

SAMIRA: We used to make a game of it, come up with random objects, we had a lot of fun

EVE: I love it!

SAMIRA: Your dad was so good, so quick

EVE: So a jar, a stick and a knife?

DAVID: Yeah like the jar might mean captivity or something you put away, and the stick might

—

EVE: —Prop you up!

SAMIRA: Exactly

DAVID: It takes a while to—

(EVE picks up three items from the table.)

EVE: —A match, a cork and a spoon!

DAVID: Or some people get it right away

SAMIRA: That was good. A match, a cork...and...

EVE: A spoon

SAMIRA: Tough one

DAVID: Well done, chip off the old block

EVE: The match is easy, it creates fire or destruction

SAMIRA: Robert? *(As in "ROBERT play along")*

ROBERT: Okay...all right...provides light

DAVID: Romance! Candles

SAMIRA: Can even cauterize a wound and save a life

EVE: I like the idea of illumination, but I like the drama of destruction

DAVID: The cork?

SAMIRA: Love?

DAVID: Love? How love?

SAMIRA: You always open champagne to celebrate something that involves love...a wedding, baby...naming a yacht

DAVID: True

EVE: Or something that makes people nervous

DAVID: Nervous?

EVE: I hate when someone is opening a bottle of champagne

ALL: Me too/Yeah/True

EVE: It's like...a gun

DAVID: A gun. Not bad. The spoon?

SAMIRA: Eating

DAVID: Food, health

SAMIRA: Family

EVE: But it's one spoon. Someone sitting alone eating

ROBERT: Isolation

EVE: Oh I like that

(EVE stands, she is in deep thought.)

EVE: A lonely couple

DAVID: Couple?

EVE: Two people make a match, does it not?

DAVID: It does

EVE: Has to take place in a small town right? A small town is a great backdrop for a ghost story

DAVID: Which is why I—

EVE: —You know why?

ROBERT: Why?

EVE: Because you can't get away with anything in a small town. Someone is always watching and people always talk. That's the weird thing, don't you think? People want to be invisible, but if you're *too* invisible, you can go crazy

DAVID: (*Jumps in quickly*) True!

EVE: So picture a typical small town with a water tower—

SAMIRA: —With the name of the town written on it

EVE: (*Paints the picture for the room*) Naturally, and a bandstand in the centre of town, a donut shop that the kids all hang out at. But like every small town—

ROBERT: (*Mocking*) —It has a dark history

EVE: Years ago...decades...a book keeper who dreamt of bigger things married a beautiful young woman, they bought a nice little house and started a family. The perfect family. Now everyone in town said his wife had always been a bit different...but she became even stranger after the birth of the twin boys. She became less social and rarely went outside. As time passed, rumours began to spread that she would sit down in the basement, but not just sit in the basement...(*EVE looks around the room and spots a wooden chair in the corner, gets it and places it in the middle of the room*) She would sit on a little wooden chair...behind the furnace. She would just sit and stare. Her husband had told friends she would sometimes get up from the dinner table in the middle of a meal to go to the basement and sit in the chair and stare. (*Beat*) He sometimes swore he could hear her whispering to someone. When he tried to approach her, the whispering would stop and she would slowly turn and look at him (*Beat*) waiting for him to leave. The husband tried everything but she slowly began to talk less to him and to spend more time in the chair behind the furnace

(*Pause.*)

One Christmas Eve, the husband came home early from work. He carried wrapped parcels under each arm and in a bag held the Christmas turkey. As he took off his coat and scarf he felt a stillness in the house he had not felt in a long time...since before the twins were born. He stood motionless, he just stood and listened. He didn't even hear the whispers. He slowly made his way downstairs, and as he walked across the basement, his gaze focused on the old furnace; something caught his eye, as something seemed out of place at the far end of the room, where the ceiling was highest. The little chair. He couldn't figure out why the little chair was on its side, hiding in the shadows...and then he realized what the shadows were. (*EVE recoils in horror as she points to the ceiling*) Three things hanging, two of which were much, much smaller (*EVE's face turns from horror to a smile as she looks at the group, who are all stone faced.*)

ROBERT: (*dryly*) Well this is fun

EVE: Do you like the story?

ROBERT: Well it's dark...and very detailed...almost a little—

EVE: —Should I continue?

SAMIRA: I'm good to go

EVE: Robert?

ROBERT: Hm?

EVE: Would you like me to finish the story?

ROBERT: Well I guess we are still missing the spoon and the cork, right?

DAVID: And a ghost!

ROBERT: Yeah the ghost

SAMIRA: Bring on the ghost!

(ROBERT gets a cheese plate and brings it to the table)

EVE: The house sat empty for years, no one wanted to move in after what had happened in the basement. Winter became summer and winter again... Years passed and the house just sat and slowly fell apart. The windows were broken by rocks and the paint peeled leaving patches of grey. Up the road not far from the house, at the back of the old church cemetery, the grave marker disappeared under a thick tangle of weeds and wild flowers. The family was no more than a memory now, but their story was told every Hallowe'en by laughing kids trying to break the last panes of glass on the upper windows

SAMIRA: What happened to the father?

EVE: *(She mimes the actions)* After the police left he sat down at the kitchen table and had a bowl of his favourite soup. He just sat there quietly eating. He finished, washed the bowl and the spoon and placed them neatly in the dish rack. He walked up the stairs, packed a few items in a bag, walked out of the front door and up the road...never once looking back. He just walked up the road and never returned

ROBERT: That sounds more like the end of a story, not the beginning

EVE: Oh no I can assure you it's not the end. You see for James, his story is just beginning

DAVID: James?

EVE: That's his name

DAVID: Ah

EVE: Years went by, James became Old Jimmy who lived in the woods, in a little cabin... isolated and alone. He became known as—

ROBERT: *(Slowly rising)* Are you...

EVE: Old Jimmy the hermit who lived past Dog Water Bog

(The phone rings. Throughout the next few lines, the phone rings in the background.)

ROBERT: *(Stunned)* Dog Water!?

EVE: Bog...yes!

ROBERT: What the fuck?!?

SAMIRA: Bob, what the hell?

(Phone rings.)

DAVID: Bob the—

ROBERT: You said Jimmy!

EVE: Yes

ROBERT: What was his last name?!

EVE/ROBERT: Knockles!!

(Phone rings.)

SAMIRA: Bob the phone!!

(ROBERT realizes and crosses to the phone, never taking his eyes off EVE.)

ROBERT: *(To EVE)* What are you fucking—

(EVE runs out of the room.)

SAMIRA: Bob what the hell?!?

(SAMIRA chases after EVE.)

DAVID: Do you want me to get—

(ROBERT grabs the phone, watching EVE. DAVID picks up the overturned chair while ROBERT talks on the phone.)

ROBERT: *(Into phone)* Hello...I...what? But...but I don't understand, you... *(ROBERT looks towards the hall)* What?...But....yeah...yes, I... WAIT, what...? *(He looks at the phone; the person has hung up)*

DAVID: Bob...is everything okay? What the hell was that about?

(Pause.)

DAVID: Bob?

ROBERT: *(Slowly, in shock)* That was Paul's daughter

DAVID: Yeah you freaked her out big time

ROBERT: On the phone

DAVID: Paul's daughter?

ROBERT: Her flight was cancelled and she's not coming, a storm...

DAVID: Paul's daughter?

ROBERT: Yes...Eve!

DAVID: *(Pause as he looks towards the washroom)* Paul's daughter is here

ROBERT: Yes I'm keenly aware of that Dave!

DAVID: *(With slight panic)* If Paul's daughter is...then who is that?

(Beat; they both think.)

ROBERT: I don't know

DAVID: What the hell is going on?

ROBERT: What do we do?

DAVID: Maybe she called from the washroom, trying to be funny or something. I mean, she is a bit weird

ROBERT: She was here when the phone rang, she was in the room!

DAVID: Do we call the police? Yeah, we have to call the police!

ROBERT: I don't know, what the hell?

DAVID: She knows us, she knows shit about us. I'm calling the cops

(DAVID moves towards the phone and starts dialling.)

ROBERT: Wait

DAVID: What?

ROBERT: *Just wait!*

DAVID: Bob, there is a person in your house pretending to be someone else

ROBERT: Just need to think for a moment

DAVID: Think about what?

ROBERT: Just...we need to wait

DAVID: What the hell do we need...*(Pause)* What the hell is going on?

(Pause.)

DAVID: Is it the story?

(ROBERT doesn't answer.)