

**THE GIRL**, *almost crying*: I'm afraid. I'm afraid I won't see you again. If I come back and you're not here, I—It's so lonely in this town. I'll stay *here*. I won't let them take you away.

**YOUNG MAN**: Listen, Katey. Do what I tell you. Go get that gun and come back. Maybe they won't come tonight. Maybe they won't come at all. I'll hide the gun and when they let me out you can take it back and put it where you found it. And then we'll go away. Now, hurry—

**THE GIRL**: All right. *Pause*. I want to tell you something.

**YOUNG MAN**: O.K.

**THE GIRL**, *very softly*: If you're not here when I come back, well, I'll have the gun and I'll know what to do with it.

**YOUNG MAN**: You know how to handle a gun?

**THE GIRL**: I know how.

**YOUNG MAN**: Don't be a fool. *Takes off his shoe, brings out some currency*: Don't be a fool, see? Here's some money. Eighty dollars. Take it and go to San Francisco. Look around and find somebody. Find somebody alive and halfway human, see? Promise me—if I'm not here when you come back, just throw the gun away and go to San Francisco. Look around and find somebody.

**THE GIRL**: I don't want to find anybody.

**YOUNG MAN**, *swiftly, desperately*: Now, do what I tell you. I'll meet you in San Francisco. I've got a couple of dollars in my other shoe. I'll see you in San Francisco.

**THE GIRL**, *with wonder*: San Francisco?

**YOUNG MAN**: That's right—San Francisco. That's where you and me belong.

**THE GIRL**: I've always wanted to go to someplace like San Francisco—but how could I go alone?

**YOUNG MAN**: Well, you're not alone anymore, see?

**THE GIRL**: Tell me a little what it's like.

**YOUNG MAN**, *very swiftly, almost impatiently at first, but gradually slower and with remembrance, smiling and The Girl moving closer to him as he speaks*: Well, it's on the Pacific to begin with—ocean all around. Cool fog and sea gulls. Ships from all over the world. It's got seven hills. The little streets go up and down, around and all over. Every night the foghorns bawl. But they won't be bawling for you and me.

**THE GIRL**: Are people different in San Francisco?

**YOUNG MAN**: People are the same everywhere. They're different only when they love somebody. That's the only thing that makes 'em different. More people in San Francisco love somebody, that's all.

**THE GIRL**: Nobody anywhere loves anybody as much as I love you.

**YOUNG MAN**, *whispering*: Hearing you say that, a man could die and still be ahead of the game. Now, hurry. And don't forget, if I'm not here when you come back, I'll meet you in San Francisco. *The Girl stands a moment looking at him, then backs away, turns and runs.*

## THE HOUSE OF BLUE LEAVES

by John Guare

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### ACT I

This is the opening scene of the play. It is five o'clock in the morning, and Bunny Flingus is knocking at the door of her boyfriend, Artie Shaughnessy. Artie is a would-be song writer who works as a zoo attendant. Bunny wants Artie to join her in witnessing the momentous first visit of a Pope to New York. She is equipped with two Brownie cameras and a sense of history. Artie is not in a hurry to leave the warmth of his sleeping bag or his Queens apartment. The ensuing conversation (begun after Artie has unlocked the door and jumped back into his sleeping bag) alternates between Bunny's plans for the Pope to marry them and Artie's attempts at coaxing her to cook something for him. (For scene-study purposes, the entrance of the "sick woman" may be ignored. The Billy referred to is an old friend of Artie's who has become a successful Hollywood filmmaker.)

**ARTIE, angry:** What I want to know is who the hell is paying for this wop's trip over here anyway—

**BUNNY, shocked:** Artie! *Reaches through the bars to close the window.* Ssshhh—they'll hear you—

**ARTIE:** I don't put my nickels and dimes in Sunday collections to pay for any dago holiday—flying over here with his robes and geegaws and bringing his buddies over when I can't even afford a trip to Staten Island—

**BUNNY, puzzled:** What's in Staten Island?

**ARTIE:** Nothing! But I couldn't even afford a nickel ferryboat ride. I know you two months and can't even afford a present for you—a ring—

**BUNNY:** I don't need a ring—

**ARTIE:** At least a friendship ring— *(reaches in his sleeping bag and gets out a cigarette and matches and an ashtray)*

**BUNNY, rubbing his head:** I'd only lose it—

**ARTIE, pulling away:** And this guy's flying over here—not tourist—oh no—

**BUNNY, suspicious of his bitterness:** Where'd you go last night?

**ARTIE, back into his bag:** You go see the Pope. Tell him hello for me.

**BUNNY:** You went to that amateur night, didn't you—

**ARTIE, signaling into the other room:** Shut up—she's inside—

**BUNNY:** You went to the El Dorado Bar Amateur Night, didn't you? I spent two months building you up to be something and you throw yourself away on that drivel—

**ARTIE:** They talked all the way through it—

**BUNNY:** Did you play them "Where's the Devil in Evelyn"?

**ARTIE:** They talked and walked around all through it—

**BUNNY:** I wish I'd been there with you. You know what I would've said to them? *Out front:* The first time I heard "Mairzy Doats" I realized I am listening to a classic. I picked off "Old Black Magic" and "I Could've Danced All Night" as classics the minute I heard them. *Recites:* "Where is the devil in Evelyn? What's it doing in Angela's eyes?" I didn't work in Macy's Music Department for nix. I know what I'm talking about. *To Artie:* That song is a classic. You've written yourself a classic.

**ARTIE:** I even had to pay for my own beers.

**BUNNY:** Pearls before swine. Chalk it up to experience.

**ARTIE:** The blackboard's getting kind of filled up. I am too old to be a young talent.

**BUNNY, opens the window through the bars:** Smell the bread—

**ARTIE:** Shut the window—it's freezing and you're letting all the dirt in—

**BUNNY:** Miss Henshaw's saving us this divine place right by the cemetery so the Pope will have to slow down—

**ARTIE:** Nothing worse than cold dirt—

*The other bedroom door opens and a sick woman in a nightgown looks at them. They don't see her.*

**BUNNY, ecstatically:** And when he passes by in his limousine, I'll call out, "Your Holiness, marry us—the hell with peace to the world—bring peace to us." And he won't hear me because bands will be playing and the whole city yelling, but he'll see me because I been eyed by the best of them, and he'll nod and I'll grab your hand and say, "Marry us, Pope," and he'll wave his holy hand and all the emeralds and rubies on his fingers will send Yes beams. In a way, today's my wedding day. I should have something white at my throat! Our whole life is beginning—my life—our life—and we'll be married and go out to California and Billy will help you. You'll be out there with the big shots—out where you belong—not in any amateur nights in bars on Queens Boulevard. Billy will get your songs in movies. It's not too late to start. With me behind you! Oh, Artie, the El Dorado Bar will stick up a huge neon sign flashing onto Queens Boulevard, in a couple of years flashing "Artie Shaughnessy Got Started Here." And nobody'll believe it. Oh, Artie, tables turn.

*The sick woman closes the door. Artie gets out of his bag.*

**ARTIE, thoughtfully, sings:**

Bridges are for burning,

Tables are for turning—

*He turns on all the lights. He pulls Bunny by the pudgy arm over to the kitchen. I'll go see the Pope—*

**BUNNY, hugging him:** Oh, I love you!

**ARTIE:** I'll come if—

**BUNNY:** You said you'll come. That is tantamount to a promise.

ARTIE: I will if—

BUNNY: Tantamount. Tantamount. You hear that? I didn't work in a law office for nix. I could sue you for breach.

ARTIE, *seductively*: Bunny?

BUNNY, *near tears*: I know what you're going to say—

ARTIE, *opening a ketchup bottle under her nose*: Cook for me?

BUNNY, *in a passionate heat*: I knew it. I knew it.

ARTIE: Just breakfast.

BUNNY: You bend my arm and twist my heart but I got to be strong.

ARTIE: I'm not asking any ten-course dinner.

BUNNY, *runs over to the piano where his clothes are draped, to get away from his plea. They are the green clothes, the pants and suit of a city employee*: Just put your clothes on over the ski p.j.'s I bought you. It's thirty-eight degrees and I don't want you getting your pneumonia back—

ARTIE, *holding up two eggs*: Eggs, baby. Eggs right here.

BUNNY, *holding out his jingling trousers*: Rinse your mouth out to freshen up and come on, let's go?

ARTIE, *seductively*: You boil the eggs and pour lemon sauce over—

BUNNY, *shaking the trousers at him*: Hollandaise. I know Hollandaise. Plopping down with the weight of the temptation, glum: It's really cold out so dress warm—look, I stuffed the *New York Post* in my booties—plastic just ain't as warm as it used to be.

ARTIE: And you pour the Hollandaise over the eggs on English muffins—and then you put the grilled ham on top—I'm making a scrapbook of all the foods you tell me you know how to cook and then I go through the magazines and cut out pictures of what it must look like. *Gets the scrapbook*: Look—veal parmigiana—eggplant meringue.

BUNNY: I cooked that for me last night. It was so good I almost died.

ARTIE, *sings as Bunny takes the book and looks through it with such despair*:

If you cooked my words

Like they was veal

I'd say I love you

For every meal.

Take my words,

Garlic and oil them,  
Butter and broil them,  
Sauté and boil them.

Bunny, let me eat you!

*Speaks*: Cook for me?

BUNNY: Not 'til after we're married.

ARTIE: You couldn't give me a little sample right now?

BUNNY: I'm not that kind of girl. I'll sleep with you anytime you want. Anywhere. In two months I've known you, did I refuse you once? Not once! You want me to climb in the bag with you now? Unzip it—go on—unzip it—Give your fingers a smack and I'm flat on my back. I'll sew those words into a sampler for you in our new home in California. We'll hang it right by the front door. Because, Artie, I'm a rotten lay and I know it and you know it and everybody knows it—

ARTIE: What do you mean, everybody knows it?

BUNNY: I'm not good in bed. It's no insult. I took that sex test in the *Reader's Digest* two weeks ago and I scored twelve. Twelve, Artie! I ran out of that dentist office with tears gushing out of my face. But I face up to the truth about myself. So if I cooked for you now and said I won't sleep with you till we're married, you'd look forward to sleeping with me so much that by the time we did get to that motel near Hollywood, I'd be such a disappointment, you'd never forgive me. My cooking is the only thing I got to lure you on with and hold you with. Artie, we got to keep some magic for the honeymoon. It's my first honeymoon and I want it to be so good, I'm aiming for two million calories. I want to cook for you so bad I walk by the A&P, I get all hot jabs of chili powder inside my thighs . . . but I can't till we get those tickets to California safe in my purse, till Billy knows we're coming, till I got that ring right on my cooking finger. . . . Don't tempt me. . . . I love you. . . .