THE COUNTRY HOUSE
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For Dana Morosini Reeve
THE COUNTRY HOUSE was originally commissioned by Manhattan Theatre Club (Lynne Meadow, Artistic Director; Barry Grove, Executive Producer), with funds provided by U.S. Trust. It received a world premiere co-production by Manhattan Theatre Club and the Geffen Playhouse (Randall Arney, Artistic Director; Ken Novice, Managing Director), opening at the Geffen Playhouse in Los Angeles, California on June 3, 2014. It was directed by Daniel Sullivan; the set design was by John Lee Beatty; the costume design was by Rita Ryack; the lighting design was by Peter Kaczorowski; the original music was by Peter Golub; the sound design was by Jon Gottlieb; and the production stage manager was Young Ji. The cast was as follows:

SUSIE KEEGAN ....................................................... Sarah Steele
WALTER KEEGAN ............................................... David Rasche
ANNA PATTERSON ............................................ Blythe Danner
ELLIOT COOPER ...................................................... Eric Lange
MICHAEL ASTOR .................................................... Scott Foley
NELL McNALLY .................................................. Emily Swallow

The world premiere co-production of THE COUNTRY HOUSE opened on Broadway at the Samuel J. Friedman Theatre on September 9, 2014. The cast and personnel remained the same, with the following exceptions: The sound design was by Obadiah Eaves; and the production stage manager was James FitzSimmons. Michael Astor was played by Daniel Sunjata, and Nell McNally was played by Kate Jennings Grant.
CHARACTERS

SUSIE KEEGAN — twenty-one, a college student, plainly lovely. Her mother, Kathy, is recently deceased.

WALTER KEEGAN — sixty-six, a successful film and stage director, Susie’s father.

ANNA PATTERSON — the matriarch, a great and famous actress, Susie’s grandmother.

ELLIOT COOPER — forty-four, a failed actor and aspiring playwright, Susie’s uncle on her mother’s side.

MICHAEL ASTOR — forty-five, a ruggedly handsome and charismatic actor, a longtime family friend.

NELL McNALLY — early forties, an intelligent and inscrutable beauty, Walter’s new actress-girlfriend.

PLACE

A house in the Berkshires. Summer.
TIME

Act One
Scene 1: Friday afternoon
Scene 2: Later that night

Act Two
Scene 1: A few days later
Scene 2: Later that night

Intermission

Act Three
Scene 1: The following morning
Scene 2: Later that day

NOTE

A slash (“/”) in the dialogue indicates the beginning of the next spoken line.
A century-old house in the Berkshires, near Williamstown, Massachusetts, that has long been the summer home of a family of theater people. Bought for a song four decades ago, it has changed relatively little over the years, and what improvements that were made were done piecemeal. Still, it is not without charm. Secondhand furnishings, collected over decades, somehow work in concert to convey cozy, Bohemian chic. (Look closely and you will see the decay.) Warped wooden shelves are crammed with mildewed summer-reading paperbacks, arts-and-crafts made by two generations of children on rainy summer days, box games, and a motley assortment of sporting equipment. Vintage posters from the Williamstown Theatre Festival and framed, faded production stills adorn the walls. Screened French doors open onto a brick patio and a garden. A kitchen, dining room, and bathroom are accessible; a staircase leads to a warren of bedrooms on the second floor.

A humid, overcast afternoon in early summer. Susie, barefoot in a black cotton dress, is curled up on the couch, looking through a photo album. Earbuds in, she’s listening to Joni Mitchell, and she mumble-sings along the way people do when they can’t hear themselves. We hear (but Susie does not) a car pull up on a gravel driveway. Anna, sunglasses on, makes her entrance carrying canvas bags of groceries.
ANNA. (Entering.) Darling, I can use a hand. (Meaning: with the bags.) Hello-o-o? (Anna comes closer, startling Susie.)

SUSIE. God, Granna, / you almost gave me a heart attack!
ANNA. How do you expect to hear anything, those stupid things / in your ears?
SUSIE. You could have at least made your presence known.
ANNA. I entered the room. I am not one whose entrances go unnoticed. Except, apparently, by my own granddaughter. Come here, you. (Anna opens her arms to Susie, kisses the top of her head.) You look more and more like your mother.
SUSIE. I look nothing like my mother.
ANNA. I haven’t seen you in ages.
SUSIE. You saw me spring break.
ANNA. Thank you so much for opening the house.
SUSIE. You’re welcome.
ANNA. The very thought of walking into this empty house …
SUSIE. I know.
ANNA. Something, isn’t it? Rooms so alive with someone, once she’s gone, all that’s left is stuff. (Susie brings the bags into the kitchen.) When did you get here?
SUSIE. (Exiting.) Last night. One of my suitemates gave me a ride from New Haven.
ANNA. (Calls.) How can you wear black on a hot summer day? It makes me sweat to just look at you.
SUSIE. (Offstage.) That’s a fallacy, you know.
ANNA. Who said? Black is a heat magnet. And it’s depressing. (Susie returns.) I need you to run lines with me later.
SUSIE. Do I have to? I read horribly.
ANNA. You do not. You read wonderfully. (Remembers to ask.) Whose Porsche is sitting out there?
SUSIE. Dad’s. Doesn’t it just cry out “Male Menopause”?
ANNA. (Lower voice.) Is he here? (Meaning: upstairs.)
SUSIE. Went for a run.
ANNA. (Surprised.) Your father’s running?
SUSIE. See: Porsche above.
ANNA. Did he bring the girlfriend?
SUSIE. Oh, yeah. What kind of man brings his girlfriend to his dead wife’s family’s house? And what kind of woman goes with him?
ANNA. What’s she like?
SUSIE. (Shrugs.) Beautiful.
ANNA. And Elliot…?
SUSIE. Uncle Elliot is napping. Uncle Elliot naps.
ANNA. Your Uncle Elliot naps … far too much. *(She picks up a discarded liquor bottle.)* What are you doing inside on such a gorgeous day?
SUSIE. Waiting for you.
ANNA. Well, go! Shoo! Shouldn’t you be out having unprotected sex with people your own age?
SUSIE. I’m with people my own age all year long.
ANNA. So, what? It’s summertime! You know, I just got a look at some of this year’s apprentices. They’re adorable.
SUSIE. They’re always adorable.
ANNA. You should hang out with them.
SUSIE. Why? They’re all actors.
ANNA. What’s wrong with actors?
SUSIE. I hate actors.
ANNA. You do not hate actors. Your whole family is actors.
SUSIE. Exactly.
ANNA. Very funny. Speaking of actors … guess who I just ran into at Wild Oats.
SUSIE. Who?
ANNA. Michael Astor.
SUSIE. *(Blushes.)* You’re kidding. What was he doing there?
ANNA. He’s doing a play / up here.
SUSIE. I know. What was he doing at Wild Oats?
ANNA. Shopping for food.
SUSIE. Michael shops for food? Doesn’t he have like little assistants who run errands for him?
ANNA. Maybe in L.A. he does. He was by himself. Posing for people’s iPhones.
SUSIE. *That* must’ve been a scene: Michael Astor in produce.
ANNA. *I* actually got a lot more looks than he did. I didn’t recognize him right away; he’s grown some sort of mustache.
SUSIE. Eew.
ANNA. He was supposed to move into his sublet today but there were bugs or something. They were going to put him in some board member’s house — that awful woman with the high-decibel voice — I said absolutely not, he was staying here.
SUSIE. *(Distressed.)* Here?!
ANNA. For one or two nights.
SUSIE. One or two?
ANNA. Until they can fumigate his sublet.
SUSIE. How could you do this to me?!
ANNA. What am I doing to you? You love Michael.
SUSIE. I do love Michael. In theory. And on television. That doesn’t mean I want him staying in our house …
ANNA. I thought you'd be thrilled.
SUSIE. He's rich … Couldn’t he stay at a hotel? What about The Williams Inn?
ANNA. Michael Astor is not going to stay at The Williams Inn — not when he has us.
SUSIE. The least you could have done was ask me first.
ANNA. Excuse me? This is still my house, young lady. I thought it would be festive having him here.
SUSIE. “Festive”?
ANNA. Given the circumstances, yes. He'll be a welcome distraction.
SUSIE. (Vulnerably.) But … I thought this was going to be, you know: just us. Immediate family.
ANNA. Oh, honey.
SUSIE. We were going to keep it low-key, look through photo albums and stuff.
ANNA. We are keeping it low-key.
SUSIE. No, now thanks to you we have guests to entertain.
ANNA. Michael, Daddy's girlfriend …
SUSIE. Michael is hardly a guest who needs to be entertained. (A car on gravel.)
SUSIE. Oh my God!
ANNA. Stop being such a drama queen.
SUSIE. I come by it genetically. (Car door slams.) Wait. Where's he gonna sleep?
MICHAEL. (Offstage.) Hello?
SUSIE. Shit. ANNA. (Brightly.) In here! (Michael enters with a leather duffle and a bag with bottles of wine and flowers. He indeed sports a mustache. Susie, blushing at the sight of him, tries to be invisible.)
MICHAEL. Anna.
ANNA. Michael. Welcome, darling. You remembered how to get here.
MICHAEL. Of course I remembered. These are for you. (He kisses her cheek and presents her with the flowers.)
ANNA. Aren't you sweet! Thank you! (He sees Susie for the first time.)

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MICHAEL. That can’t be little Susie …
ANNA. It certainly is … SUSIE. (Waves wanly.) Hi, Michael.
MICHAEL. The Susie I know is twelve years old. Look at you! Are you in college yet? / God, you must be.
SUSIE. Yes I’m in college; I’m practically a college graduate.
MICHAEL. Now I feel old. What are you majoring in?
SUSIE. Religious studies and psych?
MICHAEL. Interesting, coming from a family of heathen actors.
SUSIE. It’s called reaction formation.
ANNA. Susie’s the sane one. Always has been.
MICHAEL. Never got the acting bug?
SUSIE. You mean like scarlet fever? Or the plague?
ANNA. Ha.
SUSIE. Weren’t you just in Africa?
MICHAEL. How did you know?
SUSIE. People magazine. It’s not like it was a secret …
MICHAEL. Oh. Right.
ANNA. Were you shooting a movie or something?
MICHAEL. No no, I go a couple of times a year. To Congo, actually. We’re building schools there.
ANNA. Oh, that’s right …
SUSIE. Isn’t that awesome? You’ve been doing it for a while now, right?
ANNA. Darling, why don’t you see if Michael would like something to drink?
SUSIE. Michael, would you like something to drink?
MICHAEL. Why, yes, Susie, I would. (He produces a bottle of Pellegrino from the bag.) On ice? With lemon?
SUSIE. We don’t have lemon. (He presents one from the bag. Anna hands her the flowers.)
ANNA. I’ll have the same, dear. Thanks.
SUSIE. Anything else? I’m like a little serf around here. All I need’s a little babushka.
ANNA. Shoo! (She goes.)
MICHAEL. She’s great.
ANNA. Susie? She’s a rock.
MICHAEL. Elliot here?
ANNA. Napping, apparently.
MICHAEL. And Walter…?
ANNA. Out running. With his new ladyfriend.
THE COUNTRY HOUSE
by Donald Margulies

3M, 3W

A brood of famous and longing-to-be-famous creative artists have gathered at their summer home during the Williamstown Theatre Festival. When the weekend takes an unexpected turn, everyone is forced to improvise, inciting a series of simmering jealousies, romantic outbursts, and passionate soul-searching. Both witty and compelling, THE COUNTRY HOUSE provides a piercing look at a family of performers coming to terms with the roles they play in each other’s lives.

“THE COUNTRY HOUSE is one of the most satisfying new American plays to reach Broadway in the past decade. … [A] truly affecting play.”
—The Wall Street Journal

“Like Chekhov, Mr. Margulies is a specialist in rueful regrets and misty glimpses of roads not taken.”
—The New York Times

“Margulies takes drama and intrigue to new heights. … THE COUNTRY HOUSE gets us to think and feel and reconsider the conditions at hand. That’s a feat that great plays like this one can achieve.”
—The Huffington Post

“A valentine to the theater. … There are laughs aplenty.”
—Entertainment Weekly

“THE COUNTRY HOUSE takes its mother-son rift, its themes of art and ego and unrequited love, and even its bucolic setting from Anton Chekhov, but what it most has in common with its source material is an ability to scrupulously map all the craggy contours of the human heart.”
—LA Weekly

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