



Sample Pages from
Close Encounters of the Undead Kind

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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



Close Encounters of the Undead Kind

The Support Group from Hell

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The Support Group from Hell

Cast

5W+3M

DR. TAMMY	Counselor
WENDY	Teen girl
VLADIMIR	Teen boy, very well dressed in clothes from another era, speaks with a thick Transylvanian accent
WOLFGANG	Teen boy with an absurdly crazy beard
HECUBA	Teen girl in all black
LUCY	Teen girl, pale, in ripped jeans and T-shirt, spattered with blood
FRANK	Teen boy in plain T-shirt and blazer, a few long scars on his face with stitches
JANET	Teen girl in completely normal clothes and a Batman mask

Lights up on a semicircle of eight folding chairs, DR. TAMMY sitting center, a clipboard in her hand with a piece of paper and a pen attached. Everyone but WENDY is seated as DR. TAMMY takes attendance, about to start their session.

WENDY enters, not sure if she's in the right place.

WENDY: Oh... hi there. Um... is this the teen support group?

DR. TAMMY: (overenthusiastic) It sure is. Are you new to the group?

WENDY: (very uncomfortable) Um... yeah. I guess so. I'm Wendy.

WENDY eyes the group and starts fixating on LUCY and her blood-spattered clothes. Once LUCY notices, she starts to rise out of her seat, making subtle moaning sounds, until VLADIMIR grabs her, pulling her back down.

Totally weirded out, WENDY moves away from LUCY.

DR. TAMMY: (*looks over the paper on her clipboard*) Wendy... Wendy... nope, no Wendy. But that's no problem, it wouldn't be the first time they added someone to the group without telling me.

WENDY: I'm sorry. They told me to—

DR. TAMMY: (*gets up, goes to her*) No, no, no, kiddo, it's not your fault. They do this all the time. You are most welcome here. (*leads her to the empty chair*) Now, just have a seat, and we'll get started.

DR. TAMMY sits.

DR. TAMMY: Hello, everyone. Welcome to group. Wendy is with us tonight. A new member. Let's all say hi, shall we?

Suddenly, everyone (but LUCY, who only moans) chants in unison, with varying degrees of enthusiasm.

ALL: Hi, Wendy.

WENDY, a bit overwhelmed, smiles weakly and waves ever-so-slightly.

DR. TAMMY: As you all know, I... am Dr. Tammy.

ALL: Hi, Dr. Tammy.

DR. TAMMY: Dr. Tammy. Your counselor. Your friend. Now, as I recall, our goal for this session was to bring in a key issue. Something we feel is holding us back. Does everyone remember that?

There are weak nods all around, except, of course, for WENDY.

DR. TAMMY: Good. Now, who wants to start?

Everyone sort of shrugs, slinks down a bit. No one wants to go. LUCY moans.

DR. TAMMY: C'mon, now, people. No healing without dealing, right?

No one responds.

DR. TAMMY: C'mon, kids. Say it with me, *no healing without dealing.*

ALL: (*with next to no enthusiasm, LUCY sort of moaning along*) No healing without dealing.

DR. TAMMY: I'm sorry. I can't hear you!

ALL: (*louder*) No healing without dealing.

DR. TAMMY: Now, that's better, people. Geez. We are not making a good impression on Wendy, now are we? You see, Wendy, here, in this group, we believe that there is no HEAL-ing, without DEAL-ing. (*looks at WENDY like a crazy person*) Know what I'm sayin'?

WENDY: (*like she's afraid to say anything other than yes*) Um... yes. Yes, I do. You have to... deal... to... heal.

DR. TAMMY: (*ecstatic*) Wendy, you have just made my day, girlfriend. Bless you. Now, who's ready to deal, people?

FRANK: All right, I'll go first.

DR. TAMMY: Thank you, Frank. Let... us... DEAL.

FRANK: My key issue is with my dad. He's never there for me. Day and night, night and day, he's down in the basement... (*uses his fingers to make air quotes*) "working." It's ridiculous. I mean, when I was born, we spent a lot of time together. Now, it just doesn't seem like he cares anymore.

DR. TAMMY: Sounds like you don't value what your dad does for a living.

FRANK: Well, I would, but he's never doing it. Shouldn't a doctor be in an office seeing patients? Of course he should. My dad's a doctor. Is he seeing patients? No. He's in the basement playing around with his toys.

HECUBA: His toys? Like what? What's he got down there?

FRANK: It's a lab. He's got all kinds of chemicals and beakers full of green liquid and who the hell knows what all of it is. It's not the stuff that bugs me—it's that he never comes up for air. One time, I got really mad and took off. I was gone for, like, several days before he even came looking for me.

WOLFGANG: Where'd you go?

FRANK: Oh, here and there. I started out in the woods. Met a cute little kid by this old well. Then I hung out with this old dude in his cottage for a couple days. No biggie. I mean, it's not like Dad had to come get me from the polar ice caps or anything, but still.

Everyone groans a bit, in sympathy, LUCY a bit more than the others.

VLADIMIR: (*pulls a cigarette out from behind his ear and a lighter from his coat pocket*) Nothing worse than an absentee parent, dude.

FRANK, seeing the lighter, totally flips out, getting out of his chair and grabbing VLADIMIR by the throat. HECUBA slaps the lighter out of VLADIMIR's hand.

HECUBA: What the hell, Vlad?! You KNOW he doesn't like fire!

LUCY moans, JANET springs into action, putting FRANK in a headlock, and DR. TAMMY rises to her feet.

DR. TAMMY: It's okay, Frank. The fire's gone. The fire's gone.

FRANK relaxes and JANET releases him from the headlock, patting him on the back before sitting back down.

FRANK: I'm good. I'm good. Thanks for the restraint, Batman.

JANET: *(in a low, raspy voice like Batman of the recent films)* No problem.

FRANK: Sorry, Vlad.

VLADIMIR: No, no, man. It's totally my bad. I've been trying to quit for a thousand years but it's just not happenin'.

At this point, WENDY looks as concerned as a person can be. She looks like she's afraid these people may kill her at any moment. She moves her chair back just a bit.

DR. TAMMY: Okay, now. Little bit of excitement there. Good for us. Now, Vladimir, since you brought it up, why don't you go next? Perhaps we could address your smoking?

VLADIMIR: No, Dr. Tammy. Compared to my drinking habit, the smoking's a joke.

DR. TAMMY: Drinking it is. How bad are we talking?

VLADIMIR: *(sarcastically)* Let's see. Is having to drink every day a problem?

WOLFGANG: Yeah, man. That's a problem. How long's it been?

VLADIMIR: Since I can remember. But the worst is the shame. It's like, something I have to do at night, ya know? In the dark. You find a dark alley by a bar any night of the week and you'll find me in it, drinking.

HECUBA: That's just sad, dude.

WENDY slowly raises her hand, hesitant to participate.

DR. TAMMY: Wendy! Yes! I'm so glad you feel comfortable enough to participate. It's cool that you raised your hand, but as you can see, we're all friends, here, and just jump right in there when we've got something to say. So, what's on your mind?

WENDY: I, um, just wanted to ask Vladimir if, um, he goes to the bars with his friends. Because, well, sometimes it's your friends that are part of the problem.

VLADIMIR: No, I never drink my friends, but I see your point.

WENDY seems confused for a second, but gets it together before responding.

WENDY: Oh. Well, drinking alone is a bad sign. I'm sorry.

VLADIMIR: It's not your fault. It's mine. My... curse.

DR. TAMMY: Vladimir, can I just say that I'm proud of you? As Dr. Phil would say—

Everyone but WENDY (and LUCY, who simply moans) chants in unison; they've done this before.

ALL: Dr. Phil be praised.

DR. TAMMY: —you can't change what you don't acknowledge. Now, we know that drinking problems can be genetic. Any serious drinkers in the family?

VLADIMIR: Are you kidding? My dad drinks like a college freshman at a kegger. About ten pints a night.

Everyone recoils, aware that that's a lot.

WENDY: I'm sorry... pints?

DR. TAMMY: Oh, of course, Wendy. Vlad's dad lived in the UK. Right, Vlad?

VLADIMIR: Yes, he did. Lifetimes ago. A bloody nightmare, I'm afraid. He drank so much there that they ran him out of the place.

HECUBA: He was kicked out of the country for drinking? Now that's a drinking problem!

VLADIMIR: I know, right?

DR. TAMMY: I don't know how anyone else feels, but I think somebody needs a hug. (to VLADIMIR) Now, get over here and let the big mama bear get her claws on ya.

She stands and holds her arms out, awaiting a hug. Reluctantly, VLADIMIR walks over and hugs her.

After it goes on long enough to become awkward, VLADIMIR pulls his head away, then takes a nice, long look at DR. TAMMY's neck before going in for the bite.

DR. TAMMY doesn't notice as HECUBA jumps out of her seat, grabs VLADIMIR, and pulls him away.

HECUBA: (ushers him back to his chair) Okay, okay, big guy. Let's just have a seat.

DR. TAMMY: (sits back down) Okay, then. Who's next?

WOLFGANG: Well, I guess I'll go, 'cause I can kinda relate to Vlad. I'm a bit of a night owl, too. Problem is, I'll, like, go to bed and when I wake up, it'll be, like, a couple days later.

Everyone oohs.

WOLFGANG: And I'll be, like, in the woods.

Everyone ahs.

WOLFGANG: And, I'll be, like, naked.

Everyone oohs.

WOLFGANG: And bloody.

Everyone ews.

WOLFGANG: It's pretty messed up. And you wanna know the bizarre part of it?

Everyone looks at him funny, as if this could get any more bizarre.

WOLFGANG: When I wake up, I can't remember a thing that happened.

VLADIMIR: Sounds like you're partying pretty hard.

HECUBA: Sounds like narcolepsy. Well, um, except for the blood. I don't think that's normal.

DR. TAMMY: She's right, Wolfgang. As Dr. Phil likes to say—

ALL: Dr. Phil be praised—

DR. TAMMY: If what is happening isn't normal, admit it.

JANET: (*in the Batman voice*) I, too, am out quite a bit at night. I'll keep an eye out for you, Wolfgang. But know this: As the Dark Knight, if this substance you're covered in is, indeed, blood, you may not want to see me. (*steps up on her chair, hunkers down*) From my perch above this city, I see all. And I will do my duty. I will dispense justice. I am the Batman.

WOLFGANG: (*a little weirded out*) Um, thanks, Batman.

JANET: And, of course, the fact that you're naked. There's that, too. Public indecency. The people of Gotham are good people. Decent people. They don't need to be seeing that.

JANET sits back down.

HECUBA: Got that right.

Suddenly, LUCY moans.

DR. TAMMY: Yes, Lucy? Go right ahead.

LUCY: (*since "brains" is the only word she uses, she should inflect it in different ways to indicate a change in meaning*) Brains. Braaaaaaiiiins. Brains.

DR. TAMMY: Ah, yes, Lucy. Good point. We should remember not to discriminate against those who are covered in blood. Thanks for reminding us.

Everyone but WENDY, who has no idea what is happening, apologizes to LUCY.

LUCY: Braaaaaiins.

DR. TAMMY: Oh, you're welcome, dear. Now, let's see. Who else? Hecuba? What have you got for us tonight?

HECUBA: Well, it's my mom. It's stupid, really. Not a big thing, but still.

DR. TAMMY: Go ahead, dear. No issue is too small to share.

HECUBA: So, I keep my broom in the hall closet, right? You know, so it's right there when I need it. The other day, I go in there to grab my coat, and I can't find my broom. I start panicking, ya know, 'cause I love that broom. It's old, I know, but it's worn in, right? Besides, it's my first freaking broom! I look around in there and what do I see in the corner of the closet? A Swiffer! My MOTHER

replaced my FAVORITE BROOM with a FREAKING SWIFFER!
Now, what in the hell am I supposed to do with a freaking Swiffer?

WOLFGANG: Well, that depends. Is it one of the dry ones, that's just a duster or is it one of those wet ones you can use on tile and wood floors and stuff?

HECUBA: *(stares at him with a death glare)* You're hysterical, Wolfgang. It's the kind that with a wave of my hand I could shove right up your—

DR. TAMMY: Whoa, there. Wolfgang's sorry, aren't you, Wolfgang? We all know how much you love your broom.

WOLFGANG: Sorry, Hecuba. I was just messing with you.

WENDY: My mom does that too.

Everyone looks at her, surprised she's said something.

WENDY: You know... makes me clean.

Everyone keeps staring at her as if she's speaking a foreign language.

WENDY: With... a Swiffer.

WENDY's starting to get more uncomfortable as she notices they're staring.

WENDY: When... I... um... don't want to.

Still staring.

FRANK: Awk-ward.

DR. TAMMY: *(right on the heels of FRANK's line)* So, Wendy. About that. Is that something you'd like to talk about? Your mom?

WENDY: Um... sure. Actually, she's the reason I'm here. She made me come here. Well, that's not why I'm here, because of her. I'm here because... *(pauses)* there's this boy.

Everyone ews.

WENDY: My boyfriend. Well, I was dating him for a pretty long time, ya know, about a month, and then, one day, out of the blue, he breaks up with me.

Everyone ohs.

JANET: *(as straight as can be)* My girlfriend fell in love with the district attorney who later became Two-Face after the Joker blew her to smithereens.

Everyone stops. Stares at JANET like, "Where in the hell did that just come from?"

VLADIMIR: *That sucks.*

DR. TAMMY: Thank you, Batman. I'm sure that makes Wendy feel a little better, by comparison. Wendy? You were saying?

WENDY: It's not so much that he broke up with me; it's the way he did it. By text.

Everyone oohs.

WENDY: *(stands, starts to pace around the stage as she talks)* Yeah. He said that it was fun and all, ya know, but that he's gotta be free. That I was just... tying him down.

Everyone ews.

WENDY: But me? I say... I say... that he's a JERK!

LUCY raises her fist in the air and moans, approvingly.

FRANK: You go, girl.

WENDY: I hate him. He's dead to me.

VLADIMIR: Do you want him to be dead? 'Cause...

DR. TAMMY: Vladimir... thank you, but no.

VLADIMIR: Just trying to help.

WENDY: Dead? Dead? No. I want him... to suffer.

HECUBA: Ooh, now you're talking. If you've got a hair sample and the eye of a newt, I can totally make that happen.

DR. TAMMY: Hecuba, please. A little too supportive.

HECUBA shrugs.

DR. TAMMY: So, Wendy. Clearly, you've been hurt by this boy. And that's terrible. But you're here. Talking about it. Deeeaaaling with it. And that is something to be very, very proud of.

WENDY: Doesn't feel like it.

DR. TAMMY: (*gets up, goes over to WENDY and ushers her back into her chair*) I know, dear. Breakups are never easy. Why, when I was your age, there was a boy who broke my heart. (*leaves WENDY, strolls downstage, center stage, increasingly melodramatic*) His name: Fernando. His game: breaking... my... heart. Oh, sure, there was the passion. The... endless nights of...

FRANK: (*stands*) We get the picture, Dr. Tammy. Thanks so much.

DR. TAMMY: (*comes back to reality*) Oh, I'm sorry, kids. Just got a little too much in my head, there, for a second.

VLADIMIR: (*to WENDY*) Yeah... she does this every once and a while. We try to let her go, but sometimes, she goes a smidge too far.

DR. TAMMY: (*sits back down*) Anyway, Wendy. The point is, we've all been there. And we've all survived it. And I have a feeling that you will too. Right, group?

Everyone gives some form of support, like, "Oh, sure," or "Totally," except for LUCY, who moans, in a supportive way.

WENDY: (*genuinely touched*) Wow. Um... thanks, guys. I really appreciate the support. Ya know, I gotta say, I was very nervous about coming here, but... I dunno... you all have been so nice and, I just—

DR. TAMMY: (*ecstatic*) You have made my day, Wendy! Oh, it's just the best thing in the world when we help someone, isn't it? Just the best. Now, since we're running out of time, I think it only proper to ask you, now that you've accepted us, what sort of monster you are. For the record, you know, because I didn't get your paperwork ahead of time.

WENDY: (*genuinely confused*) Mon... ster?

DR. TAMMY: Oh, I'm sorry. Some find the term *monster* pejorative. Um... let's see... creature, entity, paranormal figure?

WENDY: I... I still have no idea what you're talking about.

DR. TAMMY: Are you a demon, or some sort of wraith, ooh, or maybe a reincarnated spirit seeking vengeance from the wrongs done to her in a previous life?

WENDY: (*to VLADIMIR*) Is this part of the therapy? 'Cause I am totally lost here.

Beggar's Night

Cast

3W+2M+2 Either

SAMANTHA	Teen girl
CLAIRE	Teen girl
JAMES	Teen boy
TRICK OR TREATER 1	Teen boy or girl
TRICK OR TREATER 2	Teen boy or girl
NECO (pronounced <i>Neck-oh</i>)	Tween girl
AKELDAMA	Teen boy

Lights up on a living room with a couch, chair, an end table, and a coffee table.

SAMANTHA and CLAIRE sit on the couch as if they're watching television. They're sharing popcorn from a large bowl. On the coffee table sits a few drinks and a bowl of candy for trick or treaters, filled exclusively with Reese's peanut butter cups.

SAMANTHA: How bad does it suck that we're here passing out candy to the stupid ten kids who'll show up tonight when we could be at that party?

CLAIRE: Kinda sucks, but you didn't really wanna go anyway. Bobby Summers is a jerk and all they're gonna do is get drunk and make fun of kids like us. Then the cops'll show up and no one will get in trouble because god forbid one of the football players can't play this Friday.

SAMANTHA: Wow, Claire. I didn't know you cared so much.

CLAIRE: I'm just sayin' that those guys are jerks and don't deserve us at their stupid party.

SAMANTHA: Right. Plus the fact that we weren't invited.

CLAIRE: Actually, we were *disinvited*. Bobby was telling Britney about it and when I said, "Oh, cool. I've got the best costume ever," Bobby rolled his eyes, turned to look at me and said, "Sorry,

Karen. But it's a private party, okay? Have fun trick or treating—with all the other little kids."

SAMANTHA: (*leans forward*) He called you Karen?

CLAIRE: Yup. Idiot doesn't even know my name.

SAMANTHA: That's just sad. What a jerk.

CLAIRE: I know, right. Screw those guys.

SAMANTHA: (*raises her glass toward CLAIRE for a toast*) Screw those guys.

They touch glasses in solidarity, drink, then lean back and sigh.

SAMANTHA: Still, I think it'd be cool to—

CLAIRE: I know, Sam. I know. Let's just sit back, watch a scary movie, and do our best to handle the five trick or treaters you're gonna get tonight.

SAMANTHA: Five? You're dreaming. Last year, we got two. TWO. My mom buys twenty bags of candy, gives the two kids we get, like, twenty pieces of it, then eats the rest. THEN, she says, "Oh, my. Why do I always buy so much candy?" Gee, I dunno, Mom. Maybe 'cause you want to eat it? 'Cause it's candy and not, like, broccoli?

CLAIRE: (*smiles*) No wonder they went out tonight. You're downright hostile.

SAMANTHA: They call it date night. It's disgusting. I'm glad they're out doing... whatever it is they do... somewhere I don't have to see it. I encouraged them to go.

CLAIRE: So you could spend some time with your best friend, right?

SAMANTHA: Well, sure. But mostly because watching them snuggle on the couch makes me wanna puke up the fifty Reese's cups I've had since they left.

CLAIRE: I hear ya. Hey, maybe that should be your Halloween display: Push the couch up against the big window so the kids coming up the walk can see your dad giving your mom a back rub. Happy Halloween, kids! Scared?

SAMANTHA: (*laughs*) Not a bad idea. But then again, there's a difference between giving kids a good scare and scarring them for life.

CLAIRE: True dat.

SAMANTHA: (*grabs the remote from the end table and starts hitting buttons, pointing it toward an imaginary television in front of them*) So, what'll it be?

CLAIRE: Ooh, stop. That's the second-to-last *Twilight* movie. The one where Bella has the baby.

SAMANTHA: Seriously? You like that crap?

CLAIRE: Yeah, yeah. It's so bad it's good. Besides, you know how many times Taylor Lautner takes his shirt off in this movie?

SAMANTHA: Please. Like I'm supposed to be impressed by—

CLAIRE: (*goes into an immediate frenzy, pointing at the "screen"*) Ooh! Ooh! There it is! Look at those abs, Sam! Tell me those aren't the hottest abs you've ever seen!

SAMANTHA: (*stares, changes her tune*) Huh. Guess you're right. Nice abs.

CLAIRE: (*grabs the bowl of popcorn, starts eating*) Of course I'm right. I know my abs, Sam. Question me on a lot of things, but not on my abs.

SAMANTHA: And suddenly it dawns on me why we're not being invited to more parties.

CLAIRE: Nice, Sam. Very nice. Keep it up and you'll be handing out candy alone tonight.

SAMANTHA: No, I won't. I invited James to come over. He just couldn't make it 'til a little later.

CLAIRE: (*visibly upset*) James?! Oh, god, Sam. Why?

SAMANTHA: What's your problem with James? I thought you liked him.

CLAIRE: It's not that I don't like James; it's just that James is more socially awkward than we are.

SAMANTHA: C'mon, Claire. Give the guy a break. He's just shy. Besides, he overheard me talking about handing out candy tonight and, unlike *some* people, when he begged to be included, I wasn't about to tell him that it was a private party.

CLAIRE: Fair enough. So when's the official start time for trick or treating?

SAMANTHA: (*checks her phone for the time*) Actually, it started a half hour ago. Told you we wouldn't get anybody.

Suddenly, the doorbell rings.

CLAIRE: Sounds like you just got somebody.

SAMANTHA: Huh. Can't believe it.

SAMANTHA gets up, grabs the bowl of candy, and walks stage left as if answering the door. CLAIRE stays put, eating popcorn and watching TV.

Somewhere near the edge of the stage, SAMANTHA is met by TRICK OR TREATER 1 and 2, teens wearing jeans, a T-shirt, and crappy masks. They carry plastic grocery bags for their candy.

TRICK OR TREATER 1 & 2: (*in unison, with no enthusiasm whatsoever*)
Trick or treat.

SAMANTHA just stands there, staring at them; she can't believe kids her age are trick or treating.

SAMANTHA: Seriously, guys? What are you, like, sixteen?

TRICK OR TREATER 1: It's Beggar's Night, dude. And we're beggars.

TRICK OR TREATER 2: Yeah.

They push their bags a little farther forward.

SAMANTHA: It's *what* night?

TRICK OR TREATER 1: Beggar's Night.

TRICK OR TREATER 2: Dude.

SAMANTHA: Don't you mean, *Halloween*?

TRICK OR TREATER 1: The term, *Beggar's Night*, is regional.

TRICK OR TREATER 2: Yeah. Our region.

SAMANTHA: And what region would that be? I've never heard anyone refer to Halloween as Beggar's Night. Like, in my life.

TRICK OR TREATER 1: What part, may we ask, is tripping you up?
Beggar's, as in, we're begging for candy?

TRICK OR TREATER 2: Or *Night*, as in, it's not daytime right now?

SAMANTHA: (*a little taken aback by their rudeness*) Look, guys, there's no need to—

TRICK OR TREATER 1: If you prefer, we could call it Samhain—

TRICK OR TREATER 2: or All Saints' Eve—

TRICK OR TREATER 1: or—

SAMANTHA: (*annoyed, now*) Guys! Forget it. It doesn't matter. Beggar's Night. Fine. (*sarcastically*) It's regional. (*looks them over pretty good*) Say, aren't you two a little old to be trick or treating?

TRICK OR TREATER 1: One is never too old to beg for candy...

TRICK OR TREATER 2: on Beggar's Night.

SAMANTHA: Not to mention, *kids*, that you appear to have no costumes except for a mask.

TRICK OR TREATER 1: Right.

TRICK OR TREATER 2: We're *masked* beggars.

SAMANTHA: (*frustrated as hell*) Ya know what? Who cares. Here. (*chucks one piece of candy into each of their bags*) Happy Halloween. Beggar's Night. Whatever you're calling it this year.

She turns to walk away.

TRICK OR TREATER 1 & 2: (*in unison*) Ahem!

SAMANTHA turns back around.

SAMANTHA: (*annoyed*) Yes?

TRICK OR TREATER 1: One piece? Seriously? I don't know if you've noticed, but there ain't no other trick or treaters on this street, dude.

TRICK OR TREATER 2: Nope.

TRICK OR TREATER 1: Yours is, like, the only house within a block with its light on.

TRICK OR TREATER 2: Yup.

SAMANTHA stares at them like she may kill them both. Pause.

TRICK OR TREATER 1: And... um... it's—

TRICK OR TREATER 2: Beggar's Night.

On the heels of the last line, SAMANTHA throws a few more pieces of candy into each bag.

SAMANTHA: There. Now, get outta here before I make it so this is your last Halloween. Like, ever.

TRICK OR TREATER 1: That's harsh, dude.

TRICK OR TREATER 2: Way harsh.

TRICK OR TREATERS 1 & 2 turn and walk away.

SAMANTHA: *(calls out to them)* You're welcome!

She turns, starts walking back to the couch, and sets the bowl of candy down on the table.

CLAIRE: What took so long? They ask for directions to your neighbor's house?

SAMANTHA: No. They were, like, sixteen. And they had the nerve to ask for more than one piece of candy!

CLAIRE: Well, you know what they say: It's Beggar's Night.

SAMANTHA stares at CLAIRE.

SAMANTHA: *(sarcastically)* Really. Haven't heard that one. How's the movie going?

CLAIRE: Bella and Edward just—

The doorbell rings.

CLAIRE: Wow. I thought you said no one ever comes to your neighborhood.

SAMANTHA: *(grabs the candy bowl, gets up)* They usually don't. *(walks toward the door)* Maybe these kids won't be old enough to drive.

She opens the door to see TRICK OR TREATER 1 & 2, who've traded masks.

TRICK OR TREATER 1 & 2: *(in unison, with no enthusiasm whatsoever)* Trick or treat.

SAMANTHA: Real funny, guys. You're hilarious. I think I'll call the police and tell them two teenage losers in masks are terrorizing small children.

SAMANTHA starts to slam the door.

TRICK OR TREATER 1 & 2: (*as SAMANTHA's slamming the door*) But it's Beggar's Night!

SAMANTHA: (*turns, walks back to the couch*) I swear to god, if those guys ring that doorbell one more time, there's gonna be a murder tonight.

CLAIRE: Same guys?

SAMANTHA: (*sets the candy bowl down, sits, takes a drink*) Same guys.

CLAIRE: That's pretty lame. But, to be fair, Sam, your house is the only one on the block—

SAMANTHA: (*glares at CLAIRE*) Not cool, Claire.

The doorbell rings.

SAMANTHA sits there for a second, about to go ballistic.

SAMANTHA: (*jumps up from the couch, heads offstage*) That's it.

CLAIRE: Where are you going? You've got costumed children out there, hungry for candy.

The doorbell rings again.

In no time, SAMANTHA returns, storming past the couch, a butcher knife in hand.

CLAIRE: (*suddenly concerned*) Whoa! Sam? What are you doing?

SAMANTHA: (*headed for the door*) They want Halloween? (*raises the knife*) I got their Halloween.

SAMANTHA throws open the door, the knife poised in the air like she's ready to bring it down on somebody's face. JAMES is standing there, completely horrified. He shrieks loud enough to wake the dead.

The second she notices it's JAMES, she flips out.

SAMANTHA: OH MY GOD! James, I'm so sorry!

She goes to put her hand on him, knife still in her other hand, and he backs up.

JAMES: Knife! Knife! Knife!

SAMANTHA suddenly remembers she's holding a knife in the air, turns, and runs to the table to put the knife

down. *CLAIRE turns to watch all of this—it's certainly more entertaining than the movie.*

SAMANTHA: Sorry! Sorry! Sorry!

She rushes back to the door where JAMES hasn't moved an inch, his eyes as wide as Frisbees.

SAMANTHA: It's okay, James. I swear. I'm not going mental or anything. Come on in.

JAMES is paralyzed.

SAMANTHA: *(waves her hands in front of his face)* Oh no. Not good.

CLAIRE! I think I killed James! Little help!

CLAIRE gets up and goes over to them, a few kernels of popcorn still in her hand that she nonchalantly eats on her way over.

CLAIRE: *(pulls up, assesses the situation)* Oh, yeah. He's dead. Way to go, Sam.

CLAIRE turns around, walks back, and sits down on the couch.

SAMANTHA: Thanks, Claire. Big help.

CLAIRE: I'm not the one who opened the door with a butcher knife in my hand.

SAMANTHA: *(as she goes around behind JAMES, puts her arms under his armpits, tilts him back, and drags him inside)* It's Halloween, Claire. You've got to expect a certain amount of knives in your face.

CLAIRE: What are you doing, now?

SAMANTHA drags him over to the couch where she places him next to CLAIRE, who makes no effort to move.

SAMANTHA: I'm not leaving him outside!

CLAIRE: *(looks more closely at JAMES's face)* Doesn't look good, Sam. I think he needs mouth-to-mouth.

SAMANTHA: NO ONE's doing mouth-to-mouth. On ANYONE.

He just needs... a few minutes. *(bites her lip nervously)* To, um... collect himself.

CLAIRE: Whatever you say, doc.

SAMANTHA: But just to be safe, I'm gonna check the first-aid kit in the kitchen. Maybe there are some smelling salts or something.

SAMANTHA exits.

As soon as she's offstage, the doorbell rings.

CLAIRE looks toward where SAMANTHA left, as if she's perfectly happy to wait until SAMANTHA comes back to get the door.

The doorbell rings again.

CLAIRE looks a little more impatient. A bit annoyed.

The doorbell rings again.

CLAIRE: (gets up, grabs the candy bowl, heads for the door in a huff) Don't worry about it, Sam. I got this one.

The doorbell rings again before CLAIRE gets there.

CLAIRE: All right, all right. I'm almost there. Geez.

CLAIRE opens the door and, standing before her is NECO, in plain clothes with no trick or treat bag, and what appears to be blood smeared around her mouth and chin. In one hand, she's holding one of the masks worn by TRICK OR TREATER 1 OR 2.

They just stare at one another for a few seconds.

CLAIRE: Uh... hey, kid. Um... trick or treat?

NECO: May I use your restroom facilities?

CLAIRE: Uh... sure. Why not?

NECO: You have to invite me in or I cannot enter the premises.

CLAIRE: (confused) Yeah. Right. Um... please. Come in.

CLAIRE gestures for NECO to enter.

NECO strolls in like she owns the place, stops by the couch for a second to take a good look at JAMES, then turns back toward CLAIRE, who is still standing by the door, wondering what this kid's deal is.

NECO: (turns toward CLAIRE) So, the restroom facilities?

CLAIRE: (*comes out of her stupor*) Oh, um, right. It's just through there. (*indicates a direction other than where SAMANTHA left the stage earlier*) Second door on the right. Can't miss it.

CLAIRE closes the door as NECO exits.

As soon as NECO exits, SAMANTHA returns, empty-handed.

SAMANTHA: No luck on the smelling salts.

SAMANTHA goes over to JAMES. She grabs one of his hands and lifts up his arm. Lets it fall. Nothing.

SAMANTHA: I just don't understand. What are we supposed to do with him?

CLAIRE: (*moves over to the couch, sits*) Oh, he'll be fine. If he's not conscious by the time Bella has the baby, I'll call 911.

SAMANTHA: You're not making me feel better, Claire.

CLAIRE: Fine. Why don't you move him into one of the bedrooms. Put him on a bed. Let him sleep it off. He'll come to eventually.

SAMANTHA: He'll certainly be more comfortable.

SAMANTHA grabs JAMES's arms again. Stops.

SAMANTHA: If you feel like helping, ya know, don't let me stop you.

CLAIRE: Thanks. I'm good. (*as SAMANTHA starts dragging JAMES off in a direction different than where NECO went*) I'll stay here in case you get any trick or treaters.

SAMANTHA: (*almost offstage, now*) We're not getting any trick or treaters, Claire.

CLAIRE: Not true. Had one a few minutes ago.

A few moments later, SAMANTHA re-enters.

SAMANTHA: Wait a sec. Did you just say you had one a few minutes ago?

CLAIRE: Yeah. I totally took care of it.

SAMANTHA: It wasn't those older kids again was it? The two I wanted to stab in the face?

CLAIRE: Nah. It was a littler one.

SAMANTHA: Oh. Cool. I hope you gave the kid a lot of candy.

CLAIRE: Nope. She didn't want any candy. It's pretty weird, actually. She just wanted to use the bathroom.

SAMANTHA: She wanted to use the bathroom.

CLAIRE: Yup. That was it. No bag. No costume. Just wanted the bathroom. Oh, but she called it the *restroom facilities*.

SAMANTHA: Huh. That is pretty weird. Don't feel bad that you told her to buzz off; I'm sure she had an older brother or sister or something to get her home before she peed herself.

CLAIRE: I didn't tell her to buzz off. I let her in. (*smiles like an idiot*) *Invited* her in, in fact.

SAMANTHA: You did what?

CLAIRE: I let her in. She's in the bathroom right now. As a matter of fact, you may want to check on her; she's been in there a while.

SAMANTHA: What the hell, Claire?! Does my house look like a public bathroom?

As SAMANTHA starts the last line, NECO enters, stopping a few feet behind SAMANTHA, who doesn't hear her come in; she no longer has blood on her face but is still holding the mask in her hand. At the same time, CLAIRE tries to indicate to SAMANTHA that the kid is right behind her.

SAMANTHA: Are you out of your mind? What if the kid's sick or something? Or— (*just now figures out what CLAIRE's been trying to tell her, but not in enough time to stop what she's saying*) some kind of psycho... (*turns, slowly*) path?

SAMANTHA immediately goes into friendly, I-didn't-mean-what-I-just-said mode while NECO looks at her with daggers for eyes.

SAMANTHA: Hey, there, sweetie. How cute are you?

NECO: I'm not cute and my name's not sweetie. It's Neco.

SAMANTHA: Oh. Neco. That's... interesting.

NECO: It's not interesting. It's Latin. It means *kill*.

SAMANTHA: (*not taking her eyes off the kid*) Did ya get that, Claire? The name's Neco. Which means *kill* in Latin.

CLAIRE: Oh, yeah. I got that. Not interesting. Nope. *(comes over by SAMANTHA, whispers loudly to her)* But pretty creepy.

SAMANTHA: *(still smiling at the kid who, as of yet, hasn't changed expression an iota, whispers loudly back to CLAIRE)* You let her in, dummy. *(to NECO)* Cool name. Well, now that you've used the potty and all, I think it's time we—

NECO: Potty? Do you have any idea how old I am? You people need to learn to respect your elders.

SAMANTHA and CLAIRE look at one another for a second in utter cluelessness.

SAMANTHA: So, you're older than you look, then? That's good. I'd hate to think you're out trick or treating by yourself if you're—

NECO: I'm hundreds of years old, *girl*. I'm simply trapped in this body because I was this age when I was turned.

NECO moves past them and seats herself in the chair next to the couch. She places the mask on her lap, face down.

NECO: I've eaten too much and I need to rest. What are we viewing on this television screen?

CLAIRE returns to her usual spot on the couch, and SAMANTHA walks over to NECO.

SAMANTHA: Wait a second. I'm still working on *turned*. Like, into what?

NECO: A vampire, you simpleton.

SAMANTHA: A vampire?

NECO: Do I stutter? A vampire. Bloodsucker. Child of the night. Most nights I just sit around and wonder how in the world I am to be eternally surrounded by you people. Let's face it: There are only so many of you I can drink at a time.

SAMANTHA makes eye contact with CLAIRE and mouths, WHAT THE HELL?

CLAIRE's response is the universal sign for crazy: moving her index finger in a circular motion on the side of her head.

SAMANTHA: Just how much candy have you eaten tonight, Neco?

NECO: (*indignant*) None, you ridiculous adolescent. I told you; I thirst only for blood.

SAMANTHA: Sure. Of course you do. So what's up with the mask, then?

CLAIRE: Yeah, and the fake blood that was on your face when you came in here?

SAMANTHA: Fake blood? She had fake blood on her face when she got here? Who puts fake blood on their face and covers it with a mask?

NECO: Fake blood? It was no such thing. I needed to clean my face after dinner, hence my asking to use your facilities.

CLAIRE: Right. What'd you have for dinner? Barbecue ribs? 'Cause your face was a mess, kiddo.

NECO: I suppose I could have barbecued his ribs, but his blood was more than sufficient.

SAMANTHA: (*getting more concerned by the second, the weirder this gets*) Whose... blood?

NECO: The man-child who formerly wore this.

NECO holds up the mask. SAMANTHA recognizes it immediately.

SAMANTHA: Oh... my... god.

NECO: I was hungry. He was annoying. The mask is, as masks go, not completely disinteresting. He no longer needs it.

SAMANTHA: (*reconsidering the insanity of all of this*) No. There's no way, right?

NECO: He tasted of Reese's peanut butter cups and stupidity.

SAMANTHA looks at the candy bowl full of Reese's peanut butter cups as CLAIRE walks over, grabs one, and holds it up.

CLAIRE: Well, look at that, Sam. Reese's peanut butter cups.

SAMANTHA: (*reflectively*) And stupidity. Those were the guys. (*loosens up, somewhat*) It's funny, Neco, that you actually killed one of them. Just a little bit earlier, tonight, I attempted to stab one of them in the face.

NECO: Understandable. *(breaks character for the first time, less reserved)*
Beggar's Night, my ass.

SAMANTHA: *(brightens up suddenly)* I know, right?! So annoying. *(nods at NECO like, You're all right, kid)* So, Neco. Have you ever seen *Twilight*? You're welcome to hang as long, of course, as you don't get hungry again.

SAMANTHA starts laughing and CLAIRE joins in, until NECO looks at them with a scowl that makes their laughter turn uncomfortable on its way to dying a slow, painful death.

NECO: I wouldn't eat either of you. After taking me in without question it would be inconsiderate of me although, for future reference, now that we're friends, you should never invite a vampire into your home. We may not enter without invitation.

SAMANTHA: That's interesting, isn't it, Claire? *(looks at CLAIRE harshly)*
They can't... enter... without an... invitation.

CLAIRE: Lighten up, Samantha. Neco's cool. Right, Neco?

NECO: Cool to the touch? Yes. Of course. I have no blood-flow like you do.

SAMANTHA: Riiiiight.

CLAIRE: So, about *Twilight*. You're probably Team Edward, right?

NECO reaches over to the candy bowl, grabs a Reese's cup and holds it up.

NECO: May I? I've sort of got the taste.

SAMANTHA: *(somewhat repulsed)* Uh... of course. Help yourself.

NECO: Team Edward? No. He's a brooding poser. But that Taylor Lautner. Have you seen his abs?

CLAIRE: That's what *I'm* sayin'!

NECO: They are to die for. That is, if I could die.

CLAIRE: Good one, Neco.

CLAIRE gets up, goes over to NECO, and raises her hand for a high-five.

CLAIRE: C'mon, girlfriend. Hit me up top.

NECO looks genuinely confused but, taking the cue from CLAIRE, extends her arm. CLAIRE smacks it.

NECO: Are we... bonding?

CLAIRE: We're bonding, all right. I dig you, girl.

NECO: You can dig me, as long as you don't dig me up.

NECO starts laughing in snorts that sound painful. CLAIRE and SAMANTHA don't get it.

NECO: *(her laughter tapering off)* Oh, a little vampire humor there. Get it? Dig me up? As in from the regenerative soil of my homeland that I require in order to survive the daylight hours?

SAMANTHA & CLAIRE: *(as if both suddenly understand, but are just being polite)* Oh, right. Of course. Your... soil. Yeah. Good one.

SAMANTHA: Well, Neco, as much fun as this has been—

SAMANTHA's interrupted by JAMES, who stumbles onstage.

JAMES: What the hell, Sam? You ask me to come over then stick a knife in my face?

NECO's head snaps back toward JAMES.

NECO: Intruder. Allow me.

NECO jumps up, gracefully moves behind JAMES, and grabs him by the shoulders, prepared to bite him on the neck. The second her hands touch him, he shrieks, like before, and goes comatose again.

CLAIRE: Nooooo!

SAMANTHA: Neco! That's James! He's not an intruder!

NECO stops.

NECO: No problem.

NECO backs away and returns to the chair.

SAMANTHA: *(moves over to JAMES)* Great. He comes out of it for, like, two seconds, and he's back to coma-ville.

Just like before, SAMANTHA starts dragging him offstage.

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 rascal. 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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