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Cries in the Night

By

PAUL ELLIOTT

Dramatic Publishing Company

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

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Cries in the Night received its premier production at Market House Theatre in Paducah, Ky., on Sept. 12, 2019.

CAST:

VICKIE Amber Dawn
NEAL Scott Dossett
KEVIN Josh Morehead
VIRGINIA..... Kim Yocum
ANGIEDagney Page
SOMETHING DARK..... Christopher Burnett

PRODUCTION:

Stage ManagerDenise Bristol
Production Manager.....Bryan Chapman
Master Carpenter.....Jim Keeney
Assistant Costume DesignerJennifer Miller
Specialty Properties Jason McHaney
Stage Crew & MagicsAspyn Burnett, Caleb Buford
Dennis Bristol, Jonathan Gericke
Set Construction.....Bryan Chapman, Jim Keeney
Dennis Bristol, Jonathan Gericke

SPECIAL THANKS

Special thanks to Director Kathy Pingel, Producer Michael Cochran and the fantastic cast and crew of the Market House Theatre for bringing this show to life, and to Diana Zimmerman of the world-famous Magic Castle for helping me prove that real magic for the stage is within the budget and realm of any size theatre.

Cries in the Night

CHARACTERS

VICKIE: Mid-30s; warm, caring and troubled.

NEAL: Mid-30s; Vickie's husband, a policeman and a realist.

KEVIN Mid-30s; Vickie's best friend from college.

VIRGINIA: 65; warm, caring and a nonstop talker.

ANGIE: 7 but seems younger and more fragile.

SOMETHING DARK: Shape of pure evil.

NOTES: Production notes and a breakdown of the illusions can be found in the back of the book. Images detailing potential set arrangements are available online. Please visit: www.dramaticpublishing.com/cries-in-the-night.

(Suddenly a spark leaps from the ball as the ball jerks towards him. KEVIN jerks his hand back as though stung.)

KEVIN (*cont'd*). Forget that. Not a good idea. No, no, no.

(Never taking his eyes off the ball, he backs up towards the door, slapping his hand in reprimand. The ball forces him towards the door.)

KEVIN (*cont'd*). Bad Kevin, goood Bobby-ball. Nice Bobby-ball. Stay! Stay!

(Fumbling, he backs out the door; that slams shut, locking him out.)

KEVIN (*from outside, loudly*). Holy shit!

(We hear him running off the porch as the stage lights dim to blackness.)

(Blackout as the wind whistles in the darkness.)

SCENE 8

(When the lights come up, it's late afternoon the next day, and VICKIE sits in her bathrobe at the dining table. NEAL stands beside her. KEVIN is pacing. The sun is setting throughout the scene.)

VICKIE. Kevin, That's not possible. I threw it away. The trash has already been picked up.

KEVIN. Well, it sure as hell came back for a visit last night. It rolled right up to my feet. I almost left with a load in my knickers.

VICKIE. Where, exactly? I don't see it.

KEVIN. Neither do I, but it was here. Trust me. Right there.

And I swear it was looking up at me. Well, maybe not, but it felt that way.

NEAL. I still don't understand. Why didn't you call me? I was just right upstairs. Or this morning even?

KEVIN. I tried. It was like you had died up there and trust me, that did cross my mind. Jesus, I almost wrecked the car twice just getting home. Then I tried calling you on the phone, but all I got was a busy signal. And this morning. All I got was silence. Well, not just silence. Like something was listening to me, breathing.

NEAL. Why didn't you call the police?

KEVIN. Hell, you are the police and what was I going to say to anyone else ... I was just attacked by a big rubber ball. I tell you I could have finished off every bottle in the ... uh, the you know what. And sleep? Forget about it. I may never sleep again. So I was left with pacing. You think this is bad. You should have seen last night. But then sometime this morning while my mum was feeding Julie Marie, it hit me, and pacing turned into rummaging through every closet in the house until I found it.

VICKIE. What?

KEVIN (*racing back to the table for his paper sack*). Excuse the fancy wrapping. And the dust. It wasn't in a closet. It was in the cellar. (*Pulling out a Ouija board.*) Ta dah!!!

VICKIE & NEAL. A Ouija board?

KEVIN. Not just any Ouija board. *Our* Ouija board.

VICKIE. Omigod!

KEVIN. Remember how we used to play with this thing? Ask it all sorts of questions, and it would tell us answers.

NEAL. You really didn't go in for that type of crap, did you?

KEVIN. But it worked. It used to always work. Remember?

VICKIE. Except that time we both were after the same boy.

KEVIN. No, no, no, no. It said, he was right for both of us.

VICKIE. He was straight.

KEVIN. Oh please, if I had gotten him behind closed doors, those legs would have been over his head before I even got my shirt off.

VICKIE. You're probably right.

KEVIN. OK, here's my plan. If Bobby really is in the house, then this will tell us.

NEAL. That is the dumbest thing I've ever heard.

KEVIN. It worked before. And if it isn't Bobby, then, we'll know that too.

VICKIE. But if it isn't Bobby, then who? What?

NEAL. Vickie, you're talking like this makes sense. You're supposed to be in bed.

VICKIE. You were the one who told me I should get up and come down for breakfast.

NEAL. Breakfast, not Ouija board ghost hunting.

VICKIE. You said yourself it's a dumb idea. A game ... so what could it hurt?

NEAL. I just don't think this is something we ought to be messing around with, you ought to be messing around with.

VICKIE. It's a game.

NEAL. I don't have time for games.

VICKIE. But you've got to!

NEAL. No, I don't.

KEVIN. If you're in the room, you do.

NEAL. Then, excuse me while I leave the room.

VICKIE. Neal, we need you.

NEAL. Not for this.

VICKIE. Neal, please. Honey. If it doesn't work, no harm, no foul. If it does, at least I'll know.

NEAL. Know what? That our dead son is haunting our house. Do you really want to know that? Do you?

KEVIN. I know it's not my place to interfere.

NEAL. Since when?

KEVIN. But, we were talking last night about all the things going on and whether ... Well, this might prove it once and for all. Maybe all of this is just our imagination. *(A beat.)* Though after last night with Mr. Ball, *(In a sing-song voice.)* I don't think so.

(NEAL looks at VICKIE and KEVIN a long moment, and then sits down.)

NEAL. Well, I still say it's a stupid idea.

(KEVIN quickly lays out the board and picks up the Ouija planchette.)

VICKIE. Don't we need a quarter ... or something silver?

(She jumps up to look for a quarter.)

NEAL. Why?

KEVIN. I don't know. Just one of the rules like you never do it alone.

VICKIE *(returning with a coin and sitting down)*. Here.

KEVIN. Now, we ask a question and—

NEAL. I know how to work the board.

(KEVIN places the planchette, and everyone puts their hands on it.)

KEVIN. OK, who wants to ask the question?

NEAL. Be my guest.

VICKIE. Neal?

NEAL. I just said, "Be my guest."

VICKIE. You have to at least be cooperative.

NEAL. I'm sitting here feeling like a fool. That's about as much cooperation as you're going to get. I'm a cop, for chrissake.

KEVIN. OK, OK. I'll ask. *(He takes a deep breath.)* Ouija, Ouija, is there a spirit in this house?

(The planchette doesn't move.)

NEAL. Maybe it's hard of hearing.

VICKIE. Neal.

(Suddenly the planchette begins to move and shoots up to the "yes." NEAL looks surprised and uncomfortable.)

VICKIE & KEVIN. Yes, it said yes.

NEAL. I can read.

KEVIN. OK, so we do have a spirit.

VICKIE. Is it Bobby?

KEVIN *(to the board)*. Is the spirit Vickie and Neal's son, Bobby?

(Even NEAL leans closer to watch this time. After a while, the planchette shoots to the opposite corner of the board, "No.")

NEAL. No! *(More relieved than he'd like to admit.)* It's not Bobby.

VICKIE. Then who?

(The planchette starts moving suddenly, startling them.)

VICKIE *(cont'd)*. A ... N ... G ... I ... E. Angie?

(The wind chimes play lightly.)

NEAL. What's an angie?

VICKIE. It's not a what, it's a who? Are you saying, the thing that's in this house is named Angie?

(The planchette moves quickly up to "Yes.")

KEVIN. Yes.

(Everyone takes their hands off the planchette.)

KEVIN *(cont'd)*. At least, it has a name.

NEAL. Are you sure you guys aren't just ... ?

VICKIE & KEVIN. No!

KEVIN. My fingers were hardly touching it.

VICKIE. OK, so we know it's someone named Angie. What do we ask now? Why is she crying?

KEVIN. Or what does she want?

NEAL. Yeah, but make it, "What does IT want?"

KEVIN. OK ...

(But as everyone reaches for the planchette, it suddenly starts rising by itself until it floats about eight inches off the table. Everyone slides quickly back, as the planchette floats as though looking at them.)

"Something Dark's Theme" plays in a low undercurrent.)

KEVIN (*cont'd*). That's not supposed to happen.

NEAL. No shit, Sherlock!

(Suddenly, The entire Ouija board flips up into the air and off the table and every door and shutter in the house start slamming, and the lights go on and off. Windows start sliding up and down, and the curtains start blowing.

NEAL and KEVIN run for the front door that's opening, but it slams shut, locking them in.

Everyone is now really panicked, except VICKIE, who seems frozen at the table.)

KEVIN. Oh, crap. I think she wants us to leave her alone.

NEAL. Come on, Vickie, let's get out of this house.

KEVIN. You can stay at my place. Come on.

VICKIE (*almost in a trance*). No.

NEAL (*trying to pull her up and toward the door*). Vickie, come on. Something's wrong here.

VICKIE (*pulling away*). No.

KEVIN. Vic, I have to agree with Neal. I think you both ought to come to my house tonight and—

VICKIE (*forcefully taking control*). No. She was crying. She sounds like a child and—

KEVIN. A pissed-off child.

NEAL. We don't even know she's a child.

VICKIE. She sounds like a child, and she's hurt, and she's scared.

(A book is hurled across the room.)

KEVIN. Scared, hell. She's tearing the place apart.

VICKIE. I'm not leaving.

NEAL. But Vickie, we don't know what we're dealing with.

KEVIN. Neal's right, Vic. This is bad. Real bad.

(The phone rings once, twice, and then won't stop ringing.)

KEVIN *(cont'd)*. See! It wants us to leave.

VICKIE. No! *(Shouting to the house.)* This is my house. *I am not leaving!!!*

(Everything stops abruptly. Shockingly. Lights are restored to the living room, dining room, kitchen and front door area.)

NEAL *(still not believing it's over)*. Whoa.

KEVIN. Mood swing.

VICKIE *(softly)*. Now, whoever you are, you listen to me. I'm here and I'm not leaving until I've found you.

(Slowly the front door opens. KEVIN looks at it and takes it as his cue.)

KEVIN. I think it's trying to tell you something ... like get the hell out of here.

NEAL. Vickie?

VICKIE. I'm not going anywhere. Kevin, you've got Julie Marie to think about. Neal, you can go or stay. I don't really care anymore.

KEVIN. You don't mean that, Vickie.

VICKIE. Go home, Kevin. Whatever this is, it's going to end tonight.

KEVIN. Neal?

NEAL *(to KEVIN at the door)*. Look, I don't know what the crap is going on, and everything in my body screams to get the hell out of this house ... but I'm not leaving her alone, even if she's already left me.

KEVIN. I'll call you in the morning. Jesus, I wish you'd go with me. Both of you.

(NEAL shuts the door and slowly turns back to face VICKIE, who is not facing him, but the living room as though expecting to see something. The lights flicker. Both freeze for a moment, and then NEAL takes the initiative and starts cleaning up the mess. Neither speaks for a long while. VICKIE slowly starts to help pick up the books, etc.)

NEAL *(stopping)*. Vickie, I think I'd rather find out we're both bat-shit crazy then the alternative.

VICKIE. What alternative?

NEAL. That it's real. This house. Something's not right.

VICKIE. The crying?

NEAL. No, I mean, yeah, that of course, but the cryings not all of it. Bottles of booze keep showing up. I dump it and the next minute it's back.

VICKIE. Why didn't you tell me?

NEAL. I knew what you'd think. I've even sat up all night, watching. Nothing comes past me, yet the next morning, another bottle or two are always there. Vickie, I want us out of this house. It wants us out of the house.

VICKIE. No, I can't.

NEAL. Why not? It's not Bobby. I don't know what it is, but it's not Bobby. Even Kevin agrees with me, only in his case, he'd have moved us out when that thing started flying. For once the queen was right.

VICKIE. Neal?

NEAL. It's a term of endearment. We're buds now.

VICKIE. She's here. I can feel her, and I think she's calling out to me. I just have to figure out how to reach her. Look,

if you don't want to help me, go on to bed. I want to stay up a bit longer.

NEAL. I'm not leaving you down here by yourself.

VICKIE. If I need you, I'll call. I just want to think this out.

NEAL. Then I'll stay with you.

VICKIE. No. Neal, you may be the problem. Everything that's happened has happened when you're not here.

NEAL. That pissed off Ouija board sure as hell happened when I was here. And the bottles.

VICKIE. But you haven't heard her.

NEAL. You don't know it's a her.

VICKIE. Her name is Angie.

NEAL. Well, then Angie's got a drinking problem.

VICKIE. OK, "it." Either way, maybe "it" doesn't want to, I don't know, show up when you're here.

NEAL. Why?

VICKIE. I don't know. I'm just guessing, but—

NEAL. Honey, it either gets both of us ... or neither of us. (*Shouting to the house.*) You hear that! No more scaring the shit out of my wife ... without me!

VICKIE. I don't think shouting is going to help anything.

NEAL. Well, it made me feel better.

VICKIE. And I don't think it's really trying to scare either of us.

NEAL. It could have fooled me. Look, I don't want us to even be in this room. It's dark now. Everything will look better when the sun's out. Trust me.

VICKIE. OK. OK. You're right. Go on and get your shower. I just have to put this glass in the drainer.

NEAL. I'll wait.

VICKI. I can put the glass in the drainer by myself. Go on, you're right, we'll decide what to do tomorrow.

NEAL. Promise? *(She nods.)* We'll think better when it's daylight. *(Starting up the stairs, then turning back.)* But if you're not up there in three minutes, I'm coming back.

VICKIE. Neal, take your shower. I'm going to need one too.

NEAL. We could take it together.

(There is a long pause.)

NEAL *(cont'd)*. Never mind, it was a bad idea.

VICKIE. I thought you were tired.

NEAL. I said, never mind.

VICKIE. I just can't.

NEAL. What? Forgive me? Love me again? Stay married? Have sex with me again? Possibly have another child. What are we talking about here?

(VICKIE doesn't answer.)

NEAL *(cont'd)*. Never mind, I don't think I want to hear the answer.

(He exits up the stairs and switches off the upstairs hall light. VICKIE watches him go, then takes the glass to the kitchen door, stops, hears NEAL's shower turning on. Quickly she decides and clicks off all the lights.)

VICKIE *(softly, but hurriedly, in the darkness)*. I know you're here. I just want to help you. *(A beat.)* But you've got to let me see you.

(The only illumination is from the moonlight glinting through the windows. VICKIE crosses to middle of the living room.)

VICKIE (*cont'd*). Please. I'm here. I won't hurt you. I just want you to know I'm here.

(There is no response, and VICKIE takes one last look into the darkness.)

VICKIE (*cont'd*). Then, maybe tomorrow.

(As she starts to turn, the wind chimes ring again. VICKIE stiffens. A child begins to cry softly in the darkness and in the soft glow of the moonlight, the dark shape of a little girl [ANGIE] stands on the staircase. "Angie's Theme" plays softly. The moonlight coming through the windows gives her definition, but her face is hidden. The small body is shaking with fear, and her sobs are audible.

VICKIE turns slowly to face the darkness and gasps. She sees the child. Slowly, VICKIE starts to take a step towards the child, but ANGIE panics and tries to get out of the room.)

VICKIE (*cont'd, whispering*). No, no. Please don't. I won't hurt you.

(VICKIE slowly tries to approach her.)

VICKIE (*cont'd*). I only want to help you. Please, don't run away.

(ANGIE begins crying again softly.)

VICKIE (*cont'd*). Who are you? Are you Angie? Are you the little girl who's been calling my name?

ANGIE. Mommy? Mommy?

VICKIE (*hurt*). No. I'm ... not your mommy. But I want to help you find her.

ANGIE. I want my mommy.

VICKIE. I know, honey. I know. Please let me near you.
Don't be afraid.

ANGIE (*backing up*). Mommy?

VICKIE. Just let me hold you?

ANGIE. Mommy? (*Growing more alarmed.*) Mommy?
Mommy? He's coming! He's coming!

VICKIE (*still moving slowly forward*). It's all right. It's all right. Nothing's going to hurt you.

(*NEAL, dripping wet and wearing only a towel, suddenly comes to the top of the stairs.*)

NEAL (*calling down*). The shower's yours.

(*ANGIE turns towards the voice and jerks back, screaming in real terror and rushes for the window, knocking over a table in the process. In growing hysterics, she bangs into the walls, trying to claw her way through.*)

VICKIE (*wheeling to NEAL*). No!!!

NEAL (*moving to the top of the stairs, instantly alert at the scream*). What the hell?

VICKIE. She's here, Neal. A little girl. Angie. (*To ANGIE.*)
Stop please. We won't hurt you.

(*ANGIE hurls herself at the window, getting tangled in the curtains as she screams.*)

VICKIE (*cont'd*). Help her, Neal. Help her.

(*NEAL switches on the blinding downstairs lights and rushes down the stairs ... ANGIE is not there. The curtains hang limply.*)

NEAL. Where is she? I don't see anything.

VICKIE. She's right here. Cut the light off!!!

NEAL (*not understanding*). What?

(In desperation, VICKIE scrambles over to switch off the lights from the bottom of the stairs.)

ANGIE is back, struggling within the curtains. NEAL, in turning, sees the struggling shape for the first time and almost drops the towel, falling over himself backing up to the stairs.)

NEAL (*cont'd*). Jesus, what is that?

VICKIE. I told you. It's Angie. The one who was crying.

(VICKIE slowly moves closer to the struggling child.)

NEAL (*trying to pull VICKIE back*). What do you think you're doing? Don't touch it.

(VICKIE pushes his hand off and continues to slowly approach the child.)

VICKIE. Stop it, please. Angie, you're hurting yourself. Let me help you.

(Suddenly in the midst of all the chaos, ANGIE throws herself into a corner and then slumps to the floor cowering.)

ANGIE (*sobbing*). Mommy! He's going to hurt me.

VICKIE (*sobbing herself*). No, honey, nobody's going to hurt you. Nobody's going to hurt you.

(VICKIE slowly approaches the terrified child, gently reaches out and finally lightly strokes ANGIE's hair.)

VICKIE (*cont'd*). There, there. It's going to be all right now.
I'm here. Mommy's here.

(Slowly VICKIE enfolds the child in her arms and rocks her on the floor. NEAL moves quietly, cautiously to them.)

NEAL. Holy crap, Vickie. She's ... she's ...

VICKIE. Real. She's real, and she's here.

(There is a long beat as NEAL slowly kneels beside them.)

NEAL. Jesus, now what do we do?

(VICKIE continues to clutch the child to her breast as the lights fade.)

END OF ACT I