

EXCERPT FROM ACT 1

(SAM sits alone at her living room table, a black trash bag folded down in front of her in way that doesn't reveal its contents. She breathes heavily.)

COLLEEN enters the apartment from stage right, and puts her bag down on a chair next to the door. SAM looks up, alarmed, as if she wasn't expecting anyone to come home. She quickly scrunches up the bag and shoves it under the couch, out of COLLEEN's line of sight.)

SAM

Hey!

COLLEEN

What the hell?

SAM

I'm great, actually, thanks for asking.

COLLEEN

When is your flight?

SAM

Tonight.

COLLEEN

Oh, yeah?

SAM

Yeah. Hour and a half.

COLLEEN

Your flight's in an hour and a half and *this* is what the apartment looks like? What are you doing?

SAM

I'm...packing. Can't you tell?

COLLEEN

This is not cool. This is not what we agreed. Also, the hallway smells like cat piss.

SAM

Well, it's definitely not coming from this apartment. Little late for that.

COLLEEN

Good to see you handling this so tactfully.

SAM

Is Ducky's death still something we need to tiptoe around?

COLLEEN

I'm not asking you to tiptoe, I'm asking you to be considerate.

SAM

I feel like we should be able to talk about it normally after this long. It's been three weeks!

COLLEEN

I didn't come home to have a conversation about grief with you. You had three weeks to move out, Sam – I need to be able to live here again. Alone. Plus, I'm not going to be able to find a new roommate until all of your stuff is –

SAM

I'm almost done!

COLLEEN

What about any of *this* is "almost done"?

SAM

I'll be almost done really soon!

COLLEEN

We agreed that you would be out of here three weeks after I moved out. That's today! And you know it's today!

SAM

We agreed I could still use your Netflix account, but you changed the password on Tuesday.

COLLEEN

Penny had questions.

SAM

Bet you didn't put up much of a fight.

COLLEEN

I was *living* with her! Her apartment is the size of an oven. There were no boundaries. We had to share a pillow.

SAM

The contract has already been violated. Your move, partner.

COLLEEN

You were supposed to *move out*.

SAM

Yeah, on Friday!

COLLEEN

It *is* Friday!

SAM

Five PM on Friday! I have seven hours before the clock strikes midnight.

(SAM zones out, staring wistfully into space.)

SAM

Wow. I'm like Cinderella. If she was homeless, and gay.

COLLEEN

You're not homeless, Sam. I watched you sign a lease.

SAM

Right...the lease...

COLLEEN

Right. The *lease*.

SAM

I don't really know if I'm doing that anymore.

COLLEEN

You don't know if you're – Sam, are you moving to Chicago or not?

SAM

I *was* going to go to Chicago.

COLLEEN

But what *are* you going to do?

SAM

I'm...moving to Buffalo.

COLLEEN

Excuse me? Why the hell are you going to Buffalo? Who lives in Buffalo?

SAM

My mom lives in Buffalo. I'm moving in with her.

COLLEEN

What about Chicago? What about that dumb art gallery?

SAM

I don't know, Colleen! I don't know about the dumb art gallery, okay? I'm trying to figure it out.

COLLEEN

I don't know what else there is to figure out –

SAM

I'm not ready to move to a new city on my own. I'm just going to spend sometime at home first.

COLLEEN

And you're sure about this?

SAM

Yes, I've thought about it a lot and I'd appreciate if you could lay-off. Take off the teacher hat for a minute and talk to me like an adult.

COLLEEN

You're right, I'm sorry – but seriously, fuck Buffalo.

SAM

Colleen!

COLLEEN

It was a joke!

SAM

Can we please not talk about this anymore?

COLLEEN

We don't have to. As long as you *are* actually moving out.

SAM

You really think I'd want to stay here? In *this* emotional climate?

COLLEEN

Don't try to pin this on me! You broke a promise.

SAM

We BROKE UP, Colleen!

COLLEEN
SO WHY ARE YOU STILL IN THIS GODDAMN APARTMENT?

(Silence hangs between the two women. COLLEEN slowly deflates, and SAM turns back to her boxes.)

SAM
Fine. I'll get out. Give me half an hour.

COLLEEN
Thank you. Do you want me to schedule you a ride?

SAM
That would be helpful.

(SAM continues to pack her boxes. COLLEEN sits stiffly on the sofa, scheduling a ride for Sam on her phone. They are silent for a few moments, before SAM speaks.)

SAM
How was Penny's?

COLLEEN
(Without looking up)
I was going to stay on her sofa, but Anna's weird step-mom was in town for one of her shows. So I had to share Penny's bed, and I think she might have bedbugs.

SAM
That sounds awful.

COLLEEN
Beat staying here. I do have to have a conversation with my principle about spreading bedbugs to a bunch of ten year olds, however.

SAM
You know you could have stayed here. I would've slept in the living room.

COLLEEN
How awkward would that have been? "Hey MTV, welcome to my crib! Technically I still share it with my ex-girlfriend."

SAM
Please, MTV would love that.

COLLEEN
It does sound very glamorous.

SAM

See, that's what I'm talking about! We need to start capitalizing on our sadness.

COLLEEN

I might have been able to afford my own place by now.

SAM

What, and leave all this?

COLLEEN

Yeah, how could I give up all these great memories? I should make a photo album of the week that my cat died *and* I broke up with my girlfriend of five years.

SAM

Bad things are supposed to come in threes, so if it was just those two maybe you lucked out.

COLLEEN

Bedbugs.

SAM

I take it back.

(Awkward silence.)

SAM

At least you only had Ducky for a couple years, right?

COLLEEN

(Referring to their relationship)

Yeah. Sucks to have something die after half a decade.

SAM

Really, Colleen?

COLLEEN

You were thinking it.

SAM

You didn't have to say it.

COLLEEN

We don't have to talk about it anymore. Just...tell me how you've been.

SAM

Oh, you know me, I'm all over the place. Yesterday I went to say good-bye to the women who run Holy Donut and they gave me a free dozen, which is honestly pretty nice considering the number of emotional breakdowns I've had in that store.

COLLEEN

I went there yesterday with Penny!

SAM

Did you use the coupons?

COLLEEN

The what?

SAM

The coupons I gave you.

COLLEEN

When...

SAM

For your freaking birthday, Colleen.

COLLEEN

Shit, Sam, come on.

SAM

If you saved at least twenty-five cents on every purchase you made, you could buy a house before the age of thirty.

COLLEEN

Oh yeah? Who said that?

SAM

I was taking a quiz online to see what kind of bagel I am, and the ad just showed up next to it. It was really informative, actually.

COLLEEN

You have to stop clicking pop-up ads. That's where the virus on your computer came from.

SAM

Oh, I've had it up to *here* with that virus. When I was home over the weekend I opened up my computer next to my grandparents and this giant window that just said 'Are YOU into butt stuff?' popped up above a *very* voluptuous young woman's rear-end. My grandma nearly had an aneurysm.

COLLEEN

You need to take your computer back to the store.

SAM

Or I could get Larry from the second floor to fix it for a cold-cut sandwich and I wouldn't even have to drive anywhere.

COLLEEN

Larry always stares at me when I'm wearing my ankle boots.

SAM

Its 'cause your ankles look sexy as *hell*, Colleen, don't pretend like you don't know!

COLLEEN

I don't think you can say that anymore.

SAM

Come on, you know I'm kidding.

COLLEEN

Still.

(Both women are silent for a moment as COLLEEN moves around the apartment, putting away her belongings.)

SAM

Have you eaten dinner yet?

COLLEEN

No. And there's no way you're roping me into getting food. You have to go. I'll eat later.

SAM

Later as in...

COLLEEN

Later as in more than half an hour from now. Later as in *alone*.

SAM

So like...

COLLEEN

After you leave.

SAM

Right. Got it.

(COLLEEN notices a plate in one of the boxes SAM is packing. She picks it up to examine it.)

COLLEEN

This is mine.

SAM

No way! I got that at a flea market in Amish Country.

COLLEEN

No, we got this at a flea market in Amish Country when we went to Pennsylvania. And I paid for it.

SAM

You paid for that?

COLLEEN

I paid for it!

SAM

It was like a buck, Colleen.

COLLEEN

It was a dollar and twenty-five cents. And I paid for it.

SAM

Jesus Christ...yeah, sure. Take it, if you want it.

(COLLEEN looks around at the other boxes, eyeing their contents.)

COLLEEN

I should probably check to make sure you haven't taken anything else of mine.

SAM

Go for it.

(COLLEEN begins picking through SAM's things, tossing a few items aside. SAM watches silently.)

SAM

Oh, come on, not that much of it can be yours!

COLLEEN

How can I trust you after you when you're clearly so confused about what belongs to me?

(COLLEEN holds up a framed picture of BARBARA BUSH and raises her eyebrows.)

SAM

Is that...Barbara Bush?

COLLEEN

I think so. Like the original Bush's wife?

SAM

Yeah, is that yours?

COLLEEN

Hell no! Why would I own a framed photo of Barbara Bush?

SAM

I don't know, but it's not mine.

COLLEEN

No way. It was in your box.

SAM

I've never seen that before!

COLLEEN

So why was it in your box?

SAM

I don't know...I was stressed! I was just throwing things in!

COLLEEN

HAH! So you KNEW you were taking stuff that didn't belong to you!

SAM

What – no! That's not what I meant!

COLLEEN

Let me read back the minutes – “I don't know, I was stressed, I was just throwing things in.” Is that not what you previously stated?

SAM

Hold on – did you plant that photo of Barbara Bush in the box?

COLLEEN

What? No, I'm ruthless, not crazy. I have no idea where this came from.

SAM

You don't care about how a framed photo of a Republican first lady got into our house?

COLLEEN

Are you offended because she's a Republican, Sam?

SAM

I mean, yeah, kind of! I'm not a Republican!

COLLEEN

Yeah, but you also don't vote.

SAM

I asked you to never bring that up again!

COLLEEN

I'm going to keep bringing it up till you register!

(COLLEEN picks up the Amish plate and stands up.)

COLLEEN

I'm going to take this back into the kitchen, and put it in the cabinet where the rat gave birth so you won't touch it.

SAM

Woah, hold on – you can't do that!

COLLEEN

There are enough plates at your mom's house. I don't think you need one of mine.

SAM

It's not about my mom's plates, it's about...it's about...

(SAM begins to pace the living room nervously.)

COLLEEN

Sam, did you try making ramen in the hot water kettle again?

SAM

No, the kettle should be fine.

COLLEEN

It's not another pyramid scheme, is it?

(SAM continues to pace, muttering to herself.)

COLLEEN

Sam, if I walk into that kitchen, are there going to be a bunch of “pond rocks” in the oven again?

SAM

No, no pond rocks.

COLLEEN

Okay, well, I need to put this plate away.

(COLLEEN gets up and begins to walk offstage, towards the kitchen.)

SAM

WAIT!

(SAM throws herself in front of COLLEEN, blocking the entryway to the kitchen.)

COLLEEN

Jesus, *what?*

(SAM plants her hands on COLLEEN’s shoulders and begins to physically push her backwards.)

SAM

You shouldn’t go in the kitchen.

COLLEEN

What the *hell*, Sam?

SAM

I just, um, haven’t cleaned in a while! It’s kind of grimy.

COLLEEN

I’ve been gone for three weeks. How gross can it be?

SAM

Seriously, Colleen. You shouldn’t go in there.

COLLEEN

If there are pond rocks in the oven, I swear to God, I am going to flip a table.

SAM

Would you cool it with the pond rocks? It was one time!

COLLEEN

Tell me why I can't use the kitchen, Sam!

SAM

I did tell you!

COLLEEN

You think I don't know when you're lying to me?

SAM

What?

COLLEEN

I know you're lying. The backs of your knees are sweating.

SAM

How do you –

(SAM feels her knees frantically.)

SAM

Son of a bitch...

COLLEEN

Just tell me the truth.

(COLLEEN glares at SAM, arms crossed.)

SAM

Shit, okay, Jesus – um, this is awkward, but, ah, you remember when Ducky died?

COLLEEN

You're kidding me.

SAM

You...you do remember it, right?

COLLEEN

Sam, we were just talking about this!

SAM

Yes, yes, you're right, we were just talking about it – rest in peace Ducky. Anyway, um, long story short – there's a ghost in our kitchen and you probably shouldn't go in there.

(There is a pregnant pause as the two women stare at each other. COLLEEN's mouth is hanging slightly open, and SAM has clasped her hands together under her chin, begging COLLEEN to not be mad.)

COLLEEN
Excuse me?

SAM
I tried to bring Ducky back to life.

COLLEEN
Excuse me.

SAM
It, uh...definitely went wrong.

COLLEEN
This is so fucked, Sam. I can't deal with this. I'm going back to Penny's.

(COLLEEN begins to gather her things, getting ready to leave.)

SAM
No! Colleen, come on, wait!

COLLEEN
If this is some ploy to make me ask you to stay here longer, it's not going to work!

SAM
Just go look in the kitchen.

COLLEEN
No!

SAM
Please just go look in the kitchen.

COLLEEN
Why?

SAM
That's where the ghost is, dingus!

COLLEEN
If I get murdered in there, I hope everyone...calls you a huge bitch at my funeral!

SAM

That's not very girl power of you!

(COLLEEN glares at SAM and stalks offstage into the 'kitchen'. SAM watches her go and sits down on the sofa, fidgeting nervously. She continues to glance back to where COLLEEN exited.)

COLLEEN walks back onstage a few seconds later. She walks very slowly, her mouth hanging open, her eyes vacant. She looks like - well, like someone who has just seen a ghost.

COLLEEN and SAM are both silent. SAM looks anxiously at COLLEEN, and COLLEEN stares vacantly into the distance.)

COLLEEN

There's a ghost in there.

SAM

Could you say it a little louder for the people in the back?

COLLEEN

I said...I said there's a fucking ghost in there, Sam!

SAM

Uh, yeah. *I know.*

(COLLEEN slowly looks over to SAM, visibly becoming more angry.)

COLLEEN

You're fucking with me. I'm going to give you three seconds for you to tell me you're fucking with me.

SAM

I ate stale tortilla chips for breakfast. How much money do you think I have set aside for pranks?

COLLEEN

One.

SAM

Come on, Colleen, let's talk about this like adults.

COLLEEN

Two...

SAM

I thought it would make you feel better!

COLLEEN
THREE.

(COLLEEN lunges for SAM, chasing her around the living room. They get stuck on opposite sides of the couch, and SAM looks absolutely terrified. COLLEEN is out for blood.)

EXCERPT FROM ACT 2

(Lights come up on MADAME ZELDA and OLIVER, sitting in OLIVER's apartment at a kitchen table.)

MADAME ZELDA
Your upstairs neighbors are exceptionally loud today.

OLIVER
You always say that.

MADAME ZELDA
And it's always true, Oliver!

OLIVER
You worry too much, Aunt Zelda!

MADAME ZELDA
Oliver, what did I tell you?

OLIVER
I said I'm not gonna call you "Madame Zelda". I'm your nephew. It's gratuitous. And super weird.

MADAME ZELDA
No, not that.

OLIVER
Oh...never assume a fish is dead until you've flushed it down the toilet?

MADAME ZELDA
No, Oliver, about neighbors!

OLIVER
Oh, um...never assume you're above leaving a dead fish on a neighbor's doorstep?

MADAME ZELDA

That's right, darling.

OLIVER

My roommates are loud too. They just don't like to be in the house when you're around.

MADAME ZELDA

What a casually callous statement from someone I consider to be such a close companion.

OLIVER

No offense.

MADAME ZELDA

You are a good neighbor, Oliver. And you make our family proud. I cannot believe you or any of your esteemed housemates would be the cause of such a public disturbance.

OLIVER

Will you quit trying to flatter me? I'm not going up there. It's embarrassing.

MADAME ZELDA

Remember this, Oliver – infatuation is not an excuse for excusing misbehavior.

OLIVER

Could you for once, please, for me – just mind your own business? I'm not infatuated with anybody.

(Pause.)

MADAME ZELDA

Oliver.

OLIVER

What?

MADAME ZELDA

Who am I?

(OLIVER grunts and looks at the ceiling.)

MADAME ZELDA

Come now, child, give your auntie a chance. Who *am* I?

OLIVER

You're the most successful medium north of Long Island.

MADAME ZELDA

And?

OLIVER

And the only reason you don't have a show on daytime television is that Maureen Hancock stole your running title "Postcards from Heaven".

MADAME ZELDA

You're exactly right, Oliver. Such a smart boy. With that in mind, I would advise that you put a little more faith in your auntie's abilities.

OLIVER

It's not that I doubt your abilities, I doubt your capacity for setting boundaries –

MADAME ZELDA

Will you fetch me some tea?

(The two stare each other down. MADAME ZELDA finally wins, and OLIVER stands up to begin making tea.)

MADAME ZELDA

Honey ginseng, please, if you would. And sprinkle in some of that lemongrass I bought at the market today.

OLIVER

You can just call it the grocery store.

MADAME ZELDA

A grocery store! What a charming notion! The free market never fails to astound me.

OLIVER

How much do you know about the free market?

MADAME ZELDA

Enough to be concerned about the chances of finding a job with an incomplete college transcript...

OLIVER

Oh, okay. You wanna go there? I can go there.

MADAME ZELDA

Are we going somewhere? I haven't even had my tea yet.

OLIVER

I didn't "fail college", Zelda. I failed *half* of senior year. There's a difference.

MADAME ZELDA

The difference being...

OLIVER

The difference being that I've completed three and a half pretty successful years of college. I'm...

(OLIVER tries to calculate the fraction of college he has completed by counting on his fingers.)

OLIVER

Seven-eighths of the way done!

MADAME ZELDA

Mmhmm...

OLIVER

I fail one semester...one semester! You didn't even graduate high school...

MADAME ZELDA

No, but I did study in a renovated coal mine for several years under a woman who claimed to be a direct descendent of a Morgan le Fay.

(MADAME ZELDA smirks as OLIVER shakes his head in disbelief, continuing to prepare her tea.)

OLIVER

Do you open every appointment with that story?

(The tension is moved past quickly, and they slip comfortably back into banter.)

MADAME ZELDA

Only when it's relevant.

OLIVER

Was it relevant today?

MADAME ZELDA

Oh, Oliver. Today was a train wreck.

OLIVER

Do tell!

MADAME ZELDA

If only you could have seen it. The girl swore up and down she had an uncle who had passed recently, but all I was getting was yapping, like a lapdog, but she swears the only dog she's ever had is alive, in her apartment, and it's sleeping under her bed. She says that the presence she has been sensing must be uncle; they were very close, he never said good-bye, blah blah blah. Then she gets a call from her mother, if I remember correctly, saying her Uncle George turned up passed out under a bridge in Poughkeepsie covered in carburetor fluid and river sludge but besides that unharmed. So she hangs up the phone, runs into her bedroom, and pulls her dog out from under the bed.

OLIVER

Dead?

MADAME ZELDA

Since last night. He ate a sock.

(Sharp rapping on the door.)

MADAME ZELDA

I hope you're not getting solicited in your own home.

OLIVER

Could be a secret admirer.

MADAME ZELDA

I was thinking perhaps it would be the girl who associates with your upstairs neighbors. So perhaps you're right.

OLIVER

You haven't even met her!

MADAME ZELDA

You're blushing, Oliver. Quite hard, I might add.

OLIVER

Just watch it, I'm gonna tell Mom you're harassing me.

MADAME ZELDA

Francine has bigger things to worry about.

OLIVER

Hold one...she *told* you! Mom *told* you!

MADAME ZELDA

Oliver, dear God, stop being so dramatic. You don't wear it well.

(The knocking continues, louder and faster.)

OLIVER
I'll be right back.

(OLIVER yanks the door open to reveal a frantic looking PENNY. PENNY freezes, OLIVER freezes, they look at each other as if the other is the last person they ever expected to see. MADAME ZELDA puts down her tea to stare at them, and stifles a laugh.)

PENNY
Hi, Oliver. Lovely day, right? Not too warm, not too hot.

OLIVER
What?

PENNY
I mean. Not too warm. I'm hot. What? I mean. I saw a cloud shaped like a chicken nugget today. And that's funny because when my parents told me they were getting a divorce I was eating chicken nuggets.

OLIVER
That's crazy, Penny, but what are you doing here?

MADAME ZELDA
I, for one, have never seen a chicken nugget with a distinctive shape. How did this cloud resemble one?

OLIVER
Uh, Penny, this is my Aunt Zelda. She might ask you to call her Mistress of the Fallen Souls, but Zelda is weird enough.

MADAME ZELDA
Madame Zelda, dear.

PENNY
Greetings, Madame Zelda.

(PENNY curtsies deeply. MADAME ZELDA looks amused, and OLIVER is embarrassed.)

EXCERPT FROM ACT 3

(SAM sits on the building's fire escape, her feet dangling between the railings. COLLEEN approaches and sits down next to her, struggling to push her feet through the railings.)

COLLEEN

I feel like I use to fit through these.

SAM

Speak for yourself. I'm the perfect size...

COLLEEN

Alright, Thumbelina.

(SAM snorts in amusement but immediately checks herself, and frowns at COLLEEN.)

COLLEEN

Really, you didn't think that was funny? I thought it was pretty sharp.

SAM

You're right. It was a funny.

COLLEEN

That okay. You're not obligated to laugh at my jokes anymore.

SAM

I'm sorry that I didn't tell you when I took the job in Chicago.

COLLEEN

Guess you couldn't find a good time to bring it up.

SAM

A lot of bad timing recently, huh?

COLLEEN

That's kind of how it feels. But that's always how I felt about us.

SAM

What do you mean?

COLLEEN

Not like that. Things with us never happened when...or how...I expected. And this isn't an exception.

SAM

I guess I never noticed.

COLLEEN

Yeah, you wouldn't.

SAM

I'm sorry.

COLLEEN

Don't be. Not your fault.

SAM

I'm sorry I've been acting like such a freak. Everything would be easier if I had just left when you wanted me to.

COLLEEN

Can you not be so hard on yourself?

SAM

I just couldn't help it – I really thought I was making things better! I don't know how you can stand to be around me right now.

COLLEEN

Ducky was a cat, Sam. Cats die before people do.

SAM

I wanted to give it a shot, at least. And what a fucking horrific shot it was.

COLLEEN

Okay, don't give yourself so much credit. Believe it or not, it was worse being around a literal ghost.

SAM

A ghost with a *lot* of attitude.

COLLEEN

Do you think ghosts go through puberty, in the afterlife?

SAM

Honestly? I think they must.

(Silence for a moment.)

COLLEEN

I wish I were more like you, Sam.

SAM

Are you kidding me? You're the smartest person I know. And the most logical, and the most loyal, and the best at catching really big bugs –

COLLEEN

Everything you do seems to so easy! Why is it so easy for you?

SAM

I just tried to bring a dead cat back to life. I am *personally* responsible for the haunting of our apartment.

COLLEEN

Yeah, you're right.

SAM

Okay, that doesn't mean you have to take the compliment back!

(They both laugh, and COLLEEN leans her head onto SAM's shoulder.)

COLLEEN

I don't. You've got a crazy mind, Sam. I like it.

SAM

Thanks. I do too.

COLLEEN

Do you think you'll ever tell anyone about this?

SAM

Oh, yeah. All the time. I want people to know what they're getting themselves way in advance.

(COLLEEN laughs, and they fall silent again.)

COLLEEN

The moon looks nice tonight.

SAM

Like a scoop of ice cream.

COLLEEN

I couldn't see the man on the moon till I was fourteen. Did you know that?

SAM

It's not a man. It's Christopher Walken.

COLLEEN

You think so?

SAM

I'd like to think so.

COLLEEN

You think anyone's ever made-out on the moon?

SAM

Not recently. But I'm sure there were some astronauts gettin' their freak on at some point.

(SAM sits up straight, mildly alarmed.)

SAM

Has anyone ever been conceived on the moon?

COLLEEN

There have been exactly zero women on the moon. So probably not.

SAM

Really? No women on the moon? What has third wave feminism been up to these days?

COLLEEN

It is high time we have a Women's March on the moon!

(SAM laughs, and they sit in silence for another moment.)

COLLEEN

Would you go to the moon? If you had the chance? If NASA gave you a free round-trip ticket?

SAM

Probably not.

COLLEEN

Really?

SAM

I think Earth is silly enough.

(They sit in silence for a moment, their legs swaying.)