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Hide and Shriek: Short Film Script

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FADE IN

EXT. OLD PLANTATION HOUSE - NIGHT

A large old plantation house on a hill. A minivan in the driveway. A steep white staircase leads to closed door.

INT. PLANTATION HOUSE - ENTRY WAY

It's a mansion. High ceiling, a chandelier, art on the walls, a spiral staircase. Slow southern music plays.

JOHN (45) and MARGE (42) dance to the music. Laughing. Intimate.

POV - FROM UNDER THE TABLE

We hear TREMBLING BREATHING. Now we see just the couple's feet as they dance.

Suddenly...

SMASH TO:

BLACK

PIERCING SCREAMS, CRASHES, and high-pitched SHRIEKING. The southern song sputters out and the BREATHING INTENSIFIES.

SLOWLY...

The lights FLICKER back on, the house TREMBLES. The man and woman scramble for the front door. They EXIT, the door SLAMMING CLOSED behind them.

SILENCE. Hitched Breaths.

FADE TO:

MOMENTS LATER

A GHOST emerges from the floor -- translucent and pale as if from a black and white movie.

Ghost wears a modern housekeeping uniform. Seven bleeding stab wounds, BRIGHT RED.

Ghost hovers toward the table in the entryway. Their feet do not touch the ground.

GHOST
They forgot their keys.

Ghost turns -- REVEAL:

A SKELETON in a tattered business casual outfit, tied together to keep it from slipping off. Dirty, caked in dried mud.

SKELETON
You mean these keys?

Skeleton JINGLES the keys and CLICKS the deadbolt into place.

GHOST
Just because you stole them, doesn't mean they won't be back for them.

SKELETON
Then you'll just scare them out again. And again, and again, and again.

GHOST
And what will you do? Steal their shoes next? You could do some good with shoes. You'd track in less mud for a start.

Ghost gestures to Skeleton's feet. They are caked in mud.

SKELETON
Oh please, it's not like you need to clean anymore. You're dead. You'd think that implies an early retirement.

GHOST
I'd actually be able to enjoy my retirement if you left me alone.

SKELETON
It's not like I can just leave! We both live here-

Ghost shoots Skeleton a look.

-died here, whatever-

GHOST
I died here. You died outside.

SKELETON

Yeah, and you saw that, did you?
Watched me take my last breath?

GHOST

No, actually, I was a little busy
dying myself-

A vase SHATTERS. They both startle and turn towards it.

SKELETON

Very funny. Trying to haunt me out
too?

GHOST

That wasn't me.

They approach the vase together. Nothing is there but
shattered glass.

They creep down--

THE HALLWAY

--pass by the SITTING ROOM and approach a bedroom door...

INT. CHILD'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Graphic novels and books are scattered around the room. Three
HEADLESS BARBIE DOLLS are stuffed in an open closet. A GLASS
DOLL WITH WIDE EYES appears to be in time out.

Skeleton lifts the sheets and peers under the bed. A shadow
under the bed shifts and DARTS out of the room.

Skeleton SLAMS their head on the bed frame in surprise. Ghost
flashes out of sight-- now TRANSPARENT.

SKELETON

Freaking-! What was that? I thought we
were the only ones in here!

Ghost slowly becomes VISIBLE.

GHOST

Another monster?

SKELETON

No, it couldn't be. No one's died here
beside us... right?

GHOST

It looked like a monster.

SKELETON

Maybe it's an animal. Like a raccoon.
Or a... baby barracuda. Or something.

Ghost squints at them. A barracuda is a fish.

GHOST

I doubt that, but let's hope it is
animal. Easier for me, if it is.

SKELETON

If it is, you can't kill it!

GHOST

I might.

Skeleton glares at Ghost. Suddenly, a CRASH coming from the
kitchen--

Skeleton and Ghost peer out the doorway. We follow them--

DOWN THE HALLWAY and past the STAIRWELL. They peek around the
corner into the--

KITCHEN

--where they see spilled Flaming Hot Cheetos, but NO MONSTER.

They follow the Cheetos trail into the--

SITTING ROOM

The furniture is as old and dusty as the house.

IRIE (10) huddled in a PINK FUZZY BLANKET sits on the couch.
Surrounded by Flaming Hot Cheetos.

She reads a graphic novel and pretends not to notice Ghost
and Skeleton. Skeleton and Ghost hide in the corner.

SKELETON

A monster, huh?

GHOST

It's not a barracuda either. (a beat)
We need to get rid of it.

SKELETON
(hopeful)

We?

GHOST
Me. I need to get rid of it. I let you help with the opossum and now it lives in the attic.

SKELETON
It's not bothering anybody, and this is different! The opossum was cute.

GHOST
Opossums are hideous.

SKELETON
It was a baby!

GHOST
So's she.

SKELETON
I know you've been dead for a couple of years but she's clearly, like, six.

GHOST
She's leaving, that's what she is.
Cute or not.

Skeleton grins. It's the closet thing to an invitation they're going to get.

The haunting begins.

--Ghost TURNS OFF THE LIGHTS. Irie nonchalantly takes out a flashlight. Continues reading.

--Ghost RATTLES A LAMP on the side table. Irie doesn't react.

--Ghost SHRIEKS. Irie puts in ear buds.

SKELETON
Terrifying. Okay, my turn.

--Skeleton DETACHES THEIR HAND. It crawls across the floor like a spider. Irie looks up, startled.

The hand crawls under the couch and tickles Irie's foot. Irie

reaches under the couch and pulls the hand out. No fear!

Skeleton's grin falls flat. The hand goes limp.

Irie inspects the hand, lifting the fingers. Skeleton closes their fingers in resistance. Irie gasps in DELIGHT.

She pries the fingers open, and the hand grabs at her. She giggles. Holds out her hand for Skeleton to shake.

IRIE

I'm Irie. Nice to meet you, skeleton hand.

They shake hands.

Ghost looks between them in shock. They SLAM a closet door open and shut in frustration.

Irie looks up and Ghost DISAPPEARS, leaving Skeleton alone.

SKELETON

Er... boo?

Irie GASPS and rushes up to them. She grabs their other hand. Skeleton stares at her in shock.

IRIE

This is the coolest thing I've ever seen.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Irie leads Skeleton to her room. She looks at her book.

IRIE

-I'm almost finished with it too! I have the next volume stashed under the floor boards so we have to pry it open-

Skeleton sees DOZEN OF BEAR TRAPS on the floor and Ghost. The culprit.

SKELETON

Hey! What-!

Ghost puts a trap down near the bedroom door and MELTS into the floor.

SKELETON

Aaand they're gone. (mutters) Bear traps, of course it's bear traps.

Irie, eyes glued to her book, keeps walking. Skeleton SNATCHES Irie up before she can step on a trap.

Skeleton steps on a bear trap and it SNAPS around their ankle. They look down surprised, but not hurt.

Parts of the trap teeth are EMBEDDED in the bone. Skeleton scowls and tries to shake the trap off to no avail.

IRIE

Oh, my dad says you gotta be careful about bear traps.

SKELETON

(mutters)
Don't I know it.

Skeleton tip toes around the traps, holding Irie by her armpits.

CUT TO

INT. IRIE'S ROOM - LATER

Irie and Skeleton are under her bed reading her new graphic novel. A floor board has been PRIED open. Skeleton is invested in the book.

They look up and notice the wooden legs of the bed are slowly being sawed away with a floating saw.

The bed CREAKS, and Skeleton scrambles to get out. Skeleton pushes Irie out. The legs break, and the bed SQUASHES Skeleton.

CUT TO

INT. STAIRWELL - LATER

Irie leads Skeleton up the spiraling stairs. She holds their DETACHED HAND in the other. Skeleton tries to smile, but glances around PARANOID.

IRIE

They'll never find us in the attic-
Oh!

Irie rushes down the stairs. Ghost's hand PHASES through the stairs and places a ROLLING PIN in front of Irie.

IRIE

I forgot my flashlight!

Skeleton PANICS and YANKS Irie backwards. Irie stumbles and falls onto the upper step UNHARMED.

Skeleton SLIPS on the rolling pin and FALLS DOWN THE STAIRS. Their bones SCATTER INTO PIECES. Skeleton scowls.

CUT TO

INT. ENTRY WAY - LATER

Irie and Skeleton put the last bone into place. Skeleton is REASSEMBLED. Suddenly--

They hear a CRACK and look up. Ghost unscrews the CHANDELIER from the ceiling. It comes CRASHING DOWN.

Skeleton PUSHES Irie out of the way but gets PINNED. They lie MOTIONLESS. A beat later, Skeleton looks up, AGGRAVATED.

SKELETON

Forget scaring! You're trying to kill her!

Ghost is TRANSPARENT. Their voice ECHOES around the house. Irie is out of sight.

GHOST

I thought that was obvious.

SKELETON

You do realize that if you kill her, she could just come back and haunt this place too, right?

GHOST

Not if you take her off the property. If her last breath is on the street-

SKELETON

You can't- look, she's not doing anything. She's harmless. All she does is eat spicy Cheetos and read bad graphic novels. She's not like them-

Ghost EMERGES from the wall, VISIBLE AND ANGRY.

GHOST
Not *like* them? (scoffs) 'Cute' doesn't mean 'innocent'.

SKELETON
She didn't mean-

GHOST
You're defending her? I was *murdered*-

SKELETON
Yeah, and I was hunted like an animal!

GHOST
At least I wasn't the cause of someone else's death!

SKELETON
I-! I had no control over that-!

GHOST
Well you do now!

SKELETON
It's not plausible, alright? There's way too much risk involved, we have no way of knowing if I'll get to the street in time and-

GHOST
THEN WHAT ARE YOU GOOD FOR?

Skeleton looks up at Ghost, taken aback.

GHOST
You can't haunt, you can't clean. You track mud in the house and let animals infest the attic. You refuse to kill anything larger than a fly and you refuse to DIE-!

Ghost stops. A beat of silence.

SKELETON
(quietly)
And if you kill her, you'll just get another me.

GHOST
...She has to go. I won't let her stay.

Ghost turns away. Skeleton watches them go, PINNED, HELPLESS.

INT. THE ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

Ghost floats into the attic. A small crawl space with a circular window looking out to the driveway. An OPOSSUM lying in the corner, DEAD OR ACTING IT.

Irie is curled up next to the window, holding Skeleton's DETACHED HAND.

IRIE

I'm not scared of you, you know.

GHOST

Doesn't matter. You'll be leaving, one way or another.

IRIE

(laughs)

You sound like my Dad.

Ghost looks horrified, compared to their WORST NIGHTMARE.

IRIE

(mocking 'dad' voice)

"You'll help us one way or another, Irie. You'll do it whether you like it or not, Irie."

Ghost hovers, unsure. A beat of silence.

IRIE

Why do you hate them?

GHOST

Because they murdered me.

IRIE

Not *them*. I know why you hate them. I mean, why do you hate Skeleton? They're nice.

GHOST

They're not supposed to be. They're supposed to scare you.

IRIE

I didn't know skeletons were supposed to do anything. You have to be spooky *and* mean? That's like when mom said

I'm supposed to be scary and pretty,
but I don't want to be either of those
things.

GHOST
(exasperated)
Why won't you just leave?

IRIE
'Cause you're not scary.

GHOST
I tried to kill you.

IRIE
There's worse you can do.

CUT TO

INT. ENTRANCE - SUNRISE

Skeleton struggles under chandelier. They hear the sound of
VOICES and FOOTSTEPS outside the door.

JOHN
Drat, the keys! I forgot them in the
house.

MARGE
Check under the mat.

SKELETON
(horrified)
The spare.

The lock CLICKS. The couple walks inside. They are the couple
from the beginning, JOHN and MARGE.

Skeleton drops, pretending to be LIFELESS.

JOHN
What a mess.

MARGE
Oh, John! Would you look at that?

They approach Skeleton. Dress shoes nudge the motionless
Skeleton. Marge leans down and GRIPS their chin.

Looks like someone's been playing in
the garden. It must be that rent

collector we buried years ago. Always so demanding. What was their name?

JOHN

Can't remember. All I can say about 'em is that their skin came off almost as nice as their clothes did.

MARGE

Oh, stop it you.

John chuckles. She slaps his shoulder playfully. Marge looks at the bear trap on Skeleton's foot and sighs.

MARGE

You know, we should have let Irie play with them back then. It looks like she had such a fun time here.

JOHN

We let her have something else, didn't we? A peeper, right?

MARGE

Oh, it was that housekeeper! So quiet. Never where they should be.

JOHN

Hm. Can't really remember 'em.

MARGE

It was Irie's first! You can't forget a first, John.

JOHN

There's been so many housekeepers, Marge.

INT. THE ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

The DETACHED SKELETON HAND in Irie's hand gestures wildly. They hear footsteps. The ladder to the attic folds down.

MARGE

Irie, are you in there, love?

JOHN

What did I tell her about going in the attic? (calls) Irie!

Irie looks TERRIFIED. Her eyes plead to Ghost for help. The

latch door pops open, and John gets into the crawl space.
Ghost DISAPPEARS, leaving Irie alone.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTRY WAY - CONTINUOUS

Ghost hiding under the table trembling TERRIFIED -- flickering in and out of visibility. They watch John drag Irie towards the door.

IRIE
No! I don't want to go!

John shakes Irie's arm. She cries out, tugging against him.

JOHN
(shaking Irie)
We didn't come all this way just for you to stay here. Stop being ridiculous.

MARGE
We need you, sweetie. It wouldn't be the same without you.

Marge pets Irie's face. John drags her towards the door.

IRIE
I don't want to go! I won't!

JOHN
Well, you're leaving whether you like it or not, Irie.

INT. ENTRY WAY - CONTINUOUS

Skeleton jumps out with a battle cry and attacks John with a ROLLING PIN.

Marge SCREAMS and pushes Irie in front of her. Irie tries to help Skeleton, but Marge's grip is too tight.

John takes out his KNIFE. Skeleton falters in fear, and we--

FLASH TO:

A MEMORY

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

We see Ghost ALIVE. They hold a hand vacuum and stare through a doorway in horror.

They see the back of JOHN, his KNIFE, and a person on a table-- the SKELETON -- with only their bare feet visible.

There are bear traps on the wall, one is on the table, BLOODIED with bits of flesh. Their feet are being SKINNED.

MARGE

(from behind)

Oh, Did you want to join the fun?

CUT TO:

PRESENT

INT. ENTRY WAY - SUNRISE

Skeleton FALTERS. John PINS them to the floor with the knife through their ribs.

JOHN

I've never killed a skeleton before,
but I think it will be just as fun as
the first time, don't you think?

Ghost SNAPS. They rise from under the table FULL OF RAGE.

A tornado of objects whirl through the air. Windows crack and shards fly. John and Marge stare in horror.

Irie RIPS away from Marge and grabs a glass shard.

IRIE

I won't let you hurt anyone else any
more!

Irie STABS Marge's stomach. John sees her fall to the ground.

JOHN

MARGE! NO!

John's face twists with rage. He starts towards Irie.

JOHN

(murderous)

Irie...

Skeleton pries the knife out of the floor and STABS John in the back. John and Marge SLUMP OVER, reaching for each other.

CUT TO:

EXT. DRIVE WAY - CONTINUOUS

A minivan rolls down the long drive way backwards. Marge and John are buckled in, nearly dead.

The car rolls down the steep driveway into the street and SMASHES into a tree.

CUT TO:

INT. DOORWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ghost and Skeleton stand next to Irie in the doorway. They are all covered in blood. Irie looks at the empty drive way.

SKELETON

I guess I did have enough time to get to the street. Not so useless after all, huh?

GHOST

(smiles)
No. I guess not.

IRIE

Well, if you kill me, it's gotta be in the attic. I probably deserve it anyway.

Ghost blinks at Irie. Skeleton gives her a sad look.

SKELETON

We're not going to kill you, Irie.

GHOST

Maybe.

Skeleton glares at Ghost. Ghost just smiles. They walk inside together and shut the door.

If you keep spilling your Cheetos on the floor, I might.

Irie laughs.

FADE OUT

