



Sample Pages from Horror Movie 102: Failing Just Got Deadlier

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HORROR MOVIE 102: FAILING JUST GOT DEADLIER

A Collection of Five Hauntingly Bizarre Tales

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT BY
Steven Stack



Horror Movie 102: Failing Just Got Deadlier

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Cast of Characters

The Ascot Ribbon (1M, 1F)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Date (2F, 2M)

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

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

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

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

Tofuman (2F, 2M)

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

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

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

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

Dedicated to...

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

Production History

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

The Ascot Ribbon

Travis: Ryan Sadkovich

Bean: Charli “Phillip” Uptegraw

Slash, Slash

Nate: Jake Piper

Brooke: Skye Murphy

Marvin: Xander Strube

Sasha: Charlie Durochik

Erika: Natalie Waterbury

The Cow’s Head

Sage: Emma Arndt

Kendra: Genevieve Helin

Landry: Erin Kelly

Kevin: Lauren Johnson

Cassie: Camille Ginther

Karen: Paige Bilse

The Date

Chris: Alex Wishart

Felicia: Mia Schoonover

Ray: Sam Frank

Jinny: Breanna Connors

Tofuman

Dane: Ayden Green

Tara: Laney Evans

Phillip: Lucas Gonzales

Bloody Mary: Whitney Waterbury

The Ascot Ribbon

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

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

BEAN: The sky is quite lovely tonight.

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

BEAN: Yes, Travis, you do.

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

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

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

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

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

BEAN: Are you going to finish –

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

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

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

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

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

BEAN: Do you want me to say it again?

TRAVIS: I do.

BEAN: And more dramatically?

TRAVIS: While looking off while saying –

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

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

BEAN: What now?

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

BEAN: Horrid name?

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

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

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

BEAN: Why didn’t you tell me before?

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

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

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

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

BEAN: Of course. *(crosses away)*

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

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

TRAVIS: Fiber?

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

TRAVIS: No. Should I have?

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

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

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

TRAVIS: Your birthday?

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

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

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

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

TRAVIS: Of course.

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

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

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

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

BEAN: Well, it's horrid.

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

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

TRAVIS: I Febreze it.

BEAN: Why don't you take it off?

TRAVIS: Why don't you change your name?

BEAN: Because I don't want to.

TRAVIS: Exactly.

BEAN: How long have you worn it?

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

BEAN: What?

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

BEAN: That makes no sense. Take it off.

TRAVIS: I don't want to.

BEAN: Take it off!

TRAVIS: I shall not!

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

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

BEAN: Why?

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

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

TRAVIS: Mother is always right!

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

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

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

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

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

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

TRAVIS smiles and leaps happily into the air.

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

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

TRAVIS: I suffer from chronic neck sweat.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Whoops. (*silence*)

TRAVIS: I feel like my head has fallen off.

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

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

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

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

BEAN: Okay. Would you like me to stay?

TRAVIS: I would if you don't mind.

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

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

BEAN: Yeah. (*sits down*)

Slash, Slash!!!

Setting: A campsite at an old summer camp that has been closed for years after “accidents.”

At Rise: NATE and BROOKE are sitting close together snuggling while SASHA sits off to one side intently watching MARVIN, who is on the phone.

MARVIN: It fell off, just like that? (silence) Wow. Yeah, I understand. (silence) Oh, hey, Travis. (silence) Cool. I'm glad that your hair still looks nice. (silence) Yeah. Makes sense. All right, Bean, I'll see you at school Monday. That's true, Travis. You probably won't be at school Monday. (Hangs up the phone. Everyone is staring at him.) Travis's head fell off.

BROOKE: What happened?

MARVIN: Bean took off Travis's ascot ribbon which was, apparently, keeping his head attached.

SASHA: And here we go again.

BROOKE: No. Don't do this Sasha.

SASHA: Brooke –

BROOKE: Travis's head falling off isn't a big deal.

MARVIN: Isn't it, though?

NATE: No. Heads fall off randomly all the time, Marvin.

MARVIN: Do they, Nate?

NATE: I don't know. I just like agreeing with Brooke.

BROOKE: That's a good policy. Travis's head falling off is a big deal. I just don't want anyone to ruin tonight because of their overreactive imaginations and (to MARVIN and SASHA) and when I say anyone, I mean you two.

SASHA: We're not going to ruin tonight. But... Travis's head falling off is an urban legend come true and that only happens here in St. Claire.

MARVIN: Not to mention that we, by coming here tonight, have clearly thrown ourselves into a horror movie so we need to be careful.

BROOKE: Horror movies aren't real.

SASHA: Neither is a ribbon holding on someone's head. Think about it. We decide to go camping on Halloween night at an abandoned campground where something terrible happened.

MARVIN: That's bad enough, but we also have the perfectly stereotypical make-up of a traditional camp horror movie. (*BROOKE and NATE look confused while SASHA realizes it's true*) We have Nate, the pretty one who offers nothing else and simply exists to be stared at.

NATE: Shouldn't that be enough?

BROOKE: It is for me, bud.

MARVIN: Brooke, the alpha, who says whatever comes to her mind, doesn't believe that anything bad will happen, and is completely okay with being obsessed with certain things that we don't often talk about aloud.

BROOKE: Playing board games? (*the others look uncomfortable, and NATE blushes*) Whatever. I'm perfectly comfortable talking about my needs.

SASHA: We know, Brooke.

NATE: Who do you and Marvin represent?

SASHA: The completely average but likable couple that recently started dating. The ones the audience can get behind because they are the least threatening and annoying of the group. Plus, we would be the last two to die.

MARVIN: Only Sasha wouldn't die because she is clearly the stereotypical "last girl" in horror movies.

SASHA: That Marvin would die saving.

MARVIN: It is my dream role.

BROOKE: Gross.

NATE: Which one of us is going to die first? It's me, isn't it? Because I'm pretty.

MARVIN: No. You would definitely die early but normally, if it's not some random stranger, the person to die first is the most expendable. The most forgettable or least likable of the group.

ALL: (*minus NATE*) Erika.

NATE: Who's Erika?

BROOKE: (*turns to NATE*) Your sister, Nate.

NATE: Oh, right. Where is she, by the way?

SASHA: She went to the woods to use the bathroom, but she's been gone for a long time.

MARVIN: The first kill always goes off into the woods alone. To use the bathroom. Because they're upset. Or to get high.

Silence. SASHA stands up.

SASHA: We should go find her.

MARVIN moves to SASHA.

BROOKE: Why? Wait, are you seriously –

SASHA: Better safe than –

NATE: Dead.

NATE stands up. BROOKE turns to NATE.

BROOKE: Not you too.

NATE: (*shrugs*) What choice do I have? I mean, she is my sister. Apparently.

An uncomfortable silence. BROOKE sighs.

BROOKE: Fine but, just to be clear, this is a total overreaction. Nothing bad is –

A scream is heard offstage. Followed by loud sobbing. They all look at each other.

Was that Erika?

SASHA: (*gets up*) I think so.

NATE: What do we do?

BROOKE: (*sighs loudly*) Go check on her.

They start to exit and BROOKE grabs NATE's backpack.

NATE: Why are you grabbing my backpack? Wait, it's because it's full of rocks, isn't it?

BROOKE: Yes, that would be it. (*ERIKA enters, a little winded perhaps*) We might need a weapon.

ERIKA: A weapon for what?

They turn to ERIKA.

BROOKE: For nothing, I guess. (*turns to MARVIN and SASHA*) See? Told you.

ERIKA: What's wrong?

SASHA: We heard you screaming and sobbing.

ERIKA: That wasn't me. It was the person trying to kill me with a bedazzled machete.

MARVIN: Wait, what?

ERIKA: Yep.

NATE: Oh my god, we are in a horror movie. A bedazzled one.

ERIKA: If it is, it's the worst one ever written. The girl who came at me had glasses, pigtails, freckles, and paint splattered overalls. (*they all groan*) Also, she would not stop talking. In a terrible British accent, mind you.

MARVIN: That sounds like a killer from a horror movie spoof.

NATE: (*turns to MARVIN*) Do people die in horror movie spoofs?

MARVIN: Yeah. The deaths are just more laughable. Sometimes.

SASHA: What happened?

ERIKA: Well, after droning on and on for what felt like forever, she announced that she was going to "Slash, slash" me and then proceeded to run at me. She almost instantly tripped over a root or something and fell to the ground. She screamed and started weeping. I laughed at her because it was funny, and she looked at me and, through her sobs, told me I was rude and then got up, grabbed her machete, and ran off still sobbing loudly. Then I came back here.

NATE: (*grabs BROOKE*) Are we going to die, Brooke? I don't want to die. I'm way too pretty.

BROOKE: No, Nate, we are not. The woman Erika saw was clearly a lonely kook who gets off on scaring teenagers. She's probably home now, having her two hundred cats lick her wounds.

ERIKA: (*laughs*) Yeah, I could see her doing that.

SASHA: But the machete.

BROOKE: It was bedazzled! Who bedazzles anything anymore?

NATE starts to raise his hand but a look from BROOKE shuts him down.

SASHA: Still, maybe we should call the cops.

MARVIN: No point. In horror movies, as you know Sasha, they always arrive too late and then usually –

BROOKE: Still not a horror movie. And let's say we do call the cops. What would we tell them? That we broke into an abandoned campground that no one is supposed to be on and that there's a woman with pigtails and a bedazzled machete running around? They would just think we were stoned. And I can't afford to have something else on my record.

MARVIN: When you say it like that –

ERIKA: So, what are we going to do?

PIPPA, the serial killer, enters, happily.

PIPPA: I, Pippa Vanderway, will tell you what you are going to do. Die! Because of me. *(slashes with her machete)* Slash, slash.

PIPPA loses her grip and drops her machete. Silence as she stares at them. She slowly, without looking, reaches down and attempts to pick up the machete, missing several times. Finally, she gets it and stands up, trying to look threatening.

NATE: Wow, you were right, Erika. Her machete is bedazzled. Love it.

PIPPA: Thank you! I took a bedazzling class in 2nd grade and, spoiler alert, someone got an A. *(silence)* It wasn't me. It was Alice. *(Looks off. With disdain.)* Alice! *(Silence. She turns back. Silence.)* What? *(Silence. She remembers.)* Right. Sorry, I'm entirely new at this. You can call me a newborn serial killer.

SASHA: Do you really want us to?

PIPPA: *(considers)* I do not. You can call me Pippa. But not for long because, despite my questionable attempt at killing *(points to ERIKA)* that rude one earlier, you'll all be dead. By me and my bedazzled machete.

Silence. No one moves. Then BROOKE sighs.

BROOKE: This is dumb. Let's go for a walk, Nate.

SASHA: (*turns to BROOKE*) You're just going to leave us here... with her?

MARVIN: You can't. You're the toughest one –

BROOKE: I know but look at her. You guys will be fine.

BROOKE and NATE start to exit but PIPPA steps in the way.

PIPPA: You can't leave. I'm about to slash, slash you.

BROOKE: Are you? Go ahead.

PIPPA considers her next move and decides that her next move will not be killing BROOKE.

PIPPA: You know what? I'll pass. (*trying to be threatening*) For now.

BROOKE mockingly laughs at her and then takes NATE's hand. They exit. Silence. PIPPA turns to ERIKA, MARVIN, and SASHA.

Well, this night is not off to the start that I hoped for but I suppose I should put on my brave face and slash, slash the three of you. To death!

ERIKA: I'm feeling pretty secure in the knowledge that I'm not going to die.

PIPPA: (*takes a moment*) You are... (*Realizes that she has no comeback and that ERIKA is probably right. Her crushingly poor self-esteem wins.*) completely right! I knew I would be terrible at this!

PIPPA crosses away, sits down and starts sobbing. MARVIN, SASHA, and ERIKA look on awkwardly. SASHA then decides to go over to her.

SASHA: Hey, there... you. You're doing all right.

PIPPA: (*looks up*) Am I?

SASHA: (*shakes her head*) No.

PIPPA: Of course not. I hoped I would be good at this. This, killing of teens in a traditional horror movie style. Alas, I am not.

MARVIN: (*crosses over to her*) Is this, killing of teens thing in...

PIPPA: A traditional horror movie style.

MARVIN: Right. Is it, like some kind of career choice?

PIPPA: Not by me. It was chosen for me by my mother and her... (*looks off*) deathbed wish.

ERIKA, SASHA, MARVIN: What?

PIPPA: It was the last thing she said that morning after giving me this letter (*takes out a letter*) that I still haven't read because I've yet to fulfill her... deathbed wish.

SASHA: What was it?

PIPPA looks at them, stands up, and then starts to walk off a bit.

ERIKA: Wait, I feel like a long monologue is coming up.

MARVIN: One is definitely coming up. She crossed away from us.

SASHA: Now she's looking off with a slightly upturned head. Standard long monologue pose.

PIPPA: (*turns back to them*) It is a monologue, but I wouldn't call it long. I would call it expansive storytelling.

ERIKA: (*turns to exit*) I'm out.

PIPPA: Why on earth –

ERIKA: Because I hate monologues. They're boring. Therefore I, along with my utterly unlikeable character, am going deep into the woods alone again for a highly superficial reason. (*takes a moment*) Which sounded exactly like something someone would say who was going to die first in a horror movie. (*to PIPPA*) The good thing for me, though, is that we have you.

PIPPA: Thank you.

ERIKA takes a moment, shakes her head in disgust and exits. PIPPA turns to MARVIN and SASHA.

I now realize that that was sarcasm. (*MARVIN and SASHA nod*) She's very hurtful.

SASHA: You were going to tell us –

PIPPA: My origin story? My "why?" (*laughs a bit and then gets sad*) Be prepared, it's quite the tragic story of a mother's death and a child's failure, up to this point, to fulfill her... "Deathbed Wish." (*looks back at them*) That is the title of the monologue. "Deathbed Wish." (*Looks back again, looking for praise. MARVIN and SASHA eventually give a thumbs up. PIPPA smiles.*) It was a dark and stormy

night many years ago that was neither dark nor stormy, nor night, nor many years ago. It was this morning, which was beautiful and cloudless. I entered my mother's room, as I did every morning, to inquire about what she wanted for breakfast. It was just my mother and me because my father had left long ago to pursue his dream of being away from us. Not only that, but Mother was also currently dying. Of what? We did not know because Mother did not believe in doctors. Nor most things. Including me. The only thing she believed in... was breakfast. Anywho, I walked up to my mother's bedside, looking away because she was quite unpleasant to look at, and in my sweetest voice, I said, "Mother, what would you like for breakfast?" She didn't answer at first, but then she grabbed me by my shoulders, pulled me to her, handed me a letter, and whispered into my ear what turned out to be her final words. She said this... *(Makes sounds where the only words that you can understand are "you," "serial," and something that sounds like a mix of "killer." Also the words "horror movie" and "corn flakes.")* After that moment, I rushed out to buy a machete, bedazzled it, and then came to these scary woods to, for the first time ever, not fail Mother. *(she turns back to them)* Now, do you understand why I had to become a horror movie style serial killer?

MARVIN & SASHA: No.

PIPPA: Because of my mother's last words!

SASHA: Which were?

PIPPA: What I told you!

MARVIN: We didn't understand what you said. You were very gurgley.

PIPPA: That's because she was very gurgley before she died.

SASHA: Couldn't she have just been asking you for cereal? I think I heard the word cereal.

MARVIN: And I heard the word corn flakes. Plus, it was breakfast time.

PIPPA: Well, she did love cereal... especially... corn flakes but... no! She clearly wanted me to become a horror movie style serial killer!

SASHA: Why would any mother want that for her child?

PIPPA: I don't know. She was an odd woman. And it doesn't matter. I chose to believe that she wanted me to become a horror movie style serial killer which I'm also currently failing at because I have no idea how to be what Mother wanted me to be. I can see why my father left, and my mother never believed in me. Can

either of you say that it is impossible to recall a moment you gave someone a reason to believe in you? (MARVIN and SASHA look away *uncomfortably*.) I didn't think so. I can though. (silence) I hoped that this time could be... but no matter. I should have known that I couldn't pull off something as glorious as fulfilling a deathbed wish. I am simply... the worst. (*starts to exit*)

MARVIN: Wait, you still can!

SASHA & PIPPA: What now?

MARVIN: The night's still young, and we are all still here.

SASHA: Do you understand the words coming out of your mouth?

MARVIN: I do, but we have to help her. It was her mother's deathbed wish. Can you imagine feeling like you're a failure? All the time?

SASHA: No, but –

MARVIN: Plus, with all our horror movie knowledge, the two of us know what it takes to be a good horror movie serial killer. We could train her!

SASHA: But we would all die!

MARVIN: Not all of us. You wouldn't.

SASHA: But the rest of you would.

MARVIN: I know, but it's for the greater good.

SASHA: Is it?

MARVIN: I think. Besides, who knows how it will turn out in the end. We might be terrible teachers.

PIPPA: And I am quite a terrible student, I assure you.

MARVIN: Are you in?

SASHA looks at MARVIN and then at PIPPA. And then back to MARVIN.

SASHA: I suppose. Even though it seems like it plays directly into the horror movie clichés of teenagers making awful decisions but... why not?

MARVIN: Awesome. (*turns to PIPPA*) Pippa, are you ready?

PIPPA: For what?

MARVIN: For us to train you how to be a horror movie style serial killer so that you can fulfill what was most likely your mother's deathbed wish.

PIPPA: Smashing! Where do we start?

MARVIN: I'll tell you where we start. With a serial killer training montage!

SASHA: Is that a thing?

MARVIN: It is now!

80's style music starts, and the training montage starts. MARVIN and SASHA show PIPPA how to be a "horror movie-style serial killer" during the upbeat montage. Here are some things they teach her: The menacing stare for a rather long and tedious time (PIPPA does rather poorly at this), the slow walk that always gets them places faster than people running (PIPPA also does poorly at this because she either skips, hops, or something else ridiculous), the powerful slashing with no flair (PIPPA also does poorly at this because she does the slashing like a dancer), appearing in random places like a game of whack a mole. (PIPPA thinks she does good at this but her happily popping out is kind of the opposite of what they are after), the using of various things to kill people, etc. Keep adding more. At one point, she wants something to drink but is denied because killers don't drink or eat. After the montage ends, PIPPA is lying flat on the ground exhausted, and SASHA and MARVIN seem disappointed.

PIPPA: That was exhausting and terribly boring. Except for the whack a mole game.

SASHA: It wasn't a "whack a mole" game.

PIPPA: Well, it should have been. Why would anyone want to be a horror movie serial killer? It seems horribly mundane. Moving slowly everywhere, never talking, no skipping, and somehow no eating or drinking. On top of that, I also imagine that there is a lot of blood and death, both of which I am not a fan of.

SASHA: Yeah, there's a lot of both.

PIPPA: Appalling.

MARVIN: It doesn't matter because people become these types of killers because they lived a life full of rejection, and usually something tragic happens, like the death of a parent or someone else close to them.

PIPPA: I do qualify there, I suppose. Plus, there is my mother's deathbed wish as an added incentive.

SASHA: Yep. Thus, they, you, lose all hope, suffer a break from reality, and –

PIPPA: Seek out a therapist?

SASHA: No. Become a horror movie serial killer of teenagers. Fate.

PIPPA: Humph. Very well. I suppose I shall follow the path fate and my mother have set out for me. Quite begrudgingly, I might add. But first, a nap.

PIPPA lays down, and MARVIN and SASHA run over to her.

MARVIN: There's no time for a nap.

PIPPA: There's always time for a nap, my friend.

SASHA: Not this time because it's time for you to go slash, slash, slashing!

PIPPA: Do you think I'm ready?

MARVIN: As ready as you'll ever be! But first, let me give you this.
(Crosses to his bag, reaches into his backpack, and takes out a mask. He crosses back over and sees SASHA staring at him.) I was going to scare everyone.

SASHA nods, and MARVIN hands it to PIPPA.

PIPPA: What is this for? *(happily gasps)* Are we going to a costume party? If so, I thank you for the gift, but I have a mask at home that I made from papier-mâché, glitter, and –

SASHA: We're not going to a costume party.

PIPPA: *(quite disappointed)* Of course not.

SASHA: All good serial killers wear a creepy mask. Right now, you look like someone who paints lovely nature scenes.

PIPPA: That's what I want to look like! *(they stare at her)* That's not what I want to look like! *(puts on the mask)* Oh my god! How

does one breathe in this thing? *(lifts mask)* This is not very pleasant.

MARVIN: You'll get used to it. Trust me.

PIPPA: Very well. Who do I kill first? You two? I mean, you are –

SASHA: No! Horror movie serial killers have an order to which they do their killing that makes complete thematic sense.

PIPPA: I don't know what that means.

MARVIN: Let your inner killer speak to you. *(silence)*

PIPPA: I don't know what that means, either.

SASHA: It's okay. We'll help you.

PIPPA: Oh, you will? *(MARVIN and SASHA nod)* Very sporting of you. Who is it?

MARVIN: It's someone who's not here, is by herself, has been gone a little too long and –

PIPPA: The plain-looking girl who has quite a negative attitude who I attempted to kill earlier?

SASHA: Her name is Erika.

PIPPA: Delightful. But how should I find her? She could be anywhere in the woods.

MARVIN: Killers like you don't have to know where the person they're looking to kill is to know where the person they're looking to kill is. They'll know when they need to know. And you will too. By a feeling.

PIPPA: *(eyes grow wide)* Wow. Serial killers are magical. Like unicorns. To the woods! *(starts skipping away)*

SASHA: Stop! *(PIPPA turns)* Slow walk, remember?

PIPPA: *(sadly)* Of course. *(she turns and begins walking around sadly)*

MARVIN: And the mask.

PIPPA stops, growing even more annoyed. She puts the mask down, sighs loudly, and then heads off slowly into the woods. Silence. SASHA turns to MARVIN.

SASHA: You realize that we just sent a serial killer after one of our friends. After showing her how to be a good one.

MARVIN: No, Sasha, we gave her hope. Hope that she won't be a disappointment for the first time in her life. But she's not killing anyone. Erika will probably scare her away by crushing whatever little self-esteem she has left. Trust me, the only way Pippa is going to kill anyone is by accident.

They laugh a little awkwardly.

SASHA: Okay. It was fun teaching with you.

MARVIN: It was. (*awkward silence*) And I want you to know that, you wanting to be my girlfriend is like the best thing that's ever happened to me. I mean, I've liked you for as long as I can remember, but I never dreamed you would like me too.

SASHA: Well, I do.

They smile at each other and seem about to take it to the next level but are interrupted when BROOKE and NATE enter, holding hands.

BROOKE: What up, losers? (*MARVIN and SASHA turn to them awkwardly*) Oh, wait. Did we just interrupt something awkward?

SASHA: No.

BROOKE: Yeah, we did. Don't worry, I'm sure you'll get more alone time. Where did Erika and that loon go?

SASHA: Erika went for a walk and –

MARVIN: We trained Pippa in the ways of horror movie serial killers and then sent her off after Erika.

NATE: Why would you do that?

SASHA: Because she has a sad backstory.

MARVIN: And she's still not going to be able to kill anyone. I think she somehow got worse with our help.

BROOKE: Sounds about right. Nate and I are going into the tent to play board games. (*MARVIN and SASHA groan*) Whatever, you're just jealous.

BROOKE and NATE exit. Silence as we now start to hear laughing from the tent.

MARVIN: What do you want to do?

SASHA: Not stay here and listen to that. Who plays board games with other people just outside? Want to go sit by the lake and talk?

MARVIN: Yeah. That sounds nice. But I must warn you, now that we are, you know, dating, I'll probably be way more awkward.

SASHA: It's okay. I like awkward.

They smile as SASHA takes MARVIN's hand and they exit as the lights fade. When they come up, we see ERIKA barely visible.

ERIKA: Well, where the hell are our tents? *(silence as ERIKA looks around)* Okay. Which way, which way? I should've Hansel and Gretel-ed this crap. *(considers what to do)* You know what? I'm just going to sit down and pray I have a signal. *(She sits down and takes out her phone. She looks at it and sighs.)* Yet another prayer unanswered. *(She hears a sound that is clearly someone trying to make a bird sound. ERIKA jumps up.)* Who there? Brooke, is that you?

PIPPA: No, it's a bird. Clearly.

ERIKA: Oh, no. Is that you. Flippa or whatever your name is?

PIPPA steps out.

PIPPA: It's Pippa and yes.

ERIKA: Why were you making a bird noise?

PIPPA: I wanted to add some ambiance.

ERIKA: I suppose you're here to attempt to make me your first kill?

PIPPA: Yes. And this time I will be successful. Your friends trained me and gave me this mask. *(puts mask back on)* Trying to breathe with it on is quite labor-intensive. Now I must get into character and then "slash, slash" time. *(Starts doing stretches and such. Some Tai Chi. ERIKA watches for a bit and then gets bored.)*

ERIKA: You know what? *(PIPPA looks at her)* I think instead of you killing me, I'm going to kill you first.

PIPPA: *(scared)* What?

ERIKA: Yeah. I'm going to pick up this rock here and crush your –

PIPPA: Don't say my pancreas! It's my favorite –

ERIKA: I was going to say your skull.

PIPPA: Oh. That's far worse. But there's no need for that. I'll be on my way and –

ERIKA: Not this time!

ERIKA charges PIPPA, who screams, collapses, and throws the machete into the air, and right into ERIKA, who screams and falls.

You stabbed me!

PIPPA: Not on purpose! You ran at me and scared me!

ERIKA: But why did you collapse and throw your machete at me?

PIPPA: Because I always collapse and throw away whatever's in my hands when I'm scared. It's a rare genetic disorder.

ERIKA: So stupid. Of course, this is the way I die.

PIPPA: Wait, you're dying?

ERIKA: I have a machete going through me so... yes.

PIPPA: Is it my fault?

ERIKA: No, it's my fault. I could've just let you go, but no. *(silence)*
Though, since I am dying and it's just the two of us, you could tell everyone that I'm your first kill.

PIPPA: Thank you, but that would be untruthful and would dishonor my mother's deathbed wish. I'll keep trying.

ERIKA: Okay. Now go so I can die in peace with a terrified look on my face.

PIPPA: Of course. *(turns to exit)*

ERIKA: Aren't you forgetting something? *(PIPPA looks back confused)*
Your bedazzled machete.

PIPPA: Right. Could you take it out of yourself and then wipe it off?
I imagine it's very bloody, and I'm quite squeamish around the blood.

ERIKA: *(stares at her)* Fine. *(slowly takes it out)*

PIPPA: Wow. That is disgusting. What you're doing.

*ERIKA almost gets the machete out but then dies.
With a terrified look on her face. Silence.*

Are you going to... (silence) I see. You're dead. All right. I suppose I can pull it the rest – (stops herself) No, I absolutely cannot. (walks over to it and instantly starts to gag) So much blood. (lamenting to the heavens) Why would my mother want this for me? (tries again but still can't) I cannot do it. But I need a weapon of –

She looks around and sees a stick. Her moods brighten. She skips over to the stick, picks it up, and starts slashing with it. Then hitting.

This stick will be an excellent weapon of... hitting! (about to skip off, but remembers) Slow walk. But it's so dull. (gets an idea) Perhaps the slow walk and the no talking were nothing more than a suggestion. Yes, that's what it was. Therefore, I say pass to those suggestions.

She skips offstage, talking happily. As the lights come back up, we are back on the main campsite where we see the tent. BROOKE gets out. We quickly see NATE peek his head out.

NATE: Where are you going, Brooke?

BROOKE: I heard people scream. Come on. We've got to check it out.

NATE: Thank you, but I would rather not.

BROOKE: What? One of them was clearly Erika.

NATE: Right but I'm actually starting to have my doubts that she's my sister.

BROOKE: She is.

NATE: Tomato, tomato. (He says them exactly the same way. BROOKE shakes her head.)

BROOKE: Thank god you're pretty. Just stay here and put up Life and get Sorry ready.

NATE: Wonderful! I'm going to zip up the tent so no one can come in until you or Marvin or Sasha come back.

BROOKE: Great.

BROOKE exits, and NATE zips up the tent.

NATE: All safe and secure. Now to put up Life and get Sorry ready.

Starts humming to himself as PIPPA, skipping, enters. After hearing the noise, she starts walking slowly and pulls the mask down. She slowly raises her stick and starts hitting the tent very hard. NATE starts screaming. PIPPA tries to poke the tent, but it doesn't work.

NATE: Don't kill me! *(He starts to struggle as PIPPA continues, to no avail, trying to get into the tent.)* If you don't stop, I'll throw stuff at you. Angrily!

PIPPA: Go ahead with your... throwing. Nothing too sharp though. *(Continues hitting the tent. NATE unzips the tent slightly and throws a red Sorry piece at her.)* Did you throw a red Sorry piece at me? How vulgar you are!

NATE: *(from inside the tent)* Yes, I did! Now I'll hit you with a blue one!

PIPPA: No, you won't, mister!

Just as NATE throws the piece at PIPPA, PIPPA closes the tent's door. What we don't see is that this causes the piece to bounce back and right into NATE's mouth.

Take that, bucko!

NATE: *(from inside the tent)* It went into my mouth! It's now stuck in my throat! I can't breathe!

PIPPA: I don't see how that's possible. It's not that big.

NATE unzips the tent and leans out, clearly struggling to breathe.

NATE: It's not just that! I need my... my inhaler!

PIPPA: Well, grab your inhaler then.

NATE: It's outside in the blue bag. Can you get it for me?

PIPPA: I don't see why I should get it for you. But fine. *(NATE lays back down inside the tent)* Then I'm going to hit you with my stick multiple times! *(walks over to his bag and throws out some rather odd things)*

NATE: Hurry!

PIPPA: Stop rushing me! *(finally finds it, opens it, and is shocked by what she sees)* Why are there rocks in here? It must weigh a ton.

NATE: Oh, it does. I carry around rocks to always be working my core.

PIPPA: Oh. All right. But where's your – here it is. Mixed in with the rocks. I'm no doctor, but I think you could pick a better place to–

NATE suddenly appears out of the tent screaming.

NATE: Just hurry!

PIPPA, frightened by NATE jumping out of the tent, collapses and throws the inhaler directly into NATE's mouth. NATE collapses back into the tent.

NATE: Oh, my god! You threw it directly into my mouth! Now I can't breathe at all!

PIPPA: It's not like I meant to do that! I have a rare genetic disorder!

NATE: Just help me.

PIPPA: I'm not going to reach my hand down your throat. I don't know you that way.

NATE: Do the Heimlich on me then!

PIPPA: I don't know what that is.

NATE: I'll explain it! I received a top score in my Heimlich training last summer. Actually, I didn't. It was Carl! *(looking off)* Carl!

PIPPA: I empathize, my friend.

NATE: Hurry! I'm too pretty to die!

PIPPA: *(takes a moment to notice NATE's beauty)* You are quite attractive, but the bluish tint of your skin is somewhat off-putting. *(realizes)* That's the lack of air. Right. I'll save you. *(starts crossing over to him)*

NATE: Thank y – *(falls dead halfway into and halfway out of the tent)*

PIPPA: The word you are looking for is you. "Yoooouu." Oh. *(Silence. PIPPA exits the tent.)* Yet another accidental death. I'm running out of teens to kill non-accidentally. Still, to be fair, I am beginning to lose interest in this entire horror movie serial killer thing. If it wasn't for my mother's – *(turns and sees BROOKE standing there)* Hello. *(notices that BROOKE is carrying the machete)* I see you found my bedazzled machete.

BROOKE: You killed Erika, didn't you?

PIPPA: Not really. She ran at me and frightened me considerably. During my collapse, I threw my machete, and it went... inside of her.

BROOKE: On purpose?

PIPPA: No, I have terrible aim.

BROOKE: (*notices the tent open and NATE's foot*) Nate? Is he –

PIPPA: Dead? Yes.

BROOKE: You killed him too?

PIPPA: I was involved yes, but only because he threw Sorry pieces at me when I was hitting the tent with my stick.

BROOKE: He was too pretty to die.

PIPPA: Apparently not.

*BROOKE grabs PIPPA and knees her in the stomach.
PIPPA cries out and falls to the ground.*

Ow. That hurt! (*BROOKE kicks her*) And that one did, too.
(*BROOKE then backs away and raises the machete*) What? You're going to... machete me?

BROOKE: You deserve it.

PIPPA: No, I don't! I mean, I did come here to kill you all, and two of you are dead but –

*Stops talking when she realizes that way isn't working.
She comes up with another brilliant idea. She grabs
NATE's body and brings him out.*

Wait! Your dashing boyfriend is still alive! (*tries to talk like NATE*)
Look at my lovely alive face, darling girlfriend! I'm alive, and I want you to put that machete down so that we can... kiss.

BROOKE: You sound nothing like him! Now put him down and face me like a woman who's about to die.

*PIPPA puts him down and moves out of the way a bit.
BROOKE takes a moment to look at NATE. PIPPA
grabs her stick and hits BROOKE with it. BROOKE
turns slowly.*

Did you just hit me... with a stick?

PIPPA: No.

*PIPPA backs away as BROOKE slowly moves towards
her. She notices NATE's backpack, gets an idea, and
slowly picks it up.*

BROOKE: That's Nate's backpack. What are you? A thief too?

PIPPA: How dare you!

BROOKE: No. How dare... you!

BROOKE rushes PIPPA, who screams out, collapses, and throws the bag awkwardly. The bag hits BROOKE in the head, she cries out, falls, and dies instantly. Silence. PIPPA looks over at her.

Sorry. I was only going to use the bag as protection from the machete. *(slowly stands up and looks around)* This night... is simply the worst night in a life full of worsts. Seriously.

MARVIN and SASHA enter and look at the carnage. They stop and stare at her. She finally sees them.

Oh, hello there. *(MARVIN and SASHA continue to stare)* Yes, they're all dead.

SASHA: This is all our fault, Marvin. We should never have –

PIPPA: Let me assure you, it is not your fault. Nor mine.

MARVIN: What?

PIPPA: I don't wish to relive my failures yet again, so let's just say I did not "slash, slash" anyone or anything except whatever was left of my self-esteem. As hard as it might be to believe, all of your friends died accidentally. *(silence)*

MARVIN & SASHA: Okay.

PIPPA: Both of you believe me? Just like that?

MARVIN: Yeah, I mean, why would you lie?

PIPPA: To get away with multiple murders?

SASHA: I don't think so. Remember, your mother's deathbed wish?

PIPPA: Right. Well, after the events of tonight, I realized that I could never intentionally kill anyone. Not because I wouldn't want to but simply because I would have failed at it. I mean, these three deaths are more of a slap in the face than anything. *(silence)* I have failed my mother one final time. I suppose now is the time for me to read her letter to me. I'm sure it will be a metaphorical bedazzled machete to the chest. *(takes out the note, and then looks at them)* Actually, could one of you read it to me? I'm not sure I can –

The Cow's Head

Setting: An abandoned, quarantined cabin.

At Rise: We hear voices outside of the cabin. Then KENDRA, SAGE, and LANDRY enter. SAGE has a backpack full of supplies. KENDRA is carrying a Halloween bag. LANDRY is carrying a bag of candy. All have flashlights. SAGE, the leader of the herd, enters first and smiles.

SAGE: Here it is.

LANDRY: Is that... blood?

SAGE: Yep. Lots of blood. Least it's not fresh.

KENDRA: Why didn't they clean up –

SAGE: Probably didn't see the point. No one's going to stay in this place again after what happened.

KEVIN: Except for us apparently.

SAGE: You're welcome.

LANDRY: *(sees an uncomfortable KENDRA)* What's wrong, Kendra?

KENDRA: *(turns to her)* Everything, Landry! We all know that my life wouldn't be on anyone's list of "Lives I wished I had," so I spend most of my time when I'm not with you guys reading and waiting for Halloween so that for a while, I won't have to be myself, and I'll get candy for it. Instead, I'm here where teenagers went crazy and killed each other.

LANDRY nods as KENDRA shakes her head in disgust.

SAGE: I feel like you're simplifying what happened because there's was way more to it than that but whatever.

LANDRY: About that, how do you even know happened? Everything awful that happens here in St. Claire always gets covered up.

SAGE: My dad.

KENDRA: He told you? That's a pretty messed up thing to –

SAGE: He didn't. After Matt died, Dad needed something to occupy his mind besides, I don't know, spending time with the kid he still had. He decided to find out what really happened here at the cabin because, well, why not? He started digging and I start

snooping through what he found. And let me tell, what happened in this cabin, is the stuff of nightmares. I'll give you all the details when it's story time. (*KENDRA and LANDRY look at her*) What?

KENDRA: Do you miss you Matt? I mean, you never talk about him anymore and –

SAGE: Of course, I do. He was awesome. And he got me. Plus, he was always nice to me even when I was “little sister” annoying. (*silence*) He deserved better than what he got. (*LANDRY and KENDRA both nod*) When he got sick and I watched him just wilt away in that bed... it wasn't him anymore so I, uh, stopped going to see him as much. (*shakes her head*) I did get to say goodbye but I don't know if he heard me.

KENDRA: You've never talked about any of this with us before.

SAGE: I've never talked about anyone about it with anyone before. I have no idea why I'm doing it now. It's not one of favorite topics. (*silence*)

LANDRY: Well, thanks for talking to us about it. Makes you more human.

SAGE: Being human is overrated. (*silence*)

LANDRY: It must be weird being the only kid now.

SAGE: It sucks. I thought that when he died, my dad would expect me to step it up or something and I wanted to, but I just became... invisible. (*silence*)

KENDRA: Do you want a hug?

SAGE: Pass. (*KENDRA seems hurt slightly, SAGE notices*) Thanks, though.

LANDRY: I bet if Matt was alive, he would've tried to stop you from coming out here.

SAGE: (*laughs*) He would have. Or he would've come out here with us.

KENDRA: Yeah, speaking of coming out here. I get why Landry and I did because we do whatever you want us to, but why did you want to come here knowing what you know about this place and what happened here?

SAGE: Two reasons, one because it's Halloween and I thought it would be fun. Two, and most importantly, when you clearly have no control over what happens to you, see Matt, why not simply say screw it and do whatever you want for however long you get to?

LANDRY: But if something happens to you, your parents will be alone.

SAGE: I know that, Landry. Believe me. But in the end, we all end up alone so there's also that.

KENDRA: Such an uplifting thought.

SAGE: This is why I avoid acting human, Kendra. *(she sighs)* Anyway, enough of this crap. Let's get this night started. Now, neither of you brought your phones, right?

KENDRA and SAGE both nod that they didn't.

LANDRY: And why did you not want us to –

SAGE: Because none of them had their phones either. That's why they weren't able to call for help.

LANDRY: Which turned out turned out well.

SAGE: Hindsight's always 20/20. Besides, Karen and Cassie's bodies were never found, so maybe their story ended happily ever after. *(silence for a moment)*

KENDRA: Something awful is going to happen tonight. Even worse than missing trick or treating.

SAGE: Relax. We're in a place where something horrible happened. Past tense. Trust me, tonight nothing bad is going to happen.

KENDRA: And you just signed our death warrant. Horror Movie 102: a group of teenagers go the scene of a grisly crime and the leader says, "Trust me, tonight nothing bad is going to happen" resulting in... something bad happening.

LANDRY: Like what? Our flashlights suddenly cutting out and us hearing a loud knock at the door?

Their flashlights cut out and a loud knock is heard at the door. They react.

Oh, crap. Did I make that happen?

Another knock is heard. KENDRA is about to scream, and SAGE puts her hand over her mouth.

SAGE: Shhh! Whoever's out there might not know we're in here.

KEVIN: *(from offstage)* I do.

KENDRA: My flashlight's not working anymore.

SAGE: Yeah, mine's not either.

KEVIN: Nor does Landry's.

LANDRY: (*whispers*) He knows my name.

KEVIN: I know all your names.

LANDRY: Well, that's not creepy at all.

KENDRA: What do we do?

KEVIN: Let me in.

SAGE: We're not doing that.

KEVIN: Don't be rude. (*more forceful*) Besides, you don't have a choice.

KENDRA: (*turns to SAGE and LANDRY*) It's okay. The door's locked.

The sound of a click is heard and the door creaks open.

KEVIN: Was... locked. (*silence*) Maybe you need a little light.

A blue light fills the cabin. They are getting scared. Silence. The voice sighs.

Come get me. Now. And don't even think of running. I promise what's out there is way worse than me. (*silence*)

LANDRY: What do we do?

SAGE: Play along until we can figure out how to get out of here. Follow my lead. (*gets up and starts walking towards the door*) If something happens to me –

KENDRA: You want us to run away.

SAGE: No! I want you to save me.

KENDRA: Yeah, we're not doing that.

LANDRY considers saying something but doesn't.

KEVIN: The clock is ticking.

SAGE: I'm coming. (*Exits as KENDRA and LANDRY move closer together. Silence. From offstage.*) Oh.

KEVIN: Oh, what, Sage?

SAGE: Oh, nothing. Nothing at all. I just –

KEVIN: Pick me up, bring me in, and then place me on the couch.

SAGE: Cool, cool, cool.

KENDRA and LANDRY move away from the couch. SAGE enters awkwardly carrying... a cow's head. She looks at LANDRY and KENDRA and then places the cow's head on the couch and backs away. Silence.

It's a talking cow's head.

Silence. KEVIN, the cow's head, makes a loud pleased sound.

KEVIN: This couch is quite comfortable. Thanks for bringing me in.
(*silence*) I get it, you three are kind of weirded out by me.

KENDRA: Kind of?

KEVIN: Okay, a lot. But look, don't judge a cow's head by its lack of a body. I am way more than what I don't have. (*silence*) I'm not going to lie; I feel a lot of judgment from you three.

KENDRA: You're a bodyless cow's head that's talking to us.

KEVIN: My name's Kevin. (*silence*) Got any food? I'm super hungry.
(*sniffs*) Is that chocolate? (*notices LANDRY eating something*)
Landry, what are you eating?

LANDRY: Me?

KEVIN: There's no other Landry here, bud.

LANDRY: A candy bar. Kit Kat. My favorite.

KEVIN: Can I have some?

LANDRY: I guess... Kevin. But like I said, they're my favorite so I'd prefer you not eat all of it. (*She crosses over with her candy bar and puts it down. Nothing happens.*)

KEVIN: I'm going to need a little help here, bud, because I don't have –

LANDRY: Oh, right. Sorry. First time I've fed a... you know... (*Picks up the candy bar and moves it close to the cow's mouth. She then pulls back.*)

KEVIN: Don't be a tease, Landry. Now give me some bar. (*LANDRY does*) Oh, this is good. Haven't had chocolate in a long time. Very tasty. (*finishes*) That's enough. Don't want to eat it all.

LANDRY: (*sadly*) You already did. Just the wrapper's left. And that was my last one.

KEVIN: Somebody under planned.

KENDRA: Were you actually going to eat after a cow's head?

LANDRY: That's a good question that I don't know how to answer.

KEVIN: (*yawns*) Put me to bed.

SAGE: Put you to bed?

KEVIN: Yeah, I'm super tired.

KENDRA: Oh! (*KENDRA is genuinely excited*) I know who you are, Kevin. You're a Ukrainian urban legend.

LANDRY: They have those?

KENDRA: Every place does, dummy. The story of The Cow's Head is that he shows up at a poor girl's house, she takes care of him, and then good things happen for her. Kind of like Cinderella.

SAGE: Seriously? (*KENDRA nods*) That's stupid.

KEVIN: Even urban legends have feelings, and just because it sounds stupid, it doesn't mean it's not true.

SAGE: Are you saying it is true?

KEVIN: What else would I be? It is St. Claire after all, am I right?

KENDRA: This is great! That means we take care of him and then good things will happen to us. We've already fed him, and now we put him to bed. And boom, in the morning everything will be great. (*SAGE and LANDRY look confused*) Trust me! We'll get our every wish. Like mine has always been to be, you know, someone else.

LANDRY: Well, that's not sad at all.

KENDRA: It is what it is.

LANDRY: Okay. What about you, Sage?

SAGE: I don't know. Something feels wrong about this –

KENDRA: Something felt wrong about coming here tonight, yet Landry and I came with you because you wanted us to.

LANDRY: Or made us.

KEVIN: Peer pressure, am I right?

The Date

Setting: CHRIS's backyard. We see a table with a slightly awkward tablecloth. There are four chairs. There's a lot of snack food and boxed fruit drinks.

At Rise: CHRIS, 15, is standing a little bit away from the table and is looking at his phone in one hand. He, at first, is reading to himself. He then turns to the table and takes a bite of his large bowl of applesauce, savors it, turns back around, and begins to talk.

CHRIS: All right, Chris. Here we go, five steps to a successful online date. One, don't be late. *(opens his eyes)* Check. Perks of having the date in your backyard. *(laughs and then closes his eyes again)* Two, look your best. *(Opens his eyes and looks into his phone. A look of disappointment crosses his face.)* With lowered expectations, that one is also a check. *(closes his eyes again)* Three, have a strong listening face while adding encouraging words to make sure your date, in this case - Jinny - knows that you are listening. *(Opens his eyes and tries a variety of "listening faces" while saying listening words. First face.)* That's very interesting. *(Makes a new face. Laughs a little.)* Are you... serious? *(makes a new face)* That's a story I would love to tell my grandmother. *(considers)* Wait, both my grandmothers are dead. I guess that could still work if I went for some sympathy. *(considers)* I'll just file that away for now. *(Makes a new face. Realizes he doesn't like that look.)* Gross. That one makes me look like I'm leering at her while smelling a fart. *(considers)* I'll just go with three. *(closes his eyes)* Step 4: Remember past dates and what went well. *(opens his eyes and ponders)* What went well on past dates? Past... dates. Um. Since there were no past dates, I'll move on to Step 5. *(closes his eyes)* Step 5: Visualize right now the perfect date happening while keeping your eyes closed. This will be fun. *(Puts the paper down and picks up his bowl of applesauce, which he will randomly take bites of during the following ridiculousness. Visualizing.)* Oh, hello... Jinny. I didn't see you there. You love my hair? Oh, thank you. I washed it today. Twice. *(smiles)* Even took a shower. With soap.

At this point, FELICIA and RAY enter from upstage unbeknownst to CHRIS. FELICIA notices first and makes sure RAY stays quiet.

I do work out a little. Thanks for noticing. What do I lift? I don't know... Weights. Boulders. The occasion horse. I don't like to talk about it because I'm pretty humble. About everything. Kind of the best at being humble.

FELICIA and RAY continue to stare on in bewildered wonder as CHRIS flexes his non-existent muscles. FELICIA and RAY turn to each other, trying not to laugh. RAY mouths, "What is going on?" FELICIA shrugs, and then their attention is drawn back to CHRIS.

Wait, enough small talk? Okay? You want to... kiss? Okay.

At this point, RAY and FELICIA can barely control themselves. They start inching closer so that they can see better. CHRIS, lost in the moment, is completely unaware that they are there.

Before we... kiss, I need to tell you something. I've never actually been kissed before. Except by my mom and my Aunt Dot, so... be gentle.

At this point, CHRIS moves in to kiss the air, rather passionately. FELICIA and RAY are chuckling quietly. At some point, sooner than later, FELICIA speaks up.

FELICIA: Chris, are we interrupting something? (*CHRIS screams and falls, spilling his applesauce on himself*) Are you okay?

RAY: More importantly, who was the better kisser? Your mom or your Aunt Dot? I'm going with Aunt Dot because I don't feel like your mom is that passionate.

CHRIS: (*struggling to get up and now has applesauce on his face*) I was rehearsing!

FELICIA: (*noticing his face*) You got a little something... all over your face.

RAY: Looks like applesauce.

CHRIS: It is applesauce. With cinnamon. I tend to stress eat cinnamon applesauce. (*tries to get it off*) Did I get it all off?

RAY: Relatively.

FELICIA: What were you rehearsing?

CHRIS: I was rehearsing the five tips for a successful date.

RAY: Oh, is that why we're here? In your backyard.

CHRIS: Yeah, you guys are a couple and my best friends, and I figured the only chance I had for this date to work out was to do research and make it a double date.

RAY: Wait, you have a date?

CHRIS: Yeah.

RAY & FELICIA: Seriously?

FELICIA: Not that we're shocked but –

CHRIS: No, you are, and I was, too. Still am. I mean, I just assumed I would never have a date.

RAY: I always thought you would. I mean, not, you know, in our teenage years. Or even in your 20s. More like when –

FELICIA: When you had a job and a lot of money. Who is she? Someone at school?

CHRIS: (*moves to the table and sits*) That's an interesting story.

FELICIA and RAY follow him to the table.

RAY: Dude, is it Elizabeth? I mean, she has had a massive crush on you since...

CHRIS: Since first grade and no, it's not her.

FELICIA: Well, who else could it be? She's the only one that's ever shown any interest in you.

CHRIS: That's a self-esteem building thought. Thanks. And it's a girl named Jinny.

RAY & FELICIA: Who?

CHRIS: You know that new girl, who started like three weeks ago, and who's really, really attractive?

FELICIA: You don't mean the inhumanely hot one that never goes to any classes and never talks to anyone, do you?

CHRIS: I do.

FELICIA: Why would she be interested in you? No offense, but she's like a perfect 10, and you, at best, are a 5.

RAY: I would go a solid 6 for you. Maybe a 6.5. Especially when you fix yourself up. But seriously, she's way out of everyone's league, so why you? Is she playing some kind of practical joke on you?

CHRIS: You know what? Maybe. But if it's not that, I have no idea why she would be interested in me.

FELICIA: When did you talk to her?

CHRIS: A couple of days ago, when I was out hiking. (*RAY and FELICIA seem shocked.*) Don't worry. By hiking, I meant taking a couple of steps into the woods and remembering that hiking is dumb. I turned around to head back to my car, and when I did, she was standing there. Looking amazing.

RAY: I bet.

CHRIS: She said, "Hi Chris, my name is Jinny and I like you. A lot."

FELICIA: She did not.

CHRIS: She did! I promise.

RAY: Did she realize she was talking to you?

CHRIS: I wasn't sure, but she did say my name, no one else was around, and she was looking directly at me. I was at a loss for words, so she kept talking about how awesome I was and how she wanted to get to know me better. Way better. We talked about going to dinner or something, but she said she doesn't really like public places that much, so she suggested hanging out in my backyard. I, also not liking public places, was like "Cool. We can absolutely hang out in my backyard." She seemed really excited, and when I was about to tell her my address, she said she already knew. Awesome, right? (*silence*) Say something.

RAY: Something's off about this.

FELICIA: Ray's right. A new girl who no one really knows comes out of nowhere, is basically perfect, and is obsessed with you? Not to mention, she wants to have your first date here in your backyard, and she somehow knows where you live? Too many things that don't add up. Something bad is going to happen.

RAY: Yep.

CHRIS: C'mon. I feel like, if you subtract everything suspicious, the main reason that neither of you can't fathom someone as attractive as Jinny liking me is that, well, it's me.

RAY: And?

FELICIA: Not to mention, if something too good to be true happens in St. Claire, it always is too good to be true and someone, usually multiple someones, dies.

CHRIS: None of us are going to die. It's just a date. The very first date of my entire life and I think she likes me. Like a lot. She even gave me a Valentine's card.

FELICIA: It's October, and we're in high school. (*silence*) What did it say?

CHRIS: It said, "Sometimes dreams come true." I looked up to thank her, but she was already walking away. Her shadow was weird, though.

RAY & FELICIA: What?

CHRIS: Like it wasn't attached to her. And it was facing the wrong way. I swear it was watching me.

RAY: A shadow, facing the wrong way, watching you? (*CHRIS nods*) Seems normal.

FELICIA: We should leave. Like now.

CHRIS: No. That would be rude. And, besides, this is my house. Look, I don't want to ruin this before it even starts. I think we might have something special.

RAY: Based on what?

CHRIS: That she's really attractive and likes me?

RAY: Make sense.

FELICIA: Fine. We'll hide in your house until she leaves, and then you text her later that you were sick or something.

CHRIS: Like I had explosive diarrhea or something?

FELICIA: What? Why would that be... just no. Say you were sick with no explanation. Then we will talk to her at school on Monday. Trust me, tonight is not going to end well, so let's –

CHRIS gets a text message.

CHRIS: Too late. She just texted me that's she's here and coming to the backyard. (*silence*) Please don't mess this up for me. I'm tired of being the one without someone. Just make me look good tonight. If anything gets weird, we'll just end the date early.

FELICIA: Promise?

CHRIS nods.

RAY: We got you, Chris. Besides, it's only one date. What's the worst that could happen?

FELICIA: (*sighs and shakes her head*) And one more thing. Everything you were rehearsing, don't do it. Any of it. It was awful.

RAY: Quite awful. Like the worst. Ever.

CHRIS: (*smiles*) Okay, I won't. Guys, thanks for helping and uh, being like my only friends in the world.

RAY and FELICIA smile just as we see JINNY entering. CHRIS jumps up, trips, and almost falls.

RAY: Solid start there, bud. (*CHRIS looks at him as he gets up*) I mean, (*mock concern.*) are you okay?

CHRIS: I'm fine. (*gets up and walks over to JINNY*) Hi, Jinny.

JINNY: Hi, Chris. (*notices the backyard*) It's just like I remembered it. (*CHRIS looks confused*) I mean, it just as I thought it would look.

Awkward silence. RAY coughs, "compliment her."

CHRIS: You look beautiful. That dress is... very dress like.

JINNY smiles as RAY and FELICIA shake their heads.

JINNY: Thanks, and you look nice too. (*notices the applesauce on his face*) Is that applesauce on your face?

CHRIS: Why yes. I had an accident. I thought I got –

JINNY: (*draws her finger across the applesauce on his chin and then tastes it*) Cinnamon applesauce, my favorite.

FELICIA: Well, that's not sanitary.

JINNY looks at RAY and FELICIA then turns to CHRIS.

FELICIA: I thought it was just going to be you and me.

CHRIS: No. Sorry. This is –

JINNY: Ray and Felicia, your best friends.

CHRIS: Yeah. How did you know?

JINNY: I see you three together at school all the time.

FELICIA: (*crosses over to JINNY and CHRIS*) Hi, Jinny. Sorry that Chris didn't let you know that this was going to be a double date.

(notices a drawing of some sort on her hand) Hey, what's that thing on your wrist? It looks familiar.

JINNY looks down and notices the drawing. Then she tries to hide it.

JINNY: It's nothing. I just tend to draw on myself sometimes.

FELICIA: But it looks familiar. Like I've seen it before.

JINNY: You haven't.

CHRIS: (sees this getting awkward and changes the subject) Why don't you come over to the table, Jinny.

JINNY and CHRIS walk over and sit. They are followed closely by FELICIA, who seems to be bothered by something about JINNY. It's the drawing. CHRIS points to the snack on the table.

If you're hungry, have some snacks or something to drink. I didn't make any of them. I actually took them from my little sister's room. She keeps a stash under her bed. (smiles awkwardly)

JINNY: (smiling) You are so adorable. I'm good right now, though. (stares at RAY and FELICIA) I'm also okay with you both being here.

RAY: Awesome.

CHRIS: Yeah, I wanted to give myself the best chance of not messing this up and figured having them here would help. I haven't had much experience at, you know, dating. Or any. (realizes what he said) I didn't mean to say that last part.

JINNY: It's okay. I've always loved your honesty. (The others seemed confused. JINNY realizes this and tries to explain.) I've talked to people about you. (silence) I haven't had much experience dating either.

CHRIS, FELICIA & RAY: Really?

JINNY: Yeah.

FELICIA: Why?

JINNY: I'm not sure.

RAY: Probably cause you're too hot and guys are scared to talk to you. I know I would be.

FELICIA: (turns to him) But not scared to talk to me?

RAY: *(Seems unsure of what to say. Awkwardly.)* Yes?

FELICIA: *(shakes her head and then turns back to JINNY)* Anyway, Chris is a great guy. Like one of the best.

RAY: And he totally likes you. I mean, probably 90% for your looks but

—

JINNY: *(turns to CHRIS)* You like me, Chris? *(silence)*

CHRIS: I mean, yeah. I know I don't know you well —

JINNY: But you do. You know me better than you think.

CHRIS: *(confused)* Oh, okay. And you're pretty, and no one even mildly attractive has ever looked at me before. Except by accident.

A quick moment of sadness passes over JINNY, but we are unsure why.

JINNY: Well, you're exactly what I want, and tonight will prove that some things are just meant to be. *(awkward silence)* Just like Felicia and Ray.

FELICIA: I wouldn't go that far.

RAY: Hey.

RAY and FELICIA both laugh. Silence.

FELICIA: What grade are you in?

JINNY: 10th, like all of you.

RAY: But you're not in any of our classes and our school is small so —

JINNY: I'm on a different schedule.

RAY: *(confused but decides not to pursue it)* Oh.

FELICIA: *(chooses to pursue it)* Well, who do you hang out with? Maybe we know —

CHRIS: Can we stop all these questions?

FELICIA: *(turns to CHRIS)* Oh, would you rather use some of those lines I saw you —

CHRIS: No. No, I would not. I simply think that —

JINNY: It's okay. I hang out with a few people. Not too many at this point, and I'm not close to anyone besides one person I think you all know. Elizabeth Berring?

RAY & FELICIA: Seriously?

JINNY nods.

RAY: I didn't think she hung out with anyone. Besides Chris every now and then.

CHRIS: I wouldn't call it hanging out.

JINNY: I think she's very nice.

CHRIS: She is. We've all known her since first grade.

RAY: *(laughs)* And that's how long she's had a crush on him. *(pointing to CHRIS)*

JINNY: Really?

CHRIS: Yeah. She's given me a Valentine's Day card every year since then. And when you gave me one, it made the second person who's given me a Valentine's card who wasn't forced.

FELICIA: Better watch out, Jinny. You might have some competition for Chris.

FELICIA, RAY, and CHRIS laugh. A change comes over JINNY's face.

JINNY: Why are you laughing? Is something funny?

They stop laughing after noticing that JINNY seems offended.

CHRIS: Um... no.

FELICIA: It's just that Elizabeth is sweet and all, but...

JINNY: But not pretty enough for someone to like? Not pretty enough like say... someone like me.

FELICIA: We didn't mean anything by it.

JINNY: I know.

RAY: We all like her, but she's just kind of sad. And her obsession for Chris is... different.

JINNY: How so?

RAY: I don't know. Maybe the fact that it's been going on since first grade and nothing's ever happened. She probably should move on. For her sake.

JINNY: What do you think, Chris?

CHRIS: I don't know. I don't like her that way, so I guess. Although, I am kind of flattered by it. I mean. It's nice to be liked. Even though it's a little weird.

FELICIA: I feel like we're all coming off poorly about Elizabeth. The bottom line, Jinny, is she's our friend.

JINNY: Is she? Is she really?

RAY: Well, not close friends, but yeah.

JINNY: Uh. When was the last time you saw her?

Confusion shows on their faces.

CHRIS: I think I saw her today in class.

JINNY: You think?

CHRIS: I mean, I thought I did.

JINNY: (*pointed*) You didn't. (*to RAY and FELICIA*) When was the last time you two saw her?

FELICIA: I don't know, this week.

RAY: Yeah, definitely this week.

FELICIA: Well, I wouldn't say, definitely.

RAY: Yeah. Maybe we saw her.

JINNY: You haven't seen her either. For the last three weeks. (*Gets up and crosses away from the table. Looking off.*) Because that's how long she's been gone. But none of you would know because she's... forgettable. Simply background noise. That's all she is to you.

CHRIS: That's not true.

JINNY: You didn't even know she was gone. For three weeks.

FELICIA: What's your deal with Elizabeth? She's not even here and –

JINNY: My deal with Elizabeth is that it must hurt to be the person who disappears, and no one notices. No one.

RAY: I can't believe she's been gone for three weeks. Wow. I mean, I hadn't noticed –

CHRIS: Don't finish that sentence. *(crosses over to JINNY)* Look, Jinny, we're teenagers. And not knowing that Elizabeth was gone for that long, though clearly wrong, doesn't mean we don't care about her. It just means...

JINNY: Means what?

FELICIA: It means that we're too wrapped up in our thoughts and problems to notice things.

JINNY: You noticed me.

RAY: Yeah, but you're like...

JINNY: Everything Elizabeth's not?

RAY: Well, yeah. I mean, it's the way the world works, right?

JINNY: Yes, it is the way the world works.

CHRIS: Look, I like Elizabeth, and I feel terrible that I didn't know she wasn't at school. Do you know what happened to her?

JINNY: She's gone.

CHRIS: What?

JINNY: She's gone.

RAY: When is she coming back?

JINNY: *(smiles)* She's not. But what of it? No one missed her anyway. The world never saw her value and never would have so who cares?

CHRIS: I do.

JINNY: *(looks at him)* I almost believe you.

CHRIS: It's true.

JINNY: *(takes a moment at then smiles at him)* Good. I forgive you. *(crosses away from him)* Everything is almost perfect.

FELICIA realizes something and crosses away from the table. She is not looking at anyone.

FELICIA: Wait. You started about the same time that Elizabeth –

JINNY: Disappeared? Yes. It was the same day.

RAY: Then how were you friends with her?

JINNY smiles but doesn't answer. FELICIA stands up.

FELICIA: We have to go. Sorry, Jinny. Ray, Chris, and I have to go.

CHRIS: Why?

FELICIA: Just trust me. C'mon, Ray.

RAY stands up.

JINNY: You're not going anywhere. None of you are. You're here with me until I get what we want.

They take notice of the word "we." CHRIS backs away from JINNY.

CHRIS: What is going on?

JINNY turns to CHRIS and reaches for him, but he reflexively backs away slightly. JINNY notices this and smiles.

JINNY: Don't be afraid, Chris. You and I will get our happily ever after. *(turns to FELICIA)* Felicia, why don't you explain what's going on to the boys because I know you know.

FELICIA stays silent. RAY turns to her.

RAY: Felicia?

FELICIA: That marking on her wrist isn't some random drawing. It's a crossroads branding.

CHRIS: What?

FELICIA: A crossroads branding. It's what one gets when they make a crossroads deal with a demon. It basically marks them as property until their debt is paid.

RAY: Holy crap.

CHRIS: *(to FELICIA)* Why would you know that?

FELICIA: Think about where we live, dummy. It pays to know stuff.

JINNY: Not well enough, apparently. *(Silence. Then smiles.)* You are a smart girl. *(crosses away a little and looks off)* It is a crossroads branding. Several weeks ago, I made a little deal. Or should I say, Elizabeth made a deal with someone. *(turns back to them)* And if you three play along, you can all reap the benefits. Well, Chris does and *(turns to RAY and FELICIA)* and the two of you get to live. *(silence)*

RAY: So, you're Elizabeth?

FELICIA: Duh. So, your deal was –

JINNY: To be everything Elizabeth was not and to live one perfect year.

FELICIA: What was the cost?

JINNY: After my year is up, I go away for good.

RAY: Wow. Someone overpaid.

JINNY: When one has nothing, there is no way to overpay.

FELICIA: How does Chris fit into this?

CHRIS: Yeah, how do I fit into this?

JINNY: Because you are the one I choose to spend my perfect year with, in a constant state of bliss.

FELICIA: (*crosses over to CHRIS*) You can't do this, Chris. (*turns to JINNY*) Elizabeth, these deals never go the person's way. And yours is just stupid.

RAY: Probably don't say that –

FELICIA: No, it needs to be said! Elizabeth, one year? Even if it's perfect? You have a whole life ahead of you. And you give up –

JINNY: I gave up nothing. You talk about an entire life ahead of me. That's easy for you to say. For Ray. Even for Chris.

CHRIS: Why "even?"

JINNY: But for me? You think this life is going to be better? You have no idea how hard it is for me to get out of bed every morning. And my future? I know what I was born into and how my story turns out. I see it every day when I watch my parents. I get that it's only a year, but I value quality over quantity. And in my case, if nothing changed, quantity would lead to nothing but disappointment.

FELICIA: You can't guarantee that. No one knows how their life is going to turn out.

RAY: But, I mean, I could see how you think your life sucks. I mean, Elizabeth was... you know, average looking, not overly smart, and we didn't even notice she was gone. And when you add the family issues and –

CHRIS: Is anything you're saying right now supposed to be helping?

JINNY: It does help. Prove my point. And it doesn't matter anyway. I've already made the deal, and deals like these aren't the kind you break. (*takes CHRIS's hands*) Chris, say yes, and you will have the best year of your life. Trust me.

CHRIS: What's happens to me after –

JINNY: You'll go back to your normal life.

CHRIS: That's a little anti-climactic.

RAY: That's because she's lying. She's going to *Romeo and Juliet* this thing.

JINNY: I'm not lying.

FELICIA: Even if you're not, you can't be sure that whoever you made a deal with won't just take Chris.

JINNY: And what if they do? I'm offering Chris a year of perfection.

CHRIS: But it's only a year.

JINNY: A lot can happen in a year. (*loaded*) A lot.

CHRIS: (*seems to be considering it*) I –

RAY: (*crosses to CHRIS*) Wait, Chris, you cannot seriously be considering this.

CHRIS: I mean –

FELICIA: (*crosses to CHRIS, separating him from JINNY*) No, Chris, you're not doing this. We're your best friends. We've always been there for each other, and this is no different. You know all of this is wrong and won't go the way she's saying it will. It never does.

RAY: I agree with Felicia. We'll find you some other girl who hasn't made a deal with a demon. I mean, she'll be less attractive, way less attractive, but she'll also have less baggage. Probably.

Silence as everyone looks CHRIS, who is trying to decide what to do.

CHRIS: Yeah. You're right. (*turns to JINNY*) I can't do this. I'm sorry.

JINNY: Huh. Such a shame. I had hoped not to do this.

CHRIS: Do what?

JINNY: See, my deal was a little different. I've always loved the stories with the genie and three wishes, and I've only used one, but now I see I'm going to have to use another ones.

FELICIA: Wait. Three wishes. That's not the way crossroad deals work.

JINNY: This one did. And I had hoped that you and Ray, Felicia, would support mine and Chris's love, but now I see that you won't. So, you'll have to go away.

FELICIA: What are you –

JINNY looks at them all almost as though she is in another place. A shadow appears. RAY suddenly gets a text. He walks over to his phone, opens it, and then reads it. A hollow look comes over his face. He collapses. FELICIA rushes over to him.

Ray? Are you okay? (she crosses to him and kneels beside him) Ray? (turns to JINNY) What did you do to him?

JINNY: I gave him to something. Something beautiful.

FELICIA: Fix him. Now!

JINNY: I'm not doing that. Because I can't.

CHRIS: But you do have one wish left.

JINNY: I'm sorry. I meant I don't want to.

FELICIA: Is he –

JINNY: Dead? No, he's still in there but is being hollowed out. Soon he'll be nothing more than a shell. For something else. When the new resident takes over, it's not going to be pleasant for him. But don't worry, you're about to find out what it's like too.

FELICIA: I gathered.

JINNY: Sit down, Felicia. (*FELICIA doesn't move*) I said, sit down.

FELICIA, seemingly controlled by some other force, moves to her chair. JINNY crosses over to her smiling while CHRIS seems too stunned to move.

You know, I've always envied you. Ever since first grade. And not just because of how close you were to Chris. I envied you because of everything you had. Everything you were. I wanted to be you every single day of my life. Did you know that? I bet you

didn't. And since I couldn't be, I at least wanted to be your friend. But I didn't get that, either.

FELICIA: I was never mean to you.

JINNY: Never mean to me. How sad that that counts for friendship when it comes to someone like Elizabeth. *(she moves away slightly)* I have a question for you: if you can't be loved, is it better to be hated and scorned or simply forgotten? *(silence)* Clearly, the answer is hated and scorned because at least that means someone feels something for you. *(turns back to FELICIA)* And now, because of what I've done to Ray, I see the hate in your eyes, Felicia. Thank you. But now it's time for you to go too.

CHRIS: Please, Jinny... I mean, Elizabeth. Don't. I'll do anything if you –

JINNY: It's too late.

FELICIA receives a text message. She looks at the phone and then looks at JINNY.

FELICIA: I just won't open it.

JINNY: *(smiles mockingly)* But you will.

FELICIA stares at JINNY. She finds herself picking up her phone. CHRIS rushes to her.

CHRIS: No, Felicia!

But it is too late. She has opened the phone. A look of fear comes over her face as she turns to CHRIS. After a moment, and then she is gone. Silence. JINNY slowly crosses to FELICIA and pushes her out of her chair as CHRIS watches her in stunned silence. JINNY turns to him.

JINNY: Trust me, you didn't want her staring at us like while we talk.

JINNY picks up her chair and moves it away from the table. She gets CHRIS's chair and does the same. She sits, looks at CHRIS, and then pats the chair beside her. CHRIS doesn't move.

JINNY: Chris, don't be that way. *(He sighs and then slowly crosses over to her and sits. Silence.)* Now it's just the two of us. *(silence)* Say something, silly.

CHRIS: This is the worst first date ever.

JINNY: You're just saying that because of what happened to your friends.

CHRIS: Yep. That would be it. (*turns to her*) I thought you were a good person, Elizabeth.

JINNY: I was, but one can only be pushed to the background so many times before asking, "What about me? Why do I have to be the one always rejected?" Instead of complaining about it and doing nothing, though, I decided to fix it. And to be honest, what happened to Ray and Felicia is really your fault, Chris. Tonight was supposed to only be you and me, but you invited them, and their words reminded me of how they had always been standing in the way of our love since the beginning. In first grade.

CHRIS: Wait, what?

JINNY: That's right. You've loved me since first grade.

CHRIS: No, I didn't. I don't even think first graders can –

JINNY: No, they can. Because we did.

CHRIS: No, I –

JINNY: Yes! You did. I saw the way you looked at me then, especially after your birthday party. The one you invited me to. Which, by the way, was the only party I've ever been invited to. Your party was when I saw your backyard for the first time. That's why I wanted our first date to be here because it's been my happy place ever since. You were so kind to me that day, the day we fell in love. We've been in love ever since. You just forgot because Ray and Felicia poisoned your mind against me.

CHRIS: That's not true. Any of it. I barely remember my party. Because I was turning 7.

JINNY: That's okay because I do. When you handed me that invitation, it made me so happy. And that day turned out to be the best days of my life. Well, until today.

CHRIS: Wait, about that invitation. It wasn't even meant for you. It was meant for Lisa, but she was sick that day, and I had one extra invite, and you had just given me that really nice Valentine's card, and you saw me with the invitation in my hand so –

JINNY: Lisa? You mean the one the buck teeth?

CHRIS: Yeah. I had a huge crush on her then.

Tofuman

Setting: TARA and DANE's shack.

At Rise: DANE is moving various pieces of tofu around and cutting them, trying to create life-like organs. Cheesy music, clearly from the 1980's is playing in the background, and DANE is singing along with it. He is wearing a "Kiss the Chef" apron. He hits a high note at the exact moment someone knocks loudly at the door. He quickly turns off the music and goes to answer the door.

DANE: Oh, that must be her. *(looks at his watch)* And right on time.

He crosses to the door and opens it. Bloo-day (emphasis on the "day") Ma-ray (emphasis on the "ray") stands there. Her hair is long and dark, and she is wearing a long white dress that seems to be covered in blood. There are also red streaks seemingly coming from her eyes.

Well, howdy, Ms... what was your name again?

MARY: Bloo-day Ma-ray. *(she pushes past him into the house)* You live in a shack.

DANE: "Un-live," actually. *(MARY turns to him and looks confused)* See, Tara, my girlfriend, and I got killed a while back by Hook Hand when Tara stupidly gave her the hook back.

MARY: You're both dead?

DANE: Undead. *(MARY turns to exit)* But we're also partially alive. *(MARY turns back)* Anywho, we're zomans, half human and half zombies. I coined the term.

MARY: That is irrelevant.

DANE: *(hurt, but only for a bit)* Of course, it is. *(whispers)* Denial box. Anywho, we have a beating heart and a working pancreas, but most everything else is pretty much undead.

MARY: Your heart still beats? *(DANE nods happily)* Wonderful. *(she walks back into the shack)* You need something from me.

DANE: I do. Because you're a chef.

MARY: I am a chef.

DANE: I must admit, though, your garb and your overall look are very un-chef like.

MARY looks at him, crosses to him and then knees him in the stomach. He collapses.

Ow. I think you crushed my undead pancreas. (MARY grabs his shirt) Wow, you are very physical.

MARY: How dare you say I look very un-chef like! Are you a chef?

DANE: No, I mean that's why I, as directed, called your name –

MARY: If you are not a chef, then you know nothing of what a chef looks like.

DANE: I mean I watch a lot of chef shows and I've never seen one that looks like (*motions at her attire and then changes course*) you know what, never mind. I'm sorry, Bloo-day Ma-ray. (*realizes something*) I just realized that your name sounds like – (MARY turns back to him) something really scary and the way I called you is similar to – you know what? Denial box! Thanks for coming.

MARY: What do you require of me?

DANE: See, Tara has really taken to her zombie side and is constantly (*whispers*) eating people.

MARY: Why did you whisper that?

DANE: Because it's embarrassing. I mean, the last time we went out to dinner, she bit off the waiter's hand and then put it on the plate. To start eating it! (*almost defending her*) At least she did it with a fork and knife, but still. (*silence*)

MARY: And? You're both zombies.

DANE: Zomans.

MARY: Doesn't matter what you call it, you crave human flesh. Be that which you are.

DANE: Even though I'm a zoman, I don't have to eat like one. I thought that since you can make tofu taste like anything, I could create fake human meals that look and taste like humans. I call it... (*very dramatic*) "Tofuman." Nice, right? (MARY doesn't respond) I hope to keep Tara from eating real humans.

MARY: (*crosses over to him, rather seductively*) Do you not feel the cravings? That tingle when living flesh gets near you?

DANE: (*Seems to be giving in but fights the urge. Laughing.*) That's not a problem, for the power of denial is quite strong in me. Like actually, my strength to deny tons of truths is probably my most robust quality.

MARY: You're pathetic.

DANE: That didn't hurt my feelings. See? Denial box!

MARY: Let me see what you've done some far.

DANE: (*gleefully*) Absolutelay, Bloo-day Ma-ray! Right this w-aay. (*MARY groans as DANE guides MARY to the table and shows her his work*) Here you go.

MARY: What is this?

DANE: A work in progress. I came up with almost the right mix for what to marinate the tofuman in, but something is missing.

MARY: The human part?

DANE: That's what the tofu needs to replicate, so that –

MARY: Let me taste it.

DANE: (*hands her a "finger"*) It's a finger. It's pretty –

MARY: Pathetic. It looks nothing like a finger.

DANE: Yeah, that's what I was going to say. Pathetic. (*MARY takes a bite and then spits it in his face*) That was gross. What you just did, (*MARY knocks the tofuman off the table*) And that was just really mean. (*picks up a blob of tofu*) This used to be a heart. But now it's broken.

MARY: I can't help you. When will your girlfriend be home?

DANE: I don't really know. She didn't tell me where she was going.

MARY: I hope she's here soon.

DANE: Why?

MARY smiles but doesn't answer. At that moment, TARA enters, followed closely by PHILLIP, who's carrying a ukulele. TARA sees MARY.

TARA: Who is this?

DANE: It's –

TARA: Are you cheating on me, Dane?

DANE: (at PHILLIP) Who's that?

PHILLIP: I'm Phillip.

TARA: It's Phillip. We were on a date.

DANE: So, you're cheating on me?

TARA: Yeah, but just for a bit. (DANE is about to question her) Doesn't matter. (walks over to MARY) Do you even have a mirror?

MARY: Many.

TARA: Well, maybe you should look in one of your "many" mirrors because you look terrible. I mean, look at me, I'm partially undead and I look amazing.

PHILLIP: Wait, you're partially undead?

TARA: Yes, Phillip, I am.

PHILLIP: Gnarly.

TARA: (to MARY) He's very stupid. (turns to DANE) Why would you date her, Dane?

DANE: I'm not dating her. She's helping me, well not any more or ever really, I thought she was going to help me make tofuman so that you wouldn't have to eat humans anymore.

TARA: I don't have to eat humans, Dane. I get to.

PHILLIP: You eat humans?

TARA: Yes, Phillip, and they're delicious.

PHILLIP: Cool. Wait, are you going to eat me next?

TARA: Yes, and Dane is too.

DANE: I'm not eating Phillip!

PHILLIP: (crosses over to DANE) Am I not good enough for you, Dane? I mean, I'm pretty meaty –

DANE: It's not that. Stop.

PHILLIP: No, you stop, Dane! And have a bite. (Holds out his arm. DANE seems tempted.) Yeah, you like that, don't you, buddy? Feeling the urge.

DANE: I am a vegetarian!

PHILLIP: Plants. I dig it. How about I throw a fern on my arm?

DANE: What? No. I'm not –

PHILLIP: Dude, I bet I'm tasty.

TARA: Phillip, stop. No one is eating you right now. I'm more interested in the affair that Dane is having with this bloody-looking woman.

DANE: I am not having an affair!

MARY: I would not have a relationship with this creature.

DANE: (to MARY) Just "Dane" is fine.

PHILLIP starts singing a "PHILLIP is tasty" song. They all turn to him.

Note: If you have some songwriting and musical talent, have them rewrite the lyrics and the song to best fit your students. I've done this show twice, and both times the students have loved putting their spin on the tunes.

PHILLIP: (sung to the tune of someone who loves punk rock, hair bands, and is basically a surfer dude)

Phillip is Tasty!

So very, very tasty.

Just a take one bite

And you will see that...

Phillip is Tasty!!!

Fingers, spleen

Lungs and liver too.

Like the tastiest morsels in your mouth

Because Phillip is tasty!

So very, very tasty.

TARA: What are you doing?

PHILLIP: Singing a song that just came to my mind... organically. (makes "mind blown" sound and gesture) Mind blown.

TARA: Go sit in the closet until we need you again.

PHILLIP: Sweet. Closets are awesome! Right, Dane?

DANE: No, not really. They're very small and confining.

PHILLIP: Whatever, dude. To the closet Phillip goes!

PHILLIP heads to the closet. TARA turns to DANE. They are about to start talking when PHILLIP starts singing again. MARY sighs.

MARY: This is growing tiresome.

MARY exits. As DANE and TARA chat, we hear PHILLIP still singing faintly in the background while MARY is explaining why that is a poor choice.

TARA: What's her story? Where did you meet her?

DANE: At this store that I had never been to before. I walked in and there was this sign hanging on a huge mirror that said, "Do you need help making Tofuman?" And I was like "Yes, please!" I mean, I was shocked because I didn't even know tofuman was a thing.

TARA: It's not, Dane. Then what happened?

DANE: It said to say the chef's name three times and –

TARA: No, Dane!

A loud ripping noise is heard.

PHILLIP: Gnarly. Can I touch it?

A loud falling noise is heard. TARA and DANE turn as MARY reenters, with a bloody hand, she is now holding a heart and a ukulele.

DANE: Um... what happened?

MARY: He wouldn't stop singing, so I ripped out his heart. (*shows bag and then holds a ukulele*) Then I took his ukulele.

DANE: That seems a bit much.

TARA: (*crosses over to MARY*) How dare you! He was ours. (*DANE starts to protest*) Not now, Dane!

MARY: I only took the heart. You can have the rest. If you have enough time.

DANE turns to TARA and mouths "If you have enough time." TARA turns to MARY.

TARA: What's your name? (*MARY smiles but doesn't speak*) Fine. (*TARA turns to DANE*) What's her name?

DANE: Bloo-day Ma-ray.

TARA: That's what you said three times while looking into a mirror?

DANE: Not exactly. I mispronounced it. I said –

TARA: Bloody Mary three times?

DANE: Right! How did you know? (*TARA knees DANE in the pancreas*)
Why always the pancreas?

TARA: Dane, how are stupid are you? You didn't mispronounce it!

DANE: I did mispronounce it! It's not Bloody Mary. It's Bloo-day Ma-ray.

MARY: You did not.

DANE looks at MARY, who smiles. TARA storms away.

TARA: You... are the worst, Dane!

DANE: That's hurtful. I'm sure there are a few others –

TARA: We just died by an urban legend, and you didn't think that a woman in a long white blood-stained dress, with blood streaking from her eyes, and coming out of a mirror after you say her name "correctly" three times might be a bad idea?

DANE: Well, when you put it like that yes, but I like to assume the best in people.

TARA: How that's working out for you?

DANE: Poorly, I suppose. I am still with you. (*TARA sighs loudly and sits down, and then a smile comes over her face*) Why are you smiling?

TARA: Because Bloody Mary wouldn't want to kill us.

MARY: Oh, I do.

TARA: No, you don't. Because we are zombies and don't have beating hearts.

DANE turns away awkwardly.

MARY: I thought as much too, until your boyfriend told me otherwise.

TARA: Dammit, Dane! You know what? We're breaking up.

DANE: We're about to die!

Production Notes

Sets

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

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

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

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

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

Lights

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

Sound

The Ascot Ribbon

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

The Cow's Head

- Loud knocking at the door
- Outdoor noise

The Date

- Cellphone notifications

Tofuman

- 80's style music

Props Needed

Ascot Ribbon

- Ascot Ribbon (Travis)

Cow's Head

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

Slash, Slash

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

The Date

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

Tofuman

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

Costume

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

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

Random Vital Notes

The Falling Off of Travis's Head in The Ascot Ribbon

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

lights returned, bam, no body. Like magic.

The Slash, Slash Training Montage

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

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

Kevin (The Cow's Head) Voice

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

Cassie and Karen in The Cow's Head

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

The marking on Jinny in The Date

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

The Ripping Out of Phillip's Heart in Tofuman

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



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