



**Sample Pages from
Bad Taste in Boys**

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CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE UNDEAD KIND

The Support Group from Hell
Beggar's Night
Bad Taste in Boys

THREE GHOULISH COMEDIES BY
Jeffrey Harr



Bad Taste in Boys

Cast

3W+3M

RACHEL	Teen
CINDY	Rachel's younger sister
MR. HARRIS	Rachel's father
MRS. HARRIS	Rachel's mother
STEWART	The Harris's nerdy neighbor
ED	Rachel's zombie boyfriend

Lights up on a living room with a couch, a few chairs, an end table and coffee table. RACHEL sits on the couch with a remote control, as if she's watching television.

CINDY sits on the chair, her leg over the armrest, doing nothing but bothering her older sister.

CINDY: So. Rach. About our little arrangement.

RACHEL: *(never looking away from the TV)* What about it?

CINDY: Well, I've been thinking, and it seems to me that the twenty bucks you gave me ain't gonna cut it.

RACHEL: *(looks at CINDY for the first time)* Oh, really. What about me driving you and your stupid friends all over town every time you wanna go to Starbucks? Does that count for anything?

CINDY: Of course it does. But, let's face it, sis. Frappuccinos ain't cheap, and what's the point of you driving us there two times a week if I have to spend my entire allowance just to get a little caffeinated, frothy refreshment?

Now, she's got RACHEL's entire attention.

RACHEL: *(sternly)* Sounds like you need to cut back on the number of Frappuccinos you're drinking.

CINDY: *(chuckles)* Right. Like that's gonna happen. No, Rach. I'm afraid that's not the solution. The solution, I think, is that someone else will have to purchase them for me.

RACHEL *stares at her sister like she wants to kill her.*

CINDY: Now, let's see. I can't ask Mom and Dad for more money, so where on earth will I get that ten bucks a week? Wait a sec. I know! The Frappuccino fairy! That's it! A Frappuccino fairy named Rachel. Whaddya say, Rach? Wanna be my Frappuccino fairy?

RACHEL: Sure, Cindy. I'll be your Frappuccino fairy. But keep this in mind: Like the tooth fairy, fairies come into your room. At night. When you're sleeping. When you're at your most vulnerable. She could leave ten bucks a week under your pillow or... she could take the other pillow and SMOTHER YOU with it.

CINDY: *(a bit disturbed)* That's unpleasant.

RACHEL: I know, right.

CINDY: Of course, you could always just go ahead and tell Mom and Dad that you're dating yet another bad boy.

RACHEL: What do you mean, *another*?

CINDY: Seriously? When's Nicky get out of prison? About three years, right?

RACHEL: It wasn't his fault, first of all. He was just *borrowing* the TV, not stealing it. And second of all, Mom and Dad would never have found out about him if you hadn't told them that you saw me making out with some guy in a leather jacket with so many face piercings that he'd never get through airport security.

CINDY: I know you won't believe it, but I'm trying to look out for you. Let's face it, Rach, your choice of boys sucks.

RACHEL: Looking out for me, huh? Who's the big sister here? You don't look out for me; I look out for YOU. And right now, the only thing you're doing for me is taking my money and using me as your personal chauffeur.

CINDY: You should be happy that's all I'm doing. By the looks of him, Mom and Dad aren't going to like him any better than any of the other losers you've dated.

RACHEL: Like that matters. If I start picking boyfriends based on what Mom and Dad want, I give you permission to shoot me in the head. Not that it's any of your business anyway.

CINDY: I totally agree. So maybe you should stop making out in Mom's car—WHILE IT'S IN THE DRIVEWAY!

RACHEL: If Mom and Dad weren't too cheap to buy me my own car, this wouldn't happen.

CINDY: Right. 'Cause you wouldn't just do it in YOUR car.

RACHEL: Of course we would, but it wouldn't be as gross. I mean, Mom's car? Ew.

CINDY: Ew is right. Nothing personal, Rach, but the little I saw of him in the dim light wasn't pretty. If I may be superficial for just a moment, on a scale of one to ten, ten being the hottest guy I've ever seen, this guy's a negative three.

RACHEL: Nice, Cindy. Well, he's coming over tonight while Mom and Dad are out, so you're either going to have to go out, too, or find a way to be nice.

CINDY: He's coming here? Ew, again. Better cover the mirrors lest he break them all.

RACHEL: Stop being so mean. And stop using words like *lest*. You know I don't read books.

CINDY: Which explains why you're attracted to the crème de la crème of guys, huh?

RACHEL: This is what I'm talking about—keep saying stuff like *crème de la crème* and you'll never get a boyfriend.

CINDY: At least when I do, he won't be such a loser that I won't be able to tell Mom and Dad.

On the heels of RACHEL's line, MRS. HARRIS strolls into the living room with a laundry basket of clothes.

MRS. HARRIS: Tell Mom and Dad what?

CINDY smiles. RACHEL is mortified.

RACHEL: Nothing. Cindy was just talking about how much she wants a boyfriend.

MRS. HARRIS: (*concerned*) Oh, my. She wasn't asking you for advice, was she?

RACHEL: Mom!

CINDY: You don't have to worry about me, Mom. Rachel, on the other hand,—

The doorbell rings.

MRS. HARRIS: (*smiles, all of the sudden, sets down the basket*) Oh, Rachel. Be a dear and answer the door.

MRS. HARRIS waits, watching the door as if she already knows who it is and can't wait to see him. RACHEL gets up, goes to the door and opens it to see STEWART standing there, a math textbook in his hand.

STEWART: (*way too happy to see RACHEL*) Hi, Rachel. I was wondering if you needed any help with algebra.

RACHEL: No, Stew. I don't need help with algebra. But thanks so much for stopping by to ask. Every day. And in case you're wondering, it's not getting old. Or annoying.

STEWART: (*suddenly disheartened*) Oh. Do I note a hint of sarcasm?

CINDY: (*yells, from inside*) YUP.

RACHEL: (*totally deadpan*) Nope.

STEWART: (*bright, again*) Oh! Good. It's no problem. After all, I do live just next door.

RACHEL: Yes, Stew. I know.

MRS. HARRIS: (*calls out from inside the house*) Is that Stewart? Aren't you going to invite him in, Rachel? Let's not be rude.

CINDY: (*calls out*) Yeah, Rachel! Don't be RUDE!

RACHEL: (*still looking at STEWART*) I'm not being rude. I don't need math help and there's no other good reason why Stewart should EVER enter this house.

MRS. HARRIS makes her way to the door and greets STEWART.

MRS. HARRIS: (*bumps RACHEL out of the way, grabs STEWART's hand, pulls him into the house*) Now, Stewart, you come in here right this minute. My goodness, Rachel, that's no way to treat a neighbor.

MRS. HARRIS drags STEWART to the couch and seats him.

MRS. HARRIS: Now, Stewart. What can I get for you two while you work on that pesky algebra? I can order a pizza, if you're hungry or... I know... how about I whip up a batch of chocolate chip cookies? How would that be?

STEWART: Why, Mrs. Harris, that would be lovely.

CINDY: (*loving this*) Why, it would be, wouldn't it?

MRS. HARRIS: (*shakes her head, rolls her eyes in delight*) Aren't you just the most polite, respectful, nonthreatening young man in the world. And look, Rachel—no face piercings. I hope I'm not overstepping my bounds a little here if I suggest that you and Rachel, well,—

RACHEL: (*comes from the door to where STEWART's sitting, grabs his arm, pulls him from the couch*) Yes, Mom, you're TOTALLY overstepping your bounds and no, there will be no cookies. (*starts ushering him back to the door*) Not today. Not tomorrow. Not ever.

STEWART: (*on his way out of the door, despondently*) But I like cookies.

RACHEL: (*pushes STEWART out the door, closes it behind him*) Bye, Stew.

CINDY: (*calls out*) Bye, Stew! (*more to herself*) See ya tomorrow.

RACHEL: (*returns to the living room*) Mom, you have GOT to stop encouraging him.

MRS. HARRIS: Oh, c'mon, now, Rachel. That boy has been in love with you since the fifth grade. I think it's sweet.

RACHEL: It's not sweet. It's creepy. The kid couldn't take a hint if it was tattooed on his forehead.

MRS. HARRIS: Well, if you ask me, he's just the sort of boy a girl should want for a boyfriend: smart, with no police record, and unlikely to do anything untoward.

CINDY: Yeah, Rach. He won't do anything untoward.

RACHEL: Thanks, Cindy. But I think it's time for you to shut your piehole.

MRS. HARRIS: (*goes to CINDY, puts her arm on her in comfort*) Rachel! I'm surprised at you. Apologize to your sister.

CINDY: (*threateningly*) Yeah, Rachel. Apologize to your sister before the cat is let out of the proverbial bag.

RACHEL: (*stares at CINDY, angry, again*) Go ahead, Cindy. 'Cause you know what happens then? I put that cat back in the bag. (*pauses*) And I bash it against a brick wall about a thousand times.

CINDY: (*cowers into MRS. HARRIS's arms*) Mom, she's scaring me. Make it stop.

MRS. HARRIS: Honestly, Rachel. Bashing cats into brick walls? That's awful. Don't let Fluffy hear you. As a matter of fact, where is that cat? Have either of you seen her lately? I wonder if she ran away again.

RACHEL: (to CINDY) I know someone else I wish would run away. (gets up) This has been fun, but I'm going to my room until you guys go out.

Before walking offstage, RACHEL stops at the chair and faces CINDY.

RACHEL: By the way, you were adopted.

As RACHEL starts walking offstage, CINDY's face betrays utter despair and MRS. HARRIS wears a look of admonishment for RACHEL.

CINDY: What?! Is it true, Mom?! Am I adopted?!

RACHEL stops, laughing to herself. It's all very funny.

MRS. HARRIS: Of course not, dear. Your snarky attitude and occasional bouts of pure selfishness are completely genetic from your father's side of the family. (to RACHEL, who has started to exit) Rachel, stop tormenting your sister!

CINDY: (mad, now) Yeah, Rachel. Or I'll tell Mom why inviting Stewart over here every day in the feeble hope that you'll find him attractive is pointless.

This stops RACHEL dead in her tracks, a second away from her exit. She turns, stares at CINDY, and mouths, "I'll kill you" as she runs her finger across her throat in the international sign of slitting one's throat, all of it, behind MRS. HARRIS's back.

MRS. HARRIS: (to CINDY) Cindy! (to RACHEL) I do not invite him over here every day, for one thing. I simply... encourage Stewart to stop by. Whenever he's free. Apparently, he's just free... a lot.

RACHEL: My god, Mom. I hope Dad doesn't know you're trying to hook me up with the guy next door!

MRS. HARRIS: Please, sweetheart. There are a lot of things your father doesn't know.

On the heels of the last line, MR. HARRIS enters.

MR. HARRIS: What don't I know?

MRS. HARRIS: Oh, hello, dear.

MR. HARRIS: How are my three favorite gals?

CINDY: Have a seat, Dad. We're getting a bunch of stuff out on the table.

MR. HARRIS: (*plops down on the couch*) Awesome. Open communication. Love it.

CINDY: First of all, apparently, I'm adopted. Thanks for not telling me sooner.

MR. HARRIS: Adopted? You're not adopted. Clearly, your snarky attitude and occasional bouts of pure selfishness are completely genetic from your mother's side of the family. (*to MRS. HARRIS*) Am I right, honey?

MRS. HARRIS: Absolutely, dear. That's exactly what I told her.

RACHEL: Can we talk about something serious, please? Like how Mom's been telling Stewart to come over here every day for the past year to try to get me to go out with him.

MR. HARRIS: Stewart? The totally nonthreatening kid next door who, unlike some other boys, does NOT have a police record? Huh. I'll tell you one thing I like about that boy: He's not the type to do anything untoward, that's for sure.

MRS. HARRIS: (*excited*) That's EXACTLY what I said! (*lovingly, to MR. HARRIS*) We are SO connected.

RACHEL: Disgusting. Maybe I'M the one who's adopted.

CINDY: If anyone cares about my opinion, I'm with Mom and Dad. Stewart's a real catch. But it doesn't matter, 'cause Rachel's already got a boyfriend.

MR. and MRS. HARRIS are intrigued. RACHEL is pissed; she gives CINDY her deathglare.

CINDY: Oops.

For RACHEL's benefit, CINDY mimics the act of smacking a bag against a wall, mewling like a cat in pain the whole time.

MRS. HARRIS: (*surprised*) Rachel, how long has this been going on?

RACHEL: About a month, now. It's no big deal, all right?

MR. HARRIS: Sounds like if it weren't a big deal we would have already met the young man. Am I right?

MRS. HARRIS: Your father has a point.

CINDY: And just like the last guy, I saw them making out in Mom's car out in the driveway.

MR. and MRS. HARRIS go into very physical shows of disappointment. They speak the next few lines simultaneously.

MRS. HARRIS: Oh my word, Rachel. I am so disappointed.

MR. HARRIS: What is it with the driveway? Is it the dim lighting out there?

RACHEL: (*gets up, goes to them, but on her way, stops to say something to CINDY*) Remind me to kill you, later. (*to MR. and MRS. HARRIS*) His name is Ed. And I know you're going to hate him just like you've hated every guy I've ever dated.

MR. and MRS. HARRIS go into very physical shows of shock and dismay. They speak the next few lines simultaneously.

MRS. HARRIS: I... I can't believe you'd say that.

MR. HARRIS: That is outrageously untrue, Rachel.

RACHEL: Ed is... a little different... and I know you won't accept him.

MR. HARRIS: Is he a felon?

RACHEL: Dad! No, he's not!

MR. HARRIS: I already like him more than Nicky.

MRS. HARRIS: Give us a chance, dear. Why don't you start by telling us a little about him? Does he go to your school?

RACHEL: Yes, he does.

MR. HARRIS: Splendid. So, he's in some of your classes, then?

RACHEL: No. He's in a... special program.

MR. and MRS. HARRIS look concerned.

MRS. HARRIS: A special program, dear?

RACHEL: It's an alternative school, actually.

MR. HARRIS: An alternative school? Is that, like, a school for kids who have been kicked out?

MRS. HARRIS: Oh, Rachel. A boy who's been kicked out of school? Honestly.

MR. and MRS. HARRIS's next two lines are spoken simultaneously.

MR. HARRIS: Aren't there any nice young men who HAVEN'T been kicked out of school?

MRS. HARRIS: (*goes into a semifit of despair*) Why does our daughter seem to gravitate toward the losers!

RACHEL: (*raises her voice to overpower them*) All right! All right! Enough! He's NOT a loser. He's special, okay? And I knew you wouldn't understand, which is why I didn't want to tell you to begin with. You're all so judgmental, I can't stand it!

MR. and MRS. HARRIS's next two lines are spoken simultaneously.

MR. HARRIS: (*to MRS. HARRIS*) I don't think we're judgmental. We're not judgmental, are we?

MRS. HARRIS: (*to MR. HARRIS*) Well, that's an awfully harsh word, isn't it?

RACHEL: It doesn't matter who I date. You're going to find something you hate about him no matter what.

CINDY: She's got a point.

RACHEL: (*touched, somewhat, that her sister has her back*) Thanks, Sis.

CINDY: Remember Robert? You HATED him. And for what?

MR. HARRIS: Well, let's see. For starters, he was twenty-two and had more children than I do.

CINDY: And Jerry. What was wrong with Jerry?

MRS. HARRIS: (*having trouble remembering*) Jerry? Oh, right. That was the one with all the tattoos.

RACHEL: By the way, Mom, EVERYONE has a tattoo these days.

MRS. HARRIS: Yes, dear. But not on their forehead.

MR. HARRIS: Your mother has a point—a nice back piece is one thing, but the forehead? That just screams, “I need attention! Won’t someone please give me some attention!”

CINDY: (*snarkily*) See? Rachel’s right. You guys don’t like anybody!

RACHEL: That’s it! I’m outta here. I’m going to find Ed and who knows? Maybe we’ll just run away together!

RACHEL, upset, starts walking toward the door as her parents plead with her, simultaneously.

MR. HARRIS: Your sister’s just being a bit of a rapsallion. Let’s not get crazy.

MRS. HARRIS: You always overreact, Rachel. I’m sure this Ed fellow is just fine.

As she’s about to exit, the doorbell rings. RACHEL stops for a second, taken off guard.

MRS. HARRIS: My, it’s busy today. Since you’re already there, be a dear, Rachel, and get that, won’t you?

RACHEL, pissed, opens the door. It’s STEWART again.

RACHEL: Stewart. What a surprise.

MR. HARRIS: Stewart? What happened to Ed? My lord, Rachel, how many boyfriends do you have?

RACHEL: (*yells*) Dad! Can it! (*to STEWART*) So nice to see you again. Like, minutes after the last time.

STEWART: (*elated*) I knew it! I wore you down! Your mom was right!

STEWART enters, wraps his arms around RACHEL and tries to hug her despite her resistance.

RACHEL: God, no, Stewart! Sarcasm, dude! Figure it out!

She fights him off. He immediately becomes depressed. Drops his head and arms.

STEWART: Oh. I see. My apologies. (*suddenly realizes he’s in their living room, stared at by the rest of the family*) Oh, hey Mrs. Harris. Mr. Harris. Cindy.

MR. & MRS. HARRIS & CINDY: (*in unison*) Stewart.

STEWART: (*all puppydogish*) I simply wanted to let you know that there’s a strange guy lurking around outside your house. By the

looks of him, he's either a raging alcoholic with the worst case of the flu, like, ever, or he's a zombie.

RACHEL: (*flips out, grabs STEWART, pleads with him*) Where, Stewart? Where was he?

STEWART: He was headed around the side of the house toward the backyard.

RACHEL: The backyard! I'll go through the kitchen!

RACHEL takes off in the opposite direction and exits.

CINDY: That would be Ed.

MRS. HARRIS: Thank you, Stewart, for keeping an eye out. It's very thoughtful.

STEWART: No problem, Mrs. H.

MRS. HARRIS: (*to MR. HARRIS*) Such a nice boy.

MR. HARRIS: (*to MRS. HARRIS*) He's no Ed, apparently.

Offstage, RACHEL can be heard calling out for ED.

CINDY: Oh, wait for it, Dad. Wait for it. One look at this guy and you'll be wishing Nicky was out of prison.

STEWART enters the threshold, then turns.

STEWART: Oh. And whomever he is, he has Fluffy. (*he turns back around, exits*) Bye, now.

MRS. HARRIS: Oh, good. I've been looking for that darn cat all day.

MR. HARRIS: That Fluffy, he IS a bit of a rascal, that one.

MR. and MRS. HARRIS share a lighthearted chuckle that stops the second ED emerges in the doorway. He's a zombie, with greenish skin and whatever gore is desired, in ripped clothes that look like he's been through a few months of a zombie apocalypse. Fluffy (a stuffed cat) is cradled in his arms. He's about to take a huge bite out of Fluffy's head when RACHEL comes up behind him, grabs him, and yanks him outside, out of the doorway, out of the sight of everyone in the house.

RACHEL: (*from offstage, frantically*) PUT THE CAT DOWN, ED! PUT... THE CAT... DOWN!

From offstage, the squealing and hissing of an agitated cat can be heard.

RACHEL: THREE HOURS EARLY, ED! THREE HOURS!

Suddenly, RACHEL emerges in the doorway, ED directly behind her. She is smiling and amazingly composed considering the fracas that just took place.

RACHEL: *(as calm as can be)* Mom. Dad. This, is Ed. Who, apparently, needs to get a damn watch.

MR. and MRS. HARRIS are stunned into silence. CINDY is visibly repulsed.

ED: *(raises his hand to say hi, casually)* Braaaaiins.

When RACHEL turns to look at ED, she notices he's got some of Fluffy's fur in his mouth.

RACHEL: *(wiping the cat hair out of his mouth, laughing uncomfortably)* Holy cats! My goodness, Ed. I told you that Fluffy doesn't like your kisses, silly. *(once he's clean)* Come on in. Meet the parents.

MRS. HARRIS: *(suddenly realizes how rude she's being, gets up, goes to ED)* Where in the world are our manners. Yes, come on in, Ed. It's good to meet you. Isn't it good to meet Ed, Cindy?

CINDY: It'd be good if he didn't try to eat our cat.

MR. HARRIS: *(stands)* Hello there, young man. Heard a lot about you. *(pauses)* Say, Rachel, why don't you give Ed a tour of the old homestead?

RACHEL: *(suspicious)* You want us to leave so you can talk about us.

MR. and MRS. HARRIS deliver their next lines at the same time.

MRS. HARRIS: Of course not.

MR. HARRIS: Of course.

RACHEL: Fine. I'll show him around, but when we get back, everyone better be nice.

MR. HARRIS: Of course, sweetheart. You two just go on and we'll get the room ready so we can all sit down and get to know one another.

RACHEL: *(to ED)* C'mon, Ed. I'll show you around.

RACHEL leads him offstage.

ED: (*follows her, stumbling around like a zombie*) Brains.

MR. HARRIS: (*as soon as RACHEL and ED are gone*) Okay, family. Huddle up. Let's go!

MRS. HARRIS comes over and puts her arm around her husband. CINDY, a lot more reluctantly, comes over and stands next to her mother.

MR. HARRIS: (*eyeballs CINDY*) Cindy?

CINDY: (*puts her arm around her mother with a heavy sigh*) Fine.

MR. HARRIS: Now, this Ed fellow. Is it just me or does he look... a little less than healthy?

MRS. HARRIS: He does seem a bit... disheveled, to say the least.

CINDY: Mom and Dad. Earth to Mom and Dad. Ed's a zombie.

MRS. HARRIS: Now, Cindy, let's not namecall. Ed's a bit lethargic and appears to have a limited vocabulary, but I wouldn't call him a zombie.

MR. HARRIS: Your mother's right, kiddo. Labels are wrong.

CINDY: It's not a label, Dad. He's a flesheater!

MRS. HARRIS: Cindy, dear, we all eat meat. It's not a crime.

CINDY: Not hamburger, Mom! Brains. They eat brains. Which explains why he hasn't attacked Rachel.

MR. HARRIS: All right. That's enough. Now, flesheater or not, Rachel likes this boy. And we all know what happens if we shun him.

MRS. HARRIS: We push her right into his arms. It's Nicky all over again.

MR. HARRIS: Precisely.

CINDY: What's in it for me?

MRS. HARRIS: Not seeing your sister eaten by a zombie?

CINDY: I don't see the downside.

MR. HARRIS: How about not seeing your phone disappear?

CINDY: (*suddenly changes her attitude*) I would love to help.

MR. HARRIS: Good choice. Now, here's the plan. (to MRS. HARRIS)
Honey, you play the sweet, supportive, caring card. Ed's not a bad zombie, he just needs some love. Probably won't be much of a stretch for you.

MRS. HARRIS: (*pleased*) Thank you, dear. I AM sweet, supportive, and caring, aren't I?

MR. HARRIS: Absolutely, my love. Now, me? I'll be the hardnosed, malecentric, pick your self up by your bootstraps Dad who doesn't want to but can't help but admire Ed's grit in overcoming the crappy hand life has dealt him. (to CINDY) Cindy?

CINDY: Ooh—I know. I'm the snarky little sister who makes fun of the parents in fake support of her big sis, making her think I'm on her side while, secretly, insidiously, and stealthily working to make her ask herself one simple question: How attractive can Ed be if YOU two like him?

MR. and MR. HARRIS look at CINDY like the proudest parents in the world. They speak their next lines simultaneously.

MR. HARRIS: You're good.

MRS. HARRIS: Impressive.

CINDY: Thanks. But I've gotta say, if this goes bad and this guy tries to take a bite out of my face, I'm jamming a pencil through his brain.

MR. HARRIS: Fair enough.

RACHEL: (*offstage*) And that's the kitchen. It's outdated but my parents are too cheap to get new stuff. Typical.

Upon hearing RACHEL's voice, MR. and MRS. HARRIS speak their next lines simultaneously.

MR. HARRIS: Cheap, my backside. Do she know how much cabinets cost?

MRS. HARRIS: Classical is not the same thing as outdated, thank you very much.

CINDY: (*leaving the huddle*) All right, all right. Break it up. She's coming.

They break the huddle and assume their seats, just as RACHEL and ED return.

RACHEL: Ed loves the place, Dad. He says it's real cozy.

ED: (*gives a thumbs up to MR. HARRIS*) Braaiins.

MR. HARRIS: Thanks, Ed. It's the product of a lot of hard work. Are you a fan of hard work, Ed? Do you have a job?

ED's about to answer when RACHEL shushes him.

RACHEL: (*to ED*) Don't even think of answering that, Ed. (*to MR. HARRIS*) Cool it with the interrogation, Dad. He just got here.

MRS. HARRIS: (*to MR. HARRIS*) She's right, dear. A little too much, too soon. (*to ED*) Now you just come right over here and have a seat. Make yourself at home.

MRS. HARRIS ushers ED over to the empty chair. RACHEL, following, stands behind it. It only takes a second for MRS. HARRIS to notice that ED may never get to the chair the way he's stumbling about.

MRS. HARRIS: (*goes to ED to help him*) Let me help you, dear.

RACHEL: (*grabs her mother's arm, holds her back*) No, no, Mom. Let him do it. He'll get over here, eventually. Just give him a minute. He doesn't like to be helped. It's a pride thing.

They all stare at ED as he labors around the room, trying to get to the chair. Once he does, he sits, exhausted.

MRS. HARRIS: Oh, well, isn't that nice. (*to MR. HARRIS*) See, dear? Ed's an independent man. Isn't that just wonderful?

CINDY: (*snarkily*) That's just wonderful.

MR. HARRIS: Actually, it is, Cindy. Ed's already learned a valuable lesson in life: You've got to do for yourself. No one's going to help you.

MRS. HARRIS: (*pats ED on the arm on her way around the chair and back to her seat next to MR. HARRIS*) Well, of course, I'd help you, dear, but I'm sure that's not what Mr. Harris means.

MRS. HARRIS sits.

MRS. HARRIS: So, Ed. Undead, huh? What's that like?

RACHEL: Mom!

ED groans and puts his hand on RACHEL as if to say, "No, no, dear. It's okay. It's a legitimate question."

ED: (*looks at MRS. HARRIS, puts his hands out, palms up, shakes his head slightly as if to say, "Not too bad. Good days, bad days."*) Ehhh, braaaaiiins.

MRS. HARRIS: People, for example. It's got to be hard to be around so many people and not... well... eat them. Am I right?

CINDY: Real smooth, Mom.

ED: (*astonished, really taken aback, points to himself as if to say, "Me? Eat people? Nah!" and vigorously shakes his head*) Braaaaiiins!

RACHEL: No, Mom! Ed DOES NOT eat people. He only eats animals.

ED nods in agreement.

RACHEL: Ed believes it's morally offensive to eat your friends and neighbors and classmates.

ED: (*nods in agreement, casually*) Brains.

MRS. HARRIS: Well, that's just great, Ed. Honestly. That shows a tremendous amount of self-control.

ED: (*visibly moved, almost to tears, puts a fist to his heart as if to say, "That means a lot to me"*) Berains.

MR. HARRIS: I have to agree. I've gotta say, Ed, I know we just met and all, but you seem like quality people, son. Is it too soon to have Ed's folks over and make this thing a dinner date?

ED frowns and drops his head in shame.

RACHEL: (*puts her hand on ED's shoulder in support*) No, Dad. That can't work. When Ed told his parents he wouldn't eat people anymore, they went berserk and kicked him out of the house. He's been living in the woods ever since.

MRS. HARRIS: (*moved*) Oh my word! That's terrible, dear. (*stands*) Why, you get over here this instant. Someone needs a hug.

MRS. HARRIS puts her arms out for ED.

ED: (*gestures as if to say, "Me? Really?"*) Brains?

MRS. HARRIS: C'mon, Ed. Bring it in.

CINDY: (*as ED rises and stumbles toward MRS. HARRIS*) I think I'm going to be sick.

RACHEL: Really, Mom. Is this necessary?

ED gets to MRS. HARRIS. They hug it out.

When MRS. HARRIS lets go, she stops, looks at ED, and puts her hand to his hair.

MRS. HARRIS: Aren't you just a good boy.

Pulling her hand away from his head, she comes away with a shock of his hair (that could have been placed in the collar of his shirt or her pocket, put in her hand before they hugged).

MRS. HARRIS: (noticing the hair) Oh my. It seems as though I've got some of your hair, dear.

ED: (shrugs as if to say, "Aw, don't worry about it. Happens all the time," holds his hand out for her to give it to him) Brains.

MRS. HARRIS: Right. Here you are, dear.

She hands him the hair and he sticks it in his pocket.

MR. HARRIS: Happens to the best of us, Ed. Lost a little on top, myself, over the years. Nothing to be ashamed of, son.

ED looks at MR. HARRIS, points at him then gives him the thumbs up as CINDY is dry heaving over the hair incident.

ED's in the act of sitting back down when, suddenly, the door flies open and STEWART rushes into the room, a huge cross in his hand.

STEWART: I'll save you, Mrs. Harris!

STEWART runs straight up to ED and jams the cross in his face. ED just shakes his head, like, "Seriously, dude? Are you an idiot?"

STEWART: Be gone, demon! Leave this family alone or face the wrath of Stewart the Just!

RACHEL: Stewart! What are you doing?!

STEWART: (ignores her completely, realizes his cross has no effect) No? Not intimidated by my cross, bloodsucker? Then try this!

From his back pocket, STEWART pulls a small spray bottle filled with water and begins spraying ED in the face. ED's reaction: He folds his arms and crosses one leg over the other.

STEWART: How's that feel, vampire? That's holy water, son! Burn, baby, burn! *(stops spraying once he realizes it's not having any effect, looks at the bottle)* Huh. I can't believe that didn't do it. I blessed it myself.

RACHEL: Hey, smart guy: Ed's not a vampire. And you're an idiot.

MRS. HARRIS: What on earth has gotten into you, Stewart?

STEWART: I was looking in your window a few minutes ago and saw—

MR. HARRIS: *(stands)* You were looking in our window? That's it, young man. *(moves toward STEWART)* You are NOT who I thought you were.

STEWART: But he was attacking Mrs. Harris! I saw it!

MR. HARRIS: What you saw was an act of compassion. Now, out you go.

CINDY: *(snarkily)* Bye, Stew.

As MR. HARRIS takes STEWART by the elbow, leading him to the door, ED sticks his tongue out at him.

MR. HARRIS: Out, you peeping Tom. *(pushes him over the threshold)* Stay off my property and stay away from my daughter!

STEWART: *(as the door closes behind him)* I could've sworn he was a vampire.

MRS. HARRIS: A vampire? That's ridiculous.

ED: *(gestures as if to say, "I know, right," mockingly)* Brains.

MR. HARRIS: *(coming back into the room)* Whew! Kicking delinquent youths out of the house really works up a thirst. Why don't Mrs. Harris and I whip into the kitchen and get us some drinks? Ed, how 'bout a cold one?

RACHEL: Dad!

MR. HARRIS: What? The man can't eat people. He just got attacked by our neighbor. He should be allowed to have a beer. What do you say, Ed?

ED: *(seeming perfectly cool with this)* Brains.

RACHEL: Mom, are you going to let Dad give Ed alcohol? What is wrong with you people?

MRS. HARRIS: (*gets up to join her husband*) Oh, lighten up, Rachel. We'll all have a drink, relax, and discuss all the activities we can do together now that you have a boyfriend we just love, love, love.

ED, moved almost to tears, pounds his heart twice and points to MRS. HARRIS as if to say, "Right back at ya."

MR. and MRS. HARRIS exit and, on his way out, MR. HARRIS makes eye contact with CINDY, nodding slightly, to tell her that it's her turn.

CINDY: Wow, Rach. Isn't it great that Mom and Dad just love, love, love Ed?

RACHEL: (*a little concerned, actually, thinking about it*) You know what? You'd think I'd be thrilled, but, for some reason, I... just don't feel comfortable with it. It's too much, ya know? Too weird.

CINDY: Got that right. At this rate, they'll be asking him over all the time. Dad'll have us all bowling together, going out to dinner. That is, if we can find a place that serves cat. (*to ED*) No offense, Ed.

ED: (*holds his hands out and shakes them as if to say, "None taken"*) Brains.

As CINDY talks, RACHEL, really starting to consider this, moves away from ED and sits on the couch.

CINDY: Yup. Somehow, Rach, this just doesn't seem as much fun, does it? No more sneaking out, no more making out in the shadows of the crappy driveway lighting. At this point, you might as well be dating Stewart. You can do algebra homework and go to orchestra concerts and—

Suddenly, the door flies open and STEWART enters, playing a violin (or, at least, running the bow over the strings). Everyone's attention goes to STEWART as he makes his way toward ED.

CINDY: Speak of the devil and the devil appears.

RACHEL: Stewart, what the hell are you doing?

STEWART: (*playing the whole time*) The monster is drawn to the music. It will mesmerize him and he'll follow me out. (*to ED*) Listen to the music, monster! It beckons you.

Like last time, ED just stares at STEWART like he's the biggest idiot on the planet.

CINDY: I hate to burst your bubble, Stew, but Ed's a zombie, not Frankenstein's monster. Not to mention the second my dad sees you in this house, again, he may shove that violin—

On the heels of CINDY's line, MR. and MRS. HARRIS reenter, a few bottles of beer in MR. HARRIS's hand. STEWART starts creeping toward the door.

MR. HARRIS: Who the hell is playing the violin in this house? You know how I feel about stringed instruments!

ED: (*confused, to RACHEL*) Brains?

RACHEL: Long story, Ed. Dad was cut from the orchestra in ninth grade. Never recovered.

ED: (*still confused*) Brains?

RACHEL: I know, right. What kind of school makes cuts in the orchestra?

MR. HARRIS: (*notices STEWART*) STEWART! I thought I kicked you out of this house! (*moves toward STEWART, stops by ED on the way, hands him both beers*) Hold these a sec, Ed. I'm gonna need both hands for this.

As MR. HARRIS makes his way toward STEWART, who seems frozen with fear, RACHEL intercedes, getting between STEWART and her father.

RACHEL: Wait, Dad! You're not going to kill Stewart, are you?

MR. HARRIS: Actually, yes. Yes, I am.

RACHEL: Because you hate him, right? Because he keeps breaking into our house, peeking in our windows, and trying to hurt Ed.

MR. HARRIS: Yes, yes. All of the above. Now, get out of the way so I can take that violin of his and—

RACHEL: That's it! Dad, you stay put for a second. (*to STEWART*) Stewart, you stay put, too. (*walks over to ED*) Ed, I'm sorry, but this just isn't working out. My parents... like you, and I'm just not ready to handle that.

ED: (*looks at her like, "You've got to be kidding me?"*) Braaaaaaiins!

RACHEL turns back to STEWART and takes his hand. He's as shocked as he was afraid of MR. HARRIS.

RACHEL: Let's go, Stewart. We're going out tonight.

All five of the following characters say their line simultaneously.

STEWART: Seriously?

MRS. HARRIS: Seriously?

MR. HARRIS: Seriously?

CINDY: Seriously?

ED: Brains?

RACHEL: (*pulls STEWART in the direction of the door*) Yes. Now let's go before I change my mind.

STEWART: What about my violin?

RACHEL: We'll drop it off at your house before we go.

STEWART: (*sheepishly*) But it goes in my bedroom.

RACHEL: (*as they reach the threshold*) Hear that, Dad?! We're going into Stewart's bedroom! With his VIOLIN! Ha!

They exit.

MR. and MRS. HARRIS look relieved.

MRS. HARRIS: (*goes to her husband, high fives him*) Nicely done. (*goes to CINDY, high fives her, although she does it a bit more begrudgingly*) Nicely done.

Seeing this, ED rises from his chair, sets the beers down on the table, and raises his hand, awaiting his high five.

MRS. HARRIS: (*to ED*) I'm sorry, dear, but no high five for you. You seem like a really nice zombie, but there's no way on God's green earth I'm letting you date my daughter. If you come anywhere near her, again, I will let Cindy drive a pencil through your skull.

ED: (*looks at her like, "Really? After you've been so nice?"*) Brains?

CINDY: (*stands, pulls a pencil from her pocket, raises it in the air*) Win some, lose some, kid. My sister's an idiot, but I don't want to see you chewing on her face. Capeesh?

ED raises his hands, disappointed, but not about to fight it. He walks to the door, stops, and turns back to the family.



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