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The Deadly Departed: The Makings of a Television Series

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The Deadly Departed: The Makings of a Television Series

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

in

Creative Writing and Writing for the Performing Arts

by

Kali Nicole O'Rourke

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Thesis Committee:

Professor Stuart Krieger, Chairperson

Professor Nalo Hopkinson

Professor Erith Jaffe-Berg

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The Thesis of Kali Nicole O'Rourke is approved:

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Committee Chairperson

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## Acknowledgements

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Thanks also to my parents for all you've done for me over the years.

This is dedicated to Ari, without whom I'd be lost.

“Pilot”

FADE IN:

TEASER

INT. CAR – DAY

CAR CRASH VICTIM (30s-40s), a harried but not unpleasant businesswoman, talks on her cell phone while turning a corner. The RADIO PLAYS in the background.

CAR CRASH VICTIM

Wait. I can't hear you. Just a second.

She balances the phone between her head and her shoulder. Keeping one hand on the wheel, she uses the other one to fiddle with the radio volume. She accidentally turns it up.

CAR CRASH VICTIM

Damn it.

She tries to turn the knob the other way, and the phone slips to the floor. She watches it fall.

She doesn't see the other car coming.

SMASH.

EXT. SIDEWALK - CITY STREET – DAY

Lights flashing and SIREN BLARING, a police car speeds past STEPHANIE ELLISON (20), a self-possessed college student.

The car stops a few blocks away, still visible but distant. A large group of people mills nearby with a couple of other police cars already present, lights going.

CARLY ELLISON (8), a bubbly and inquisitive force of positivity, walks hand-in-hand with her sister. She grips Stephanie's hand tightly.

CARLY

Did something bad happen?

Stephanie eyes the scene. She smiles - not very convincingly - down at Carly.

STEPHANIE

It's okay. Don't worry about it.

She squeezes Carly's hand and looks around for MAX ELLISON (10), a rambunctious ball of energy who is ready to argue about anything.

Max has spotted the car crash and is hurrying toward it.

STEPHANIE

Max! Max.

She rushes forward and grabs hold of his backpack.

MAX

Aw, come on. I want to see the dead people. I never get to do anything fun.

CARLY

Is somebody hurt?

Stephanie's eyes are drawn back to the scene, almost involuntarily.

The crowd parts without realizing it for Car Crash Victim, who moves through the air as if propelled internally. Her unmoving feet hang just above the ground.

She is disfigured from the car accident, but other than a slight translucency, she looks as solid and stable as anyone standing around her.

She locks eyes with Stephanie. Stephanie stares for a moment before very deliberately looking away.

STEPHANIE

(to Carly)

What? No, honey, everything's going to be fine. We'll just have to go a different way to school. Don't want you to be late, right?

CARLY

It's Library Day.

STEPHANIE

Right, see? Library Day. Definitely can't be late for that.



Stephanie turns Carly around, walking down the sidewalk away from the accident. She drags Max by the backpack along with them. He strains to see the cars. Stephanie can't help but look behind them too.

MAX

But the dead people.

CARLY

Are there dead people?

Stephanie tears her eyes from the scene of the accident and turns around.

STEPHANIE

No, okay? There aren't any—

Car Crash Victim stands in front of her, face-to-face. It scares the audience. But it doesn't scare Stephanie. She's only unsettled.

STEPHANIE

--dead people.

She closes her eyes and draws in a sharp breath as she steps through Car Crash Victim.

She shudders and opens her eyes again.

STEPHANIE

No dead people. Nothing to worry about. Just school.

The three continue down the sidewalk. Car Crash Victim trails along behind them. Stephanie glances back at her worriedly.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – DAY

A crowd of KIDS and PARENTS instantly sweeps up Stephanie, Carly, and Max when they arrive at school. Max hurries off into the crowd without a backward glance.

Stephanie hugs Carly to her side then lets her go toward the school. Carly turns back and waves at Stephanie.

Stephanie waves back. As she turns to leave, Car Crash Victim catches her gaze. Students and Parents leave a wide gap as they swirl around the Car Crash Victim. She stares at Stephanie.

Stephanie swallows hard and ducks her head. She rushes away from Car Crash Victim.

INT. LECTURE HALL - COLLEGE CAMPUS – DAY

Along with many other STUDENTS, Stephanie sits in the hall as the teacher lectures. Not listening to any of it, she props her head on her hand and taps her pen on the notebook in front of her.

She sighs, shifts in her seat, and stretches. As she does so, she glances down the empty aisle beside her.

Car Crash Victim stands there. She stares beseechingly at Stephanie.

Stephanie's eyes go wide, and she returns the stare.

Beat.

Suddenly, a CLASSMATE brushes past Stephanie on the way out of the aisle. Class is over. Stephanie glances back down the aisle, but Car Crash Victim is gone.

Stephanie hurriedly gathers her things and does her best to rush for the door. Her progress is slowed by throngs of slow-moving Students.

Stephanie throws another look over her shoulder. Car Crash Victim has returned to the aisle. Her eyes bore into Stephanie's.

Stephanie turns quickly away and pushes through the remaining Students.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS – DAY

Stephanie hurries through the crowded campus, pushing past Students going the opposite direction.

She looks over her shoulder, searching the crowd. The crowd parts as Car Crash Victim drifts through.

Stephanie turns away from the ghost and barrels into BAILEY KINCAID (21), an All-American security guard.

BAILEY

Whoa. Hey. You don't have to run.

Stephanie is anxious and jumpy. She wants to get away from Bailey as quickly as possible.

STEPHANIE

Sorry. Sorry. It's class. I'm late. Have to go.

Bailey holds out a hand to stop her.

BAILEY

You don't have to run there.

Stephanie glances back over her shoulder. Car Crash Victim is getting closer. She turns back to Bailey.

STEPHANIE

Right. Sorry. You're right. I'll slow down.

It's a conciliatory effort, but Bailey nods.

BAILEY

Good.

Stephanie looks over her shoulder yet again, and Bailey picks up on the fact that something is wrong.

BAILEY

You're sure it's just class? Nothing else? No one's bothering you, are they?

Suddenly, Car Crash Victim appears over Bailey's shoulder. He shivers but seems otherwise unaware of it. Stephanie gasps and takes a quick step back.

BAILEY

What's wrong?

He holds his hands out in a pacifying gesture as he moves toward her.

Stephanie shakes her head quickly and rushes off in the direction she came from, moving as quickly as possible.

STEPHANIE  
(calling over her shoulder)  
Sorry! Test!

Bailey looks concerned, but he doesn't pursue.

BAILEY  
(calling after her)  
Stop running!

She doesn't listen to him but keeps going at the same speed.

Bailey watches her go, shaking his head. Car Crash Victim floats through him, headed after Stephanie.

Bailey freezes for a moment and glances around. Seeing no one next to him, he shakes himself and moves on.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Still hurrying along, Stephanie checks over her shoulder for Car Crash Victim once more. The ghost is gone.

Stephanie stops running. She lets out a deep breath in relief and smiles and laughs a little.

STEPHANIE  
You're being silly.

She moves forward at a more appropriate speed, not quite paying attention to her surroundings yet.

She walks straight through PAIGE (early 20s), an ornery and stubborn ghost who has a bigger heart than she's willing to admit. Like the Car Crash Victim, she is slightly translucent.

PAIGE  
Hey, watch where you're going, why don't you?

STEPHANIE  
(hurriedly)  
Sorry.

A beat. Stephanie realizes Paige must also be a ghost. She gapes at Paige for a moment before hurrying away.

PAIGE

Wait up! I need to talk to you.

Stephanie keeps going.

INT. CLASSROOM - COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY

Stephanie breathes hard in the empty room. Paige appears at her shoulder.

PAIGE

You didn't have to run away.

Stephanie jumps. She tenses, ready to run again.

PAIGE

Calm down.

She holds out her hands in a pacifying gesture.

STEPHANIE

Sorry... you just... the other one...

PAIGE

Yeah, scary, right? With her face?

Paige shudders theatrically.

PAIGE

Wouldn't want that following you home at night.

Paige grins, but Stephanie stiffens at the mention of home.

STEPHANIE

What do you want?

PAIGE

(cheerfully)

You've been activated. Congrats! You've got a job to do.

Bewildered, Stephanie shakes her head.

PAIGE

Let's see... what's the company line? Activated. You attract mostly dead people, so you can send them on their way and all that.

She sighs heavily.

PAIGE

And I have to help.

STEPHANIE

Half-dead?

PAIGE

Ghosts. Duh. Thought you would know that. They told me you'd done this before. Seen us.

The words take Stephanie aback. She bites her lip.

FLASHBACK - STEPHANIE'S BEDROOM - 8 YEARS AGO

YOUNG STEPHANIE (12) sits up in bed. Her eyes are wide open as she stares at DAD (30s), clearly a ghost based on his translucency.

DAD

Hey, princess.

YOUNG STEPHANIE

Dad?

Off Young Stephanie's astonished gaze...

BACK TO SCENE

Stephanie shrugs and wraps her arms around herself.

STEPHANIE

Some... But they don't usually follow me.

PAIGE

Oh, that.

(shrugging)

Get used to it, sister. Now that you're activated, ghosts are gonna start coming to you everywhere. Here. Home.

STEPHANIE

Home?

Stephanie takes a step back. She looks frightened.

PAIGE

Yeah... now where'd that ghost get to? I'd like to take care of this.

She looks around the classroom with a sigh and shake of her head.

Stephanie stares at Paige for a moment. She takes a deep breath and then steps through her.

Paige looks shocked by the turn of events.

Stephanie hurries for the classroom door. Right before she reaches it, Paige appears, blocking her way. She clenches her jaw in determination and narrows her eyes.

PAIGE

Won't. Be. That. Easy.

Paige grows visibly less translucent and more solid. She clenches her muscles.

Stephanie reaches out for the door that's only a few feet in front of her. It requires going through Paige, but she's not expecting any resistance.

Her hand hits Paige's very solid arm. Paige vibrates with the effort of holding solidity.

Stephanie flinches away from Paige and shakes her hand through the air as if trying to get rid of Paige's ghostly essence.

Paige de-tenses her body and fades out into translucency again. She grins at Stephanie.

PAIGE

Told you it wouldn't be that easy.

Stephanie paces, away from the door and into the empty classroom. She glares back in Paige's direction.

STEPHANIE

Whatever. Just take your spooky spook hands and get out of here.

PAIGE

No can do. Have to tell you what's up.

She sighs and shakes her head.

PAIGE

But if I'd known you were this new, I would've requested a transfer.

Stephanie rubs at her arm. She doesn't look at Paige.

STEPHANIE

I can't have ghosts following me everywhere. Make it un-happen. They don't need me.

PAIGE

Can't. They wouldn't listen to me. I'm not high enough up on the food chain. Plus, my whole punishment thing, but...

STEPHANIE

What punishment thing?

Paige waves her hand at Stephanie dismissively.

PAIGE

That's my business.

STEPHANIE

Um... Okay... Tell me who they are? So I can talk to them.

PAIGE

Are you kidding? You can't talk to them. That's why I'm here. As an "interface."

She does the air quotes. Stephanie frowns at her.

PAIGE

Look, I didn't make the rules. And there's nothing to be done because they can't un-activate you. So you should probably get used to it.



Stephanie folds her arms and glares. The door to the classroom opens, and STUDENTS enter. As frustrated as she is with Paige, Stephanie doesn't notice.

STEPHANIE

And how do you suggest I do that?

PAIGE

Same way I got used to being dead. I don't think about it.

It's the closest to vulnerable Paige gets -- which is not very -- but Stephanie is still sorry she asked.

STEPHANIE

Oh, um, I didn't mean...

Stephanie glances away from Paige and notices the Students. They look around the room, but the only one they see is Stephanie.

Paige bursts out laughing.

PAIGE

You look like such an idiot.

STEPHANIE

Quit laughing!

The Students freeze in place. They whisper to themselves. One steps forward toward Stephanie.

Paige keeps laughing.

STUDENT

(tentatively)

Are - are you okay?

STEPHANIE

(frustrated)

I'm fine.

The Student is taken aback by Stephanie's harsh tone.

STUDENT

We're supposed to have a class in here?

STEPHANIE

Okay. Okay. Whatever. We're -- I'm leaving.

The Students whisper together again, dismayed by Stephanie's odd behavior. Stephanie tries her best to ignore them as she leaves the room with her head held high.

Paige trails along after her, still chuckling.

INT. BATHROOM - COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY

Stephanie pushes the doors of the bathroom stalls open, checking for people. There is no one.

She rounds on Paige, who stands nearby.

STEPHANIE

Why would you do that?

Paige shrugs.

PAIGE

For fun.

She chuckles again. It irritates Stephanie.

PAIGE

You're so easy. Maybe this whole thing won't be horrendous after all. Still pretty bad, but not awful.

Car Crash Victim appears. Paige claps her hands together in delight.

PAIGE

Oh, look, there she is. So help her or whatever.

Stephanie turns to look at Car Crash Victim, who stands silently a couple of feet away from the girls. If she wasn't badly disfigured, it would be hard to tell she was dead.

STEPHANIE

How?

Paige elbows Stephanie, pushing her forward.

PAIGE

You said you didn't want her following you. The only way to make her stop is to figure out why she's here and fix whatever the problem is.

Still, Stephanie hesitates. She looks at the ghost with apprehension.

PAIGE

Do I have to do everything? Because let me tell you, that is just not going to work out.

Stephanie takes a deep breath then moves cautiously forward. She wants to help, but she doesn't want to get too close either.

STEPHANIE

But what am I supposed to do? Like specifically.

Paige shrugs.

PAIGE

I don't know. I just got this job. And I mean, they gave us a handbook, but it's not like I read it. I had better things to do.

STEPHANIE

But you're a ghost...

PAIGE

Yeah, but that doesn't mean my social life is dead.

Stephanie shakes her head in wonderment. Paige doesn't seem to care much. The ghost is more an inconvenience for her than anything. It's Stephanie's problem.

Stephanie is still hesitant. But she cares enough to try, even in this weird situation. She approaches Car Crash Victim cautiously, hands held out as if the ghost is a wild animal.

STEPHANIE

Hey. Um, hi. I'm Stephanie. And I don't know if you know this... but you're dead! So it would be really great if you could move on to the Great Unknown sometime soon. Like really soon.

PAIGE

The Great Unknown? That's ridiculous.

STEPHANIE

I just said something, okay? It's not like you were any help. And which one of us knows what being dead is like?

PAIGE

The not completely stupid one, apparently.  
(shaking her head)  
The Great Unknown.

Car Crash Victim continues to stare at Stephanie. She doesn't move in the slightest.

STEPHANIE

So why doesn't she, you know, tell me what she wants?

PAIGE

Not all ghosts talk.

STEPHANIE

You're an exception? Lucky me.

Paige sighs heavily.

PAIGE

No, I'm not an exception. It's just hard when you first cross over. Sometimes it takes a while.

Car Crash Victim continues to stare at Stephanie. It's getting unnerving. Stephanie takes a quick step back.

PAIGE

You don't want to do that. Be better to get rid of her. Or the Runners'll come after you.

STEPHANIE

Runners?

Paige is not impressed with Stephanie's continued lack of knowledge. She rattles off the information quickly but also manages to make it sound as if she's talking to a five-year-old.

PAIGE

Runners. Take souls without them being properly sorted. That is what you're trying to stop.

Stephanie stares back blankly. She doesn't know. Paige is wholly unconcerned.

PAIGE

You help a ghost, and no Runner comes after you. Easy peasy. Now, I'm going to get out of here. My duty is done. I've interfaced. Good luck with that.

She scornfully gestures at Car Crash Victim.

STEPHANIE

I thought you were stuck with me.

PAIGE

Not all the time. Nothing could have made me sign up for that.

STEPHANIE

But you're a ghost. What do you even have to do?

Paige affects an offended posture.

PAIGE

Ghosts can't watch TV? Gossip Girl's my jam.

Stephanie stares at her in disbelief.

PAIGE

Later. Call me if you need me or whatever.

It's already clear she doesn't mean it, but Paige decides to clarify anyway.

PAIGE

But actually don't call me.

STEPHANIE

But... but...

But Paige is gone.

STEPHANIE

Where do you watch TV at?

Stephanie sighs and looks at Car Crash Victim.

STEPHANIE

Why can't you leave like that?

Car Crash Victim vanishes.

STEPHANIE

Huh. That actually worked? Maybe she wanted to watch something too.

She laughs, taking long, heaving breaths, releasing the stress and weirdness of the day out instead of letting it crash down on her.

EXT. QUAD - COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY

Stephanie walks through the campus and into...

INT. AUDITORIUM - COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY

The giant room doesn't have many kids in it. Stephanie finds a seat in the middle. She sits and breathes.

The auditorium gradually fills with kids. Stephanie looks around and smiles to herself.

STEPHANIE

(under her breath)

No ghosts.

She keeps her smile as class begins.

EXT. FRONT STOOP - ELLISON HOME - DUSK

Stephanie lets herself into the house. She doesn't notice the shadowy figure standing in the middle of the street.

The shadowy figure looks like a Dementor or a Ringwraith except it's cloaked in shadow rather than wearing an actual cloak.

This is the RUNNER that Paige mentioned. It lifts a hand of menacingly long-fingers -- think a mash up of Freddy Krueger and the Gentlemen from Buffy the Vampire Slayer's "Hush."

We know it's watching Stephanie. Waiting.

END OF ACT ONE

## ACT TWO

### INT. KITCHEN - ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

The kitchen is small with just enough room for all the appliances and a dining table. Takeout boxes cover the counter.

The Ellisons we've already met - Stephanie, Carly, Max – sit around the table, eating the takeout. They're joined at the table by two new family members:

MOM (40s), who is exhausted and showing it but trying to hold it together for just a few more hours for the sake of the kids,

and

ALYSSA (15), Stephanie's sister, a fairly typical teenager who doesn't want to be spending time with her family. She types on her phone more than she eats.

Next to Alyssa, Max wriggles in his seat excitedly as he eats.

MAX

We saw a car crash today. On the way to school.

He beams.

MOM

Oh yeah?

MAX

Yeah. But Stephanie wouldn't let me see the dead people.

He glares over at Stephanie who grins at him and shakes her head.

STEPHANIE

Maybe next time, kiddo.

She catches Mom's eye across the table. Mom mouths a "thank you." Stephanie waves it off, like it's no problem.

Max is not impressed by all this.

MAX

But I wanted to see them!

CARLY  
(matter of factly)  
Max is wrong. There weren't any dead people.

MAX  
Yes, there were!

CARLY  
No! Stephe said so.

Carly beams across the table at Stephanie. She clearly looks up to her older sister.

Alyssa barely glances up from her phone. But that doesn't keep the scorn out of her voice.

ALYSSA  
Well, she was lying to you. Idiot.

MAX  
(to Carly)  
See?

Carly's face falls.

CARLY  
(to Stephanie)  
Were there dead people?

Stephanie shakes her head. As she does so, Car Crash Victim appears in the room. The only one aware of it, Stephanie jumps. It flusters her.

Carly awaits a response. Mom looks at Stephanie oddly. Stephanie averts her gaze from Car Crash Victim, looking down at the table instead.

MOM  
(to Carly)  
No, honey. There weren't any dead people.

Carly nods, satisfied with the response, and returns to eating.

The talk continues around the table, this time with laughter, but Stephanie doesn't hear any of it.



All she can hear is her HEARTBEAT and the CLINK of her SILVERWARE as she concentrates on pretending to eat for the sake of appearing normal.

MOM

Stephanie? Stephanie?

Stephanie tunes back in. She glances up at Mom, and her eyes fall on Car Crash Victim, who stares at her.

Stephanie stares back with dread. She quickly pushes back her chair and stands up. In her fervor, the chair almost falls over.

Everyone around the table - except Alyssa, who couldn't care less - looks at her in surprise. Stephanie grabs at her dishes.

STEPHANIE

I, um, have to go.

MOM

Now? We're not finished.

Stephanie averts her gaze from Car Crash Victim. She takes a breath, trying to appear calm. But she's still very clearly not.

STEPHANIE

I--I... completely forgot I have a thing... a thing... to do... right now.

It's obviously a lie, and Mom is not impressed.

STEPHANIE

(hurriedly)

Won't take long. Promise. Gotta go.

She crosses to the nearby kitchen sink and adds her dishes to the several that are already there.

When she returns to the table, Stephanie sees her mom looks disappointed. Stephanie hates to disappoint -- she knows how much these dinners mean to her mother -- but she also doesn't want the ghost in the house.

STEPHANIE

(quietly)

Sorry.

She pushes her chair in carefully and leaves the room.

Alyssa finally glances up from her phone.

ALYSSA

It's her turn to do the dishes. She's probably just trying to get out of it.

EXT. FRONT STOOP - ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

Stephanie slams the front door shut as she leaves the house. She jogs down the stairs and across the street to –

EXT. SWINGS - PARK - NIGHT

The park is deserted. A small playground stands off to one side. Stephanie makes her way over to the swings and sits down.

She waits a moment before Car Crash Victim appears in front of her. The two regard each other for a moment.

STEPHANIE

Good job. You followed me. Wish it was that easy to get you to leave.

Stephanie kicks her feet on the ground. She starts swinging, not very high.

STEPHANIE

Just tell me what you want. And I'll do whatever it is, so you can leave me alone.

Suddenly, Car Crash Victim disappears.

STEPHANIE

Wait! Where are you going? I have to help you!

Just as suddenly, Paige appears in front of the swing set. She looks frazzled, scared and glances around the park quickly.

Stephanie draws the swing to a stop.

STEPHANIE

I'm actually kind of happy you're here. Surprisingly. The ghost showed up at my house this time. I don't know what to do.

PAIGE

We have to go.

It takes a moment for Stephanie to realize how serious Paige is being, and even when she does, she still can't quite believe it.

STEPHANIE

Go where? Go why?

PAIGE

Just do it. Move.

Stephanie still isn't sure whether to believe Paige or not, but something in the other girl's tone strikes a chord.

She moves. Without knowing why or where. She just knows she has to get out of there.

But there's nowhere to go. The area around the swings is wide open. Flustered, Stephanie moves around the area.

Paige appears in some tall bushes in front of Stephanie. She urgently waves Stephanie over.

EXT. PARK ENTRANCE - PARK - NIGHT

The entrance to the park is framed by an archway. A Runner glides through it.

EXT. SWINGS - PARK – NIGHT

Paige gestures urgently from the bushes again, but Stephanie is strangely reluctant to move. She turns toward the park entrance and the Runner, which hasn't seen her just yet.

She only gets about halfway around before Paige is back.

PAIGE

(hissing)

Come on!

She motions Stephanie over to –

EXT. BUSHES - PARK - NIGHT

Stephanie and Paige crash into the bushes. Well, Stephanie crashes, wincing as the branches scratch at her.

The branches don't bother Paige, even though they brush against her the same way they do Stephanie. Occasionally a branch won't move aside, poking through Paige instead.

PAIGE  
Keep quiet.

Stephanie glares incredulously.

But Paige isn't paying attention. She brushes some of the branches in front of her face carefully aside and peeks through the leaves.

PAIGE  
I think -- I think we lost him.

Stephanie shoves at the branches in front of her face. They scrape at her. She ducks and moves trying to clear a spot without injuring herself. The branches mess with her hair.

When she finally gets enough of a spot clear, she too peeks out and gets her first look at a Runner, and it's... not that terrifying.

The Runner hovers just inside the entrance. It looks more like a still-life painting than anything else.

Stephanie narrows her eyes and sighs. She moves back from the hole in the bushes.

STEPHANIE  
That's what we were running from? That Grim Reaper reject?

The branches stab at her, and she fights with them.

Paige turns away from her own clear spot and stares at Stephanie in wide-eyed shock.

Stephanie shakes her head as best she can with the branches in her way.

STEPHANIE

You're being ridiculous.

She brushes at a branch again, and this time draws blood on the back of her hand.

STEPHANIE

Ow!

She puts her hand up to her mouth and licks at the wound and soothes it. More branches scrape at her in the process.

STEPHANIE

You know what, I'm not staying here. So what if it sees me? What's it going to do?

She steps through the bushes with some difficulty, almost tripping on the roots.

Paige panics. She reaches out for Stephanie, but her hand goes right through.

Paige quickly tries to center herself mentally. She scrubs a hand across her face then zeroes her gaze on Stephanie's arm.

She clenches her muscles again, and she becomes less translucent. Paige darts a hand out and finally succeeds in grabbing hold of Stephanie. She pulls her back into the bushes.

STEPHANIE

Ow! Hey.

Paige drops Stephanie's arm and the solidity act. She fades into translucency.

PAIGE

You don't want to do that.

Paige turns back to the hole in the bushes and eyes the Runner carefully. Stephanie looks at Paige, who's not usually so quiet or serious.

Paige turns to Stephanie with her serious face still on, but there's a hint of exasperation around the edges.

PAIGE

(hissing)

I already told you about the Runners. It's not my fault you didn't listen. But go out there if you want. Whatever.

Stephanie blinks at Paige. Paige glares back, her arms crossed over her chest. The moment stretches.

Stephanie turns a little to peer through the branches. The Runner still hasn't moved. She swallows hard and looks away.

PAIGE  
Chicken.

But there's a self-satisfied smirk on her face.

Annoyed, Stephanie turns away to peer back out of the bushes again. Car Crash Victim suddenly appears right in front of her.

Stephanie jumps back. The bushes crackle around her.

PAIGE  
(tense)  
What is it? Did it find us?

Stephanie shakes her head.

STEPHANIE  
The ghost.

Paige's relief is palpable. She steps up to the hole in the bushes and glares through at Car Crash Victim.

PAIGE  
Go away.

She steps back from the bushes and turns on Stephanie.

PAIGE  
Didn't I tell you this would happen? This exact thing. You should have gotten rid of her.

STEPHANIE  
How? It's not like you were any help.

Paige waves off the insult.

PAIGE

I'm the sidekick. Not the do-everything-er.

With the argument, Paige forgets to pay attention to the Runner.

EXT. PARK ENTRANCE - PARK - NIGHT

The Runner stays stock still. Wind blows past it.

Suddenly, it moves. From where arms would be, the shadow parts, and we can see its long, spindly fingers.

It flexes them inward, nice and slowly. Then disappears.

EXT. BUSHES - PARK - NIGHT

Stephanie rolls her eyes at Paige.

STEPHANIE

Whatever. I'd rather take my chance out there with it than stay here with you.

Stephanie steps out of the bushes, less clumsily than before. She angles herself away from Car Crash Victim.

She glances toward the park entrance and sees nothing there.

STEPHANIE

It's gone.

Paige appears at her shoulder.

PAIGE

What? It can't be.

Stephanie shrugs and brushes herself off. She fixes her clothing and tweaks her hair where the branches mused it.

STEPHANIE

Well, it is. I'm going home.

She turns to Car Crash Victim, pointing at her like she's a bad dog.

STEPHANIE

Don't follow me.

She moves off toward the park entrance.

Paige looks around. Every shadow could be a potential threat. Paige shivers.

PAIGE

Hey, Stephanie! Wait up!

She disappears.

INT. LIVING ROOM - ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

Carly sits watching TV. A TAPPING noise at the window draws her attention.

A shadow - much like a tree's shadow would look – crosses the window.

Carly turns her attention back to the TV.

The TAPPING sounds again.

Carly looks back at the window. The tree shape becomes more humanoid, branches turning into fingers. It beckons Carly.

Carly is enraptured. She stands up slowly, turns off the TV, and walks to –

INT. FRONT HALL - ELLISON HOME – NIGHT

Carly turns the knob on the front door. Mom walks by, a little way down the hall.

MOM

Carly? It's late. What are you doing?

Carly freezes in place.

A dawning light comes back to her eyes. She stares at the hand on the door knob as if she doesn't know how it got there. She lets go, shaking herself.

The TAPPING sounds again. Carly looks around, locating the shadow on a pane of glass in the door.



Her eyes glaze back over. She reaches for the door knob.

MOM

Carly?

CARLY

(almost robotically)

I'm going outside to wait for Stephanie.

MOM

Well, don't stay out too late. If she's not home soon, come back inside.

Mom leaves. Carly turns the door knob and pulls the door open.

EXT. FRONT STOOP - ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

Carly steps out onto the front stoop. It's empty.

She looks around, a little more comprehension in her eyes than before but not much.

Her eyes fall on a dark, shadowy figure in the street in front of her. We know it's the Runner.

The Runner lifts a hand and flexes its long fingers in a wave.

Carly smiles. It's incongruous with the horror of the scene.

The Runner drifts forward toward Carly and the front stoop.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE - ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

Paige and Stephanie walk up the middle of the street toward the Ellison's house.

PAIGE

The Runner'll just keep coming back if you don't get that ghost to wherever it is she's going.

STEPHANIE

Where is she going?

Paige shrugs.

PAIGE

I don't know. I'm still here. But the point is the Runner.

Silence. Paige frowns.

PAIGE

It could follow you home...

Stephanie frowns. Paige looks relieved that she's taking this seriously.

STEPHANIE

Fine. I'll... deal with the ghost.

PAIGE

Do your job?

STEPHANIE

Sure. That.

With Stephanie in agreement, Paige recovers her trademark sass. She claps her hands together in delight.

PAIGE

Goodie. Good little minion.

STEPHANIE

You were the one assigned to me. Doesn't that make you my minion?

She grins in Paige's direction, but Paige has stopped stock still in the middle of the road. Her eyes are wide with fear.

STEPHANIE

Paige?

PAIGE

I... I told you...

She lifts a trembling hand and points ahead at the Ellison's house. Stephanie looks that direction, and what she sees there chills her: the Runner and Carly on the front stoop.

The Runner places one long-fingered hand on Carly's shoulder. It flexes its fingers possessively.

Stephanie is frozen in place as she processes the scene.

STEPHANIE

Carly.

Suddenly, Stephanie starts running. She makes it to only feet from the stoop when Carly and the Runner vanish. Breathing hard, Stephanie collapses on the stairs.

STEPHANIE

Carly!

Still frozen in place in the middle of the road, Paige is the only one around to hear her.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. STREET - OUTSIDE ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

Stephanie paces on the sidewalk frantically. She is on the verge of falling apart.

Paige stands nearby, still visibly shaken.

STEPHANIE

It took Carly! We let the Runner take my sister! What are we gonna do?

PAIGE

What do you mean do?

Stephanie stops mid-step and rounds on Paige.

STEPHANIE

To get her back.

Paige shakes her head slowly.

STEPHANIE

There must be something. My mom, the police, someone.

PAIGE

You can't tell anyone. They'll think you're crazy.

STEPHANIE

But we need help.

Paige starts to say something but thinks better of it. Stephanie gestures impatiently.

STEPHANIE

Come on. What is it?

PAIGE

(hesitantly)

There's... there's some people I know who could help.

STEPHANIE

Then let's go.

Stephanie is raring to go. The newfound urgency suits her. She calms down, not quite so scattered as just moments before.

Still, Paige hesitates.

PAIGE

They don't... They're not going to like it.

STEPHANIE

Doesn't matter. It's Carly. I'll do anything.

Paige nods in understanding.

PAIGE

I get it. I had a sister once too.

Stephanie's jaw drops. Paige winces and looks away.

PAIGE

I'll take you.

STEPHANIE

(gratefully)

Thank you.

It's the first time they've come to an agreement about anything. Almost subconsciously, they enjoy it for a moment.

INT. STEPHANIE'S BEDROOM - ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

The room is neat and clean. Books line empty surfaces. Several pictures of Stephanie with her family dot the area.

Stephanie hands Alyssa some money from her wallet.

STEPHANIE

Just for a couple hours. Make sure Mom doesn't realize how long we're gone.

Alyssa pockets the money but doesn't say anything. She holds her hand back out expectantly.

Stephanie sighs and takes more money out to give to Alyssa.

ALYSSA

Sure, whatever. Where're you going anyway?

Stephanie grabs Alyssa's shoulders and places a kiss on her forehead. Alyssa squirms.

STEPHANIE

Thank you.

Stephanie lets go and moves away. She heads for the door.

Alyssa makes a disgusted face and wipes at her forehead with her arm.

STEPHANIE

(calling back)

And do the dishes.

ALYSSA

That's gonna cost you!

Stephanie ignores her and walks out.

INT. LIVING ROOM - ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

Mom sits in a chair, reading a book. Stephanie breezes through the room, struggling to act casual.

STEPHANIE

(hurriedly)

Hey, Mom, Carly and I are going on a walk. We'll be back soon. Promise.

Mom puts her book down and eyes Stephanie skeptically. Stephanie avoids her gaze and hurries away as fast as possible.

MOM

(calling after her)

Stephanie? Stephanie!

Mom stands up from the chair and follows her into--

INT. FRONT HALL - ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

Mom rounds the corner just as Stephanie reaches the front door. Mom folds her arms across her chest.

MOM

It's a school night.

Stephanie gives no indication that she heard what Mom said. She gives a brief wave.

STEPHANIE

Back soon!

Stephanie exits to --

EXT. FRONT STOOP - ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

Paige waits outside. Stephanie walks down the steps to join her.

STEPHANIE

Let's go. Before Mom comes after me.

Paige displays an uncharacteristic hesitance. She wraps her arms around herself. Stephanie hurries past her.

She glances back and sees Paige hasn't moved. She waves her forward.

STEPHANIE

Come on.

Paige sighs heavily and follows Stephanie.

INT. BUS - NIGHT

Stephanie stares at her reflection in the window. Paige stands nearby, but she doesn't appear in the glass. She shakes her head and mutters to herself.

STEPHANIE

They'll help. They have to help.

A PASSENGER glances up sharply, and Stephanie puts on a bright smile. She turns away from the Passenger toward Paige. Paige shrugs.

EXT. MURDOCK HOUSE - NIGHT

In the light, this would look like a nice, inviting house, but at night, the shadows of the roof's triangle dormer intimidate.

EXT. FRONT STOOP - MURDOCK HOUSE - NIGHT

Stephanie and Paige stand side by side on the porch. Paige lifts her hand to the doorbell but stops, her finger hovering over the button.

STEPHANIE

What are you waiting for?

PAIGE

This is a terrible idea.

STEPHANIE

It was your idea.

Paige shakes her head and pulls her hand away from the door.

PAIGE

Never listen to me. We should go.

Paige backs away from the door. Stephanie turns, watching her incredulously.

STEPHANIE

You can't just go!

Paige shrugs, no witty comeback at the ready. Letting her shoulders slump, she turns away from the door and from Stephanie.

Stephanie steps toward Paige, reaching out for the other girl's shoulder.

STEPHANIE

Wait.

On the way there, she thinks twice about it and lets her hand fall back to her side.

STEPHANIE

You... you saved me... from the Runner. That means something, you know. We can do this. It can't be that bad.

Paige shrugs again and shakes her head softly.

STEPHANIE

Please.

Paige turns around. She's never looked more like a ghost than in this moment. Fragile. Like you could see right through her, like she's about to disappear.

PAIGE

You don't know. What happened. They should hate me.

Paige shudders.

Stephanie is sorry she asked but purses her lips in annoyance since Paige won't help.

STEPHANIE

Fine. You don't have to. I'll do it myself.

Stephanie turns quickly back to the door. Paige watches in horror.

PAIGE

Don't.

Stephanie jabs the doorbell. While they wait for the answer, she has time to regret the decision.

After a moment, the door is pulled open by ARCHIE MURDOCK (late 60s-70s), an ex-police officer who's still rough around the edges in spite of his age.



ARCHIE

(irritably)

Do you know how late it is?

Stephanie isn't prepared. She chokes on her words.

STEPHANIE

Please. It's... they... my sister...

ARCHIE

Talk sense, girl.

Clearly at a loss for words, Stephanie shakes her head.

ARCHIE

Damn kids.

He starts to shut the door. Stephanie closes her eyes in despair.

Suddenly, Paige brushes past her shoulder, stepping up onto the porch and toward the door. She's got her bravado back now.

PAIGE

A Runner took her sister, Archie. Open up.

Archie sees Paige and freezes.

ARCHIE

Oh no, not you. You can't come in here.

He quickly tries to shut the door. Paige puts her hand out between the door and the frame. She looks at Archie through the crack.

PAIGE

I wouldn't have come if it wasn't important. You know that.

They have a brief stare down before Archie sighs heavily and opens the door.

Stephanie lets out a sigh of relief.

STEPHANIE

Thank you. Thank you so much.

She's saying it as much to Paige as to Archie. Archie waves his hand dismissively.

ARCHIE

Leena's not going to like it.

He steps back and moves into the house.

Stephanie follows him. Paige takes a moment to steel herself before stepping inside.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MURDOCK HOUSE - NIGHT

Muttering to himself, Archie ushers the girls into the room. Then he moves away a few steps to pace in the background.

LEENA MURDOCK (late 60s-70s), the warm, grandmotherly type but one who has seen some things, stands up from the couch. She smiles warmly.

LEENA

It's nice to see you again, Paige.

Archie scoffs.

Paige nods quickly and glances at the floor. Tension hangs in the room as she composes herself. It only takes a moment.

PAIGE

Stephanie, meet the Murdocks.

(to Archie and Leena)

We're here for help.

ARCHIE

(suspiciously)

What kind of help?

Stephanie steps closer to Paige and leans in.

STEPHANIE

(whispering)

How come they can see you? I thought that was just me.

Paige makes a face and waves her hand in a vague gesture.

LEENA

You're allowed to ask us questions, dear.

Stephanie straightens up, embarrassed at being overheard.

LEENA

Not to worry. I can tell you're new.

Behind the girls, Archie puffs up in pride. He smiles at his wife, the expression out of place on his face but genuine.

ARCHIE

Always did know more than she should. Should've listened when she warned me about you.

He glares pointedly at Paige.

LEENA

It's a gift.

Archie turns back to Leena. She smiles at him, and his face softens. When she looks at him, he forgets there's anyone else in the room.

Stephanie bounces anxiously, but she doesn't know these people well enough to interrupt.

ARCHIE

(fondly)

Yeah, yeah. The first day I met you, said you were gonna marry me. You'd seen it. And here we are. Best thing that ever happened to me.

He trails off into a contemplative silence. Suddenly, he glances at Paige. His expression turns sour.

ARCHIE

And you're the worst.

Leena listens to Archie with the air of someone who's heard this particular complaint many times, so often that it's become somewhat endearing, if still annoying.

LEENA

(to the girls)

Ignore him. What can we do for you, dearies?

Stephanie hesitates. Paige nudges her in the side. Leena waits patiently while Stephanie takes a breath to bolster herself.

STEPHANIE

A Runner has my sister. It stole her. And... I have to get her back. I have to. Please. Paige said you could help. I'm begging...

Leena holds up a hand to cut her off.

LEENA

Oh my, that is serious. But we'll get her back, don't you worry.  
(to Archie)  
Go and get the books.

Archie gapes at her. Then he bristles.

ARCHIE

I put them in storage for a reason. We're retired.

LEENA

I'm sure we can find a way to help with this one thing, can't we?

She eyes Archie, daring him to defy her. He's not willing to. Still grumbling, he leaves to collect the books.

Leena waves her hands at the girls and smiles.

LEENA

Now, sit, sit. It might take awhile, I'm sorry. I'll get some tea going.

She leaves.

The girls glance at each other before moving over to the couch. They sit down.

Stephanie plucks at her clothes nervously. Paige glances around the room every few seconds, as if afraid of being attacked. It's clear she'd rather be anywhere else.

STEPHANIE

Can they really help us?

PAIGE

No one better. That's why I brought you, even though...

Stephanie side-eyes Paige for a moment. She tries to say something several times before she can settle on the words.

STEPHANIE

What happened? Why does he hate you?

Paige's face falls. She glances down at the floor.

PAIGE

He doesn't... It's complicated, all right?

She looks back up at Stephanie with fire in her eyes. She clearly doesn't want to talk about it.

Taken aback, Stephanie swallows and nods. The two sit in awkward silence.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MURDOCK HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Eyes closed, Leena sits in front of a table covered with several stacks of books. She hums lightly and trails her fingers over the book covers.

Archie stands nearby, but he leans away from the books, as if trying to not let them infect him.

Stephanie and Paige stand just behind Leena, watching. Stephanie leans in toward Paige.

STEPHANIE

(whispering)

What's she doing?

LEENA

I told you you can ask me these questions, dear. I don't bite.

She keeps her eyes closed. Stephanie's cheeks turn red in embarrassment.

STEPHANIE

What are you doing?

Leena hums her approval.

LEENA

That's better. I'm scanning the books. The right one will give off a kind of pop. And we'll start with that. I'm afraid it's not always an exact science.

She shrugs lightly.

LEENA

Mistakes are made.

Paige snorts.

PAIGE

I'll say.

ARCHIE

That wasn't Leena's fault. It was yours.

Paige turns away to keep Archie from seeing her face fall in dismay.

Leena sighs and shakes her head at the two of them.

LEENA

Quiet. I need to concentrate.

She goes back to humming and trailing her fingers along the books.

Stephanie rubs at her arm anxiously and bites her lips.

Finally, after an interminable few seconds, Leena picks up a book.

LEENA

(pleased)

That was fast.

(reading cover)

"The Invocation of Spirits, Departed and Otherwise." Ah, of course.

ARCHIE

(ruefully)

Should've known.

Leena opens the book and begins rifling through it.

STEPHANIE

What? Is it bad?

LEENA

Not at all. You'll be able to get your sister back just fine. Once you summon the Runner. And ask for a trade.

Paige scoffs.

PAIGE

Trade with the Runner. Are you serious? She can't do that. She's new.

STEPHANIE

I'll do anything.

PAIGE

You don't know. It's dangerous.

(to Leena)

And where's she going to get a soul to trade anyway?

Leena's calm surface flickers under Paige's exasperation. She looks away.

LEENA

She's been activated. There should be plenty of souls following her.

Paige throws her hands up in exasperation.

LEENA

It's not ideal, but if you work together, it can be done.

Archie steps forward with a frown.

ARCHIE

It could get awfully dangerous for the two of them.

LEENA

This is the way it has to be. The way it is.

ARCHIE

I could go. Supervise.

Leena places a hand on Archie's.

LEENA

Relax. Everything will be fine. You'll see.

Leena pulls out a pen and a notebook. She writes instructions on the paper before tearing it out and handing it to Stephanie.

Stephanie looks at the paper. There's very little written on it, just a few steps.

STEPHANIE

This can't be everything. It's so easy.

LEENA

Sometimes the simplest solution is the best. It's also harder than it looks. Requires something special.

STEPHANIE

But I'm not special.

Leena waves her off with a smile.

LEENA

Nonsense. Everyone is. And you'll have Paige there to help you. It's going to be just fine.

This doesn't convince Stephanie.

STEPHANIE

Okay...

LEENA

Oh, I almost forgot. You're going to need somewhere with a lot of space. To try and keep him from following you home.

STEPHANIE

He's already done that.

ARCHIE

(irritably)

Following again then.

Leena shoots him a look -- behave.



LEENA

If he keeps following you, come back and see us. We'll work it out. Don't worry.

Stephanie still isn't convinced, but she nods.

STEPHANIE

Somewhere with a lot of space, huh?

Stephanie and Paige exchange a look.

EXT. QUAD - COLLEGE CAMPUS - NIGHT

Stephanie and Paige stand on a wide-open lawn in a darkened area of campus. Stephanie holds her phone over Leena's instructions in order to read them.

STEPHANIE

"One: Get scared."

Stephanie glances at Paige, who nods.

PAIGE

We're attempting to summon a Runner, so check.

STEPHANIE

"Two: He's drawing his power from your sister. Think of her. Really focus. And he'll come to you. If it helps, chant her name softly."

Stephanie looks skeptically back at Paige.

STEPHANIE

How are you going to do that? You didn't even know Carly.

PAIGE

I guess you'll have to think hard enough for the both of us.

Paige's nerves make her sarcastic and snappish. She regrets the outburst almost immediately.

PAIGE

(quietly)

There are other things I can think about. And I can chant her name. He'll be able to hear me.

Stephanie watches her for a moment, expecting some more explanation. Paige looks away, embarrassed by the emotion. Stephanie nods and returns to the list.

STEPHANIE

"Three: In order to see the Runner when he comes, bend down and peer through your legs." Um... what?

She laughs hesitantly and looks to Paige for confirmation that she's read the instructions correctly. But Paige seems just as confused as Stephanie.

PAIGE

Are you sure that's what it says?

Stephanie looks back at the paper.

STEPHANIE

Yeah. "Bend down and peer through your legs." I hoped you'd know what it meant. It just sounds strange to me.

Paige shakes her head.

PAIGE

If I didn't know better, I'd think Leena was messing with us. But I trust her. With my life. My un-life. Whatever. It must be part of the ritual.

STEPHANIE

Then we'll do it. No matter how dumb it sounds. Then we just have to figure out a trade.

Stephanie takes a deep breath.

STEPHANIE

Ready?

PAIGE

As I'll ever be.

Stephanie closes her eyes and bends over. Next to her, Paige does the same.

STEPHANIE

Carly, Carly, Carly...

PAIGE

Carly, Carly, Carly...

They keep chanting Carly's name as Stephanie opens her eyes.

There's nothing at first, and Stephanie has to blink back sudden tears. Her voice falters.

PAIGE

Come on. Don't stop. We can do this.

She makes an attempt to sound more confident than she is, for Stephanie's sake.

Stephanie takes a breath and nods, best she can while upside down. She resumes chanting.

STEPHANIE

Carly, Carly, Carly...

The Runner appears several yards away. And next to him stands Carly.

Forgetting everything else but Carly, Stephanie straightens up quickly.

STEPHANIE

Carly!

Carly doesn't answer. She stares off into the distance, obviously mesmerized, at the Runner's side.

STEPHANIE

(to Paige)

It's here. Now what?

Paige shakes her head. Stephanie steels herself and glares at the Runner.

STEPHANIE

Give us Carly. We want a trade.

PAIGE

It's never going to work.

Suddenly, the Runner disappears. Carly stands across the yard alone.

Stephanie blinks. Could it be that easy? She glances triumphantly at Paige. But Paige remains uneasy, looking wildly around the yard.

PAIGE

Where did it go?

STEPHANIE

Who cares?

She turns her attention to Carly and slowly moves toward the girl.

STEPHANIE

Carly?

Carly doesn't react in any way.

While Stephanie is otherwise occupied, the Runner reappears near her. Paige sees it, and her eyes go wide. She opens her mouth, as if to scream out a warning to Stephanie, but nothing comes out.

The Runner flexes its long fingers and stalks forward toward Stephanie and Carly. Fear written across her face, Paige disappears.

Paige reappears between the Runner and Stephanie. She clenches her jaw in determination and narrows her eyes. She grows less translucent and more solid.

Stephanie turns to see The Runner lift one long finger and place it against Paige's chest, right where her heart would be. Paige watches as he slowly pushes it through as she shudders.

Paige's concentration breaks. She suddenly fades back into transparency. This time, the Runner rakes the finger through her chest. Paige convulses.

STEPHANIE

Paige!

Paige stops shaking, but she's still unsteady. She flickers in and out of view.

PAIGE

Told you... bad idea.

She pauses. She's not in any way okay.

PAIGE

Leena said. Soul. Car crash. Call her. Do... that.

Paige shudders. She's held out as long as she could. Paige disappears.

STEPHANIE

Paige? Paige!

The Runner moves forward toward Stephanie. Stephanie drops to her knees in the grass beside Carly. She takes hold of her sister's shoulders firmly and shakes them.

STEPHANIE

Carly! Sweetie, we have to get out of here. Please wake up.

Carly gives no indication that she knows Stephanie is there. She stares straight ahead.

The Runner advances on the two of them. Stephanie glances back over her shoulder.

The Runner lunges forward.

SMASH CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. QUAD - COLLEGE CAMPUS - NIGHT

The Runner advances on Stephanie, who kneels next to Carly on the campus lawn. It lunges at Stephanie.

Suddenly, Car Crash Victim appears between them, her back to the Runner. As always, she stares at Stephanie.

The Runner stops moving.

Stephanie glances between Car Crash Victim and the unmoving Runner. Maybe the trade will work.

Stephanie stares at the Car Crash Victim and licks her lips nervously.

STEPHANIE

Sorry.

She stands to address the Runner.

STEPHANIE

Let's trade. You like souls, right? You give me Carly, I'll give you that one.

She points at Car Crash Victim.

STEPHANIE

Even-steven.

She doesn't really expect the ploy to work, but she's desperate.

RUNNER

This is not fair.

The Runner's voice is airy and hisses like a snake.

RUNNER

We do not accept this. One depleted soul does not replace a living one. Particularly a thriving, vibrant one like this child possesses.

Stephanie is shocked that the Runner can speak, but she doesn't let that stop her from negotiating.

STEPHANIE

She's my sister. Do you understand that? Sister? I need her back.

RUNNER

Sister... We possess knowledge of the concept, but we do not understand what this means to you.

STEPHANIE

I can't explain my sister to you.

RUNNER

No need.

The Runner steps forward quickly and places one long finger on Stephanie's head.

MONTAGE - STEPHANIE'S MEMORIES

- Stephanie holding Carly for the first time
- watching over Carly while she sleeps
- teasing Carly and making her cry
- walking her to school, Carly runs ahead, Stephanie yells and chases after her
- laughing together
- hugs, lots of hugs.
- in short, love

END MONTAGE

RUNNER

Yes... we understand now. You are willing to sacrifice for Sister. Your soul would be less vital than the younger but prize enough.

STEPHANIE

Okay. Okay. You want me? You can have me. I'll do anything.

RUNNER

Admirable. Also unnecessary. We have been watching you, and we are intrigued.

This startles Stephanie, but she tries not to show it.

STEPHANIE

Does that get me Carly back?

RUNNER

We will accept your first offer. This grisly soul and one living, one less vibrant than this.

Stephanie glances over her shoulder at Car Crash Victim. She frowns, and there's the other nagging issue...

STEPHANIE

What other living soul?

RUNNER

We will let the fates decide this. No one is to know.

STEPHANIE

What's going to happen? To both... souls.

RUNNER

Your sister will be returned to you. This is the price.

Stephanie frowns again. She looks over at Carly. Hesitates. She looks back to the Runner.

STEPHANIE

Maybe...

RUNNER

This is the price.

Stephanie bites her lip. She looks back at Carly, who stands so still.

STEPHANIE

Okay... I guess...

She looks to the Runner then quickly away. She shakes her head and steels herself.

STEPHANIE

It's a deal.

The Runner makes a gesture that resembles inclining its head.

Stephanie releases a nervous breath.

RUNNER

As you wish.

The Runner folds its arms in front of its body - almost as if praying - but its hands aren't pressed together. Its fingertips are barely touching.

The wind picks up around Stephanie and the Runner. Stephanie's hair flies, but the nearby trees don't move.

There's a humming noise, which eventually clarifies into a myriad of voices, all talking and overlapping each other.



CLOSE ON THE RUNNER'S FACE

The face is covered by a dark veil, which obscures any features. But suddenly in the blackness, its eyes open. They are pure white.

INT. FRONT HALL - ELLISON HOME - SAME TIME

Shoes, backpacks, other debris of living litter the hall.

Max crouches near a pile of shoes. He unscrews the lid from a jar full of slugs and pulls one out.

He makes a face at it, sticking out his tongue.

MAX  
(excited)  
Gross.

He puts the slug into one of the shoes, which is clearly Carly's. He grins.

BACK TO RUNNER'S FACE

The Runner's eyes close again. There is nothing but black.

BACK TO SCENE

The Car Crash Victim is stretched and pulled like silly putty. She lets out a low moan.

Stephanie closes her eyes and looks away.

The Car Crash Victim disappears with a POP.

Slowly, Stephanie turns her apprehension-filled gaze back on the Runner.

STEPHANIE  
What just happened?

The Runner nods at her.

RUNNER  
The fates have decided.

STEPHANIE

What does that mean?

RUNNER

Your sister has been returned to you. We bid you well.

Stephanie eagerly turns to Carly, but Carly is still frozen, staring straight ahead. Stephanie chokes back a sob.

She whips around to face the Runner again.

STEPHANIE

You promised!

Suddenly, a flashlight shines across the quad. Stephanie steps protectively in front of Carly. Carly stands stock still behind her.

Bailey jogs across the quad.

BAILEY

Hey! Everything okay here?

Bailey makes his way over to Stephanie and Carly. On the way, he steps through the Runner. Sensing something off, he pauses for a second and shivers.

The Runner disappears.

Bailey shakes himself and advances on Stephanie. She tries to see around him to the Runner, but she has to shield her face from the glow of the flashlight.

BAILEY

It's late. You shouldn't be out here. In the dark. Yelling.

He gets close enough to see Stephanie's face.

BAILEY

You. You're that girl. The one from this morning.

He pauses, realizing that might be a cause for concern.

BAILEY

Is everything okay?

STEPHANIE  
(sardonically)  
Just fine, Officer.

Bailey registers her tone and frowns, but he doesn't call her on it. Instead, he sweeps his flashlight across the quad. The light lands on Carly.

BAILEY  
Who's the kid?

Stephanie tenses, moving to shield Carly from view.

STEPHANIE  
My sister.

BAILEY  
How old is she? She definitely shouldn't be out here this late at night.

STEPHANIE  
Don't worry about it. We're leaving.

Stephanie turns away from Bailey, bends to Carly's level, and puts her hands on the girl's shoulders, trying to force her to move.

Carly stays mesmerized.

Bailey tries to get a better look at Carly. He registers the fact that something weird is going on.

BAILEY  
Are you sure everything's okay?

Stephanie sighs and drops her head down. She doesn't want to deal with this. Not when she's worried about Carly.

STEPHANIE  
(overly chipper)  
Yeah. Yes. Everything's fine. Why wouldn't it be?

Bailey isn't convinced. For good reason. Stephanie isn't very convincing. He nods skeptically.

BAILEY

Uh huh.

Carly's hand twitches in Stephanie's grasp. Stephanie immediately drops to her knees in the grass. Joy mingled with relief floods across her face.

Carly looks around in confusion. She's dazed, as if she'd just woken up.

STEPHANIE

(hesitantly)

Carly?

Carly turns toward Stephanie. She blinks. Then her face straightens out in recognition.

CARLY

Stephie? Where are we?

Stephanie flings her arms around her sister, hugging her tight. She didn't think she'd ever see her again.

STEPHANIE

It's okay. You're going to be okay.

CARLY

What happened? What was that?

STEPHANIE

Don't worry. It doesn't matter. Everything's okay.

Stephanie strokes Carly's hair as she looks up at Bailey.

STEPHANIE

(to Bailey)

Everything's okay.

Her eyes dare him not to believe her. He sighs because he still doesn't believe it. But after a moment, he nods.

BAILEY

All right.

Stephanie buries her face against Carly's neck.

INT. STEPHANIE'S BEDROOM - ELLISON HOME - DAWN

Carly sleeps in the bed while Stephanie sits next to her. Stephanie strokes the girl's hair, grateful to have her back.

Paige appears in the room. She stands next to the bed, as hesitant as she ever gets.

Stephanie startles at Paige's appearance.

STEPHANIE

Are you okay? What happened?

Paige shrugs and looks away.

PAIGE

I had to go back. Reform or... I'd... Anyway, I'm fine. Now. Perks of being a ghost.

She puts on a false smile but can't hold it. Upset, she sighs heavily then looks back at Stephanie.

PAIGE

(softly)

I'm sorry. I thought I could keep it together. Stop him.

STEPHANIE

It's okay. We got her back. Thank you.

Paige smiles sadly and rubs at her arm. She clearly has something else to say, but she doesn't want to.

PAIGE

They sent me. I have a message for you.

STEPHANIE

Whatever it is they want... no. Just no.

Paige nods. Silence for a moment.

PAIGE

I have to tell you... They're angry because you gave him the car accident person.

STEPHANIE

I had to. For Carly. It was the only way. I didn't want to...

Beat.

PAIGE

I know, but... they don't see it like that. They say you owe them. Like I do. They told me you have to do your job now.

Stephanie sighs and glances away for a second before returning her gaze to Paige. There's a determined look in her eye.

STEPHANIE

Look. Tell them I don't want anything to do with it. Any of it. My sister was almost...

PAIGE

But you were activated. It's your duty.

STEPHANIE

Did they tell you to say that?

Paige looks away. It's true.

Stephanie finally looks up at Paige. She speaks matter-of-factly, without malice. She's just tired.

STEPHANIE

Tell them I won't do it. Find somebody else.

Paige nods and disappears.

Carly stirs from her sleep.

CARLY

(mumbling)

Who was that?

Stephanie strokes Carly's hair.

STEPHANIE

No one. I was just talking to myself. I didn't mean to wake you up.

She smiles warmly, but the smile doesn't quite reach her eyes.

STEPHANIE

(whispering)

Go back to sleep.

Carly nods and closes her eyes again. Stephanie stares worriedly down at Carly.

END OF ACT FOUR

TAG

INT. MAX'S BEDROOM - ELLISON HOME - DAWN

It's dark in the room, even though a glow of sunlight can be seen through the curtains.  
Max sleeps in bed.

A shadow crosses over the end of the bed. It looks like a tree's shadow, but there's something just a little bit... off.

The shadow comes from a Runner, standing at the foot of Max's bed.

The Runner flexes its fingers and reaches for Max.

Max slumbers on.

END TAG

FADE OUT.

Episode Two: "Where in the World is Max?"

FADE IN:

TEASER

INT. LIVING ROOM - ELLISON HOME - DAY

Police officers mill around the room. On the couch, Stephanie's Mom converses urgently with one POLICE OFFICER.

POLICE OFFICER

Now, Mrs. Ellison, you're sure your son hasn't just... run away?

Mom looks upset at the very thought.

MOM

He's only ten...

Alyssa, Carly, and Stephanie huddle together in an out of the way corner. Carly tugs on Stephanie's sleeve, and Stephanie bends to hear her better.

CARLY

When are they gonna find Max?

Stephanie grimaces but quickly covers it by straightening back up. She strokes Carly's hair.

STEPHANIE

Soon, honey. Soon.

Alyssa huffs and crosses her arms.

ALYSSA

They are not.

CARLY

They're not?

Stephanie glares at Alyssa. Alyssa clearly notices but ignores her.



As she talks, she gets louder and louder, drawing the attention of the police officers and Mom.

ALYSSA

No. She's lying to you. They're never gonna find Max. Max is gone. Like his stupid hamster. Like Dad.

Carly's face falls. Her eyes fill with tears.

Alyssa breaks away from the group and rushes for the stairs. She clomps quickly up them.

Mom stands up from the couch, making an effort to follow after her, but she's still reeling from Max's disappearance.

Stephanie gestures to Mom to sit back down.

STEPHANIE

I'll go after her.

Mom hesitates, torn.

Stephanie bends down to Carly again.

STEPHANIE

He's not gone. The police are gonna find him. That's what they do.

She gives Carly a hug then pushes her gently toward the couch.

STEPHANIE

Go help Mom for me?

She smiles big at Carly, who nods tearfully up at her before heading for the couch.

Mom holds out a hand as Carly approaches, welcoming her over. She and Stephanie exchange nods across the room.

Stephanie heads up the stairs to –

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - ELLISON HOME - DAY

A police officer comes out of a nearby door. On the door, there's a faux license plate with letters that spell out "Max."

As Stephanie and the police officer pass each other, Stephanie nods. She smiles brightly.

When the police officer is gone, Stephanie's smile fades. For the first time, we get a sense of just how much of an emotional toll Max's disappearance has taken.

She stops outside a closed door a few feet past Max's room, takes a deep breath, and knocks.

No response.

STEPHANIE

Alyssa, I'm coming in.

Still no response.

STEPHANIE

Whether you want me to or not.

ALYSSA (O.S.)

Fine.

The word is muffled by the door, but Alyssa still manages to sound as annoyed as possible.

Given the go-ahead, Stephanie opens the door and steps into...

INT. ALYSSA'S BEDROOM - ELLISON HOME - DAY

Posters, mostly for outdated alternative bands (Green Day, Good Charlotte, Blink 182, etc.), litter the walls in an attempt to cover up the light pink wallpaper underneath.

Alyssa is curled up on the bed. She faces away from the door.

There's a framed picture of a younger Alyssa and her father on the bedside table.

Stephanie closes the door behind her as she steps into the room.

STEPHANIE

You scared Mom. Carly too.

Alyssa half shrugs as best she can while in bed. Stephanie sighs.

STEPHANIE

You wanna talk about it?

ALYSSA

No.

Stephanie continues across the room anyway and sits down beside Alyssa on the bed.

STEPHANIE

They're going to find him.

ALYSSA

Don't want to talk about it.

STEPHANIE

It's not going to be like Dad. You'll see.

Silence for a moment. Then Stephanie can just barely make out the sounds of crying. She puts a hand on Alyssa's arm.

STEPHANIE

They're going to find him. I promise.

Stephanie doesn't look quite convinced of this herself, but she's making an effort to be here for Alyssa.

The crying gets louder.

STEPHANIE

Oh, baby, it's okay to cry.

ALYSSA

I'm not crying.

Stephanie pats her arm.

STEPHANIE

It's okay.

ALYSSA

I'm. Not. Crying.

Alyssa dislodges Stephanie's arm and rolls over to face her. No signs of tears on her face.

Stephanie stares in shock. She - and the audience - can still hear the crying.

STEPHANIE

I thought I -- Sorry.

Alyssa rolls her eyes and turns away from Stephanie once again.

Bewildered, Stephanie looks around the room. Tucked into a corner is a slightly translucent GHOST GIRL (6 or 7). She's crying, curled up and hugging her knees. Stephanie stares wide-eyed at the girl as we—

CUT TO CREDITS.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. ALYSSA'S BEDROOM - ELLISON HOME - SECONDS LATER

Stephanie blinks back her surprise at seeing the Ghost Girl. And as usual, once she's over the initial shock, she's spurred into action.

She pats at Alyssa's arm and stands up.

STEPHANIE

Come on. Downstairs.

ALYSSA

This is my room. I can stay here if I want.

STEPHANIE

Mom wants us all downstairs. You know that.

Stephanie glances at the Ghost Girl in the corner. The girl hasn't moved.

Alyssa sighs heavily and rolls over. She gets off the bed and grabs her phone.

Stephanie looks back at Alyssa just in time to see her grab it.

STEPHANIE

No phone.

Alyssa sighs even more heavily and tosses the phone onto the bed. She stomps toward the door.

Stephanie hangs back. She very purposefully doesn't look directly at the Ghost Girl. Instead, she watches out of the corner of her eye.

Alyssa turns back when she realizes Stephanie isn't following her.

ALYSSA

You coming?

STEPHANIE

Yeah... yeah, in a minute.

ALYSSA

Still my room.

Alyssa clearly isn't leaving until Stephanie does.

STEPHANIE

I know. I'm coming.

She walks toward the door. Alyssa sighs and shakes her head.

ALYSSA

Whatever.

The two leave the room and enter --

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - ELLISON HOME - DAY

Stephanie hangs back as Alyssa goes ahead down the stairs.

She checks around surreptitiously before gently pushing Alyssa's door back open and going inside.

INT. ALYSSA'S BEDROOM - ELLISON HOME - DAY

Stephanie carefully closes the door behind her then walks over to the Ghost Girl. The girl is still crying softly.

Stephanie bends down next to her. She reaches for the girl's knee, but when she sets her hand down, it goes through the knee a few inches.

Stephanie frowns and brings her hand back up. She holds it over the knee, trying not to put it through again.

STEPHANIE

You okay?

The Ghost Girl looks up. Tear tracks streak her cheeks. A jagged wound about the size of a quarter can be seen at the edge of her hairline. She shakes her head frantically and starts sobbing.

Stephanie stares in dismay.

STEPHANIE

Hey... hey, it's all right.

The Ghost Girl buries her face against her knees. Stephanie's hand goes right through the girl's head. She pulls her hand back quickly and stands up.

STEPHANIE

(addressing the ceiling)

Paige? If you can hear me, there's a situation here.

She waits a moment. Nothing.

STEPHANIE

I told you I wasn't going to do this anymore.

Still nothing. Stephanie glances at the Ghost Girl, looking pitiful curled up in the corner of the room. Stephanie's expression softens. It's hard for her to see a kid in need.

The Ghost Girl lifts her face off her knees to rub at her eyes. Stephanie stares at the wound on her forehead. Oh yeah... this kid's dead.

She returns to her summons of the absent Paige with renewed vigor.

STEPHANIE

And I'm not. Going to do this. So just... take her away.

She mostly means it. But there's a shred of doubt – should she help? -- especially when the girl starts to cry again.

GHOST GIRL

Mommy... Want... Mommy...

Stephanie feels compelled to help.

STEPHANIE

Fine. But this is not me changing my mind about the job.

Stephanie walks back over to the kid and kneels down.

STEPHANIE

Hey... you can talk. That's good. Wanna tell me your name?

GHOST GIRL

Anne Marie.

STEPHANIE

Nice to meet you, Anne Marie. I'm Stephanie. You can call me Stephe, if you want. My sister does. She's about your age.

GHOST GIRL/ANNE MARIE

(shyly)

I like Stephanie.

Stephanie nods. She smiles widely at Anne Marie.

STEPHANIE

I like Anne Marie.

Anne Marie smiles back. She snuffles softly and rubs at her cheeks.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - ELLISON HOME - DAY

Stephanie and Anne Marie walk down the hall.

STEPHANIE

You can stay here for a little bit. And we'll find out--

As they walk past Max's door, a shimmery, silver word appears on it: "Help."

Stephanie stares at it.

ANNE MARIE

What?

The word fades.

STEPHANIE

They took him.

ANNE MARIE

Who?

Stephanie walks quickly to her room. She opens the door and motions to Anne Marie.

STEPHANIE

Come on. You can stay in here.

Anne Marie moves over to the door and goes inside.

STEPHANIE

I've gotta go. Stay here.

Anne Marie frowns, but Stephanie shuts the door on her.

INT. LIVING ROOM - ELLISON HOME - DAY

Carrying a backpack, Stephanie walks into the living room. The Police Officers are gone.

Stephanie's Mom sits on the couch with Carly curled against her side. Everyone looks worried, even Alyssa who sits a few feet away, trying to maintain her teenage-cool facade.

Stephanie takes a deep breath and brandishes the backpack like a shield.



STEPHANIE

(quickly)

I have to go out. Be back soon.

She turns back toward the front door.

MOM

No...

Stephanie freezes at the word and winces. She didn't want to deal with this.

Mom shuffles around on the couch to face Stephanie.

MOM

No. Where are you going? Your brother's missing, and...

Stephanie doesn't turn to face her mother as she replies.

STEPHANIE

Class, you know. There's a test. I'll be back as soon as I can.

MOM

Can't you... tell them...?

This time, Stephanie turns around.

STEPHANIE

Wish I could. But test days. Different rules.

She shrugs softly. She doesn't like lying to her Mom.

MOM

Come home right after?

Stephanie nods.

STEPHANIE

I promise.

EXT. FRONT STOOP - ELLISON HOME - DAY

Stephanie steps outside. A group of reporters stands in the street. They are cordoned off by Police Officers.

The Police Officers try to hold them back as the reporters all snap pictures and yell questions. Stephanie looks away from the camera flashes

ANNE MARIE (O.S.)  
Stephanie!

Stephanie turns around and sees Anne Marie behind her.

STEPHANIE  
I told you to stay inside.

She opens the door and waves Anne Marie in. Anne Marie frowns.

STEPHANIE  
Go on. I'll be back as soon as I can.

A REPORTER snaps a digital picture of Stephanie and holds it up for examination. In the screen, there's a faint white cloud where Anne Marie stands on the stoop, unseen by the reporters.

The Reporter rubs at the white spot. The DOOR to the house SLAMS, and the Reporter snaps to attention. He brings his camera up and starts shooting pictures as Stephanie hurries past the crowd.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Paige lounges on a park bench. A WOMAN eating lunch sits beside her.

Paige flails about dramatically as she talks.

PAIGE  
I told her it was a bad idea, but did she listen to me?

The Woman doesn't respond in any way.

PAIGE  
Of course not! And then she quit, so like, I'll never be done with this shit.

There's a TINKLING, like that of a BELL. Paige sighs loudly. The Woman packs up her lunch.

PAIGE

Hear that? Everyone keeps calling me. Don't they know I'm busy? Talking to you.

The Woman gets up and walks away. Paige sighs again and sprawls across the bench.

PAIGE

Whatever.

She closes her eyes.

INT. BUS - DAY

All jitters, Stephanie has a hard time sitting still in her seat.

BUS DRIVER (V.O.)

Driftwood Road.

Stephanie launches out of her seat and reaches for the stop cord. She freezes part way to it.

FLASHBACK

Max scrambles up on top of his bus seat. He stretches for the stop cord but can't quite reach it.

Stephanie sits next to him. She grabs at him, pulling him back down.

STEPHANIE

Max! Sit down.

She reaches for the cord herself.

Max folds his arms across his chest and drums his feet against the seat.

MAX

I want to do it!

Stephanie glances down at him indulgently. She points over to the easier-to-reach stop button on one of the bus's poles.

STEPHANIE

Push that.

Max pushes the button, and the "Stop Requested" sign at the front of the bus turns on. He grins up at Stephanie.

BACK TO PRESENT

Tears fill Stephanie's eyes. She swipes at them with the back of her hand. She changes course away from the stop cord and pushes a nearby stop button instead.

EXT. MURDOCK HOUSE - DAY

Stephanie checks her reflection in glass windows beside the Murdocks' doors. She runs a finger along the rim of each eye, making sure any traces of tears are gone.

Then she steps back, takes a deep breath, and knocks on the door.

After a moment, Archie opens it and sees Stephanie.

ARCHIE

Oh, no. Not you again.

He starts to shut the door, but Stephanie reaches out and catches it.

STEPHANIE

I'm not going away. I want answers.

She glares at Archie, and he glares back. Neither one of them aims to give in.

LEENA (O.S.)

Let the girl in.

Archie breaks eye contact.

ARCHIE

(calling)

But Leena!

LEENA (O.S.)

Let her in.

Archie sighs and begrudgingly holds the door open for Stephanie. He scowls at her as she walks inside.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MURDOCK HOUSE - DAY

Archie and Stephanie enter the room. Leena sits at the table, which is drowning in books. She scans a book page.

Stephanie is too upset to wait patiently for her to finish.

STEPHANIE

(accusingly)

You have to help me. You're the reason he's gone.

Leena picks up a ribbon by her elbow. She slowly places it in the book and closes the pages.

Stephanie fidgets, uncomfortable in the silence.

STEPHANIE

Well, aren't you going to answer me?

ARCHIE

Don't talk to her like that.

LEENA

It's all right, Archie. Leave the girl alone. She's right after all.

Leena looks directly at Stephanie and smiles sadly.

Archie startles at Leena's words, but he attempts to hide it. He covers by glowering at Stephanie.

Stephanie didn't expect such an easy capitulation. It takes the edge off her anger.

STEPHANIE

Why would you do that? Why would you send me out there if you knew?

ARCHIE

Of course we didn't know.

LEENA

It was possible. That the Runner would take someone else.

Stephanie grimaces. Leena's words surprise Archie once again.

LEENA

But no way of knowing whom. I'm sorry. I thought your sister was worth the risk.

Stephanie is grateful for that much, but she's still not happy with the situation. Leena stands and drifts over to Stephanie.

She reaches out and takes her arm. Stephanie flinches, and Leena lets go.

LEENA

We'll find your brother for you.

The words reinvigorate Stephanie.

STEPHANIE

You can still get him back? You're sure? Without them taking anyone else?

Archie steps forward. He frowns at Leena.

ARCHIE

(to Stephanie)

Of course she's not sure.

Leena purses her lips gently.

LEENA

Hush. We need a bowl of water. Can you get it for us?

Archie stares in dismay at his wife.

ARCHIE

You don't need to be doing this. We got out of this business for a reason. So we wouldn't be playing with fire.

LEENA

It's already done. I've seen it.

She softens at the stricken look on Archie's face.

LEENA

Please get us a bowl of water.

Frustrated, Archie turns away.

ARCHIE

Fine.

He walks out of the room, and Leena turns back to Stephanie. She smiles sadly.

LEENA

Sit. We'll get your brother back.

Stephanie is torn between amusement and disbelief.

STEPHANIE

Why would I believe you?

Leena ignores her.

LEENA

It's just a simple spell. Check up on him. Then we'll call the Runner again.

She crosses to the couch as Archie returns with the bowl of water. He sets it on the coffee table in front of the couch then turns to Stephanie.

ARCHIE

You should go home, girl. Forget about all this.

Stephanie stares at him in shock.

LEENA

(pointedly)

Thank you for the water, Archie.

He grumps away into the background.

Leena beckons to Stephanie.

LEENA

Come on. We'll find him.

Stephanie hesitates. She throws a glance at Archie then looks back to Leena. Leena beckons her forward again.

LEENA  
We'll get him back.

Stephanie still doesn't believe, but she has no other option. She walks over to the couch and sits down.

Leena positions the bowl in front of Stephanie. She reaches out for Stephanie's hand. Stephanie pulls it away.

LEENA  
It's better if you do it. Closer connection. Hold out your pointer finger.

Stephanie doesn't want to do it, but she has no choice. She holds out the finger.

LEENA  
Swirl the water and focus on your brother. I'll do the rest.

She reaches for Stephanie's hand again. Again, Stephanie pulls it back.

LEENA  
I have to touch you for this to work.

Stephanie frowns but relents.

Leena holds tight to Stephanie's hand as Stephanie sticks her finger in the water and moves it in circles.

LEENA  
(with intensity)  
Show us. Show us. Make us see. Max. Her brother. Show us.

Black smoke slowly fills the water. It soon starts to take over the bowl and rises into the air.

Leena yanks Stephanie's hand out, and the smoke settles down.

LEENA  
(quickly)  
That's enough of that. Archie, take the bowl away.



She's obviously hiding something.

STEPHANIE

What is it? What does that mean?

Leena shakes her head and closes her eyes. Archie walks over and picks up the bowl.

ARCHIE

(to Stephanie)

I told you you should forget all this.

He leaves.

Stephanie sits forward on the couch. She eyes Leena frantically.

STEPHANIE

Tell me what that was. What's wrong with Max?

Leena takes a deep breath and opens her eyes. She gazes squarely at Stephanie.

LEENA

You were right. The Runners have him.

Stephanie looks briefly triumphant, but Leena frowns worriedly.

STEPHANIE

So that's good. We can call them and trade and --

LEENA

But... his soul is... lost.

STEPHANIE

What does that mean?

Archie returns, slipping into the background of the room.

LEENA

I'm sorry. There's nothing we can do.

STEPHANIE

Why not? You said you'd help.

ARCHIE

It's not as simple as all that.

Stephanie spins to look at him. Archie steps forward.

ARCHIE

She should have told you.

He stares accusingly at Leena, who looks away and down at the ground.

ARCHIE

We can't help if he's lost. This isn't like your sister. He's been with the Runners too long. He's gone. Faded.

STEPHANIE

But I saw him. Well, not him but words. He needs help.

Archie shakes his head.

ARCHIE

They do that sometimes. Reach out. But it's too late. I'm sorry for your loss.

Stephanie stares at him in dismay for a moment. Then her facial expression hardens into determination.

STEPHANIE

No.

She stands up abruptly.

STEPHANIE

No. I'll call them back. Make them give me Max. He's not gone.

Leena and Archie look at her. Leena slowly shakes her head.

STEPHANIE

(exasperated)

So, I shouldn't even try?

Leena's face crumples in concern.

LEENA

No one's saying that.

Archie pshaws.

ARCHIE

I'm saying that. Leave it be, girl. Move on. That's what we did.

STEPHANIE

What you did?

ARCHIE

(forceful)

Move on. I'm sorry, but your brother's lost.

Stephanie stares at the two wide-eyed.

STEPHANIE

No. No. He's not lost. Max isn't lost.

She shakes her head and glares at the two.

STEPHANIE

You're wrong. The bowl's wrong. It's all wrong. I have to go.

Stephanie hurries out of the room. The Murdocks watch her go in silence. Finally, Archie turns to Leena.

ARCHIE

Girl's going to get herself killed.

LEENA

She won't. I've seen what's coming. She doesn't need us.

He sighs heavily.

ARCHIE

That's no excuse.

He shakes his head disapprovingly.

EXT. QUAD - CAMPUS - DAY

Stephanie takes a deep breath and surveys the area. It's between classes, but there's still a fair amount of people nearby at this time of day.

Stephanie doesn't care. She flings herself through the motions of calling upon the Runner with reckless abandon. She bends over and peers through her legs.

STEPHANIE

(muttering)

Max. Max. Max. Max.

Nothing. No Runner appears.

A few people stare at her and whisper amongst themselves.

Stephanie frowns at the empty air. She closes her eyes.

STEPHANIE

Max. Max. Max. Max.

She opens her eyes again. Still nothing.

She stands up straight and kicks at the air in front of her.

STEPHANIE

(yelling)

Where are you?

Moments pass with no Runner appearing.

Just when Stephanie's given up hope, the Runner finally appears in front of her.

RUNNER

Why have you summoned me again?

STEPHANIE

You know why! You took my brother. I want him back.

RUNNER

You were warned.

The Runner shimmers, as if it's about to disappear. Stephanie jumps forward.

STEPHANIE

Not that you would take my brother!

RUNNER

You were warned.

Stephanie shakes her head.

STEPHANIE

Doesn't matter. We're trading. Again. You give me Max back, and I'll give you another soul.

RUNNER

There will be no trade. Do not call on me again. The consequences will be dire.

STEPHANIE

You can't just --

The Runner vanishes.

STEPHANIE

-- go.

Stephanie lets out a frustrated scream. It draws stares and whispers from the passersby.

One of the passersby - a STUDENT - approaches Stephanie cautiously.

STUDENT

A-are you okay?

Stephanie rounds on the Student and lets all her frustration pour out.

STEPHANIE

Of course not!

The Student's eyes go wide, and she backs away.

STUDENT

S-sorry.

The Student turns and hurries off. Stephanie watches her go with guilt creeping into her eyes.

INT. BLOGGER'S APARTMENT - DAY

The room is dark, even at this time of day. Some light filters in through the drawn curtains, but most of the light in the room comes from a computer monitor.

Scruffy-looking blogger LUCAS 'FISH' FISHER (late 20s) chugs a soda while still watching the role-playing game on the monitor intensely.

He types furiously then suddenly cheers and spikes the now empty soda can off the floor. Fish leans back and pumps his fists in the air.

A new email notification pops up onscreen, and Fish leans forward again. He clicks on the email.

The Reporter's picture of Stephanie and the white space where Anne Marie should be appears, along with a link to an article about Max's disappearance. The text of the email reads, "Interested?"

Fish grins maniacally and swipes at his chin.

FISH

Time to go hunting.

He resumes his furious typing.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. QUAD - CAMPUS - DAY

Stephanie prepares to go when Bailey walks up behind her. He wears his campus police uniform.

BAILEY

Miss? We got notification of a disturbance around here.

Stephanie turns to look at him. Bailey lets out a heavy sigh.

BAILEY

Oh. It's you. Of course it is.

STEPHANIE

I'm sorry. We're -- I'm leaving now.

Bailey nods suspiciously.

STEPHANIE

Look. My brother's missing, and I just... needed something...

BAILEY

Max is your brother?

Stephanie is surprised he knows what she's talking about.

BAILEY

I heard about that. I'm sorry.

Stephanie nods half-heartedly.

STEPHANIE

Sorry. About the screaming.

Bailey waves her off.

BAILEY

Don't worry about it.

He digs in his pockets and comes out with a notebook and pen. He scribbles his phone number down and hands it to Stephanie.

BAILEY

Listen. I know some people at the, you know, real police station, and you let me know if they're not treating you right. Or if there's anything I can do.

Stephanie stares at the phone number for a second before glumly putting the piece of paper in her pocket.

INT. FRONT HALL - ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

Mom holds open the hall closet door. Several jackets hang inside. She reaches in and strokes one that clearly belonged to Max. She looks like she's about to cry.

Stephanie opens the front door and steps inside. She shuts the door behind her.

STEPHANIE

(calling)

Mom, I'm home!

She looks up and notices Mom in front of her. Staring into the closet, Mom simply stands there, not giving any reaction she heard Stephanie.

STEPHANIE

Mom?

Stephanie approaches slowly.

Anne Marie bolts into the hall suddenly. She goes right through Mom.

ANNE MARIE

You're back!

Stephanie looks down at Anne Marie then back up at Mom. She's torn. But she reaches for Mom's shoulder.

Mom shakes herself. She pulls her hand out of the closet, closes the door, and turns around. She startles when she sees Stephanie.

STEPHANIE

(concerned)

Mom.

Mom's face crumples.

MOM

I -- I...

Stephanie steps forward and places a hand on Mom's arm.



STEPHANIE

I know.

She wraps her arm around Mom in a hug. Mom squeezes tight.

Anne Marie peers up at Stephanie.

ANNE MARIE

Are you okay?

Stephanie nods as best she can. Mom pulls away from the embrace.

MOM

Where were you? It's late.

STEPHANIE

I'm sorry. I should've called. I didn't mean...

Mom sighs sadly.

MOM

I told you to come home, Stephanie.

Stephanie doesn't know what to say.

ANNE MARIE

What's wrong?

STEPHANIE

Hold on a minute.

MOM

Hold on a minute what?

Stephanie winces at her mistake.

STEPHANIE

I... I heard Carly.

She turns away from Mom.

STEPHANIE  
(calling)  
Hold on a minute!

She turns back to Mom with a rueful expression.

STEPHANIE  
You didn't hear her?

Mom frowns.

MOM  
I guess not.

STEPHANIE  
I better see what she wants.

Stephanie starts down the hall, but after a few steps, she turns back to Mom.

STEPHANIE  
I really am sorry. Everything's going to be okay. I'll make sure of it.

Mom smiles sadly. Stephanie smiles back and walks away.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

Stephanie and Anne Marie walk down the hallway. As they pass Max's door, the word "help" appears again.

Stephanie stares at it in relief.

STEPHANIE  
He's alive.

INT. STEPHANIE'S BEDROOM - ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

Stephanie shuts the door behind her and Anne Marie. Anne Marie looks up at Stephanie hopefully.

ANNE MARIE  
Play now?

Stephanie shakes her head.

STEPHANIE

(frustrated)

How do I get him? Why wouldn't the Runner trade?

Anne Marie crosses to the wall and sits down. She puts her knees up, curling herself around them like when we first met her.

STEPHANIE

None of this makes any sense.

She looks up at the ceiling.

STEPHANIE

Paige!

Nothing.

STEPHANIE

Paige!

Stephanie sighs. She glances back down and notices Anne Marie is gone. She looks around, quickly spotting her by the wall.

She walks over to the girl and bends down next to her.

STEPHANIE

What's wrong?

Anne Marie shakes her head.

ANNE MARIE

You don't want me here.

STEPHANIE

Well... you're... you're a ghost. You don't belong here.

Anne Marie bursts into tears. Stephanie winces.

STEPHANIE

I'm sorry. That's how it is. But I'll help best I can. Make sure you go somewhere nice. Okay?

She smiles down at Anne Marie.

Anne Marie snuffles, but after a moment, she nods. Stephanie nods encouragingly back.

STEPHANIE

Okay. Bedtime, huh?

ANNE MARIE

Ghosts don't have bedtimes.

STEPHANIE

How do you know?

Anne Marie's certainty falters.

ANNE MARIE

They don't.

STEPHANIE

But they can. Aren't you tired?

ANNE MARIE

(unwilling to admit it)

A little.

STEPHANIE

Then let's try a bedtime and see what happens.

Anne Marie nods. She swipes at the tear tracks on her cheeks. Stephanie smiles at her.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Paige dances among a group of people. She spots a CUTE GIRL across the room and smiles broadly. The girl appears to smile back. Paige winks.

Suddenly, the GIRL'S BOYFRIEND walks right through Paige and over to the Cute Girl.

PAIGE

Hey! Rude! I'm standing here!

She mutters and shakes her head as she turns away.

STEPHANIE (V.O.)

Paige!

Paige scoffs. She turns to a GIRL next to her.

PAIGE

Did you hear something?

The Girl walks off without acknowledging Paige whatsoever. Paige frowns.

PAIGE

No? No, I didn't think so.

She turns to another BAR PATRON.

PAIGE

What about you? Hear anything?

No reaction.

Paige sighs heavily.

PAIGE

Of course you didn't. No one ever does.

She disappears.

INT. STEPHANIE'S BEDROOM - ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

Anne Marie sleeps on the floor with a few blankets and a pillow underneath her. They all protrude partway into her body.

Stephanie lies in bed and stares at the ceiling. She sighs heavily and turns over. She still can't sleep.

INT. LIVING ROOM - ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

The only light in the room comes from the TV set. Infomercials play across the screen. Mom sleeps sitting up. Her neck leans against the couch at an awkward angle.

Stephanie crosses to the couch and sits beside her. She leans against Mom's arm and curls up. She closes her eyes.

INT. LIVING ROOM - ELLISON HOME - DAY

The TV is off, and Mom is nowhere to be seen. Stephanie lies on the couch with a blanket over her.

Carly skips into the room and up to the couch. She sits down on Stephanie's legs.

CARLY

Stephie? Can I have breakfast?

Stephanie turns over and tries to pull the blanket higher.

Carly pokes Stephanie several times. Stephanie groans.

CARLY

Breakfast?

She pokes her again.

Stephanie opens her eyes and flings the blanket off.

STEPHANIE

Okay, okay.

CARLY

Yay!

Carly stands up. Anne Marie rushes into the room and through Carly to take Carly's spot on Stephanie's legs. Carly shudders violently.

ANNE MARIE

Me too!

STEPHANIE

(muttering)

You too.

CARLY

What?

Stephanie winces. She shakes her head and smiles at Carly.

STEPHANIE

Nothing, sweetie. So, breakfast, huh? What do you want?

Stephanie stands up in spite of Anne Marie sitting on her. She takes Carly's hand and they head for the kitchen.

Still on the couch, Anne Marie looks crestfallen.

INT. KITCHEN - ELLISON HOME - DAY

Stephanie plates cooked eggs and bacon. Without thinking, she automatically makes two plates. When she takes them to the table, she places one in front of Carly.

Stephanie places the other plate in front of an empty chair - Max's empty chair.

Anne Marie sits down in the chair and eyes the food.

Carly starts eating, but she frowns at the other plate.

CARLY

Is that for Max?

She looks around excitedly.

CARLY

Is he back?

Stephanie tunes back into what she's doing. She looks down at the plate, and her face crumples. She shakes her head at Carly. Carly's mood deflates.

Stephanie scoops the plate up and whisks it away to the sink. Anne Marie watches it go with a look of dismay.

Stephanie turns back to Carly, but before Stephanie can say anything, the DOORBELL RINGS. She's grateful for the interruption.

The DOORBELL RINGS again.

STEPHANIE  
I'll be right back.

She leaves the room.

INT./EXT. FRONT DOOR - ELLISON HOME - DAY

Stephanie opens the door. Fish stands outside with APRIL (late 20s), who has a slight punk/goth vibe going and a perpetual frown.

Fish's eyes light up when he sees Stephanie.

FISH  
You're her.  
(to April)  
It's her. I told you we were in the right place.

April doesn't react. She stares at Stephanie. Stephanie is unnerved.

STEPHANIE  
What do you --

FISH  
Want? What do we want? I'm glad you asked.

He grins and makes a show of pulling a business card out of his pocket. He hands it to Stephanie.

FISH  
We are April and Fish. Ghost catchers extraordinaire. We heard you might have a little problem.

STEPHANIE  
Heard from who?

APRIL  
So it's true.



Stephanie's eyes widen in panic.

STEPHANIE

No. It's not... Ghosts aren't... What are you doing here?

APRIL

(to Fish)

It's true.

She pulls \$20 out of her pocket and passes it to Fish. Fish takes the money with a grin.

FISH

We were hoping to survey the premises. A little EMF here, thermal imaging there, maybe an EVP session if we're really in the mood. Help you with your problem.

STEPHANIE

There's not -- I don't have a problem. We're just... busy. It's not a good time. For the family.

Crying, Anne Marie runs up behind her.

ANNE MARIE

I want some food too.

STEPHANIE

(quietly)

In a minute.

April squints into the house. She takes in a sharp breath.

Stephanie closes the door in their faces.

EXT. FRONT DOOR - ELLISON HOME - DAY

Fish hasn't given up yet. He raises his voice to be heard through the door.

FISH

Okay, but if you need us, call!

No response from inside. He sighs in defeat.

FISH

That could have gone better.

April grins suddenly. It looks out of place on her face.

APRIL

I think it went just right.

FISH

What are you talking about --?

APRIL

I felt something.

Fish turns to her with wide eyes.

FISH

Something as in a ghost, right? Not something... else?

An exasperated look crosses April's face.

APRIL

What else would I...? You know what, don't answer that. Yes, a ghost.

Fish's eyes light up.

FISH

We have got to check this out. A real, live ghost. Finally!

He turns back to the house and stares at in awe. Then he looks at April with a manic grin on his face.

FISH

And we're going to be the ones to catch it!

Fish grins wider.

END OF ACT TWO

### ACT THREE

#### EXT. CONCERT STAGE - PARK - DAY

Paige lounges on her bench. Nearby, at a newly erected stage, kids and their parents wait in anticipation as a PERFORMER (40s), a man dressed in the wackiest, tackiest outfit possible, takes the stage.

He tunes his guitar, and the microphone crackles with feedback.

Paige winces at the noise and glances over at the stage. Slowly, a smile spreads across her face.

#### EXT. CONCERT STAGE - PARK - MINUTES LATER

The Performer plays songs for the toddlers and young kids. The parents clap their hands along or sit back, looking beat.

The kids are having the time of their lives. They wave their arms in the air and yell. They'd start moshing if they were old enough to know what that was.

Paige dances in the middle of the crowd. She's yelling right along with the kids and having the time of her un-life when suddenly...

Paige disappears with a cry of surprise.

No one notices. The kids continue dancing without her.

#### INT. OFFICE - GHOST HR - TIMELESS

Paige appears in the middle of an office filled with cubicles and desks. The whole area is cast in a beige light.

As she appears, Paige almost topples over but manages to right herself just in time.

In front of her is the desk belonging to GAIL (50s), a frumpy but formidable ghost. Paige stomps up to it.

PAIGE

Hello! I was busy. What'd you go and drag me up here for?

Gail calmly consults her computer. She doesn't look at Paige.

PAIGE

I'm talking to you!

Paige leans forward, placing her hands on the desk. Gail smashes a pen down on them before Paige realizes what's happening.

Paige pulls her hands back. She rubs at them as if in pain.

PAIGE

Ow!

GAIL

Honey, you're dead. Can't tell me that hurt.

Paige folds her arms grumpily.

PAIGE

(muttering)

It did.

Gail turns to Paige and lifts one eyebrow imperiously. Paige frowns.

PAIGE

It didn't.

GAIL

Right. Now that's settled. Why you're here... you don't know?

PAIGE

Haven't been doing anything wrong...

It's more or less the truth.

Gail consults her computer again.

GAIL

Let's see. Paige. Assigned ghostly mentor to one Stephanie Ellison. Brought up on charges of... Ah, yes. Ignoring your responsibilities and your charge. Didn't read the handbook.

She tsks quietly then turns back to Paige with a haughty look on her face.

GAIL

Does that sound right?

PAIGE

That handbook was thousands of pages long! And I can't have been ignoring her. She quit!

GAIL

Did you file form B-309c?

PAIGE

Um... yes?

Gail rightly doesn't believe Paige.

GAIL

No. The charges stand. Guess we'll have to alert the Big Bosses.

She reaches for the phone on her desk. Paige panics and tries to stop her.

PAIGE

No! No, we don't have to involve them. Do we?

She smiles, trying to look innocent.

Gail frowns and consults her computer once again.

GAIL

This Ellison girl. Gotten herself into a heap of trouble without you.

PAIGE

(muttering)

I'll bet.

Gail looks over with her imperious eyebrow raised.

PAIGE

What can I do?

Gail types on her computer. She strikes the enter key with finality.

Paige disappears with a cry of surprise once again.

INT. LIVING ROOM - ELLISON HOME - DAY

Paige appears in the room. She stumbles around drunkenly.

PAIGE

(outraged)

Again? What did I do to deserve that?

STEPHANIE (O.S.)

Paige?

PAIGE

Oh no.

Paige looks around the room desperately for a place to hide. Before she can find one, Stephanie enters the room. She rushes up to Paige. Paige grimaces.

STEPHANIE

You're here!

PAIGE

Not for long. And stop calling me. You quit, remember?

STEPHANIE

I know. That's what I thought. But then a new one showed up.

PAIGE

So what? Deal with it yourself. Not my problem anymore.

Stephanie takes a step back, flustered by the fierceness in Paige's tone.

STEPHANIE

Then why are you here?

PAIGE

I'm not. You're hallucinating.

She waves her fingers in front of Stephanie's face. Stephanie crosses her arms and glares skeptically.

After a moment, Paige sighs.

PAIGE

They sent me. Because apparently you're such a failure. But everything looks fine here, so I'll go.

Stephanie bites her lip. She decides to tell Paige everything.

STEPHANIE

Wait. I... need your help. My brother. He's missing. The Runners took him. Like Carly.

Paige looks taken aback. That was nowhere near what she expected Stephanie to say, and it shocks the attitude out of her.

PAIGE

(seriously)

I'm sorry. I know what that's like.

Stephanie's face registers her surprise. Paige regrets the revelation immediately. She shifts uncomfortably and looks away.

PAIGE

What do you think I can do? Last time, that was just a fluke. Luck. And the Murdocks did most of it.

STEPHANIE

They won't help. I don't know why I thought you would.

PAIGE

How do you know he's even...?

She looks away, unable to face Stephanie's gaze.

STEPHANIE

He's alive.

She says it with firm conviction, and Paige nods.

STEPHANIE

You all knew, didn't you? That this could happen. And you didn't tell me.

Paige looks up again. Regret and pain are written across her face.

PAIGE  
I'm sorry...

Stephanie sighs heavily. She doesn't want to fight. She's too tired for that.

STEPHANIE  
It's fine. Just go.

PAIGE  
You were calling... You need help.

STEPHANIE  
And there's a reason you didn't listen. I'll take care of everything myself.

She bites her lip and looks away. Paige stares at her for a moment then makes up her mind. She sets her chin determinedly and takes a step forward.

PAIGE  
You don't have to. I'll try and talk to someone. Get you some answers.

STEPHANIE  
Thank you.

Paige shrugs.

PAIGE  
(attempting a joke)  
Yeah, well... guess they were right, and it's a mess here.

Stephanie laughs without feeling.

STEPHANIE  
First thing they've been right about.

Stephanie looks right at Paige. She doesn't want to ask the next question, but she has to.

STEPHANIE  
How do I know you'll come back?

PAIGE  
I'll come back.



Paige returns her stare. The two gaze at each other for a moment before Stephanie nods hesitantly.

Paige disappears. Stephanie lets out a sigh.

STEPHANIE  
(muttering)  
Good luck.

She shifts anxiously, her posture tense.

INT. KITCHEN - ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

The room is silent. Carly, Alyssa, and Stephanie sit around the table. Alyssa has her phone back.

Dinner steams on the table as Mom hands out plates. She puts one down on the table then gives a plate to each of the kids in turn.

When she's done, there's one plate left in her hands: Max's plate.

Mom stares at it. Her face grows heavy with recognition.

Suddenly, Mom sets the plate down on the table, covers her face with her hands, and starts to cry.

Stephanie glances up sharply, her eyes wide in dismay. She puts on a fake smile and turns to her sisters.

STEPHANIE  
Alyssa, Carly, you wanna go watch TV?

Alyssa looks up from her phone. Her face says, "Why?" Stephanie gives her a stern look and tips her head at Mom.

Alyssa glances over. Her face grows serious. She stands up and motions to Carly.

ALYSSA  
Come on.

She grabs hold of Carly's hand and pulls her toward the living room. As they pass Stephanie, Carly speaks.

CARLY  
(to Stephanie)  
What about dinner?

STEPHANIE  
In a second.

Alyssa and Carly leave the room. Stephanie watches them go then turns back to Mom.

STEPHANIE  
(softly)  
Mom?

Mom sobs, a harsh, choking sound.

Stephanie stands up and moves over to Mom's chair. She places a hand on her shoulder.

Mom sits up. She places her hand on Stephanie's. With her other hand, she wipes at the tears on her face. She gives a faint smile as she looks up at Stephanie.

MOM  
Sorry. I'll... I'll be okay.

Worried, Stephanie bites her lip.

STEPHANIE  
You sure?

Mom nods. It's meant to reassure, but she overdoes it, which has the opposite effect.

STEPHANIE  
It's okay. I've got things under control. It's going to be fine. You'll see.

She gives her Mom a hug. Mom returns it best she can.

MOM  
I should be brave for you.

STEPHANIE  
I can be brave enough for the both of us.

Mom looks away guiltily. She nods.

MOM  
(quietly)  
Thank you.

Mom buries her face back in her hands. Stephanie rubs gently at her Mom's shoulder.

STEPHANIE  
Shh. You're doing fine. We're all fine.

MOM  
But Max...

Stephanie frowns.

STEPHANIE  
I know, Mom.

There is quiet in the room. Mom looks down at the dishes in dismay. Stephanie notices.

STEPHANIE  
I've got it. Don't worry.

Mom nods hesitantly.

INT. LIVING ROOM - ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

Stephanie and Carly walk into the living room. Anne Marie appears in the room, unseen by the others.

CARLY  
Can we watch a movie?

Stephanie smiles down at her.

STEPHANIE  
Sure. And you can even pick.

Carly grins.

ANNE MARIE  
A movie!

Startled, Stephanie turns to her.

STEPHANIE

(to Carly)

Uh... why don't you start it? I'll be right back.

She walks over toward the stairs. Anne Marie doesn't follow.

Carly starts getting the movie ready. Stephanie checks to make sure she's not paying attention then gestures to Anne Marie to follow her.

INT. STEPHANIE'S BEDROOM - ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

Stephanie shuts her bedroom door. Anne Marie stands inside the room. She smiles up at Stephanie. Stephanie studies the girl.

STEPHANIE

What are we going to do with you?

Anne Marie holds out her arms for a hug.

ANNE MARIE

Mommy.

Stephanie nods.

STEPHANIE

Mommy... All right. We can do that. We'll find your mommy.

Anne Marie steps forward and hugs Stephanie. Her ghostliness causes her to melt slightly into Stephanie's body.

Stephanie grimaces but doesn't move away. She pats at the air where the girl's head is.

INT./EXT. FRONT DOOR - ELLISON HOME - DAY

Bailey stands on the front stoop while Stephanie stands just inside the house with the door open. He hands her a small piece of paper.

BAILEY

Here's that address. How's it going?

STEPHANIE

(stiffly)

Fine. Thank you for this.

Bailey frowns.

BAILEY

Yeah. I'd ask what you need it for, but I have a feeling you wouldn't tell me.

Stephanie looks away. He's not wrong.

BAILEY

How's it really going?

STEPHANIE

Fine.

Bailey raises his eyebrows. Stephanie bites her lip.

STEPHANIE

Hard. It's hard.

She didn't mean to be so genuine. She tries to cover.

STEPHANIE

(quickly)

Look, thanks, but I have to go.

BAILEY

But someday you'll tell me, right?

Stephanie looks at him regretfully and shuts the door in his face.

Bailey shakes his head ruefully. He's disappointed, but he didn't expect anything different.

INT. LIVING ROOM - ELLISON HOME - DAY

Mom sits on the couch. The TV is on, but Mom looks at it like she can barely see it. Stephanie enters and stops behind the couch.

STEPHANIE

Mom, I have to go.

MOM

Again?

But there's no real force behind the question, and Mom doesn't turn around.

Stephanie frowns.

STEPHANIE

I'll be back soon as I can.

Mom sighs and waves Stephanie away.

Stephanie lingers behind the couch, concern for her mother flitting across her face, but finally, she turns and leaves.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE ANNE MARIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Stephanie and Anne Marie stand on the street outside the house. Stephanie checks the piece of paper Bailey gave her to make sure they're in the right spot.

STEPHANIE

Well, we're here. Time to get you your mommy.

Stephanie moves forward, but Anne Marie hangs back. Stephanie looks back at her.

STEPHANIE

Don't you want to see your mom?

Anne Marie looks nervous. Stephanie waves her forward.

STEPHANIE

Come on. It'll be okay.

It takes a moment, but Anne Marie moves forward hesitantly. Stephanie smiles widely at her, and the girl relaxes a little.

EXT. FRONT DOOR - ANNE MARIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Stephanie takes a deep breath and pushes the doorbell. It CHIMES inside the house.

As she and Anne Marie wait, Stephanie looks with concerned eyes at the girl.

STEPHANIE

You okay?

Anne Marie looks up and nods. Stephanie isn't quite convinced, but suddenly, the door opens.

INT./EXT FRONT DOOR - ANNE MARIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Startled, Stephanie quickly looks away from Anne Marie and toward the door. Holding it open is ANNE MARIE'S MOTHER (late 30s), worn and disheveled by life.

ANNE MARIE'S MOTHER

What do you want?

Stephanie is taken aback by the harsh tone, but she pastes a smile on her face and tries not to show it. She holds out a hand for Anne Marie's Mother to shake.

STEPHANIE

I'm Stephanie Ellison, and...

She looks down at Anne Marie. She doesn't know how to explain.

She looks back up at Anne Marie's Mother, who stares at her expectantly. Stephanie lowers her hand. She opens her mouth and shuts it a couple of times.

ANNE MARIE'S MOTHER

And...?

STEPHANIE

I -- I -- I'm here about your daughter.

Anne Marie's Mother's face goes stony.

ANNE MARIE'S MOTHER

Go away.

She moves to shut the door. Anne Marie walks in the open door.

STEPHANIE

Please. I know it's a bad time. I'm sorry. My brother, he... I just wanted to help... I'll go.

Stephanie bites her lip and looks down at the ground as she turns away. Anne Marie's Mother watches her go, and her expression softens.

ANNE MARIE'S MOTHER

You can come in. But just for a minute.

Stephanie turns back around and nods hopefully. Anne Marie's Mother moves back to let Stephanie in the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM - ANNE MARIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Anne Marie's Mother walks through the room to the kitchen. Stephanie checks in with Anne Marie, who is running around the room with glee.

Anne Marie stops and looks all around her in awe as a huge grin spreads across her face.

Stephanie smiles down at her.

STEPHANIE

Yeah, you're home.

Anne Marie takes off across the room toward the stairs.

STEPHANIE

Wait! Where are you going?

Anne Marie doesn't listen and hurries up the stairs.

Stephanie crosses the room to follow her when Anne Marie's Mother returns to the room.

ANNE MARIE'S MOTHER

What are you doing?

Stephanie starts guiltily then walks back across the room while Anne Marie's Mother eyes her suspiciously.

INT. KITCHEN - ANNE MARIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Stephanie sits at the kitchen table. A KETTLE WHISTLES on the stove, and Anne Marie's Mother moves to take care of it.



STEPHANIE

I know it sounds crazy. But you have to believe me.

Anne Marie's Mother pours boiling water into mugs.

ANNE MARIE'S MOTHER

Don't have to do anything. You seem like a nice kid. But not well. You know, mentally.

She finishes preparing the tea.

Stephanie sighs and leans back in her chair.

STEPHANIE

I don't blame you. I wouldn't believe me either. But I've been psychic my whole life, and I was just... drawn to this house.

Anne Marie's Mother returns to the table with two mugs of tea. She places one in front of Stephanie.

ANNE MARIE'S MOTHER

(skeptically)

Because of my daughter.

STEPHANIE

What happened to her?

Anne Marie's Mother's face falls. Stephanie notices, and she's afraid she's said something wrong.

STEPHANIE

If you don't mind my asking.

ANNE MARIE'S MOTHER

Not very psychic, are you?

Silence. Stephanie looks embarrassed.

ANNE MARIE'S MOTHER

She went missing. Just gone. The police had no clues, no leads, no anything.

STEPHANIE

I'm sorry. I know how awful that is. My brother—

ANNE MARIE'S MOTHER  
(vehemently)  
You don't know. You can't.

Stephanie is taken aback.

STEPHANIE  
I'm sorry. You're right.

ANNE MARIE'S MOTHER  
You're sorry. Of course you're sorry. Everyone's so sorry. But has anyone done anything for me since...

Anne Marie's Mother huffs angrily. She picks up her mug and sips at the drink.

Stephanie picks up her mug and drinks too. She looks around the room.

Anne Marie bounces through the kitchen doorway and into the room. She beckons Stephanie towards her.

Stephanie notices and her eyes go wide. She glances quickly at Anne Marie's Mother. The woman is still lost in her drink and her grief. Stephanie subtly shakes her head at Anne Marie.

A moment later, Anne Marie's Mother sets the cup down, takes a deep breath, and looks at Stephanie with a smile.

Stephanie smiles nervously back while Anne Marie pouts in the background.

ANNE MARIE'S MOTHER  
Now I'm sorry. You didn't come here to hear me go on about that.

She frowns slightly.

ANNE MARIE'S MOTHER  
Why did you come here?

STEPHANIE  
Just a feeling.

Anne Marie renews her gesturing at Stephanie to follow her and then skips out of the room.

STEPHANIE

(to Anne Marie's Mother)

I, um... do you have a bathroom I can use?

Anne Marie's Mother sighs and sits back in her chair. She waves a hand toward the hall.

ANNE MARIE'S MOTHER

Third door on the right.

Stephanie smiles anxiously and nods. She quickly hurries after Anne Marie.

INT. STAIRS - ANNE MARIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Anne Marie dances up and down the stairs. Stephanie watches her for a moment before darting a glance over her shoulder toward the kitchen.

STEPHANIE

(hissing)

What are you doing?

Anne Marie smiles a giant smile and gestures at Stephanie to follow her then she races up the stairs.

Stephanie sighs, and after one more glance at the kitchen, she walks quietly after Anne Marie.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE BEDROOM - ANNE MARIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Anne Marie stands outside the door. She beckons to Stephanie again.

STEPHANIE

(muttering)

I should not be up here.

Anne Marie grins and turns toward the door. She starts walking through.

Stephanie gapes at her.

STEPHANIE

Hey. Where are you going? Don't...

Anne Marie is gone.

STEPHANIE

... do that.

Stephanie glances around and moves over to the door. She places a hand on the doorknob and takes a deep breath.

Anne Marie's head pops out of the door, and Stephanie jumps back.

Anne Marie only smiles and sticks a hand out of the door to gesture her in. Then she disappears inside again.

Stephanie breathes hard and stares at the door. After a moment, she walks back up to it, opens it, and heads into...

INT. BEDROOM - ANNE MARIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Clearly Anne Marie's old room, the bedroom has all of her old toys and clothes. It's like Anne Marie never left.

Stephanie stares at the room.

STEPHANIE

(in awe)

Oh.

Anne Marie sits on the floor by a dollhouse. She gestures at Stephanie again.

ANNE MARIE

Come play with me.

STEPHANIE

I... we can't.

ANNE MARIE

Sure, we can. They're my toys, silly.

Stephanie smiles in spite of the circumstances. Then she glances over her shoulder at the door.

STEPHANIE

I don't think... your mom would approve.

She turns back to Anne Marie.

STEPHANIE  
We should go.

ANNE MARIE'S MOTHER (O.S.)  
You should.

Startled, Stephanie spins around to face Anne Marie's Mother in the doorway behind her.

STEPHANIE  
I-I'm sorry. I didn't mean--

ANNE MARIE'S MOTHER  
Told you I'm sick and tired of hearing sorries.

STEPHANIE  
She led me here. Your daughter. I can see her.

There's a pause. Maybe Anne Marie's Mother believes? But then... she shakes her head.

ANNE MARIE'S MOTHER  
Hun, you're crazier than I thought.

STEPHANIE  
No. I-I promise. I can see her ghost. She's right there.

Stephanie points at the spot where Anne Marie sits.

ANNE MARIE'S MOTHER  
No. She can't be there. She can't. Because she's not dead. My baby's coming back to me.

STEPHANIE  
I'm sorry.

ANNE MARIE'S MOTHER  
Stop saying that!

Silence. Anne Marie's Mother takes a haggard breath.

ANNE MARIE'S MOTHER  
Out. Get out.

Stephanie nods.

STEPHANIE

Of course. I'm really...

She bites her lip and glances down at the floor.

STEPHANIE

I'll go.

Anne Marie's Mother nods imperiously.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE ANNE MARIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Dejected, Stephanie walks away from the house.

EXT. FISH'S VAN - STREET - DAY

Inside, the van we can see Fish and April in the front seats. Fish holds a pair of binoculars up to his face. They're trained on Stephanie. Bored, April looks at a book in her lap.

INT. FISH'S VAN - DAY

Fish lowers his binoculars.

FISH

She's leaving.

He glances over at April.

FISH

Pay attention, will you?

April looks up from her reading.

APRIL

Would if I knew what we were doing here. The ghost is at the house, Fish, remember?

Fish frowns and puts the binoculars up to his face again.

FISH

I remember.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE ANNE MARIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Stephanie gestures wildly as she walks and talks.

STEPHANIE

That could have gone better. Sorry, Anne Marie. We'll do better next time. We'll figure it out, get you to your mother.

Stephanie looks around her. Anne Marie is nowhere to be seen. Almost frantically, Stephanie turns and searches the area. Her eyes fall on...

POV SHOT - ANNE MARIE AT THE WINDOW

Anne Marie waves at Stephanie.

BACK TO SCENE

Stephanie smiles and waves back.

INT. FISH'S VAN - DAY

Fish holds the binoculars in front of his face.

FISH

What is she doing?

He moves the binoculars to look at...

POV SHOT - BINOCULARS ON WINDOW

Nothing.

BACK TO SCENE.

He takes the binoculars down again and blinks in confusion.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE ANNE MARIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Stephanie stops waving and turns on her heel with a grin. She continues down the street.

INT. FISH'S VAN - DAY

As Stephanie walks away, Fish trains the binoculars on her.

FISH

There's something going on here. Something with this girl.

APRIL

Says you.

FISH

And I'm going to find out what it is.

POV SHOT - STEPHANIE IN BINOCULARS

Oblivious to Fish's presence, Stephanie strolls down the street.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. LIVING ROOM - ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

Carly, Alyssa, and Mom sit on the couch in front of the TV. Alyssa pats Carly's knee and glances nervously at Mom.

Mom reacts slowly to Alyssa's look but manages a faint smile. It's not very reassuring. Stephanie enters with a box of pizza. A breath of fresh air in the room. She grins broadly.

STEPHANIE

Who wants some pizza?

Carly jumps off the couch.

CARLY

Me! I do!

Stephanie smiles down at her.

STEPHANIE

Great.

She looks to the couch.

STEPHANIE

Alyssa?



ALYSSA

Yeah, sure, whatever.

Alyssa stands up. She casts a worried glance at Mom then looks back to Stephanie.

Stephanie purses her lips. She walks over to the couch and hands Alyssa the pizza box then sits down next to Mom. She pats Mom's leg with her hand.

STEPHANIE

Come on. Pizza time.

Mom looks at her blankly.

STEPHANIE

I'm here.

She glances at Alyssa.

STEPHANIE

We're all here. We'll get through this. Come on.

Stephanie helps her Mom stand up from the couch. Everyone walks toward the kitchen.

Stephanie stops dead. Paige stands in front of them. She smiles nervously at Stephanie. Mom turns to Stephanie with concern.

MOM

(softly)

What's wrong?

Stephanie shakes herself and forces a smile.

STEPHANIE

Wrong? Nothing.

She looks back to Paige.

STEPHANIE

I'll catch up with you guys in a second, okay? Gotta grab something upstairs.

Mom frowns at her, but she and the others leave the room. Stephanie waves Paige forward.

STEPHANIE

Upstairs.

She scrubs a hand over her face.

EXT. SIDE OF ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

Carrying a camera, Fish walks along. He stares up at the outside of the house. Clearly uncomfortable, April follows beside him with her arms crossed.

APRIL

Is this necessary?

Fish doesn't look away from the house.

FISH

(vaguely)

Of course.

He spots an open window on the second floor then he sees the window below. It has an upper ledge that sticks out just enough for someone to use it to get inside.

Fish's eyes light up. He turns to April with a grin.

FISH

Sometimes you have to get your hands dirty if you want results. Help me up.

APRIL

This is a crime, you know.

FISH

But there's a ghost here. And I have to see it.

April sighs but gestures toward Fish: "go on."

INT. STEPHANIE'S BEDROOM - ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

Stephanie paces her room. Paige appears nearby.

PAIGE

We need to talk.

Stephanie spins on her.

STEPHANIE

Obviously. Is Max okay? Where is he? Are they going to help?

Paige swallows hard. Her expression doesn't look hopeful.

INT. BATHROOM - ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

Fish pulls himself through the open window and looks around the room. He grins, self-satisfied, and clambers down into the room.

Once inside, Fish turns to the window and gives a thumbs-up at April down below.

He hoists the camera with a determined look.

INT. STEPHANIE'S BEDROOM - ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

Stephanie stares at Paige expectantly.

STEPHANIE

Tell me.

Paige shrugs her shoulders.

PAIGE

They'll help...

Stephanie smiles and nods eagerly.

PAIGE

... if you help them. You have to do your job. Help the ghosts that come to you. Take care of them.

Stephanie's face collapses in despair.

STEPHANIE

But... I can't. Carly... Max...

PAIGE

I'm sorry. It's the only way.

Stephanie lets out a frustrated sigh. A LOUD CLICK sounds, a camera going off.

Stephanie spins on her heel. Fish stands in the doorway with the camera held up. Then he bolts down the hall.

STEPHANIE  
It's that ghost hunter!

PAIGE  
What ghost hunter?

STEPHANIE  
Doesn't matter. We have to stop him.

Paige and Stephanie exchange glances. Suddenly, the sound of crying fills the room.

The girls look around. Anne Marie is huddled in the corner.

PAIGE  
(to Stephanie)  
Your ghost?

Stephanie nods.

PAIGE  
I'll take care of that guy. You help her.

She disappears.

INT. BATHROOM - ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

Fish hurries into the room and toward the window, but Paige appears in front of him before he gets there.

PAIGE  
Boo.

Fish stops short. His eyes go wide.

FISH  
(awed)  
The ghost. Right here. With me.

He holds the camera up for another shot.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

Stephanie approaches Anne Marie. She kneels down next to her.

STEPHANIE

Anne Marie? What are you doing here? What about your mom?

Anne Marie looks up with tearful eyes.

ANNE MARIE

She can't see me.

STEPHANIE

I can see you.

ANNE MARIE

But you're not my mom.

She starts crying again. Stephanie shushes her gently.

STEPHANIE

I could pretend. Would you like that?

Anne Marie thinks about it for a moment then nods.

INT. BATHROOM - ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

Paige gets a look of concentration on her face. She reaches out and grabs hold of the camera. She pulls it away from Fish.

FISH

Hey!

Paige dashes the camera against the toilet. Pieces break off. She leaves the camera sitting there and leans in close to Fish. Spooked, he moves back a step.

PAIGE

Get out.

For a moment, Fish's excitement about ghosts overcomes his fear.

FISH

No way. This is awesome. You can talk too?!

Paige sighs.

PAIGE

Yeah. And I can turn you into jelly.

FISH

(elated)

You can?! That is so...

He realizes what she said.

FISH

... cool... You can really do that?

Paige reaches out and brushes a hand through Fish's chest. He shudders violently.

PAIGE

If you know what's best for you, you'll get out.

Fish's jaw goes slack. He nods vigorously.

PAIGE

Now go.

She steps aside, and Fish scrambles toward the window. He grabs the broken camera on his way out.

Paige grins smugly.

INT. STEPHANIE'S BEDROOM - ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

Anne Marie lies on top of the bed. She's not under the covers.

Stephanie sits down on the bed next to her. She smiles brightly.

STEPHANIE

Time to sleep.

ANNE MARIE  
You're a good mommy.

STEPHANIE  
I've had practice. My sisters and my...

She frowns.

STEPHANIE  
My brother. I tucked them in too.

Anne Marie yawns and settles against the covers.

ANNE MARIE  
Lucky. Are you going to tuck them in tonight too?

Stephanie fights hard to keep her composure.

STEPHANIE  
Carly maybe. Max is... he's not here.

Anne Marie frowns.

ANNE MARIE  
Where'd he go?

Stephanie winces but tries to hide it from Anne Marie.

STEPHANIE  
Don't worry about it. He'll be back soon.

Stephanie smiles at her, and Anne Marie smiles back. A soft, golden glow manifests around Anne Marie.

ANNE MARIE  
And when you see him again, you'll tuck him in.

STEPHANIE  
I hope so.

The light gets brighter. Stephanie squints.

ANNE MARIE  
You'll see him again.

Anne Marie smiles.

ANNE MARIE  
I know it.

The light gets so bright that Stephanie has to shield her eyes. When she looks back, Anne Marie is gone.

Stephanie can't hold back the tears any longer.

EXT. SIDE OF ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

Fish crash lands on the grass in front of April. He lies on his back and grins up at the house. April rushes over to him.

APRIL  
That bad, huh?

Fish grins up at her. He shakes his head.

FISH  
This house is going to be the best thing that's ever happened to me.

April bites her lip and turns. She follows Fish's gaze. They both stare up at the house.

INT. STEPHANIE'S BEDROOM - ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

Stephanie sits on the bed. When Paige appears in the room, Stephanie wipes at her eyes with the back of her hands.

PAIGE  
That guy definitely won't be back.

STEPHANIE  
Are you sure?

Paige looks at her with concern.



PAIGE  
(seriously)  
I took care of it. Are you okay?

Stephanie nods.

STEPHANIE  
Thank you.

A moment between them.

STEPHANIE  
I'll do it. Tell them I'll do my job. Help the ghosts move on and all that.

Paige nods.

PAIGE  
(jokes weakly)  
Just like old times.

Stephanie frowns at her. Paige looks apologetic.

STEPHANIE  
But it's temporary. When we get Max back, I'm done.

PAIGE  
I'm not sure that...

STEPHANIE  
I'm done.

Paige nods sympathetically.

STEPHANIE  
Now let's get Max back.

She clenches her jaw in determination.

END OF ACT FOUR

TAG

UNKNOWN DARK AREA - UNKNOWN TIME

The area is dark, so dark we can't tell if it's a room or not. But Max is there. He looks scared. His face is covered in tears.

MAX

Help...

When he speaks, his voice is raspy, as if he's been crying and shouting.

He sits down with his hands resting on the floor. The floor is like tar. It sticks to his hands.

Max panics. He pulls his hands up, but the tar-floor sticks to him. It gloops from his hands.

Max looks around wildly.

MAX

Help! Help!

The camera ZOOMS OUT from Max until we see...

A RUNNER.

Although we can no longer see Max, it's clear the dark area where Max is trapped is inside the Runner's chest.

EXT. ELLISON HOME - NIGHT

The Runner stands in the street looking at the house. Max's screams for help echo around it.

END OF TAG

FADE OUT.

Show Bible:

### Series Overview

Although college student Stephanie Ellison (20) has been seeing ghosts all her life, she wasn't prepared for it to become her job. One day, a ghost named Paige (early 20s) arrives to inform Stephanie that she's been "activated," which means Stephanie must now help ferry ghosts on their post-death journey from our world to wherever it is they're going. Unfortunately, she learns the hard way that her new job comes with risks.

In addition to the ghosts following her, Stephanie has to worry about the eerie, Grim Reaper-esque Runners, who have a mysterious agenda all their own. Through Stephanie manages to rescue her younger sister Carly (8) when the girl is kidnapped by the Runners, she is less successful at saving her younger brother Max (10) when he is taken too.

With her siblings in danger, Stephanie at first refuses to deal with her new ghost job, but Paige's bosses in the ghost bureaucracy promise help recovering Max – only if Stephanie helps them in return. Luckily, Stephanie has support on her side.

Even though Paige is stuck "interfacing" between the ghosts, Stephanie, and her bosses because of a sin she won't discuss, she still finds it in her to help Stephanie in her quest to retrieve Max and recover her normal life. To do so, Paige introduces Stephanie to Leena and Archie Murdock (late 60s-70s). The Murdocks agree to assist the girls with spells and Leena's premonitions as needed in spite of their tense relationship with Paige, which no one will explain to Stephanie.

Stephanie herself found help in the form of campus security guard Bailey Kincaid (21). At first willing to use his police connections for Stephanie, Bailey becomes frustrated by her continued evasiveness when he asks what she using his information for. He teams up with Stephanie's arch-nemesis, ghost hunter and blogger Lucas 'Fish' Fisher (late 20s), to figure out Stephanie's secret.

Stephanie certainly has her plate full – ghosts, a missing brother, and an annoying blogger. Can she handle it all while balancing her school and family life too? Or will something have to give? It certainly won't be the latter if Stephanie has anything to say about it!

#### Characters

- STEPHANIE ELLISON (20), college student and ghost whisperer. While she's been seeing ghosts most of her life, Stephanie never really had to interact with one until now, but she's resilient and determined to succeed. She's extremely close with her family – they came together as a group in the years since her dad died – in particular her younger sister Carly, who's begun showing signs of having the same ghost-seeing abilities as her older sister.
- PAIGE (20s), ghost. Paige's favorite thing about being dead is that no one expects anything from her. Of course that's change now that she's been assigned to work with Stephanie. While she's new to this work, she's not new to the spirit world, having some contacts and useful knowledge, including the likes of the Murdocks.

Paige can be prickly at first, but it's at least partially an act to hide her emotional scars.

- **ARCHIE MURDOCK** (early 60s-70s), an ex-police officer who's still gruff around the edges in spite of his age. He absolutely adores his wife, Leena; it's other people and complicated situations he can't stand. For this reason, he's glad he and Leena got out of the business of helping people with ghost crises, but sometimes he secretly longs to be out in the field dealing with the ghosts directly. He has a tense history with Paige.
- **LEENA MURDOCK** (early 60s-70s), psychic and paranormal researcher extraordinaire. It helps that she can use her psychic abilities to find the information she needs from a book. It doesn't always work, but it works most of the time, which is good enough for Leena. She likes to see the glass as half full, and if her psychic abilities work at all to help people, she's pleased. Some people may think she's mismatched with her surly husband Archie, but if you ask her, she's always known they were destined to be together.
- **BAILEY KINCAID** (21), security guard at Stephanie's college. He can sense the ghost world more than most people, but even if Stephanie was willing to explain her odd behavior, he probably wouldn't believe her. Until he had more proof.
- **LUCAS 'FISH' FISHER** (late 20s), ghost hunter and blogger. Determined to expose the secrets of the ghost world, Fish is like a dog with a bone when it comes to Stephanie. He won't leave her alone because he's convinced she has

something to do with the paranormal. Of course, she does, but Stephanie can't let him know, though it's going to take all her wits to keep him off her trail.

#### Episode Outline: "The Crazy Ones"

##### Teaser

- Clearly waiting for someone, Bailey stands on the street. He checks his phone and looks around.
- Stephanie is in a nearby alleyway dealing with a ghost.
- Frustrated, Bailey walks away. As he does so, he sees Stephanie down the alley. She appears to be talking to herself.
- Stephanie helps the ghost, and the ghost disappears in its final golden light.
- Bailey saw the light. Off his shocked expression...

##### Act One

- On the street where Bailey was earlier, Stephanie looks around for Bailey. She calls him.
- Bailey avoids the call.
- Stephanie returns home, as Paige appears. She takes the opportunity to rant about Bailey.
- Paige introduces Stephanie to her new ghost. Paige calls the ghost "a doozy." But the ghost articulates what she wants clearly.
- Stephanie tries to leave with Paige and the ghost, but Mom tells her she has to babysit.

- Bailey searches for information on ghosts in the area and finds Fish's blog.
- Stephanie protests the babysitting. Mom says Alyssa can't do it because she's grounded, and Stephanie must help out. Mom leaves.
- The ghost "freaks out" that she can't be helped. Poltergeist activity.
- Bailey knocks on Fish's door.

## Act Two

- Stephanie manages to calm the ghost down by promising help.
- Bailey talks to Fish, and once Fish learns about that Bailey knows Stephanie, he reveals his evidence of ghosts. It's too much for Bailey to believe, and he storms off after calling Fish crazy.
- Paige and Stephanie discuss the ghost. Stephanie doesn't want her in the house with Carly if there's going to be poltergeist activity. Paige agrees to take the ghost to the Murdocks' house to wait for Stephanie, but Stephanie must show up ASAP.
- Stephanie convinces Alyssa to cover for her, but as she leaves the house, Stephanie gets side-tracked by Carly and a call from Mom.
- Bailey comes to Stephanie's house. He hesitates when he goes to knock on the door.
- The ghost is clearly not happy with the new arrangements. Paige takes her eyes off the ghost for a second, and the ghost disappears.
- Stephanie finally leaves the house. Still outside, Bailey hides nearby.

- Paige arrives and announces the ghost is missing. She tells Stephanie the ghost could be coming back here.
- Bailey watches Stephanie talk to herself again. He emerges from his hiding place and says, "He [Fish] was right."
- The house's front door slams shut. Ghost's POV as she gets closer to an oblivious Alyssa.

### Act Three

- Stephanie pounds on the front door, which won't open. She tries to keep up a conversation with both Bailey and Paige, but the Paige conversation and danger to Stephanie's family wins out. Bailey gets angry, calls Stephanie crazy, and leaves.
- Stephanie can't worry about Bailey, and she renews her pounding on the door. The door opens of its own accord.
- Stephanie rushes inside, but everything appears fine inside. She talks to Alyssa, who seems maybe a little weird (more polite) but not enough to worry Stephanie.
- Paige leaves to try and find the ghost. Maybe she went somewhere else.
- Stephanie pulls out her phone and almost calls Bailey, but she doesn't.
- Carly and Alyssa recruit Stephanie to play a board game with them.
- Bailey returns to Fish's apartment and apologizes. He tells Fish that he was right about Stephanie and the ghosts.



- The girls continue the game. Stephanie notices that Alyssa is acting weird. When Stephanie confronts her, Alyssa/the ghost who possessed her starts giving off psychic/poltergeist activity.
- Stephanie sends Carly to her room and keeps Alyssa from going after her. The activity grows.

#### Act Four

- Stephanie and the ghost face off. The ghost has psychic activity on her side. Stephanie yells, “What do you want?”
- The ghost is rightly angry at Stephanie for ignoring her and demands help.
- Stephanie wants the ghost to leave Alyssa, but the ghost claims Alyssa is insurance. The two negotiate.
- Paige returns to the house and gets up to speed. She knows a way to get the ghost to leave Alyssa.
- Stephanie tells her to wait because they’ve almost got everything worked out, but Paige doesn’t.
- Paige’s idea/spell seems to hurt the ghost and/or Alyssa. They scream as she attempts to separate the two.
- Stephanie wants her to stop, but Paige can’t stop mid-spell. Eventually, it works, and Alyssa collapses onto the ground.
- Stephanie rushes to Alyssa, and it turns out she’s okay. The spell got rid of the ghost entirely.

- Stephanie is upset at Paige for taking action when they could have talked it out.

Paige says the ghost was crazy, but Stephanie says she just wanted help.

#### Tag

- Fish and Bailey team up to investigate Stephanie.

#### Episode Outline: "April Showers"

#### Teaser

- April walks around an abandoned warehouse.
- Feeling the presence of a ghost, she shivers then smiles.
- April shows up at Stephanie's house: "I need your help."

#### Act One

- April tells Stephanie about the warehouse ghost, but Stephanie is understandably reluctant to help. She tries to deny any knowledge of ghosts too, but April isn't buying it. She tells Stephanie the ghost asked for her.
- April and Stephanie go to the warehouse. Fish is already there, and he's setting up equipment to investigate the ghostly phenomenon.
- Stephanie reacts badly to Fish's presence, but just as she's about to leave, there's ghostly activity.
- Paige arrives at the Murdocks' house. She hesitates then turns to leave. Leena opens the door and invites Paige in.

- April, Fish, and Stephanie investigate the warehouse ghost, i.e. ESP, camera, invocations, everything like ghost hunters on TV. While April and Stephanie are busy, Fish sneaks away and calls Bailey. He tells him now is the perfect time for action because he can keep an eye on Stephanie.

## Act Two

- Nothing is happening in the warehouse investigation, so Stephanie says she's going home. Fish goes out of his way to convince her to stay.
- Paige and Leena discuss why Paige came to the house. She wants to use a spell to contact her sister, who's dead and moved on. The spell, which opens a portal to the other side, could re-release souls into the world as ghosts.
- Bailey shows up at Stephanie's house and asks her family if Stephanie is there. Obviously she isn't, but when Bailey implies he's her boyfriend, they invite Bailey in to wait.
- Back at the warehouse investigation, there's finally ghost activity. But Stephanie figures out Fish faked it, and she storms out.
- April comes after her to try and get her to stay. She says she didn't know what Fish was planning, and that there's definitely a real ghost at the warehouse. April admits that she thinks the ghost is her grandmother. Stephanie agrees to stay.
- Fish calls the girls back into the warehouse because there's something weird happening. He's genuinely freaked now. The power levels he's reading are far too high.

- Stephanie doesn't believe Fish at first, but April starts channeling the ghost.

### Act Three

- Cute, teasing scene with Stephanie's family about Bailey being Stephanie's "boyfriend." Bailey excuses himself from the room to go the bathroom, but he actually sneaks into Stephanie's room.
- Back at the warehouse, Stephanie talks to the ghost through April. Fish asks if she's done this before because she's surprisingly good at it. Stephanie figures out who the ghost is, and it's not April's grandmother. The ghost wants help finding her aunt.
- Paige and Leena set up for the spell. Leena asks if Paige is sure about this. "How bad could it be?" They both know it could be bad, but Paige is willing to take the risk.
- Stephanie and April head for the ghost's aunt's house. Stephanie tells her she's sorry the ghost wasn't her grandmother, and April shrugs it off.
- Bailey has searched Stephanie's room, but he hasn't found anything. He calls Fish, who agrees to take over investigating. He's following April and Stephanie to the aunt's house.
- With Paige and Leena, the spell is working. Until it starts to go wrong.

## Act Four

- April and Stephanie arrive at the aunt's house. They talk to the aunt, who refuses to listen to them. This upsets April, and Stephanie essentially offers a shoulder to cry. They have a heart-to-heart in which April admits she didn't get to make amends with her grandmother before she died.
- Since the spell is going wrong, Paige reaches out psychically to Stephanie. In case they need help containing any rogue ghosts.
- Continuation of April and Stephanie's heart-to-heart. Stephanie tries to comfort April, but she's interrupted by Paige's psychic summons. Stephanie has to go, and this makes April close up emotionally again. Stephanie promises it's urgent, and to prove it, she confides in April about how she helps ghost – not all of it, but enough.
- Fish gapes from the shadows.
- Paige and Leena's spell ends. Some souls escape from the portal they opened, and Leena gets some minor injuries.
- Stephanie helps Paige and Leena clean up the Murdocks' house. Afterward, Stephanie and Paige talk about why Paige wanted to open the portal. Paige admits she wants closure with her sister. Stephanie encourages her to keep trying – though in a less dangerous way – because she's seen how not having closure affected April and the warehouse ghost and her aunt.
- April visits her grandmother's grave and cries.

## Tag

- Fish calls Bailey (no longer at Stephanie's house) and tells him he'll never believe what Fish just found out.

## Additional Loglines

1. Paige and Stephanie team up to convince Fish that Paige isn't a ghost but is instead a not-dead friend of Stephanie's, but they can't convince him alone and must enlist the Murdocks' help and help from Paige's bosses.
2. In an attempt to get closure on Max, Stephanie's mom lets Fish and April investigate the house for signs of ghostly activity. Stephanie runs interference, and she's surprised as anyone when April has a genuine paranormal experience in Max's room.
3. After failing to help one of her ghostly charges find peace, Stephanie learns the failure was because the ghost isn't yet dead but instead, is in a coma in the hospital.
4. When Stephanie questions Paige's ability to "interface," Paige brings Stephanie behind the scenes and into the bureaucracy of the ghost world.
5. When Stephanie's (ghost) dad shows up to "protect" Stephanie from the ghost world, he learns he's too late to stop her from taking the job, but the two manage to reconnect.
6. Another ghost/human pair contact Stephanie with information on Max, and while Stephanie is eager to accept their help, Paige doesn't trust them.