

Moose Tracks

A Play by

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“The bird hunting a locust is unaware of the hawk hunting him.” – Proverb

“You must have hated this moose.” – Dudley Moore

Dedicated to my biggest fan and toughest critic... my mom.

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Moose Tracks

Characters: (In order of appearance. Six characters: Three Women, Two Men and a Moose)

Harvey Pressman: A dentist and a hunter in his late sixties or early seventies who's very protective of his granddaughter.

Victoria Pressman: A wife and a grandmother in her late sixties or early seventies who wishes she were a single, spinster lady. She's still madly in love with her dead dog.

Betty Franklin: A psychic (self-taught) in her late seventies and Victoria's best friend. Actually, her only friend. She is hard of hearing and forgetful, especially when it comes to her hearing aid.

Johnny Fortis: A young man in his twenties who just walked into problems. Lots of 'em.

Skyler Pressman: A young woman in her twenties, who keeps losing things... especially boyfriends.

Hayward: A moose on a wall, but a live male human voice is crucial to the part.

Setting: Three room set: a dining room stage right, a living room next to it center stage and an office next to that stage left in a lavish, overly-ritzy, yet extremely old-fashioned mansion. A car is also needed, but can be imagined.

Time: A long night's journey into day in the digital age.

Act One/Scene One

Scene One: The séance and the car ride.

(Evening in the dining room. At rise, HARVEY, VICTORIA and BETTY are seated around a dimly-lit dining room table. There is a small candle in the center of the table and the three are holding hands and having a séance. There are several stuffed animal heads hanging on the walls, perhaps an elk and a deer, maybe a buffalo. HARVEY is dressed in full hunter attire, camo or beige khakis, flak jacket, etc. and he wishes he was anywhere else but sitting at this table, but VICTORIA and BETTY are very much into it. VICTORIA sheds a few tears as BETTY conducts the ritual and all three have their eyes closed, though HARVEY sneaks a few peeks periodically.)

BETTY

We are here tonight... to call out to you... we are all here for you. We all want to be here...

(HARVEY scoffs. VICTORIA kicks him in the shin from under the table. HARVEY bites his lip to keep from screaming in pain.)

BETTY *(Cont'd, unabated)*

If you are here with us tonight and you left this world with any unfinished business...

(HARVEY scoffs again. VICTORIA kicks under the table again but HARVEY opens his eyes and then dodges his legs out of the way this time.)

VICTORIA (*With her eyes still closed*)
Harvey?! Please! This is serious!

HARVEY
Unfinished business?! What kind of—

VICTORIA (*Overly hostile*)
SSSSHHHH!

(*HARVEY covers his mouth again, but this time to keep from laughing out loud.*)

BETTY (*Right back into it*)
So, if you are here with us tonight, Mr. Pawpaw, then please come out and join—

HARVEY
Who?

BETTY
Mr. PawPaw.

HARVEY
Who the hell is Mr. PawPa—

VICTORIA (*She shakes her head*)
You don't even know the name of your own—

HARVEY
Our dead dog's name was Pockets.

VICTORIA
That's right.

HARVEY
Right? (*A beat*) Okay, then, so who was—

VICTORIA
PawPaw was his last name.

HARVEY
His *what*?

VICTORIA
His last name. Have you ever heard of a dog without a last name?

HARVEY
Yes.

VICTORIA

Oh, yeah? Which one?

HARVEY

ALL OF THEM!

VICTORIA

That's ridiculous. Every dog has a last name.

HARVEY (*Scoffs*)

Yeah. (*A beat*) On Mars, maybe... or Pluto.

BETTY (*Gasps*)

PLUTO DIED?!

VICTORIA (*Sighs*)

No, Betty. Harvey meant the planet.

HARVEY

No, not anymore, they kicked Pluto out of the planet clique. Actually, out of the whole solar—

BETTY

A plant? Pluto was a plant? I thought he was a dog? (*A beat*) What kind of plant?

VICTORIA (*Frustrated*)

NOT A PLANT! A PLANET!

BETTY (*Gasps*)

Pluto was an alien from another planet? Which one?

HARVEY

Whichever one you're still orbiting.

VICTORIA

HARVEY?!

HARVEY

What?! She's your friend! Tell her to turn her hearing aid back on!

VICTORIA (*To BETTY*)

BETTY? TURN YOUR HEARING AID BACK ON!

HARVEY (*Rubbing his ears*)

Now I need one.

BETTY

Huh?

VICTORIA (*To BETTY*)

TURN YOUR HEARING AID ON!

HARVEY (*Rubbing his ears again*)

I think you just did.

BETTY (*Touches her ear*)

Sorry... excuse me... now then... shall we continue?

VICTORIA

PLEASE!

BETTY (*Grabs her ears in pain*)

I already turned it on!

VICTORIA (*Whispers*)

Sorry. Please.

BETTY

Very well... now then... Pluto...

VICTORIA

PawPaw.

BETTY

Pluto PawPaw... if you are here with—

VICTORIA

No, not Pluto. Just PawPaw.

BETTY

Just PawPaw, if you—

HARVEY

No, Pockets.

VICTORIA

Fine, Pockets. Pockets PawPaw.

BETTY (*Shakes her head*)

Your dog had a last name?

VICTORIA

Yes! Our dog had a last name!

BETTY

Okay, then, Mr. Pockets PawPaw, if you're here with—

HARVEY

Why not Pressman?

VICTORIA (*Sighs*)

What?

HARVEY

Why wasn't his name Press—

VICTORIA

That's ridiculous. Why on earth would the dog have the same last name as we do?

HARVEY

BECAUSE HE WAS OUR DOG!

VICTORIA

Yeah, but not since birth.

HARVEY

Oh, well, then. That makes total sense.

VICTORIA

Thank you, you're finally starting to see things my way.

HARVEY

I crossed my eyes.

VICTORIA (*Nods*)

Sometimes that's the only thing that works for me too.

HARVEY

When do you cross your eyes?

VICTORIA

When I look in the mirror.

HARVEY

Does it make a difference?

VICTORIA (*Crosses her eyes*)

You tell me.

(*A beat*)

HARVEY

Tell me when you're gonna cross 'em.

VICTORIA

Very funny.

HARVEY

Bet the mirror has a tough time not laughin'.

VICTORIA

Every time.

BETTY (*Off in her own world*)

I often wonder if Picasso crossed his eyes while he was painting.

(*A long pause as HARVEY and VICTORIA just stare at BETTY. No one knows how to respond right away. Finally...*)

HARVEY

I often wonder the same exact thing.

BETTY

You do?

HARVEY

I do when I take Ambien.

VICTORIA

You don't take Ambien.

HARVEY

I wish I took some tonight.

VICTORIA

Well, this is your own fault by now.

HARVEY

My fault?!

VICTORIA

Of course, we could have been done a long time ago. If you could just learn to keep your mouth closed for five seconds.

HARVEY

Fine.

(HARVEY turns back to face BETTY again.)

BETTY

Oh, right. *(Getting back into it)* Now then, Mr. Pockets PawPaw, I call out to you once again... that is to say, if your spirit is still here with us tonight in this house... and you feel that you have unfinished business you didn't have a chance to deal with while you were still of this earth... then—

(Unable to contain himself anymore, HARVEY bursts out laughing.)

VICTORIA

SHUT UP, HARVEY!

HARVEY *(Through the laughter)*

I'm sorry, I can't help it. Unfinished dog business? Like what? Oh wait, I know, he finally found that stick and brought it back.

VICTORIA

What stick?

HARVEY

The one from eight years ago. The one I told him to fetch.

VICTORIA

He's only passed away three years ago.

HARVEY

I threw it pretty far.

VICTORIA

Well, that's not the kind of unfinished business Pockets Patches would—

HARVEY

I thought you said his name was Pockets PawPaw?

VICTORIA

Patches was his middle name.

HARVEY (*To BETTY*)

Did our dog see a shrink?

BETTY

Yes, I think they do shrink as they get older. Just like we do.

HARVEY (*To VICTORIA*)

You know, a doggie shrink might have been able to cure his Multiple Marmaduke Disorder. If you loved the mutt, maybe—

VICTORIA

HOW DARE YOU?! YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I LOVED POCKETS PATCHES PAWPAW!

HARVEY

Picked a peck of pickled peppe—

VICTORIA

HARVEY!

HARVEY

What?! How can you not wanna finish that tongue twister?

BETTY

Oh, I used to love Twister! I used to play it all the time, when I was younger. Now the game should be called... Twist-OW!

(A long pause. HARVEY and VICTORIA don't know how to respond to BETTY by this point. A long silence. Finally...)

HARVEY

Well, shall we try again?

BETTY

Fry a hen? (*A beat*) I'd never! I'm a vegetarian.

HARVEY

Is that what you call yourselves on your planet? (*Sighs. To VICTORIA*) I thought she turned it back on?

VICTORIA

It still doesn't work all the time, even when she turns it on. It's old and sometimes just doesn't work.

HARVEY

Probably the same manufacturer as your cell phones.

VICTORIA

Not now.

HARVEY

Remember our deal.

VICTORIA (*Sighs*)

Fine. But it's never gonna happen if we don't finish this séance first, remember?

HARVEY

I wonder how many conversations have ended with the same sentence.

BETTY

I bet more than you think.

HARVEY

Yeah, in Haiti.

VICTORIA

I'm not even gonna dignify that with a response.

HARVEY

You just did.

VICTORIA

I mean a real one.

HARVEY

Will wonders never cease?

VICTORIA

I've got all night, do you?

HARVEY (*Sighs*)

Fine. (*To BETTY*) Come on, Betty, let's try this again, what'd you say?

(BETTY leans down and retrieves her purse.)

HARVEY (*Cont'd*)

Oh great, she's given up on Pockets, now she's gonna try and channel her car keys.

VICTORIA

Don't be ridiculous.

HARVEY

What makes that so much more ridiculous than any of this?

VICTORIA

Everything. You know Betty can't drive anymore.

(BETTY reaches into her purse and removes her cell phone and answers it.)

BETTY

Hello?

HARVEY

How could anyone in their right mind think she's unfit to drive?

BETTY

Hello?

HARVEY

Tell the mothership to call back after the voodoo session.

VICTORIA

It's not polite to make fun of her just because she—

HARVEY

Hasn't figured out how to text in Klingon yet?

VICTORIA

Give me a break, she doesn't know how to text in English. In fact, she doesn't even know what text even mean—

HARVEY

Shh! E.T.'s got no reception in the black hole!

VICTORIA

No, it's because she—

HARVEY

Hasn't hung up yet?

VICTORIA

A DINOSAUR!

(A long silence. Then BETTY hangs up the phone and holds it up for VICTORIA to see.)

BETTY

No, actually, I think it's called a Jitterbug.

(VICTORIA puts her hand on BETTY'S hand and the phone and lowers both back down the table.)

VICTORIA

I know it is, sweetheart. I know it is.

HARVEY

Victoria has one, too.

(VICTORIA starts to stand up. HARVEY gently pulls her back down to the table again.)

HARVEY *(Cont'd)*

Don't get in a huff. I'm only playin'. I'm sorry. Alright?

VICTORIA

Thank you.

(A long pause)

HARVEY

I know you've got two.

(VICTORIA starts to stand up again. HARVEY pulls her back down to the table again, this time more forcefully.)

HARVEY *(Cont'd)*

I'm sorry. I couldn't resist.

VICTORIA

You hurt me that time.

HARVEY

Physically or emotionally? *(A beat)* Forget it, I'm sure it was emotionally, 'cause the physical pain at our age goes without saying.

(A long silence. VICTORIA gives HARVEY a silent but deadly stare.)

HARVEY *(Cont'd)*

Okay, I'm sorry. Please, let's just finish getting this over with. I'll be good from now on. I promise.

VICTORIA *(Sighs)*

Fine.

(HARVEY nods then turns back to BETTY.)

HARVEY

Well, let's get goin' again, what do you say?

BETTY

Huh?

HARVEY

Who was on the phone?

BETTY

I'm not sure. I think it was—

VICTORIA

A wrong number?

BETTY

I get them a lot.

HARVEY

Thin air has fat fingers, tough to dial.

BETTY

But it wasn't a wrong number this time, it was—

HARVEY

Please don't say Pockets. Please don't say Pockets.

BETTY

Who?

HARVEY

PawPaw.

BETTY (*To VICTORIA*)

She changed her name?

VICTORIA

Who?

HARVEY

Pockets was a boy.

BETTY

Do you think it's just a phase?

VICTORIA

Betty? What are you talking about?

BETTY

Skyler. Or is it Pockets Patches Skyler PawPaw now? Or Skyler PawPaw Patches Pockets, oh, now I've gone cross-eyed.

HARVEY

Join the club.

VICTORIA

Betty, forget about Pockets PawPaw.

HARVEY

You first.

VICTORIA (*Ignoring HARVEY*)

What about Skyler?

BETTY

I think that's who was on the phone.

VICTORIA

Skyler was on the phone?

HARVEY

Only the one in her head.

BETTY

I think it was her.

VICTORIA

What's she say?

HARVEY

Let me out of your dementia, it's dark in here.

VICTORIA

HARVEY?!

HARVEY

What? Why are you placating your friend? You know it wasn't Skyler on the phone.

BETTY

But I think it was her.

HARVEY

Did the butterflies tell you that, sweetie?

VICTORIA

Butterflies? What butterflies?

HARVEY

The ones floating around her head.

BETTY (*Looking around*)

Oh, you see them too?

HARVEY

Of course I do. (*A long pause*) When I cross my eye—

VICTORIA

STOP MAKING FUN OF MY FRIEND!

HARVEY

Come on, that's like sayin', whatever you do, (*Points up into the fly space*) don't look up there.

(*BETTY is the only one who looks up into the fly space.*)

HARVEY (*To VICTORIA*)

You see?

VICTORIA

I didn't look.

HARVEY

But I know you wanted to.

BETTY

How did the butterflies get up there?

HARVEY

Well, sweetheart, they're not exactly called butterdrops are they?

VICTORIA

I'M NOT KIDDING, HARVEY! STOP MAKING FUN OF—

HARVEY

I'm just trying to prove a point.

VICTORIA

What? That you're a complete jerk?

(HARVEY gestures to BETTY, still looking up at the butterfly space.)

HARVEY *(Gestures to BETTY)*

No, that all of that's how I know it wasn't Skyler on her imaginary phone ca—

(On cue: the cell phone in VICTORIA'S front pocket starts ringing. VICTORIA quickly retrieves it and answers it.)

VICTORIA *(Panic-stricken)*

Skler?... Is that you?... Are you all right, my angel?... *(A beat)* Oh, really?... yeah... uh-huh... or course... okay, then.

(VICTORIA quickly hangs up and puts the cell phone back in her front pocket. Then VICTORIA and HARVEY stare at BETTY, whose head is still in the clouds. After a long pause, BETTY finally lowers her head and smiles. Then she answers her own non-ringing Jitterbug again.)

BETTY

Hello? *(BETTY covers the phone.)* I'm sorry, I have to take this.

HARVEY

Is it the butterflies or Pockets?!

VICTORIA

Pockets?

HARVEY

Of course.

VICTORIA

Why are you talkin' crazy?

HARVEY

I'm trying to fit in. *(A beat)* Wait a minute, talkin' crazy? Does that mean you're finally willing to accept that it was silly to try and have a stupid séance for a dead dog?

VICTORIA

I'd never give you the satisfac—

HARVEY *(Pointing up)*

OH, MY GOD! WHAT'S THAT?!!! *(VICTORIA quickly looks up into the fly space. HARVEY grins.)* I knew I could get you to look.

(VICTORIA quickly lowers her head and gives HARVEY an evil stare.)

BETTY (*Covers the phone, then to both:*)
And if you don't mind, it's kind of private.

HARVEY (*As he stands up*)
Non-entities are so anti-social.

(*VICTORIA stands up slowly and both HARVEY and VICTORIA cross to exit.*)

HARVEY (*To VICTORIA*)
So, what did Skyler say?

VICTORIA
I don't want to tell you.

HARVEY
Why not?

VICTORIA
Two reasons. One, you'll get excited like you always do and you'll run outta here to go get ready to embarrass us again. And two... 'cause you'll make fun of me again.

HARVEY
I will not. (*A beat*) Unless... did she find Pockets?

VICTORIA (*Sighs*)
No. She found Fortis.

HARVEY
What's a Fortis?

(*VICTORIA whispers in HARVEY'S ear. Immediately, HARVEY gets excited and then barrels out of the dining room and into the unlit living room, and finally, the unlit office.*)

VICTORIA (*Calling after him*)
I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU WEREN'T GONNA EMBARRASS US?! (*To herself*) You'd think after forty two years of marriage I'd have known him better than this, wouldn't you?

(*Just before VICTORIA is entirely offstage...*)

BETTY
Victoria?

(*VICTORIA turns back.*)

VICTORIA
Yeah?

(BETTY holds the phone outstretched.)

BETTY

He wants to talk to you?

(A beat)

VICTORIA

Who does?

BETTY

You know who it is.

VICTORIA

No, I don't, and I'm not sure I want to know.

BETTY

Of course you do. It's him!

VICTORIA

Him, who?

BETTY

It's Pockets. It's PawPaw! He wants to talk to you!

VICTORIA

Oh, really? What's he want to say? Woof?

BETTY

Huh?

VICTORIA

PawPaw was our dog, sweetie. And honestly, I don't know what I was thinking with this whole thing, I guess I just have to get used to the word... was.

HARVEY *(Offstage)*

I HEARD THAT!

VICTORIA

IT WASN'T ME, IT WAS THE BUTTERFLIES!

BETTY

Again? *(A long silence. Then BETTY is back on the phone.)* I'm sorry, but I think you have the wrong number... no... no... yes... no... my name is Betty Franklin... no, from Massachusetts... no, Mashpee Neck... yeah, it's small... about four thousand peo—

VICTORIA (*Sighs*)

Betty!

BETTY (*Looks up*)

Oh, right. (*Back on phone*) No, I'm sorry, I gotta go. I gotta call a dead dog now... okay, you too... yeah, I know... okay, thanks... bye.

(*BETTY hangs up the phone and looks at VICTORIA again.*)

BETTY

Sorry.

VICTORIA

Are you sure you're okay today, hone—

(*BETTY grabs her phone again and holds up one finger.*)

BETTY

Oh, sorry, I forgot I had a call waiting, excuse me.

(*BETTY answers her non-ringing phone again.*)

BETTY (*Cont'd, on phone*)

Hello? Oh, hi, how are you doing?... Yeah, it's still Betty Franklin... Mashpee Neck? Well, what do you wanna know?

(*VICTORIA shakes her head and sighs, and then exits, watching BETTY speak into her phone in discreet hushed tones the whole time. The lights slowly fade. A long moment of total blackness. Then the lights rise and SKYLER and JOHNNY are in a car. SKYLER is driving and JOHNNY nervously sits shotgun. SKYLER finishes putting her cell phone back in her purse one-handed, while she drives with the other. Obviously, no time should have passed between this scene and the previous. The act of driving and the car itself can be pantomimed.*)

JOHNNY

Well?

SKYLER

We're all set.

JOHNNY

Meaning?

SKYLER

Meaning, now they're expecting us. No more surprises.

JOHNNY

I thought you said I should be prepared for nothing but surprises from your grandfather.

SKYLER

Oh, yeah, you should.

JOHNNY

Then what happened to no more surprises?

SKYLER

I didn't mean you. I meant no more surprise visit, now they're expecting us.

JOHNNY

So really, all you did is give your grandfather time to prepare.

(A beat)

SKYLER

Huh. I never thought of it like that before. *(A beat)* But... you know what... yeah. *(A beat)* I guess I did.

JOHNNY

Oh, great. So I should still expect nothing but surprises when it comes to your grandfather, right, especially now that he knows I'm coming?

SKYLER

I wouldn't go so far as to say *nothing* but surprises...

JOHNNY

What do you mean?

SKYLER

I mean if I were you, I'd try to prepare for surprises, maybe a little fear, some terror, probably even a little pain.

JOHNNY

Pain?

SKYLER

Yeah, probably.

JOHNNY

Physical pain?

SKYLER

For starters, yeah. But he'll probably get you emotionally, too.

(A beat. JOHNNY scoffs and laughs, then shakes his head in disbelief.)

SKYLER *(Cont'd)*

Johnny, my grandfather's not only a hunter, he's also a dentist.

JOHNNY

So, what? Not all dentists are about pain.

SKYLER

How could you say that with a straight face?

JOHNNY

Actually, I'm a little surprised I could.

SKYLER

If I were you, I'd try to get prepared for the worst possible pain ever.

JOHNNY

I'm already dating you, aren't I?

(SKYLER shoots JOHNNY a death stare.)

JOHNNY *(Cont'd)*

What?! I'm kidding!

SKYLER

That's a cop out. And I'm getting' real sick of it.

JOHNNY

What is?

SKYLER

You think you can say whatever mean and hurtful thing you want, and then just cover it up with "I'm kidding!"

JOHNNY

Just now figured that out, huh? Wow, only took one whole year.

(SKYLER shoots JOHNNY another death stare.)

JOHNNY *(Cont'd)*

Oh, come on, that one was funny.

SKYLER

Fine. Whatever.

JOHNNY

Oh, come on, baby, don't pout, you know I live to be only kidding.

SKYLER

Fine, suit yourself, keep trying to be funny all you want. Just remember that I am a dentist's granddaughter.

JOHNNY

What does that have to do with anyth—

SKYLER

I know where he keeps his tools.

(JOHNNY laughs, SKYLER doesn't.)

JOHNNY

I think you're bluffing.

SKYLER

Oh, you do, do you?

JOHNNY

You have to go to the bathroom?

SKYLER

No, I want you to reach under your seat.

JOHNNY *(Chuckles)*

For what?

SKYLER

Because I'm bluffing.

(JOHNNY sighs, then reaches under his seat and then removes a giant pair of dentist pliers.)

JOHNNY

GOOD GOD!

SKYLER

Told 'ya.

JOHNNY *(Off the cuff)*

So what? You threatenin' to rip out one of my teeth.

SKYLER

I wouldn't be putting it near your mouth.

JOHNNY

There what would you—

(SKYLER glances at JOHNNY'S pants and he quickly crosses his legs.)

JOHNNY *(Cont'd)*

OW! *(A long silence. JOHNNY thinks about it.)* But what a minute, that'd be a lose lose for both of us wouldn't it?

SKYLER *(Shrugs)*

I can buy batteries.

(A beat)

JOHNNY

You'd never.

SKYLER

Tell me that after you meet my grandfather.

JOHNNY

But we're just going to meet him. It's not like I'm getting a root canal, I mean, I understand your grandfather might be a little overprotective, but that doesn't mean—

SKYLER

You have no idea.

JOHNNY

Just because none of your other boyfriends were able to pass muster with your grandfather doesn't mean I have anything to worry about.

SKYLER

Johnny, it's not like my grandfather only did it once. Every boyfriend who ever met him took off running for the hills right after they did. They didn't even say goodbye. Eight guys before you. And you're probably—

JOHNNY

Look, you've never dated a guy like me before. I am not gonna let your grandfather intimidate me to the point where I'd just leave and not say—

SKYLER

Intimidate? I didn't say intimidate. I said inflict pain.

JOHNNY

Oh, please, I've seen *Meet the Parents*, and that's De Niro! How could your grandfather possibly be any scarier than Robert—

SKYLER

Don't think about *Meet The Parents*. That's not a good comparison for what you're about to go through.

JOHNNY

Oh, really?

SKYLER

Yeah, really.

JOHNNY

Then name a movie more suited for this weekend.

SKYLER (*Shrugs*)

I don't know... *Marathon Man*?

JOHNNY (*Scoffs*)

Yeah, right.

SKYLER

I'm serious. Robert De Niro's got nothing on Laurence Olivier.

JOHNNY

I'm not scared of Hamlet either.

SKYLER

I hope you're not gonna keep up this naïve, puffed-up image of yourself as some sort of a tough guy when you actually do meet him, 'cause he'll see right through that too.

JOHNNY

I'm not worried.

SKYLER

You look worried.

JOHNNY

Nah, maybe a little nervous, but not—

SKYLER

Is it safe?

JOHNNY

Knock it off.

SKYLER

Is it safe?

JOHNNY

Stop it. I'm not gonna let some stupid movie from the '70s scare me from—

SKYLER

Is it safe?

JOHNNY

I'm serious, your grandfather's not even my dentist.

SKYLER (*Scoffs*)

That's never stopped him before.

JOHNNY

Well, I'm not letting him near my mouth. Besides, I have nothing to worry about anyways, I have impeccable teeth. I've never even had a cavity. I brush my teeth three times a day, at least.

SKYLER

When's the last time you flossed?

(A long silence)

JOHNNY

I'm a dead man.

SKYLER

Probably. But after eight ex-boyfriends, I'm used to it by now.

JOHNNY

If you're so resigned to failure, then why are we even going?

SKYLER

Because they're my grandparents and I love them and I'm just hoping one day, my grandfather will be too tired to get rid of my boyfriend and just give up.

JOHNNY

Well, we could just wait until—

SKYLER

Don't you dare say that! My grandparents are never gonna die!

(A long pause)

JOHNNY

Are they superheroes?

SKYLER

They are to me!

JOHNNY

Have you asked God how he feels about it?

SKYLER

Not since he stole my parents.

JOHNNY

God didn't cause that car accident.

SKYLER

It was his hurricane.

JOHNNY

You can't honestly believe—

SKYLER

Why not? I convinced my therapist.

JOHNNY

You did?

SKYLER *(Sarcastic)*

No, he just became an atheist to see what it was like for a while.

JOHNNY

Well, everybody questions the existence of God every once in a—

SKYLER

He's in jail now for the rest of his life.

JOHNNY

For not believin' in God? Where's he live? Utah?

SKYLER

No, he's in jail for setting fire to sixty-eight buildings.

JOHNNY

What'd he burn down?

SKYLER

Haven't you been listening? Duh! Churches!

JOHNNY

Well, there's a sure-fire way to guarantee you're going to hell.

SKYLER

Haven't you been listening, he doesn't believe in hell.

JOHNNY

Then I'd love to see the look on his face?

SKYLER

Whose?

JOHNNY

Satan.

SKYLER

I bet the look on my grandfather's face is gonna be scarier.

JOHNNY

So what? How scary could it be? I've already seen yours before you have your coffee in the morning.

(SKYLER glares at JOHNNY.)

JOHNNY *(Cont'd)*

Yikes! Okay, it has never looked that scary before.

SKYLER

Wait until you see my grandfather's.

JOHNNY

Whatever. I still think you might be overreacting a bit. I mean, it's not like this is the first time I've met my girlfriends' folks. This ain't my first rodeo.

SKYLER

How many?

JOHNNY

Excuse me?

SKYLER

How many *ex-girlfriends'* parents have you met before?

(A long silence)

JOHNNY

One.

SKYLER

One?

JOHNNY

Yeah, but I met her parents hundreds of times.

SKYLER

Hundreds?

JOHNNY

I like to exaggerate.

SKYLER

Then how many, for real?

JOHNNY

Two.

SKYLER

I think you're still lying...

JOHNNY

No, of course—

SKYLER

I don't care, I appreciate you trying to protect my feelings, just don't lie to my grandfather. He'll know you're not telling the truth.

JOHNNY

How? What was he? A dentist for the CIA?

SKYLER

Might as well have been, he's that good.

JOHNNY

I think I'll be okay.

SKYLER

When's the last time you flossed?

JOHNNY

This morning.

SKYLER

Don't say that, if you say that, he'll know you're lying for sure.

JOHNNY

How?

SKYLER

Please? I'm not even a dentist and even I know you're lying on that one.

JOHNNY

Fine. Yesterday, then, all right?

SKYLER

I guess you don't wanna stay in this relationship with me, huh?

JOHNNY

Okay, fine. Last Friday then, okay?

SKYLER

Or maybe you just don't want to be alive to see where our relationship—

JOHNNY

Fine, I flossed last Wednesday.

SKYLER

Last Wednesday, what?

JOHNNY

Last Wednesday, ma'am.

SKYLER

You call my grandfather ma'am and you're gonna get a root canal.

JOHNNY

See, this is good, I'm learning. That's what I need. An education before the introduction is all I need to get prepared.

SKYLER

You don't need a GED, you need a PHD, and we're only ten miles away from their house.

JOHNNY

I flossed last Monday, sir.

SKYLER

Okay, you call him sir and he's likely to just shoot you. Remember, he's also a hunter. *(A beat)*
Ten miles is so not enough.

JOHNNY

Well, what should I call him, then?

SKYLER

Mr. Pressman.

JOHNNY

Maybe he'll like me enough to even let me call him Harvey at some point.

SKYLER

You'd have better luck if you were an invisible rabbit.

JOHNNY

I just don't think it could possibly be that—

SKYLER

Do you hunt?

JOHNNY

You know I'm a pacifist.

SKYLER

But he doesn't.

JOHNNY

Right, okay, then, ask me again.

SKYLER

Do you hunt?

JOHNNY

All the time, Mr. Press—

SKYLER

Oh, really? What'd you use?

(A long pause)

JOHNNY

A gun?

SKYLER

Oh, yeah, you're toast, just like all the others.

JOHNNY

Okay, how come it's okay for you to tell me about your other eight ex-boyfriends but not for me to tell you about all my ex—

SKYLER

Seriously? You really wanna go down that road with me now with that ques—

JOHNNY

You're right, you're right. Look, if I'm not gonna go hunting with a gun, what, am I supposed to go all Katless Everbean and bow it?

SKYLER

Go all what?

JOHNNY

You know, from Hunger Pains. Doesn't she use a bow and arrow?

SKYLER

Who? Bennifer Lawyerance?

JOHNNY

You mean Jennifer Lawrence?

SKYLER

Figures you'd get her name right, but nothing else. (*A beat*) Pervert.

JOHNNY

Well, I knew you'd know what I was talking about if I even got close. (*A beat*) TMZ slut.

SKYLER

Hardly. The point is, you can't just say a gun. Or a bow and arrow. If you're talking to my grandfather, you've gotta at least appear like you know what you're talking about.

JOHNNY

Like you are with football around my dad, right?

SKYLER

Exactly.

JOHNNY

Where's the ten yard line?

SKYLER

Right in the middle of the field.

JOHNNY

Of course it is.

(JOHNNY quickly reaches into his pocket and removes his cell phone and starts searching for something online.)

SKYLER

What are you doing?

JOHNNY

After you just said that, I'm looking up the names of some hunting rifles.

SKYLER

Where?

JOHNNY

Where do you think? The finest hunting store on the Web.

SKYLER

Sportsman's Warehouse?

JOHNNY

Wal-Mart.

SKYLER

I was wrong about the ten yard line, wasn't I?

JOHNNY

Only by a few yards.

SKYLER

How many?

JOHNNY

All of them.

SKYLER

But I was a cheerleader.

JOHNNY (*Looking at his smartphone*)

Even scarier, why do you think—Oh, look... a Mossberg 835THUG 12-Gauge LBA Red Dot PTT, Mossy Oak Break Up Infinity... Good God, your grandfather actually calls a gun by it's name like that?

SKYLER

Of course, why, what would you call that?

JOHNNY

Well, of course, I'd naturally call it the exact same thing.

SKYLER

Okay. Go ahead.

JOHNNY

Of course. You know, Mr. Pressman, when I go hunting, I always make sure I bring my (*looks down at his phone*) Mossberg 835THUG 12-Gauge—

(*SKYLER quickly grabs the smartphone away from JOHNNY.*)

JOHNNY (*Cont'd*)

What are you doing?

SKYLER

You're not gonna have a crib sheet at my grandparents house. Now then, what's that gun called again?

JOHNNY

Well, Mr. Pressman, whenever I go hunting, I always make sure I bring my Mooseberg—

SKLYER

Mossberg.

JOHNNY

Right, that's what I said. I always bring my Mossberg... 8... 2...

(*SKYLER glances at the phone briefly, then back on the road.*)

SKYLER

Three.

JOHNNY

3... 5... THUG... 11-gauge—

SKYLER

12-Gauge.

JOHNNY

12-Gauge...

SKYLER

Start over again.

JOHNNY

What?

SKYLER

That's what my grandparents always made me do when I had to remember something for school and I made a mistake... they always made me start over from the beginning again so it would get ingrained in my mind.

JOHNNY

I'd like to ingrain something in your brain right now.

SKYLER

Come on, just start over again.

JOHNNY (*Sighs*)

Well, Mr. Pressman, whenever I go hunting, I always remember to bring my Mossberg 835... THUG... 12-Gauge... big, ouchie-ouchie-ouch, bang bang blast-maker.

SKYLER

Don't joke with my grandfather.

JOHNNY

Your grandfather doesn't have a sense of humor, either?

SKYLER

Oh, no, he does.

JOHNNY

Then what's the problem?

SKYLER

He likes to be the funny one. He just doesn't like it when other people are funny, too.

JOHNNY

He must hate Bill Cosby.

SKYLER

Well, I don't know if I'd go that far—yeah, you're right, more than likely, he probably does.

JOHNNY

Fine. I won't be funny. Are there any other rules I should know about?

SKYLER

Just one. If he asks you to go hunting with him—

JOHNNY

RUN!

SKYLER

Well, I was gonna say duck, but you're probably gonna wanna do both.

JOHNNY

Well, why don't we have a safe word, then?

SKYLER

A what?

JOHNNY

A safe word. In case we get separated, and your grandfather has me backed in a corner, afraid he's gonna make me head for those hills like all those other boyfriends, I can yell out the safe word and you can come running to find me so I can say goodbye first.

(SKYLER glares at him.)

JOHNNY *(Cont'd)*

I'm kidding. *(A beat. SKYLER focuses on the road again.)* But not about the safe word, I still think that's a good idea.

SKYLER

Okay, fine, then what's the word?

JOHNNY *(Thinks)*

Well... *(Thinks harder)*... okay, well, you said your grandfather's not just a dentist but also a hunter so how about "Grizzly bear?"

(SKYLER nods.)

SKYLER

"Grizzly bear" is certainly fitting.

JOHNNY

Okay, great, then. You hear me shout "Grizzly bear," that means you come running, sound good?

SKYLER

Sounds good.

JOHNNY

Okay, good. Now can I please have my phone back, I wanna, at least, get a few more looks at the name of that gun before we—

(On cue: SKYLER mimes slamming on the brakes and stops the car and turns off the ignition. JOHNNY stares at her like a deer caught in the headlights. She shrugs.)

SKYLER

What? I told you we were only ten miles away.

(SKYLER tosses JOHNNY his smartphone again and exits the car and starts walking towards the unseen mansion offstage. JOHNNY stares after her. Then he looks at his watch.)

JOHNNY *(Calling after her)*

IT'S ONLY BEEN SEVEN MINUTES!

SKYLER *(Shrugs, calls back)*

I'M SORRY, SOMETIMES I GET A BIT OF A LEAD FOOT.

JOHNNY *(Under his breath)*

I wish I had a lead foot so I could stick it right up your—

SKYLER *(Calling back)*

COME ON! MY GRANDFATHER REALLY HATES IT WHEN PEOPLE ARE LATE!

JOHNNY *(Under his breath)*

What's he gonna do? Shoot me twice?

SKYLER *(One step away from being offstage)*

If you're lucky it'll only be twice.

(SKYLER exits. JOHNNY looks up after her.)

JOHNNY *(To himself)*

There's no way she could have heard...

(A beat. Then JOHNNY quickly exits the car and takes off running in the direction SKYLER exited in as the lights slowly fade. End of Act One/Scene One.)

Act One/Scene Two

Scene Two: The meeting and the moose.

(Late at night in the living room. At rise, VICTORIA and BETTY are sitting on the sofa in the living room and HARVEY is standing by the downstage left front door leading to the offstage front lawn. A door stage right leading to the unlit dining room is present, as is another door to the also unlit office upstage left. He peers through the front curtains. He is still dressed in his khakis and flak jacket and now he holds a hunting rifle in his free hand. He seems as giddy as a child on Christmas morning and VICTORIA and BETTY look sullen, even a bit slightly embarrassed. More stuffed animal heads line the walls, and a large stuffed grizzly bear is taxidermized in an upright, two-legged attack pose. He stands frozen far upstage center, ready to pounce.)

VICTORIA

Harvey, please don't—

HARVEY

Shh! They're coming. They're walking across the front lawn. Look at that bum, can't even use the driveway. Has to trample all over your roses, the punk.

VICTORIA

Just promise me—

HARVEY

SHHH! They're almost here!

(A beat)

VICTORIA

What roses?

(A beat)

HARVEY

Well, if you had any, they'd be goners.

VICTORIA

Just, please, promise me you're not gonna do anything too—

HARVEY

SHHH!

(A beat. HARVEY approaches the front door. Then the SOUND of a doorbell is HEARD. BETTY reaches into her purse, which is resting on her lap and retrieves her Jitterbug and answers it.)

BETTY

Hello?... oh, hi, again... what's that?... Oh, it's in Massachus—(*BETTY notices VICTORIA and HARVEY staring at her. Then she covers the phone with her hand and tries unsuccessfully to disappear into the sofa cushions. Whispers...*) No, it's not really near Boston at all.

(HARVEY rolls his eyes and sighs. VICTORIA shakes her head and BETTY continues speaking in muffled tones into the phone. Another beat. Then HARVEY throws the front door open and aims the rifle out it at two figures offstage. Even though he's unseen, JOHNNY quickly throws his hands in the air, and SKYLER pushes the gun out of her way and enters. She walks right past HARVEY towards her grandmother. HARVEY immediately retracts the gun on JOHNNY who still waits outside and offstage.)

VICTORIA

Skyler, honey!

SKYLER

Hi, grandma.

(SKYLER immediately gives her grandmother a great, big hug.)

VICTORIA

Oh, honey, I'm so glad you managed to fit a trip to see us into your busy schedule, what with work and school and everything else going on with you right now, dear.

SKYLER

Well, I wanted to come see you and grandpop 'cause I knew you'd both want to meet my new boyfriend, just like the others.

(SKYLER turns back to see HARVEY with the gun sticking out the front door again. SKYLER sighs.)

SKYLER (*Cont'd*)

Oh, for God's sake, Grandpop, would you knock it off? At least, invite Johnny in before you train the gun on him, for God's sake.

HARVEY (*Growling*)

Mmmmmmm...

VICTORIA

HARVEY!

(HARVEY sighs and then lowers the rifle. JOHNNY enters with his hands still held high in the air. He cautiously passes by HARVEY and crosses towards VICTORIA and SKYLER.)

SKYLER

Grandmom, I'd like you to meet my boyfriend, Johnny Fortis.

(JOHNNY extends his hand and VICTORIA shakes it graciously.)

VICTORIA

Very pleased to make your acquaintance, Johnny.

JOHNNY

It's an honor to meet you Mrs. Pressman. *(Looks back over towards HARVEY.)* And you, too, Mr. Pressman.

HARVEY *(Smells his free hand)*

Weird, my hands don't smell dirty.

(JOHNNY quickly returns and extends his hand to shake HARVEY'S hand. HARVEY doesn't reciprocate the gesture.)

JOHNNY

My sincere apologies, Mr. Pressman. I just thought you needed to use both hands to hold onto that Savage Axis XP 243 Bolt Action Rifle with Scope.

(JOHNNY glances back at SKYLER and nods and smiles. SKYLER looks impressed and returns the nod. HARVEY turns back and places the rifle on the ground and props it up against the front door.)

HARVEY *(With his back still turned)*

Nice try, kid, but this is the XP 308. Does this rifle look like it's painted in camo to you?

JOHNNY *(No idea)*

Uhh... *(SKYLER shakes her head. JOHNNY scoffs.)* 'Course it wasn't painted in camo. Looks more like it was painted in... Home... Depot gray... *(SKYLER shakes her head.)* I mean Lowe's silver...

HARVEY

What?

JOHNNY

Crayola?

HARVEY

What did you just say?

JOHNNY

I said, of course not, not camo!

HARVEY

‘Course not.

JOHNNY

‘Course not, honestly, what was I thinking?

(HARVEY turns back and glares at JOHNNY.)

HARVEY

That’s the problem, I don’t think you were thinking in the first place.

JOHNNY

Yeah, I forget to think sometimes. *(Gestures at his outfit.)* I mean, just look at how I dressed myself this morning. I mean, what would you even call this outfit?

HARVEY

Embarrassing?

JOHNNY

Exactly.

(JOHNNY looks down at his extended hand as HARVEY scoffs and walks past just in time to see BETTY hang up and rejoin the others.)

HARVEY *(As he passes JOHNNY)*

Please excuse me for not shaking, but I have a thing against germs.

SKYLER

Give me a break, grandpop, Johnny’s not carrying any diseases.

HARVEY

Do you have the doctor’s note that proves that?

SKYLER

I left it at home.

HARVEY

Of course you did. Besides, I wasn’t even talking about anything he might be *carrying*... I was talking about... *him*.

BETTY *(Whispers to VICTORIA)*

Is he talking about Pluto?

VICTORIA

PawPaw.

HARVEY

Pockets!

SKYLER

Aw, I miss Pockets Patches PawPaw.

HARVEY

You knew his full name too?

SKYLER

Who didn't?

(BETTY points at HARVEY.)

VICTORIA

I'm so, sorry, Skyler, my dear. You remember my friend Betty Franklin, right?

(SKYLER extends her hand.)

SKYLER

Of course I do. Hi, Betty, how have you been?

(BETTY shakes her head after looking at SKYLER'S extended hand.)

BETTY

Oh, no thanks, I already ate, my darling.

(SKYLER pulls her hand back, then she touches her ear.)

SKYLER

I see she's still got that whole...

(HARVEY and VICTORIA nod in unison. Then SKYLER leans down closer to BETTY.)

SKYLER

WELL, BETTY, SO NICE TO SEE YOU AGAIN. I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET JOHNNY.

BETTY

Why are you shouting, is your boyfriend hard of hearing?

(A long pause)

SKYLER

Why, yes, yes, he is.

BETTY

Oh, that's too bad. I can't even imagine what that's like.

HARVEY

I think you need to try harder.

SKYLER

Yes, it's a shame. *(A beat)* ISN'T THAT RIGHT, JOHNNY?

JOHNNY

I'm sorry, what?

SKYLER *(To BETTY)*

As you can see, it's been very difficult.

(BETTY quickly retrieves her phone again.)

BETTY

Oh, I'm sorry, please excuse me, I don't know why he keeps calling me. *(BETTY answers the phone.)* Hello? Oh, yeah, hi, again... what's that?... Oh, well, actually, you know what... to be honest with you, I actually don't know where they got the name Mashpee Neck from...oh, yeah, I know... it is a funny word to say. Excuse me for one second...

(Without saying another word, BETTY stands and exits into the unlit dining room, still mumbling on the phone the whole time. SKYLER and JOHNNY look from HARVEY to VICTORIA and back again for answers, but they both just shrug and shakes their heads.)

SKYLER

Who does she keep talking to?

HARVEY

Oh, you mean you don't remember ever meeting Thin Air. I thought we introduced you last year.

SKYLER

Well, where's she goin'?

HARVEY

There's better reception in the dead doggy ghost room.

SKYLER

What?

HARVEY

I don't even have the strength to tell the story anymore.

VICTORIA

I've never seen her this bad... this is getting very scary.

HARVEY

The phone calls to no one or the hearing aid on mute?

VICTORIA

Everything. She's getting worse. I'm really, really, scared. I don't think it's just her hearing that's going...

HARVEY

Yeah, I know. You're just like me. You think her brain's chasing after her hearing.

VICTORIA

I know. That's why I'm so scared.

SKYLER

Oh, grandmom, I'm so sorry about your friend.

JOHNNY

Me too. My deepest sympathies go out to—

HARVEY

OH, PLEASE!

JOHNNY

I beg your pardon, Mr. Pressma—

HARVEY

She doesn't need your fake sympathies. You don't even know her.

JOHNNY

Does that mean I shouldn't even bother expressing my concern?

HARVEY

YES! Yes, it does. You think she needs sympathy from some idiot who doesn't even have the common curiosity to walk up the driveway instead of traipsing through the front lawn of a family you've never even met yet.

JOHNNY

Well, I didn't mean to upset anyone.

HARVEY

Well, maybe you should just turn your hearing aid off.

JOHNNY

I wish!

(A long, awkward silence.)

VICTORIA

So, what do you do, Johnny?

JOHNNY

I beg your pardon, ma'am.

VICTORIA

WHAT DO YOU DO?!

JOHNNY

Oh, uh, well, I do... as little as I have to.

(JOHNNY smiles. SKYLER shakes her head in fear. HARVEY crosses back over to the gun and picks it up again.)

JOHNNY *(Panic-stricken)*

Uh, what I mean is... I do construction.

VICTORIA

Oh, well, then... that's great.

SKYLER

Actually, grandma, Johnny's the lead foreman for a big construction company in the city.

VICTORIA

Oh, well, what do you think of our humble abode, then?

JOHNNY

It's nice.

HARVEY

What's the name of the company you work for?

VICTORIA

Oh, that's a great idea! We were thinking of remodeling the guest bathroom upstairs. We'd love some professional input.

JOHNNY

Well... the company I work for is called DCU Construction.

VICTORIA

Oh, that's nice.

HARVEY

Yeah, now we know who not to call.

SKYLER

Grandpa!

HARVEY

DCU, what's that stand for, "Don't Call Us" Construction?

JOHNNY

How'd you guess?

SKYLER

Johnny's just kidding, grandpop! Always the kidder. Just like you.

(HARVEY crosses and picks up the rifle and retracts it on JOHNNY again. On instinct, JOHNNY throws his hands back up in the air.)

HARVEY

I don't always kid.

(A long moment, then HARVEY relaxes his pose and smiles. Then he lowers the gun, causing JOHNNY to lower his hands and relax his pose. Then HARVEY smiles.)

JOHNNY

Ah, good one, Mr. Pre—

(HARVEY is instantly back to aiming at JOHNNY. JOHNNY throws his hands back in the air again immediately. Then the action repeats again. Finally...)

SKYLER

Actually, grandpop, the company Johnny works for stands for Donald Carter Upton Construction.

HARVEY

Don't Call Us has a better ring to it.

JOHNNY

I think you might be right on that one, Mr. Press—

HARVEY

How could your boss be proud of a name like that enough to name his business after it?

JOHNNY

He wasn't, that's why he went by just the initials.

(A long pause. SKYLER puts her head in her hands, resigned that any further communication between her grandfather and her boyfriend is probably going to end badly. HARVEY studies JOHNNY up and down for a few moments. JOHNNY remains steadfast, frozen in place. HARVEY begins to pace around JOHNNY, with the rifle resting on his shoulder the whole time.)

HARVEY *(As he paces)*

So, Fortis... do you—

JOHNNY

Please, Mr. Pressman, you can call me Johnny.

HARVEY *(Still pacing)*

I know I can, Fortis. Do you think I need your permission?

JOHNNY

Well, everybody needs permission for somethings now and again, don't you think?

HARVEY *(Stops dead in his tracks)*

No.

JOHNNY

Well, of course not you, but I meant everybody else.

HARVEY *(Starts pacing again)*

Well isn't that noble of you to give the world permission.

JOHNNY

I'd like to think so, yeah.

(HARVEY stops pacing and turns and looks JOHNNY dead in the eye.)

HARVEY

Is that a fact?

JOHNNY

Not in the least. I'd like to think so, but who really cares what I'd like to think?

HARVEY

Not me.

JOHNNY

Exactly, not you, not anyone. Nobody needs permission to call me Johnny. People can call me whatever they'd like.

HARVEY

How 'bout jerkoff?

JOHNNY

That's my middle name.

HARVEY

Very well, jerkoff, so then why don't you answer me one question then...

JOHNNY

Last Monday.

HARVEY

You didn't let me finish my question. Last Monday, what?

JOHNNY

Last Monday... was a beautiful day, wasn't it?

HARVEY

Now you want to ask me questions?

JOHNNY

No, you first.

HARVEY

When's the last time you flossed?

JOHNNY

Last...

HARVEY

Monday?

JOHNNY

Or Tuesday.

VICTORIA (*Sighs*)

Alright, enough of your third-degree, Harvey, leave the boy alone, already.

HARVEY

What boy?

VICTORIA and SKYLER

Jerkoff.

JOHNNY

Yes?

HARVEY

Very well.

SKYLER

Thank you, Grandma.

VICTORIA

This is more exhausting than the failed séance.

SKYLER

Séance?

VICTORIA (*Sighs*)

Yeah, earlier we—

HARVEY

So, what do you think of my animal menagerie, jerkoff?

JOHNNY

Menagerie?

HARVEY

It means—

JOHNNY

Oh, I know what it means, it's just not the word I would have used.

HARVEY

Oh, really? Then what word would you have used?

JOHNNY

Oh, I don't know, murder scen—

SKYLER

Heaven! Animal heaven is the word he would have used, right, honey?

(A beat)

JOHNNY

Yeah, right, that's what I meant to say.

HARVEY

Heaven, huh? Is that where you think all these animals went?

JOHNNY

Well, I can't say that for sure, I mean, some of them might have been evil and wound up joining Skyler's therapist, the heathen.

HARVEY

Do you know my brother?

JOHNNY (*Looks at SKYLER*)

Your brother?!

(SKYLER shrugs.)

HARVEY

Yeah, well, nobody's perfect.

JOHNNY

I think that's actually what it says on the sign out front.

VICTORIA

Of jail?

JOHNNY

Of hell.

SKYLER

Probably both.

(SKYLER, VICTORIA and JOHNNY nod. HARVEY remains steadfast. Then suddenly, BETTY lets out a high-pitch SHRIEK offstage. SKYLER jumps to her feet and races through the door to the dining room and VICTORIA heads into the dining room as well, as quickly as she can. JOHNNY turns to head out after them but HARVEY rests the gun on JOHNNY'S chest to stop him.)

JOHNNY (*Cont'd*)

I'm sorry, sir, but shouldn't we go see if everything's okay with your—

HARVEY

She's not my friend.

JOHNNY

So it doesn't matter what happened to her?