notebook
Monster costume	Check
Butcher knife	4 Envelopes
Nixon mask	

SOUND EFFECTS

Sound of door slamming shut	"It's Not Unusual" by Tom Jones or another suitable song
Gunshot	
Train	"Whip It" by Devo or another suitable song
Low humming sound	
Police sirens	Watch alarm
Dance music	Scary music
Striptease-type music	"Give Up the Funk" by Parliament or another suitable song

“THEY LOVE it WHEN
I CALL them “NUT JOBS.”
It MAKES them FEEL
LIKE they HAVE PERSONALITIES.”

— DR. SANDORA

Act I

(AT RISE: The dining/living room of the Sandora household, Greenwich, CT. All is quiet. We hear the front door slam shut. Pause. Katherine and Ken Sandora enter. They are both wearing suits – Katherine in all black and Ken in a colorful ensemble. They both seemed strained. Ken carries a red tin and waves it wildly throughout their conversation.)

KEN: That was the last one, Katherine, I swear it!

KATHERINE: I understand, Ken. I hear you.

KEN: No, you don't understand. You hear me, but you don't understand.

KATHERINE: I understand you, and I hear you.

KEN: No, you don't! *(He dramatically waves the tin in the air.)*

Half of my patients wouldn't even need me as long as they do if they'd adhere to some basic listening skills. You know, listening has nothing to do with hearing. *(Katherine tries to interrupt.)* All that whining and crying and carrying on and on and on! The majority of those people just got up there to hear themselves speak, you know.

KATHERINE: What are we talking about now?

KEN: See? There you go. You're not listening to me!

KATHERINE: *(Honestly.)* I'm not listening, or I'm not hearing? Or don't I understand?

KEN: Your subtle sarcasm is an unattractive quality, Katherine.

KATHERINE: But I am...confused, Ken! I really am! You switched conversations on me.

KEN: That was the last one, Katherine, and I mean what I say.

KATHERINE: Our last conversation?

KEN: *(Loses it.)* Funeral! That was my last funeral! You can go by yourself next time! Or take a friend!

(Exasperated, he accidentally drops the tin. She picks up the tin and hands it back to him.)

KATHERINE: You wouldn't have even gone if they hadn't let you speak. Besides, Ken, it isn't as if it were just anybody. This was a relative...it was important that we were both there.

KEN: He was your mother's sister's husband. You didn't even share the same blood. No one should have to attend a funeral where their spouse isn't even of the same blood as the deceased.

KATHERINE: That's true, but I don't think that should have been the opening of your eulogy...

(Ken notices leftover ashes in the fireplace. He walks over, picks up the fireplace broom and begins to sweep up.)

KEN: Nobody would have cared one way or another. And the least they could have done was provide a decent lunch. The Gaspar funeral last month had pheasant! Pheasant's a far cry from cheese and crackers.

KATHERINE: This was all bad timing, I know. You're just stressed, honey. But it's only five. We have three hours to finish up...

KEN: The guests will be here at seven.

KATHERINE: But the writer won't be here until eight. I'm sure your patients can just relax a bit if things aren't ready on time. *(She goes to the small end table by the couch and picks up the small white box.)* Is this ready? Do you need to charge the batteries or plug it in?

(Ken drops the broom, grabs the box from her, and puts it back.)

KEN: Don't touch that dial, Katherine...

KATHERINE: I'm not, I'm not...

KEN: This is just the prototype. I'm still unsure of its total power. I don't need my wife messing around with it.

KATHERINE: I'm sorry, I won't touch it.

KEN: And what's it doing lying around in the open? It should have stayed locked in the cabinet until tonight.

KATHERINE: Well, I told Fulga to put it on the table this afternoon so it would be ready.

KEN: It needs to stay hidden. I wouldn't put it past Wright to put on a Santa outfit and come through the chimney to steal it.

KATHERINE: Oh, but he's been at the funeral all day with us.

(Ken continues to clean the fireplace.)

KEN: I was being sarcastic, Katherine. No, he wouldn't dare come into our house to steal it. I'm sure he employs thugs to do his dirty work.

KATHERINE: You still think he was the one who took your original plans for the box?

KEN: I know he hired someone to do it.

KATHERINE: Well, that's all under the bridge now. After all, you created the box, and you're the one who's going to get the publicity after Mr. Whitney writes his article, and you're the one who's going to help all those people...

KEN: And I'm the one who'll be collecting all the money...if it works.

KATHERINE: Oh, it'll work. It worked on those laboratory monkeys, didn't it?

(Ken notices there is no place to put the swept up ashes, so after a moment, he opens the tin and puts the ashes inside. Katherine grimaces slightly.)

KEN: Yes, but those were simple commands. Who knows what it will do to a whole bunch of nutcases.

KATHERINE: Make sure you don't slip up and say that in front of your patients, Ken.

KEN: Don't lecture me. They love it when I call them "nut jobs." It makes them feel like they have personalities. Now why are we standing here talking? Make sure everyone is ready to go.

KATHERINE: If they're not, the guests can wait in the living room until we finish things up.

KEN: "We?" What are we paying those people in white for? They'd better have things ready by seven—they've had plenty of warning.

KATHERINE: They will, dear. I'll just go check with Fulga.
(*She starts to exit into the kitchen.*)

KEN: Did you notice the way he was acting when we were surrounding the urn?

KATHERINE: Who, darling?

KEN: Eyes all red and puffy...acting as if he personally knew him.

KATHERINE: You mean Wright? Well, he did know Uncle Michael. He became his doctor last month when Dr. Adams retired. We are talking about Dr. Wright, aren't we?

KEN: Last month? No wonder he died. (*He tosses the tin on the couch and sits down next to it.*) In any case, all that over sentiment was very unprofessional.

KATHERINE: He wasn't crying. It was his allergies.

KEN: Allergies? From what?

KATHERINE: Daniela Burrows thought it must have been from the...from the...ashes.

KEN: No one's fault but his own...bending over and peering in like a snoopy neighbor.

KATHERINE: I think that was just Dr. Wright's way of saying goodbye.

KEN: Why would he need to look in anyway? What did he expect to see down there?

KATHERINE: (*Honestly.*) I'm not sure, but I don't think you should have said that out loud either...

KEN: (*Small grin.*) He got a little teed off, didn't he?

KATHERINE: I don't know, I guess he might have been upset...but he wasn't officially there was he, Ken? I mean, unless you believe in spiritual phenomenon.

KEN: I wasn't talking about your Uncle Michael! I was talking about Wright!

KATHERINE: Oh. (*Thinks.*) Perhaps you're a little tired, Ken. Maybe you should lie down awhile before all the activity starts.

(*The kitchen door swings open and Tony enters dressed in chef attire.*)

TONY: Excuse me, I didn't mean to interrupt —

KEN: Who are you?

TONY: I'm Tony. I'm the culinary artist for the evening.

KATHERINE: Oh, that's right.

KEN: Where's Alberto and Lucas?

KATHERINE: They had other plans tonight. I forgot to tell you.

KEN: They've known about this for weeks!

KATHERINE: Yes, but apparently they got a once-in-a-lifetime job tonight, and they said they couldn't pass it up.

KEN: They're fired.

KATHERINE: That's fine. They also said you could fire them if you wanted to.

KEN: What kind of "once-in-a-lifetime job" would they take and jeopardize their jobs here?

KATHERINE: I don't know...

KEN: After 10 years you would expect... (*Thinks.*) ...this smells like Wright.

KATHERINE: What do you mean?

KEN: Getting rid of my only cooks on the night I need them most. Sounds like sabotage to me...

TONY: Should I come back at another time?

KEN: No! Who hired you?

TONY: A woman named....I think her name was, Foolga?

KATHERINE: Oh, Fulga. That's our head housekeeper.

TONY: She called my agency.

KEN: Where's the other chef?

TONY: Please, sir, if you don't mind, we prefer, "culinary artists."

KEN: Where's the other cook?

TONY: My cousin, Rico. He has not arrived as of yet.

KEN: Let me know when he gets here. I want to debrief the both of you at the same time.

TONY: Debrief, sir?

KEN: You need to understand the importance of this evening. It's bad enough I have to break in two new servants on a night like this.

TONY: You have nothing to worry about, sir. We've completed our schooling at Dubrulle International Culinary and Hotel Institute of Canada.

KEN: So what you're saying is you have a license to cook at The Howard Johnson's?

TONY: Well, not exactly...

KEN: Comforting. I'm going to lie down for a while.

KATHERINE: Oh, that's a good idea. I'll come up and get you an aspirin.

KEN: *(To Tony.)* You get started with or without your partner.

KATHERINE: *(To Tony.)* If you need anything, just find Fulga. She's probably in one of the rooms making up the beds.

KEN: Speaking of that, where's that bell I bought?

KATHERINE: It's in the kitchen, dear. I'll get it later.

KEN: Did you go over the bell rules with the staff yet?

KATHERINE: Not yet, but I...

KEN: We've purchased a brass bell for this evening. Whenever you hear it, you come running like Pavlov's dogs.

KATHERINE: Let's go lay down, Ken. I'll explain the bell situation to Fulga and the rest of the staff before the guests arrive.

KEN: Fine. I have a tremendous headache. *(He hands the red tin to Katherine.)* Here. Take your uncle's ashes and put them somewhere outside this house. I don't want to see them ever again. *(He exits.)*

KATHERINE: Here, um...Mr....um?

TONY: You can call me Tony, ma'am.

KATHERINE: Would you please put this...somewhere out of the way. I'll find some place to put it later.

TONY: Do they need to be refrigerated?

KATHERINE: Oh, no, nothing like that. Just put them somewhere where Dr. Sandora won't find them.

(She exits out the hallway. Tony just shrugs and heads for the kitchen. But before he goes, he spots the white speaker-like box on the end table. He goes to it and gingerly picks it up to take a closer look. When his back is turned, the closet door behind him slowly opens. Rico tiptoes out and stands right behind Tony. Rico wears a chef's outfit and a gaudy diamond necklace. Rico taps Tony on the shoulder and Tony jumps up, nearly dropping the box.)

TONY: What the —

RICO: Hey, cousin. Scared you, huh?

TONY: What are you trying to do, give me a heart attack? I almost dropped this thing!

RICO: Is this his box?

TONY: It looks like a piece of crap. Wires all sticking out...

RICO: Wanna try it out first?

TONY: No! I shouldn't even be touching it. *(He puts it back.)*

Where were you? *(He looks back at the closet.)* Were you hiding in the closet this whole time?

RICO: Yeah, I got here a couple of hours ago and went through the whole plan, but they got home a little earlier than I expected, so I had to hide in the closet.

(Tony grabs his heart.)

TONY: Jeesh, you got my mitro valve prolapse acting up.
Where's your box and the rest of the stuff?

(Rico goes back to the closet, bends down, and picks up a small suitcase.)

RICO: It's all here. *(He opens up the suitcase.)*

TONY: Let me check. I don't want you messing everything up.

(Rico shows Tony the items from the suitcase while naming them off one by one.)

RICO: Blueprints, music, masks, earmuffs...

TONY: Where's Wright's box?

RICO: Here. *(He pulls out a similar looking box, but this one is put together more professionally.)* I like this one better.

TONY: Yeah, but they both work the same. Where are the copies of the patient charts?

(Rico fiddles in the upper partition of the suitcase.)

RICO: Right here.

TONY: Four files, right?

RICO: Four patients, four files.

TONY: And you've been reviewing them? *(Tony takes one of the files and leafs through it.)*

RICO: I've memorized them. I got them from Dr. Wright on Monday, and since last night, it's all up here. *(He points to his head.)*

TONY: What is an "O"?

RICO: That would be Omar Limon, patient number 61971. His friends and family call him "O". Twenty-two years old and has been a patient of the doctor's for only six months. *(Throughout the following lines, Tony looks through the other three files.)* PTSD patient.

(Tony checks his pulse at the neck.)

TONY: And that would be?

RICO: Post-traumatic stress disorder. This one's really strange. Apparently, Mr. Limon has seen "one too many scary movies" in his lifetime. Swears he started watching horror movies after "Romper Room" refused to call out "Omar" in the magic mirror.

(Tony grabs his heart again.)

TONY: Wow, I can feel my arterial wall thickening from the stress. *(Back to the charts.)* What else?

RICO: Apparently it got to him one day. He had just finished watching Stephen King's "Christine," and Mom found him an hour later laying under her Mercedes claiming the thing had gotten pissed off and backed right over him. Mom brought him to Dr. Sandora's office within three hours. They would have been there sooner, but Omar made them take bikes.

TONY: I can't believe he has so many young people taking part in his experiment.

RICO: I think that's part of the reason why Dr. Wright is so upset.

TONY: Upset? What are you talking about? I thought he just wanted to see how the box works.

RICO: Oh, yeah, I'm sure that's really what this is all about.

TONY: What are you hiding from me?

RICO: Nothing. *(Tony looks at him.)* Nothing! I was just doing my own thinking.

TONY: God help us. *(Pause.)* Now you're going to help me with the cooking until it's time for you to do your job. What's your basic plan for the closet?

RICO: I put the earmuffs on, pull them in one at a time, and put them under hypnosis. Simple.

TONY: How are you going to distract the doctor so you can get at the patients?

RICO: Don't even think about it. You do the cooking. I've gone over the plan for a week now. I have a whole script written out with endless possibilities written and rehearsed. When does Dr. Wright pay us?

TONY: He dropped off the first half this morning on his way out to some funeral.

RICO: And the rest?

TONY: Tonight after the job is done. Of course, I have no idea how he's going to know if we did anything or not.

RICO: Because when I got here, I installed a listening device under the couch and a small camera in that heating vent up there. He'll be in a van across the street listening and watching the whole time.

TONY: Not a very good move. I think Sandora's already suspecting Wright as it is. If he finds out, I'll have another heart attack for sure.

RICO: Tony, stop talking about heart attacks! That was built up gas and you know it. You're 28 years old...you're not going to have a heart attack. And if Sandora does find out Wright stole his idea and hired us to biff it all up for him, who cares? We'll be carrying our cash and flying out of the city. *(Thinks.)* Hey, did you tell them we graduated from that culinary school in Canada? *(Tony nods.)* Such a nice touch!

(The kitchen door opens and Fulga enters.)

FULGA: Are you the caterers?

TONY: Actually, we prefer —

FULGA: Why are you in the dining room?

RICO: Who are you?

FULGA: My name is none of your business.

RICO: First or last?

TONY: We are the caterers, yes, and I was just going over the evening's agenda with my colleague here. I'm Tony and this is —

FULGA: Your names are none of my business, either.

RICO: Well, we certainly seem to have a lot in common!

TONY: Rico, shut up.

FULGA: *(Calmly, but an underlying threat.)* Listen to me, I suggest you get yourselves into the kitchen and begin the dinner.

RICO: But it's just a suggestion, right?

TONY: *(Steps in.)* We were just planning on it. Come on, Rico, let's get started.

FULGA: It's all laid out in the refrigerator. The lobster is still in the tank. Take it out only when you are ready to boil it.

RICO: *(Dropping his attitude.)* Lobster?

FULGA: You can make lobster, can't you?

(Tony pulls Rico along toward the kitchen.)

TONY: Yes, we can. We'll be starting now.

RICO: I can't boil a...

(They exit into the kitchen. Fulga exits into the kitchen after them as Katherine enters from the hallway.)

KATHERINE: Fulga?

(As Katherine heads toward the kitchen, Fulga enters carrying a bag of groceries. She holds a tablecloth under her arm.)

FULGA: What?

KATHERINE: There you are.

(Fulga hands Katherine the groceries.)

FULGA: Here.

KATHERINE: What's this?

FULGA: Groceries. I put the bill in the drawer next to the sink. I used Dr. Sandora's American Express. You should put the stuff away. Those caterers have no idea where anything goes.

KATHERINE: I thought I had already done the shopping for this evening.

FULGA: I bought some food I actually like eating. Is that a problem?

KATHERINE: Oh, no!

FULGA: (*Looks into the bag.*) What's the old adage, "You should never go shopping when you're hungry?" After this shopping trip, I've definitely learned my lesson.

(*Katherine pulls out a few of the items.*)

KATHERINE: But you bought a hairdryer and vodka...

FULGA: So what you're saying is that I'm only allowed to buy necessities for you and your family, correct?

KATHERINE: Oh, no, you're misunderstanding!

FULGA: Am I? (*She starts putting the tablecloth on the table.*) I see how it is in this household. You'd better hurry and put all that away in my room.

KATHERINE: All right. (*Tentatively.*) Is everything ready for this evening?

FULGA: I don't know. Did I say everything would be ready by five?

KATHERINE: (*Slowly.*) Yes...

FULGA: And what time is it now?

KATHERINE: Just after five.

FULGA: So, what do you think?

KATHERINE: I just wanted to be sure...

FULGA: How long have I worked for you, Mrs. Sandora?

KATHERINE: I think it was 10 years last...January?

FULGA: Eleven. Have I ever not had things ready when the doctor put in a request?

KATHERINE: Actually, no.

FULGA: Why should tonight be any different?

KATHERINE: Oh, it's not, it's not! I just thought that maybe you might need my help —

FULGA: Your help? When was the last time you ever lifted a finger to help out in this house?

KATHERINE: Well, you never let me help.

FULGA: That's right, Mrs. Sandora. I've never let you touch any part of this house, and I'm not about to begin now.

KATHERINE: I'm sorry, Fulga. I just thought that maybe for once I could —

FULGA: Even if I let you, you wouldn't have any idea how to run this household. I have picked out every single piece of wallpaper, made every carpet and rug decision, and put all the trinkets on the hundreds of shelves in this house. In reality, this is more my house than yours, so why don't you go back to your husband, and let me finish up in here, yes?

KATHERINE: *(Defeated.)* Yes, that's a good idea. Let me know if...well, I'll be down later. *(Katherine opens the door as Haydee enters followed by Chase. Haydee is wearing Rollerblades and carrying a hockey mask and a stick. During the conversation, she throws the mask and stick into the closet and takes her Rollerblades off.)* Did you have a nice time with the boys, Haydee?

HAYDEE: Mother, I want Jonathan fired.

KATHERINE: Why's that?

HAYDEE: Because I specifically told him not to... *(She looks over at Chase.)* ...answer...to let...to open... *(Throws her hands up.)* I am so tired of lying all time to avoid hurting people's feelings. I told Jonathan directly not to let Chase in. And now look.

KATHERINE: Oh, so this is Chase.

CHASE: Yes, ma'am.

KATHERINE: Haydee has told us so...little about you.

HAYDEE: Mother, weren't you leaving when I came in?

KATHERINE: Oh, yes, I have to go and get your father some aspirin.

HAYDEE: Then why don't you go do just that?

KATHERINE: Yes, I think I will. It was nice meeting you, Chasen.

CHASE: Same here, Mrs. Sandora.

KATHERINE: Haydee, don't forget, your father wants you here for dinner tonight.

HAYDEE: I know, Mother. *(She shuts the door in Katherine's face.)*

CHASE: Can we talk now?

HAYDEE: I don't know what else there is to say, Chase. I think I pretty much covered it.

CHASE: But why now? I thought everything was going good.

HAYDEE: I didn't say things were going poorly, Chase. I just feel like I need to move on. You seem more like a brother to me than a boyfriend.

CHASE: I am so tired of hearing that. I have enough sisters to start a convent.

HAYDEE: Are you chastising me because of my feelings? How am I at fault because I feel the way I do?

CHASE: Now you sound like your father.

HAYDEE: How would you know? You've never met my father.

CHASE: Well, I know his type. *(He looks over at Fulga.)* Can't we go somewhere where we have some privacy?

(Haydee looks over at Fulga as well.)

HAYDEE: Why? She'll just stand outside the door and eavesdrop.

CHASE: Can't you just give the skinny straight to me? None of this brother/sister bit...I want the real reasons why you don't want to see me anymore.

HAYDEE: I told you why, Chase. I told you the truth.

CHASE: You sent me a fax, Haydee. How could someone break up with a person by fax?

HAYDEE: You make me sound so insensitive. I'm not the one who doesn't have an email address, Chase.

(Chase pulls out the fax.)

CHASE: This was the worst fax I've ever gotten.

HAYDEE: That's because your father has one of the oldest fax machines I've ever seen. I'll bet money he bought it in '95.

CHASE: I didn't mean the quality of the fax itself. Let me ask you this...are you leaving me for another guy?

HAYDEE: What? No! What are you talking about?

CHASE: *(Reads fax.)* "Dear Chase: Have you wondered why I haven't returned your calls lately? It's because I've decided I needed some spike."

HAYDEE: *(Without even looking at the fax.)* That's "space," Chasen. Space. I need some space. What did I tell you about your father's fax machine?

(Chase thinks.)

CHASE: Oh, I guess there's no one named Jake either, huh?

HAYDEE: No, that would be "break." I need a break.

(Pause.)

CHASE: And...Jacob? That would be "break-[up]" –

HAYDEE: Chase, stop, please.

CHASE: Okay, I'm sorry.

HAYDEE: The fact is I don't have to give you a reason for this. I don't even need a reason for myself. I just don't want to be with you anymore.

CHASE: But I don't accept that. If you have to end things, then fine. But I have to know.

HAYDEE: I told you there is no reason.

CHASE: There has to be a reason.

HAYDEE: There is no reason.

CHASE: There has to be a reason.

HAYDEE: There *is* no reason.

CHASE: There *has* to be a—

HAYDEE: Okay, you're a Clark Kent without the Superman,
Chase!

(Pause.)

CHASE: Is that the real reason?

HAYDEE: *(Screams.)* Chase!

CHASE: Okay, okay. What does that mean? What does
"Clark Kent without the Superman" mean exactly?

HAYDEE: I can't explain it.

CHASE: Yes, you can.

HAYDEE: No, I can't.

CHASE: Yes, you can.

HAYDEE: No, I...in layman's terms, it means you're a wimp,
and you have no self-esteem, and you let me walk all over
you.

CHASE: Yeah, so?

HAYDEE: Well, I hate that! I hate always telling you how to
dress, how to act, and how to speak. It was fun at first, but
you're just so bad at taking orders. Dating you is a very
frustrating part of my life, Chase. I can't get frustrated so
early on in my life. It causes wrinkles.

CHASE: I can change.

HAYDEE: No, you can't. Remember when we tried to put a
leather jacket on you and slicked your hair back? People
still call you "The Fonz."

CHASE: That was kinda cool.

HAYDEE: Not for me, Chase.

CHASE: Well, I can't help being who I am! Your expectations
are too high! You'll never find a Superman!

HAYDEE: I want a guy who knows what he's doing – who's confident! Who knows what he wants and goes for it!

CHASE: You mean you want someone like you?

HAYDEE: If I do, it's my prerogative.

(Chase shrugs his shoulders.)

CHASE: So I'm not a Superman, more like Clark Kent...

HAYDEE: Yes, but not the Dean Cain type of Clark Kent.

You're more like the Christopher Reeves' Clark.

CHASE: Great, now I have to run out and rent Superman so I can understand what you're talking about.

HAYDEE: I'd say I'm sorry, Chase, but I think I already have.

FULGA: Excuse me!

HAYDEE: *(Notices Fulga.)* Yes, Fulga?

FULGA: How can I possibly eavesdrop if you two don't speak up?

HAYDEE: Oh, sorry about that. We'll try harder.

FULGA: Thank you.

CHASE: *(Ignores them.)* Let me prove to you I can be like Superman. You want someone to come in and whisk you off your feet? Well, let me do it! Let me jump through your walls, and grab you, and fly you away, fighting bad guys all the way!

HAYDEE: Chase, I play roller hockey on a regular basis with 15 college guys. You come near my house anymore and you will know what death-by-puck is really all about. It's over.

CHASE: But –

HAYDEE: Chase, you have five seconds to go before I let the dogs out. Or Fulga over there. You pick.

CHASE: All right, I'm leaving...

(He gets up. Haydee follows him to the living room door.)

HAYDEE: It's for the best, Chase.

CHASE: Maybe your best.

(Haydee goes to shake hands with him.)

HAYDEE: Goodbye, Chase. It's been, well, it's been...an experience. *(She slams the door in his face. She recovers her composure and goes to Fulga.)* Fulga, if he is caught within 20 feet of the property, I want you to use the mace and the taser again, all right?

FULGA: Looking forward to it.

(Ken enters from the kitchen.)

HAYDEE: Hi, Ken.

KEN: I can't find any aspirin, and I can't find your mother. Do you have pain medication?

HAYDEE: Not the type that would do you any good.

(Katherine enters from the living room door.)

KATHERINE: There you are, Ken. There's a package for you at the front door. UPS brought it and I signed for it.

KEN: Why didn't you bring it in?

KATHERINE: It's a huge appliance box. Are you expecting a new refrigerator or something?

KEN: No, I'm not. Have Jonathan bring it in.

HAYDEE: He can't.

KEN: Why not?

HAYDEE: I fired him.

KEN: Aah, Haydee, not again!

HAYDEE: Trust me, Ken, he needed to go.

KEN: For the last time, would you stop calling me "Ken"? *(There is a knocking sound at the living room door. Ken opens the door to find a huge box standing in the hallway.)* How did this get here?

RACHEL: *(From inside the box.)* Some lady picked me up at the door and dropped me off here!

HAYDEE: Who is that?

(Rachel opens the top of the box and looks out at everyone.)

RACHEL: Hi, I'm Rachel. I'm one of the experimentalists.

KEN: I wondered how you were going to get here.

KATHERINE: You came all this way in a box?

RACHEL: I had UPS deliver me. I put in the delivery early because you never know if they're running behind. That's why I'm already here.

KEN: This is Rachel Brice. She's the agoraphobic I've been telling you all about.

HAYDEE: Aah, now I remember!

KATHERINE: Oh, now, Ken, you've embarrassed her, talking about her like that.

RACHEL: Oh, I'm not embarrassed!

HAYDEE: Yeah, you have. Look, her cheeks are all red.

KEN: No, no, no. She has roseacea.

HAYDEE: Oh. *(She gets it.)* Oh...

(Rachel gets out of the box and brings out a suitcase.)

RACHEL: The agoraphobia is almost gone. Dr. Sandora has helped me reach the point where I'm not afraid to leave my own house. I just can't deal with open spaces quite yet, hence the UPS delivery. I'm sorry I'm so early.

KEN: Not a problem. Katherine, why don't you take Rachel upstairs and get her settled? Take her the back way—it's less open.

KATHERINE: All right. *(She takes Rachel's suitcase.)* Right this way.

(Rachel and Katherine exit through the kitchen door.)

HAYDEE: And I'm going up to my room to relax my face.

KEN: Dinner's at eight. Don't forget.

HAYDEE: I won't, Ken. *(She exits.)*

KEN: And stop calling me— *(Fulga enters from the kitchen door.)* Fulga, did anyone tell you about the bell system for the evening?

FULGA: *(Her eyebrow is raised threateningly.)* Bell system?

KEN: Yes, it's just for tonight. I want to be able to reach all of you whenever I may need you. See, we bought this bell, and if I ring it twice, well, that means it is summoning you. If I ring it three times, that means I want the head cook. If I ring it four times, I want the assistant cook.

(Haydee pops her head in.)

HAYDEE: Someone's at the door.

KEN: Why don't you answer it?

HAYDEE: *(Laughs.)* Yeah, right. *(She exits.)*

KEN: *(To Fulga.)* I tell you what...you get the door, I'll get the bell.

(Fulga glares at him and exits through the living room door. The kitchen door opens, and Tony enters holding the bell.)

TONY: Mrs. Sandora thought you might want this.

(Tony hands Ken the bell.)

KEN: Yes, I do. How are things in the kitchen?

TONY: Everything is running smoothly. The hors d'oeuvres are about ready, and shortly after that, we'll be putting in the lobster.

KEN: Good. Do you understand why everything has to go so smoothly this evening?

TONY: Not really, sir, but it really doesn't matter because we take a certain pride in all the jobs that we—

KEN: Let me show you something. You and your people should get a kick out of this. *(He takes him over to the white box and hands it to him.)* Now don't touch the buttons. This

little homemade box is going to be the beginning of my years as the most successful and promising psychotherapist in the field today. It'll be a breakthrough in science. There is no doubt I will win the Pulitzer.

TONY: (*Acts interested.*) What is it?

KEN: This little box is the key to hypnotherapy.

TONY: The key?

KEN: You know how hypnosis works, right?

TONY: You put someone under a spell and then tell them to bark like a dog and they do it, right?

KEN: Something like that, yes. It's a little more complicated than that. But that's what Sandora's Box does—it takes the complication out of hypnosis and makes it a possibility for everyone. Not everyone can take the suggestions made by regular hypnosis, and that is why it's a lost science.

TONY: What does this box do that's different?

KEN: How do I explain this to your kind so you can understand it? When turning this knob on the right, the box emits a sound...a silent sound...much like a dog's whistle might make, actually. But this sound is very powerful to the subconscious and through a series of electrons and brain impulses—which you will never understand with the degree you are currently carrying—it puts a person in an immediate state of the most powerful hypnosis known to man. It is so powerful, it actually made an ape pick up and understand human commands. Think of the communication we can have with the animals!

TONY: I think I'm seeing it first-hand right now.

KEN: For the first time ever, I am going to put my patients under a state of hypnosis, using my box of course, and am going to make subconscious suggestions to heal their various abnormalities. And the writer—he's from "Psychology Today"—is going to write down all that he observes and is going to publish it and make me a millionaire. And that is why tonight is so important.

(The living room door opens and Fulga enters followed by Kevin and Jessie. Jesse keeps his face to the ground and Kevin has his nose in a copy of "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe." They are both carrying suitcases.)

FULGA: Two more are here.

KEN: Boys, you're early. *(They don't say anything.)* Kevin, put your book down and look at me. *(He does.)* Why are the two of you here already?

KEVIN: *(Indicates Jessie.)* I don't know why he is. I found him hiding in the bushes when I came up here. My mom said she was sick of me and made me walk.

KEN: Kevin, I thought we were going to try a new book this week.

KEVIN: I tried.

KEN: What happened to the copy of Judy Blume's "Wifey" that I gave you?

KEVIN: *(Still reading.)* I tried to read it, but I had to go back to this again.

(Rico comes out of the kitchen and stands next to Tony.)

KEN: *(To Kevin.)* This makes 897 now, doesn't it?

KEVIN: 898.

KEN: *(Sighs.)* You're not taking the ritlin anymore, are you?

KEVIN: I ran out.

KEN: That's fine. I'm switching you to a new, experimental drug just out on the market. Remind me to write out a prescription for you before you leave. Here, Fulga, in the kitchen drawer, I have a pamphlet on a drug called Novil. Bring it here, please. *(Fulga exits into the kitchen.)* You're still taking the St. John's Wort, though, aren't you?

KEVIN: Yes, but I don't want any more medication!

KEN: Then you have got to start making an effort at being a normal human being!

KEVIN: I thought therapists weren't supposed to use the word "normal."

KEN: As of yet, other therapists haven't had the privilege of having you on their couch. Now, the drug is relatively new, but it's worked wonders with people suffering from different obsessive-compulsive disorders.

KEVIN: Hey, you're not supposed to be telling people about my neurosis!

(Fulga enters with the pamphlet.)

FULGA: Here.

(Kevin takes it from her.)

KEN: *(To Kevin.)* Now read up on that and call me if you have any of the side effects listed. *(Kevin starts reading the pamphlet.)* Fulga, why don't we take the boys up and show them their rooms? They're sharing.

KEVIN: Whoa, wait a second! Have you even read this?

KEN: Of course I have. *(He takes the pamphlet and looks at it.)* Hey, is this Patty Duke?

KEVIN: Read the side effects part!

(Kevin scans the pamphlet and eventually comes across it. He reads to himself for a second.)

KEN: I don't see the problem.

(Kevin takes it back.)

KEVIN: *(Reads.)* "Those taking Novil should be aware of a few possible side effects: nausea, loss of appetite, weight gain, diarrhea, constipation, foaming at the mouth, dry mouth, erratic behavior, increase of urination, urination

discoloration, the onset of depression, and/or suicidal tendencies."

KEN: Those are just the possibilities. They never happen.

KEVIN: (*Reads.*) "Those taking weight loss pills, appetite suppressants, have upset stomach, irregular bowel syndrome, or are prone to headaches should see a doctor if feelings of paranoia set in. Because of its effectiveness, patients should not operate heavy machinery, and/or regular household appliances, especially machines that run on lithium batteries. If hiccupping begins, rush to your nearest emergency room. Finally, those who have diabetes, irregular heart murmurs, seizures, and those who have a tendency to breathe should not take Novil." This is great.

KEN: See, you are making progress. You can read something other than "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe." (*Kevin starts reading the book again.*) Fulga, let's show them to their rooms, please.

(*Ken, Fulga, Kevin, and Jesse exit SL.*)

TONY: But, sir, I need to — (*Ken has already exited.*) Okay, I guess I'll serve the red wine then.

RICO: The kid who was looking at the ground — that's the one who has social anxiety disorder. Can't handle dealing with other people.

TONY: The one in the blue shirt?

RICO: Which one?

TONY: The shorter one.

RICO: The one with the blue jeans?

TONY: Yes.

RICO: And the one wearing the necklace?

TONY: Yes.

RICO: No, that's not the one. That's Kevin. He's read the C.S. Lewis book "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe" 898 times now. Obsessive-compulsive disorder.

TONY: We don't have time for this. Come on, I need you in the kitchen.

RICO: Okay, but don't ask me to do it. I won't be able to put that thing in the pot when it comes down to it.

TONY: I said you wouldn't have to do any of the cooking. I'll handle that part.

RICO: How can you put that cute little red thing in the pot and boil him until his little shell cracks open and he writhes in pain?

TONY: Because I can.

RICO: By the way, did you see some of the coats and stuff they had in their closets?

TONY: No, I haven't been snooping around here all day like you have.

RICO: I haven't seen clothes like that since I used to shop at Armani during our club days. What I wouldn't do to wear some of those clothes again. Just to feel alive...I miss money, Tony, I really do.

TONY: It won't be much longer. If things go the way they're supposed to tonight, we'll finally have the rest of the money for the club.

RICO: Did you give any more thought to Los Angeles?

TONY: I told you...I hate LA.

RICO: But that's where the money is, Tony.

TONY: We're not making any decisions until we've finished this job. Now come on, let's focus now. *(Tony starts to exit into the kitchen.)*

RICO: Okay. *(As they both walk toward the kitchen.)* Some of the guests are here, so I guess I can start early.

TONY: Might not be a bad idea.

RICO: All right, well, you keep fixing dinner, and I'll start grabbing the patients.

TONY: And you know how to distract the doctor?

RICO: I told you, I have it covered. *(Tony exits into the kitchen and Rico goes over to the closet again. He sees the hockey mask and stick lying there. He picks up the mask.)* Where did this

come from? *(He picks it up and tries it on.)* Jeesh, how do people breathe in this thing? *(The living room door opens up and a face peeks in. It is O. He is carrying a small backpack. Rico has his back to O. Rico begins playing with the stick, swinging it around and talking out loud. He points to the pair of glass angels on the mantle and taunts them.)* What are you looking at, huh? Who's your daddy? Who's your daddy?

(Rico takes a fake swing at the glass angels as O slowly walks into the room. Rico turns and steps in front of O. They both see each other. Rico is startled, but O freaks out.)

O: *(Screams.)* Jason! *(O continues yelling until he drops to the floor. Rico throws off the mask and helps O up.)*

RICO: It's just a hockey mask—a hockey mask! I'm so sorry! I didn't mean to scare you!

O: *(Still a little freaked.)* It's okay. I'm all right. It's just that you caught me off guard.

RICO: You must be Omar, right?

O: Yeah, but I go by O.

(At that moment, Tony comes in from the kitchen. He is holding a long kitchen knife in front of him. In the other hand is a hand mixer.)

TONY: *(To Rico.)* Hey, do you know how to—?

(O sees the knife, screams, and falls to the floor again. Tony runs over to them.)

RICO: Put the knife away! *(Tony hides the knife behind his back, but the hand mixer comes forward instead. Just as Rico is helping O back up again, Tony accidentally hits the mixer's on button and the blades go spinning, right in O's face. O screams again and passes out.)* Are you crazy? This is that scared kid I was telling you about!

TONY: Well, I didn't know!

RICO: He's out cold.

TONY: I thought you wanted him scared.

RICO: I gotta wait until the writer guy can witness all of this, or we're only doing half the job. Besides, I want to put him under hypnosis first. I'm kind of curious as to whether or not it really works. *(Gently slapping O around.)* O, wake up...come on, O. *(O finally starts waking up. To Tony.)* Go back in the kitchen and put those things away. I'll take it from here.

(Tony exits into the kitchen.)

O: What happened?

RICO: You fainted. You're all right.

(Rico helps O up and sits him on the couch.)

O: I've been doing that a lot lately.

RICO: By the way, my name is Rico.

O: Hi, Rico.

RICO: You sit here, and I'll get you a glass of water, okay?

O: Okay.

(Rico exits through the kitchen. A few seconds later unseen by O, Rico comes back through the door, wearing earmuffs, carrying his box, and crawling on his hands and knees. He crawls into the closet and shuts the door. Moments later, he begins scratching the door from inside. O is just sitting there when he hears the sounds coming from the closet. O is hesitant at first, but he finally, slowly, walks to the door. He extends his hand to open the door, then falters. He finally decides he is too scared to do it and begins to back away. That's when the door shoots open and Rico grabs O by the wrist. O screams, but it's too late. Rico pulls O into the closet and shuts the door. All is quiet again. Ken and Fulga come back in from the living room door.)

KEN: Well, make a note of it! I can't have guests sitting on one of my toilets, reaching for something to read, and pulling out a "Reader's Digest" or a "Guidepost."

FULGA: Your wife is the one who places the magazine orders around here, Dr. Sandora.

KEN: Yes, but I thought I ordered you to take charge of the household, not my wife. Much can be said about one's personality by the magazines found lying around the house. *(He begins to exit into the kitchen. Fulga follows.)* Now, for next time, I want you to place an order for periodicals to be placed in the bathroom that reflect my traits and individuality as a physician.

FULGA: I'll try, but I think "Quack Monthly" went out of business years ago.

(Fulga and Ken exit through the kitchen door as the closet door opens and an "unconscious" O is being led out by Rico, who is still wearing earmuffs. Rico flings O over the couch, closes the closet door, and heads back into the kitchen, taking his box with him. Right before Rico goes through the door, he pushes one of the buttons on the box. Rico exits and O jumps up.)

O: What happened?

(The living room door slowly opens up and Chase quickly steals in unseen by O.)

CHASE: *(To O.)* Hey.

(O jumps up and screams again. O then ducks behind the couch as Moriah enters behind Chase.)

MORIAH: *(To Chase.)* What was that?

CHASE: I don't know. I just said "hi" to some guy, and he ducked behind the couch. *(To O.)* Hey, buddy, you okay?

(O slowly comes up from behind the couch.)

O: Yeah, I'm okay. You just scared me. Do you know where Dr. Sandora is?

CHASE: He's probably upstairs. I heard he has an office up there.

O: Do you know how to get there?

CHASE: Just go through this door and up the stairs. I'm sure you'll run into it.

O: Thanks. *(He exits through the living room door, taking his backpack with him.)*

MORIAH: Can you now tell me why we're sneaking in here? Where's that butler guy? And what am I doing here?

CHASE: 'Cause I may need your help if I'm going to do this properly.

MORIAH: How can I help you get your girlfriend back?

CHASE: She wants me to swoop in and take her in my arms. I can do that. *(He goes over and looks at the fireplace.)* Yeah, this will do.

(Moriah joins him.)

MORIAH: This will do for what?

CHASE: Come on, we need to go back to my house.

MORIAH: For what?

CHASE: Rope.

(Chase exits out the living room door. Moriah follows then stops.)

MORIAH: *(Aside.)* Why can't I be your girlfriend?

(Moriah exits. The kitchen doors swing open and Rico comes back out, carrying his box, his earmuffs, and a ladle. He heads for the living room door. As he approaches the door, it opens up. He quickly ducks behind it. Ken steps in and takes the bell from off the end table. He rings it twice. No response. At this point, Rico darts

out from behind the living room door. Ken rings the bell again. Still, no response. Finally, Fulga enters from the kitchen. She gives him her icy cold stare.)

FULGA: What do you want?

KEN: *(Nervously.)* I would like you to serve drinks in the living room.

(The living room door opens and O comes out slowly.)

O: *(Half-whisper.)* Dr. Sandora?

KEN: Yes? *(He turns and O winces.)* Omar, you're here already?

O: Yes, sir, I was here and wondering what I should do next.

KEN: Well, we have a room all ready for you. No TV as you requested. There's a bathroom down the hall from your room.

O: I know. I found it. Do you mind if I take the June issue of "Reader's Digest" with me? I think my grandmother would appreciate one of the articles.

(Ken gives Fulga an annoyed look.)

KEN: You can take them all if you'd like.

O: Thank you.

(Katherine quickly enters through the living room door. Her sudden appearance makes O jump.)

KATHERINE: Ken, we have a problem.

KEN: What now?

KATHERINE: Ms. Brice was outside and she —

KEN: Outside? She can't go outside. Why was she outside?

KATHERINE: We're not sure, actually. One minute she was up in her room, the next she was crawling through the foyer.

She said she wasn't sure how she got dragged outside, but she threw up all over the carpet.

KEN: She threw up on the carpet?

FULGA: Did you rub her nose in it? Teach her not to do it again?

KATHERINE: I hadn't really thought of that.

KEN: All right, I'll see to it. Katherine, get me a drink, will you? Fulga, take O up to his room and then help me with Ms. Brice.

(They all leave to their respected places. Moments later, Rico steals back into the room through the living room door, dragging Jesse, and covering Jesse's mouth. This is very hard to do considering he is wearing earmuffs and carrying the box. Rico throws Jesse into the closet and shuts the door behind them. Katherine walks in with Ken's drink. She sets in on the table then exits out the living room door as Tony comes out of the kitchen. Tony looks disheveled and weary of cooking. He also looks like he doesn't know what he's doing.)

TONY: Rico? *(Pause.)* Rico?

(The closet door opens up and Rico appears, wearing an expensive suit jacket obviously taken from the closet. He quickly shuts the closet door behind him.)

RICO: You can't come out here without the earmuffs on! Do you wanna fall to the floor?

TONY: The signal can't reach that far, can it?

RICO: It can flow through a whole room. Get back into the kitchen so I can take him out of the closet and turn the thing off.

TONY: Where did you get that jacket?

RICO: From the closet.

TONY: Well, why are you wearing it?

RICO: I just couldn't resist, Tony. It looked so nice and expensive, I just had to try it on.

TONY: Take it off before someone sees you. Are you almost done?

RICO: Three down, one to go.

TONY: Who's left?

RICO: Kevin. The book kid.

TONY: When'd you do the woman?

RICO: I put her out and then threw her in the front yard and did it out there. Only I forgot to bring her back inside before I turned it off. She got dizzy and barfed all over the carpet.

TONY: Good for her. Go finish the kid. I'm about to put the lobster on.

RICO: No! Don't do it, Tony. I was thinking...what about lasagna?

TONY: There is no time to cook lasagna, and besides, we can't veer off the plan. Don't you want to get the rest of our money?

RICO: I don't know if I want to get it this way.

TONY: Get back to work!

RICO: I oughta call PETA on you!

(Tony exits into the kitchen and Rico goes back into the closet. The living room door opens and Haydee comes in, ticked off. She is holding a small can of mace.)

HAYDEE: All right, Chase, some psycho kid said you're in here, and I found Fulga's mace. Where are you? *(She goes over to the closet and tries to open it, but it's locked.)* Chase, are you in there? *(Fulga comes in through the kitchen entrance.)* Fulga, who's in the closet?

FULGA: I have ten bucks on [George Clooney]. *(Or insert the name of another actor.)*

(Fulga exits out the living room door. Haydee throws up her hands in frustration and exits through the kitchen door just as Rico comes

out with the unconscious Jesse. Rico does the same routine with Jesse as he did with the others. As Rico exits, he turns off the machine and Jesse jumps up with a start. Jesse immediately puts his eyes back on the floor. Jesse heads for the kitchen, but his eyes can't see where he's going. The kitchen door opens up and he gets knocked to the ground. Haydee comes back through the door. Haydee sees Jesse and mistakes him for Chase.)

HAYDEE: Ah-ha! *(Before she can realize it's not Chase, she sprays Jesse in the face with the mace. He screams and starts rolling around, grabbing at his eyes.)* Oh my gawd, you're not Chase!

(Fulga enters in through the living room door and wipes her hands on her apron.)

FULGA: What happened?

HAYDEE: I thought it was Chase, and I sprayed him with mace.

FULGA: Where did you hit him? Right square in the face?

HAYDEE: I can't believe I did that! He'll probably go blind!

FULGA: How'd you make that mistake? Are you losing your mind?

HAYDEE: Dr. Seuss, give it a rest, and will you help me, please!

(Rico enters from the kitchen, holding a bottle of Ranch, blue cheese, and Caesar salad dressing.)

RICO: What do you think? Ranch...Cesar? How 'bout blue cheese?

HAYDEE: *(Loses it. Shouts.)* Everyone shut up!

RICO: *(Offended.)* Jeesh! *(He exits back into the kitchen.)*

HAYDEE: *(To Fulga.)* We got to go clean his eyes out before he sues us. Come on, help me.

(Together, they grab Jesse, who is still writhing, and drag him through the kitchen door. When they have exited, the living room door opens with a bang and Rico is back, this time, carrying an unhappy Kevin, thrashing against him. Kevin's mouth is covered as well, and he is trying to beat the crud out of Rico with his book.)

RICO: *(To Kevin.)* Stop hitting me with the book!

(Rico finally gets him in the closet and slams the door shut behind them. Ken walks in through the living room door with Katherine and Rachel.)

KEN: Well, one more time...I'm sorry about that. Fulga is a little rough around the edges, but she usually doesn't do that.

RACHEL: *(Rubbing her nose.)* Oh, that's all right. I've heard it works wonders with new pets.

(The kitchen door swings open and Haydee enters in with Jesse. He is still looking down at the floor and rubbing his eyes.)

KEN: What happened?

HAYDEE: Oh, nothing, just a little accident with some mace.

KEN: Mace?

HAYDEE: Yes, no big deal. He got a little mace in his eyes, but Fulga and I made a paste out of baking soda and water to help reduce the pain.

KEN: You rubbed baking soda in a child's eyes?

HAYDEE: No, just around the affected area.

KATHERINE: Do we even have baking soda?

HAYDEE: Yeah, there was some in a cookie tin on the counter.

KATHERINE: A cookie tin?

HAYDEE: Yeah, it was just sitting there.

KEN: What color was the tin?

HAYDEE: Red, why?

KEN: Oh no. *(He heads for the kitchen.)*

KATHERINE: Oh, he's not thinking what I think he's thinking, is he? *(She follows him.)*

HAYDEE: What, Katherine?

KATHERINE: I think he's thinking Uncle Michael.

HAYDEE: Uncle Michael? Isn't he dead?

KEN: I hope so 'cause they cremated him.

(Ken, Haydee, and Katherine exit through the kitchen. Rachel is left with Jesse, who is wandering about.)

RACHEL: Here...um, maybe I should take you upstairs and help you wash that out.

(Rachel takes Jesse by the hand and they exit through the living room door. Rico comes out of the closet, wearing a nice pair of slacks that go with the jacket, and dragging the unconscious Kevin with him. This time, Rico throws Kevin into the hallway and then, as an afterthought, throws his book on top of him.)

RICO: There! How do you like it?

(Rico pushes the button and then slams the door shut. He goes back to the closet, throws the earmuffs and the box back in, and closes the closet door. Rico then heads for the kitchen and the door swings open. He hides behind the door and after Haydee, Ken, Katherine, and Fulga enter, he exits into the kitchen.)

KEN: So much for rest in peace.

FULGA: More like rest in pieces.

HAYDEE: Brings a new meaning to the phrase "seeing things through someone else's eyes," doesn't it?

KEN: Hey, where's Ms. Brice?

KATHERINE: She must have taken the little boy upstairs to clean him up.

HAYDEE: I'm going upstairs. I can feel the skin on my face slipping down.

KEN: Since everyone is here early, we'll be eating shortly. I think that cook is ready to put the lobster in.

KATHERINE: Come on upstairs, Ken. We'll find that aspirin for you.

KEN: If only Wright could see all this. He'd be laughing his butt off about now.

KATHERINE: He's not anywhere near here, dear.

(Ken and Katherine exit through the living room door just as Rico sneaks out of the kitchen. Rico is hiding a lobster under his coat. He looks around the room and finally opens up the living room door. He carefully places the lobster down the hallway a bit. He comes back in and shuts the door. The kitchen door swings open and Tony stands there.)

TONY: Where is it?

RICO: Where's what?

TONY: There is no time. Where's the lobster?

RICO: I swear I don't know. *(He sniffs the air.)* Something's burning.

TONY: What?

(Tony sniffs the air and then dashes off into the kitchen. Rico throws the living room door open and yells down the hallway.)

RICO: Run, Sebastian, run, my little red friend! Go under the sea, under the sea!

(Blackout. Intermission.)

ACT II

(AT RISE: One hour later. The table is now set for dinner. Ken is standing next to the fireplace examining his box. He checks a few wires in the back and tightens a few of them. The living room door opens and Katherine walks in.)

KATHERINE: There you are! Ken, the toilet's overflowing in the boy's bathroom, and the water is flowing into their room.

KEN: Oh, for Pete's sake!

(Ken sets his box down and heads for the door, Katherine in tow. Rico and Tony appear from the kitchen. Tony is soaking wet.)

TONY: *(To Ken.)* Sir, we were wondering if—

KEN: I want dinner on the table in five minutes. Have Fulga call everyone down.

(Ken and Katherine exit left.)

RICO: *(To Tony.)* What happened to you?

TONY: I went looking for you in the boy's bathroom, and I slipped on the wet floor.

RICO: I was just up there looking for you. I didn't see you.

TONY: That's 'cause I was stuck in the walk-in freezer.

RICO: You locked yourself in?

TONY: No, I was wet when I went in, and I tripped and fell against the wall. I had to peel myself out of there.

RICO: Well, let's get moving. Since they're fixing the toilet now, I'm going up to put the music in and put the lock on the office door.

TONY: Was the toilet difficult?

RICO: No, I just shoved a whole bunch of toilet paper down the hatch.

TONY: Then go!

RICO: Hey, Tony, guess what they had in the bathroom?

TONY: I'm afraid to ask. What?

RICO: They have a Chia Pet.

TONY: *(Feigning interest.)* No!

RICO: Yes!

TONY: Who cares? Get back to work.

RICO: Do you think I could just take it before we leave?

TONY: No!

RICO: Oh, come on, Tony! You know I've never been able to grow one!

TONY: I said no! Now, come on!

RICO: What are we having instead of lobster?

TONY: Duck.

RICO: Duck? Oh, the poor—

TONY: No more talking!

(Tony and Rico exit through the kitchen as the living room door opens and Chase quietly peeks in.)

CHASE: *(Cautiously.)* Hello? *(No answer, so he enters slowly. He runs over to the fireplace and looks up.)* Okay, drop the rope! *(Nothing happens.)* Did you drop it?

MORIAH: *(From the roof through the chimney.)* I dropped it! It's not long enough!

(Chase thinks. Then he crawls into the fireplace and looks up the chimney.)

CHASE: Well, I can see it! I think it's long enough for me to hang and then jump the rest of the way!

MORIAH: I've seen you climb the rope at school, Chase. There is no way you're going to be able to lower yourself down! Why am I doing this for...I mean, why are we doing this, Chase?

CHASE: You don't understand, I have to be able to get in and out of this house tonight!

MORIAH: Well, this may come as news to you, but I think they have a front door!

CHASE: Which she'll be guarding, I'm sure! Look, you don't understand the whole story!

MORIAH: I can't believe I drove all the way in from the city to help you do this!

CHASE: I know what I'll do...I'll tie the rope around the loops in my jeans, and you can lower me down that way!

MORIAH: I have to lower you down? Are you crazy? You weigh too much!

CHASE: Here, we can't have this conversation like this. I'm coming up! Help me up the ladder!

(Chase exits out of the fireplace and heads for the living room door right as Fulga and Haydee enter in from the same door. They look at each other and Chase is horrified.)

HAYDEE: Chase!

CHASE: You weren't supposed to see me yet!

(Haydee runs after Chase and he jumps over the couch.)

HAYDEE: Get the taser, Fulga! Get the taser!

CHASE: I'm sorry, Haydee, but I'm doing what you asked me to!

(Chase sees Fulga standing in the doorway with the taser gun. He drops to his knees and crawls under and exits the room.)

HAYDEE: *(To Fulga.)* Get him before he leaves!

(Fulga and Haydee give chase. Silence. Then Moriah's voice comes down the chimney.)

MORIAH: (*Concerned.*) Chase? Where are you? Are you okay? Are you hurt? Chase, answer me!

(*Haydee and Fulga enter, dragging Jesse behind them. He is wearing patches over both eyes and is semi-conscious. He holds his hands over his left hip. Fulga is holding the recently used taser gun by her side.*)

HAYDEE: Why does this kid always get in the way?

FULGA: Have any other dead relatives you can rub over his hip?

(*They throw him on the couch.*)

HAYDEE: (*To Fulga.*) You see him again, you have my permission to use a real gun.

FULGA: If it's a part of my job, then I guess I have to...

HAYDEE: He'll be fine on the couch for a while.

(*Ken and Katherine enter in from the living room door.*)

KEN: (*In the middle of a conversation.*) And that's why I think those suffering from elephantiasis should not be allowed to eat shrimp!

KATHERINE: Wow, when you put it that way, I guess it doesn't sound so insensitive...

KEN: (*Sees Jesse.*) Oh, gawd, what happened, now?

HAYDEE: Little accident with the taser gun.

KATHERINE: A taser gun?

HAYDEE: Look, Mother, I'm being stalked, okay? Little David Spade just got in the way again. (*She gets up and exits into the kitchen.*)

KEN: That's what all famous people have.

KATHERINE: What do they have, Ken?

KEN: A stalker.

KATHERINE: A stalker?

KEN: A person with a stalker gets so much publicity...Fulga, call my publicist first thing tomorrow and find out what Madonna's old stalker is doing these days... *(Fulga exits into the kitchen. To Jesse.)* Jesse, why don't we go into the kitchen, and get some ice for that hip?

(Jesse doesn't look up at him, but he quietly limps off toward the kitchen as Rachel comes in from the living room entrance.)

RACHEL: I'm all ready to start.

(Ken shoves Jesse the rest of the way through the kitchen.)

KEN: Oh, good. *(He comes back into the room as we hear Jesse crash into something offstage.)* I believe we're almost ready to start dinner. Why don't we gather everyone else and take them into my office, and we'll do some preliminaries before dinner.

KATHERINE: You two go in the office. I'll get the boys.

(Everyone exits out the living room door. The kitchen door swings open and Tony, Rico, and Jesse enter. Tony and Rico are helping Jesse to the couch. Rico has a noticeable lump underneath his shirt. Jesse still has the patches and is still limping. In addition, his tongue is sticking out and there is a bandage wrapped around it.)

RICO: Jeesh, kid, I'm really sorry, but you shouldn't open your mouth and stick out your tongue when you're in a walk-in freezer. Too bad he couldn't learn from your mistake, Tony. You should have gotten the ice for him.

TONY: How was I to know he can't stand up right? *(They lay Jesse down on the couch.)* Besides, I have a dinner to get ready for, no thanks to you. *(Notices his shirt.)* Wait a second...what's underneath your shirt?

RICO: Nothing!

TONY: You have a lump underneath your shirt! Let's see it!

RICO: No! It's...it's...chest hair!

TONY: Chest hair? Since when? You shave your chest.

RICO: *(Total shock.)* I do not! *(Pause.)* It's because I'm a swimmer!

TONY: I can't believe our mothers are sisters. Now show me!

(Begrudgingly, Rico takes a Chia Pet out from under his shirt and hands it to Tony.)

RICO: Here.

TONY: I can't believe you were going to steal a Chia Pet!

RICO: I just can't help myself! They have such nice things here, Tony.

(Tony takes it away from him.)

TONY: Knock off all this foolishness. We have to deal with this kid now.

RICO: Did you hear the way his tongue ripped open when I pulled him off the wall?

TONY: Yes, I did.

RICO: He sure is klutzy.

TONY: Well, something's wrong with his leg. *(Heads back into the kitchen.)* So, did you finish your job?

RICO: Yep, I put the music in the stereo system and locked the office door.

TONY: Where's the remote and key?

RICO: *(Pats his pants.)* Right here in the pocket.

TONY: And the music comes from where?

(Rico points up to the speaker installed in the wall.)

RICO: Right above your head.

TONY: Okay then, looks like we're ready to start.

(Tony and Rico exit into the kitchen as Chase enters from the living room door. He is carrying a flashlight. He peers around the room and finds that the coast is clear. Chase goes back to the chimney and shines the flashlight up the chimney and yells upward.)

CHASE: I'll only be dangling about three feet from the ground. I'm telling you, you can hold me!

MORIAH: *(From above.)* This is the stupidest stunt you've ever come up with, Chase!

(Fulga enters from the living room. She sees Chase in the chimney. She smiles and produces a gun. Chase hears something and pops out. He sees Fulga and screams. He makes a run for it and she quickly blocks his way. He jumps over the back of the couch and lands on top of Jesse, who groans loudly. Fulga, in her attempt to grab Chase, accidentally fires the gun next to Jesse's ear. Jesse and Chase scream and Chase runs out the door. Jesse holds his ears in pain. Haydee runs in from the kitchen.)

HAYDEE: What happened now?

FULGA: The boy was here again, and I shot at him.

HAYDEE: You really shot at him?

FULGA: They're only blanks. But I think I did something to his ears.

HAYDEE: They're probably ringing like mad. Let's take him into the kitchen and stuff cotton in them.

FULGA: I think we're out of cotton, but we have plenty of Uncle Michael left!

HAYDEE: This is no time for jokes. Help me.

(Fulga and Haydee grab Jesse and drag him into the kitchen as Ken and Katherine enter from the living room door entrance.)

KEN: *(To Katherine.)* I guess we'll just have to have our preliminaries in here.

KATHERINE: You've never had to lock that office door in your life, Ken. Why start now?

KEN: I'm telling you, I didn't lock it.

KATHERINE: And you're sure your key is missing?

KEN: Yes, and I'm sure Wright took it.

KATHERINE: Oh, now, Ken, he never had your keys.

KEN: He probably snagged them at the funeral. *(The living room door opens and Kevin, still reading his book, and O come into the room.)* Good, we're almost all here. Sit down everyone.

O: Where's the other kid?

(Haydee enters with Jesse.)

HAYDEE: Here he is. *(Jesse still has a limp, eye bandages, a tongue bandage, and now his ears have cotton sticking out.)* A little beaten, but he'll be okay.

KEN: Wait a minute. Where's Ms. Brice?

HAYDEE: Oh, she's resting in her room. I guess Fulga opened up the drapes in her room and Rachel saw the backyard. She should be up and around in no time.

(Everyone finds a place to sit. Blind, Jesse is helped to a chair by Haydee. Kevin still reads his book.)

KEN: Before we have dinner, I'd like to go over the evening's agenda. I want to help clear up any fears or worries you may have about my little machine here. *(He picks up his box.)* Do we have any questions before I begin?

O: I do.

KEN: Okay, go ahead.

O: Isn't there some writer guy coming tonight?

KEN: Yes, in about an hour. Lazaro Whitney is a feature writer for "Psychology Today" and is publicizing tonight's events for an article he is writing for the magazine. This will make the public aware of my new invention. There's

nothing to be nervous about when it comes to my box. It is as harmless as regular hypnosis, only more powerful. *(From the speaker on the wall comes a strange sound. There are sounds of a train running, low humming music, and finally police sirens. [Similar to the opening bars from the musical, "Saturday Night Fever."] During this, Ken and Katherine are reacting.)* What the devil?

KATHERINE: Is it coming from upstairs?

KEN: Yes, someone's playing the stereo.

KATHERINE: But the office is locked. How did they get up there?

KEN: *(Snaps his fingers.)* Wright!

KATHERINE: I was right? Oh yaay! I never get to be right!

KEN: No, Dr. Wright. He's up to this!

KATHERINE: You mean, he's in the house?

KEN: Let's go!

HAYDEE: Wait, wait!

(Ken races out through the living room door with Katherine and Haydee following right behind. At that moment, dance music is heard and O stands up and breaks into a dance. Kevin looks up, shrugs his shoulders, and continues reading. O has great moves, but he is not aware of what he's doing. Jesse, sensing something is going on, slowly leans over and feels the floor. He feels the music through the floor and starts dancing in his chair – one hand grasping the floor at all times. At that moment, Tony walks in through the swinging kitchen door carrying food. He sees what is going on and immediately goes back into the kitchen. The door swings back open and Fulga enters.)

FULGA: The devil went down to Georgia! What is going on in here?!

(O is freaking out. O has the John Travolta moves down, and by this time, he is on the table. Ken, Katherine, and Haydee burst back in through the living room door.)

KEN: Now what?

KATHERINE: Oh, my dear, sweet —

KEN: Get him off the table!

(All of a sudden the music stops. O "comes to" and is embarrassed and confused as to why he's on the table. Jesse sits back in his chair.)

O: What happened?

KEN: Get off the table, you moron!

(O climbs down.)

O: Why was I on the table?

KEN: It's Wright! He's got my box!

KATHERINE: But it's right here.

KEN: He's gotten it somehow.

HAYDEE: Did you get in the office to shut it off?

(O sits down on the couch.)

KEN: He wouldn't open up. He's in the office running it with the door locked. *(Heads for the living room door again.)* I'm going to break it down if I have to. *(He exits.)*

KATHERINE: *(Breathes a sigh.)* Why doesn't everyone sit down again, and he'll just have to have his meeting after dinner.

(All of a sudden, striptease-type dance music comes on through the speaker. Right then, Rachel walks in from the living room entrance. She is smiling.)

RACHEL: I'm feeling much better —

(Rachel gets that glassed over look in her eyes and stops in her tracks. She immediately takes off the headband she's wearing and throws it to O. She begins to take off her shoe when Katherine stands up.)

KATHERINE: *(To Rachel.)* Oh, no, you don't! Haydee, help me!

(Haydee and Katherine grab Rachel and start dragging her toward the kitchen. They finally get her through the doorway and the door swings shut behind them. Kevin doesn't take his eyes of his book. Kevin just shrugs as Ken comes back in.)

KEN: I don't think anyone's in the office. I think he's hiding in the house working it by remote control. *(The kitchen door swings open and one of Rachel's shoes comes flying out and smacks Jesse right in the head. He goes down. Then, as suddenly as it started, the music stops.)* Where is the weasel?

(Katherine, Rachel, Haydee, and Rico enter.)

RICO: Dinner is served.

KATHERINE: Okay, everyone's all dressed now. We'll figure this all out, Ken. Maybe he's done for now. Now, everyone has place cards, so find your card and sit there.

(Everyone does so, but Kevin is still sitting on the couch. Rico steals over to Kevin and leans down.)

RICO: *(To Kevin, whispers.)* Aslan!

(At that moment, Kevin jumps up and throws his book across the room.)

KEVIN: *(Screams.)* Narnia! *(He bolts towards the closet and opens it up with tremendous force. He runs straight into it and crashes into the back wall.)* Ow. *(Everyone jumps up and watches as Kevin falls on his butt. He gets up, backs out of the*

closet and tries it again.) Narnia! (Again, he crashes into the back of the closet and falls down.) Ow.

O: Dude, he thinks the closet is the secret entrance to Narnia!
(Kevin crashes into the back of the closet again.)

HAYDEE: What's Narnia?

KEN: It's the magical land in his books. *(He runs over to Kevin.)* Kevin, now stop it!

(Ken grabs Kevin and yanks him over to the chair. As Ken is doing this, Rico is getting everybody seated at the table. When Rico gets to O, he leans down.)

RICO: *(Whispers.)* Hey, guy, look!

(From under his shirt, Rico produces a small replica of a gremlin. O screams and jumps back, knocking over his chair. He runs screaming toward the kitchen door and exits as Tony comes through the door at the same time, carrying plates of food. Tony is knocked over and everything goes crashing into the kitchen. Rico digs into his pocket and pushes a button on the remote. Tom Jones' song "It's Not Unusual" or another song comes on and Rachel and Kevin start dancing like mad all over the room. Jesse just sits there. Rico runs into the kitchen, grabs O, and brings him out. Rico has a Freddy Krueger type knife/hand glove on his left hand, but he hides it. O too starts dancing like crazy. Chase and Moriah's voices are heard through the chimney.)

MORIAH: *(From the chimney.)* I can't hold you much longer!

CHASE: *(From the chimney.)* Tie the slack to the chimney!

MORIAH: *(From the chimney.)* I can't do it!

(All of a sudden, Chase's legs come crashing down, but something has caught the rope and he is dangling in the chimney, his feet resting a few feet above ground. The rope tied through the loops in his jeans. Immediately his jeans go flying upward against the pull of

the rope. Chase begins struggling as he dangles. Rico goes over to O and pulls out his Freddy glove.)

RICO: (Yells into O's ear.) Freddie's coming! Freddie's coming to get you!

(O screams again and starts running around the room like a mad dog, screaming all the way. The music is still playing and everyone is doing their best to stop the guests from their current activity. It is mass chaos. Tony comes back in, food all over his clothing, carrying what is left of dinner. Chase is heard in the background.)

CHASE: Help! My underwear!

(Chase grabs at the back of his jeans, trying to pull them "out." At the same time, he is desperately trying to reach the floor. Haydee sees this and screams out his name. She runs over and starts pulling on Chase's legs, jamming the jeans and the underwear up even more. Chase starts screaming. Jesse, blind and deaf, stumbles around the room and bumps into everything. Ken throws his napkin in the air and sits down miserably. Blackout.)

[End of Freeview]