

The Middle

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SCENE

JIM is sitting on a couch reading the newspaper.
KRISTIN barges in wearing a beekeeper suit while holding a watering can.

JIM

How is it outside?

KRISTIN

They didn't let me get to my flowers.

JIM

I told you that it wasn't a good idea to go out today.

KRISTIN

Well, they need to figure out when this issue will be solved. I cannot continue to live like this!

JIM

Well, they can't do anything about it right now.

KRISTIN

I blame the government.

JIM

Government? What government?

KRISTIN

I'm just saying that for paradise, it's just not so great.

JIM

This isn't paradise.

KRISTIN

Then, what is it?

JIM

I don't know. Brad just said that it isn't the after—

KRISTIN

Fuck Brad.

JIM

It isn't his fault.

KRISTIN

Then it's your fault.

JIM

How is it—

KRISTIN

If you had been paying attention then—

JIM

Are you trying to tell me that I should have hit the deer?

KRISTIN

It wasn't even real!

JIM

How was I supposed to know that!?

KRISTIN

You know, I always knew that you were a shitty driver.

JIM

Just because I refused to hit a deer?!

KRISTIN

You had time to stop the car!

JIM

I told you I couldn't.

KRISTIN

Yeah, that's because you suck at driving.

A loud beep is heard, and a voice begins to speak overhead. JIM and KRISTIN are frozen.

JANET

Hello! Hi, uh... yeah... I just wanted to let you know that we can...we can hear you.

JIM

Sorry! We didn't mean to be so loud!

JANET

Yeah, I don't think you turned off your speaker.

KRISTIN

Sorry, Janet! We'll take care of it right now!

JIM fumbles with a wall speaker. He presses a button.

JIM

There we go. *(Pauses)* Well, that was embarrassing.

KRISTIN

Oh, it's just Janet. You know she's really nosy.

JANET

I can still hear you.

KRISTIN

(Nervously laughing) I—I... How's Carl?

JANET

It's the red button, if you're wondering which one turns it off.

KRISTIN

(To Jim) Go! Turn it off!

JIM runs back and pushes the button. There is another loud beep.

JIM

Hello. Janet are you still there. (*Silence*) Okay. That was interesting.

KRISTIN

I wonder how Carl puts up with her. I feel bad for him, like he had to deal with her then and now. He should have divorced her before he died.

JIM

Yeah, he told me how he had planned on doing that but then he had that heart attack.

KRISTIN

Poor Carl. I wonder if he was sad when she appeared.

JIM

You would think this place would announce something like that.

KRISTIN

I heard from Tessa that Janet had remarried.

JIM

No.

KRISTIN

Yes. I wonder how that will work out.

JIM

Maybe Carl will just dump her onto her other husband.

KRISTIN

I just know that I want to see that play out. That will teach her!

JIM

Maybe we'll hear it. Now, how did this thing turn on?

KRISTIN

I don't know. Oh! You know what it must have been the door.

JIM

You have to be more careful.

KRISTIN

We should probably talk to Brad about moving it.

JIM

We should call him.

JIM walks over to a rotary phone. He picks up the receiver.

Do you know what his phone number is?

KRISTIN

It's probably in the handbook.

JIM

Okay. Where did you put it?

KRISTIN

It's right there.

KRISTIN points to a thick book on a coffee table. JIM walks over in disbelief.

JIM

Please tell me that there's a directory on here.

KRISTIN

I don't know. I only read the first page. It was too hard to hold it.

JIM

Who has time to read this?

KRISTIN

We do. I mean we are dead.

JIM

This is going to take years.

KRISTIN

Don't you like to read?

JIM

I like to read the newspaper.

KRISTIN

We're dead. What else do you think is going to happen?

JIM

We still have family and friends there.

KRISTIN

And?

There's a knock on the door. Jim opens the door. JACK and CHRISTINA walk in.

CHRISTINA

(Snotty accent) Hello! We heard we had new neighbors!

JIM and KRISTIN stand there in silence.

Not like we had any... on this side at least. Oh! Before I forget.

CHRISTINA hands KRISTIN a cake.

(Hesitantly) Well, what a lovely place you have here. Jack and I have a much bigger place, but then again we were... fortunate. Who knew that that would travel here! *(Laughs)* So, what happened to the two of you?

JACK

Oh. Don't mind her. She simply needs new friends.

Don't push it.

CHRISTINA

The last person we met was Janet.

JACK

That nosy bitch.

CHRISTINA

(Off stage) I can hear you!

JANET

JIM rushes to turn off the speaker again.

Oh, hello Janet! How's Carl?

JACK

There's a loud beep again.

I told you she's always snooping around.

CHRISTINA

I see that you haven't had it fixed yet.

JACK

Wait, you're telling—

KRISTIN

JACK

You have to speak to Brad about it. For some reason the wiring here is awful.

CHRISTINA

It took me a week to figure out how to turn on the TV.

JIM

Ours works fine.

CHRISTINA

Do you have to use the robot?

JIM

Robot?

CHRISTINA

Yes, the small rectangular robot. I wish it spoke.

KRISTIN

Do you mean the remote?

CHRISTINA

The what?

KRISTIN

The remote. You know the remote control. They come with all of them.

CHRISTINA

Are you mocking me?

JACK

Now, I don't think they meant any harm. She's just a little dramatic. She used to be an actress on Broadway.

JIM

Really? What shows were you in?

CHRISTINA

I was the lead in Irene. Those soldiers loved to watch me.

JIM

Don't think I've ever heard of it before.

JACK

It's from the early 1900s. She doesn't understand the passage of time.

CHRISTINA

I don't appreciate you speaking of me. I can clearly hear you.

KRISTIN

So, when did you die?

JIM

I don't think she meant...

KRISTIN

We died in a car accident. He didn't know how to swerve so we landed in a river.

CHRISTINA

I died in a fire.

The two of you?

KRISTIN

No. I had an aneurysm.

JACK

That's scary.

KRISTIN

You know I didn't really feel it.

JACK

How far apart did you two die?

KRISTIN

Ten years.

JACK

Wow. How did the fire happen?

KRISTIN

It all sounds awful. So, how may we help you?

JIM

Don't be boring.

KRISTIN

Excuse me.

JIM

KRISTIN

So, the fire.

CHRISTINA

I don't remember it except that it was hot. I still believe that I was murdered.

KRISTIN

Really? Any ideas on who did it?

JACK

It wasn't murder.

CHRISTINA

You never believe me.

JACK

You tend to embellish things.

CHRISTINA

Well, I do love theatrics. After all I was an actress for 40 years.

They stand in silence and then turn to look at each other for a moment.

KRISTIN

You know this cake is getting heavy. I'm going to set it down.

CHRISTINA

Yes! I hope you love it my baker Tom makes the best cakes in town.

KRISTIN exits.

JIM

How did you get a baker?

CHRISTINA

Brad introduced us.

JIM

Brad. By the way, how do you contact him?

END