



**Sample Pages from
Horror Movie 101: Failing Can Be Deadly**

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HORROR MOVIE 101: FAILING CAN BE DEADLY

A Collection of Five Hauntingly Bizarre Tales

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT BY
Steven Stack



Horror Movie 101: Failing Can Be Deadly
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Cast of Characters

Heirlooms (2W, 1M)

Tara: Female. 16, very rough, lives in squalor.

Dane: Male. 16, is trying to build a life with Tara.

Nicole: Female. Current “Hook Hand.”

The Girl on the Side of the Road (3W, 1M)

Cal: Male. 18, very caring, has family issues.

Jane: Female. 18, comes off as cold and unfeeling but really isn't. For the most part.

Hazel: Female. A girl that needs to get home to Mother.

Mother: Female. Rather scary, out for vengeance.

The One (4W, 2M)

Spencer: Female. Sarah's girlfriend. 17, smart, self-assured, and willing to make tough choices.

Sarah: Female. 16, Spencer's girlfriend, the nice one of the group.

Mark: Male. 18, the logical one, Liam's best friend.

Liam: Male. 15, the goofy one, dating Ava.

Sophie: Female. 16, obsessed with horror movies.

Ava: Female. 17, very smart but believes there is more out there than can be proven by science or logic.

Isolation (5W)

Karen: Female. 18, Cassie's older sister and protector.

Cassie: Female. 16, Karen's younger sister, the favorite of the family.

Marcy: Female. 17, Karen's best friend, hiding something.

Taylor: Female. 17, attacked by Jenny, currently tied up.

Jenny: Female. 17, has been attacked, currently running through the woods like some type of crazed animal.

David and Delaney's Guide to the Perfectly Nifty Prom (2W, 1M)

Kate: Female. 18, Delaney's best friend and possessor of a well-manicured ancient burial ground.

David: Male. 17, Delaney's dedicated boyfriend who doesn't like dirt or gross things.

Delaney: Female. 17, David's girlfriend since they were 6, dead.

Horror Movie 101: Failing Can Be Deadly was first performed in October of 2016 at Forte Studios in Mt. Horeb, Wisconsin. Here is the original cast.

Heirlooms

Tara: Gracie Hamburg

Dane: Carter Coon

Nicole: Evelyn Santoirre

The Girl on the Side of the Road

Cal: Kobi Johnson

Jane: Grace Haroldson

Hazel: Chloe Stack

Mother: Evelyn Santoirre

The One

Spencer: Evelyn Santoirre

Sarah: Sara Thompson

Mark: Carter Coon

Liam: Kobi Johnson

Sophie: Gracie Hamburg

Ava: Camille Ginther

Isolation

Karen: Evelyn Santoirre

Cassie: Gracie Hamburg

Marcy: Grace Haroldson

Taylor: Camille Ginther

Jenny: Justine Mattson

David and Delaney's Guide to the Perfectly Nifty Prom

Kate: Sara Thompson

David: Carter Coon

Delaney: Justine Mattson

Dedication

Dedicated to Prentiss Alexander Bledsoe

Heirlooms

Setting: A living room. Quite messy.

At Rise: TARA and DANE are looking at a hook that's lying in the center of the living room, which is covered in clothes and other debris.

DANE: What do you want to do with it, Tara?

TARA: Sell it.

DANE: I'm not sure how many people would want a hook.

TARA: It's not a hook, Dane. It's a hook hand.

DANE: And that drives up the value?

TARA: You bet it does.

DANE: But it's not *your* hook hand.

TARA: It was once it got stuck in my car.

DANE: Ah, a little finders keepers thing. (*stares at the hook hand*) So what kind of person—

TARA: Lots of people. Because it's a hook hand.

DANE: And?

TARA: What aren't you getting?

DANE: All of it, apparently.

TARA: God, you are so dense sometimes.

DANE: Must you resort to insults so quickly, Tara? It weakens the foundation of what you and I are trying to build together. (*TARA looks at him, confused. He touches her shoulder.*) A life.

TARA: Dane, we're 16. We're dating, not building a life together.

DANE: Your words say one thing, but your heart says another. (*silence*) Anyway, how much do you think—

TARA: A lot.

DANE: Well, we better get this red stuff off then. (*licks his fingers and picks the hook up*) That will certainly lower— (*TARA slaps his hand and takes the hook away before placing it back on the ground*) Ow. Now we've added physical abuse as well?

TARA: Look, the red stuff is what makes it worth so much.

DANE: Why?

TARA: Because it's blood. Real blood. Of many people. (*DANE's eyes grow wide*)

DANE: Why would there be real blood on a—

TARA: Because it's used to kill people that's why. (*DANE stares at it*) Dane? You all right?

DANE: Yeah, I was just way off. I thought it was red with fruit juice because it was used to carry fruit.

TARA: I suppose it still could be.

DANE: Not with the blood. That would be very unsanitary. (*pause*) Hold on. So this thing that was in your door and covered in blood... is used to kill people? (*TARA nods*) So that means—

TARA: That's right. Someone was trying to kill us.

DANE: Why? I'm likable and you... you have really nice hair.

TARA: Thanks. Anyway, it's not about who we are but about where we were. Make-out Point.

DANE: I don't see how the two relate. (*looks around the house*) Why are you living in such squalor?

TARA: Because I went out with you instead of cleaning up, like I was supposed to. Not to mention that I also gave up going to the haunted house with Sophie and her friends because you don't like haunted houses.

DANE: I don't. I don't see any reason to be scared when I don't have to be. And no worries, I can help you clean up because this house looks... appalling. Probably the dirtiest house in St. Claire and that's saying a lot. Trust me.

TARA: Can we please stop talking about how appalling the living room looks and focus on this hook hand lying on the floor?

DANE: Sure. What does our being at Make-out Point have to do with this?

TARA: It has to do with the Legend of Hook Hand, which apparently isn't a legend. (*Suddenly the lights go out. DANE screams.*) Are you okay?

DANE: Yeah, I am. I got scared when the lights went out. *(silence)* Um, this “Hook Hand Legend” doesn’t ring a bell.

TARA: Really? *(DANE nods)* All that matters is it’s real and we have the proof. I don’t suppose there’s many hook hand killers running around.

A loud knock is heard at the door. DANE and TARA do not move. Another knock is heard at the door. DANE starts to go to answer the door and TARA tackles him. He starts to speak and TARA puts her finger over his mouth.

Horror Movie 101: Never open the door if someone knocks right after the lights go out. Especially when you are in possession of a hook hand whose intended purpose was to kill you. Now don’t move. And only whisper. *(silence)*

DANE: Okay. You’re really strong. That tackle hurt. I think you crushed my pancreas.

TARA: Sorry.

DANE: No worries. *(silence)* Who do—

A loud noise is heard. The lights come back on and NICOLE (Hook Hand) is standing there.

NICOLE: Hi there. *(DANE and TARA scream. They jump up. NICOLE smiles.)* Am I interrupting something?

TARA: No. Who are you?

NICOLE: My name’s Nicole and, as you can see, I’m missing something. *(Shows them her stump. They scream again.)* You know, screaming again after seeing my stump is quite offensive.

DANE: How did you get in here?

NICOLE: I broke down the door. Because someone wouldn’t answer it. And the rain was beginning to shrink my sweater.

TARA: I have one like that. It’s red.

NICOLE: Red’s my favorite color, but the guy I... *bought* it from only had blue. But enough about my sweater, I came here to get my hand. *(laughs)* My hook hand. *(sees the hook lying on the ground)* Ah, there it is. I’ll just get it and— *(TARA grabs for the hook, gets it, and stands up)*

TARA: I don’t think so, buddy.

NICOLE: But it's mine.

TARA: Not anymore. You stuck it in my car. My car, my hook hand.

NICOLE: I didn't mean to stick it in your car. I was at Make-out Point and I walked up on you two in the car. Pretty heavy session, guys, let me tell you. I reached for the door to open it and my hook got stuck and the next thing you know, the car cranks up and you guys take off, taking my hook with you.

DANE: That must have hurt.

NICOLE: It really did. Why the rush? Did you see me?

TARA: No. I had a craving for a burger.

DANE: More like five burgers. (to NICOLE) It was like watching a lion feast on a wildebeest in the fierce land of the Serengeti.

TARA: Whatever. I was hungry.

DANE: Clearly.

TARA: (to NICOLE) So, you were trying to open my door to kill us? (NICOLE smiles)

NICOLE: Spoiler alert. And, yes, yes I was.

DANE: Why?

TARA: Because it's what she does. Like I said earlier.

NICOLE: It is what I do. I come from a long line of hook hands. But, now I guess I'm "Stump Hand." Not really as threatening.

TARA: You could club people.

NICOLE: As if they were baby seals? (TARA shrugs) No, I'm just going to take it back. (NICOLE and TARA start to battle over the hook and TARA shoves NICOLE down) Ow. Wow, you are rough.

DANE: She's very physical.

TARA: You're not getting the hook hand back! And no, it's not because you use it to kill people. I'm not concerned with that at all.

DANE: (to TARA) Shouldn't you be, though?

TARA: No. She stuck it in my car, so now it's mine.

NICOLE: (looks at TARA then turns away) So that's how it is, huh? (TARA nods) I understand. (walks away some) It's only that... that hook

hand you're holding in your non-hook hand has been passed down from generation to generation. Why if that hook hand could talk... man, the stories it would tell.

DANE: Of murders?

NICOLE: Oh, yes. Lots and lots of glorious murders. But more importantly, it would speak of memories—

DANE: Of murders?

NICOLE: No. Of special times that happened to involve murders. Through those special times, a strong family bond was created. All because of that hook hand.

DANE: Well, I'm sure that you sometimes got a new—

NICOLE: No, that was the only one we ever used. That's why it's so special. You see, everyone in my family was born without a left hand; it's why we were destined for this. So in a way, it's not just a hook hand we're passing down, but the family hand itself. An heirloom, if you will. An heirloom that's now gone because of my carelessness. I'll be on my way. (*turns to go*)

TARA: Stop!

NICOLE turns.

DANE: What are you doing—

TARA: Here. Take it.

*TARA is about to hand the hook hand to NICOLE.
DANE steps in the way to stop her.*

DANE: No. If you give it back, she's going to kill people with it.

NICOLE: (*shrugs*) I will. It's what I do.

TARA: It doesn't matter. I won't separate another heirloom from a family again.

DANE: What are you talking about?

NICOLE: You had an heirloom too?

TARA: (*still holding the hook hand, walks away and looks off*) My grandmother.

NICOLE: She had the heirloom?

TARA: No, she *was* the heirloom. Or more specifically, her corpse was.

DANE: Wait, what?

TARA: My grandmother's corpse was our family's heirloom and it's not anymore... because of me.

NICOLE: That sounds tragic. How did you lose her? Did you get her stuck in a car door too?

TARA: No. A suitcase.

DANE: Why was your—

TARA: My great, great, great, great, great grandmother Eunice's dying wish was to spend a year with each of her grandchildren, and great grandchildren, and her great, great... you get the point, after her death.

NICOLE: How would that even work?

TARA: My family specializes in body preservation. Anyway, the year after her death, Grandmother Eunice spent the year with my Cousin Bernice, whom I never knew because she was over a hundred years older than me. That first time, according to family stories, was beautiful. Full of tea times, sleepovers, long walks, knitting, and cuddling. And year after year, Grandmother Eunice was able to spend time with all of her beloved grandchildren that she didn't know because she was dead. And then, finally, it was my turn. I was so excited. Had so many things planned. And we did them all. My favorite was the time we wore matching dresses and sun hats and went to the carnival together. She won me a stuffed animal and I bought her a candy apple that we shared on the Ferris wheel.

DANE: Do you know how bizarre that sounds? (*NICOLE punches him in the arm*) Ow!

NICOLE: Show some respect, kid. (*to TARA*) I think it sounds beautiful. How did you lose her?

TARA: My friend Marilyn came to visit and she had always been scared of Grandmother Eunice. Why, I never knew. So, on the day before she left, I stuffed Grandmother Eunice in her suitcase, as she had grown more bendable over the years. I figured that when Marilyn opened her suitcase, Grandmother Eunice would pop out and scare her.

NICOLE: (*punches DANE*) Like a Grandmother in a Box.

NICOLE and TARA laugh. DANE does not.

The Girl on the Side of the Road

Setting: A dark and lonely road. Midnight.

At Rise: HAZEL, a shabbily dressed girl, is sitting onstage, slowly rocking back and forth. She is muttering, but it's not clear what she is saying. CAL and JANE enter, in the midst of an argument.

JANE: Why are we walking this way? I swear the gas station was back the—

CAL: I know this area of St. Claire really well and there's a— (*JANE's finger across CAL's lips quiets him. She moves her hand away.*) Why did you— (*her finger goes back across his mouth*)

JANE: (*whispering*) What part of my finger on your mouth did you not understand? Look. (*She points to HAZEL rocking back and forth. CAL looks.*)

CAL: Wow. That's— (*together with JANE*) Sad.

JANE: (*together with CAL*) Creepy. (*CAL turns to her*) A girl in a ripped and dirty dress, rocking back and forth mumbling something on an abandoned road in the middle of the night? Creepy.

CAL: A girl in a dress that perhaps her mother made, sitting alone on a road in the middle of nowhere, hoping desperately that someone will help her? Sad. (*CAL crosses to HAZEL. JANE tries to stop him but fails.*) Hey there. Are you okay? (*HAZEL continues mumbling*) Can you hear me? (*More mumbling. CAL slowly sits down beside her.*) Do you mind if I sit here?

Still more mumbling. Finally, JANE grows tired of this. She crosses over to them.

JANE: She doesn't want us here, Cal. Let's go.

CAL: I'm not leaving her here. (*to HAZEL*) Can you hear me?

There is no answer. JANE crosses to her.

JANE: (*forcefully*) What's wrong with you?

CAL: Jane, I got this.

JANE: Apparently not.

CAL tries to get JANE to stop talking when HAZEL finally speaks.

HAZEL: (to JANE) Can you take me home?

JANE: (*forcefully*) What? No. (CAL looks at her and JANE tries to be sweeter) I mean... not a chance.

CAL: That wasn't better. Worse, actually. (CAL turns to HAZEL) What's your name?

HAZEL: Hazel. I want to go home. Can you take me home?

CAL: Of course. Why are you out here alone?

HAZEL: Because I got mad at Mother. I had to leave. And then it got dark.

CAL: Let's see if we can get you home— (JANE grabs him and starts to pull him away) What?

JANE: (*looking at HAZEL*) We'll be back in a second. (JANE pulls CAL downstage) What are you doing?

CAL: Helping a girl find her way home.

JANE: No, you know what you're doing? Dropping us right in the middle of a horror film.

CAL: What?

JANE: There is clearly something up with that girl. Horror Movie 101 says, if your boyfriend's car runs out of gas and you come upon a creepy girl talking about being lost and "going home to Mother"... you know what you don't do? Take her home to Mother. Because Mother will kill you. Trust me. This... is not a good thing.

JANE looks at HAZEL, who's watching her calmly, then looks back to CAL.

CAL: Horror Movie 101 is not a real thing.

JANE: Oh, I guess you're also going to say that the legend of Hook Hand is only a legend.

CAL: It is.

JANE: Tell that to Dane and Tara. Oh, wait, you can't because they're dead. From wounds that looked like a hook went through them. We are not walking her home because if we do, we'll end up like Tara and Dane... dead, and ending up dead was not in my plans for tonight.

CAL: First of all, you're overreacting, as you often do. And yes, I've only known you two weeks, but evidence is trending that way. This is not a movie. What happened to Dane and Tara was a tragic accident that has nothing to do with us. We just happened to get stranded on a lonely dark road where there just happens to be a girl who needs to get home. (*considers*) Okay, that does sound like the making of a horror movie.

JANE: Exactly.

CAL: But it's not.

JANE: You don't know that. Remember Ava and her friends at the haunted house? How did that turn out?

CAL: Poorly, but it's not the same thing.

JANE: Famous soon-to-be last words.

HAZEL: Please, I just want to go home.

CAL looks at JANE, who seems to be relenting. Slightly.

JANE: This is such a bad idea.

CAL: (*smiles at her then crosses over to HAZEL*) We'll take you home.

HAZEL: (*smiles and stands up*) Thank you. Mother will be so happy to see me. She must be so worried now. (*looks around*) Where's your car?

JANE: Someone thought we had enough gas. And we didn't.

CAL: I feel like that's a shot at me.

JANE: It is.

CAL: Anyway, we have to walk. Is your house far?

HAZEL: No. It's real close. (*pointing off*) It's that way.

JANE: If you knew the way home and it's real close, why didn't you just walk—

HAZEL: Because of the dark. Bad things happen in the dark.

JANE: No need to tell me that.

CAL: Okay, let's get you home. We'll keep you safe.

JANE: (*to CAL*) Are we seriously doing this? (*CAL nods*) When I end up dead, I am going to be pissed at you.

CAL: And dead, so...

JANE: I really hate you sometimes.

CAL: But the rest of the time... (*he smiles*)

JANE: I know. Let's just hope we get more "rest of the times."

CAL: We will. Trust me. (*takes her hand*)

HAZEL: Can you take me home now?

JANE: Yes. Geez. We already said we would. So stop asking.

CAL: You have a way with people. (*reaches for HAZEL, who pulls away*)

HAZEL: Don't touch me!

JANE laughs.

CAL: Okay, sure, no problem. We'll start walking and you tell us where to go, okay? (*HAZEL doesn't respond*) I'll take that as a yes. (*CAL starts walking, but JANE stays still. HAZEL stares at JANE and doesn't move. JANE stares right back at her.*) C'mon, Jane.

JANE: (*turns to CAL, shakes her head, and then follows him*) This is not going to end well.

They exit with HAZEL following behind them.

Scene 2

Setting: Still on that same dark and lonely road.

At Rise: JANE and CAL enter, but there is no sign of HAZEL.

JANE: We have been walking for forever. My legs hurt, I'm hungry, and—

CAL: We're doing a good deed, Jane.

JANE: Have you always been like this?

CAL: What—thoughtful? Caring? Concerned about the wellbeing of others?

JANE: Sure.

CAL: Not always, but my mom taught me to always put my family first.

JANE: But she isn't your family. Unless you mean "God's family" or something.

CAL: I didn't. She reminds me of my sister.

JANE: I didn't know you had a sister.

CAL: I did. But she, uh, died... when I was 5. She was uh... really good. My mom never really got over it, and I, well...

JANE: (*touches his arm*) I'm sorry.

CAL: Yeah. So, I guess, ever since then, I don't want anyone to have to go through...

CAL looks away and stops talking. JANE touches his arm.

JANE: I understand.

CAL: (*to JANE*) Are you having a moment of feelings?

JANE: They leak out every now and then.

CAL: It's nice. (*Silence. CAL takes JANE by the hands.*) I need you to know something now. I know we haven't been dating long, but... I like you. A lot.

JANE: Because I have feelings? If I'd known that—

CAL: No. I knew the first time I saw you. It was like... we were meant to be together.

JANE: Little heavy, dude, though I guess that explains why you were staring at me. But why tell me now if it wasn't because of the—

CAL: It's just, you never know when... (*He seems to be trying to say something—but he can't. He changes the subject.*) Where did she go? Hazel! (*There's no answer. CAL turns to JANE.*) How did we—

JANE: Because we're so into each other? (*CAL turns to her and gives her a rather disapproving look*) Oh, I see. Losing someone is a mood killer. I have to be honest, though, I'm already sick of her. I know that you want to do the right thing, but—

CAL: What do you suggest we do?

JANE: Leave her. We already lost her, so leaving her—

CAL: We are not leaving her out here in the middle of nowhere.

JANE: Because your mother would—

CAL: *(more forceful than intended)* My mother protects her own.

JANE: You realized how creepy that sounded, right?

CAL: Yeah. I'm sorry. It's just that my mom... is a little messed up right now, so I get a little defensive about her.

JANE: Well, I didn't really say anything about her, but... my mom's a little off too. For about 10 years. I swear that she loves her bottle more than me. Hey, we should have them get together and have a messed-up mom party. *(CAL stares at her but doesn't say anything. He then turns and walks away.)* Or not.

CAL: Hazel! Hazel!

They wait and nothing happens. Then HAZEL appears behind JANE and touches her back. JANE jumps.

JANE: Holy sh—you scared me!

HAZEL: I'm sorry. I brought you these. *(from behind her back, she produces flowers, dead ones, and smiles)*

JANE: For me? *(HAZEL nods. CAL crosses beside JANE.)* They're dead.

HAZEL: They reminded me of you.

JANE: What is that... whatever. Here's what I think of you and your stupid flowers. *(JANE takes the flowers, looks at them and then throws them over to the side. JANE turns to HAZEL, who's smiling.)* Are we almost to your house? Because this is getting old.

HAZEL: Oh, we are. So close. *(she looks at them)* Will you come in and talk to Mother?

JANE: Does your mother have a phone?

HAZEL: No. We don't need those things.

JANE: Then no.

CAL puts his hand on JANE's shoulder and then turns to HAZEL.

CAL: *(sweetly)* We really need to get home. Our parents are going to be worried and—

HAZEL: Mother will be sad if you don't come in. *(to JANE)* Especially you.

JANE: I'm okay with your mom being sad, so we're going to leave after we bring her stray home.

HAZEL starts screaming and throwing a fit. CAL tries to stop her but JANE just keeps staring. Finally, the girl calms down and a bizarre look comes over her. She walks over to JANE.

HAZEL: When Mother finds you, she's going to choke the life out of you. And I'm going to laugh. Because you're bad. You do bad things! Like *your* mother.

JANE: What the hell? (*looks at HAZEL and then to CAL*) I'm going back to the car. With or without you, Cal. This girl is messed up and I'm done. (*HAZEL smiles at her*) Keep smiling at me and I will punch you in the face.

CAL: (*crosses over to her*) Jane, we can't leave her out here alone. (*JANE starts to protest*) Okay, I can't leave her out here alone. I know she's... but she's still—

JANE: No! You heard what she said to me. How can you—

CAL: I have to.

JANE: Something is wrong about this. Really wrong. We need to go now. She's not normal, and this is going to end badly for us. So come with me and we can find a phone and call the cops for her.

CAL starts to consider it and HAZEL hugs him.

HAZEL: Please don't leave me here all alone. Please?

CAL: (*looks at HAZEL and then at JANE*) I can't.

JANE: Then I can't go with you.

CAL: I understand. You should go. Go back to the car and wait for me. I won't be long.

HAZEL: No! Don't let her go.

CAL: (*to HAZEL*) She's going back to the car to wait for me. And I'm going to take you home. Everything will be fine. Trust me. (*Turns back to JANE and crosses to her. Almost in a whisper.*) Don't wait for me. Find a way home. Walk home if you have to. Do not wait for me. I'll talk to you tomorrow.

JANE: Seriously? (*CAL shrugs*) No, I'll... (*CAL kisses her*) Wow, our first kiss. I figured it would be under less strange terms, but—

HAZEL: (*angrily*) Take me home. Now.

JANE: (to HAZEL) No. We're having a moment. (to CAL) What did you mean—

CAL: I gotta go. (*louder than needed*) I'll be back before you know it. Just wait for me. (*he looks at JANE a little longer, sadness in his eyes, then turns to HAZEL*) Ready?

HAZEL: Yes.

HAZEL takes his hand and they start to walk off. HAZEL looks back and flashes a creepy look at JANE. JANE starts to say something, but they are gone. Lights fade to black.

Scene 3

Setting: The same dark lonely road. Still.

At Rise: We see JANE, tired, scared, and angry, making her way back to the car.

JANE: I swear the car was right here. Where is it? And what's taking Cal so long? He should be... such a bleeding heart. (*beat*) Which he probably has now. (*she paces in silence*) I never should have left him. What was I thinking? That girl... and Cal had to be the hero. Insisted on taking her home. (*Unbeknownst to JANE, CAL enters. He looks distressed, empty.*) And here I am looking for a car that has apparently disappeared. Unless... (*beat*) No. I can't start thinking that way. I'm already freaked out enough, so— (*she turns and sees CAL*) Cal?

CAL: Jane.

JANE: (*runs to him*) Are you okay?

CAL: Why didn't you go home? Like I told you to.

JANE: I couldn't leave you. Well, and I couldn't find the car.

CAL: Didn't figure you would. (*JANE takes a moment*) Because you're bad with directions. (*looks away*)

JANE: (*places a hand on his shoulder*) What's wrong with you?

CAL: You were right all along.

JANE: About?

CAL: The girl. Everything.

JANE: Did you drop her off?

The One

Setting: A room in a haunted house.

At Rise: SPENCER, SOPHIE, LIAM, SARAH, MARK and AVA are standing behind a body bag on the floor. Silence.

MARK: Is this weird? I feel like it's weird. *(silence)* It's weird, right?

LIAM: Yeah, it is. And it's like one of the cases we worked.

MARK: We don't work cases.

LIAM: In my mind we do.

MARK: Really? *(LIAM nods and MARK laughs)* In my mind we do too.

They start having a conversation about various "cases."

AVA: Stop it. And yes, Mark, this is weird! And unsettling. A body bag with a body in it. Just... lying there.

SOPHIE: An empty body bag would probably not be as effective.

SARAH: It's not that unsettling if you consider the fact—

SPENCER: That we're in a haunted house.

SARAH: And it's one of the many scares.

LIAM: Then how do you explain the fact that we don't know how we got here? We just appeared randomly in a room. *And* how do you explain the lack of noise?

SPENCER: Clearly this is a soundproof room, and the smoke and lights made us confused as to how we got here. And now that we've seen the body bag... let's go.

SOPHIE: Wait, there must be more than a body bag. Let's give it a little more time. Something's got to happen.

MARK: I don't have a long time though. I have to get my dad's cabin ready. Cassie and Karen are coming up with some friends and I promised that it would look nice for them. Right now it looks like crap.

LIAM: How are you and Cassie doing?

MARK: Good. I think she actually likes me.

SPENCER: Shocking. And Sarah and I have dinner plans that we cannot be late for, so we don't have time to watch a fake body in a bag do nothing. Ready, Sarah?

SARAH: Yep. *(they take hands and begin to exit)*

AVA: Wait, you're the only one who drove, Spencer.

SPENCER: No worries, we'll call you a cab. Later.

SARAH and SPENCER exit. Silence.

LIAM: All right. They left, which leaves us to... what?

MARK: We could you tell you guys about our—

GIRLS: No.

MARK: That's a little rude.

LIAM: That's to be expected. Well, from Sophie. Ava, you know how good my stories are.

AVA: Do I?

LIAM: Well, you said you did last night.

AVA: I was just—

SPENCER and SARAH return.

SARAH: There's a problem. A rather large one.

AVA: Which is?

SPENCER: There's no door. Anywhere. Just walls.

AVA: There has to be a door. We got in here, so—

MARK: Maybe it's a hidden door.

SPENCER: Do you remember going through a hidden door, Mark?

MARK: I don't remember going through any door, so—

SOPHIE: This is awesome! Now, not only do we get to figure out what's up with this body bag, we get to figure out what happened to the door! Or if there ever was a door. Greatest haunted house ever. *(they all look at her)* C'mon, guys. We wanted to be scared and now we are.

SPENCER: I'm not. This is boring. Although I must admit that I am slightly intrigued about how they got us into the room. Not about

the body bag with a body in it, though. It's just stuff bought on Amazon.

AVA: I don't think so. I don't like this. Not anymore. I don't think this is part of a haunted house. Something is wrong here.

SOPHIE: And I know what it is. (*They all look at her. Very dramatic.*) We're all dead.

SARAH: That's kind of a leap.

SPENCER: We're clearly not dead.

SOPHIE: Oh, we are. We're all dead! It's Horror Movie 101. Put the pieces together, smart girl. We go to a haunted house that we randomly find on the side of a dark road in the middle of nowhere that's packed with people. We enter, separate, and then somehow end up together in a room without sound, with a body bag and, wait for it... no door. Why is all of this happening? Because we're dead.

During the above, MARK inspects the body finds a letter.

LIAM: So why just one corpse, Sophie? Shouldn't there be 6?

SOPHIE: No, the corpse is just to throw us off. From thinking that we're dead. But me and Ava are too smart.

AVA: It's Ava and I.

SOPHIE: I didn't say I was smart in grammar.

LIAM: So how did we die?

SOPHIE: I don't know. But we will know at some point. One by one, we'll have a memory or something that will gradually put the story of our demise together and then there will be a montage that shows all of our deaths.

SARAH: This is not a horror movie, Sophie.

SOPHIE: I know it's not. Because it's real. And I hope our deaths were super gruesome.

LIAM: (*to SOPHIE*) What is wrong with you?

SOPHIE: Nothing. It's Halloween. What would be better than all of us getting murdered gruesomely?

SARAH: Pretty much anything. Horror Movie 101 also says that you don't want to be thrown into some psychopath's elaborate game that ends in your death.

SOPHIE: I guess. If you're lame.

SPENCER: Mark? Don't you have something to add to this ridiculous conversation?

MARK: I think Sophie's right. Sort of. (*they turn to him and see that he's holding a note*)

AVA: What do you mean?

MARK: There's a note. (*silence*)

SPENCER: And are you going to share the contents of this note?

MARK: I'm pausing for dramatic effect. (*silence*) It says "Welcome Sarah, Spencer, Mark, Liam, Sophie, and Ava."

SARAH: How did the note know our names?

SOPHIE: The note didn't. The writer of the—

SARAH: You know what I meant.

MARK: Guys, there's more.

SPENCER: Most letters are more than the salutation.

MARK: Thank you, Spencer. May I continue? (*reading*) "Inside this bag lies one of you. See who it is, and only the one who's seen will die. Refuse to look, and you all will. You have six and a half minutes."

A clock is heard ticking.

LIAM: Ticking clock. Rather ominous. The first sound, besides our voices, since we got here.

MARK: And an odd time choice, right? I would have guessed something like 10 minutes.

SARAH: Don't think that matters. This is creepy.

SOPHIE: And even more amazing, right?

AVA: Do you think the letter's real?

SPENCER: Of course not. Think about where we are. At a haunted house. This is clearly part of the scares.

MARK: I would agree, but how do you explain all of our names on the note?

SARAH: Maybe they heard us say each other's names.

LIAM: Doubtful.

SPENCER: Trust me: the body, the ticking clock, they're all just cheap tactics to build suspense... which I have grown weary of. I'm ready to go. I'm just going to pull the zipper back and— (AVA stops her) What are you doing, Ava?

AVA: You're not pulling that back.

SPENCER: Nothing's going to happen if I do.

AVA: But what if it does?

SPENCER: Your intellect is second only to my own, so you should know that it's not. And I get that you have this odd spiritual side that sometimes trumps your intellectual side, but—

MARK: You don't know that it's not real, Spencer.

SPENCER: Come on. (*looks around*) Seriously? Do the rest of you believe it too? (*silence*) Sarah, even you?

SARAH: I don't know, but I would rather you didn't—

SPENCER: Okay, I won't pull it back. But think for a moment. Say all of this is real. If we don't look, after 6 and a half minutes we all die.

Worried conversation starts. LIAM cuts them off.

LIAM: Before we do anything, let's look at all our options. Option one, we could leave.

MARK: Well, when Spencer and Sarah tried to leave, there was no way out.

SARAH: And if we look, one of us dies.

SOPHIE: But if we don't, all of us will.

MARK: Unless it's not true. So we just wait the five or so minutes and then I bet somehow the door appears and we go home.

SPENCER: Mark, if that's the case, there's no reason that we wouldn't look now and get out of here faster.

LIAM: I would agree, but then again if it is true, we'll be killing one of us.

SPENCER: And if we don't, we're killing all of us. Both choices suck, so let's just get it over with.

LIAM: (*crosses away*) This is like *Star Trek II* where Spock... spoiler alert... sacrifices himself for everyone else. Which is what one of us needs to do right now. Be Spock. And that person... is me. I'll do it. I'll sacrifice myself.

MARK: You might not be sacrificing yourself. It could be any of us. It could be me.

LIAM: Ah yes, I can see the problem with my train of thought. (*to everyone*) I don't want to sacrifice Mark.

AVA: What about your girlfriend?

LIAM: I was about to say that. I don't want to sacrifice Mark or Ava.

SOPHIE: You would be okay with sacrificing the rest of us though?

LIAM: Well, more than I would Mark and Ava. (*silence*) Look, I really don't want to sacrifice anybody. Including myself.

SARAH: So what do we do?

SOPHIE: Let's do it. Let's look. This might sound morbid, but wouldn't it be cool if one of us was really in that bag?

AVA: No. It wouldn't. Especially if it meant that person was dead.

SARAH: That would be awful.

SOPHIE: But cool on some level, right?

LIAM: No. Look, I don't even like haunted houses. Ever since I was 6 and peed myself at the haunted house at the church carnival... (*realizes what he just said*) I just came so that when Ava got scared, she would find me.

AVA: So sweet. And I think you meant that when *you* got scared, you could find *me*. Anyway, I've had enough of this. I'm done. I'm leaving. With or without you guys. And yes, Spencer and Sarah, I know that you didn't find a door. But I'm going to find a way out. Somehow. (*exits*)

LIAM: (*following*) Ava, hey, wait up. (*But AVA is gone. Then she screams.*) Ava!

LIAM runs off to find AVA. The others look off for them without speaking. Tension is growing. Moments

pass. Then AVA enters, followed by LIAM, despair on their faces.

AVA: There's nothing there. Nothing at all. No walls. Nothing. Just darkness.

SPENCER: What are you talking about?

LIAM: She's right. I can't explain it. It's like some type of abyss or something.

SARAH: Stop messing around.

AVA: We're not. We should never have come here. I told you we should have driven by and gone to the most popular haunted house in St. Claire like we always do. But no, none of you would listen. And now we're...

AVA sits down in front of the body. LIAM sits down beside her. The others look at each other.

SPENCER: I don't believe it. C'mon, everybody, they're messing with us.

SARAH: And if they aren't?

SPENCER: We've got some decisions to make. Let's go.

SPENCER, SOPHIE, SARAH, and MARK leave as LIAM and AVA stare at the corpse. MARK turns.

MARK: You guys coming?

AVA: Why would we, Mark? We already know we're screwed.

MARK considers it and then exits with the others, leaving AVA and LIAM staring at the body. After some moments of silence, the others re-enter, looking scared.

MARK: What's going on?

SPENCER: This must be fake.

AVA: How is it fake, Spencer?

SPENCER: I don't know. I don't create haunted houses nor study them. I'm only saying, things like this don't happen in the real world. It's got to be a trick.

AVA: So somehow they designed a place that makes worlds disappear except for one room that none of us remember getting into

Isolation

Setting: A cabin, deep in the woods.

At Rise: KAREN is trying to calm down CASSIE, her younger sister.

KAREN: Everything's going to be fine, Cassie. Trust me.

CASSIE: And why should I trust you again? You're the one who brought us out here in the first place. And you killed Mark, who came all the way out here even though he's dealing with what happened to Sarah.

KAREN: I know. It's terrible, but if I hadn't killed him, he would've attacked you. Or killed you. He'd already attacked Jenny, so someone had to stop him.

CASSIE: Well, you sure stopped him.

KAREN: Look, I'm sorry for what happened to Mark, and I'm sorry for all this, but we can't leave Jenny out there. We have to find her.

CASSIE: Find her for what?

KAREN: To get her help. And Taylor too.

CASSIE: What are you not getting? There was no help for Mark, and there's not going to be any help for—

MARCY enters pulling down one of her sleeves while KAREN and CASSIE turn to her.

Well?

MARCY: She's tied up. She's not going anywhere.

CASSIE: Are you sure?

MARCY: Well, I'm no Girl Scout with her knot tying badge, but I think so.

KAREN: You didn't get bitten or anything, did you?

MARCY: I'm not stupid, all right? I'm fine.

CASSIE: Why did you roll your sleeves down when you came out? Like you were trying to hide something?

MARCY: I was cold.

CASSIE is about to protest, but KAREN cuts her off.

KAREN: No, Cassie. She said she was fine, so she is.

CASSIE: Of course. Taking people at their word in a situation like this seems to be exactly what we should be doing.

MARCY: What's your problem?

CASSIE: I don't know, Marcy. It *might* have something to do with my sister killing my boyfriend, who had taken out a pound of flesh from Jenny, who before running off like some monster, attacked Taylor, who now lies in there foaming at the mouth and tied to her bed! Other than that, I have no problems at all. Thanks for asking.

MARCY: Um, you're welcome? (to KAREN) So—are we ready to go?

KAREN: Yeah. And once we find Jenny, we'll tie her up too, bring her back, and then go get help.

MARCY: Sounds like a plan.

CASSIE: When did you both become so dense?

KAREN: That's not helping, Cassie.

MARCY: (to CASSIE) What do you propose we do?

CASSIE: What we should've done after Mark attacked Jenny. Leave and then send help for them.

KAREN: We can't do that. If we don't find Jenny soon, she may... and Taylor needs medical attention now—

MARCY: So we find them first and then we go. And then everything will be okay.

CASSIE: Nothing will ever be okay again! And this plan of yours... Horror Movie 101 says that when teenagers in a cabin start getting infected with some unknown virus and start attacking one another, they all end up dead. At no time ever has a plan of saving your friends from something like this worked.

MARCY: So you propose we leave Jenny in the woods and Taylor tied to the bed while—

CASSIE: While we go for help.

KAREN: Which will take too long.

CASSIE: Well, it wouldn't have if someone hadn't demanded that we leave our phones at home!

KAREN: I wanted us not to be distracted!

CASSIE: And we're not. We are clearly aware of Jenny running around the woods like a raging animal, and Taylor slowly becoming what Jenny is just one door away from us.

MARCY: Don't say that! Both of them are going to be fine.

CASSIE: No, they're not. They're both going to end up like Mark and both of you know that. You (*points to KAREN*) are just doing this because of guilt and you (*points to MARCY*) are just doing it because of loyalty and I understand both. But in the end, if we stay, we're only going to be faced with one option if we're going to survive.

KAREN: Kill them?

CASSIE: That's right.

KAREN: We're not killing them.

MARCY: We might have to. You had to kill Mark.

KAREN: Mark was too far gone.

CASSIE: And Jenny's not? You saw her and the way she attacked Taylor. How is she different from Mark?

KAREN: It doesn't matter. We have to try.

CASSIE: I don't.

KAREN: We're not asking you to. We're asking you to stay here until we get back. Don't go in there with Taylor under any circumstance. If she talks to you, just talk to her through the door and try to keep her calm. Can you do that?

CASSIE: While you two are—

KAREN: Finding Jenny? Yes.

CASSIE takes a moment, looks at the car keys—a look which MARCY notices—and then CASSIE looks back at KAREN.

CASSIE: Okay, I'll stay.

KAREN: Good.

MARCY picks up the keys and pockets them.

CASSIE: You're taking the keys? What, you don't trust me?

MARCY: No, I don't. And we can't take the chance of you leaving us out here.

CASSIE: Karen?

KAREN: I know you don't agree with this, but I've always kept you safe before, and I'm going to do it this time too.

CASSIE: By leaving me in this cabin with her (*pointing offstage*) without a cell phone or a car?

MARCY: Well, when you think about it, the two of us are way more likely to die.

CASSIE: That doesn't make it better.

KAREN: Look, no one's going to die. Anymore.

CASSIE: And what if you guys do get killed or get turned? What then? What do I do? How is that protecting me, Karen?

KAREN doesn't speak for a moment and seems to be considering something. She then turns to MARCY.

KAREN: Give her the keys, Marcy.

MARCY: (*to KAREN*) What?

KAREN: Do it. Listen, there's a huge chance that you and I... and we're too far out for her to walk to the nearest town. If something happens to us, she has to have a way to get out of here fast. (*to CASSIE*) Promise us, though, that you'll stay for at least an hour and if we're not back by then, take Taylor and get her to a hospital. You understand?

CASSIE: Okay. But if she goes all Mark or Jenny, I'm leaving without her.

KAREN nods at MARCY, who hands CASSIE the keys reluctantly.

KAREN: We're counting on you, Cassie.

CASSIE: And I'm counting on you two coming back.

KAREN: We will. With Jenny in tow. (*to MARCY*) Get the rope.

MARCY walks over and picks up the rope as KAREN picks up the baseball bat.

CASSIE: Why are you—

KAREN: Just in case. Love you, little sis.

CASSIE: You too.

KAREN: (to MARCY) You ready?

MARCY: I'm not sure one can be fully ready for this particular situation, but... sure.

KAREN and MARCY start to leave as CASSIE clutches the keys. KAREN turns back to her.

KAREN: Remember, one hour.

CASSIE: One hour.

They look at each other and then hug awkwardly. Then KAREN and MARCY exit, leaving CASSIE alone. The silence of the cabin starts to make her even more anxious. She sits down and thumbs through a magazine, clearly not registering what she is seeing. She starts to hear sounds that may or may not be there. She throws the magazine down and groans. She gets up and looks at the keys and begins to walk over to the door. She is seriously considering leaving but can't.

Damn you, Karen.

TAYLOR: (offstage) Cassie? Is that you? Are you there? (CASSIE freezes but doesn't answer or turn) I can hear you breathing.

CASSIE: What do you want?

TAYLOR: I want you to untie me. I'm better now.

CASSIE: Doubtful.

TAYLOR: I'm your friend. You can trust me.

CASSIE: I'm not untying you.

TAYLOR: Can you get me a glass of water then? I'm so thirsty.

CASSIE: Nope, nope, nope. Not going in there. You can wait until Marcy and Karen come back.

TAYLOR: Oh, you're out there alone? (CASSIE doesn't answer) You are, aren't you? (no answer) Maybe I should come out there and keep you company.

CASSIE: Shut up! You're tied up in there, so—

TAYLOR: Am I?

A struggle is heard and TAYLOR begins laughing. And then nothing. Until footsteps from the room are heard. TAYLOR gently knocks on the door.

TAYLOR: Knock, knock, knock. Let me out, Cassie. Or I'll huff and puff and blow the door down. (*silence*) This is no way to treat a friend.

CASSIE: That's—you're not you anymore.

TAYLOR: That's true, but Taylor's still in here. I can hear her screams. Like I'll hear yours soon. (*laughs*) Now open the door, Cassie!

The door starts violently shaking.

CASSIE: Forget this! (*Runs to the front door and tries to open it. She can't.*) What the—why won't the door open?! (*TAYLOR laughs as the bedroom door continues taking abuse. Then the lights cut out.*) Oh my god.

Silence. Then the bedroom door crashes open. CASSIE screams. She starts to fumble in her pocket and pulls out a tiny flashlight that fits in her pocket. She turns it on, facing the front door. She hears footsteps and swings the flashlight around, trying to find them. After a few misses, she turns and finds TAYLOR right in her face.

TAYLOR: You're it. (*grabs CASSIE and bites her as the flashlight rolls away*)

Scene 2

Setting: The woods.

At Rise: We see KAREN enter ahead of MARCY, who enters rather slowly.

KAREN: I still don't think you should have done that to the door.

MARCY: You're the one who wanted to give her the keys.

KAREN: I'm only saying that—

MARCY: Just taking precautions, Karen.

KAREN: A precaution is not locking my sister in a cabin with—

MARCY: She'll be fine. I tied Taylor up. She's not going anywhere. And it's not like Cassie couldn't open the door if she tried. It would just take her a little time.

KAREN: And if she doesn't have a little time?

MARCY: Then she'll be out of luck, I guess.

KAREN: (*looks at her*) I'm going back.

MARCY: And do what? Bring her with us? To find Jenny, who's not tied up and has already attacked Taylor? Solid plan there, Karen. Let's stick to what we were going to do: get Jenny and then go back for Taylor and Cassie. Then we get the hell out of this godforsaken place. (*scratches her arm*)

KAREN: (*noticing MARCY*) What's up with your arm? You've been scratching a lot since we left.

MARCY: My dad's trying a new detergent. Not a fan.

KAREN: Were you a fan earlier at the cabin? When you weren't scratching?

MARCY: What are you trying to say?

KAREN: (*stares at her*) Nothing. I'm sorry. (*silence*) This whole thing stinks. How does something happen like this in St. Claire, Minnesota?

MARCY: Or anywhere... really.

KAREN: Yeah. Do you think it's a virus? Like Cassie said?

MARCY: Well, Cassie is the smart one and the way she explained it after Jenny went nuts... I would say yes. If not that... demons?

KAREN: (*laughs*) More like zombies.

MARCY: Yeah, but ones that aren't stupid. Like, Jenny was never that clever when she wasn't...

KAREN: Infected?

MARCY: Yeah, infected. (*silence*) Say, if we survive this, when do you think Cassie is going to forgive you what you did to Mark?

KAREN: I don't know. What's the going time for getting over your sister bludgeoning your boyfriend to death to save your life? Two weeks? (*silence*) I don't know. She really liked him.

MARCY: We all liked him. Not like Cassie, but you know what I mean. He even let us use his family cabin. (*silence*) Well, I guess I didn't like him much after he tried to eat Cassie and Taylor. (*silence*) Do you think Jenny's still out here?

KAREN: I do. Remember when she left, she said she would be waiting for us.

MARCY: Well, I wish she'd given us a meeting spot because I think our time is running out.

KAREN: It is. I'm not even sure that there ever was time.

MARCY: You can't think that way.

KAREN: All I wanted was to hang out with my sister and my friends before graduation. That's it. And I get this. You get this. Because of me. This is all my fault.

MARCY: Well, not all. Just mostly.

KAREN: Thanks. And Cassie didn't even want to come, but I forced her to. And now, if something happens to her... I'll never forgive myself.

MARCY: What if something happens to me?

KAREN: You came here by choice. But I wouldn't forgive myself for that either. But Cassie's my sister. The one member of the family who's going to be something.

MARCY: So are you.

KAREN: What, Marcy? I couldn't get into college. Any college. Cassie, though... There's a reason that my parents put her on a pedestal. And I understood. I always understood. I'm the tough one with nothing to lose. I'll live a perfectly average life, but she... (*looks at her watch*) Let's just hurry up and find Jenny.

They walk around silently.

MARCY: Hey, did you hear what happened to Delaney?

KAREN: Yeah, what's going on in this town? All these people dying in such bizarre ways and now... this.

MARCY: Right? It's like we're in a movie. Maybe Cassie's on to something with that Horror Movie— (*they hear a noise*) That's probably not her.

JENNY: (*sing-song*) Karen. Marcy.

MARCY: Or it is? What's our plan exactly?

KAREN: You got the rope?

MARCY: Yeah. What am I supposed to do though? Lasso her?

David and Delaney's Guide to the Perfectly Nifty Prom

Setting: Outside of Hilmore High. By a bench. And perhaps a tree.

At Rise: DELANEY is standing between DAVID and KATE wearing an old looking dress that is also quite dirty. KATE is looking off awkwardly. DAVID is smiling at DELANEY.

DELANEY: So... how do I look?

KATE: (to DELANEY) Like you came back from the dead, then walked across town to St. Claire's Graves on a Mound, found a grave that belonged to a woman with a Victorian-sounding name, dug it up, and stole her dress.

DELANEY: Nailed it. Her name was Constance Stanbury, by the way. (turns to DAVID, who is smiling at her) Hello, Mr. Smiley Pants.

DAVID: You're... back. And I think you look beautiful. Well, except for the dirt and... the worms in your hair.

DELANEY picks around in her hair, finds one, looks at it, and laughs.

DELANEY: (dismissive) Oh, those are maggots.

DAVID: Awesome.

DELANEY: (Turns to KATE. Silence.) So... how have your kids been?

DAVID: Not too good, actually.

DELANEY: Because of my dying?

DAVID: Yeah. And I have a rash. On my stomach.

DELANEY: You should probably get that checked out. (to KATE) What's wrong, Kate? Do you not like the dress? Or is it the maggots?

KATE: It's not either of those things. It's... how do you... feel, Delaney? Do you feel like attacking us or... I don't know... eating us or something?

DELANEY: (stares at her confused, as does DAVID) Um... no to both. I feel surprisingly well for, you know, dying a couple of weeks ago. Oh, I was thinking that maybe I could shower at your house before going to see my parents? I certainly don't want them to find out that I came back from the dead looking like this. (to

DAVID) And you and I can start making sure we are ready for our perfectly nifty prom. Not a lot of time, but we do have the manual.

DAVID: That's right.

KATE: You didn't tell her?

DAVID: When would I have told her?

DELANEY: Tell me what?

DAVID: Nothing.

KATE: It's not nothing, David. (to DELANEY) David and I are going to the prom together.

DELANEY: Why would you be going to the prom with David?

KATE: Because of the last thing that you said to me as you lay dying.

DELANEY: About wanting banana pudding? I don't know—

KATE: The next to last thing you said.

DELANEY: About the fact that I was the one who stole your mom's sweater?

KATE: That was you?

DELANEY: (Stares at KATE. Unconvincingly.) No.

KATE: I missed the band trip because of that!

DAVID: It was a good band trip. (to DELANEY) And you looked really nice in that sweater.

DELANEY: Thank you. And it really was a nice trip. (turns to KATE, who's staring at her angrily) So, judging by your response and your lack of knowledge of my taking of your mom's sweater, I'm gathering that I don't remember what I said—

KATE: You said to take care of David.

DELANEY is shocked and saddened. She looks at KATE and then DAVID.

DELANEY: Did I?

KATE: Yes, you did.

DELANEY: That's why you were going to go to the prom with him. (understands) That's very sweet.

KATE: Thanks.

DELANEY: And now I understand why you brought me back.

KATE: I... wait, what?

DELANEY: You brought me back because you knew that if you two went to the prom together, it would mess up *David and Delaney's Guide to*—

KATE: I didn't bring you back!

DELANEY: Sure. You're the one that has the well-manicured ancient burial ground in her backyard and—

KATE: Look, I don't mess with that burial ground since Ralph. You know that.

DELANEY: Really? (*KATE nods*) But if you didn't do it, then... (*silence as they both turn to DAVID*)

KATE & DELANEY: David.

DAVID: I had to. Delaney, we've talked since we were six about going to the prom together. It was our dream. Look. (*pulls out book*) *David and Delaney's Guide to the Perfectly Nifty Prom*.

DELANEY: (*gasps*) Our manual.

DAVID: I haven't stopped carrying it around since you died. After your funeral, I didn't know what to do. I ran to my room, clutching the book, and I sat there for days, just looking at the life-sized cutout of the two of us dressed in what we were going to wear to the prom and Kate standing by... well, no one, because we didn't know who her prom date would be.

KATE: You have a cardboard cutout of me?

DAVID: Of course, you're number 13 on the list. Right after "Must Have Time to Bake the Most Perfectly Nifty Prom Cake." And don't worry, your cutout is very flattering.

DELANEY: It really is. It's based on when you get out of this, you know, 90s grunge period you're in right now. Which by the way, is 7th on the list: "Take the Plunge, Get Kate out of Grunge." (*to DAVID*) You know, that was my least favorite rhyme.

DAVID: Mine too, although it does get the point across. (*to KATE*) You are really grungy, you know. The 90's called and said they want their style back.

KATE: Clever. Can you get back to your story so we can understand your horrible decision?

DELANEY: Horrible decision? Are you saying—

DAVID: Don't worry, Delaney. After she hears the rest, she'll understand.

*DELANEY smiles at DAVID and nods "Go ahead."
DAVID takes a moment and then looks off.*

DAVID: As I looked at those cutouts, I cried because our dream of the perfectly nifty prom was dead. Like you. Then, moments later, I got that rash I mentioned earlier, which caused me to consider joining you in the afterlife. It's very itchy. Then, moments after moments after that, Kate climbed in my window and told me we were going to prom together. I tried to protest, but she said that it was what you wanted. I didn't believe her because nowhere in *David and Delaney's Guide to the Perfectly Nifty Prom* did it say "In case of Delaney's death, David should go with Kate." It doesn't even rhyme! But I said yes anyway just in case it was true. After she left, I put mine and Kate's cutouts together just to see... but there was no connection there, no cardboard spark. Because it wasn't the way it was meant to be. Kate was meant to be number 13 on the list: "Find Kate the Perfectly Nifty Mate So that We Can Double Date." Alas, I may have been the perfect mate for Kate, but Kate was not the perfect mate for me. Only (to *DELANEY*) you were. I had to find a way to bring you back. And that's when I remembered Kate's well-manicured ancient burial ground. So I went to your grave, dug you up, carried you through town, and then reburied you in Kate's well-manicured ancient burial ground.

DELANEY: That is the sweetest thing I've ever heard.

KATE: It really is, but David—you have no idea what you've done.

DAVID: Oh, I do, and (to *DELANEY*) seeing you tonight proves something to me. For the longest time I couldn't figure out if I really loved you or just had that teenage like/lust thing that we teenagers call love when it's clearly not. But seeing you like that, all dirty and decaying with wor... maggots in your hair... it couldn't be lust. It could only be love because you are so not att—

DELANEY: You can stop there. And I love you too. (*moves to kiss him*)

DAVID: (*stopping her*) And I would kiss you now, but you smell terrible and I don't want to throw up in your mouth.

DELANEY: I don't want that either. (to KATE) Do you mind if I go freshen up in your house?

KATE: Sure.

DELANEY: Thanks. (to DAVID) And I'll see you in a bit. I figure you two have some things to talk about. (exits)

DAVID: (to KATE) Look, I'm really sorry—

KATE: I seriously don't care. What the hell were you thinking bringing her back?

DAVID: I was thinking that I love her and I wanted her to be able to go to her prom.

KATE: Well, now we have to kill her.

DAVID: No, we don't.

KATE: Yes, we do. Before she goes wrong.

DAVID: What are you talking about? She seems fine.

KATE: Oh, innocent child. I was once like you. But not anymore. Look: when I moved here, I was so excited to find out that we had an ancient burial ground right in our backyard. I mean what girl wouldn't be, right? But then my next-door neighbor Sophie, a horror movie buff, came over and told me not to tamper with it because of Horror Movie 101.

DAVID: Is that a class at school?

KATE: It should be. But it's not.

DAVID: What does it—

KATE: In this case, Sophie told me, Horror Movie 101 states that if you use an ancient burial ground to bring someone back, they'll come back wrong. They wouldn't look like it at first, but soon their wrongness would come out and everyone around them would suffer. I laughed at her and said she was being dumb. She said she was like me until what happened to Sarah happened. I told her this and what happened at the haunted house had nothing to do with one another and she just said "We'll see" and left.

DAVID: Great story.

KATE: It's not done.

DAVID: Of course.

KATE: The next day, Ralph died.

DAVID: Your cat?

KATE: Yeah. The only thing, besides Delaney, that I actually cared about in this world. I knew what I had to do. I took his broken carcass and buried in my now well-manicured, because of Delaney's help, ancient burial ground. The entire time, I kept hearing Sophie's warning.

DAVID: In your head? Like in a movie?

KATE: No, it was her car that hit Ralph, so she had guilt and she was walking behind me, warning me. Despite her warnings, I buried Ralph in my well-manicured ancient burial ground. Nothing happened for days, and then the morning of the International Hole Digging and Refilling Contest came. Sophie, a skilled refiller, and I, an ace digger, were sitting in the kitchen eating breakfast when we heard it.

DAVID: Heard what?

KATE: A soft meow and a gentle scratch. Sophie tried to hold me back, but you can't keep a girl from running to open the door for her returning from the dead cat.

DAVID: I've heard that.

KATE: Have you?

DAVID: No.

KATE: Anyway, I opened the door and there was Ralph looking... quite awful, actually. I mean, Sophie has a really big car and she was speeding as always so she nailed him pretty hard. Flew about 50 feet and then Sophie, not aware that she hit a cat because she was eating a burger, ran over him. Also, Ralph had been decomposing for a couple of days, so there was—

DAVID: (*shudders and holds up a hand*) Stop. Please. But how did he act?

KATE: Sophie?

DAVID: No. I said "he." Ralph.

KATE: Just like he had before. Ornerly, but purring and rubbing up against my leg. Even though I knew it was a setup, I was so happy. And then Ralph saw Sophie.

DAVID: What did she do?

KATE: Well, Sophie was standing behind the table just staring at Ralph when he came around the table and (*looking away*) rubbed against her leg too.

DAVID: That doesn't sound—

KATE: It wasn't. And I was a little mad because Ralph was being all loving to her and she was the one who smashed him to bits in the first place and didn't want to bring him back. Then it happened. Sophie, trying to get away, stepped on Ralph's tail and Ralph hissed. Sophie yelled "We're all going to die!" and ran out the door, followed by the pursuing Ralph.

DAVID: Oh no.

KATE: Oh no is right. I ran outside and watched Ralph chase Sophie right into the field where the International Hole Digging and Refilling contest was being held.

DAVID: Did she fall in a hole?

KATE: No, she avoided the holes. But she didn't avoid running off Dead Man's Cliff just past the field. And Ralph, consumed by an anger that perhaps I had seen before, followed her right off that cliff, where she was caught by a hawk in midair and eaten. (*shakes her head*) I lost a cat and a friend that day.

DAVID: Wait, I didn't know that Sophie died too.

KATE: Oh, Sophie didn't die. She was fine, some cuts, scrapes and bruises. But she refused to talk to me anymore. She even convinced her parents to move.

DAVID: Wow.

KATE: That's right. If it weren't for the hawk eating Ralph, I don't know what he would have done. Oh no, I do. He would have gone on a killing spree.

DAVID: You don't know that. Even when he was alive, Ralph was all messed up. He always used that purring and rubbing against your leg technique to get you to let your defenses down so he could tear into your flesh.

KATE: Don't you dare talk of Ralph that way! Even though it's completely true and I basically said the same thing earlier. But you didn't see the look in his eyes when he went wrong—I did. And the same thing is going to happen to Delaney. Do you want your girlfriend—my best friend—to become some crazed monster?

DAVID: No, I don't, but I can't believe that she's wrong just because of Ralph.

KATE: It's not just Ralph, though. It's what happened to Sarah, Dane and Tara, and don't forget Jane. Car accident? I don't think so. Car accidents don't choke you to death. Something's messed up in this town, and I'm not willing to risk Delaney being the one oddity that proves none of these things are related except for the fact that we're friends.

DAVID: Okay. What do you want us to do?

KATE: Kill her.

DAVID: I can't kill the love of my life. It will probably damage our relationship.

KATE: I know. I don't expect you to. I expect you to distract her while I kill her.

DAVID: How?

KATE: (*picks up a rock*) With this.

DAVID: A rock? I can't. What if she came back normal? Then—

KATE: Doubtful, but tell you what. I'll only use my "stun 'em" club instead of my "kill 'em" club. Then we'll tie her up to see if she does go wrong. If not, it's all good. You'll have your prom date back and I'll have my best friend back.

DAVID: And if she does go... wrong?

KATE: We'll cross that line when we come to it.

DELANEY: (*offstage*) Hmm. That was so good.

KATE: All right. Here she comes. Play it cool. Distract her, and at some point, I'll give her the "stun 'em" club. If she shows any early wrong signs, I'll use the—

DAVID: How do you even know—

KATE: I took a class.

DELANEY enters.

DELANEY: Sorry I took so long. I was busy eating your parents'... (*A look of horror comes over KATE and DAVID's face. KATE prepares her rock.*) fantastic blueberry pie. (*DAVID and KATE relax. A little.*)

DELANEY notices that they are uncomfortable.) What's wrong with you guys?

DAVID: Um nothing. You look amazing. Like you haven't been decomposing for two weeks. More like two days.

DELANEY: Thank you! I was going for "only four days decomposing," but two days... you really know how to sweet talk a girl.

She turns to KATE and rushes over to her. KATE freaks out as DELANEY's hands go around her neck. Then she... gives her a massage.

So tense.

DAVID: So much for playing it cool.

DELANEY: And you, mister... *(walking over to DAVID)* I've got a bone to pick with you.

DAVID: Um... what?

DELANEY: Some... unfinished... business. I'm a little hungry for something.

She moves towards him and KATE springs into action. DAVID, seeing this, shoves her out of the way and gets hit by the rock. He falls.

David, oh no! *(She kneels and checks him. She turns to KATE.)* He's dead.

KATE: Well, it was my "kill 'em" club.

DELANEY: Wait, you were trying to kill me?

KATE: Yeah, I thought you had gone wrong. Like Ralph.

DELANEY: Why would you think I was going "wrong?" Whatever that means?

KATE: Because you gave David a creepy look.

DELANEY: That was my seductive look.

KATE: Oh. But then you said you were hungry for something. I thought you were going to eat him.

DELANEY: No. I was hungry for a kiss. With the combo of the look and the seductive line I thought maybe he could forget my smell.

KATE: Oh. Well, that's the worst seduction that I've ever seen.



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