

TWO, FOUR, SIX, EIGHT, WHO DO WE RESUSCITATE?

by

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## CAST

AVA (F, 17) - must get into a good college

HAZEL (F, 17) - might be a witch

ELOISE (F, 17) - died of the measles

PARKER (M, 17) - is in over his head

## SETTING

The basement of the Bradlaw & Taylor funeral home in Hartford, CT. Present day.

## SYNOPSIS

A dead body is brought back to life, ostensibly to improve American vaccination rates, but really to impress the Ivy League.

This play was written for Playwrights Thriving's Frightfully Inspired Challenge, from the prompt "The Mummy."

*A NOTE ON LANGUAGE: This play contains swearing, but it doesn't have to. I'm happy to send a clean version on request.*

*Lights up on the basement of the Bradlaw & Taylor Funeral Home in Hartford, CT. It is sparse and sterile. There are two doors: one inside the basement, leading to the refrigeration room, and another accessing the basement from the funeral parlor above. It is through this second door that AVA (17) enters, having picked the lock. She wears a cheerleader outfit and a backpack. HAZEL (17) follows behind her, also wearing a backpack.*

AVA

We're in!

HAZEL (*no enthusiasm*)

Awesome.

AVA

I told you I learned how to pick locks in the Junior Detective Club in middle school.

HAZEL

It's wild that an adult thought that was a good idea.

AVA

There should be, like, a walk-in freezer where they keep the bodies.

*(She notices the door to the refrigeration room.)*

Oh, I bet it's that.

*Ava swings her backpack off her shoulders and begins pulling out winter gear - a coat, a warm hat, earmuffs, a scarf, gloves - over the following dialogue.*

HAZEL

And you're sure no one is going to catch us?

AVA

There are no funerals on the books here until Eloise on Friday. They're embalming her tomorrow. Nobody's coming tonight. Don't worry.

HAZEL

I just - I've worked really hard on my GPA and I want to get into a good school and junior year is so important, and getting caught trespassing in the basement of a funeral home -

AVA

We're not gonna get caught. I'm a former Junior Detective.

HAZEL

That's not super reassuring.

AVA

Plus the whole reason we're here is so we can get into a good school.

HAZEL

That's the reason you're here. I'm here because of blackmail.

AVA

God, can't you just enjoy the ride? This is the most exciting thing that's ever happened to you.

*Ava begins putting all the winterwear on Hazel.*

HAZEL

No it's - You don't have any idea about the exciting things I've done.

AVA

Girl, the most exciting thing about you is that your great-great-great-whatever grandmother was a witch.

HAZEL

No she wasn't.

AVA

Hanged for witchcraft, that's exciting.

HAZEL

They didn't hang witches, they hanged women.

AVA

And now you're following in her footsteps.

HAZEL

I am not a witch. She was not a witch. There are no witches in Hartford.

AVA

It's in your blood.

HAZEL

You don't listen, Ava. You never listen to any -

AVA

I have excellent hearing, honed during the second half of seventh grade, Wednesdays after school, when I was a Junior Detective. You're not gonna get caught. I'm eagle-eared. We'll be fine.

HAZEL

Eagles don't have -

AVA

Are you gonna stand here overheating, or are you gonna get in that walk-in freezer and bring Eloise back from the dead?

HAZEL

For the millionth time, I can't bring -

AVA

Hazel. You are a witch.

HAZEL

No.

AVA

You are descended from a witch, and her witch-blood flows through your veins. Don't be nervous. You've got this.

*(She pulls a book from her backpack and hands it to Hazel.)*

Here's the Egyptian Book of the Dead. I bookmarked the spell for you to try. It's about going out into the day and living after death.

HAZEL

The spells in the Egyptian Book of the Dead aren't for bringing people back to life, they're for protecting the dead in the underworld. We learned that in sixth grade.

AVA *(ignoring her)*

Just, like, put your hands on her and say it slowly. Or whatever feels right to you. Follow your instincts. You're the witch, not me.

*(Hazel sighs.)*

Ready?

HAZEL

Can you catch measles from a dead body?

AVA

You can't. You're vaccinated.

HAZEL

Yeah, but -

AVA

Your parents believe in science, you're fine.

HAZEL

Her parents also believe in science, she just couldn't get the MMR shot because of her gelatin allergy.

AVA

It's so gross that there's gelatin in there.

HAZEL

If herd immunity were still a thing, she would have been okay.

AVA

Yeah, people suck. But this is definitely gonna get me into an Ivy.

HAZEL

No it won't, because it's not going to work.

AVA

Of course it's going to work! You have witch-blood!

HAZEL

I do not have witch-blood. And even if I did, even if that were a real thing, the moral of, like, fifty percent of horror movies is 'Don't raise the dead.'

AVA

This isn't a horror movie. This is real life. Which is also sort of a horror movie, but not the kind you're talking about.

HAZEL

Can we just -

AVA

Get in that refrigerated room and raise Eloise from the dead, or I will tell everyone who that tampon belonged to. Everyone.

*Slight beat.*

HAZEL

God, you suck.

*Hazel begins stomping toward the door to the refrigeration room. Ava holds up the book Hazel forgot to grab.*

AVA

Book of the Dead!

*Hazel makes a frustrated sound, swipes the book from Ava's hand, and stomps into the refrigerated room, letting the door slam behind her. Ava fishes her phone out of her backpack and begins recording herself.*

AVA

Hello college admissions people. My name is Ava Russell, and I deserve to be admitted into your biology program, so I can study to become a doctor. This video is a multi-media addition to my application, detailing how I convinced vaccine-skeptical Americans to start vaccinating their children again. Phase one is currently underway: A teenage witch who goes to school with me is bringing a girl who died of the measles back to life behind this door, right now.

*(She lowers the phone.)*

Wait, I can't film this. This is proof of breaking and entering.

*A bloodcurdling scream comes from the refrigerated room. Hazel rushes out, slams the door behind her, and throws the Egyptian Book of the Dead on the ground as she runs for the exit, speaking all the while.*

HAZEL

Holy shit holy shit holyshit oh my god oh my god ohmygod -

AVA

Did it work?

HAZEL (*pulling at the door*)

Let me out, let me out, I want to go home! (*She begins frantically pulling her gloves off to better grip the door.*) These stupid gloves!

AVA

Did it work?!

*The door to the refrigerated room flies open and ELOISE (17) emerges, with the white sheet that had been, until a few moments ago, covering her dead body wrapped around her like a long towel. Her eyes are wide. Her face is wild.*

HAZEL (*pounding on the door*)

Oh my god!!

AVA

You did it! My beautiful little Witch of Blackbird Pond, you did it!

HAZEL (*sinking into a defensive ball on the floor*)

I'm not a witch!

AVA

You clearly are!

HAZEL (*burying her face in her hands*)

I want to go home!

*Ava approaches Eloise like she's a skittish horse.*

AVA

Eloise, hi. Do you remember me? Ava Russell. I'm the varsity cheerleading captain? But I'm also, like, really smart, which nobody gives me credit for because I'm a cheerleader. And I knew that in order to get into the caliber of university that I deserve on the full ride scholarship I require, I would have to do something really amazing. And then you died of the measles, and I was like, 'This is so great!' I mean, it's not great. It's super sad, but it works out great. You know? For me. And for Hazel, who's discovering herself.

*Hazel moans in despair. Ava takes some clothes out of her bag and slowly approaches Eloise with them.*

AVA

Anyway, I brought you some clothes. Since dead bodies are stored without any, I thought you might, you know... So here you go.

*She gives the clothes to Eloise, who takes them, looks down at them, and then back up at Ava.*

ELOISE

Am I really alive?

AVA *(all smiles)*

Yes.

ELOISE

How?

AVA

Hazel's a witch.

ELOISE

Like her great-great-great-whatever grandmother?

AVA

/

HAZEL

Yeah.

No.

AVA

Put on the clothes so we can get out of here.

ELOISE

I get a second chance?

AVA

Yes. Put on the clothes.

*Eloise begins moving back toward the refrigerated room to change, then stops.*

ELOISE

You'll wait for me?

AVA

We're not leaving without you, girl. You're my ticket to the Ivy League.

*Eloise smiles and disappears into the refrigerated room to change. Ava squeals with delight.*

AVA

Holy shit, Hazel!

HAZEL

I want to go home. Please can I go home?

AVA

Yeah, I just need you to take some videos of Eloise and me when we get outside, and then you can go.

HAZEL

And you won't tell anyone about the tampon?

AVA

Girl, I'll take it to my grave. And if you want to talk about it after that, you can just raise me from the dead, since/ you're a witch.

HAZEL (*overlapping*)

Shut up, I'm not.

AVA

The proof is in the pudding, and the pudding is the dead girl. Embrace who you are. You brought the junior class president back from the dead. Like, if you do nothing else with the rest of your long life, you will still be the most interesting person at every party.

HAZEL

I want to go.

AVA

Well, I can't film the multimedia addition to my Ivy League applications inside the business I broke into. I need plausible deniability for that shit. Film us when we get outside, make sure it's a flattering angle for me, and then you can go home and forget this whole thing.

HAZEL

I knew I shouldn't go to that house party.

AVA

But you did, and you were on your period, and now here we are.

*Eloise emerges tentatively from the refrigerated storage room. She wears a Hartford High Cheerleading hoodie and leggings. Her feet are bare.*

AVA

There she is! Eloise! How are you feeling?

ELOISE

Okay.

AVA

Yeah?

ELOISE

I... I don't understand why you did this. Why you wanted to do this. We weren't friends.

AVA

I told you. It was so I could use you. I mean, not like 'use you' like exploit you. Just use you to get what I want.

ELOISE

That's exploitation.

AVA

No.

ELOISE

That's the definition of exploitation.

AVA

No. You get something out of it, too. You get to be alive again.

ELOISE

And what do you get?

HAZEL

Can we take this conversation outside, please? Can I just film you two so I can leave?

ELOISE

Film us? Why are you filming us? *(to Ava:)* Why is she filming us?

AVA

You're part of my college application.

ELOISE

How?

AVA

You're a multimedia component to my Ivy League applications.

ELOISE

That's a thing?

AVA

It's an extra thing I'm doing to stand out. It's not mandatory or, you know, asked for, but it's gonna blow them away.

ELOISE

I don't think they want to watch videos of kids arguing that they're smart.

AVA

It's not an argument, it's proof from a girl who's been stereotyped! When did we decide as a society that cheerleaders are dumb and vapid? I am more than a short skirt and a rhyming chant.

ELOISE

If you're so worried about being stereotyped, why do you date the dumbest boys in school?

AVA

I date the hottest boys in school! They're not built for thinking! It's called work-life balance, Eloise! My free time is precious. I'm not going to spend it talking with sixes. I'm going to spend it making out with tens while they bench-press me with one arm. It's not like I'm marrying them, I'm just having fun!

HAZEL

You're very smart, Ava. So amazingly smart and so tragically misunderstood. Let's leave the funeral home now.

ELOISE

I still don't see how Hazel bringing me back to life gets you into an Ivy.

HAZEL

I don't actually think it was anything I did.

AVA

Because vaccination rates are down across the country, and scientists are freaking out.

HAZEL

In fact, how do we even know you were truly dead?

AVA

They can't figure out how to convince people to vaccinate their kids anymore.

HAZEL

The hospital could have made a mistake.

ELOISE

Hazel, I have nothing against you. You've always seemed cool, but please shut up.

HAZEL

I'm just saying.

AVA

Ignore her, she's just in denial. The whole thing got me thinking about my sister's herpes.

ELOISE

Excuse me?

/

HAZEL

Your sister's -

AVA

My older sister got herpes from her ex. It flared up while she was home for Thanksgiving last fall, and peeing was excruciating. Like, her crotch was on fire. She would be in the upstairs bathroom and I'd hear her wailing all the way downstairs. And I thought, 'This is what they  
(more)

AVA (cont)

should teach us in sex ed. Don't just tell us we need to use condoms, explain to us in graphic detail why. Give us first-hand accounts that will paint a picture of the consequences so vividly that it will scare us into celibacy.' And that's why I need you.

ELOISE

I don't have herpes.

AVA

No, but you had measles. You died of it. Did it suck? Was it painful?

ELOISE

Yeah.

AVA

Was it the worst thing you've ever experienced?

ELOISE

Obviously. It killed me.

AVA

See! I want to interview you. I want you to explain in graphic detail what you went through, to convince people that whatever misinformation about autism is scaring them into avoiding vaccines, the diseases they prevent are worse.

*Eloise gives a resigned sigh.*

ELOISE

That's actually a good idea.

AVA

I know. I'm smart. We're gonna make a video, it's gonna go viral, there's gonna be a major uptick in vaccinations, I'll let the Ivies know it's all thanks to me, they'll each offer me a full scholarship, and the perfect trajectory of my life will be assured. I'm gonna be a doctor. A hot one.

HAZEL

You're an inspiration to girls everywhere. Let's get started. Let's go outside.

ELOISE  
Wait.

HAZEL  
Come on.

ELOISE  
I'm not going anywhere just yet.

HAZEL  
Please.

AVA  
Why not?

ELOISE  
I need something too.

HAZEL  
Whatever you need, I'm sure it's outside of this funeral home.

ELOISE  
I was dead, you understand? I was dead.

AVA  
Yeah.

HAZEL  
You might not have been dead.

ELOISE  
I was one with the universe, and all its secrets and all its mysteries were revealed to me.

AVA  
Okay. What did you learn? We can put it in the video.

ELOISE  
Parker Harrington likes me.

Who? AVA

Parker Harrington. ELOISE

Who's that? AVA (*looking to Hazel for help*)

He's in our grade. ELOISE

He's on the debate team with Eloise and me. HAZEL

I don't know who he is. AVA

Maybe because he can't bench-press you with one arm. HAZEL

I'm just having fun! AVA

He wears a navy blue hoodie every day and Buddy Holly frames with no glass inside. I've been in love with him since fifth grade, and he likes me too. He like-likes me. ELOISE

So... wait. All of life's mysteries were revealed to you, like 'What is the meaning of life?' and 'Is there a god?' and 'Are we alone in the universe?' and your one takeaway from all of that is - AVA

Parker Harrington likes me, and I have a second chance. ELOISE  
(*She hugs Hazel.*)  
Thank you, Hazel. You have no idea what this means to me. I won't squander this opportunity.  
(*To Ava:*) I need Parker. Bring him here now.

Wait, wait, wait. Eloise. This isn't gonna work. AVA

ELOISE

Why not?

AVA

What made you such a special unicorn is not only that you come from a pro-vaccine family yet had to rely on herd immunity because you were medically unable to get the MMR shot, but also the fact that you are a strong female leader: Captain of the debate team, a math olympiad participant, junior class president - you've risen as high, politically, as a woman can in this country, and yet nothing you've said in the last five minutes passes the Bechdel test. That's unacceptable. My application is about showing what women are capable of, especially in the realm of science, and how you were taken from us too soon because of antivaxxers. How they robbed us of, like, the woman who could have cured cancer or been, like, our greatest political mastermind, but you're gonna undermine everything if all you want to do is talk about how you have the hots for some guy.

ELOISE

Dying showed me what truly matters.

AVA

This is unbelievable. I thought you were a feminist.

ELOISE

I am a feminist. You're allowed to be a feminist and also be in love with a boy.

AVA

Not if you're a real feminist! Goddamn it, this is so unfair!

ELOISE

Look, I'll make your little video. I'll talk about how it feels to die of the measles in excruciating detail. But first, I've got a ton of lost time to make up for. I want you to bring Parker Harrington here, and I want to kiss him until I'm sick.

HAZEL

There are lots more romantic places to kiss than the basement of a funeral home.

AVA

Hazel is right. Make my video, and then I'll bring you to Parker.

ELOISE

Bring Parker to me, and then I'll make your video.

HAZEL

We can all agree that no matter what order we do things in, the first step is to leave this building.

AVA

I don't have time to wait around while you make out with some guy. I have trigonometry homework and a project due for AP Spanish.

ELOISE

You don't seem to realize that you need me much more than I need you.

*A beat of silent standoff before Ava lets out a frustrated sigh.*

AVA

How am I supposed to bring him here? I don't have his number. I don't know where he lives.

ELOISE

He's a delivery driver for Signore Pizza after school. Order a pizza and request that he deliver it.

AVA

I'll sound like a stalker!

ELOISE

Do you want to go to an Ivy or not?

AVA

Goddamn it! Fuck!

*(She fishes her phone out of her backpack, looks up the number, and calls.)*

Hi. Um, is Parker Harrington working today? Cool. Um, could I get a medium cheese, and could Parker deliver it? The Bradlaw and Taylor Funeral Home. I'll pay cash. Okay, thanks.

*(She hangs up, tosses her phone on her backpack, and turns to Eloise.)*

You owe me fourteen bucks, plus tip.

ELOISE *(suggestively)*

Oh, I'll give Parker his tip.

AVA

Shut up. What would Gloria Steinem think of you?

ELOISE

Gloria Steinem got married.

HAZEL

You know, Parker would probably do a better job filming the video than I would. I think he took photography as an elective last year.

AVA

No, I want this to be a women-only enterprise.

HAZEL

You don't have to tell anybody a boy was involved.

AVA

But I'll know. I take pride in my work.

ELOISE

Did you know that Parker Harrington hates arguments, but he joined the debate team because I was the captain?

AVA

I don't care.

ELOISE

I should have figured it out. He's bad at debating, right, Hazel?

HAZEL

He's... not great.

ELOISE

He wasn't there because he loved debate. He was there because he loved me.

AVA

Shut up.

ELOISE

And did you know that one time, in art class, Parker Harrington accidentally touched my hand reaching for some paints, and he was like 'Your hands are so cold,' and I was like, 'I know, sorry, my hands are always cold' -

AVA

Why would you apologize for your hand temperature?

ELOISE

And then the next day, before class started, Natalie was telling us a story about... something. I forget. And Parker slid onto the bench next to me and put his hands over mine to warm them while we listened. But I didn't get it. He liked me, but I couldn't see.

AVA

You sound basic. Have some self-respect.

ELOISE

And another time, Mira got a group of people together to go out to a restaurant, and Parker was there, and afterward she offered a ride home to anyone who needed it, but there were one too many people to fit in her car, so Parker was like, "Eloise, why don't you sit on my lap-"

AVA

Shut up. Seriously.

ELOISE (*lost in the memory*)

He squeezed me tighter every time the car made a turn.

AVA

I'm so embarrassed for you. I'm trying to make big strides for science -

HAZEL

You're trying to get a full ride to an Ivy League school.

AVA

While making big strides for science! Yet the junior class president, who was on track to be valedictorian, who was dead and has come back to life - the first person ever in the history of the world to do so -

HAZEL

Are you familiar with the central conceit of Christianity?

AVA

- can't focus on anything but some guy! And not even a hot one!

HAZEL

You don't know that he's not hot. You don't even know who he is.

AVA

If he were hot, I'd know who he is.

ELOISE

Do either of you have gum or breath mints or something?

AVA / HAZEL

No. Sorry, no.

ELOISE

Rats.

*Ava sits dejectedly on the ground and grabs her phone, settling in to wait. Hazel starts finally taking all her layers off and folding them into a pile.*

ELOISE

It's good to see you, Hazel.

HAZEL

Oh. Yeah. Thank you. I mean, you too.

ELOISE

It's really sweet of you to break into this funeral home and bring me back to life. That's, like, way above and beyond for an acquaintance.

HAZEL

Well... I mean...

ELOISE

I didn't realize you and Ava were friends.

AVA

We're not.

HAZEL

She's blackmailing me.

ELOISE

Oh.

HAZEL

Not that I didn't - I mean, obviously I'd prefer you alive, but breaking and entering isn't really my thing, and I didn't think it was gonna work, so, like, why get in trouble for -

ELOISE

What's she got on you?

HAZEL

The blackmail? It's - It's private.

AVA

It's about a tampon.

HAZEL

Ava!

AVA

I didn't tell her what about a tampon.

HAZEL

You're not supposed to bring it up at all! I did this for you, now you're supposed to forget about it for me.

AVA

Oh, I can't possibly forget. But I won't mention it.

HAZEL

You just did, though! I've kept my half of the bargain, and you just -

AVA

Your half of the bargain isn't complete until we've shot our footage.

HAZEL

I am clearly acting in good faith, and you -

ELOISE

So you only wanted to help me to keep this tampon thing a secret?

HAZEL

No! I only wanted to help Ava to keep this tampon thing a secret. I didn't think I'd be helping you at all, because I didn't think it was possible for you to come back to life.

AVA

You are a witch! Why are you the only person who doesn't see your potential? Why can't women believe in themselves? Did you know that women playing chess online are more likely to lose if they're told that their opponent is a man? Like, what the hell?

HAZEL

I'm not quite sure what that has to do with -

AVA

Know your worth! You are a powerful witch. Own it. You're so tragic. Both of you are just so disappointing.

PARKER *(off)*

Hello?

*(The girls' attention snaps to the door leading to the stairs. Eloise gasps in delight.)*

Did... did someone order a pizza?

ELOISE *(a reverent whisper)*

He's here.

AVA *(calling to him)*

Yeah, we're in the basement! Can you bring it down?

*A beat.*

PARKER *(off)*

Um... I would - I would prefer if you came up.

AVA

But we're down here.

PARKER *(off)*

Could you come up to get it, though?

AVA

Do your legs not work?

PARKER (*off*)

This just kind of feels like the start of every horror movie?

AVA

This isn't a horror movie! I mean, real life is a little bit of a horror movie, but this isn't a slasher film situation.

PARKER (*off*)

It feels like it.

AVA

No.

PARKER (*off*)

My manager said you asked for me specifically.

AVA

Yeah, but that's not weird.

PARKER (*off*)

It's super weird.

AVA

No, it's totally normal.

PARKER (*off*)

Can you just come up here to get the pizza and pay me, please?

AVA

No! Come on, Parker. We're just three girls in the basement of a funeral home after hours who ordered a pizza and requested you, by name, to bring it to us. I don't get why that weirds you out.

PARKER (*off*)

...I'm just gonna leave it here.

AVA

What? No!

PARKER (*off*)

You don't have to pay me. I - I do this job for the love of it. Really, it's fine -

ELOISE

Parker Harrington, this is Eloise Langley! Please come downstairs.

*A beat.*

PARKER *(off)*

...Is this some kind of joke?

ELOISE

No!

PARKER *(off)*

Is this some kind of sick joke?

ELOISE and AVA

No!

PARKER *(off)*

Look, your pizza's at the top of the stairs. I'm/ going to -

*Ava runs through the door, sprinting to Parker to drag him downstairs.*

AVA *(as she runs off)*

Don't you dare! I need you!

*The sound of a scared teenage boy shrieking and tumbling down the stairs, and then PARKER (17) crashes through the open door, into the basement. He wears a navy blue hoodie and Buddy Holly frames with no glass. Ava follows, holding the pizza. Parker scrambles to his feet, backing away from the girls. Ava blocks the doorway. He is trapped.*

PARKER *(as he tries to scramble away)*

What do you want from me? Why are you doing this? I'm expected home at ten, and my mom listens to a lot of true crime podcasts. If I don't come home -

ELOISE

Parker.

*Parker's eyes go wide at the sight of her. Then, trying to curl himself into the smallest ball possible, he starts to cry.*

ELOISE (*without taking her eyes off Parker*)  
Leave us.

HAZEL  
Eloise -

ELOISE  
Go upstairs for a little bit.

HAZEL  
Eloise, he's scared.

ELOISE  
No he's not. Those are happy tears.

HAZEL  
They're scared tears.

AVA  
They're totally scared tears.

PARKER (*to Hazel*)  
What did you do to her?

HAZEL  
Me? Why are you accusing me?

PARKER  
Your great-great-great-whatever grandmother was a witch.

HAZEL  
No, she was an opinionated woman in a time when you weren't allowed to be.

ELOISE (*approaching Parker*)  
Hazel brought me back to life.

HAZEL (*shaking her head*)  
The hospital made a mistake. She was never dead.

ELOISE

She gave me a second chance to tell you that I have a crush on you, too.

*A beat. Parker blinks at her.*

PARKER

What?

ELOISE

I know you like me. I like you, too.

PARKER

You died, though.

ELOISE

But I'm alive again.

PARKER

Because Hazel's a witch?

*Eloise nods as Hazel throws up her hands in frustration. Parker studies Eloise.*

PARKER

Do you still have measles?

ELOISE

I don't seem to.

PARKER

Do you still have a life-threatening gelatin allergy?

ELOISE

I don't know.

HAZEL

Let's not test it.

AVA

Why not? You can always bring her back.

PARKER (*a whisper*)  
You were dead.

ELOISE  
I know.

PARKER  
I was sad.

ELOISE  
Me too. Well, not when I was dead. But when I was dying, I was sad.

PARKER (*noticing her feet*)  
You don't have any shoes.

ELOISE  
Ava gave me some of her clothes - but just a hoodie and pants. (*A conspiratorial whisper:*) I'm not wearing any underwear.

HAZEL  
Okay, could you not -

AVA  
Don't tell him that. This boy has no idea what to do with that information.

PARKER  
No, I - I know what to do with it.

AVA  
You don't.

PARKER  
I know what to do with that information.

AVA  
Your face is saying that you don't.

HAZEL  
All right, leave him alone.

ELOISE

You're about to get ravaged, Parker Harrington.

PARKER

Um -

ELOISE

It's been a long time coming.

HAZEL

What about consent?

ELOISE

He consents.

PARKER

Um, I really should get back to work.

ELOISE

You work too hard. Take a break.

AVA

Yeah, hang out for a sec.

PARKER

In the basement of a funeral home?

AVA

What a fun story this will be tomorrow, right?

*(She holds up the pizza box.)*

Let's have some pizza!

PARKER

I'm sick of pizza.

ELOISE

I can't eat dairy.

HAZEL

I can't eat gluten.

AVA

Well, I don't like red sauce, so...

*(Ava puts the pizza down.)*

Why is the pizza a man?

HAZEL

What are you talking about?

AVA

Signore Pizza. Pizza is a feminine word. La pizza. God, I hate the patriarchy. Anyway. Parker.

PARKER

What?

AVA

Can you make out with Eloise real fast so she'll help me with this video I need? I don't have all night. I have trig homework.

PARKER

Uh -

AVA

Go in the refrigerated room. Do like a 'seven minutes in heaven' thing. *(to Eloise:)* Seven minutes is long enough to get it out of your system, right?

ELOISE

Seven minutes? I've waited years.

PARKER

I don't -

AVA

I guarantee this boy doesn't know what to do with you for seven full minutes.

ELOISE

Oh, he knows what to do.

PARKER *(getting up)*

I don't wanna be here anymore, so I'm just going to -

AVA

Sit down, Parker. You're not going anywhere. (*He sits.*) I pride myself on not needing a man, yet I find myself in the infuriating position of needing you.

ELOISE

Thank you for calling him a man.

AVA

Shut up. Look. Parker. I need you to make out with Eloise so that she'll make the video I need her to make.

PARKER

Why do you want a video of us making out?

AVA

I don't. That's -

ELOISE

Oh my gosh, but could we make a video though?

AVA

No.

ELOISE

A make out video?

AVA

No. We're making a video about how terrible the measles are.

ELOISE

I can make out with him while I talk about it.

AVA

No.

ELOISE

But sex sells.

AVA

We're definitely not making a sex video.

ELOISE

A tasteful one, though. Classy.

AVA

Parker, please help me. Just make out with her so this (*gestures toward Eloise*) will stop so I can get back to my life.

PARKER

I don't... really feel comfortable?

ELOISE

But you like me! You like-like me!

PARKER

Yeah, I did. And then you died.

ELOISE

But I'm back. Everything's fine now. It's like it never happened.

PARKER

But it did happen. You died. Yesterday. I talked to a grief counselor at school this morning.

ELOISE (*touched*)

You talked to a grief counselor because of me?

PARKER

And it's cool that you're alive again - it's great - but it's also weird. It's very weird and a little scary.

ELOISE

Scary?!

PARKER

Because you were dead. And I just don't - It just feels weird to - I just don't know that this is the time or, really, the place to make out with you.

ELOISE

Excuse me?

PARKER

I just... there's a lot... to sort through? Inside me. And I just don't feel like now is-

ELOISE

Excuse me?!

AVA *(to Parker)*

What are you doing?

PARKER

Um, articulating my feelings?

AVA

No.

PARKER

Drawing boundaries?

AVA

No. You're fucking up my future, you pathetic little nobody.

HAZEL

Ava -

AVA

I have worked too hard for too long and have my future too planned out to see it all go to shit because of some loser who wears glasses performatively.

ELOISE

The glasses are hot.

AVA

Get over there and stick your tongue down her throat so she will film this measles video. I have so much I still need to do tonight.

PARKER

Look, Eloise, I'm really glad you're alive. And I'd love to, like, go out to dinner with you or to the movies or something. But this feels -

*(Eloise begins stalking toward Parker, who instinctively starts moving away.)*

What are you doing?

*Hazel grabs Eloise by the arm, stopping her.*

HAZEL

What are you doing?

ELOISE

I'm gonna kiss him.

HAZEL

He doesn't want to be kissed.

ELOISE

Yes he does.

HAZEL

He said he doesn't.

ELOISE

But he does.

AVA

Let her go, Hazel. It's just a kiss. Take one for the team, Parker.

HAZEL

What team?

AVA

Me. I'm the team.

PARKER

I really don't -

ELOISE

Nothing's changed.

PARKER

Everything's changed.

ELOISE

The only thing that's changed is that I died and came back to life.

PARKER

That's a pretty big change.

ELOISE

Which we should celebrate by kissing.

HAZEL

Look, I think what Parker's saying is he'd like to move a little bit slower than this and have your first kiss not be in the basement of a funeral home.

AVA

Hazel, stop cock blocking.

HAZEL

I'm not -

AVA

Vagina blocking. Whatever. Just let Eloise kiss him.

HAZEL

But he doesn't -

AVA

Do you want everyone to know about the tampon?

HAZEL

Stop bringing it up! You're terrible at blackmail.

AVA (*pointing at Parker*)

Help me hold him down so she can kiss him.

PARKER

/

HAZEL

What?!

Oh, I don't feel comfortable with that.

ELOISE

Look, Hazel, thanks for bringing me back to life, but you can bow out now.

AVA

Yeah, why don't you go?

HAZEL  
...You want me to go?

AVA  
Just leave.

HAZEL  
But then who's going to -

AVA  
Parker can film it. You're right. No one has to know there was a boy involved.

ELOISE  
He's not a man anymore?

AVA  
He was never a man. *(To Hazel:)* You've been saying you want to go home basically since we got here.

HAZEL  
Yeah, but -

AVA  
So go. You get what you want, and I get this done faster without you in the way.

HAZEL  
I just - It feels like -

AVA  
Are you really on the debate team? Because you're terrible at expressing your thoughts.

HAZEL  
Some of us choose our extracurriculars based on what will make us more well-rounded people instead of what we already enjoy.

AVA  
Nerd.

ELOISE *(beaming at Parker)*  
And some join because I'm on the team.

AVA (to Hazel)

Go home.

*Hazel is unsure what to do. She glances at Parker, who shoots her a pleading look. But what does she owe him, really? He'll probably be fine. She slowly moves to gather up her backpack.*

PARKER

Hazel.

HAZEL (without meeting his eye)

Good to see you, Parker.

PARKER

Don't.

HAZEL

See you guys tomorrow.

PARKER

Don't!

*Hazel exits through the door leading up into the funeral parlor. Parker, trapped and alone, looks with wide-eyed terror at Ava and Eloise.*

AVA

We don't need her. I can hold him by myself. Cheerleading is basically gymnastics. I'm, like, all muscle. And he's on the debate team.

ELOISE

Model UN, too.

AVA

Model UN? Oh, I've definitely got this. Come here, Parker.

*Ava moves toward Parker, who tries to scramble away without being caught by Eloise, who begins to try to herd him toward Ava. This continues under the*

*following dialogue (bonus points if Ava incorporates some gymnastic-y cheerleading moves), with Parker getting more and more frantic, until he is finally caught:*

PARKER

Leave me alone! I want to go!

AVA

The sooner we get this over with, the sooner you can leave.

ELOISE

You're gonna like it, just relax.

AVA

Girl, you sound crazy. This is gonna be his villain origin story.

ELOISE

No it's not.

AVA

It one hundred percent is.

ELOISE

Then why are you helping?

AVA

For my future! What do I care if you traumatize him into becoming a monster? After we graduate next year, I'll never see him again. You think I'm coming back to Hartford? Please.

*(She catches Parker.)*

Gotcha!

PARKER *(struggling against her)*

Let me go!

AVA *(to Eloise)*

Kiss him.

PARKER *(as Eloise stalks toward him)*

Eloise, you're - you're not being yourself.

ELOISE

I'm being the truest version of myself.

AVA

Was all this really hiding inside you when you were alive?

ELOISE

/

PARKER

Yes.

No!

*Eloise runs her hand through Parker's hair as she leans down to kiss him while he tries to lean away. Eloise startles when Hazel bursts back into the basement.*

HAZEL

I can't do this. I can't just walk away while you - *(She shoves Eloise back.)* Get away from him.

ELOISE

What the fuck, Hazel?!

AVA

What are you doing?!

ELOISE

This doesn't concern you!

HAZEL

You're making me an accessory to assault!

ELOISE

It's not assault when he likes you!

AVA

I mean, it can still be assault - but this is for science, so that makes it okay.

*Eloise lets out a guttural sound of frustration and stomps into the refrigeration room.*

HAZEL

I can't leave and pretend this isn't happening. It makes me feel gross.

AVA

Don't you want people to start vaccinating their kids again?

HAZEL

Yeah, but -

AVA

Then let Eloise kiss him.

HAZEL

She can't just -

*Eloise reemerges from the refrigeration room, holding a crowbar menacingly.*

AVA

/

HAZEL

/

PARKER

Holy fuck!

What are you doing?

*(incoherent whimpers)*

HAZEL

Is that a crowbar?

ELOISE

Hell yeah it is.

HAZEL

Why was there a crowbar in there?!

ELOISE *(with a shrug)*

Sometimes funeral directors need a crowbar.

HAZEL

When? What times?

ELOISE

These times.

HAZEL

These are not times anyone could have foreseen!

*Ava releases Parker so she can move away from this new danger.*

AVA

Whoa, whoa. Hey. Girl. We're on the same side.

ELOISE

You want to exploit me.

AVA

No. *(Off Eloise's look:)* Barely. I'm also trying to help you get what you want.

ELOISE

Then why'd you let go of him?

AVA

To defend myself. You're coming at us with a crowbar!

ELOISE

I'm coming at Hazel with a crowbar.

HAZEL

Why?!

ELOISE

You're trying to prevent me from taking what I want! 'Justice delayed is justice denied.'

HAZEL

Trying to stop you from kissing a boy without his consent is not delaying justice.

ELOISE

It's delaying the inevitable!

HAZEL

Please, can we just all go upstairs?

*(Eloise takes a swing at Hazel, who jumps back.)*

Whoa! *(to Ava:)* Look what you've done!

AVA

What I've done?! You're the one who brought her back to life!

HAZEL

I didn't!

AVA

You did!

HAZEL

Well you're the one who blackmailed me into it!

AVA

You still could have said no!

HAZEL

You would have told everyone about the tampon!

AVA

You would have gotten over it!

HAZEL

I would have thought about it on my deathbed!

*(She notices how menacingly close Eloise has gotten to Parker.)*

Oh my god! Parker! Defend yourself!

PARKER

With what?

HAZEL

Hold your keys like a weapon, how your mom taught you!

PARKER

My mom didn't teach me how to do that!

AVA

That lesson's just for daughters!

PARKER *(frantically pulling out his keys)*

How do I hold my keys like a weapon?

*He holds one key like a tiny sword and tries to jab it at Eloise.*

ELOISE

You are adorable.

AVA

Not like that!

HAZEL

Lace them through your fingers so you look like Wolverine!

AVA

He's trying to stab her with a key like it's a little sword from a cocktail.

*As Parker tries desperately to lace his keys through his fingers while his hands are shaking, Eloise easily plucks the keys out of his hand and tosses them away.*

HAZEL

Oh.

AVA

Well, there goes that.

*Hazel makes a move to help Parker, and Eloise swings at her with the crowbar. Eloise begins pursuing Hazel, who runs and dodges around the room.*

ELOISE (*punctuating each word with a swing:*)

Stop! Meddling! In! My! Love life!

*Ava picks The Egyptian Book of the Dead up from where Hazel dropped it when she ran out of the refrigeration room at the beginning of the play. Over the following dialogue, Parker begins trying without much success to crawl unobserved to where his keys were tossed, so he can grab them and get out.*

AVA

Hazel, this situation seems to have devolved into something other than I anticipated. I think it might be time to implement my contingency plan.

HAZEL (*dodging*)

You have a contingency plan?

AVA

Of course I do. The moral of, like, fifty percent of horror movies is 'Don't raise the dead,' as you mentioned. And I knew that because, as I mentioned, I'm very smart.

HAZEL (*dodging*)

Okay.

AVA

I think it's time to kill Eloise.

ELOISE (*stopping her attack*)

Excuse me?!

AVA

No offense, Eloise, but if the girl I raised from the dead kills the witch who brought her back, that doesn't help my Ivy League prospects.

ELOISE

But murdering me does?

AVA

You're already dead.

ELOISE

I was already dead, but now I'm alive again.

AVA

Nobody knows that but the four of us.

*Eloise goes very still. It's the calm before the explosion.*

ELOISE

I see.

AVA

Hazel, I'll hold her down. I've dog-eared the page in the Egyptian Book of the Dead for you.

HAZEL

You want me to murder her?

AVA

I just want you to put her back the way we found her.

HAZEL

You want me to murder her.

AVA

She's trying to murder you.

HAZEL

So I should murder her first?

AVA

Yes. Preemptively murdering others is, like, the bedrock of American society. Be a patriot.

*(Eloise stalks toward Ava, swinging her crowbar. Ava scoots away.)*

Quick, Hazel! The book!

HAZEL

I'm not a killer!

AVA

All you want to do is whine about what you're not: 'I'm not a killer,' 'I'm not a witch' - You contain multitudes, Hazel! Multitudes. And one of those tudes is a witch who kills to save her own life and the life of her friend.

HAZEL

We're not friends.

AVA

But we have a certain rapport.

HAZEL

You're blackmailing me. Poorly.

AVA

Don't think I won't tell everyone all about that tampon if you don't kill Eloise.

ELOISE

Don't worry, Hazel. Dead girls can't snitch about tampons.

AVA

Open to the dog-eared page! Do you want to die in this basement?! Next to Parker Harrington?!

ELOISE

Oh, I'm not gonna kill him. Well, maybe with kisses. But it would be accidental.

*Ava does an elaborate cheerleading/gymnastic maneuver which ends with her disarming Eloise and pinning her arms at her sides.*

AVA

Hell yeah! That's why I'm cheer captain, bitch!

ELOISE

Let me go!

AVA

Open to the dog-eared page, Hazel! It's her or us!

HAZEL

I -

AVA

You know why you're refusing to do it? Because despite all your protestations, deep down you know you really are a witch.

HAZEL

You're wrong! I'm not a -

*Eloise lurches free of Ava, grabs the crowbar, and swings for Hazel. In the same split second, Ava tackles her, pinning her to the ground, while Hazel shrieks, lunges for the Egyptian Book of the Dead, and opens to the dog-eared page.*

HAZEL *(reading from the book while putting one hand on Eloise)*

To me belong all men, I have given everything to myself.

ELOISE

Parker, help me!

AVA *(to Parker)*

Don't you dare!

HAZEL *(reading)*

I have gone in as a falcon, I have come out as a phoenix -

ELOISE

She's trying to kill me!

AVA

Stay where you are!

HAZEL (*reading*)

- the god who worships Ra. Prepare a path for me -

*Eloise flings Ava off of her. She stands and grabs the crowbar, then turns on Ava and Hazel.*

ELOISE

You tried to kill me!

HAZEL

/

AVA

No, I -

Us? No.

ELOISE

And Parker, you didn't try to stop them.

PARKER

I'm just -

ELOISE

It's okay, I forgive you. Our feelings for each other are intense, and intensity can be scary.

PARKER

...Yeah.

ELOISE

But I don't forgive Hazel and Ava.

HAZEL

/

AVA

We didn't mean -

Girl, I'm on your side!

ELOISE (*to Ava and Hazel*)

I'm gonna deal with you in a second. But first things first.

*Eloise strides over to Parker, who has his keys in hand at last and is trying to crawl, unnoticed, to the door to the stairs.*

ELOISE *(to Parker)*

You have the cutest little butt.

*(She kicks him in the side so he falls over onto his back.)*

Where do you think you're going, though? We have unfinished business.

*Eloise sits on him to trap him and gives him a long, nonconsensual kiss. When she's finished, she stares at him, very pleased with herself. Slowly, her expression changes to one of confusion, and then concern.*

ELOISE

Did you eat gelatin?

PARKER

...I -

ELOISE

Did you eat gelatin before coming here?

PARKER

N-no. I mean, I don't - I keep gummy worms in my car, to snack on while I deliver -

ELOISE

Did you eat gummy worms before coming here?

PARKER

I - Yeah. It's super late when I get home for dinner, so -

ELOISE

Gummy worms contain gelatin, Parker!

PARKER

They do?

ELOISE

Oh my god.

*(She gets off of him and turns toward Ava and Hazel, clawing at her neck.)*

Do something. *(Off their wide-eyed stares:)* Help me! Do something!

*At a loss, Hazel opens and begins frantically paging through The Egyptian Book of the Dead. Eloise rips it from her hands and tosses it aside.*

ELOISE *(her voice getting more wheezy)*

Not that! That's not gonna do anything! Do something with your witch-magic.

HAZEL

I don't have any -

ELOISE *(putting Hazel's hands on her own throat)*

Heal me. Heal me. I want to live. I want to live a long life.

HAZEL

I don't know how.

ELOISE *(getting harder to talk)*

Channel your great-great-great-whatever grandmother!

HAZEL

She wasn't a -

ELOISE

If you don't heal me, I will haunt you forever, you will never know a moment's peace, do you hear me? Do you hear me?

HAZEL

I hear you, but that doesn't mean I'm able to save you!

ELOISE *(struggling to get the words out of her closing throat:)*

You suck... so bad.

*Eloise dies. Hazel, Ava, and Parker (who is still on the floor) stare at her for a long moment. Then Ava slowly turns toward Parker.*

AVA

Parker. You killed her.

PARKER

What?

AVA  
You killed her.

PARKER  
No.

AVA  
You did.

PARKER  
I didn't mean to.

AVA  
But you did.

PARKER  
Well, you tried to. You two held her down and tried to do Ancient Egyptian witch-magic on her.

HAZEL  
Well you didn't try to stop us! And, I mean, she was attacking us! She would've killed us!

AVA  
Listen. We don't need to get bogged down in the minutiae of who tried to kill Eloise and who succeeded in killing Eloise.

HAZEL  
Parker succeeded.

PARKER  
Accidentally!

AVA  
What's important is that Eloise is dead now. And she was also dead an hour ago, and no one needs to know about this time in between, where she was a living horndog of a girl. It never happened. Parker. I owe you pizza money. And I actually have cash today, so here - *(She rummages through her bag and pulls out a twenty.)* Here you go. Pizza plus tip. You're free to leave. Please go. Right now. And we'll never speak of this again.

PARKER

What are you gonna do with her?

AVA

Put her back the way we found her. You shouldn't be here for that. It's inappropriate. They store the bodies naked. Please respect her body.

HAZEL

Even though she didn't respect yours.

AVA

She did though. She totally did. Except for a weird blip of time in this basement, which we've all already forgotten about.

*A beat. They all stare at each other.*

AVA

Go.

*Parker slowly turns to go, but stops at the door, having thought of something:*

PARKER *(to Hazel)*

Angel's house party, where the dog pulled a used tampon out of the trash and ran around the house shredding it... that was your tampon?

HAZEL

No.

PARKER

It was, though, wasn't it?

HAZEL

No.

AVA

Is the boy who killed Eloise Langley saying something?

*(A beat, and then Parker slowly shakes his head.)*

That's what I thought.

*Both girls stare daggers at Parker until he turns and exits through the door*

*leading upstairs.*

HAZEL

Thank you.

AVA

Blackmail's becoming like second nature to me. Maybe I'll be able to use my skills to take down greedy insurance companies when I'm a hot doctor.

*(She moves toward Eloise's body.)*

I'll grab under her arms, you grab her legs.

HAZEL

I'm sorry it didn't work out. It was an insane plan, but a good idea.

AVA

Yeah... I just didn't realize she was gonna come back so weird.

HAZEL

I mean, they always do in the movies.

AVA

Yeah, but that's not real life.

*(A slight beat as Hazel stares down at Eloise's body.)*

...You know, there are groups you can join.

HAZEL

For trauma therapy?

AVA

No. I mean, yeah I'm sure there are, but I meant groups that can help you hone your witch skills.

HAZEL

Oh.

AVA

If you want to get more in touch with that side of yourself.

HAZEL

I don't know. Maybe. *(She looks down at Eloise.)* I tried to kill her.

AVA

She was coming at you with a crowbar.

HAZEL

Still.

AVA

I won't tell anyone.

HAZEL

Only because you also tried to kill her.

AVA

So you can trust me not to snitch. Besides, I was just trying to save kids from the measles.

HAZEL

...What is wrong with us?

AVA

Nothing. We're just a do-gooder and a white witch resetting a dead body.

*(Hazel gives her a dubious look.)*

But we should wipe this room down before we leave, so there are no fingerprints. Just in case.

HAZEL

Thank you, junior detective.

*They pick Eloise up. Ava pushes her back against the door to the refrigeration room and begins walking in backward.*

AVA

I'll have to find another way to increase American vaccination rates.

HAZEL

I'm sure you'll think of something.

AVA

Girl, you know I will. I'm very smart.

*The door shuts behind Hazel as they carry Eloise back to her slab.*  
*END OF PLAY*