

# **Beyond the Door**

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## Beyond the Door

### **Cast of Characters:**

Eric E.- A young college student who has recently inherited the house he was renting a room in from his kindly landlady. Eric doesn't have a great deal of money and is just trying to finish his bachelor's degree in Literature before his scholarship money runs out. Timid and lonely, he doesn't have a lot of friends.

Agnes Perry- A retired religion professor who rented rooms to students. Eric was her only tenant when she became sick and died. Because she had taken a great liking to Eric, she left him the house in her will. A lifelong believer in the occult and resurrection, she made Eric promise to bring her body back to the house after her funeral.

Judith (Judy) Perry- Agnes' daughter, a young professional woman whose motives are suspect. She seems to want to take the house from Eric.

Det. O' Henry- An elderly neighbor who happens to be a police detective, a few days shy of retirement.

**Setting:** The play is set in the house of Agnes Perry, a former college professor. The house is near the school, a small liberal arts university in the American north east. It is early fall, and the leaves have just begun to change.

(The stage has two rooms. The one on stage left is a handsome looking kitchen with sparse but nice furnishings that does not look very used. A set of a few stairs leads to the other room on stage right, which is slightly raised. The room on stage right is a cluttered, semi unused looking place. The countertops in the background seem to be cluttered with old newspapers and random knickknacks. The counter's sink has a bucket of some kind in it. The room has a single bed against the stage right wall, and a recliner in the middle of the room that faces toward the TV, though the recliner is covered with a large sheet. A single wooden chair sits next to the TV. An old window box air conditioner is running on high).

## Act I

Eric: (enters and sits down in the lone wooden chair, pauses a moment. He begins to talk toward the covered chair) Ugh.. .today was rough. I always think first days of the semester will get easier as I go, but now that I'm at my last semester, it's still ridiculously stressful.

(Eric waits a moment, still looking at the chair. He makes a move to get up, but then seems to change his mind. He starts again)

(Eric gets up and pulls the sheet off. A woman is sprawled in the chair, looking quite dead. She looks to be an older woman, possibly in her late sixties, wearing a long black

funeral dress. Eric goes to the sink and puts some water in the bucket. He gets the rag and walks over to the woman. With a dip in the bucket, he begins to give the woman a halfhearted sponge bath with the rag, but begins to talk again.)

Eric: And my professor, that old asshole Harrington. He has hated me ever since I declared and joined the Lit department. After taking his ludicrously difficult Shelley seminar last year, I thought I wouldn't have to take him again.. .but guess who they got to teach the senior thesis seminar, Harrington.

(Eric notices something on the side of the woman's face that faces away from the audience. He winces with a look of distaste on his face.) Ugh. (he pulls it off, checks for others but finds none) Well, I suppose that will happen.. .Hey, just so you know, I got a letter of inquiry from Judy's lawyer, something about assessing the estate. I'm not really sure what it means frankly.

(Eric kneels and exhales loudly as he continues to look her over) It's just all so stressful. That's why I wish you were back already. I mean, look around, I can't even keep this place clean...

(Eric looks satisfied and puts the rag back in his bucket of water. Quickly, he puts the sheet back over the body of Agnes, covering her and the chair completely. He takes the bucket back over to the sink and dumps it out, then begins to wash it out. As he does so, there is a slight twitch under the sheet. He turns around, thinking he heard something, but

sees nothing. As he goes back to his cleaning, another slight movement is made under the sheet. Suddenly, there is a knock on the door, and Eric looks towards the kitchen. He quickly dries his hands on a towel and makes his way for the kitchen door.)

(Judy, Agnes daughter is waiting at the door.)

Eric: Yes?

Judy: Eric, it's me, Judy.

Eric: Coming, coming. (He unlocks the door open and lets Judy in).

Judy: (smiles) Hey Eric. How have you been holding up?

Eric: Oh, just fine I guess. And you?

Judy: Well, I have been a little down since everything happened, especially since mother wasn't talking to me much in the last year.

Eric: Yeah.. .(trying to find words) that really is too bad. I know she loved you.

Judy: Oh I know. I just wish we had time to get everything settled so we could have been close again at the end.

Eric: (gestures towards the kitchen table) Would you like to have a seat?

Judy: Sure. You weren't busy?

Eric: (looks back toward the bedroom) Oh, nothing too big. Can I get you anything?

Judy: A little coffee would be nice.

Eric: All we have here is tea.. .I mean, all I have here is tea.

Judy: (Nods) That's fine. I came over because I wanted to explain to you about the letter.

(Eric puts some water on.) I really wanted you to know that I'm not trying to move in and take this house from you. Mother wanted you to have all this, and that's fine. She left me quite a bit. But my lawyer and I agree that there are quite a few parts of mother's will that need to be looked at closely while everything is being settled. And several of my other relatives are trying to make claims on some things.

Eric: Claims on what?

Judy: Mother and father both had some real estate overseas. And my uncle Stuart has made inquiries to my lawyer about challenging our inheritances.

Eric: Oh...(looks down)

Judy: Really, it is Stuart that is thinking about making a fuss. I have already told my lawyer if there is a trial I will gladly testify on your behalf. Stuart seems to think you're some kind of manipulative chippy who moved in here to steal my mother's money-

Eric: But Judy, I really did care for your mother. She took care of me and helped me out when no one else would.

Judy: I know that Eric. That's just what my uncle thinks.

Eric: I don't really have any money for a lawyer.

Judy: Well hopefully you won't need one. The lawyers have to decide whether or not he has grounds to challenge you and all that I think, (the kettle whistles, and Eric gets up. He puts water in two mugs and two teabags.)

Eric: I'm sorry, I don't have any sugar.

Judy: Living like a real college bachelor now finally?

Eric: (smiles finally) Actually I really just couldn't afford any when I was at the store yesterday.



Judy: (giggles a little) Can't afford sugar? Are you kidding? You could just take a few packets from a fast food restaurant you know. I used to when I was still in business school.

Eric: I'll have to try that.

(There's a brief pause as both people look off over each other's shoulders.)

Judy: (getting serious again) Eric. Can I ask you something?

Eric: Of course.

Judy: I'm kind of worried about you living here alone. Have you thought about what you're going to do at the end of this semester?

Eric: Um.. .I'm not really sure yet. I'll be graduating, so I guess I'll get some kind of job.

Judy: Do you really think it will be easy living in a house by yourself?

Eric: Well, I hadn't really thought about it.

Judy: A house is a lot of upkeep. Maybe you should think about having someone move

in. You know, help you keep up with the place, pay you a little rent.

Eric: Oh, yeah, that might help.

Judy: Just think about it Eric. You're a really nice guy, you just need to remember to watch out for yourself when it comes to all this kind of.. .legal stuff.

(Judy takes a long last sip from her mug, and it is empty. Eric looks down and notices)

Eric: Would you like any more?

Judy: No thanks. I should probably get going. Would you like to get together sometime next week? I will have probably heard some more from the lawyers by then.

Eric: That would be great.

Judy: Bye. (She leaves)

(Eric stares out past her, trying to figure her out. After a pause, there is another knock at the door.)

Eric: (getting up) Yes? (He sees a man at the door).

O' Henry: My name is O' Henry, I live down the street.

Eric: Oh, hello.

O' Henry: Hello. I don't know if you remember me, but Agnes and I used to play poker some Sundays. You weren't around much.

Eric: Yeah, Sunday is my library day.

O' Henry: Well Agnes and I were pretty close friends; we knew each other for years.

Eric: I think I remember seeing you at her funeral. Would you like to come in?

O' Henry: Yes, thank you. But listen, I came down with something more business related in mind.

Eric: Business...?

O' Henry: Well my business is the law Eric, I'm a detective for the city.

Eric: Oh.

O' Henry: A file came across my desk this morning, and I wanted to get in touch with

you and Agnes' daughter right away.

Eric: Oh, Judy was just here. You missed her.

O' Henry: That's a shame. Eric, I know this is a hard time for you, but I have some unfortunate news. Agnes' body is missing.

Eric: (Looking confused) Missing?

O' Henry: Yes, it's a pretty odd case. But I have started interviewing people, and you have my word, as Agnes' friend, I will find out who did this.

Eric: This is just...terrible.

O' Henry: I know. Look, I'm going to leave my card here, but I'll be back within the next couple days when I know a little more.

Eric: Ok, thank you.

(O' Henry puts a card on the counter.)

Eric: I really appreciate you coming by to tell me. That would have been awful to hear about on the news.

O' Henry: Well hopefully it won't be on the news, we're trying to keep this kind of hush hush. Alright Eric, I'm going to make some calls and try to get in touch with the young Ms. Perry.

(O' Henry tips his hat and exits. Eric waves after him, and his expression turns dark. He waits a moment, then turns and heads back to the bedroom.)

(Eric walks in quickly, then stops. His leg is shaking a little. He paces back and forth in front of the body, slowing a little with each step. Finally, he stops, and stares at the body.)

Eric: Did you just hear any of that? (pause) The police know.. .Great.. .(pause) And your trusted old friend is going to be investigating all this (gestures around the room, pauses) Well.. .what are we gonna do? (pause) I can't handle this kind of stress...I'm not good at lying and sneaking around. If you don't come back soon.. .I'll have to take you back. (Frustrated, he exits the room)

(Lights go down to minimal power, and the body under the sheet sits up fully. She moves over towards the counter. The figure begins to move things around as the lights go down completely.) (The next morning, the room looks much cleaner. Eric enters and walks up to the sink absentmindedly. As he notices the bucket is no longer in the sink, the state of the rest of the room hits him. He looks around, and then moves over to the chair. The body is still sitting underneath the sheet. He pulls the sheet down and inspects the body

for a few moments, looking for signs that she has moved.

Eric: How?

(Shakes his head, then exits the room. He walks down to the kitchen, paces alone for a few moments. The phone rings, and Eric answers.)

Eric: Hello? Oh, yes Detective. How are you? Well, things have been ok around here. I know, yeah. Well, I think Judy and Agnes were on better terms than you might think. It's kind of complicated. Yeah. The disappearance is so macabre. I just am not sure what all to say about it. I'll be around all day today come by whenever. Ok. See you then.

(Eric hangs up the phone and sits down at the table with a hint of dread on his face. The phone rings again. Eric gets it.)

Eric: Hey Judy. Yeah, it's nice to hear from you too. Oh, it's been a weird couple of days. I almost can't believe this would happen. I know. Oh ok. Well-Really? Someone you know? I guess give him my number. I'll talk to him at least. I just don't know if I'm ready to have a tenant right now. No. Well, I'll talk to him at least. Ok. Yeah. Let's do that soon. My schedule is pretty free this week. I just have a thesis meeting at school on Thursday. Yeah, it's kind of a light, but very stressful schedule this semester. Well, this thesis has to get done. It just has to. Yeah. Ok. Well, it will be good to see you then... bye.

(Eric hangs up the phone, but this time grabs his book bag and empties its contents onto the table. It begins to rain outside. Two spiral notebooks and two thick books fall out. Eric begins to read through one of the books, occasionally stopping to take notes. After a little time passes, Eric begins to doze off and then slumps down on top of his book. O' Henry appears at the door. He is wearing his usual dress shirt and tie, but this time he has a long wet trench coat and fedora on as well. He knocks on the door. Eric, startled, sits up fast.

O' Henry: Sorry my boy. I didn't mean to scare you.

Eric: Oh, ha. It's ok. I think I fell asleep while studying.

O' Henry: (As Eric gets up and lets him in the room) It's really coming down out there now. I used to love dark, rainy nights like this, but now, it just seems like an inconvenience.

Eric: Yeah.. .Wow, I didn't think anyone went for the old stereotypical "detective" look anymore.

O' Henry: Ha, you mean with the coat and hat? Oh come on, this is a classic look.

(They both pause, look at the outfit, and then laugh)

O' Henry: I guess you're right. Well, it's no big deal.

Eric: Can I get you some tea?

O' Henry: That would be great. I don't want to come down with a cold in the middle of my investigation.

Eric: (gets serious as he gets out the kettle and such) How is that going?

O' Henry: Oh not bad actually. I talked to all the employees at the cemetery, and I'm pretty sure none of them were involved. Only one of them saw anything that night, but it was a pretty good tidbit of info. Two middle aged guys were sitting out front of the cemetery in a plumbing van around sunset. He couldn't remember what company, but it's a lead. I'm making calls to area plumbers right now.

Eric: Yeah, they probably could have hauled the body off in a van.

O' Henry: Exactly. You'll be glad to know the owner of the cemetery has been very cooperative. I think this is a bit of a sore spot for him, if something like this got around, it would be terrible for his business.

Eric: Oh, I'm sure.



O' Henry: I actually wanted to ask you a few questions Eric.

Eric: Me? Oh, well, what can I help you with?

O' Henry: Did Agnes have any enemies I didn't know about? Anyone she had disagreements?

Eric: Not really. She was pretty well liked.

(The kettle whistles and Eric serves up the tea. He puts a few sugar packets on the table, and O' Henry smiles.)

O' Henry: Hard times? (Eric nods and O' Henry gets serious again) It's just that this doesn't seem to be the usual, "money" motivated crime Eric. It seems more like some bizarre revenge thing.

Eric: I.. just.. I'm not sure who would do something like that.

O' Henry: Think hard.. didn't she have any bitter ex students? Someone who took grades way too seriously or something.

Eric: I can't think of anyone that mad at her...

O' Henry: You'd be surprised what some people will do when it comes to academics. I once had a case in which a former student was stalking a teacher who gave him a D. Restraining orders weren't being followed. After the teacher's dog was killed, we had to take the kid in. He was pretty sick.

Eric: That's awful. And you think something similar might be going on here.

O' Henry: Well, I'm just having a hard time finding some other kind of motivation. There's no money in stealing corpses. The only other things I can think of are pretty terrible Eric.

Eric: Other things?

O' Henry: Necrophila?

Eric: (disgusted) Oh, God no.

O' Henry: I hope not too Eric. But this is a weird case; the possibilities are all pretty morbid.

Eric: I know.

(The two sit in silence for a moment. O' Henry takes a long drink of his tea.)

O' Henry: I'm glad we had a chance to talk Eric. You still have my card?

Eric: Of course.

O' Henry: And Eric? You really don't think Judy had anything to do with this?

Eric: Oh, no detective. They didn't get along for a little while, but the disagreements were more about Judy's career decisions and stuff like that.. .nothing to cause something like this.

O' Henry: Career decisions?

Eric: She's involved in a large international shipping business.. .an executive. Agnes always thought that was kind of a money grubbing, uber capitalist life she chose.

O' Henry: Agnes was always kind of..

Eric: Yeah, a little bit of a liberal idealist. She's like a lot of professors; she wanted to change the world by changing a generation of minds.

O' Henry: Ha, you are a Literature major. Such grand description! Haha. (Eric smiles)

Eric, you're a good kid. It's good to have neighbors like you. You know, in two weeks, I'll no longer be a detective, just your friendly old retired neighbor.

Eric: Are you looking forward to it?

O' Henry: Kid, you have no idea. I've seen too much on this job. And Agnes' case is my last one. Then it's going to be years of building model boats, lazy afternoons, and occasionally seeing my grand nieces. It'll be great.

Eric: Yeah.

O' Henry: Well I think I'll head home. Perhaps we'll talk in the next couple of days.

Eric: Ok, keep me informed.

O' Henry: Don't worry, I will. And don't worry Eric, I'll find whoever did this. You have my word.

Eric: Thanks.

(O' Henry leaves and Eric sits alone at the kitchen table. He breathes a great sigh of relief.

The room is silent, except for the continuing rain outside. Eric slowly slumps back down onto his books and falls asleep. The lights slowly go down, and in half lighting, the

corpse in the next room begins to move again. This time, she gets up, leaves the bedroom. She walks into the kitchen, bends over and kisses Eric on the cheek, then leaves through the front door.)

(The set goes completely black for a few moments. When the lights come up, the corpse is back under its sheet in the bedroom and Eric is just waking up in the kitchen. The phone rings.)

Eric: (hops up and gets it) Hello? Oh hey. No, I stayed up a little late last night working on my senior thesis and slept in. Yeah. (His mood changes) Oh...no....No. I just saw him yesterday. Is...Do the police have any idea? Ok...well, I'll be here. Come by. Ok, bye.

(Eric hangs up the phone slowly. He turns and runs up to the bedroom, only to stop fast when he sees the corpse is still under the sheet. He sighs heavily and sits down on the floor in front of the chair.)

Eric: Agnes? (pauses) Agnes? (Waits) Something happened last night. That O' Henry...he was killed at his house. Strangled to death...Agnes? (Eric waits for an answer, in the silence, a brief moan is heard, then-)

(A knock comes at the door. It's Judy. Eric jumps up and runs downstairs, trying to remain calm. When he gets to the door, he tries to fix himself up a little, then he lets Judy in.)

Judy: (comes in and hugs him, much to his surprise) Oh Eric. Mr O<sup>f</sup> Henry! I had seen him so much these last couple of days.

Eric: I know...I saw him last night.

Judy: You should probably talk to the police. They might need to know that.

Eric: Yeah...

Judy: (After a pause) My uncle is coming in to town today. He and his lawyer are fairly sure they want to go ahead with the challenge.

Eric: Why haven't they called me?

Judy: You were supposed to get a legal summons or something in the mail like that.

Eric: Oh. Maybe I didn't see it. (he looks through the stack of mail on his kitchen counter and finds a letter, looks at it, but doesn't open it) Like this?

Judy: (takes the letter) That's his lawyer. I'm sorry Eric.

Eric: Yeah...this is just all happening at such a hard time...Agnes is dead...school is so

stressful...but now, I have to worry about this stuff.

Judy: Eric, I am going to talk to my uncle and try to get him to stop all this. I called him two days ago, but he wasn't at his office. If you give me a chance, maybe I can get this sorted out.

Eric: (looks down) I appreciate it.

Judy: (reaches out for his hand) It's no problem, really.

Eric: (hesitates, then takes her hand) Ok.

(The two sit alone for a few moments quietly. A quiet rasp is heard in the next room. Eric's eyes dart towards the bedroom, but he doesn't turn his head at first. Judy seems to start to notice it, but says nothing at first).

Judy: Eric?

Eric: (startled) Uh, yes?

Judy: Do you hear something?

Eric: Um, yeah. I think I.. .there might be mice up in the attic. I heard them earlier this

week and kept forgetting to call the exterminator.

Judy: Eric! You need to take care of that.

Eric: I know.

Judy: That reminds me, (pulls a piece of paper out of her purse) here is that number. It would be easier to take care of this place with a roommate.

Eric: Yeah... who is this person?

Judy: A girl I knew at the office that is going back to school for a graduate degree. She would be quiet and pretty reliable on the rent.

Eric: Ok, I'll call her.

Judy: And Eric?

Eric: (looking at the paper) Yes?

Judy: You should call an exterminator about the mice.

Eric: I know.



Judy: (getting up) Well, how about coffee or dinner tomorrow?

Eric: Ok...I'd love to.

Judy: I get off work around five, soooo....

Eric: I'm free all night if you want to do dinner or whatever.

Judy: Dinner it is.. I guess I have to pick you up.

Eric: Yeah, I still don't have a car.

Judy: Ok, well I will pick you up in front of your house around eight.

Eric: Great, if you need to change plans or cancel, you know the number.

Judy: Bye. (she walks out the front door)

(Eric waves after her. As soon as the door closes, he jumps up and looks towards the bedroom. The noise has stopped. He quickly walks towards the upstairs, but a coat on the coat rack catches his eye. It is O' Henry's coat. Eric is about to pull it off the rack when he hears another noise. He darts up the stairs. The corpse is still under the sheet. He

tentatively pulls the sheet back, slow and apprehensive. When the head is revealed, the corpse's eyes are open, sending Eric stumbling back.)

Agnes: (in a low rasp) What's wrong Eric?

Eric: I.. .I.. .thought I was...

Agnes: Going crazy? (She sits up a little more, stiffly)

Eric: How is this.. .possible?

Agnes: I told you I would come back.

Eric: I thought that was just.. .talk. Sure, you always said it, but-

Agnes: Eric.

Eric: You always said it, you said "Eric, after I die, don't let them leave me in a cemetery to rot, I'm coming back," but to really see you-

Agnes: (sounding a little more agitated) Eric.

Eric: Back, here, I thought all this wasn't really happening, every day I tried hard not to

think about what I had done. Every day I tried to remind myself that I had made a promise to you-

Agnes: (sounding much more firm) Eric! That's enough. You did what I asked, and I'm happy you did. Now you need to calm down, (she slowly gets up to go to the sink, Eric makes a move to help, but she waves him away) Don't worry, I'm fine, I'm fine. It's going to take a little while to get used walking and talking again, (she washes her face a little at the sink. Eric sits in silence, with a look of dread on his face)

Eric: I'm just still not sure I understand all this.

Agnes: I can explain, just give me a few moments to get collected.

Eric: I have tried to keep your house the way you liked it, but as you can see, I'm not as good a housekeeper as you were, um, are.

Agnes: (still washing) It's your house now Eric.

Eric: But.. .now that you're back...

Agnes: (turns) No one can know Eric, are you serious?

Eric: (looking down) Oh, of course.

Agnes: You will just have to keep on with your daily routine. Do all the things you were going to do before you saw me today.

Eric: (looks at his watch) That means I should probably get ready to go out with Judy.

Agnes: (looks worried) You're dating Judy, my daughter Judy?

Eric: We're not dating, but we are supposed to go out to dinner to talk about legal woes and such. I could cancel.. .you did just come back from dead.

Agnes: No, don't cancel. You're right, it would look odd to cancel. I'll still be here when you get back.

Eric: OK, (he awkwardly comes over and gives her a hug and then smiles. Then Eric leaves the room.)

(The lights go down on the set, and a spotlight comes up on Eric, standing and waiting. He's quiet and staring forward, a dark look on his face. Judy sneaks up behind him and quickly taps him on the shoulder, scaring him.)

Eric: Ah! You scared me.

Judy: Sorry.

Eric: But I'm glad you invited me out.

Judy: You don't seem like you get out much Eric.

Eric: These days...I don't.

Judy: Well why not? You're a happening college kid.

Eric: I've been working on my senior thesis.. .(looks down) but I've never been much of a social butterfly.

Judy: (trying to change the subject) Well where do you go when you go out?

Eric: The grocery store...

Judy: Yeah, but like, on your last date where did you go?

Eric: Umm.. .I've never really gone on dates. Well, I went on one in high school, we went to the pizza place in my neighborhood. But I don't really know any of the pizza places around here.

Judy: Right.. .(smiles) you're mr "poor student."

Eric: Yeah...sorry.

Judy: So I'm probably paying for this date.. .(laughs a little)

Eric: (smirking now) Hey, YOU asked ME out.

Judy: (grabs his arm, starts to pull him) Well let's just walk down the street until we see something we want to eat.

(the two exit the spotlight and it goes down. The lights for the set come up, and Agnes is sitting in her chair, this time the sheet is off. She is watching television.)

Agnes: Rubbish. Absolute rubbish.

(Eric enters downstairs and takes off his coat. He looks towards the stairs and pauses a moment.)

Agnes: (not getting up) Eric? Is that you?

Eric: (pauses) Yeah, I'll be right up. (with a sigh he goes up to her room)

Agnes: Well, how was it?

Eric: Fun. We walked over to a pizza place down by the south end of campus, ate, and hung out there for a while.

Agnes: Well, I have to admit, I'm surprised.

Eric: Surprised?

Agnes: I just have a hard time imagining the Judy I knew wanting to go out with a poor college student. Although I've had some trouble remembering things, maybe she's not that way anymore.

Eric: (silent a moment) Wait, you've had trouble remembering things?

Agnes: Certain things, yes. With certain people I can remember their face but not how I knew them. I recognized a policeman on television earlier but couldn't remember how I knew him.

Eric: Detective O' Henry?

Agnes: Yes, there was a story about him being murdered on the news.

Eric: You used to know him, he lived down the street.

Agnes: Oh my. Well at least he's gone...(trails off)

Eric: To a better place?

Agnes: It wasn't what I thought Eric.

Eric: Oh.

Agnes: It wasn't better.. .it wasn't worse.. .it was just another place. Very strange. There was this large valley with dense foliage. It stretched on for what seemed like an eternity into the distance. I couldn't see what was beyond the mountains. And it was always twilight.

Eric: (sits down on the floor in front of her chair) Were you afraid?

Agnes: When I first got there. But then I remembered that I had always vowed to come back, and I climbed the nearest mountain, always looking up to the sky.

Eric: Looking up? I don't understand.

Agnes: I had fallen from the sky when I got there. When I reached the top of the



mountain, a dark hole opened up in the ground and a blinding light appeared in the sky next to the mountain. I jumped off the mountain towards the light, and now I'm here again.

Eric: That's.. .amazing. You kept your word and came back, (reaches out and holds her hand) Now that you're back, everything is back to normal.

Agnes: Except for the memory loss.

Eric: I can help you remember things.. .and what I don't know, maybe we can ask Judy eventually.

Agnes: Yes, maybe. But, I have had a few blank spots of memory since I came back. A couple nights ago I can't remember what happened. Nor this morning.

Eric: You were aware a couple nights ago.

Agnes: I was silently aware for a couple days when I first came back. I heard things you said.

Eric: What do you remember?

Agnes: I remember you talking about the survey and Harrington.

Eric: Amazing! I thought you were still dead then.

Agnes: You know Eric, I partially came back to help you. I know my life's research was all based around resurrection and I told my colleagues for years that I wanted to come back from the dead to write about it. But I didn't think you were ready for everything.. .life, yet.

Eric: (nods) It has been pretty stressful these past couple of weeks.

Agnes: Now I can take care of you again. I can't do everything I used to, but I can still cook and clean, and listen to your problems.

Eric: So we're a family again.

Agnes: But I want you to watch out. I don't know what Judy's intentions are.

Eric: I don't think you understand. She's changed so much from when you and her stopped talking. She's trying not to live her life around work and money anymore-

Agnes: That may be, and for our sakes, I hope so.

Eric: (withdraws his hand) I think you'd like her now Agnes.

Agnes: Eric, you've gone on one date with my daughter, I have known her for years, she's so much like her father.

Eric: I-

Agnes: (interrupts) I came up with a solution to our problem.

Eric: Our problem?

Agnes: To explain the sudden new person in this household Eric. You will tell people who ask that I'm an elderly woman who has begun renting a room. When people see me,

Eric: But.. .you can't go out. You look.. .dead.

Agnes: I am going to cover up, don't worry. You can tell everyone I have a condition, which has disfigured me. I will wear scarves on my face and such.

Eric: Ok. What will I call you?

Agnes: Um.. .(takes a moment, then decides) Emma. Ms. Emma Bunson.

Eric: (lets out a laugh) Where did that name come from?

Agnes: She was a woman I knew back in college. After she married, she became Emma Gibson. We corresponded for a few years until she and her husband died in a car crash.

Eric: Oh.

Agnes: No one around here would bat an eye at a name like that.

Eric: Well, Emma, I'm going to say goodnight, (he gets up and leaves as the lights go down)

(Lights come up on the set. Eric is making tea in the kitchen. Agnes is nowhere to be seen.

Judy knocks on the door.)

Eric: Hey Judy, how do?

Judy: Eric, I brought you some things.

Eric: (lets her in) Wow, thanks.

Judy: (puts the grocery bag on the table and unpacks it) Here, we have some bananas, a box of pasta, some cans of tomatoes, olive oil, some bread, and some sugar.

Eric: (laughs) Thanks.

Judy: Can you cook?

Eric: Yeah, I can cook a little.

Judy: I thought you could cook me a spaghetti dinner later.

Eric: Oh.. .Yeah I can do that.

Judy: What are you supposed to do today?

Eric: Well I was going to go over to the library and try for some more research. I've still got quite a bit to do for the history section of my senior work.

Judy: (sits down) What is it about?

Eric: Well.. .it's kind of a mix between a literature paper and a history paper. I've done quite a bit of reading about Charlemagne, and I started to realize the "myth of Charlemagne" would be good stomping grounds for my senior thesis.

Judy: (underwhelmed) So it's about Charlemagne?

Eric: Yes. But really, it's about the myth of him and his triumphs, and the corresponding myths and culture it has instilled in the French people. It touches on a great deal of stuff you see throughout French culture, even right up to today.

Judy: Oh.

Eric: You don't seem too impressed.

Judy: Oh, I guess I just don't know much about Charlemagne, other than a few things I learned in my college European history survey. He lived a pretty interesting life though?

Eric: Well.. .sure. He was one of the greatest military minds of his time. But I think all the mythology that has followed in his death is more intriguing. More of the paper is about that. Did you know that there was a time that people were so worried Charlemagne would be resurrected to fight on the side of Anti-Christ during Armageddon, so they disinterred him?

Judy: (smiles) What? They thought he would come back to life and fight for the Anti-Christ? They were that afraid of him?

Eric: No, he was still a hero to them, they were just that afraid of his military wisdom and strength.

Judy: Oh. But him coming back to life seems kind of.. .fantastic.

Eric: People have long thought resurrection was possible.. .and there have been all kinds of writings about the positive and negative aspects of it.

Judy: So-

(Agnes, face obscured by scarves, enters through the front door, and stands shocked for a moment with a bag of groceries.)

Eric: (momentarily panics, but says) Oh, Judy, you should meet my new tenant, Ms. Bunson. She is renting Agnes' old room.

Judy: (stands up, extends her hand) Hello. I'm Judy.

Agnes: Hello, (she doesn't take the handshake, but puts the groceries on the counter and hurries up the stairs to her room, where she collapses into her chair.)

Judy: (sits back down) Did I offend?

Eric: Oh, I don't think so.. .she's kind of shy and all. (leans in closer) She has this condition that has changed her skin, so she doesn't take off those scarves in public.

Judy: Oh, that's terrible.

Eric: Yeah. She's been here a couple days.

Judy: Well I'm glad you found someone to rent mom's old room. So tell me, what did they do to old Charlemagne after they dug him up?

Eric: That's kind of weird actually. I've read one account where everyone came back to their senses and reburied him, and one account where they cremated him so he couldn't join the forces of darkness. I'm going to do more research and find out what actually happened.

Judy: That's weird. I (her cell phone rings, she pauses and answers it) Hey. Oh, well Duke, I'm not sure what to say on that one. Yeah. Yeah. He's kind of a straggler is all.. .Ok, yeah.. .Ok. I'll be over soon, (hangs up) That was work, they're having a situation of some kind with this guy who might be stealing, they want me to come take a look at some files and talk to some people, (she gets up) Are we on for later though?

Eric: Yeah, I can make stuff.. .what time?

Judy: I think I will be done by six or seven.. .so let's say eight?

Eric: Ok.



(Judy gives him a hug and then walks out)

Eric: Bye (he says quietly after she leaves)

Agnes: (from her chair) Eric!

(Eric darts upstairs, enters the room to see her sitting down as usual)

Eric: Is everything ok? You sounded like-

Agnes: I'm fine. I thought we talked about Judy; she's up to something Eric.

Eric: Oh, don't start with that again. Come on. She's my friend. I don't really have any friends, so it's kind of nice.

Agnes: But I'm your friend.

Eric: That doesn't mean Judy can't be too. I'm making her dinner tonight; we're going to hang out. It's no big deal.

Agnes: I've wanted to tell you something Eric. Things have been different the past day or so. I don't sleep anymore ever since I returned. And earlier this morning, my left arm

started feeling numb. I can't move it as easily.

Eric: Hmm. What does that mean?

Agnes: I'm not sure. And unfortunately there's no "expert on resurrection" to go talk to here in town.

Eric: (smiles) Maybe you will feel better tomorrow.

Agnes: Maybe.

(there is an odd silence in the room, Agnes stares straight at the television, which hasn't been turned on)

Agnes: So, you're cooking tonight?

Eric: Yeah...

Agnes: You can cook?

Eric: Um...I can read directions. It's just spaghetti.

Agnes: Well good luck.

Eric: Is there something I should know?

Agnes: You can read directions, I'm sure you'll be fine.

Eric: Agnes, you know I don't cook much, come on.

Agnes: (returning to a more motherly tone) Just try not to overcook it. Overcooked spaghetti is awful.

Eric: (his mood darkens a bit) There's been something I've wanted to ask you the past few days Agnes.

Agnes: Yes?

Eric: I found a coat downstairs, do you know whose it is?

Agnes: A coat?

Eric: Yes Agnes, it's important.

Agnes: I don't remember anything about a coat. Are you sure it's not one of my husband's old coats?

Eric: Agnes, you got rid of his stuff years ago, this coat looked like something I saw on a person recently.

Agnes: Well why don't you ask them about it?

Eric: Because that person passed away recently.

Agnes: Oh. Well...

Eric: Agnes please, you've got to remember something.

Agnes: Eric, I honestly don't know what to say.. (sounding a little more upset) I have a hard time remembering some things that happened or that I do. Perhaps I picked it up when I was out walking.

Eric: Out walking? Are there walks you don't remember?

Agnes: I remember all the ones lately, but the first few I don't remember very well.

Eric: Oh no.

(There is a brief silence)

Agnes: Is everything ok Eric?

Eric: (looking back down towards the coat rack) I think so.

(The lights dim)

by: C. Drew Haddon.