

The Ghost of Agnes Keller

a play in two acts

written by

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“THE GHOST OF AGNES KELLER”

SYNOPSIS

Agnes Keller, a wisecracking, mother of two and housewife is dead. Her drowning is not her real problem. Her real problem is she can't get into Heaven until she gets her Angel Classification. Unfortunately, due to a “heavenly error”, she can't be classified until she gets her sleazy husband, George, to confess to murdering her.

Agnes is permitted to return to Earth, for one week, to get George's confession. However, George is not about to give up the extravagant lifestyle he has gained, since parlaying Agnes' life insurance policy into a small fortune. Since George is the only one who can see or hear Agnes, he feels confident that there is nothing she can do to force him to confess.

Although Agnes is warned only to get a confession and not get involved with the family, her maternal instincts kick-in when she sees her daughter, Melanie, a one-time teen-aged beauty queen, has turned into the school tramp and her thirteen year old son, Brian, a promising athlete, has evolved into a pathetic bookworm.

Agnes feels compelled to help George when Melanie brings home a biker named Viper with whom Melanie plans on traveling across America. Plus, Agnes ruins George's plans for a romantic evening with Miriam, a gold-digging vamp George intends to marry, by forcing him to attend Brian's Science Fair.

George has also gotten himself involved with Vincent Scarfone, a very, unsavory, underworld-type figure, who has bought a racehorse from George that ends up “dying in the stretch.”

After Agnes and the kids rescue George from a certain death and the “bad guys” are turned over to the police, George reveals to Agnes that he did intend to kill her that day, but the backwash from another boat knocked her overboard, causing her to drown, and making her death an accident. His story comes too late as Agnes finds out Heaven couldn't wait and she is given the next to the lowest Angel Classification.

Twenty years later, George bumps into Agnes while she's dusting Heaven's Waiting Room. He fills her in on the past twenty years and apologizes for being the “scum-sucking, slime-bucket” that he was.

As a repayment for being a wonderful wife and mother, George confesses to murdering Agnes even though she knows he didn't. George gets the lowest Angel Classification and Agnes is promptly promoted, so that she can spend eternity with her parents “and finally gets to meet Clark Gable.”

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Agnes Keller – (40's) A quick-witted, mother of two. She's smart and confident with a sarcastic side.

Angel Margaret – (50's) – A tough, square-jawed woman. She's in charge of checking people into Heaven. She has a soft side for Agnes and her situation.

George Keller – (40's) – Agnes' husband. Short, stocky, and balding. A schemer, philanderer and is unsympathetic to Agnes' situation. He tries, but fails miserably raising his two children.

Melanie Keller – (17) – A teenager with a bad attitude. Disrespectful, self-centered, radical. Always dressed in bizarre and outlandish outfits. Her hair is always a mess and she wears too much makeup..

Brian Keller – (14) – A total nerd. Dressed in suits and bowties. Wears horn-rimmed glasses. His hair is plastered down and parted in the middle.

Miriam Wilson – (20-30) A sexy, gold digger looking to land George, but slightly naive. Always dressed seductively.

Vincent Scarfone – (40's) – A dignified businessman with underworld ties. Ruthless in getting what he wants.

Tough Guy #1 – (30's) Muscle-bound but dumb. One of Vincent's bodyguards.

Tough Guy #2 – (30's) Another of Vincent's bodyguards. Could be even dumber.

Viper – (30's) – A grizzly looking biker, complete with beard and leather jacket with sleeves missing. His long, unkempt hair is greasy from not bathing and he's sporting several tattoos. Mostly grunts until his transformation.

Veterinarian – A crusty, old doctor, complete with white moustache and wire rimmed glasses.

Track Announcer – All lines are done OS.

Act I, Scene 1

(Agnes and Angel Margaret appear in front of the curtain with a bright spotlight on them. Angel Margaret holds a clipboard.)

ANGEL MARGARET

Mrs. Keller, my name is Angel Margaret and I'm here to make sure your transition to Heaven is seamless.

AGNES

Seem less than what?

ANGEL MARGARET

No, I mean, seamless; without interruption.

AGNES

Oh.

ANGEL MARGARET

Harvard girl, huh? Anyway, Agnes, your angel status must be determined before you pass through the Pearly Gates, meet your Maker, or go knock, knock, knockin' on Heaven's door. The status is determined by what kind of life you lived on Earth.

AGNES

Angel status?

ANGEL MARGARET

Yes, you see, Heaven is divided into ten levels. Level One has two occupants; the Big Guy and His son. Level two has all your holy people; popes, saints, nuns priests,

(smiling awkwardly)

although, some of them aren't quite making it up this far anymore. Starting with Level Three, your average people start filtering in. That's where you want to be. After that, the more you've sinned, the lower the level.; four through ten. Tenth Level being the lowest; murderers, rapists, game show hosts, you know.

AGNES

I just thought they went to Hell.

(There is the SOUND of loud thunder and red lights flashing.)

ANGEL MARGARET

Please, we don't mention that word around here.

AGNES

(embarrassed)

Sorry. I thought they went to H-E-L-L.

(The SOUND of thunder and red lights flash again.)

ANGEL MARGARET

We don't spell that word either.

(Looking up)

Sorry, it won't happen again. Now, because your death occurred on a holiday weekend, we were working with a skeleton crew, if you'll pardon the expression, and we were unable to monitor your death.

AGNES

Why not?

ANGEL MARGARET

Well, before I go on, let me assure you, our monitoring angels are the best trained angels you'll ever find. They're alert, attentive; nothing gets by our monitoring angels.

AGNES

So, what happened?

ANGEL MARGARET

Yours fell asleep. Only for a few minutes, mind you, but long enough to miss the circumstances of your death. He was in the middle of pulling a double shift and, well, believe me, he is being severely punished.

AGNES

So, what has that got to do with me?

ANGEL MARGARET

Well, as far as we can see, you've led a model life; good mother, faithful wife. It's just we need to know how you died in order for us to provide you with your Angel status.

AGNES

I told you when I got here, I drowned.

ANGEL MARGARET

Yes, but was it an accident, intentional, which, by the way, is a heavenly no-no, or murder?

AGNES

(Laughing)

Murder? Don't be ridiculous.

ANGEL MARGARET

Think. What happened that day?

AGNES

Well, we were on a boat. George, my husband, rented one for our anniversary. I was standing by the rail, looking at the beautiful view, while George went below to get me a life preserver. I can't swim, you know?

ANGEL MARGARET

Do tell.

AGNES

All of a sudden, I found myself in the water.

(Remembering)

And, as I was going down for the third time, you really do go down for the third time, you know, just like in the cartoons, I...I could see the boat pulling away as I sank deeper and deeper.

(Realizing)

Wait a minute! That bum, George, pushed me overboard.

ANGEL MARGARET

Hallelujah!

AGNES

He murdered me.

ANGEL MARGARET

That's what we thought, but we weren't sure.

AGNES

How do you like that? After all those years of cooking for him and listening to his gross noises in bed; wait until I get my hands on him.

ANGEL MARGARET

You're going to have to wait for that.

AGNES

Oh, yeah, I guess I will. Well, that ought to clear things up for you. Now you can give me my Angel status. So, what am I? Level Three? Four?

ANGEL MARGARET

We can't take your word for it, Mrs. Keller.

AGNES

What do you mean? I just told you that bum murdered me.

ANGEL MARGARET

Mrs. Keller, Agnes, Heaven is not run in such a slipshod manner as Hollywood would like you to believe. Why, just this week, a bank robber tried to convince us he stole the money to pay for his dear, old granny's gall bladder operation.

AGNES

So, maybe he did.

ANGEL MARGARET

His dear, old granny has been working in our receiving department for ten years.

AGNES

Oh.

ANGEL MARGARET

Look, as much as I believe you, I'm afraid the front office won't. You need something more substantial.

AGNES

Like what?

ANGEL MARGARET

Like a...a...a confession. A confession to the police department would do it.

AGNES

George isn't going to confess to the cops.

ANGEL MARGARET

All right, since we're partly to blame, we'll let you go back down to Earth to talk to your husband. Try to convince him to do the right thing.

AGNES

Suppose that doesn't work.

ANGEL MARGARET

We'll cross that cloud when we get to it. Now,

(Looking at the clipboard)

according to this, your husband has done quite well for himself and is living in Beverly Hills, California.

AGNES

Beverly Hills? We live in a broken-down apartment in Brooklyn.

ANGEL MARGARET

Well, now he's in Beverly Hills with your two kids, Melanie and Brian. I guess I should tell you, a year has passed since you died.

AGNES

Why has it taken so long for me to get here?

ANGEL MARGARET

Hey, Heaven doesn't have an Express Lane. I'll show you how to get back.

(They begin exiting stage left.)

And, Agnes, we'll give you one week and then the Angel Rating Council will be forced to automatically give you your classification.

1-1-6

AGNES

Great. No pressure. This is worse than the post office. Hey, is Clark Gable up here? I've always wanted to meet him.

(They exit)

Act I, Scene 2

Setting: The Keller Living Room/Dining Room. Upstage right are stairs. Stage left also features two doors, almost next to each other. The one most downstage is the door to the outside. Next to it is a closet door. Stage right downstage is a door to the kitchen. Half the set is dedicated to the living room, stage left. It is nicely decorated with a bar along the back wall. A sofa is in the center of the room. Stage right features the dining room with a table and four chairs.

George is seated on a bar stool. He is talking on his cell phone. Miriam enters through the kitchen door. She walks very sexy up to George.

GEORGE

Oh, by the way, Phil, put a hundred bucks down on Chimney Sweep in the fifth...Of course on the nose...Hey, when it comes to George Keller, that's the only body part that counts.

(Miriam stands very close to him with her breasts in his face.)

Hold on for a recount.

MIRIAM

Hiya, Georgie.

GEORGE

(Into the Phone)

Nothing. Just place the bet.

(Clicks the phone off)

Miriam, you look great.

(Miriam walks over to the sofa and sits.)

You walk great, too.

MIRIAM

I can't wait for our special dinner tonight. Where are we going?

(George joins her on the sofa.)

GEORGE

I planned a real romantic dinner; Mu Shu Pork at the Imperial Gardens.

MIRIAM

Sounds great. You know how Chinese food makes me want to make love.

GEORGE

You're telling me. They won't let us eat at the Shanghai Wok anymore. Hey, I've got an idea. Why don't we have the food delivered here? And then we can...

(He gives her an evil smile.)

MIRIAM

Sounds great to me, but what about your kids?

GEORGE

Melanie and Brian? I can get rid of them for the evening. Don't you worry your pretty, little head, or anything that is attached to it.

(George escorts Miriam to the kitchen door.)

Now, you just go into the kitchen and get things ready. I'll be right back.

(Miriam gives him a kiss and exits. Melanie enters from upstairs and heads for the front door.)

Melanie, where are you going?

MELANIE

To rob a Seven-Eleven. What's it to ya?

GEORGE

I am your father, young lady. You will speak to me with respect.

MELANIE

Yeah, right. Judy's picking me up. We're going to the mall. Maybe I'll be home later.

(George crosses to where Melanie is. He reaches into his pocket and hands Melanie some money.)

GEORGE

Here's fifty bucks. Make it much later. Miss Wilson and I are having a special dinner tonight.

MELANIE

Oh, Mu Shu Pork night? Hey, make it a hundred bucks and I'll spend the night at Judy's.

(George reaches into his pocket and hands more money to Melanie.)

GEORGE

Here, but I want you to call later.

MELANIE

Get real. I'm seventeen now. In a year, I'll be history.

GEORGE

Your mother would be so proud. Where's your brother?

MELANIE

The nerd? He's upstairs. Ciao.

(Melanie exits. George walks to the bottom of the stairs.)

GEORGE

Brian, would you come down here, son?

(George walks over to a chair in the living room where he picks up a baseball and glove.
Brian enters from upstairs.)

BRIAN

What is it, Father?

GEORGE

How about playing a little catch with the ol' man?

(George tosses the ball and it hits Brian in the chest. The ball falls to the floor. Brian
picks up the ball.)

BRIAN

Father, I thought my position about my motor coordination skills and aptitudes were made
clearly perceptible to you.

GEORGE

Brian, in language I can understand.

BRIAN

I ain't got it, Pop.

GEORGE

Come on, Brian, just throw the ball once. I guarantee you'll like it again, if you'll just try it.

BRIAN

All right, Father, if it will put an end to your constant badgering.

(George stands in front of the bar with the glove on. Brian stands at the other end of the room.)

GEORGE

Put it in there, Bri.

(Brian winds up and throws the ball across the room, smashing some bottles behind the bar.)

BRIAN

That was extremely exhilarating. How was it, Father?

GEORGE

It needs a little work. Listen, Brian, I want you to go over to one of your little friend's house and have dinner tonight.

BRIAN

Father, I have no friends. However, there is an exhibit at the museum I've been anxious to see.

(Miriam enters stage right.)

MIRIAM

Is everything all right? I heard a crash.

GEORGE

Everything is fine. Come on, Brian, why don't you go out to the kitchen and let Miss Wilson fix you some milk and cookies?

BRIAN

Between meals consumption can lead to obesity. However, I have been craving a hearty rationing of wheat germ.

GEORGE

Good. Knock yourself out.

BRIAN

If I render myself unconscious, how will I be able to consume my sustenance?

GEORGE

Just go. Miriam, my pet, keep an eye on Brian. I'm going to get us a bottle of wine for tonight. I'll be right back.

(Miriam and Brian exit stage right. George opens the front door. Agnes is standing there. George gasps and slams the door shut. He shakes his head in disbelief and opens the door again. Agnes is gone.)

GEORGE

(shivering)

Wow! I better get my jacket.

(George opens the hall closet door and out walks Agnes, carrying George's jacket. She hands the jacket to him.)

AGNES

Here you go.

(George takes the jacket and heads for the front door.)

GEORGE

Thanks, Agnes.

(George stops dead in his tracks.)

AGNES!

(George spins around, looks at Agnes, rubs his eyes and looks at her again.)

GEORGE

Agnes, you're alive and well.

AGNES

Well, you're half right, George.

GEORGE

(Fearful)

You're alive?

AGNES

Try again.

GEORGE

That's what I was afraid of.

(George walks to the bar.)

I need a drink

(He pours himself a scotch.)

I must be working too hard. That's it. I need a vacation.

(Agnes walks to the bar and sits on a barstool.)

AGNES

My goodness, George, you sure have the good life now. A house in Beverly Hills, California. Sure beats that dump of a tenement we lived in. Do you know how long it took me to find you?

GEORGE

(Ignoring her)

I'm dreaming. That's it. I'm dreaming. I'll pinch myself to wake up.

(Pinches himself)

OW! That hurt. I'm not dreaming. It really is her, uh, you, in the flesh.

AGNES

You're just not grasping this concept, are you, George?

GEORGE

W-w-w-w-would you like a-a-a-a drink?

(George tries to pour another drink, but is so nervous, he spills most of it.)

AGNES

Gee, George, it's a good thing you're not a surgeon. No. No, drink for me, George. I don't ever have to eat or drink again.

GEORGE

(George crosses to the sofa and takes a seat.)

This is ridiculous. I'm hallucinating. I knew I shouldn't have tried those funny looking mushroom twenty years ago.

(George takes a cigarette from a container on the coffee table and lights it.)

AGNES

How are the kids, George?

GEORGE

My hallucination is talking to me.

(Agnes sits next to George)

AGNES

I'm not a hallucination, George.

GEORGE

You're not?

AGNES

No, I'm not.

GEORGE

So, what are you?

AGNES

Guess.

GEORGE

Guess? You want me to guess? Okay, let's see, you're not a hallucination, and, and, you're not alive, s-s-so, let's see, what does that leave?

AGNES

Come on, George. If we were playing Hot, Hot, Cold, you'd be burning up right now.

GEORGE

(Fearful)

A-a-a-a-a-a g-g-g-g-g-ghost?

AGNES

Bingo! Hey, you're pretty good at this. But, we don't like the word ghost. Sounds to Halloweenish, know what I mean? We prefer spirit.

GEORGE

(He lights another cigarette.)

S-s-s-s-spirit. M-m-m-much better.

AGNES

George, you already have a cigarette lit.

GEORGE

I do? Oh, I do. Right.

(Puts both cigarettes in his mouth.)

S-s-s-s-so, Agnes, uh, w-w-w-what brings you here?

(He realizes he has both cigarettes in his mouth. He puts them both in the ashtray.)

AGNES

You do.

GEORGE

I do?

AGNES

Yup. Believe it or not, George, I have the most amazing story to tell you.

GEORGE

You do? I mean, I'm sure you do.

AGNES

Would you like to hear it?

GEORGE

Do I have a choice?

AGNES

Not really.

GEORGE

Then, I'd love to hear it.

AGNES

Well, in a nutshell, I was all set to be given my angel status in Heaven. But, due to some screw up with the angel monitoring my death, I can't get my angel status. That's where you come in.

GEORGE

Me?

AGNES

Right. I need your help.

GEORGE

S-s-s-sure. Anything. Anything at all. Let me get my checkbook.

AGNES

No, you big silly. It's true what they say. You can't take it with you.

GEORGE

You can't?

AGNES

Hey, I was as shocked as you are. No, George, I need something a little more important than money.

GEORGE

Sure. Name it. It's yours.

AGNES

A confession.

GEORGE

You got it.

(Beat)

Wait. What?

AGNES

A confession.

GEORGE

A confession. What kind of confession?

AGNES

That you murdered me.

GEORGE

Murdered you? I-I-I didn't murder you.

AGNES

Right. I pushed myself overboard and drowned. Come on, George, let's get this over with. There's the phone.

(Points to his cell phone on the coffee table)

Call the police so that I can be on my way. If you hurry, I'll be able to catch the movie tonight. It's that one with Demi Moore and Patrick Swayze.

(George stands and walks to the bar.)

GEORGE

I-I-I- can't do that, Agnes. I'll go to jail. I might even be executed.

AGNES

Oh, that will be nice. I'll be sure to put in a good word for you.

GEORGE

Agnes, I looked all over for you when you fell overboard.

AGNES

Pushed overboard. Then, why did you pull away and head for shore?

GEORGE

I-I-I went to get help.

(Pours another drink. Agnes walks over to the bar.)

AGNES

George, I was only a few feet away. You could've jumped in. You could've thrown me a life preserver. But, going for help? Think about it, George. Not one of your more inspired moments.

GEORGE

Well, the police believed it.

AGNES

Then, they're as stupid as you are.

GEORGE

Look, Agnes, I don't know what you want from me.

AGNES

I told you. A confession.

GEORGE

Well, you're not going to get it.

AGNES

I was afraid you were going to say that.

GEORGE

You might as well go back to where you came from, because I'm not confessing to anything.

AGNES

George, if you don't confess, I'm going to make your life on Earth a living Hell.

(Bells SOUND and lights FLASH.)

GEORGE

Wh-wh-wh-what was that?

AGNES

Aw, they don't like me saying that word.

GEORGE

Alright, just for argument's sake, what happens if I do confess?

AGNES

Then, I go back to Heaven, get my angel status and end up washing and ironing wings, or something.

GEORGE

No, I mean, what happens to me?

AGNES

Oh, more than likely, you'll go to jail, where your filthy carcass will probably rot and die. So, ready to go?

GEORGE

Let me get this straight. My choices are confessing and rotting in jail, or living the life I've recently grown accustomed to, with you making my life a, what was it you called it?

AGNES

A living hell.

(Lights FLASH and bells SOUND)

AGNES

(Looking up)

Hey, I was just trying to make a point.

GEORGE

Well, I guess I have no choice.

AGNES

Good. Do you want to call the cops, or do you want to confess in person?

GEORGE

Neither.

AGNES

Excuse me?

GEORGE

Well, I'm not gonna rot in jail and as far as you making my life a living hell...

(Agnes ducks, but nothing happens.)

AGNES

Guess it doesn't work for everyone.

GEORGE

As I was saying, as far as making my life a living hell, you did that for twenty years. I think I'll take my chances.

(Smugly)

In fact, I'll bet you disappear once your kids find out what you're up to. They'll throw you out of the house.

(George walks over to the kitchen door.)

You think they're going to believe you? Brian, come in here, will you?

AGNES

George...

GEORGE

They're not going to take very kindly to the thought of you scaring and threatening us.

AGNES

George, I think there's something you should know.

(Brian enters)

GEORGE

Brian, Brian, you got to help me. It's your mother.

BRIAN

(Confused)

What about her, Father?

GEORGE

(Points to her)

You don't see her?

BRIAN

Are you feeling well?

AGNES

He can't see, or hear me, George. Only you can. Aint't that a hoot?

(George gets a shocked look on his face.)

BRIAN

What's the matter, Father? You look like you've just seen a ghost?

(George's eyes roll back in his head and he faints.)

CURTAIN

Act I, Scene 3

AT RISE: It is later that evening. George enters through the front door with Brian and Melanie under each arm. The room is dark.

BRIAN

Here you go, Father. We're home.

GEORGE

I feel really strange.

BRIAN

The doctor at the emergency room administered several cc's of diazepam.

GEORGE

What?

MELANIE

You're doped up. Don't worry, it doesn't make you any dopier than you already are.

GEORGE

(They seat George on the sofa.)

Where's Miss Wilson?

BRIAN

Upon completion at the emergency room, Father, Miss Wilson proceeded to her place of residence.

GEORGE

What?

MELANIE

She was making us all sick, so we sent her home.

GEORGE

(Pulling himself together.)

I'm okay. You kids better get ready for bed. You've got school in the morning.

BRIAN

You're right. Good night, Father.

(Brian exits upstairs.)

GEORGE

(To Melanie)

Aren't you going to bed?

MELANIE

Later. I'm starved.

(She exits to the kitchen. George stands and walks over to the light switch. He flips it on to see Agnes sitting in the chair next to the doorway.)

GEORGE

(startled)

AH!

AGNES

Well, George, are you done fainting so we can get back to business.

GEORGE

No, I thought this was a horrible nightmare.

AGNES

George, your nightmare is just beginning. Now, what's your decision?

GEORGE

I told you. No confession. So, go.

AGNES

You know you're going to confess, George. So, you might as well do it now.

GEORGE

What about the kids? What's going to happen to them if I confess?

AGNES

I don't know. They'll probably go live with my sister in Jersey. Besides, there's nothing I can do about them. I need that confession.

GEORGE

Aren't you just a little curious about the kids?

AGNES

No.

(Brian enters dressed in his pajamas.)

BRIAN

It is I, Father.

AGNES

Who is that?

GEORGE

Your son.

AGNES

No.

GEORGE

Come here, Brian.

(Brian stands between George and Agnes.)

BRIAN

Father, is everything copacetic? I heard you conversing with yourself and became extremely concerned.

GEORGE

I'm fine, Brian. I, uh, was just singing to myself.

(George stands behind Agnes.)

BRIAN

Singing to yourself?

GEORGE

Yeah, you know, uh,

(Singing)

I want a girl, just like the girl, who married dear old dad.

(He points straight at Agnes.)

BRIAN

Did you drop something, Father?

GEORGE

He really can't see you.

AGNES

I told you.

BRIAN

See what, Father?

GEORGE

Nothing, son. You better get to bed.

BRIAN

Well, good night, Father.

(He starts for the stairs. Agnes follows him.)

GEORGE

Good night, son.

(Brian turns.)

BRIAN

Oh, Father, don't forget your promise to attend my science fair at school on Friday.

GEORGE

Science fair?

BRIAN

Father, you've been experiencing an enormous amount of memory loss lately.

GEORGE

Science fair. I remember. You made that thing that does something.

BRIAN

A clean air emulsifier designed to decrease the hole in the ozone layer.

GEORGE

Right. I'll try to be there.

(Brian exits upstairs feeling hurt.)

AGNES

He's so smart. So intelligent. What the heck happened to him? He used to be a junior jock. He had one of the best pitching arms in Little League. He loved the game.

GEORGE

It happened right after your death. He went to his room and hardly ever came out. All he did was read. I don't know what got into him.

AGNES

The Brian I knew wouldn't pick up a book unless it had "Monster From" in the title. He's scary.

GEORGE

That's a good one. A ghost standing three feet from me and she says, "He's scary."

AGNES

Well, he is.

GEORGE

You want to see scary?

(Melanie enters with a bowl of popcorn and a soda. She stretches out on the sofa and flips the television remote switch. Agnes and George watch her. Melanie sees George.)

MELANIE

What the hell do you want?

GEORGE

Nothing.

MELANIE

Well, go to bed. You're giving me the creeps standing there.

(He turns to Agnes)

GEORGE

Say hello to your daughter.

AGNES

That's not my little angel, Melanie.

GEORGE

No, that's your little Beelzebub, Melanie.

AGNES

But, she was beautiful. She was going to be a model. She was going to have her picture on every magazine cover in America.

GEORGE

At the rate she's going, she's going to have her picture in every post office in America.

(Melanie turns her head and spies George.)

MELANIE

Who are you talking to?

GEORGE

(Smiling nervously)

No one. I wasn't talking to anyone.

MELANIE

You're standing there and you're talking to yourself. Don't tell me you're not. What, are you having a reaction to the medicine they gave you?

GEORGE

That's it. A reaction.

(Melanie looks at George strangely and returns her focus to the TV.)

GEORGE

Look, Agnes, I've had a really tough day. I'm beat. Do what you gotta do, but I'm going to bed.

(George begins to exit upstairs. He stops and looks at Melanie.)

GEORGE

Anything I can do for you before I go to bed?

MELANIE

I think you've done enough for one night, old man. Making me leave Judy's, because you have to be transported to the hospital in a drunken stupor. Thanks.

GEORGE

I guess you won't need anything then.

(Melanie gives George a disturbed look. He exits upstairs. Agnes sits on the sofa next to Melanie. She studies Melanie closely. Agnes takes a deep breath and blows it out slowly in the direction of Melanie. Melanie shivers and takes an afghan from the back of the sofa and bundles up in it. Agnes continues to watch her.)

(Melanie freezes in motion as Angel Margaret appears in the room under a bright spotlight.)

ANGEL MARGARET

Mrs. Keller, how is it going?

AGNES

(Surprised)

Angel Margaret. Hi. I'm doing fine.

(She stands and joins Angel Margaret under the spotlight.)

ANGEL MARGARET

Did you get your husband to confess yet?

AGNES

Not yet, but he will. Things sure have changed in the past year, especially the kids.

ANGEL MARGARET

Word of advice, Mrs. Keller, don't get involved. There's nothing you can do. Just take care of the business you were sent down to do and get back.

AGNES

But my son has turned into a witless nerd and my daughter's class is voting her most likely to conceive.

ANGEL MARGARET

That's their problem now. Yours is to get your angel classification.

AGNES

Okay, but supposin' George doesn't confess.

ANGEL MARGARET

Well, the Angel Council will only allow you this week before they have to classify you. I'm afraid if you can't come up with a confession by then, they'll rule your death a suicide and the best they'll be able to do is give you a Class Nine Classification.

AGNES

A week isn't much time.

ANGEL MARGARET

Well, there's always the Millennium Review Board. You put in an upgrade and they review your record. If you've been a model angel, they'll advance you by one class every review.

AGNES

And, don't tell me, they meet every millennium.

ANGEL MARGARET

By Earth's timetable. I'll check in with you again soon.

(The spotlight goes black and Angel Margaret exits.)

AGNES

Nice talking to you.

CURTAIN

Act I, Scene 4

AT RISE: It is the next morning. We are still at George's Beverly Hills home. George enters from upstairs dressed casually.

GEORGE

(Looks around)

Oh, Agnes.

(When Agnes doesn't answer, he lets out a sigh of relief.)

I guess she gave up.

(He pulls out a ring box from his jacket pocket and opens it. He smiles and puts the ring back in his pocket. The doorbell RINGS. George opens the front door. Standing there is Tough Guy #1 and Tough Guy #2.)

TOUGH GUY #1

George Keller?

GEORGE

Yes?

TOUGH GUY #1

Mister Vincent Scarfone would like to speak to you.

GEORGE

Vincent Scarfone? The mobs...uh,the mobs, uh the man that, uh, mobs of people adore?

(Vincent enters the living room with Tough Guy #1 and #2 following)

VINCENT

Mr. Keller? I'm Vincent Scarfone.

(George closes the door and follows.)

GEORGE

May I say what an honor it is for you to honor my living room, sir?

VINCENT

I understand you have a racehorse for sale.

GEORGE

Rapid Randy? I did. Excuse me for asking, but how did you know about him?

VINCENT

I've seen him run and I've visited him in the paddock area. I'm very impressed with his record and I feel strongly about his potential.

(He puts a briefcase on the coffee table and opens it to reveal it is full of money.)

I'm prepared to offer you one hundred thousand dollars for him.

GEORGE

Well, Mr. Scarfone, I already promised Rapid Randy to my friend at the track.

VINCENT

Yes, I know, a Mr. William Elliot. It seems Mr. Elliot has withdrawn his offer and is currently recovering from a broken leg in Vail, Colorado, after an unfortunate skiing accident.

GEORGE

(Laughing)

Skiing accident? Bill doesn't ski.

TOUGH GUY #2

He's lucky he can still walk.

VINCENT

Anyway, in the interim, I'm hoping you will consider my offer. I think you will find it very generous. It's twice as much as Mr. Elliot was offering.

GEORGE

(Smiling)

If you wait right here, Mr. Scarfone, I'll get you Rapid Randy's papers.

VINCENT

(Smiling)

An excellent decision.

CURTAIN

Act I, Scene 5

AT RISE: The dining room table is set for dinner. Agnes walks to the table, looks to see if anyone is watching, picks up a water glass. She puts the glass down. Brian enters right and takes a seat at the table.

AGNES

Hi, Brian, how's my boy? I'm really happy you've taken an interest in science and all, but remember we played catch down at the playground? You were the best pitcher in Little League. Your coach even said you could have a career as a major league pitcher? Remember, you were supposed to pitch the first game of your playoff series? That was the week that I...that your dad...so, did you win? I sure would like to know what happened.

(George and Miriam enter right. He sees Agnes.)

GEORGE

(Angered)

What are you doing here?

BRIAN

Father, you dispatched an invitation to me that I felt was irrevocable.

MIRIAM

George, is he going to be talking like that all night?

AGNES

(re: Miriam)

George, who is this? Aren't you going to introduce us?

GEORGE

No!

MIRIAM

No what?

GEORGE

Uh, no, he's not going to be talking like that all night? Are you, Brian?

BRIAN

Indubitably.

GEORGE

Where's your sister?

BRIAN

She revealed her plans for the evening to include the presence of a gentleman friend.

GEORGE

She's on a date?

BRIAN

In so many words.

GEORGE

I told her I wanted her here for dinner tonight. Tonight's going to be a special night for the whole family.

BRIAN

She mentioned you might convey such a charge and requested I pass along a communiqué to you.

GEORGE

A message? What is it?

BRIAN

One that should not be repeated in mixed company, however, included in the message was the word "rotate."

(Miriam steps in front of her chair, waiting for George to push it in. Agnes makes her way over to her.)

AGNES

You still haven't told me who this is yet, George.

(George tries to push the chair in for Miriam, but Agnes keeps holding the chair back.)

MIRIAM

What are we having for dinner, Georgie?

GEORGE

None of your business.

MIRIAM

Excuse me?

(George is desperately trying to push in the chair.)

GEORGE

(Gritting his teeth)

Nothing.

MIRIAM

Georgie, you can push my chair in now.

GEORGE

Let go.

(Agnes lets go and the chair slams into the back of Miriam's legs, sending her falling back.)

MIRIAM

Oh!

GEORGE

I'm sorry, sweetheart. Are you alright?

MIRIAM

Georgie, save the rough stuff for later.

GEORGE

I'd like to see you in the living room.

MIRIAM

Which one of us?

(George points to Agnes and then realizes what he's doing.)

GEORGE

Neither...neither one of you, uh, Brian, if you don't mind, maybe Miss Wilson will help you bring the food in from the kitchen. I've been cooking all day and, uh, it's all ready. So, you guys bring in the food and I'll get a bottle of wine from the bar.

(Miriam and Brian get up and exit right. George motions with her finger for Agnes to follow him. Agnes smiles condescendingly and follows George into the living room.)

GEORGE

What the hell do you think you're doing in there?

AGNES

I just want to know who this woman is. Wasn't she here the night you passed out? She rode in the ambulance with you to the hospital.

(George walks behind the bar. Meanwhile, Brian and Miriam bring the food out and take their seats at the table.)

GEORGE

Her name is Miriam Wilson. I met her three weeks ago and, yes, I am going to ask her to marry me.

AGNES

Are you crazy? You don't know anything about this woman...except that she's a forty-two D.

(He takes a bottle of wine from behind the bar.)

GEORGE

I know that I love her and she loves me.

AGNES

You mean she loves your money.

GEORGE

You're just jealous, that's all.

AGNES

Jealous? I'm concerned what kind of stepmother that gold digging bimbo is going to make for our children.

(George puts the bottle of wine into an ice bucket and steps out from behind the bar.)

GEORGE

Well, since it has nothing to do with you, I'd appreciate it if you'd just butt out.

AGNES

It has plenty to do with me. Are you going to kill her the same way you killed me, or do you have something special planned for her?

GEORGE

Go find some other house to haunt, will you?

(He enters the dining room.)

AGNES

This one will do just fine, thank you.

(She snaps her fingers. Everyone freezes in motion. Agnes enters the dining room. She stands in the corner and snaps her fingers again. Everyone comes back to life. Agnes waves to George.)

GEORGE

(Re: Agnes)

How did you do that?

AGNES

I'm a ghost, George. I can do anything.

BRIAN

Do what, Father?

GEORGE

Uh, get your hair so shiny. Now, where were we?

MIRIAM

This is so nice, Georgie. I mean, you know, having dinner with your family and all. It sure would be nice to be a part of the family.

AGNES

What are you planning, George, adopting her?

GEORGE

Actually, I'm glad you brought that up.

MIRIAM

Brought up what?

GEORGE

Family. I...we have been seeing each other for some time now.

MIRIAM

Three weeks. I remember how we met.

(To Brian)

Did your daddy ever tell you how we met?

AGNES

I'd like to hear this myself.

GEORGE

Shut up.

MIRIAM

If you don't want me to tell, Georgie, I won't.

GEORGE

No, uh, sweetheart. I'm sorry. Go ahead.

MIRIAM

Well, your daddy was stopped at a traffic light on Wilshire in his bright, shiny new Mercedes, when silly me bumped your daddy's bumper with my Gremlin.

AGNES

And he's been bumping your bumper with his Gremlin ever since.

GEORGE

Right, and we exchanged drivers licenses and insurance cards and the next day, guess who's ringing our front doorbell?

AGNES

The Maytag repairman?

BRIAN

Fascinating.

MIRIAM

It was the happiest day of my life.

AGNES

If I were you, I'd find out how many other Mercedes she's bumped into with her Gremlin.

GEORGE

(Snapping)

Who asked you?

MIRIAM

Sorry, Georgie, you don't have to snap at me.

GEORGE

I wasn't snapping at you, Miriam. I was...that is...you were saying how much you'd like to be a part of this family. And, to that end, I'd like to propose a toast.

(George takes Miriam's glass and begins pouring wine into it.)

I hope you like this wine. I've been saving it for a special occasion.

(Agnes tips the bottle, so the glass overflows.)

MIRIAM

Georgie, are you sure you haven't been tasting the wine before us?

GEORGE

Brian, would you like to taste the wine?

BRIAN

Father, alcohol is the key to the door of degradation.

GEORGE

So, what is it? You don't want any?

MIRIAM

I'd love some.

AGNES

Georgie, Miriam would love some wine.

(George places a glass on the table in front of Miriam.)

GEORGE

I'd better pour this one with the glass on the table.

(He checks to make sure Agnes isn't anywhere near. He pours the glass successfully, but as Miriam goes to reach for it, Agnes tips the glass into her lap. Miriam jumps up.)

Agnes!

(Brian and Miriam look at George strangely.)

MIRIAM

Georgie, are you feeling all right?

(Agnes is standing at the end of the table with the tablecloth in her hands.)

AGNES

Hey, George, want to see a neat trick?

GEORGE

(Shouting)

NO!

(Miriam starts for the front door.)

MIRIAM

I'd better be going.

GEORGE

No, wait.

(George follows closely behind her.)

MIRIAM

You've been acting very strangely lately, Georgie. When you think you're feeling better, call me.

(Miriam exits.)

GEORGE

Miriam, wait. I've been under a lot of stress lately. I can explain. Really. My dead wife is trying to louse things up for us. Miriam? Miriam? Honey?

(George walks to the bar, sits on a stool and pours himself a drink. Brian enters from the dining room.)

BRIAN

This was most enjoyable. We must do this more often. Good night, Father.

(George gestures as Brian exits upstairs. He takes a sip of his drink. Agnes pops up from behind the bar.)

GEORGE

(Startled)

AH!

AGNES

George, I have a question.

GEORGE

Will you stop doing that?

AGNES

But it's so much fun. Can I ask my question now?

GEORGE

What is it?

AGNES

How did you do it?

GEORGE

I already told you, Agnes, I'm not going to confess to murdering you.

AGNES

I don't mean that. I mean, how did you get so rich? I was married to you for twenty years and all we ever had in the savings account was seventy dollars.

GEORGE

You're not going to believe this.

AGNES

Try me.

GEORGE

Remember that twenty-five thousand dollar life insurance policy we had?

AGNES

Yeah.

GEORGE

I cashed it in.

AGNES

I think this house cost more than twenty-five thousand, George. I think your bathroom cost more than twenty-five thousand.

GEORGE

I don't know what happened. I cashed the insurance check, put most of it in the bank and took a couple of grand with me. On my way home, I passed Aqueduct. Something told me to go in. Sure enough, in the very next race, there was a horse called Lucky George. I put the whole two grand on his nose and...

AGNES

He won.

GEORGE

Paid eight to one.

AGNES

Huh, imagine that.

GEORGE

Listen to this. I stayed and bet on the last five races. They all came in. I couldn't believe it. I quit that stupid job I had at the hospital, emptying garbage, and spent all my time at the track. I couldn't lose. Then, I tried my luck at the lottery. I just couldn't lose. It was unbelievable. It's like your dying was the luckiest day of my life. No offense.

(There's the SOUND of a motorcycle pulling up outside. The engine revs and then shuts off.)

GEORGE

Now what.

(He gets up and walks to the front door just as Melanie and Viper enter.)

MELANIE

Hey, old man.

GEORGE

What the hell is going on? What the hell is this?

(Viper gives George a murderous look and heads towards him.)

MELANIE

(Intervening)

Viper? No, Viper.

GEORGE

Viper? The man's name is Viper?

(Viper heads towards George again with an angry look in his eyes. Melanie steps between the two.)

MELANIE

Viper. Viper. Food, Viper. Food.

(Viper stops in his tracks, thinks about food, grunts and enters the dining room with Melanie. George and Agnes follow.)

GEORGE

Okay, you want to tell me what this is all about?

MELANIE

His name is Viper and he's going to be staying with us for a while.

(Viper sits at the table and starts devouring everything. He's eating like he hasn't had nourishment for days. Melanie sits next to him. Agnes watches in amazement.)

AGNES

It's a good thing you don't have any pets.

(George gets a better look at Viper.)

GEORGE

Melanie, would you like to tell me about your little friend?

MELANIE

I told you. His name is Viper and he's going to be staying with us for a while.

GEORGE

(Trying to remain cool.)

Uh-huh. How long is a while?

MELANIE

Until he's finished his book.

AGNES

You mean he's going to eat a book, too?

(George motions for Agnes to leave. Agnes shrugs her shoulders and exits to the living room.)

GEORGE

What book?

MELANIE

Viper used to belong to the Devil's Disciples Motorcycle Gang. He's going to write his memoirs, right here, in our house. Isn't that exciting?

GEORGE

(Trying to smile.)

Exciting.

MELANIE

And I'm going to represent him. I'm going to be his agent. I can see it now. We'll be on book signings across the country together. People will just eat up his raw animal magnetism.

