

# Homebody

screenplay by  
Orson Scott Card

Based on the novel by  
Orson Scott Card  
copyright © 1996, Harper-Collins

Taleswapper, LLC  
1725 Butler Ave. #105  
Los Angeles, CA 9002  
310-709-8944

© 2005 Taleswapper Inc., all rights reserved

EXT. BAKER AVENUE - DAY

A street of old houses in present-day Greensboro, NC. Old trees, their leaves just turning autumn colors, their roots deforming the sidewalks. Here and there children play in the shade, but most of these houses are cut up into apartments and most of the people living in them are students. A couple of joggers pass by; a couple of people walking dogs.

A red pickup truck with a low camper shell on the back pulls up in front of a corner house. The door opens, and out comes DON LARK, dressed in jeans and a clean button-up shirt. This is about as dressed-up as he gets.

EXT. FRONT OF BELLAMY HOUSE - DAY

The Bellamy house is a magnificent three-story Victorian, the largest on the street. Also the seediest. The lawn is overgrown, the windows are boarded up, and graffiti artists have been at work on the faded clapboard walls.

EXT. CARRIAGEHOUSE - DAY

The curtains part in an upstairs window of the house next door.

POV WINDOW

The watcher sees Don pull up the FOR SALE sign that's lying on the lawn. He drags it to the curb and drops it face-down as a car pulls up. The REAL ESTATE AGENT, an attractive woman of 40, gets out. They shake hands. She gives Don a key.

JUDEA (O.S.)  
Man just bought the damn house.

TITLES OVER:

EXT. LOWE'S LOADING BAY - DAY

Don loads his purchases into the back of his truck: Boxes of door locksets, extension cords, electric cable, portable temporary lights, nails, screws.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

With a cordless drill, Don augers a wide new hole in the front door, just a few inches below the screwholes left behind by the hasp and padlock.

EXT. PORCH, BELLAMY HOUSE - DAY

Don stands and watches as the guy from the city staples up his building permit.

EXT. PORCH, BELLAMY HOUSE - DAY

Don slides a new deadbolt assembly into brand new holes in the front door. The ragged screwholes from the hasp and padlock are still visible.

EXT. BACK DOOR, BALLAMY HOUSE - DAY

Don is augering a new hole for a deadbolt in the backdoor as, a few yards away, watches the DUKE POWER GUY hooks up the house.

DUKE POWER GUY

Ancient wiring like that, it's gonna burn this house down.

DON

The old lines are never gonna carry current.

INT. BASEMENT FUSE BOX - DAY

Don puts up a new breaker box beside the old fuse box. A single white cable runs out of it, along the basement floor, and up the stairs.

INT. BALLROOM - DAY

The white cable runs in from the hall to a multiple outlet box; from that, a spaghetti of wires connects to various battery chargers for Don's cordless tools. One wire runs to a portable light, which Don is hanging from the chandelier.

EXT. BACK DOOR, BALLAMY HOUSE - DAY

Don tests the deadbolt he just installed on the back door; he closes the door, then uses a shiny new key to open the deadbolt. Screwholes from another hasp and padlock are visible on this door, too, just above the new deadbolt. Then he closes and locks it and walks around to the front.

EXT. SIDE YARD FENCE - DAY

As Don walks along the side of his property, EVELYN TYLER, an old white woman from hillbilly country, leans on her rake and calls out to him.

EVELYN

Hey, young man. You fixin' up the old Bellamy house or tearin' it down?

DON

House ain't ready to die yet.

She calls out to someone behind the high hedge.

EVELYN

You was right, Miz Judy, the landlord's gonna make this poor feller fix up the Bellamy House!  
(to Don)  
I hope you don't think a couple of locks on the doors are going to make you safe. It's a nasty house!

JUDEA CRAWLEY, an ancient black woman, emerges from behind the hedge, leaning deeply into her cane.

JUDEA

I'll bet you, Miz Evvie, four bits says he bought the place hisself.

EVELYN

Don't be silly! People with money never do the work theirselves.

DON

You made yourself a bad bet, ma'am. I own it all right.

EVELYN

Damn all! Damn upon damn!

JUDEA

Don't you go swearin' at me like  
some cheap hillbilly whore!

EVELYN

Gladys told you, didn't she!  
You're a cheater!

JUDEA

I never said Gladys didn't tell me,  
now, did I?

EVELYN

It ain't sportin' to bet on a sure  
thing!

JUDEA

I'm having fun!

They're so caught up in their argument that they completely  
forget about Don. He tips an imaginary hat to them.

DON

Evenin', ladies.

He leaves them and continues to the front door.

EXT. FRONT OF BELLAMY HOUSE - DAY

Don lugs a heavy portable B&D Workmate workbench from the  
truck to the house.

EXT. FRONT DOOR - DAY

He uses the workbench to push the front door open. A moment  
later he sets it down with a thud and comes back and looks at  
the door, runs his fingers over the wood where the screwholes  
were, above the deadbolt. Smooth. Not a mark. He looks  
around, leans over, picks up the hasp and lock. He puts them  
against the deadbolt assembly, to see if the screws would all  
fit within that space. They would - but then he pulls the  
door to, and sees that the screwholes on the doorjamb are  
missing, too.

EXT. BACK DOOR, BALLAMY HOUSE - DAY

Don is checking there, too. Not a screwhole. He still holds  
the hasp-and-padlock from the front door. Now he finds the  
ones from the back door, too, holds them up.

No way could the screwholes disappear. Furious, confused, he stalks away into the back yard.

EXT. EDGE OF GULLY - DAY

He stands at the edge of the gully, tossing the hasps and padlocks slightly, catching them. Then he pulls them back like a pitcher and fires them out across the gully. They clatter against rocks on the far side.

EXT. SIDE YARD FENCE - DAY

Don walks back around the house. This time he is looking for the old women. They are both hard at work in the garden, weeding, trimming. They look at him, expectant.

DON

You ladies see some fool messing  
with that front door?

The old ladies look at each other.

JUDEA

I have to say we did.

Don starts to walk away, muttering.

DON

I don't know what kind of stupid  
practical joke ...

Then he realizes, comes back, embarrassed.

DON (cont'd)

I mean besides me.

JUDEA

Oh, then no, we didn't see a soul.

EVELYN

Is something wrong?

DON

No.

He stalks back to the front porch.

INT. BALLROOM - DAY

Don pushes the last of the decrepit old furniture up against the front wall. Then he sets up the workbench in the open space near the light.

EXT. FRONT OF BELLAMY HOUSE - DUSK

It's getting on toward dark. His skillsaw tucked under his arm, he locks the back of his truck, then heads inside for the night.

EVELYN (O.S.)  
Hey! Hardworkin' man!

Don turns and looks. Evelyn is standing behind her fence, holding a plate with a checkered cloth over it.

EVELYN (cont'd)  
Look at this!

She pulls away the cloth. Under it is a steaming loaf of hot fresh bread.

EVELYN (cont'd)  
We got stew. We got lemonade. Put that saw inside, lock that miserable old house, and come on over for supper.

Don tugs at his sweaty clothes.

DON  
I can't exactly clean up, ma'am, water won't get hooked up till tomorrow.

EVELYN  
Then you better come on over and pee.

INT. CARRIAGEHOUSE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The room is elegantly furnished. Too elegantly, like a high-class bordello. The stew is in a porcelain tureen, from which Judea is ladling into their bowls. The bread is in thick slices now, with butter melting on them. The lemonade is in a sweating silver pitcher, which Evelyn is pouring into Don's glass.

JUDEA

I'm Miz Judea Crawley.

DON

I'm honored, Miz Judea. I'm Don Lark.

JUDEA

And this is Miz Evelyn Tyler.

DON

Miz Evelyn, pleased to meet you.

EVELYN

Don Lark. What a lovely name.  
Like the first birdsong of morning.  
Dawn. Lark.

DON

You ladies take neighborliness  
farther than I ever saw before.

JUDEA

Folks can't be too neighborly.

DON

I got to tell you, ladies, I'm not  
a neighborly kind of guy. I'm sort  
of ... standoffish.

JUDEA

Standoffish is fine.

EVELYN

Gladys said you were like a nut,  
tough outside, but inside as sweet  
as -

JUDEA

Hush, Evvie, that's for later.

Don looks at them a little warily. What are they plotting?  
Judea sets his bowl down in front of him. The steam rises  
into his face.

JUDEA (cont'd)

You smell that? What does that  
smell like?

DON

Like I've died and gone to heaven.



He dips in his spoon, but Judea lays a hand on his arm as takes her place. He waits. They bow their heads.

EVELYN

Dear Lord, for this food we give thanks, and for this strong young hardworking man who earns his bread by the sweat of his face. Bless him to be smart enough to get the hell out of that house before it eats him alive.

JUDEA

Evvie!

EVELYN

(pointedly ignoring her)  
A. Men.

JUDEA

Amen. Say amen, young man.

DON

Amen.

INT. CARRIAGEHOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Judea is washing while Don dries.

JUDEA

It's kind of you to help.

DON

I sure wasn't expecting to eat so well tonight.

JUDEA

You hardly ate a thing.

DON

You made enough to feed a whole work crew, Miz Judea. You'll be eating that stew for a week.

Evelyn comes in with a tray and sets it by the sink. The pitcher and tureen are both on it, and as Judea plunges them into the dishwater, it's clear that they're both empty, too.

EVELYN

Gladys is so crabby tonight.

DON

Gladys?

EVELYN

She's on a diet.

JUDEA

He doesn't need to know personal things like that, not about Gladys. You are talky tonight, aren't you?

DON

Ladies, what is it y'all are both so shy about telling me?

EVELYN

Well it's the house, you see. Those locks you put on the doors. They're strengthening the house.

DON

That's the idea. I've got all my stuff in there.

EVELYN

But you just can't. The house was finally beginning to fade, don't you see? Any time now, the termites were going to get in and -

JUDEA

Miz Evvie's trying to tell you that it's out of the question for you to renovate that house.

DON

Ladies, it's too late. That house isn't a historic site and I've got all my permits.

EVELYN

We're just asking you to let the house die a natural death.

JUDEA

He thinks we're crazy.

DON

No I don't.

JUDEA

Well I can't think why not. But you've got to stop repairing that house. It's very dangerous for you to continue.

DON

Ladies, I'm grateful for the meal you fed me, and I hope we'll get along as neighbors while I renovate the house, but I got to tell you, every penny I have in the world is sunk into that place. I'm going to fix it up and then I'm going to sell it.

JUDEA

Sell it!

EVELYN

Oh, Miz Judy, he's going to find some unsuspecting family and ...

JUDEA

You're not the kind of man Gladys led us to believe!

Don steps away from the dishdrain.

DON

Ladies, whoever Gladys is, I don't know her and she doesn't know me. And I got a lot of work tomorrow.

Evelyn stops him before he can get to the door. Her behavior is coquettish, which is grotesquely out of place for a woman so old.

EVELYN

You don't have to leave so soon, do you, Mr. Lark?

JUDEA

Let him go, Miz Evvie.

EVELYN

You only think it's your house.

DON

I handed a lot of money to the former owner. And now I'm going to put a year of sweat into it. It's my house.