



2-PERSON SCENES

This scene is from a Stage Partners play, free to read in full at yourstagepartners.com.

***Beware The House on Haunted Hill!* by Matthew Byrd
and Kathryn Funkhouser**

1M 1F
Comedy

Nora Manning and Lance Schroeder are guests at an eccentric millionaire's party in the 1950s, where they are getting a tour of a famously haunted house, until they hang back behind the rest of the group. Nora is a nervous young woman who introduces herself as a professor of the paranormal. Lance is a friendly but vain actor who believes his handsomeness makes him more capable than he is. Both are a little self-absorbed.

(LANCE lingers behind, and NORA turns towards him as the others leave the room.)

NORA: Lance, are you coming? We really shouldn't miss any of the tour.

LANCE: A tour? Ha! That's a good one. Next, you're going to tell me that you order off the menu. Don't you want to explore this place on your own?

NORA: I don't know if that's a good idea...

LANCE: Come now. As I said in *Detective Virtuous and The Case of the Thing That Should Not Be*, "The darkness is our greatest natural resource for adventure!"

NORA: Oh, maybe you're right.

LANCE: Of course, I'm right...I'm Lance! Now, let's start with some of these doors. In my experience, doors almost always have something behind them.

(LANCE mimes opening a door.)

LANCE: See...dusty old bottles! You won't find those on the beaten path.

NORA: Lance...can you keep a secret?

LANCE: Of course I can! Why, I've never even told anyone that Marilyn Monroe is actually a brunette.

NORA: It's just that I've been holding on to something since we've got here, and I don't know if I can keep it to myself any longer...

LANCE: *(Looking around and not paying attention to NORA:)* Keep talking, I'm absolutely listening.

NORA: Oh, Lance, I knew I could trust you! See, I'm not actually Professor Nora Manning.

LANCE: *(Absentmindedly:)* Too few of us are these days.

NORA: My real name is Paige Slugworth. I'm a student of Professor Manning's. It all began years ago when my father bought an old Chevrolet.

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LANCE: Sorry. Were you finished?

NORA: —I thought I was finished the day the old Chevrolet skidded off the road.

(LANCE continues to wander around.)

NORA: The policeman said it was a wonder my family survived the automobile accident at all. But my dreams? *They* were the ones who died that day. Because now I'm the only one in my family who can make any money.

LANCE: I wonder if that's a closet or another door?

NORA: *(Too caught up in her story to notice:)* So I worked the counter at the shoe store, I waitressed at the malt shop, I scrimped and saved and got myself a scholarship. But I never knew what struggle was until I got an on-campus job working for the great Professor Manning.

LANCE: It is a closet!

NORA: I know! Never have I been so disrespected. I toiled for this woman while she threw paperweights at my head and called me a waitress.

LANCE: *(Totally ignoring her:)* You know, they just don't make cellars like they used to.

NORA: So one day, I walk into an office and find a fancy letter on her desk. I didn't care what was in it...I just didn't want her to have it. It turned out to be an invitation and...well, I'd never been to a fancy party. Much less one that offered a prize...

LANCE: Nora, you've got to stop talking about whatever you've been talking about and open one of these doors! They're just the best.

NORA: *(Exasperated:)* Oh, very well...

(NORA opens a door. A strange noise emerges from inside the newly discovered room. Perhaps a wail or laugh.)

NORA: What was that?

LANCE: What was what?

NORA: That noise!

LANCE: Oh, you're probably just scaring yourself. I did it all the time when I played one of Frankenstein's monsters in *Seven Brides for Seven Frankensteins...*

(The noise emerges from the room again.)

NORA: Was that one in my head too?

LANCE: Hey you're right...there is something in there. Don't worry, I know just how to take care of it.

(LANCE faces the open door.)



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LANCE: LANCE!!!!!!!!!!

(LANCE charges offstage into the room. There is a crashing sound and the door closes.)

NORA: Lance? Lance? Are you okay? What's in there?

End of Scene.

BEWARE THE HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL! adapted by Matthew Byrd & Kathryn Funkhouser from the 1959 film *House on Haunted Hill*, written by Robb White, directed by William Castle, starring Vincent Price

Length: 85-90 minutes

Cast Size: 9 actors (suggested casting: 3F, 3M, 3 any)

Genre: Comedy Thriller

Synopsis: Come to the party...stay if you dare. An eccentric millionaire promises six guests a mysterious prize if they can survive the night at the only truly haunted house in the world. Everyone invited has a few skeletons in their closets though, and screwball scares lurk around every corner. The classic 50s horror movie *House on Haunted Hill* becomes a campy whodunnit in this low-tech stage adaptation. Join us at the House on Haunted Hill - it'll be a *scream*.

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