

DISPOSOPHOBIA

CHARACTERS:

MARY CASTLE, 70, sweet but stubborn, and less robust after the death of her husband last year.

SYLVIE CASTLE, 40, her oldest daughter, used to getting the job *done* in all areas of her life. A financial planner.

LULU CASTLE, 37, Mary's second daughter. She works as an EMT. Trying to save lives, trying to understand life. She's a searcher.

DOUGIE CASTLE, 35, Mary's son, her youngest. Dougie moved in last year after his father died. His presence was supposed to make a positive difference. Things aren't going so well.

SETTING:

Their home of nearly 40 years. A ranch house, in the suburbs, with big backyard and woods beyond.

TIME:

Springtime. One day before The Closing on the family home.

ACT ONE

SCENE 1

The Castle family kitchen had its last makeover in '78. The refrigerator sounds like a washing machine and the dishwasher sounds like-well, good thing it's not running right now.

Sylvie comes up from the basement.

SYLVIE

Jesus. There's way too much stuff on the steps, mom.

She drops a cardboard box and hits her arm on the doorknob.

Ow. My funny bone.

MARY

Rub it hard, honey.

Mary sits deep in her well-worn armchair, stacks of catalogs and mail around her.

SYLVIE

I get what you and Dougie did. Basically moved crap from the kitchen to the cellar steps.

MARY

We threw a lot away, Sylvie. Keep the blood moving. Keep rubbing. Get some ice.

Sylvie opens the freezer.

SYLVIE

I bruise so easily.

MARY

Your mother's genes I'm afraid.

Packets fall out.

SYLVIE

Where are the ice cubes?

MARY

I haven't made any in over a year. Without your father needing his gin and tonics...

Sylvie reads packets.

SYLVIE

Pork chops, August 12. Is that August 12th or 2012? Blueberries... forget about the rubber band around that one. It's freeze-dried rubber now. And this one's wrapped in so many layers, it's like you have to *mummify* everything. Dougie's trout? May 2013. Yuck. Why do you even label all this if you never defrost anything? And what's this? There's no label on this one.

She holds it out. Mary takes it.

MARY

Now that feels like... that's my baby porcupine. Your father and I found it under the tulip tree.

SYLVIE

You have got to throw this out.

MARY

I couldn't bear it. Tiny quills barely poking through. I'll thaw him out so you can see how beautiful. Or her.

SYLVIE

Spare me.

MARY

The quills were still soft to the touch.

Mary gets up and takes the frozen porcupine to the sink. Turns on the cold water, not a lot.

SYLVIE

Has Dougie done *anything* we talked about? Other than thrown stuff down below?

MARY

Your brother's working very hard.

SYLVIE

Really.

MARY

He's using up all the junk mail.

SYLVIE

The recycling bin's outside the front door. I wouldn't call that heavy lifting.

MARY

He's weaving paper bowls. He calls them E Bowls.

SYLVIE

E Bowls.

MARY

He's selling them on line.

SYLVIE

MOM. What do you say to the buyers if the house looks like this tomorrow? This was not the deal.

Lulu is outside the kitchen door.
She takes a deep breath and
enters.

MARY

Lulu!

Gives her a hug.

LULU

Hi, Mom. Hey, Sylve.

SYLVIE

Hi. Where were you? I thought you'd get the 10:42.

LULU

I tried to make it but-this guy choked on a piece of steak and we nearly didn't get to him because there was this fire on Pine Street in Lakeville and then the/

SYLVIE

They never heard of the Heimlich Maneuver?

LULU

The woman on the phone didn't speak English.

MARY

But you saved him.

LULU

We couldn't.

MARY

Oh that poor man.

LULU

I know. I felt so bad. Everybody on the EMT squad was like, doesn't everybody in every language know how to save you from choking? And then/

SYLVIE

Lu?

LULU

I helped the woman calm down some.

Sylvie lifts the box and puts it
on the kitchen table.

SYLVIE

Could you help?

LULU

Sorry. Let me help.

MARY

Let your sister put her things down first.

Lulu pulls a gift from her bag.

LULU

I brought you a present.

SYLVIE

A *book*?

LULU

Mom loves books.

MARY

I forgot to mention, girls. I've got two boxes in the car.

SYLVIE

You don't.

MARY

From Ruthie in my quilting group. She never waits for the paperback to come out.

SYLVIE

And you can never say no!

LULU

I was reading somewhere you could use them for insulation. Stack them up instead of fiberglass between the two by fours.

SYLVIE

Except nobody's building a house but hey.

LULU

Or you could cover them with copper flashing and stack them to make a table. I love that idea.

She looks at her sister.

But we're *not* redecorating, right?!

Mary sits down at the kitchen table to open the present without tearing the paper.

MARY

National Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Wildflowers. Eastern Region. Thank you, Lulu.

SYLVIE

You already have that.

MARY

I can't seem to find my old one. I can see it, but/

She folds the wrapping paper.

LULU

It's in your mind's eye, right? But you can't pinpoint it exactly. On the physical plane. I feel that a lot too.

MARY

Your father would turn over in his grave if he knew we were getting rid of them.

SYLVIE

He might be more comfortable.

MARY

Sylvia Jean Castle!

LULU

Jeez, Sylve.

Lulu reaches into the box on the table. Pulls out a book.

SYLVIE

My yearbook! I've been looking for that.

Sylvie tries grab it but Lulu turns her back and starts to read.

LULU

Let me start by saying something nice. Thanks for making my advisorship so easy. So much for that B.S. Now for the truth.

SYLVIE

Gimme that.

Lulu dances away from her.

LULU

Why weren't you born 10 years earlier? You're really a cool chick. Don't forget to stop back and visit old Ray after you've become a huge socialite in the big city.

She looks up and laughs.

MARY

Your sister was very popular. She was voted most popular in her senior class.

LULU

So did the huge socialite ever go back and visit old Ray?!

SYLVIE

I was voted most versatile. Now hand it over.

LULU

But it's a *book*. Insulation or trash?

Lulu hands Sylvie her yearbook.

I didn't get voted most anything.

SYLVIE

They didn't have a category for most likely to attend shaman school back then.

LULU

Ha ha.

MARY

Explain to me what that is again.

SYLVIE

She thinks she has special powers. Especially when she takes out her healing stones.

LULU

I don't think that.

MARY

I think she might. Your great aunt Octavia found a cat that was missing for eight weeks.

And?
LULU

MARY
Octavia. Number eight!

LULU
It's not about insignificant things like that.

Dougie enters the kitchen. He's
carrying a woven paper bowl, more
square than round.

DOUGIE
All set. Hey, sis.

LULU
Sorry I was late.

DOUGIE
We're cool.

SYLVIE
What's all set?

DOUGIE
The rest of the house. I'm doing my own run through.

MARY
Thank you, Dougie dear.

DOUGIE
Attic's bare. Bedrooms empty-except for mom's.

SYLVIE
What about yours?

DOUGIE
Just a few things.

SYLVIE
Such as?

DOUGIE

Such as the bed where I sleep tonight? And in the bathroom one medium-hard toothbrush and a one last carefully calibrated squeeze of Crest.

Sylvie sighs deeply.

My shaving stuff too. Is that acceptable? But no shaving hairs in the sink. Speaking of which, are we keeping this bowl of cat hair, mom?

He holds it out to his mother.

MARY

That's Omar's.

SYLVIE

Omar's?

MARY

I caught that look, girls. We have our reasons, don't we?

SYLVIE

Please-enlighten us.

LULU

I remember now! Dougie's dog.

SYLVIE

Dougie doesn't have a dog.

DOUGIE

Not yet.

LULU

Mom explained this to me. When Dougie gets his dog, he sniffs the cat hair for a while before they meet.

MARY

And then when we introduce Omar to Dougie's dog, they have a much better chance of getting along.

SYLVIE

Oh for chrissakes. They won't even be in the same house!

MARY

Well that wasn't the plan when I saved the cat hair.

LULU

Where is Omar anyway?

MARY

He won't leave my bedroom.

SYLVIE

You've been feeding him in there??

MARY

He's too scared with all the upheaval.

SYLVIE

And so where's he been-

MARY

Dougie's been awfully good about cleaning that out every day.

SYLVIE

God.

DOUGIE

So what time's this walk-through tomorrow?

SYLVIE

How many times do I have to tell you? 2 o'clock.

DOUGIE

Hours to go before we sleep.

SYLVIE

They will not close unless we're totally cleared out.

DOUGIE

Lulu will save us. You'll do a shaman ceremony.