

HIDE

Written by

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INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A circle of women in their late 30's sit around an altar, in loose fitting shawls and dresses, holding hands. They hum softly under their breath.

The room is lit dimly with candles. The altar sits at its center, laden with a deep purple cloth, and decorated with incense, pentacles, and precious stones and crystals.

Sitting on a raised pedestal, is an open leather-bound book. Laid on top of the book is a stuffed, homemade cloth doll, in the shape of a human. Its features are completely blank.

As the women hum, eyes closed, one woman, CASSIE GARRISS, 37, leans forward, breaking the circle. She places a ceramic face over the blank head. She picks up a needle and pushes a length of white thread through the needle's eye.

Cassie brings the needle down the doll's face. She stabs the needle through the doll's eye.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

DAKOTA GARRISS, 15, brunette, pale and mousy, wakes abruptly with her sheets clinging to her body with sweat. She pulls the sheet away from her, throwing it onto the ground.

She wipes the sweat from her face and twists around, flopping onto her stomach. Clutching her pillow tightly, Dakota closes her eyes.

Scratching at her arm, Dakota winces and opens her eyes. She raises her arm so she can see the long, inflamed scratches left by her nails in the dim light. The streetlamps are still lit, and the sun has only just started to rise. She drops her arm. Dakota rolls out of bed.

She wades through heaps of dirty clothes. She picks up a pair of sweatpants and sheds her shorts. She stares at herself in her vanity mirror as she pulls them on, her face glistening in the dim light. She pulls a sweatshirt over her head, covering her scratched arms.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Dakota slips out of her bedroom door in running clothes and heads down the hall and down the stairs.

Once she is off-screen, the door at the far-end of the hall opens and Cassie peeks her head out. She watches Dakota leave down the hall for a beat, and down the stairs.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Cassie ducks into the kitchen and sees her arranged lunch box untouched. She sighs, disappointed.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Dakota slings her backpack over her shoulders and sprints after the bus, which slows as the driver spots Dakota running towards it in its side mirrors.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

Dakota is now sprinting along the pedestrian sidewalk of a bridge, spanning a wide river. She has headphones on, and her chest is already soaked through with sweat.

Her breath is ragged, and comes in short gasps. After a few beats, she slows down to a jog. Something along the scaffolding of the bridge catches her eye, and she comes to a stop.

Dakota stands and stares at an aluminum sign posted by the sidewalk, printed with the line, "Life Is Worth Living. Make the Call.", beside an emergency phone line.

She considers the sign for a moment, then turns and approaches the railing, staring down at the dizzying drop.

COACH (O.S.)
Keep up the pace!

Dakota looks back down the walking path. A group of other high school students on the cross-country team are jogging at a steady pace behind her, dressed similarly. At the back of their group the COACH, a slight but muscular woman in her mid-thirties, jogs with her hands cupped around her mouth.

Dakota starts running again.

COACH (CONT'D)
C'mon, I wanna see you keeping pace
with Dakota!

A few groans come as response from the other students. They put on a burst of speed, catching up to Dakota. SAM MALLORY, 15, an African-American girl with short hair, wearing a black band tee and basketball shorts, comes up behind Dakota, out of breath.

SAM
(hissing)
Slow down!

TERRY SOUN, 17, a boy with long black hair wearing a bright red hoodie jogs to catch up with Dakota, smirking at her.

TERRY
You make the rest of us look bad.

DAKOTA
Sorry.

Dakota slows down. Sam and Terry jog alongside her.

SAM
We were just teasing!

TERRY
Yeah, don't stop on our account.

Terry gives Dakota a wink.

COACH
C'mon, c'mon, pick up the pace,
we're almost to the woods!

The group gives another audible groan. Dakota throws a look over at Terry as she runs, blushing.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Dakota sits in the grass by the edge of the forest path with a couple other students, all drinking water or lying down to catch their breath.

COACH
(to class)
Hit the showers before you go to
your classes, folks. You stink.

Dakota watches from a distance as Terry helps pull Sam to her feet, laughing together as they walk across the field back to the gymnasium.

COACH (CONT'D)
Good work, Garriss. You run like
you've got hell at your heels.

Dakota looks up and finds the coach looking down at her with a smile.

COACH (CONT'D)

Glad to have you on the team. You give me an excuse to push my runners.

DAKOTA

Thanks.

Dakota gets to her feet along with the rest of the students, and joins them in walking back to the gymnasium. The coach walks beside her.

COACH

How've you been adjusting to AHS?

DAKOTA

(hesitantly)

Okay.

Coach claps a hand on Dakota's shoulder.

COACH

Well, it was smart to join Cross Country. You'll meet a lot of great people here, Garriss, I guarantee it.

Dakota nods. Coach walks away. Dakota glances across the field at Sam and Terry, now walking arm and arm as they enter the gymnasium doors.

Dakota catches herself scratching her arm. She wraps her fist around her forearm, stopping herself.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Dakota stands at the center of the cafeteria, clutching her backpack as she scans the room. The cafeteria is bustling with students crammed around circular tables, joking and jovial. Their trays of cafeteria food seem to go unnoticed as they all chatter excitedly with one another.

Dakota walks forward, noticing an empty spot. As Dakota moves to slip into the seat, the two girls sitting across from her glance her way, stack their empty trays and stand to leave, muttering under their breath.

Dakota watches the girls as they walk up to another group of students, casting backwards glances at her over their shoulders. Dakota slams her bag onto the table, and drops down into her seat. Unzipping her bag, she fishes out a granola bar. She reaches into her bag again, casting her hand around its contents impatiently, and pulls out her book.

A CLOTH DOLL comes tumbling out with it, made of plush but with a gaunt, porcelain face, the same that Cassie made. Dakota stares at it incredulously.

SAM (O.S.)

Hey.

Dakota looks up, and crams the doll into the bag. Sam slides into the seat across from her with a smile.

SAM (CONT'D)

Didn't know you had this lunch period.

DAKOTA

Yeah.

SAM

You moved here last month, right?

Dakota nods.

SAM (CONT'D)

I think I've seen your house on my bus route. Do you live on Woodland? In the green house with the weird little demon statues out front.

DAKOTA

Uh. Yeah.

SAM

Pretty neat.

DAKOTA

I guess.

SAM

I've always loved shit like that. All that New Age, "witchy" kinda stuff.

DAKOTA

Um...

SAM

(laughs)
Sorry, that was kinda blunt. I'm Sam, by the way.

Sam puts out her hand, and Dakota shakes it.

DAKOTA

Dakota.

SAM

So, are you into that stuff?
Y'know, there's a cult up in Port
Hope, I heard. Real big on the
blood sacrifices and naked
rituals. Or maybe they were just a
nudist colony. I forget.

DAKOTA

No, we're not -

SAM

It's totally cool if you are. I
don't discriminate.

DAKOTA

We're not occultists. My mom's just
Wiccan.

SAM

Oh really? That's so cool!
(beat)
That's not, like... the same thing?

DAKOTA

No. Not even close.

SAM

Oh.

An older girl with dyed-pink hair, LEENA, 18, walks by,
ducking to tap Sam on the shoulder.

LEENA

Sam!

SAM

Hey!

The two embrace.

LEENA

I'm still seeing you tonight?

SAM

For sure. Oh!

Sam turns to Dakota.

SAM (CONT'D)

Dude! You should totally come.

DAKOTA

To...?

SAM

Would that be okay, Leena?

LEENA

(shrugging)

The more the merrier.

SAM

(to Dakota)

There's gonna be a party out behind the old elementary school tonight. You should come and hang, there'll be drinks.

DAKOTA

Oh. Tonight?

LEENA

(to Sam)

I gotta go out for a smoke, I'll see you later hun.

SAM

Wait, actually I'll come out and join you in a sec.

(to Dakota)

So, you coming?

DAKOTA

I, uh... maybe.

SAM

(teasing)

That's sounding more like a "no" maybe, than a "yes" maybe.

DAKOTA

Not sure my mom will swing for it.

SAM

So don't tell her.

DAKOTA

I... dunno.

SAM

Listen, it's no big deal. But if you wanna come and meet some new people, invite's open. We're meeting up at around eleven.

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

You know where the elementary
school is?

DAKOTA

Yeah, I think so.

SAM

Great. I gotta go grab a smoke.
I'll see you around?

DAKOTA

Sure.

Sam smiles at Dakota and stands, picking up her tray. Dakota watches as she walks away. When she is gone, she takes out the doll again, turning it over, confused.