

Lindsey Alexander
Anne Marie Brethauer
Katherine Burkman
Jane Cottrell
Martha Lovely



Linda Meadows
Cecily O'Neill
Marilyn Rofsky
Ann Roth
Cathy Ryan

HOMESCAPE (First performance, 1995)

This original script has been performed as a site-specific work at a home in Bexley, OH. Original music by WOMEN AT PLAY regulars, Daniel and Andrew Rogers.

Contact Info/Request Script:

Katherine H. Burkman, Artistic Coordinator
Phone, (614) 457-6580
Email, burkman.2@osu.edu

SCENE from HOMESCAPE

THE PORCH

AT RISE: ELLEN is seated on the top step of the porch of an ordinary suburban house. She is heavily pregnant. Her husband, PAUL, enters from the house but she does not look around.

PAUL
What are you doing out here?

ELLEN
Sitting.

PAUL
I can see that. The question is why.

ELLEN
No reason. I'm tired. It's hot.

PAUL
Then come back inside.

ELLEN
No, I've been in there long enough.

PAUL
You haven't really seen the place yet.

ELLEN
I don't need to see it. I know what it's like.

PAUL

(Sitting down beside her)

Look, I know you're tired, but so am I. I'm tired of looking at houses you don't like. This place has everything we want. Or everything we can afford right now. Why won't you at least take a look at it?

ELLEN

You look.

PAUL

It's a quiet neighborhood, there's a big yard, room for an office for me. You haven't seen the nursery yet--it's even painted blue.

ELLEN

You sound like the realtor.

PAUL

We have to make up our minds. We have to come to a reasonable decision.

ELLEN

You're always so reasonable. You decide.

PAUL

For God's sake, Ellen, what do you want? Do you want us to live with your mother?

ELLEN

No. I'm sorry. You go ahead. Talk to the realtor. I'll be in soon. We'll come and live here.

(PAUL exits to house, slamming the door. A large armchair in the corner turns around. A woman is sitting in it)

Oh, I didn't see you there.

WOMAN

You're Ellen.

ELLEN

Yes, we're looking at the house.

WOMAN

That's right. I like to sit out here, too. Your baby's due soon.

ELLEN

Yes.

WOMAN

She'll be born in June. This is a good house for babies.

ELLEN

I suppose so.

WOMAN

They grow so quickly. Tumbling in the yard, making a swing in the trees. You'll worry about them crawling under the house, but Paul will cover it with wire.

ELLEN

You raised your family here?

WOMAN

Riding their bikes in the street, staying out late. You'll worry about them when the neighborhood changes. There 'll be lots of traffic, new people.

ELLEN

How long have you been here?

WOMAN

As soon as you arrived. I've been here many years.

ELLEN

Is your family still here?

WOMAN

All gone. Scattered. My first, she was born in June. She's in Seattle now. Grown and gone. The twins. . .

ELLEN

There's twins in my family too.

WOMAN

That's right. They quarreled. If one comes to visit, the other stays away. it started when Paul left.

ELLEN

Paul?

WOMAN

My husband.

ELLEN

That's my husband's name too!

WOMAN

Yes, gone too.

ELLEN

You must be lonely.

WOMAN

Alone. Lonely, no, not really. I thought I'd miss him when he left, but I didn't feel much different. I was alone for a long time in this house, sitting on this porch.

. . . .

He won't be happy here for long.

ELLEN

No, I suppose not. He wanted to stay on in the apartment, and then when our finances were really unsure, he wanted to get a really big place. He works downtown.

WOMAN

In a bank. You'll be happy here at first.

ELLEN

And then?

WOMAN

It's hard to say when things change. Life seems to slow down. We wait for time to pass here on the porch. Waiting to have a baby.

ELLEN

It seems to take forever.

WOMAN

Waiting for them to go to school.

ELLEN

Paul's already got a school picked out.

WOMAN

To grow up, move out, come back to visit. . .

ELLEN

Should we buy this house? Do I have a choice?

WOMAN

You'll buy it. Here's Paul.

(PAUL appears in doorway)

PAUL

Ellen, we've got the house. You have to come and sign, now!

(Both ELLEN and WOMAN stand up and face the audience, speaking together)

ELLEN and WOMAN

I'm coming.

(They face each other, then turn to follow PAUL into the house)

END OF SCENE

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