OF MOSS AND MEN

By David Meyer

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CHARACTERS

(5 M, 5 W, 5 Flexible. Doubling possible.)

MICKEY MOSS: A man with a dream, determined, mid 30's.

MINNIE MOSS: The rock behind her husband, Mickey. Pleasant, likable, accepting of her husband's unusual traits.

RHETT: The butler. Deaf and dumb but his real handicap is being totally innocent. An audience favorite.

WASHINGTON CLOTH: A nasty neighbor, seems like a small- time gangster.

***LESLIE or LESTER BARTER:** Local real estate broker; working hard to close a deal with the Mosses, regardless of the consequences from Mr. Cloth.

SUZETTE LaCREPE: Pretty, young, soft-spoken; forced to take shelter from the storm.

BURTON BELCHER: Handyman who is not so handy. About 50, a bit too refined for his work.

***BUZZ:** Phone repair person. Came to install the phone lines and got in deeper than expected.

HAZEL KNUTLEY and HELEN BENNET: Local Welcome Wagon Representatives. Both are kindhearted, older ladies forced to seek shelter.

***CHIP PORCELLINI:** Dark and handsome plumber.

DOM or DONNA SYLES: Building inspector; a suspicious character, very bitter.

SAL E. or SALLY MANDER: Related to Jerry. A couple of back room kingmakers. Shady characters.

JERRY or GERRY MANDER: The other half of the back room political team that gets what it wants through corruption and pressure.

CARMEN PARKER: A gruff, pushy individual. His/her motives are evident.

These parts can be doubled. A performance can be done with 13 to 15 actors using a maximum of 11 male parts and as few as 4 females, or with a maximum of 10 females and as few as 5 male parts.

TIME: Spring, current year.
PLACE: The lobby of an old run-down inn.

SYNOPSIS:

Act I
Scene 1: A spring afternoon.
Scene 2: One week later.
Act II
Scene 1: Later that night.
Scene 2: A half an hour later.

THE SET

The main room of the inn is a large, open room with a door to the outside USC and a window to the SR of it. An old hotel desk is located at SL, a closet with a working door is SR, and a pair of hallways leading off to the various rooms of the inn are on each side.

In Act I, Scene 1, the place is in shambles. There are cobwebs, dirt, dust, leaves, etc. everywhere. The pieces of furniture on stage, a desk and occasional chairs, are overturned, with some broken apart. It is obvious the inn has not been occupied or cared for in many years. In Scene 2, the place has been swept and the furniture righted and covered with drop cloths to protect it from the paint and tools being used.

In Act II, the drop cloths are removed but many tools and supplies are stacked near the desk.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: The stage is unoccupied for a few seconds to give the audience a chance to get the full effect of the shambles. BARTER enters USC door, followed by MICKEY and reluctantly by MINNIE. Barter carries a folder and is "showing" the inn to the perspective buyers.)

BARTER: Well, this is it ... I told you it was a handy-man's special.

(As THEY look around, MICKEY begins to smile and show interest. MINNIE is dismayed.)

MINNIE: It certainly is that all right.
MICKEY: This place must have been something in its day, a couple of hundred years ago.
MINNIE: It's not the days I'm worried about ... it's the nights. A place like this just has to be haunted!
MICKEY: It does seem a bit worn around the edges.
BARTER: It's the only inn up for sale for a hundred miles. It's just the kind of thing you said you were looking for ... *(MINNIE gives a hard look at BARTER.)* ... well, that is, it could be everything you want.
MICKEY: It does have possibilities.
MINNIE: Yes, it should possibly be condemned.
MICKEY: Now, Minnie, it does need some attention but you know you can't tell a book by its cover.
MINNIE: We are not looking at its cover. We are inside the pages. I can see the writing on the wall. *(HER attention is captured by some graffiti painted on a wall. What is actually written is at the director's discretion.)*
MICKEY: *(Noticing.)* Oh, yeah ... me too.
BARTER: *(Trying to sell.)* You know places like this are hard to come by. Besides the possibilities, this place offers potential and a great location ... and it has character!

MINNIE: It sure does. *(In a negative, half-hearted way, SHE continues to look around.)*
BARTER: *(Adding more pressure.)* The inn is a local point of interest.
MINNIE: You must be kidding.
BARTER: There is a history attached to this place. Local folklore has it ...

(MINNIE is now at the closet door, which is half open, with debris visible inside. She opens the door, steps slightly in and gives a short, startled scream. She jumps back and hurries to MICKEY, who rushes toward her. BARTER is startled and watching.)

MINNIE: *(Excitedly.)* In there! I saw something.
MICKEY: What?
MINNIE: It was horrible! It was glaring at me ...
MICKEY: *(Going toward the closet.)* Probably some animal made a home there ...
MINNIE: Be careful. It's ferocious. It growled at me and it has blood drooling from its fangs!
MICKEY: *(At closet door.)* Oh, my gosh!
MINNIE: Mickey! Don't go near it!
BARTER: *(Calling after.)* Ah ... any livestock on the grounds is included in the sale price.
MICKEY: *(In closet rumbling around.)* Oh, no! No!
MINNIE: *(Rushing toward closet with BARTER close behind.)* Mickey!

(There is some thrashing about in the closet. MICKEY struggles to the closet door and is pulled back into the fracas. Finally he comes out with a badly worn, stuffed teddy bear with a red ribbon. As a means of ribbing MINNIE, he continues the "struggle" with the bear.)

MICKEY: I found your horrible monster and he's a pretty tough hombre ...
MINNIE: *(Feeling foolish.)* But I saw it move. Are you sure?
MICKEY: Take a look in there. *(SHE hesitantly looks in the*

closet - slight scream. MICKEY goes in and comes out with a mirror.) This is what you see.

MINNIE: *(Staring at it.)* That's it! That's it! Oh, my God, it's horrible!

MICKEY: *(In disbelief.)* It's a mirror!

MINNIE: *(Adjusting hair, referring to hairstyle.)* Horrible!

BARTER: *(Still selling, referring to mirror as MICKEY tosses it back into closet. The shattering of glass is heard.)* The furnishings are included!

MINNIE: Broken mirror ... seven years *(Looks around.)* bad luck.

MICKEY: Oh ... yes ... well, why don't we look around and see what kind of shape the rest of the place is in.

MINNIE: You can tell that from here. I don't think it gets any better than this.

BARTER: It's a bargain at this price. It's got everything you want.

MICKEY: Actually, we were hoping to find something a little closer to Lloyds.

BARTER: Lloyds is a nice little town, but if you ask me, they over did it with all that honeymoon trade they're advertising for. You're better off here ... close, but not too close.

MINNIE: But that's why Mickey wants to get a place like this ... well, not like this.

MICKEY: That's right. If a little town like Lloyds can become a popular honeymoon resort, I'm gonna try to get a piece of the action.

BARTER: That's why you can't find an inn up for sale for a hundred miles ... except this one. And this place is located on the right side of the river. With Lloyds on the other side and only two bridges across, you're sure to get the business.

MINNIE: I think we're getting the business now.

MICKEY: Those bridges you mentioned ... are they the famous Lloyd bridges?

BARTER: They sure are.

End of Freeview

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