

Sunny Room in Charming House

Marcia Savin





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ArtAge Publications
Bonnie L. Vorenberg, President
PO Box 19955
Portland OR 97280
503-246-3000 or 800-858-4998
bonniev@seniortheatre.com
www.seniortheatre.com

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SUNNY ROOM IN CHARMING HOUSE

by Marcia Savin

CAST

LYDIA BAILEY: Woman, 60s

CONNIE PENDLETON: Woman, 60s

Setting: The entire action takes place in LYDIA's living room.

At rear is front door. Nearby is an antique standing cabinet, about three-feet high. It holds a corked red wine bottle, one glass and framed photo of LYDIA and her husband, dressed for a party, a few years earlier. He's 60ish. LYDIA's comfortable house shoes by door. Also, a coatrack with a jacket, silk scarves, hats and gym bag.

Downstage: A coffee table, vase of flowers in exact center. Chair at left is soft, comfortable, lived-in. Two formal, stiff chairs are spaced equally around the coffee table. A side table holds Trollope's "Framley Parsonage."

SUNDAY AFTERNOON, 4pm. Doorbell rings. Lights. LYDIA onstage, in slacks, casual top, scarf at neck, closes eyes for good luck. She's excited, hopeful, nervous as she opens front door. Enter CONNIE, tousled, in casual jacket, jeans, bike helmet, camera around neck. She's overloaded, carrying a laptop, suitcase, shopping bags spilling DVDs, photo albums, swimming goggles, gym bag: her worldly goods. Front door stays open.

Note: CONNIE's distinguishing characteristic is a big, infectious smile. It's the smile of one who finds people and the world amusing. It can be a grin, or knowing, or a 'gotcha' smile, but it's never phony.

LYDIA: Connie, you made it!

CONNIE: *(big smile)* Lydia, I don't know you without your goggles.

LYDIA: *(laughs)* We were ships that passed in the Slow Lane. *(looks at helmet)* Connie, you didn't bike over with all this?

CONNIE: No, silly. Took a cab. *(Reaches outside front door. Brings in battered bike. Shuts door. Leans bike against cabinet. Bike starts to fall. LYDIA rushes to grab wine bottle. CONNIE moves bike to rest against wall.)* Don't worry, Lydia, I'll keep it in my room.

LYDIA: *(uneasy laugh)* Fine.

CONNIE: *(Collapses into comfortable chair. Removes helmet.)* Whew! Sooo glad I saw your notice at the Y. I was getting a wee bit antsy about finding a place to live.

LYDIA: *(Takes stiff chair)* Well, I'm glad it was you who answered it. At least, I knew you: The lady who kicked me in the pool with her frog stroke! *(demonstrates flinging arms and legs out.)*

CONNIE: I can't see anything without my contacts. I didn't hurt you, did I?

LYDIA: Oh, no. And Connie, you were so nice about it. Some people snarl, "Stay in your own lane!"

CONNIE: *(Gets up, looks around)* I loovve your place, Lydia! The old ceilings and fixtures.

LYDIA: We did the refinishing ourselves. *(beat)* But I was worried that I overstated the 'charming' part. On the notice.

CONNIE: Oh, nooo. When I saw the photos of my room, I thought: perfect!

LYDIA: It's a big step, sharing...

CONNIE: Yeah, but it was: share — or the street.

LYDIA: I meant, for me. I've never done this before. I'm a little nervous.

CONNIE: Of course! It's your home! And who am I? Someone who kicked you from the middle lane.

LYDIA: *(rushes in)* It's not that I was desperate or anything. I just...

CONNIE: Ran out of money. Isn't it a surprise? Who looks at bills?

LYDIA: We thought — my husband and I — (*eyes to photo*) he died last year ...that we had enough saved. But then he was sick. For a very long time.

CONNIE: That's rough. But, Lyddie, (*LYDIA jarred by "Lyddie," but covers*) you're lucky you still have your house. My ex, the Scumbag, cleaned out our bank accounts, then told me he was leaving.

LYDIA: No!

CONNIE: You should have seen our place, Lyddie. Three bedrooms, a great patio, a view. But, hasta la vista, baby. It's the bank's now.

LYDIA: I'm sorry, Connie. (*stands*) I painted your room. It might still smell of paint.

CONNIE: I love that smell. It says, "Today's a fresh start!" (*CONNIE picks up her stuff*)

LYDIA: (*worried*) Your husband took all your money?

CONNIE: Can you believe? I could have moved in with my daughter but I just couldn't impose. Don't worry, Lyddie, I have enough for rent. So, how we doing this?

LYDIA: Pardon?

CONNIE: What's mine, what's yours?

LYDIA: Your room is all yours. We share the kitchen. And bathroom. I made a list. (*takes from pocket*)

CONNIE: Goody. I love lists!

LYDIA: Now, I get up early.

CONNIE: (*laughs*) I don't.

LYDIA: (*relieved*) I'll need the bathroom first thing in the morning but I'll be out by seven.

CONNIE: Is there a schedule for peeing at night?

LYDIA: Oh, Connie, this is just a rough outline. Then I'll be in the kitchen from—

CONNIE: Don't bother fixing me anything. I never eat breakfast.

LYDIA: *(hadn't planned to)* I'll be out of the kitchen by 7:45. Then I leave for work at 8:15. Now, about dinner...

CONNIE: The kitchen's all yours, Lyddie. *(She's trying to gather all her stuff. It keeps spilling.)*

LYDIA: But what about dinner?

CONNIE: When Scumbag left, I gave up cooking. Just leave me shelf space.

LYDIA: *(makes note)* Connie, what's your schedule like?

CONNIE: Don't have one. I'm freelancing.

LYDIA: *(sigh)* Just one more year and I retire.

CONNIE: I hated that nine-to-five life. Always having to hustle your bustle.

LYDIA: *(laughs)* "Hustle your bustle."

CONNIE: I'm into photography now.

LYDIA: That sounds so interesting, Connie.

CONNIE: Photorealism. Actually, art photojournalism.

LYDIA: When I retire, I want to do something creative, too.

CONNIE: Oh, like what?

LYDIA: Oh...nothing. You're a big movie fan.

CONNIE: *(picking up spilling DVDs)* I'm an addict.

LYDIA: I love old musicals.

CONNIE: I've got them all. We'll have a blast!

LYDIA: (*heading stage left*) Connie, I painted your walls white. I hope that's okay.

CONNIE: White's perfect! Great background for looking at my shots.

LYDIA: And you get lots of light.

CONNIE: I'm so excited! (*following her*) Lyddie, anything to eat? With all the packing, I never had time for a bite.

LYDIA: Oh. Cheese and crackers? I think I...(*about-face turn stage right*)

CONNIE: (*follows, lugging bags*) Perfecto. Any mustard?

(*They exit right*)

BLACKOUT

Scene 2: Next evening, 6pm (CONNIE in the comfortable chair, with laptop, typing and making notes. Papers, notebooks, camera, on coffee table. Vase with flowers pushed to side. On side table, crowding LYDIA's book is coffee cup and slice of key lime pie on plate.

CONNIE sipping coffee, eating pie. Her jacket is flung on an empty chair. LYDIA enters front door, in business clothes. Taken aback seeing CONNIE and her stuff. Hangs coat on coatrack, changes to comfortable shoes.)

LYDIA: Hi.

CONNIE: Lyddie, look at these shots I took today. This guy —

LYDIA: Let me get a glass of wine first. I always have a glass of wine and read before fixing dinner.

CONNIE: I'll have one, too. I like red.

(LYDIA bites her tongue, pours red wine from opened bottle. Takes another glass from cabinet. Hands CONNIE glass, stands, waiting.)

CONNIE: Thanks. This guy? (*shows laptop screen*) He calls himself Dry Doc.

LYDIA: (*smiles*) Connie, that's my chair.

CONNIE: (*smiles*) I guess technically they all are.

LYDIA: Connie, I don't mean to sound petty.

CONNIE: But I've got my work all spread out.

LYDIA: Yes, but I worked all day. And that's the comfortable chair.

CONNIE: (*laughs*) Oh, the uncomfortable ones are for guests.

LYDIA: You're not a guest.

CONNIE: I noticed.

LYDIA: (*trying to be cordial*) Connie, our arrangement was you had your room, not the whole house.

CONNIE: (*realizes she's overstepped*) Hey, whoa! I'll move. (*gathers stuff*)

LYDIA: I'm sorry but I'm tired. It was hell at work. (*Collapses in her chair. Puts CONNIE's glass on table. Moves vase to center.*) Just one more year.

CONNIE: Lyddie, I know I should be working in my room but the light's so much better in here.

LYDIA: But your room is so sunny.

END OF FREEVIEW

You'll want to read and perform this show!