

**The Locked Room**  
**A One Act Play**  
**By Harry Adelman**

**Time:** The present

**Cast:**

Realtor	A man or woman any age
Elaine	A woman in her late 20's or early 30's
Matt	A man in his late 20's or early 30's (Elaine's husband)
Dr. Driscoll	A man or woman any age
Realtor 2	A man or woman any age (could be same actor as Realtor)
Sarah	A woman any age
Ralph	A man any age (Sarah's husband)

**Set:** A combination living and dining room with a couple of doors set into the walls

**Props:** Card table and chairs, champagne bottle and glasses, cheese tray, cracker box, living room and dining room furniture, cell phones, flashlight, key, desk and chairs

**Scene 1** 7:00 PM one evening

*Lights come up on an empty stage. The background is a typical combination living and dining room without any furniture or pictures on the walls. One wall has a fireplace. There are a couple of doors in the walls, one with a lock in the doorknob and a deadbolt. There is a post-it note on this door. A real estate agent, Elaine, and Matt walk in from off stage.*

**Realtor:** "Now, this is the living area...."

**Elaine:** "Wow; it's nice and spacious! It's bigger than our entire apartment!"

**Matt:** (*chuckling*) "Yeah; *all* our current furniture would fit in here without a problem."

**Realtor:** "Lots of room for you two to grow into." *Walks over to one of the doors and opens it.* "And this is a linen closet."

**Elaine:** (*looking into the closet*) "Very nice. And I just love the fireplace."

**Matt:** (*walking over to the locked door*) "And where does this lead to?" *He tries the knob and sees that it's locked.* "Hey, it's locked. Is there a key for it?"

**Realtor:** "There is a key, but it can only be used by the current owner, who is an eccentric old man living in Florida. It was not given to us. The key is in a safe at the office of the owner's local attorney. In the event the house is sold, the key will be conveyed to the new owner at the closing."

**Elaine:** "What kind of sales contract is that? Is it legal?"

**Realtor:** "The contract was written that way. The room is not subject to inspection, and can only be opened by the owner. That's why the asking price is \$20,000.00 lower than it would normally be for a house of this size."

**Matt:** (*still looking at the door*) "This is a steel exterior door. And there's a note on it." *He reads the note out loud.* "For your safety, keep this door locked and bolted, especially at night. What the hell does that mean?"

**Realtor:** "It means you get a bargain, if you decide to go ahead and purchase the house. Well, shall we go and see the upstairs now?"

**Elaine:** "What do you think, Matt? Are you still interested in seeing the rest of the house?"

**Matt:** "Why not? As long as whatever is behind that door behaves itself, I still like the house. And the price is right."

**Realtor:** "Okay, right this way." *They exit.*

*Blackout*

**Scene 2** An early evening a month later

*Lights come up on the main stage, which is now furnished with a card table and a couple of folding chairs. There is an open bottle of champagne and two glasses on the table. Sitting at the table are Elaine and Matt.*

**Elaine:** “Well, we did it! We signed our lives away and now this place is ours. Let’s drink a toast to our new home. Cheers!” *They both raise their glasses and clink them together*

**Matt:** “Ah, good stuff! I thought the closing went really well; not as difficult as I thought it would be. And that lawyer did a great job explaining everything to us.”

**Elaine:** “Yeah, ‘Lurch did OK.” *They both laugh.*

**Matt:** “Yeah I guess he did come across as a little creepy. I half expected him to say ‘You rang’ at some point. But I thought he represented both sides fairly in the transaction. I was a little concerned at first about using the seller’s lawyer, but things worked out fine. And his fee was nominal.”

**Elaine:** “Agreed. Between the breaks we got on the sale price and on his fee, we made out like bandits. I can’t wait until the new furniture arrives next week!”

**Matt:** “Yes, it will really make this room look really nice.”

**Elaine:** Are you hungry? There are cheese and crackers in the kitchen. I’ll go get them and be right back.” *She exits.*

**Matt:** “There’s nothing like Ritz crackers and Cheese Whiz to make an occasion special, is there?” *While she is out of the room, the door knob to the locked room starts rattling, drawing Matt’s attention. While he is staring surprised at the door, Elaine returns carrying a tray and box of crackers.*

**Elaine:** “Here we are!” *She notices an apprehensive look on Matt’s face.* “What’s wrong, honey? You look like you’ve seen a ghost.”

**Matt:** “Nothing, just tired. It’s been a long day.”

**Elaine:** “I can put the cheese back in the fridge if you’re not hungry. I’m pretty beat too. We can just go upstairs and get ready for bed.”

**Matt:** “Is that an invitation?”

**Elaine:** “Maybe....first night in a new house. Who knows what can happen?”

**Matt:** “Let’s hope for the best. I’ll bring the rest of the champagne just in case we need it.” *Elaine exits. Matt grabs the bottle and glasses and looks at the locked door before exiting.*

*Blackout*

**Scene 3** Early evening two days later

*Lights come up on the main stage, still furnished with a card table and a couple of folding chairs. Sitting at the table looking at his phone is Matt. The locked room door rattles, and Matt looks up at it. He gets up and walks over to the door. Just as he is about to touch the knob, Elaine walks in and sees him.*

**Elaine:** “So...you were about to unlock the door without me!”

**Matt:** (*startled*) “No I wasn’t! I was just, uh, checking if it is still locked.”

**Elaine:** “How could it have gotten open? By the way, what did you do with the key?”

**Matt:** “It’s in that small drawer in the kitchen, with all the other odds and ends like scissors, scotch tape, twist ties, and that kind of junk.”

**Elaine:** “So when are we going to open it?”

**Matt:** “I don’t think we’re ready yet.”

**Elaine:** “Why not?”

**Matt:** (*briefly searching for an excuse*) “Because we have a lot of other things to deal with in the house before we get to that. We want to finish painting before the furniture arrives and get the yard in shape. There might be a big mess in that room that might take days to deal with. Besides, there was the warning from the old owner. Perhaps there’s something dangerous in there like a hole in the floor, or bad wiring. We’ll get to it honey; I promise.”

**Elaine:** “Well, OK. But aren’t you the least bit curious about what’s in there?”

**Matt:** “Sure, it’s human nature. I guess I just have more willpower than you.”

**Elaine:** “I’m just dying to find out what’s behind that door, but I’ll wait if you say so.”

**Matt:** “Just bear with me a few more weeks. What’s there can wait until then.”

*Blackout*

**Scene 4** Early evening two weeks later

*Lights come up on the main stage, which is now nicely furnished. Matt enters from off stage.*

**Matt:** "Honey, I'm home."

**Elaine:** *(from off-stage)* "I'm upstairs; I'll be down in a jiffy."

**Matt:** "OK." *The door knob to the locked room starts rattling. He walks over to the door and touches the knob, and then pulls his hand away in surprise.*

**Matt:** "Oww!" *As he touches the knob, Elaine enters.*

**Elaine:** "What's wrong?"

**Matt:** "Come over here and feel this knob. It's red hot!" *Elaine walks over and gingerly feels the knob.*

**Elaine:** "It doesn't feel hot to me."

**Matt:** "Well is was. Look at my fingers; they're all red." *Matt shows her his hand then feels the knob himself.*

**Elaine:** "I believe you; but how could the temperature change so quickly?"

**Matt:** "I don't know. And I don't know how the knob could keep rattling itself. Have you ever heard it?"

**Elaine:** "No, but I assume you have."

**Matt:** "Yes; many times. That's one of the reasons I keep putting off opening the door to see what's inside. Do you think I'm crazy?"

**Elaine:** "No, I think you're just letting your imagination run away with you. All because of that stupid warning that was on the door before we bought the house."

**Matt:** *(angry)* "It's not my imagination. I've heard it rattle and it *was* hot!"

**Elaine:** "Ok, ok. Maybe you should talk to Dr. Driscoll. I can get you an appointment."

**Matt:** "With your head shrinker? No, I don't think I'm ready for that yet."

**Elaine:** "You can at least talk to the doctor about this. It might do you some good." *She embraces him.* "Think about it, ok?"

**Matt:** "All right, I'm sorry I got angry. What's for dinner? I'm starving."

**Elaine:** "It's a surprise. Why don't you set the table and I'll finish getting it ready."

**Matt:** "Sounds good to me."

*Blackout*

**Scene 5** Early afternoon a few days later

*Lights come up on the main stage. Elaine and Matt are sitting on the couch.*

**Matt:** “Well, time for me to go. I shouldn’t be gone too long.”

**Elaine:** “Good luck trying to fix Dan’s computer.”

**Matt:** “It shouldn’t take more than an hour or so. Hopefully, I’ll be back in time for us to leave for dinner.” *Matt gets up and starts exiting.*

**Elaine:** “You’d better be! It took me two weeks to get that reservation.”

**Matt:** “I will. See you later.” *Matt exits. After he leaves, Elaine gets up and goes to the kitchen, returning with a key and a flashlight. She goes to the door of the locked room and opens it. She walks in and is out of sight for several seconds. When she comes out, she is visibly upset. The door to the locked room is left open. She pulls out her cell phone and dials a number.*

**Elaine:** *(into the phone)* “Is Doctor Driscoll in today? *(pause)* This is Elaine Rutherford; I’m a patient and I need to talk to the doctor right away. *(pause)* Thank you. *(pause)* Doctor I need to see you *now*. It’s an emergency. Can I come right over? *(pause)* In about fifteen minutes? Great, I’m leaving now. Thank you.” *Elaine puts the phone away and exits.*

*Blackout*

**Scene 6** Half an hour later

*Lights come up on the front of the stage where a desk and two chairs are placed. Elaine is sitting in front of the desk and Dr. Driscoll is seated behind it.*

**Dr. Driscoll:** “So what’s the matter, Elaine?”

**Elaine:** “It’s not me, Doctor, it’s Matt. He’s having what I think are delusions.”

**Dr. Driscoll:** “Tell me about them.”

**Elaine:** “As you know, we recently bought a house. There is a locked room in the house that we were not allowed to see the contents of until we became the owners. Matt has been acting strangely with regard to this room since we moved in a month and a half ago. He keeps putting off opening it with one excuse after another. A couple of days ago, he told me he has been hearing the knob in the door rattling on a regular basis, like something is in there. He also claims to have burned his hand when he touched the knob one time.”

**Dr. Driscoll:** “And you have experienced any of these manifestations yourself?”

**Elaine:** “No. However, today when he went out, I opened the door and went inside.”

**Dr. Driscoll:** “What did you find?”

**Elaine:** “The room is oddly shaped and painted black. There are no furnishings in it. In the center of the room a five pointed star is painted on the floor. In the center of the star is a block of wood with an ax on it.”

**Dr. Driscoll:** “Hmm; sounds like it could have been used by Satanists for a black mass. The star is a pentagram; the chopping block and ax were probably used to sacrifice animals. What do you know about the previous owner?”

**Elaine:** “Not much, other than he is an eccentric old man now living in Florida. His lawyer handled the closing and we never even met the owner. What should I do?”

**Dr. Driscoll:** “For now, I would suggest that you tell Matt nothing about this, until I have a chance to talk to him. Don’t say anything to him about opening the door, and keep the door locked for the time being.”

**Elaine:** *(suddenly looking distraught)* “Oh my God! I left the door open!”

*Blackout*

**Scene 7** Half an hour later

*Lights come up on the main stage. The door to the locked room is still open. Matt enters.*

**Matt:** “Hey Laney, I’m back.” *Matt sees that the door to the locked room is open. He walks over to it and looks in. He pulls out his cell phone, and using it in flashlight mode, goes inside. After a few seconds Elaine enters.*

**Elaine:** “Matt, Matt, are you here?”

**Matt:** *(from inside the locked room)* “In here!” *Elaine walks to the open door and peeks inside.*

**Elaine:** “Matt?” *Suddenly, Matt grabs Elaine’s arm and pulls her into the room.*

**Matt:** “I have something for you.”

**Elaine:** “Matt, no!” *Elaine screams, then we hear several chopping sounds. The door slams shut and we see the deadbolt turn in the lock.*

*Blackout*

**Scene 8** Early afternoon a few months later

*Lights come up on the main stage, which is now empty of furniture. There is again a post-it note on door to the locked room. Another real estate agent, Sarah, and Ralph walk in from off stage.*

**Realtor 2:** "Step right in folks. This is the combination living and dining room."

**Sarah:** "I like it. Very homey."

**Ralph:** "I could see us living here." *He walks over to the locked door and tries it.* "Why is this door locked? Do you have a key? And get this crazy note." *He reads the note out loud.* "For your safety, keep this door locked and bolted, especially at night. What does that mean, that there are zombies in there?"

**Realtor 2:** "There is a key, but it can only be used by the current owners, who are an eccentric young couple living in Texas. The key is in a safe at the office of the owners' attorney. When the house is sold, you'll get the key at the closing."

**Sarah:** "What kind of crackpot deal is that?"

**Realtor 2:** "That's how the sales contract was written and why the price is so low. Listen, if any of this bothers you, we can move on to the next house and not waste any more time here."

**Ralph:** "I've seen enough."

**Sarah:** "Me too. Let's get out of here."

**Realtor 2:** "OK, let's go" *They exit. After they leave the door knob to the locked room starts rattling.*

*Blackout*

**The End**