



**Sample Pages from
The Ascot Ribbon**

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HORROR MOVIE 102: FAILING JUST GOT DEADLIER

A Collection of Five Hauntingly Bizarre Tales

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT BY
Steven Stack



Cast of Characters

The Ascot Ribbon (1M, 1F)

Travis: 16, and has an affinity for his looks, Bean, his mother, and his ascot ribbon.

Bea: Also 16, a somewhat normal teen except for her name (and the story behind it) and her odd affection for Travis.

Slash, Slash!!! (4F, 2M)

Nate: 17, the traditional heartthrob with nothing else to offer; dating Brooke and is Erika's brother, though he has his doubts about this.

Brooke: 18, the jock who's good at everything she does. Is dating Nate because he's quite attractive. Not one for feelings.

Marvin: 16, the studious, kind of dorky one, a fan of horror movies. Recently started dating Sasha.

Sasha: Brooke's best friend, dating Marvin, also a fan of horror movies, and clearly would be the "last girl" in horror movies because she is the least threatening and most likable.

Erika: The friend who's the least likable and most expendable of the group. Also, Nate's sister.

Pippa Vanderway: A serial killer, reminiscent of 80's Slasher films. Well, except for the fact that she's British, wears paint-splattered overalls, has pigtails, and is terrible at it.

The Cow's Head (5F, One Talking Cow's Head)

Sage: 14, Very headstrong and in denial due to her older brother's death and her parents' inability to love the one they still have. The leader of the group.

Kendra: 13, lives her life in fairy tales because her real life is clearly no fairy tale.

Landry: 14, the logical one of the friend group who tries to be the bridge between Sage and Kendra. Is also protective of Sage because she doesn't seem to want to protect herself.

Kevin: The Cow's Head, the star of a Ukrainian urban legend, oddly similar to Cinderella.

Cassie: Was the younger sister of Karen, but now is merely a vessel for a virus that is keeping her alive.

Karen: Was the older sister of Cassie, but now is merely a vessel for a virus that is keeping her alive.

The Date (2F, 2M)

Chris: 15, best friends with Ray and Felicia, who are dating. Speaking of dating, Chris has never been on a date. Until tonight.

Felicia: 16, dating Ray. Likes to research the odd happenings in St. Claire. Very loyal and direct.

Ray: 16, dating Felicia. Sees Chris as a little brother even though he's only a few months older. Seems to have it all together.

Jinny: Probably 15. A girl who is inhumanely attractive and mysterious. Started school at St. Claire three weeks ago and is very attracted to Chris, for reasons unknown.

Tofuman (2F, 2M)

Dane: 17, dating Tara, died last year and is now a Zoman, half-zombie/half-human. Tends to place lots of things in his "denial box."

Bloo-day Ma-ray: The urban legend Bloody Mary, only here she rips out hearts and sings about her love of ripping out hearts.

Tara: 17, died last year with Dane, her boyfriend, when she gave Hook Hand back her hook. Is really embracing this Zoman thing, including the eating human part.

Phillip: 18, went on a date with Tara, rather dumb, loves playing the ukulele and being found edible.

Dedicated to...

Jon Hawkins, who is one of my best friends and who once hit me in the face with a racquetball because he's terribly inaccurate on the racquetball court. Or maybe he's quite accurate. One can never be sure about such things.

Production History

Horror Movie 102: Failing Just Got Deadlier was first performed in February of 2019 at Forte Studios in Mt. Horeb, Wisconsin. Here is the original cast.

The Ascot Ribbon

Travis: Ryan Sadkovich

Bean: Charli “Phillip” Uptegraw

Slash, Slash

Nate: Jake Piper

Brooke: Skye Murphy

Marvin: Xander Strube

Sasha: Charlie Durochik

Erika: Natalie Waterbury

The Cow’s Head

Sage: Emma Arndt

Kendra: Genevieve Helin

Landry: Erin Kelly

Kevin: Lauren Johnson

Cassie: Camille Ginther

Karen: Paige Bilse

The Date

Chris: Alex Wishart

Felicia: Mia Schoonover

Ray: Sam Frank

Jinny: Breanna Connors

Tofuman

Dane: Ayden Green

Tara: Laney Evans

Phillip: Lucas Gonzales

Bloody Mary: Whitney Waterbury

The Ascot Ribbon

Setting: Early evening on Halloween Day, a holiday in St. Claire, Minnesota. A sidewalk near a gentle meadow that's making that gentle meadow sound.

At Rise: BEAN and TRAVIS, two teens, are walking back to town after a delightful picnic. This is their fifth date, and things are getting serious. But there is trouble. Trouble in the form of TRAVIS's neckwear and BEAN's name. But more importantly, BEAN's name.

BEAN: The sky is quite lovely tonight.

TRAVIS: Yes, but not quite as lovely as I. *(Silence. TRAVIS turns to her.)*
Nor you. *(silence)* Though I really do look lovely tonight, Bean.

BEAN: Yes, Travis, you do.

TRAVIS turns and smiles at BEAN. He then takes her hand.

TRAVIS: Thank you for agreeing with me. I knew it was true before you agreed but it's wonderful when your girlfriend notices how lovely you are.

BEAN: *(pulls back)* I'm sure it is. Wait. Girlfriend? When did we make it official?

TRAVIS: I thought it was just one of those unspoken truths. Like that old unspoken truth...

Silence as BEAN waits for TRAVIS to finish speaking of an unspoken truth that he has no intention of speaking.

BEAN: Are you going to finish –

TRAVIS: *(laughs and lightly pinches her cheek)* Oh, you silly Bean.
(grimaces at the sound of the name BEAN) If I spoke it, it would no longer be... *(looking off)* unspoken.

BEAN: That's true. But you spoke about the unspoken truth of me being your girlfriend.

TRAVIS: That is because it was time for the unspoken to be... spoken. Unless... *(turns away dramatically)* You don't want yourself to be my girlfriend and I *(Looks off again but in a new direction. Quite dramatically, I might add.)*... your boyfriend?

BEAN: Of course, I would love to be your girlfriend and you my boyfriend.

TRAVIS: You must say it more dramatically and while saying “my boyfriend” you must look off. (*silence as TRAVIS stares at her dramatically*)

BEAN: Do you want me to say it again?

TRAVIS: I do.

BEAN: And more dramatically?

TRAVIS: While looking off while saying –

BEAN: My boyfriend. Got it. (*looks off dramatically*) I would love to be your girlfriend and you... (*looks off in another direction not facing TRAVIS*) my boyfriend.

TRAVIS: (*makes a giddy sound and hugs her*) That was splendid. (*turns away*) I knew it was worth looking past your horrid name to make this work.

BEAN: What now?

TRAVIS: (*looks back*) What now what?

BEAN: Horrid name?

TRAVIS: Your name is Bean, and it’s not short for anything. Just... Bean. It’s like every time I call your name, I’m calling you a legume. (*looks off*) Because I am.

BEAN: I didn’t know you found my name horrid.

TRAVIS: (*Looks back to BEAN. Quickly.*) I do. I always have.

BEAN: Why didn’t you tell me before?

TRAVIS: Because before we weren’t boyfriend and girlfriend. Now that we are, though, I felt I needed to pull back the curtain and reveal... the truth. About your horrid name. (*silence*) I mean, I simply never imagined that I would ever love a bean. (*considers*) Wait, that’s not true. There was this one bean, a garbanzo, whom I named Ivory. I caught her gaze while eating my second helping of Mother’s seven-bean soup that she loved making for us. Anywho, I was instantly smitten. I reached into the bowl of soup and plucked Ivory out. I smiled at her, held her close, looked at Mother and said, “Mother, I think I love this bean.” Mother looked at me in her condescending way that I’d come to know so well, sighed that condescending sigh that I’d also come to know

so well, and then walked over to me with that condescending gait that I've seen so much it is seared into my memory. She snatched Ivory from my loving grasp and said, "Oh, this bean?" And I said "Of course, Mother." She placed it on the table, pulled out the large mallet she always carried with her and smashed Ivory to wee bits. She then fed Ivory's remains to Carl, our potbellied pig that always dined at the table. I looked at mother, tears streaming out of my sparkling eyes, and she said: "You're 16, stop being weird." (*silence*) That was the last bean I ever loved. (*turns to BEAN, crosses to her, and takes her hand*) Until now. Until you.

BEAN: Wait. Ignoring the part where you said you loved me and the fact that you fell in love with an actual bean, you were 16 when this happened? (*TRAVIS smiles and nods*) But you turned 16 –

TRAVIS: Yesterday. Sorry that I didn't invite you to the party, but we weren't officially boyfriend and girlfriend then so it wouldn't have been appropriate.

BEAN: Of course. (*crosses away*)

TRAVIS: And when we're married, you can take my middle name, Satchel, as your first.

BEAN: I'm never changing my first name. It means something to me.

TRAVIS: Fiber?

BEAN: (*looks off*) Partially. (*turns back to TRAVIS*) More importantly, though, it means... sacrifice. (*TRAVIS is quite confused, so he stares at her with a quite confused look. Silence.*) Did you ever think of asking why I was named Bean?

TRAVIS: No. Should I have?

BEAN: Yes. Especially if you were going to insult it.

TRAVIS: I wasn't insulting it. It's simply a horrid name, as I said multiple times earlier. (*BEAN lets out a loud sigh*) That's just like my mother's sigh. (*turns away*) I've bungled it again. (*dramatically*) Why were you named that?

BEAN: (*looks off*) On the day of my birth –

TRAVIS: Your birthday?

BEAN: Yes, now stop interrupting. (*TRAVIS zips his mouth shut*) On the day of my birth, my parents, in the midst of marital conflict, were joylessly watching a local yak parade when someone fell from a skyscraper and was trampled by said parading yaks. The ensuing

chaos cancelled the rest of the parade and made traffic a beast, and at that moment, my mother's water broke –

TRAVIS: Gross. (*BEAN stares at him*) Sorry. Please continue.

BEAN: Thus, the process of my birth began. My parents could not get to their car since they didn't have one. So, they jumped on two separate stampeding yaks. They didn't take the same one due to their marital conflict.

TRAVIS: Of course.

BEAN: They both yelled at the yaks, "To the hospital!" But the yaks didn't know where it was because they were new in town. (*TRAVIS nods knowingly*) Long story short, they ended up inside a bean silo where I came out of my mother's womb and into the world. Thus, my name became Bean, and I became the reason my parents gave up personal happiness in order to stay together. For their little Bean. (*Silence. Turns to TRAVIS.*) Now do you see why it's not a horrid name, but a beautiful one?

TRAVIS: No, your story lacked the passion and dra-mah of mine. (*silence*) Oh, how I wish I could look past your horrid name. Like this. (*looks past her*) Alas, I cannot.

BEAN: Very well. If you can't look past my name, then I refuse to continue looking past your neck ribbon.

TRAVIS: (*offended*) It is an ascot ribbon.

BEAN: Well, it's horrid.

TRAVIS: (*gasps*) No, it's not. It's beautiful!

BEAN: It's not beautiful and I've never seen you without it. At school, our dates, the pool, you always have it on. It must smell terrible.

TRAVIS: I Febreze it.

BEAN: Why don't you take it off?

TRAVIS: Why don't you change your name?

BEAN: Because I don't want to.

TRAVIS: Exactly.

BEAN: How long have you worn it?

TRAVIS: I came out of my mother's birth canal wearing it.

BEAN: What?

TRAVIS: It's a part of me. Like my pancreas.

BEAN: That makes no sense. Take it off.

TRAVIS: I don't want to.

BEAN: Take it off!

TRAVIS: I shall not!

BEAN: I'll change my name if you do.

TRAVIS: (*gasps and seems to be considering what to do, and then sighs sadly*) If I could, I would, but you see, it's not that I don't want to, it's that... I cannot.

BEAN: Why?

TRAVIS: (*looking off yet again*) Because Mother said something terrible would happen to me if I did.

BEAN: What? Your head would fall off or something? (*TRAVIS looks at her, afraid as he lets out a tiny gasp*) That's an urban legend, and yes, I know urban legends tend to come true in St. Claire, but –

TRAVIS: Mother is always right!

BEAN: No, your mother is trying to keep you as her little boy. Trying to control you. That ribbon –

TRAVIS: (*offended yet again*) Ascot ribbon.

BEAN: That ascot ribbon is the collar for the leash your mom has around your neck. You're 16, Travis, and you have a girlfriend now. It's time to let your mom know that you're not a baby anymore. If you can't do it, let me take it off for you.

Silence as TRAVIS walks off to consider. Many things. But mainly if he should let BEAN remove the ascot ribbon. Dramatically, he turns back to BEAN.

TRAVIS: You're right. (*Takes her hands. By "takes," I don't mean removes. I mean "holds in a romantic like fashion."*) If I do, though, were you serious about changing your name? If you still want to be a legume, you could change your name to Fava.

BEAN: We'll talk about it later, but right now, this isn't about me. It's about you. Breaking free!

TRAVIS smiles and leaps happily into the air.

TRAVIS: I'm ready to break free! You can do it. But be gentle.

BEAN: I will. (*TRAVIS holds his head up and BEAN finds where she can take the ascot ribbon off. She touches it and grimaces.*) Wow, it's really wet.

TRAVIS: I suffer from chronic neck sweat.

BEAN: It would appear so. Okay. Here we go.

TRAVIS: Are you sure this is the right thing to do?

BEAN: Absolutely. For you and... for us. I would kiss you now, but all I can focus on is how sweaty this thing is. And I think if I kissed you, I would taste the sweat.

TRAVIS: You would. Mother lets me moisten my lips with my sweat. It's very holistic. (*BEAN makes a face*) What?

BEAN: Uh... nothing. Here we go.

BEAN pulls the ascot ribbon. Blackout. When the lights come up, we see that TRAVIS's head has fallen off. Quick note: You are probably wondering "How will this happen on stage? One cannot simply have an actor's head fall off and not face some serious ramifications." You're correct. At the end of the script, there's a note on how to pull this off without an actual head falling off. Back to the scene: BEAN stares down awkwardly. Silence.

Whoops. (*silence*)

TRAVIS: I feel like my head has fallen off.

BEAN: It did. It did fall off. (*silence*) I guess your mom was right.

TRAVIS: Mother is always right. (*silence*)

BEAN: Would you like me to carry your... head somewhere?

TRAVIS: No, I suppose I would like my eyes to close for the final time looking at this meadow.

BEAN: Okay. Would you like me to stay?

TRAVIS: I would if you don't mind.

BEAN: I mean, I did make your head fall off after all.

TRAVIS: No, that was my decision. If I could go back, perhaps I would leave the ascot ribbon on – but what's done is done.

BEAN: Yeah. (*sits down*)

Production Notes

Sets

The Ascot Ribbon needs merely a bench. You could add delightful trees and shrubbery if so inclined.

The Cow's Head takes place in an old cabin and only needs a chair or a couch. You can make the set as elaborately “creepy cabin” as you wish. Even though a “bloodstain” is mentioned, there is no need to stain your stage with blood.

Slash, Slash takes place at abandoned campground, but the only real set piece needed is a tent. For Erika's death scene, you can have it simply take place downstage using downstage lighting, leaving the main set (featuring the tent) onstage in the dark.

The Date occurs in a backyard with a table and four chairs at night.

Tofuman takes place in a living room of a shack. There needs to be some chairs and a table for Dane to work his magic with his tofu.

Lights

Basic lighting is needed for all scenes. To create a more suspenseful atmosphere, dim lighting is recommended for almost all scenes, and a blue light would be excellent for *The Cow's Head*. There are moments that blackouts are required, and those are mentioned in the script.

Sound

The Ascot Ribbon

- Perhaps a soft meadow sound
- The sound of a head falling off

The Cow's Head

- Loud knocking at the door
- Outdoor noise

The Date

- Cellphone notifications

Tofuman

- 80's style music

Props Needed*Ascot Ribbon*

- Ascot Ribbon (Travis)

Cow's Head

- Bags (Sage, Landry, Kendra)
- Cow's Head (Kevin) Note: We used a cow's head mask stuffed to make it look full. You could also make one.
- Kit Kat bars (Landry)
- Flashlights (Sage, Landry, Kendra)

Slash, Slash

- Bedazzled Machete (Pippa)
- Backpacks (Marvin, Sasha, Erika, Nate, Brooke)
- Note (Pippa)
- Stick (Pippa)
- Sorry Pieces (Nate)
- Inhaler (Nate)

The Date

- Snack food, juice boxes (Chris)
- Bowl of cinnamon applesauce (Chris)
- Cell Phones (Chris, Ray, Felicia)

Tofuman

- Tofu in the shape of human parts (Dane)
- Ukulele (Phillip)
- Phillip's Heart (Bloo-day Ma-ray) Note: If you wished you could place the heart in a paper bag.

Costume

All characters can dress in what you imagine for them, except for Pippa Vanderway in *Slash, Slash*, who has “glasses, pigtails, freckles, and paint splattered overalls.”

Also, Travis's ascot in *Ascot Ribbon* should be quite the colorful one.

Random Vital Notes*The Falling Off of Travis's Head in The Ascot Ribbon*

We did this by blacking out the lights when Bean removed the ascot ribbon and having Travis fall behind the bench so that only his head could be seen. We covered the bench with a black sheet to aid in the illusion. When the

lights returned, bam, no body. Like magic.

The Slash, Slash Training Montage

This is based on what was quite prevalent in almost every 80's movie I saw. Think cleaning montage, or car wash montage, building montage, etc. And each montage is full of hijinks, no talking, smiles, goofiness, and, most importantly, an upbeat 80's song. In our case, the montage is training someone to be a horror movie serial killer. Even though it's already listed in the script, I've included what needs to be trained... right here:

- The menacing stare for a rather long and tedious time (Pippa does rather poorly at this).
- The slow walk that always gets them places faster than people running (Pippa also does poorly at this because she either skips, hops, or something else ridiculous).
- The powerful slashing with no flair (Pippa also does poorly at this because she does the slashing like a dancer).
- Appearing in random places like a game of whack-a-mole (Pippa thinks she does good at this but her happily popping out is kind of the opposite of what they are after).
- The using of various things to kill people.
- At one point, she wants something to drink but is denied because killers don't drink or eat
- Whatever else you can think of! Have fun!

Kevin (The Cow's Head) Voice

This one we did by using a microphone. You could also just have the person hidden onstage to provide the voice. Though the microphone added another element of weirdness.

Cassie and Karen in The Cow's Head

They should simply be in the background covered in sheets. They could also almost be offstage if that's easier.

The marking on Jinny in The Date

Have fun with this one. Not that you couldn't have fun with everything else. It needs to be big enough to be seen by the audience. Placement depends on your taste.

The Ripping Out of Phillip's Heart in Tofuman

This one clearly takes place offstage, and no heart must be ripped out.



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