

inhabited

by Michael John Garcés

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draft 1b
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Fondly dedicated to Maureen Brennan, Dana Salisbury and the Red Dive Collective.

with apologies to Julio Cortázar

Es casi repetir lo mismo salvo las consecuencias.
Casa Tomada

blu
galvez
spider
cris
kel

casting note: I imagine that they are all in their early thirties. gender doesn't matter, but I think spider is probably male - and probably white, and perhaps it might be fun if he were absurdly good looking, in a somewhat broken way. be great if the cast were as diverse as possible - kind of like the neighborhood, at least back in the day.

time: now
place: nyc, lower east side

set note: a tenement apartment, ideally with three doors, one to the other room, a front door to the hallway and stairs, and one to the bathroom, and a window. of course, this can be solved however, including a set with no doors at all.

sound note: other than the sounds indicated in the stage directions, all the things that the cast hears are inaudible to the audience.

lighting note: things should seem slightly off, like the atmosphere in the minutes preceding a storm.

note on playing: blu and galvez should start at a pretty intense pitch and sustain and ramp it up throughout, regardless of asides, which are just their (unsuccessful) attempts to ward off panic. the stakes should be very high and they, especially galvez, should be terrified from the first moment of the play. otherwise it just won't work. also, it should be played fast.

the characters never see anything that isn't there, but do hear things inaudible to the audience.

note to the notes: then again, you know, maybe I'm wrong.

*[darkness. the very loud sound of a door slamming shut. the lights rise.
blu and galvez are staring at each other. there is a very fraught pause.]*

b- ...anything?
g- now? no. you?
b- no- wait-
g- was that..?
b- shh.
-
...no.
-
g- this is so..so...
b- you believe me now?
g- I don't- I mean-
b- you don't.
g- no, I-
b- no?
g- yes. yes, I..think...
b- ...what?
g- ...I think so. maybe.
b- because, because I thought I was-
g- like, like-
b- yeah, like, losing it or-
g- insane, this is-
b- -or, or delirious, or-
g- but, but, but-
b- but what?
g- but, but- but maybe it's just something.
b- something?
g- the, like, the pipes? like- like your neighbor, or..bugs?
b- the pipes. you actually think. the pipes.
g- the radiator. in these old buildings.
b- that's what you think. bugs?
g- no, but.
b- but what?
g- maybe we are.
b- are what?
g- crazy?
b- you think I'm-
g- I think you've been stressed out. work, you broke up with-
b- I wasn't even going out with-
g- well, ok, but being dumped by a-
b- sleeping with somebody is not a relationship.
g- it's a good thing because spider is not someone who anyone could possibly take-
b- you can't be dumped by someone you are not in a relationship with ok? is that ok
with you?
g- I mean who calls themselves spider, I mean, seriously?

b- enough I said.
g- ok, whatever, fine. then stop talking about it all the time.
b- me?
g- yeah, you.
b- when was the last time you had sex? all you ever do is whine about how-
g- I said fine. forget it.
b- anyway, I'm stressed out? me? you're the one who-
g- I'm always stressed out.
b- so we're just having the same stress induced delusion, power of suggestion,
hypnosis, hysteria, hallucination, that's what you think.
g- no, you know what I think? I think maybe you're messing with me.
b- what?
g- with your messed up sense of humor.
b- I don't think this is funny.
g- I don't think it's funny either.
b- you think I'm messing with you. kind of practical joke.
g- yeah, maybe, yes.
b- so go back in.

-
g- ...what?
b- do it.

-
go back in the other room.
g- uh. no.
b- no?
g- no.
b- do it.
g- stop, let go.
b- come on.
g- I said stop.
b- if you think I'm-
g- it's not funny.
b- if I'm just messing with you then-
g- get off me.
b- ok, fine I will.
g- no, come on, no.
b- out of my way.
g- you can't. don't.
b- my house, why not?
g- please- just please. please.

-
just don't open the door.

-
ok?
b- ...so maybe it's true.
g- yes. but if...

b- ...if it's true then...
g- ...that's...
b- ...crazy.
g- yes. yeah. yes.
-
but...
-
you said it was just the closet, that you, that it was...
b- yeah. it was.
g- so, but. but now....
-
b- I guess. now it's the room, too.
-
g- so...
b- so.
-
g- what are you going to do?
b- do? what can I-
g- I don't know. you could...
b- call an exterminator?
g- your landlord?
b- what's he going to do? put up an eviction notice?
g- I don't know. maybe a priest?
b- seriously?
g- yeah. yes.
b- I don't even believe in god.
g- maybe you should.
b- do you?
g- I don't believe in this.
b- well it's happening.
g- maybe.
b- so...
g- we should go.
b- where?
g- anywhere.
b- ok, that's. yeah. ok.
-
what are you doing?
g- I'm..your stuff. pack some stuff, you can't just-
b- I'm not leaving.
g- you're not?
b - I mean- if you want to get coffee or something, I guess.
-
g- coffee? are you-
b- there's a new place on the corner, it's-
g- what is your..?

-
you need to leave this place.
b- no.
g- but..you can't just...
b- she hasn't come in here.
g- she?
b- they.
g- here?
b- this room
g- yet.

-
this apartment has two rooms. are you just going to live in here?
b- My first apartment was basically a closet, so-
g- wait. are you..?
b- you know what my rent is? I can't afford to-
g- seriously? your rent? seriously?
b- all my stuff is in there. my, my clothes, my stuff, my guitar, my-
g- your clothes? you dress like a-
b- my pad, my pod. my stuff. my phone. my fucking journal, my-
g- get a new phone-
b- letters from my mom? pictures of her and me when I was-
g- but you can't go in there.
b- she's dead.
g- I know, I'm sorry, but you can't go in there so-
b- my knitting, I was almost finished with a-
g- just forget all of that shit, it's gone, it's-
b- shit? my stuff is not shit.
g- ok, ok, I just-
b- my stuff is not shit, ok?
g- ok, I said ok, I'm sorry. I didn't mean.
b- your bag.
g- my..? bag.
b- yeah.
g- o. o, no, o, o...no.
b- yeah. see?
g- I- I can't, all of my-
b- see?
g- my work, I can't go back to work without-
b- see?
g- that stuff's not mine, my boss is going-
b- see?
g- gonna kill me fuck why did you let me just-
b- me?
g- you told me to come over.
b- because I didn't believe it.
g- why didn't you warn me?

b- you wouldn't have believed it.
g- so, so..

-
why did you say she?

b- I just...
g- you said she.
b- ...I think..it's maybe a she.
g- a woman.
b- a girl. a little girl.
g- uh..huh.
b- I mean, one of them.

-
I saw something.

g- o, o, o, ok. ok, this is..o.
b- last night.
g- o, o, I don't like this.
b- late. I couldn't sleep.
g- at all.
b- not with- not knowing.
g- o, ok, o.
b- I couldn't help it. I just peeked inside.
g- you saw her in the closet.
b- not in the closet. later. but I wasn't sure.
g- in the room.
b- in front of my bed. it was late. and then she wasn't.
g- in the dark?
b- no. no. I've had all the lights on since..for a few days now.

-
g- I thought you hadn't gone back into the closet. hadn't opened the door. since.
b- not really but. last night.
g- you did.
b- I just peeked.
g- and?

-
so you knew.

b- I thought. but maybe I was just. or. but now you-
g- so they were already...
b- what?
g- out?
b- I was worried. it felt..you know how it felt. feels. in there. and, then, then- they
it started. when you. they started.
g- o. we need to go. now.
b- no, I...

-
uhm.
-

g- ...you don't want to leave.
b- my stuff, I told you that-
g- no, but. you don't want to leave.

-
b- I can't.
g- can't?

-
b- she seemed...
g- what?
b- sad? or.
g- uh huh, ok, look-
b- she seemed..so, so...
g- look, you're- what was that?
b- her. them.
g- was that from in there?
b- I think so.

g- ok, this isn't- we've got to get the hell out of here before-
[as galvez goes to the hallway door, there's a loud, urgent knocking.]
-oh my-

b- -what was-
g- -god., they're-
[s off] yo, let me in.
b- spider?
[s off] don't be mad, c'mon.
b- that you?
[s off] let me the fuck in, man. I gotta pee.
g- who is it?
[s off] it's me, man, who the fuck are you?
g- I thought you guys broke up.
b- first of all, we were never going-
[s off] serious, man, let me in.

[a opens the door]
b- hey, spider.
s- yo, close that door, man, you got rats out there or what?
g- rats?
s- shit is fucked up.
g- what do you mean?
s- 'sup?
b- hi.
s- miss me?
b- no.
s- 'sup, g.
b- what do you want?
s- what are you guys so serious about?
b- spider, what-
s- why I gotta want something?

g- rats in the hall?
s- I said I was sorry.
b- no, you didn't.
g- did you see them?
s- see them? no.
g- so how do you know?
s- well I am, ok?
g- I mean are you sure that-
s- mice maybe? bugs. gross out there. they were all like hissing or something. a,
you need to get your super to exterminate this place and, b, you need to answer
the door faster.
g- uhm...
s- big-ass nasty-butt slum dwelling bugs.
b- some, sometimes, sure.
s- not some. fucking infestation.
g- out there.
s- somethin'.
g- see something?
s- can't see shit. bulb's busted. should tell your super that too.
g- so you didn't-
s- heard 'em. freaked me out.
g- o. o.
b- no.
s- that's why they need to tear this old world ghetto shit down, man. build some nice
ventilated bug-free aerodynamic climate control apartments for civilized first
world college educated connoisseurs of fine cohibas, finer chivas and finest
converse original jam skidgrips like my especially scrumptious self.
g-they're out in the hall.
b- no.
s- who?
b- they can't be.
g- why not?
s- who?
b- because. because.
g- because what.
b- because we didn't let them out.
s- yo, you guys alright because you seem a little-
g- they can't open a door themselves.
b- no. no they can't. no.
g- how do you know that?
b- I just do.
s- who can't open a-
g- or under the door or through the-
s- under?
g- spider, please, just-
s- man, ya'll are-

g- just shut up, ok? please?
s- what?
g- how do you know they can't-
b- because they can't. because they stayed in the closed until we- we let them-
g- we? you. last night. even before I-
b- maybe. or maybe when you opened it aftr I told, I asked you to please not- that's
when they started right? that's when the sound and the-
g- they were already-
s- who are you-
b- you don't know that.
g- you saw her.
b- maybe. or maybe I was just tired. or maybe-
g- well, they're out there now. in the hall. so where do we go?
b- just, just-
g- so how are we..how are going to-
s- you guys need some private time, because-
g- maybe they're in here.
b- no, no. no they're not.
g- maybe.
b- you think they're in here.
s- you got some kind of infestation. bedbugs? oh, shit, bedbugs, why didn't you
warn me, man, if I got bedbugs on my shit I'm going to-
b- no, no-
s- -fucking skeeves me the fuck out, man, and you can't just get rid of that shit it
gets into everywhere, man, your fucking clothes, your hair, shoes, you gotta burn
that shit my new kicks man my-
b- no, listen, no-
s- -fuckin shave your head and your pubes pull out your fingernails gets all in your
nose and your ears and your pores and your asshole and your-
g- there aren't any bedbugs, calm down just calm down.
s- you calm down.
b- just, just-
s- calm the fuck down.
g- I'm not- this isn't-
b- relax-
s- the fuck's wrong with you?
g- this- this- this-
s- man, this is - I gotta pee, man.
b- wait, don't.
g- what?
b- don't open that door.
s- gotta pee I gotta pee, man.
g- you think-
b- I don't know.
s- fuck you I have to pee, let go of-
b- hold up, hold up.

g- don't he said don't-
b- no, don't-

[spider exits into the bathroom. here is a pause, during which, imperceptibly at first the lights begin to dim. this slowly continues over the next several minutes but they never go out. otherwise, silence. galvez and blu stare at each other. then spider comes back out.]

s- shit. shit.

g- what?

s- what's wrong with your bathroom, yo?

g- did you...

s- what?

b- feel it?

s- what the fuck is going on?

-

g- ...o..o..o, o, o, o, o-

b- ok, ok.

g- o o o o-

b- ok.

g- o this is- o this is, this is bad.

b- ok, ok, but.

g- this is, this is. o, o. this is bad.

b- you know they're not in here.

-

right?

-

right? you can feel it right?

g- ...I guess.

b- you guess? you don't remember how it felt? in there?

-

spider, how'd it feel in the bathroom?

s- it was...I don't know. not cold, but. cold. and there was a sound like...

-

b- feel that way out here?

s- no. not really.

g- ok. right. but out there..in the hall.

s- yeah. it was kind of like that. but.

-

b- maybe..maybe we should check.

s- maybe you should check. that shit freaked me out.

b- I'm not going out there.

s- ok, so, but then, how do we get out of here. I gotta pee.

g- you didn't-

s- in there? no, man. no way.

g- so what were you...

-

s- I don't...

-
g- fire escape.
s- fire escape?
g- yeah, or. maybe.
-
or we could wait.
s- for?
-
like a snake or something?
g- no.
s- 'cause I fucking hate snakes, man. like, a phobia. why I live in the city. snakes scare the shit out of me, man, I don't care about spiders or roaches, but snakes, man.
g- not a snake. it's not a snake.
s- then what?
-
what was that?
-
you hear that?
b- yeah.
s- that wasn't no snake.
g- no.
s- wasn't no rat neither.
b- maybe it was the pipes.
s- pipes?
g- it wasn't the pipes.
s- you heard that.
g- yeah.
s- there it is again.
-
uhm, I really don't like this at all, ok, so if this is some kind of.
b- some kind of what?
g- is that coming from in there?
s- no, I think the bathroom.
g- out in the hall?
[now we can hear it - music, soft, gentle. coming from different places, or from everywhere. it very gradually increases in volume. perhaps some voices, fragments, german, polish, yiddish, spanish.]
s- yeah.
g- ...no, the kitchen.
s- no, in the other room.
g- no.
-
b- in here.
s- I don't-
g- no.

b- in here.
g- I don't think so.
s- maybe. yeah.
g- the window won't open.
b- they're in here.
g- I can't open it, help me.
s- relax, just-
g- help me.
s- alright, calm down, just- fuck.
g- -shit-
b- they're here.
s- stop it-
g- help me, don't-
s- stop you're going to break-
g- it won't open yes break it break it-
s- won't open-
b- can you feel it?
g- they won't let us open it they won't let us.
s- you're going to hurt-
g- get the fuck off me-
b- I can feel it I can-
g- get off me, get- get-
b- you believe me now?
g- -stop, stop-
b- you believe me? do you?
g- ...yes. yes. yes, I- yes.

-
...you don't want to leave...

b- no.

[galvez breaks away from spider and blu, runs over to the front door, tries to open it, can't, then goes to the door to the other room, opens it, the music swells, the voices rise, galvez looks back at blu, there's an awful pause, then goes in. the door slams shut behind her. it is very dim now. silence.]

s- you ok?
b- I live here now, see?
s- live here.
b- we do.
s- yeah, you live here.
b- we're here. now. you too. I'm sorry.
s- for what?
b- we're here too. just like them. a part of it.
s- part of what?
b- this is our room. my room.
s- ...what?

[there's a differeent sound, a thump, audible to us, from the other room.]

g..?
-
is that them?
 [again.]
is it? what are they?
b- no. no, it's...it's us.
s- us.
b- ...yes.
 [again.]
we live here.
[c off] I love this place, it's so..
[k off] so dirty.
[c off] it has character.
[k off] yeah, if by character you mean water damage.
[c off] come on
[k off] how long has this place been empty?
[c off] oh, gosh I don't know the agent said...
[k off] what?
[c off] a long time.
[k off] yeah, well that's weird.
[c off] the landlord is old school, old country, didn't want to-
[k off] the slum lord.
[c off] come one. this place is great.
 *[the door to the other room opens. cris and kel enter, with boxes, cleaning
supplies. the lights brighten. blu and spider don't move. the couples in
no way acknowledge each other.]*
I mean, be happy.
k- I am.
 [spider laughs, softly.]
c- did you hear that?
k- what?
c- that.
k- I think that's coming from the street.
 [blu sighs.]
or maybe downstairs.
c- no it's in here
k- rats?
c- rats?
k- or mice, in the walls.
c- mice.
k- hopefully.
c- hopefully?
k- or rats.
c- no, not-
k- what do you think it is?
-

c- I guess mice.
k- great.

-

c- so.
k- so...

c(s)- home. (...home)

-

k- ok.

c- yes?

k(b)- home. (home...)

-

c- so let's get started.