EXCERPT FROM ACT 1

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

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

SAM
Hey!

COLLEEN
What the hell?

SAM
I’m great, actually, thanks for asking.

COLLEEN
When is your flight?

SAM
Tonight.

COLLEEN
Oh, yeah?

SAM
Yeah. Hour and a half.

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

SAM
I’m…packing. Can’t you tell?

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

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

COLLEEN
Good to see you handling this so tactfully.
SAM
Is Ducky’s death still something we need to tiptoe around?

COLLEEN
I’m not asking you to tiptoe, I’m asking you to be considerate.

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

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

SAM
I’m almost done!

COLLEEN
What about any of this is “almost done”?

SAM
I’ll be almost done really soon!

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

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

COLLEEN
Penny had questions.

SAM
Bet you didn’t put up much of a fight.

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

SAM
The contract has already been violated. Your move, partner.
COLLEEN
You were supposed to move out.

SAM
Yeah, on Friday!

COLLEEN
It is Friday!

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

(SAM zones out, staring wistfully into space.)

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

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

SAM
Right…the lease…

COLLEEN
Right. The lease.

SAM
I don’t really know if I’m doing that anymore.

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

SAM
I was going to go to Chicago.

COLLEEN
But what are you going to do?

SAM
I’m…moving to Buffalo.

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

SAM
My mom lives in Buffalo. I’m moving in with her.
COLLEEN
What about Chicago? What about that dumb art gallery?

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

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

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

COLLEEN
And you’re sure about this?

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

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

SAM
Colleen!

COLLEEN
It was a joke!

SAM
Can we please not talk about this anymore?

COLLEEN
We don’t have to. As long as you are actually moving out.

SAM
You really think I’d want to stay here? In this emotional climate?

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

SAM
We BROKE UP, Colleen!
COLLEEN
SO WHY ARE YOU STILL IN THIS GODDAMN APARTMENT?

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

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

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

SAM
That would be helpful.

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

SAM
How was Penny’s?

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

SAM
That sounds awful.

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

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

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

SAM
Please, MTV would love that.

COLLEEN
It does sound very glamorous.
SAM
See, that’s what I’m talking about! We need to start capitalizing on our sadness.

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

SAM
What, and leave all this?

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

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

COLLEEN
Bedbugs.

SAM
I take it back.

(Awkward silence.)

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

COLLEEN
(Referring to their relationship)
Yeah. Sucks to have something die after half a decade.

SAM
Really, Colleen?

COLLEEN
You were thinking it.

SAM
You didn’t have to say it.

COLLEEN
We don’t have to talk about it anymore. Just…tell me how you’ve been.
SAM
Oh, you know me, I’m all over the place. Yesterday I went to say good-bye to the women who run Holy Donut and they gave me a free dozen, which is honestly pretty nice considering the number of emotional breakdowns I’ve had in that store.

COLLEEN
I went there yesterday with Penny!

SAM
Did you use the coupons?

COLLEEN
The what?

SAM
The coupons I gave you.

COLLEEN
When…

SAM
For your freaking birthday, Colleen.

COLLEEN
Shit, Sam, come on.

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

COLLEEN
Oh yeah? Who said that?

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

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

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

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

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

SAM
It’s ‘cause your ankles look sexy as *hell*, Colleen, don’t pretend like you don’t know!

COLLEEN
I don’t think you can say that anymore.

SAM
Come on, you know I’m kidding.

COLLEEN
Still.

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

SAM
Have you eaten dinner yet?

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

SAM
Later as in…

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

SAM
So like…

COLLEEN
After you leave.

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

COLLEEN
This is mine.

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

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

SAM
You paid for that?

COLLEEN
I paid for it!

SAM
It was like a buck, Colleen.

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

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

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

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

SAM
Go for it.

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

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

COLLEEN
How can I trust you after you when you’re clearly so confused about what belongs to me?
(COLLEEN holds up a framed picture of BARBARA BUSH and raises her eyebrows.)

SAM
Is that…Barbara Bush?

COLLEEN
I think so. Like the original Bush’s wife?

SAM
Yeah, is that yours?

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

SAM
I don’t know, but it’s not mine.

COLLEEN
No way. It was in your box.

SAM
I’ve never seen that before!

COLLEEN
So why was it in your box?

SAM
I don’t know…I was stressed! I was just throwing things in!

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

SAM
What – no! That’s not what I meant!

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

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

COLLEEN
What? No, I’m ruthless, not crazy. I have no idea where this came from.
SAM
You don’t care about how a framed photo of a Republican first lady got into our house?

COLLEEN
Are you offended because she’s a Republican, Sam?

SAM
I mean, yeah, kind of! I’m not a Republican!

COLLEEN
Yeah, but you also don’t vote.

SAM
I asked you to never bring that up again!

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

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

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

SAM
Woah, hold on – you can’t do that!

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

SAM
It’s not about my mom’s plates, it’s about…it’s about…

(SAM begins to pace the living room nervously.)

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

SAM
No, the kettle should be fine.

COLLEEN
It’s not another pyramid scheme, is it?

(SAM continues to pace, muttering to herself.)
COLLEEN
Sam, if I walk into that kitchen, are there going to be a bunch of “pond rocks” in the oven again?

SAM
No, no pond rocks.

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

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

SAM
WAIT!

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

COLLEEN
Jesus, what?

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

SAM
You shouldn’t go in the kitchen.

COLLEEN
What the hell, Sam?

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

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

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

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

SAM
Would you cool it with the pond rocks? It was one time!
COLLEEN
Tell me why I can’t use the kitchen, Sam!

SAM
I did tell you!

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

SAM
What?

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

SAM
How do you –

(SAM feels her knees frantically.)

SAM
Son of a bitch…

COLLEEN
Just tell me the truth.

(COLLEEN glares at SAM, arms crossed.)

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

COLLEEN
You’re kidding me.

SAM
You…you do remember it, right?

COLLEEN
Sam, we were just talking about this!

SAM
Yes, yes, you’re right, we were just talking about it – rest in peace Ducky. Anyway, um, long story short – there’s a ghost in our kitchen and you probably shouldn’t go in there.
(There is a pregnant pause as the two women stare at each other. COLLEEN’s mouth is hanging slightly open, and SAM has clasped her hands together under her chin, begging COLLEEN to not be mad.)

COLLEEN
Excuse me?

SAM
I tried to bring Ducky back to life.

COLLEEN
Excuse me.

SAM
It, uh…definitely went wrong.

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

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

SAM
No! Colleen, come on, wait!

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

SAM
Just go look in the kitchen.

COLLEEN
No!

SAM
Please just go look in the kitchen.

COLLEEN
Why?

SAM
That’s where the ghost is, dingus!

COLLEEN
If I get murdered in there, I hope everyone…calls you a huge bitch at my funeral!
SAM
That’s not very girl power of you!

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

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

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

COLLEEN
There’s a ghost in there.

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

COLLEEN
I said…I said there’s a fucking ghost in there, Sam!

SAM
Uh, yeah. I know.

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

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

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

COLLEEN
One.

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

COLLEEN
Two…

SAM
I thought it would make you feel better!

    COLLEEN
    THREE.

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

**EXCERPT FROM ACT 2**

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

    MADAME ZELDA
    Your upstairs neighbors are exceptionally loud today.

    OLIVER
    You always say that.

    MADAME ZELDA
    And it’s always true, Oliver!

    OLIVER
    You worry too much, Aunt Zelda!

    MADAME ZELDA
    Oliver, what did I tell you?

    OLIVER
    I said I’m not gonna call you “Madame Zelda”. I’m your nephew. It’s gratuitous. And super weird.

    MADAME ZELDA
    No, not that.

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

    MADAME ZELDA
    No, Oliver, about neighbors!

    OLIVER
    Oh, um…never assume you’re above leaving a dead fish on a neighbor’s doorstep?
MADAME ZELDA
That’s right, darling.

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

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

OLIVER
No offense.

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

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

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

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

(Pause.)

MADAME ZELDA
Oliver.

OLIVER
What?

MADAME ZELDA
Who am I?

(OLIVER grunts and looks at the ceiling.)

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

OLIVER
You’re the most successful medium north of Long Island.
MADAME ZELDA
And?

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

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

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

MADAME ZELDA
Will you fetch me some tea?

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

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

OLIVER
You can just call it the grocery store.

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

OLIVER
How much do you know about the free market?

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

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

MADAME ZELDA
Are we going somewhere? I haven’t even had my tea yet.

OLIVER
I didn’t “fail college”, Zelda. I failed half of senior year. There’s a difference.
MADAME ZELDA
The difference being…

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

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

OLIVER
Seven-eighths of the way done!

MADAME ZELDA
Mmhmm…

OLIVER
I fail one semester…one semester! You didn’t even graduate high school…

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

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

OLIVER
Do you open every appointment with that story?

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

MADAME ZELDA
Only when it’s relevant.

OLIVER
Was it relevant today?

MADAME ZELDA
Oh, Oliver. Today was a train wreck.

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

OLIVER
Dead?

MADAME ZELDA
Since last night. He ate a sock.

(Sharp rapping on the door.)

MADAME ZELDA
I hope you’re not getting solicited in your own home.

OLIVER
Could be a secret admirer.

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

OLIVER
You haven’t even met her!

MADAME ZELDA
You’re blushing, Oliver. Quite hard, I might add.

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

MADAME ZELDA
Francine has bigger things to worry about.

OLIVER
Hold one…she told you! Mom told you!

MADAME ZELDA
Oliver, dear God, stop being so dramatic. You don’t wear it well.
(The knocking continues, louder and faster.)

OLIVER
I’ll be right back.

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

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

OLIVER
What?

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

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

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

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

MADAME ZELDA
Madame Zelda, dear.

PENNY
Greetings, Madame Zelda.

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

EXCERPT FROM ACT 3

(SAM sits on the building’s fire escape, her feet dangling between the railings. COLLEEN approaches and sits down next to her, struggling to push her feet through the railings.)
COLLEEN
I feel like I use to fit through these.

SAM
Speak for yourself. I’m the perfect size…

COLLEEN
Alright, Thumbelina.

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

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

SAM
You’re right. It was a funny.

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

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

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

SAM
A lot of bad timing recently, huh?

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

SAM
What do you mean?

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

SAM
I guess I never noticed.

COLLEEN
Yeah, you wouldn’t.
SAM
I’m sorry.

COLLEEN
Don’t be. Not your fault.

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

COLLEEN
Can you not be so hard on yourself?

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

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

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

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

SAM
A ghost with a lot of attitude.

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

SAM
Honestly? I think they must.

(Silence for a moment.)

COLLEEN
I wish I were more like you, Sam.

SAM
Are you kidding me? You’re the smartest person I know. And the most logical, and the most loyal, and the best at catching really big bugs—
COLLEEN
Everything you do seems to so easy! Why is it so easy for you?

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

COLLEEN
Yeah, you’re right.

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

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

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

SAM
Thanks. I do too.

COLLEEN
Do you think you’ll ever tell anyone about this?

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

(COLLEEN laughs, and they fall silent again.)

COLLEEN
The moon looks nice tonight.

SAM
Like a scoop of ice cream.

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

SAM
It’s not a man. It’s Christopher Walken.

COLLEEN
You think so?
SAM
I’d like to think so.

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

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

(SAM sits up straight, mildly alarmed.)

SAM
Has anyone ever been conceived on the moon?

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

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

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

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

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

SAM
Probably not.

COLLEEN
Really?

SAM
I think Earth is silly enough.

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