

# OVER MY DEAD BODY

A One Act Play by Jean Blasiar

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A ghost and her husband (in a loft above the dining room table) are prepared to haunt the house below before they'll let their family sell the house that has been theirs for three generations.

Cast:

Miranda 60's

Ben 60's

Stella 40's

Frank 40's

Jessica 20's

Dylan 20's

Mr. Horace 40's

Francis 50's

AT RISE Miranda (60's) and BEN (60'S) are sitting on a second story platform above the dining room of their former house.  
A very sturdy pole is in the center of the platform.

Miranda and Ben are deceased.

In angel form, they are watching what their family is doing downstairs (first floor, dining room) since their demise (separately) within the past six months.

On the ground level sitting around the dining room table are FRANK (late 40's), STELLA (late 40's), their daughter JESSICA (20's) and son DYLAN (20's).

MIRANDA

(enters loft; sits next to Ben)

Who they talking about?

BEN

Charlie. Jessica's new boy friend.

MIRANDA

Another one? What happened to the last one?

BEN

He's in jail.

MIRANDA

I never liked him anyway.

BEN

The new one's no better.

AMANDA

How do you know?

BEN

When he left here last night, I followed him.

MIRANDA

Oh, Ben, you old pervert.

(snuggles closer)

Tell me everything.

BEN

Later. I want to hear what they're saying.

Stella wants to sell the house.

MIRANDA

Over my dead body.

Ben looks at her.

MIRANDA

I'll haunt her. I'll give her nightmares.

BEN

Sh-h, listen.

Unanimated up until now, the family in the dining room comes alive.

STELLA (wife, mother)

It's a mausoleum, Frank. The only time people visit us is on Halloween.

JESSICA (daughter)

My friends asked if we had a cousin Itt.

DYLAN (son)

Is that the half man half beast in the basement?

STELLA

Dylan! Stop that! You see, Frank, they make jokes about us and this house. The neighbors have a petition to tear it down.

FRANK (husband, father)

It's my boyhood home.

MIRANDA

(in the loft)

You tell her, Frankie.

STELLA

And look at your warped childhood.

MIRANDA

Watch it, sister.

JESSICA

I have a date.

STELLA

And I suppose he doesn't want to pick you up here.

JESSICA

No, he doesn't.

STELLA

You see, Frank.

JESSICA

He said you put a spell on him, dad. He swears he was followed home last night. A black cat jumped out at him and he was hit with a snowball.

STELLA

What snow?

BEN

(from the loft)

It was foam. The wuss.

JESSICA

He's not coming here any more.

DYLAN

Good. If it keeps creeps like Charlie away, I say we keep the house. I like how it creaks at night.

JESSICA

That's your grandmother looking for her cat.

MIRANDA

(from the loft)

I know that witch drove Tiger somewhere and abandoned him. I'll find him and when I do, look out Mortitia.

BEN

(from the loft)

Did you look in the lost and found section up here?

MIRANDA

Not there. He's following the scent back to the house. That's another reason why they can't move.

BEN

You can't stop them, Miranda.

MIRANDA

You watch me. Nobody will buy this house after I get through haunting it.

JESSICA

(downstairs)

It is haunted, you know.

STELLA

Jessie! Don't ever say that. We'll never dump... sell it if people think it's haunted.

FRANK

It *was* haunted by my grandfather. He was a tyrant.

MIRANDA

(in the loft; to Ben)

You going to let him talk that way about your father?

BEN

It's true. He was a tyrant. Chased anybody who he suspected wasn't a blueblood out of town. He walks around the house at night making sure all the appliances are off. Tight as they come. Always turning off the furnace and the lights to save a few cents. Never trusted electricity.

JESSICA  
(downstairs)  
Is he the one who turns off the furnace at night?

STELLA  
That's your father.

FRANK  
No, it isn't. I thought it was you.

DYLAN  
My lamp goes out at eleven o'clock every night.  
I thought there was a timer on it.

FRANK  
That would be dad. Lights out eleven o'clock.

STELLA  
You don't mean that he...  
(looks around slowly)

JESSICA  
I think it's kinda cool that somebody's watching  
over us like that. At least, I did until he started  
chasing away my boy friends.

STELLA  
(pats her daughter's hand)  
There's a better class of boys in Florida, dear.

DYLAN  
WHAT? You're delusional.

FRANK  
Dylan. Don't speak to your mother like that.

DYLAN

Dad, if she thinks that boys that Jessica drags home are going to be any more refined than that jerk last night...

JESSICA

Hey!

STELLA

We will be living in a more refined area in Florida. Betsy says...

FRANK

Stella... don't use your sister as a reference. We won't be moving on Betsy's recommendation.

STELLA

She's right on the beach, Frank. Right out her front door.

FRANK

I'm not so sure that the beach is a proper environment for the children.

STELLA

Oh. And this Amityville berg is?

DYLAN

(hangs his head)

Florida! All that sunshine. Every day.

STELLA

You'll get used to it.

DYLAN

I hate it now. Three times a year. I thought that's why we moved to Philadelphia.



STELLA

What do you care if the sun is shining? All you do is sit in your room with your eyes glued to that computer. I can make a killing as a realtor in Boca. Five million dollar homes.

FRANK

Stella... we can't afford a home in Boca Raton.

STELLA

*Outside* Boca. Betsy says...

FRANK

I don't want to hear what Betsy says.

JESSICA

(turns to Dylan)

Maybe you hate sunshine because you're a vampire.

DYLAN

Maybe I am. Let's test it. Come here, you wench.

Dylan moves to bite Jessica's neck.

FRANK

Dylan! Stop that.

JESSICA

You are soooooo weird, Dylan. No wonder my friends ask if we have a cousin Itt.

STELLA

(pondering the move to Florida)

Before we put the house on the market, we have to clean out all the cobwebs.

DYLAN

And the ghosts.

STELLA

Don't breathe a word about the ghosts. We don't want anybody to know.

FRANK

Oh, they'll know, all right. The first time things start to happen, they'll know.

STELLA

What things?

FRANK

You'll see. My mother never wanted this house to fall in the hands of anyone but the Goulds.

STELLA

What could a dead old woman possibly do to stop it?

FRANK

I don't think you want to find out, my dear. There's a lot of devil in that "dead old woman".

Miranda and Ben look at each other and give a high five.

STELLA

I don't believe in ghosts, Frank.

FRANK

You will, Stella. You will. We've only been here a few nights. Wait til she gets started.

Eerie music.

Blackout.

## Scene Two

In the blackout...

Stella enters from the back bedroom. She's carrying a flashlight, bumps her toe on a piece of furniture.

STELLA

Damn!

(looks around)

You don't scare me, Miranda Gould. I'm not afraid of ghosts. Turn the power back on. I know you're responsible.

She tries the wall switch. No power.

STELLA

I heard you walking around down here. If you're looking for your cat, Miranda, you might as well give up. Tiger was as mean as you were. He bit Jessica's boy friend. You didn't like that boy, did you. I'm wise to you, old woman. You didn't like me either. Trying to keep the family lineage upper crust, were you? Well, guess what, Miranda, I'm the lady of the house now and what I say goes. We're selling this monstrosity before it falls down with the next earthquake. And when it goes, I hope we never hear from you again. Now turn the damn power back on.

All of a sudden lights, buzzers, alarms, motors, electric gadgets go off, inundating Stella with no much noise, she has to hold her ears.

Jessica, Dylan and Frank come running into the room in their nightclothes.

FRANK

What the hell is going on?

STELLA

Your mother thinks she's being funny. Turn everything off and go back to bed. Frank, I've told you before, your mother is a miserable old woman, who doesn't have anything better to do than wake up people in the middle of the night.

(looks skyward)

Don't you have any old cronies up there to play maj jongg with? Lucille Miller passed away last week. Go look her up.

The family looks at Stella as if she's lost her mind.

FRANK

It's only the beginning, Stella. Give it up.

STELLA

(vowing)

Never!

Blackout

### Scene Three

Stella has papers covering half of the dining room table. She's busy with her calculator and pen, figuring costs, etc.

Ben is sitting alone in the loft, smoking his pipe.

Jessica enters the dining room.

JESSICA

Mother, she won't stop.

STELLA

Ignore her, dear.

JESSICA

How can I ignore her when she keeps moving things back. I empty her closet, leave the room for two minutes and all the stuff is back in the closet.

Stella looks up with an idea.

STELLA

Your grandmother was afraid of dogs. Don't you know someone whose dog you can borrow just until we get rid of all of her things?

JESSICA

First of all I don't have any friends here in Amityville and if I did, what would I tell them? Excuse me, may I borrow your dog for a few days until we get rid of my dead grandmother?

STELLA

(reabsorbed in her work)

Do the best you can, dear. Get Dylan to help you.  
Miranda liked Dylan. I think because he's as  
incorrigible as she was.

Jessica exits.

In the loft, Miranda joins Ben.

BEN

Where you been?

MIRANDA

(grins)

I'm having such fun. I think I can get Dylan to  
help me sabotage the move.

BEN

Remember the rules. No touching, hugging or  
kissing.

MIRANDA

Does that go for you, too?

BEN

No, not me, too.

MIRANDA

Good.

(comes over and gives Ben a kiss)

I missed you, you know.

BEN

I missed you, too. A couple of women up here were getting a bit frisky while I was waiting for you to join me. I told them I was saving myself for the woman I married fifty five years ago.

MIRANDA

Who are they? What are their names?

BEN

They moved on.

MIRANDA

(hugs Ben)

I like it here.

BEN

It was worth it, right?

MIRANDA

I guess. But I still miss the house.

BEN

They're just things, Miranda. Let the kids do what they want with the house.

MIRANDA

I want it for our great grandchildren and I want a place to visit. And I WANT MY CAT! She took it some place out in the country and let it go.

BEN

It's happier.

MIRANDA

But I want to visit it. And my house. They're packing up the china. Did you know that? Your mother's china. Probably giving it away.

BEN

I don't care about any of that stuff any more. Let's do something fun. Maybe visit some of our old friends and neighbors.

MIRANDA

Right after I nudge Dylan into getting off his duff and helping me. Two days, Benjamin. Three at the most. Just let me save the house from the wrecking ball. I loved your parents. When we moved in, your parents told me to make their house ours, and I did. I loved it as much as you did. More. I never had a home of my own before I married you. I love every little corner of that house.

BEN

Okay, sweetheart. If it means that much to you. I'll wait for you at the buffet.

MIRANDA

Don't sit with that hussy from Texas again. She has eyes for you, Benjamin.

BEN

Oh, Miranda. Those days are behind us.

MIRANDA

They're not behind her. If it weren't for gravity, I'd kick her into the next millennium.



BEN

(whispers)

I like it when you talk dirty, Miranda.

MIRANDA

Why are you whispering? Nobody's watching any more.

BEN

I don't know. We could be under surveillance. Maybe we could be sent back.

MIRANDA

I wish. Just for one day so's I could...

BEN

Don't say it, Miranda. Wishes may come true.

MIRANDA

Just don't sit with thirty eight knockers from Texas in the cafeteria again, Benjamin, if you value your...

(leans over and whispers something)

BEN

(shocked; looks around)

Miranda! What if someone...

MIRANDA

Go on now. And no impure thoughts. Remember where you are.

Ben exits the second level behind hidden (draped) stairs.

Downstairs, Dylan enters, all excited.

DYLAN

Psst! Grandma! You there? Listen, mom's determined to sell the house. She's bringing in a...

Voices O.S.

Stella and a man (MISTER HORACE) enter.

STELLA

There you are, Dylan dear. I want you to meet Mister Horace. He's a... realtor in my office.

DYLAN

Yeah? How's it goin'?

MR. HORACE

Good. In my business, that's a good thing. Goin'?

DYLAN

Oh. Houses, you mean.

STELLA

(covering)

Yes. Of course, houses. Why don't you go up to your room, sweetheart, while I show Mister Horace the house.

Dylan exits; looks suspiciously at Mr. Horace.

Stella waits to speak until after Dylan leaves. She even checks the door to be sure he isn't behind it listening.

STELLA

(to Mr. Horace; whispers)

He and his grandmother were very close.

MR. HORACE

Why are you whispering?

STELLA

This is the room where the strange things happen. She's watching, believe me.

Mr. Horace looks around suspiciously, even a little timidly.

MR. HORACE

What things, exactly?

STELLA

She doesn't want me to sell the house. Or give away the china. She turns the lights off in here. And she messes with the thermostat.

MR. HORACE

Oh, please. In my thirty years of...

STELLA

Trust me. She's watching. And Dylan, my son, tells her everything. I've heard him talking to her when he didn't know I was around.

MR. HORACE

That's not uncommon. Ghosts frequently befriend one member of the house.

STELLA

You came highly recommended. Can you get rid of her?

MR. HORACE

Of course. I specialize in house exorcizing. People, I find more tricky. But houses don't fight back.

STELLA

I should warn you. Miranda was a champion arm wrestler at this bar where they used to hang out.

MR. HORACE

She's no match for me. I'm very strong.

STELLA

Yeah. Well, good luck. I don't want to watch.

MR. HORACE

I don't want you to. Just leave everything to me.

Stella looks around suspiciously, exits.

Mr. Horace walks around the room, touching the table, looking at the china in the cabinet, then up at the ceiling.

Miranda is keeping close tabs on him. It's eyeball to eyeball.

MR. HORACE

(directed at the ceiling)

I should tell you that I arm wrestled my way through college. Let's see how tough you are.

Mr. Horace sits down at the head of the dining room table. He puts his right elbow on the table and waits.

Suddenly, his arm plops on the table. Aced!

Miranda concentrates, her eyes open, not waivering from Mr. Horace's arm, all of her concentration centered on the "fall".

Mr. Horace is dumbfounded that Miranda whipped him.

MR. HORACE

Two out of three.

And again, Mr. Horace puts up his arm and Miranda quickly beats him again.

Mr. Horace is now livid.

He closes his eyes and concentrates on exorcizing Miranda.

After several seconds of deep concentration, he waves both hands at the ceiling.

A big wind, stage left (fans o.s.) attacks Miranda, so much so that she has to hold onto the pole to keep from being blown away. Her hair and gown are blowing in the wind. She keeps her eyes closed, head down, bucking the gale.

Miranda holds on.

Mr. Horace gives up before Miranda.

Mr. Horace is exhausted. He stands, takes a deep breath, closes his eyes and concentrates once again on exorcizing Miranda.

A big wind comes from stage right this time, trying to suck Miranda into it.

Mr. Horace concentrates with all of his might.

Miranda hangs onto the pole for dear life.

Finally, Mr. Horace collapses into a chair; the suction stops abruptly.

Miranda settles down on the floor.

Both Mr. Horace and Miranda are exhausted.

Stella sticks her head in.

STELLA

Any luck?

MR. HORACE

I'll be back tomorrow. I need reinforcements.

Mr. Horace gives one last look at the ceiling before exiting.

Stella looks up at the ceiling.

STELLA

You haven't beaten me. I'll get you, you devil.

Miranda grins, gives Stella the finger.

BLACKOUT