



Something Bad is Happening

by Bradley Walton

Sample Pages from Something Bad is Happening

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SOMETHING BAD IS HAPPENING

A DRAMA IN ONE ACT BY
Bradley Walton



Something Bad is Happening
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Cast

2M + 2F

MAX: A teenager stuck at home in Virginia while his friends are all on vacation.

TAYLOR: A horror movie fan traveling with her family in Kansas.

CARTER: A prankster who likes to make bets, visiting with family at a beach house in North Carolina.

DREW: Visiting her grandfather at an isolated Oregon cabin.

Feel free to change the genders and pronouns of the characters to whatever best fits your performers.

Production Notes

The play is written to be performed online by actors from their homes, but could also be produced onstage with each actor pretending to talk to a screen.

Sound Effects

A crashing noise of bottles and small boxes falling onto the floor.

MAX appears onscreen. A few seconds later, TAYLOR appears.

MAX: Hey, Taylor.

TAYLOR: Hey, Max. Are we the first ones here?

MAX: Yup. How's your road trip?

TAYLOR: There's corn EVERYWHERE.

MAX: You're in the Midwest. That's normal... right?

TAYLOR: If it's not, they've got a serious problem.

CARTER appears onscreen.

CARTER: Hey y'all.

TAYLOR: Carter!

MAX: How's the beach?

CARTER: The beach is great. Sharing a bedroom with my brother in the beach house... not so great.

DREW appears onscreen.

DREW: Am I the last one?

TAYLOR: Yup.

CARTER: Late as always, Drew.

DREW: I'm not always late.

CARTER: I'm kidding.

DREW: You're obnoxious.

CARTER: I don't deny that.

TAYLOR: *(waving arms to get everyone's attention)* Hey! Everybody!

CARTER: What?

TAYLOR: It's nice to see you all.

CARTER: You, too.

DREW: Yeah.

MAX: Miss you guys. It's lonely here without you.

TAYLOR: I'm sorry.

MAX: Not your fault everybody's summer travel plans all hit at the same time.

DREW: Except yours.

MAX: Except mine.

TAYLOR: So what's new in Virginia?

MAX: Nothing. But I'm not the one who's off doing cool stuff. You all tell me about you. So far I know that Taylor is being stalked by corn—

DREW: Was that a pun?

TAYLOR: Just because it's a pun doesn't mean it isn't true.

MAX: And Carter's being pushed to the brink of insanity at the beach house.

CARTER: I really, really miss having a bedroom all to myself.

TAYLOR: Is your brother there now?

CARTER: I convinced him to leave for a while so I could talk to you guys.

TAYLOR: How'd you manage that?

CARTER: We made a bet. He lost.

DREW: What was the bet?

CARTER: Wanna make a bet that you can't guess it in three tries?

DREW: I still owe you for the last bet I lost.

MAX: Hey, Carter? Wanna bet you can't make it through the rest of this conversation without trying to make another bet?

CARTER: Are you implying that I have a gambling problem?

TAYLOR: Yes.

CARTER: Nope. I totally deny that.

MAX: Well, let's see... on the first day of summer vacation, you made bets on what size milkshake Taylor was gonna order at Dairy Queen, which pair of sunglasses I was gonna wear to the park, whether it was going to be cloudy at 3:00 that afternoon... do I need to keep going?

DREW: Please don't. I lost every single bet I took that day, so I had to help Carter prank his cousin by asking her where to find toilet paper in the pet store where she worked, then act baffled when she said they didn't have any.

TAYLOR: (*smiling*) Yes, Carter. We think you have a gambling problem.

CARTER: Wanna bet you get as much of a kick out of it as I do?

MAX: Drew, how's Oregon?

DREW: Well, yesterday Granddad took us hiking—I think he's in better shape at seventy-six than I am at sixteen. And then he cooked supper for us on the grill. He gave me the rarest hamburger I've ever eaten in my life, but it was delicious. Right now, everybody's out on the deck and I'm inside marveling at the fact I can get a signal. Granddad doesn't have a computer here and this cabin is waaaay the heck out in the middle of nowhere.

CARTER: Like, *Friday the 13th* territory?

TAYLOR: No, Camp Crystal Lake is in New Jersey.

CARTER: *Evil Dead* territory?

TAYLOR: That was set in Tennessee.

CARTER: It blows my mind how you always know stuff like this.

TAYLOR: Horror movies are my thing. Drew's in Oregon, so that's Bigfoot country, which is actually kind of cooler, because Bigfoot's mythical as opposed to fictional.

CARTER: Is there a difference?

DREW: Either way, I haven't seen any masked slashers or demons or Sasquatches around.

MAX: So it's just a cabin... in the middle of the woods?

DREW: It's a nice cabin. More like a house, really. But yeah, middle of the woods. Closest town is like an hour away.

CARTER: Why? I don't get the appeal.

DREW: Me neither. But it's Granddad's hideaway. And he wanted to bring us out here while we were visiting.

MAX: Is it boring?

DREW: It's a little too creepy to be boring.

CARTER: You just said you hadn't seen any slashers or monsters.

MAX: You also said it was a nice house.

DREW: A place can be nice and not have slashers or monsters, but still be creepy.

TAYLOR: That's very true.

CARTER: How?

DREW: A cabin in the woods is still a cabin in the woods.

CARTER: Makes sense.

DREW: Taylor, how's your family's annual horror movie pilgrimage? Besides the corn?

TAYLOR: Not bad. I've never been to Kansas, so it's got some novelty.

CARTER: What was the movie you said was filmed there?

TAYLOR: *Carnival of Souls*. 1962. Black and white. Low budget. Bad audio. Weird. But kind of a classic.

DREW: I'll be right back.

MAX: Sure.

DREW disappears from the screen but her camera stays on.

TAYLOR: We went to a church today that was in the movie, but we just walked around the outside. I wanted to go in and take pictures of the stained glass windows, but Mom said that would be disrespectful.

MAX: Because you'd have been treating the church like a tourist attraction?

TAYLOR: Yeah. It was still cool to see it from the outside, though.

CARTER: Hey—we should play a prank on Drew... like, leave our cameras on, but move away from them so none of us are onscreen, and then when she comes back she'll be like, "Where is everybody?" We let her wonder about it, and then we all pop back onscreen at the same time and scare her.

MAX: That would be obnoxious.

CARTER: I'm obnoxious. We've established that. And it would be funny!

MAX: She'll know you're up to something.

CARTER: Why just me? Why not us?

MAX: You're always up to something.

TAYLOR: Drew should be back soon anyway.

CARTER: Whatever she's doing, it's taking a while.

The sound of several objects hitting the floor is heard.

CARTER: What was that?

MAX: Not me.

TAYLOR: Wasn't anything here.

MAX: (*calling loudly*) Drew? Everything okay?

Beat.

TAYLOR: (*calling loudly*) Drew?

MAX: Okay, this is maybe a little weird now.

TAYLOR: How long should we give her?

MAX: Before we do what?

TAYLOR: I don't know.

CARTER: Is there someone in the cabin with her?

MAX: Maybe somebody came in from the deck?

CARTER: No, I meant like, do you think there could be someone there who's not supposed to be?

TAYLOR: Carter, don't go trying to turn this into a horror movie.

CARTER: I thought you liked horror movies.

TAYLOR: I do. But I don't need for them to intrude on my reality.

CARTER: So you think this could be a real-life, horror movie-type situation?

TAYLOR: I didn't say that.

CARTER: But you're thinking it. You watch too many horror movies not to be thinking it.

MAX: Carter.

CARTER: What?

MAX: Don't.

CARTER: Don't what?

MAX: What you're doing.

TAYLOR: Trying to make me paranoid.

CARTER: It's not paranoia if it's really happening.

TAYLOR: You think that because I watch horror movies, that's where my brain is gonna automatically go?

CARTER: My brain already went there, and I don't watch horror movies. How is your brain not there?

TAYLOR: Maybe because watching them has trained me to distinguish fantasy from reality?

MAX: Drew's still not back yet.

TAYLOR: Yeah, I'm starting to get worried.

CARTER: See? There's your horror movie mentality kicking in.

TAYLOR: I can be worried without thinking there's a slasher in the cabin. Maybe she fell.

CARTER: If she was eighty-five years old, yeah, I could see that. But she's not.

MAX: Does her grandfather have a cat? Could a cat have knocked something over?

TAYLOR: I feel like she would've mentioned a cat. Drew loves cats.

MAX: A dog?

TAYLOR: Drew would've mentioned that, too.

MAX: Was Drew talking to us from her laptop or her phone?

TAYLOR: She was afraid of her laptop getting broken if she took it on the plane, so she's using her phone for this chat. If she's not in the same room with it, she wouldn't hear if we called—her ringtone's really soft.

CARTER: Does anybody have her mom's number, or her dad's?

MAX: I don't.

TAYLOR: Nope. And definitely not her granddad's.

CARTER: Maybe we should call the police.

MAX: Which police? The cabin's not close to any towns, and for that matter, we don't have any idea what part of the state she's in. Unless she told either of you?

TAYLOR: No, she didn't say anything about that. But I do know it's her mom's dad they're visiting, because her other grandparents live here in town.

MAX: Do you know Drew's mom's maiden name?

TAYLOR: No. Carter?

CARTER: No clue.

TAYLOR: So that's a dead end.

MAX: Somebody might be able to find them from Drew's phone's GPS.

TAYLOR: That's a great idea.

CARTER: Are you gonna call the police?

MAX: Do you think I should?

CARTER: Max, to be completely honest, if there's anybody here I'd consider the sensible one, it's you. I'm way more inclined to go by what you think than what I think.

MAX: As much as I appreciate the vote of confidence, I'd really prefer that we not put this all on my shoulders.

TAYLOR: How long has it been now?

CARTER: Since when?

TAYLOR: Since Drew left her phone.

CARTER: I don't know. A while. Too long.

MAX: But not long enough. If we were to call the police right now—our police, the Oregon police... whatever police... and tell them that our friend is in the middle of nowhere and they need to use her phone's GPS to find her because we think something's up... they wouldn't do anything, because we haven't seen or heard anything really definite, and it's only been a few minutes.

TAYLOR: It feels like forever. If Drew was planning to be gone from the phone for a long time, she'd have told us. Plus, there was that noise.

MAX: Which literally could have been anything. If we call the cops, they'll laugh.

TAYLOR: I think something bad is happening.

CARTER: I do, too.

MAX: Okay, okay. But before I call... I have to be sure about something.

TAYLOR: What?

MAX: Carter, do you have anything to do with this?

CARTER: What?

MAX: Is this a prank on me and Taylor?

CARTER: Are you serious?

MAX: I'm completely serious.

CARTER: How can you even ask me that?

MAX: Because it's exactly the kind of thing you'd do.

TAYLOR: Max is right, Carter.

CARTER: Drew would have to be playing along. Why would I have asked you to help me prank Drew if she was helping me prank you?

MAX: Because you're compulsive and I could totally see you doing that without thinking. Drew said she owed you something—is this it?

CARTER: If she was standing off-camera listening to this exchange we're having right now, she'd jump in and tell you not to call the cops, regardless of what I asked her to do. This isn't funny. How in the world can you think I'm doing it?

MAX: Carter, a lot of your stuff is nowhere near as funny as you think.

CARTER: What?

MAX: It gets old.

TAYLOR: Max!



help@theatrefolk.com www.theatrefolk.com

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