

A House With a Broken Swing

A play

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Vee - (age 16) raised strangely, mysteriously even, interpret that how you wish; could probably fit in during any time period in history

Chris - (age 16) the kind of person who would name themselves; probably watches too much *BuzzFeed Unsolved*

A NOTE ON PERFORMANCE MEDIUM

This play was originally designed to completely function using features on Zoom. A completely digital performance is feasible, however, the show can be adapted for an onstage inperson performance.

VEE'S ROOM - NIGHT

VEE
(opening her computer)

...I have summer work.

Vee opens a piece of scrunched up paper and copies "Omegle" into her search bar. Checking to make sure no one is watching, in the discussion topic Vee begins to write, "teenage" but then stops herself. She backspaces, and writes "books: ghost stories, horror + romcom movies." She starts an Omegle call. Chris appears on the other end in her own room.

Hiiiiiiii!
CHRIS

Vee quickly turns her volume down.

Shh!
VEE

Oh, I get it. Sorry.
CHRIS

Um... That's alright. Uh-- I'm Vee.
VEE

Huh. So we ARE doing names. I'm Chris.
CHRIS

Hello.
VEE

Awkward beat.

So where are you calling from?
CHRIS

Oh uh-- Oregon, Portland.
VEE

CHRIS

No way. Me too.

VEE

What?

CHRIS

Yeah! West Mount Scott! Next to the cemetery!

VEE

Me too...

CHRIS

Yooo... That's insane! Now the whole ghost story books thing makes sense. There's this super dead house on my street, you've probably seen it, but it has this broken swing from a hecking long time ago. I heard this couple lost their kid because some psychopath pushed them off the swing and they got hurt really bad and died, and now the couple haunts the house. People go missing around there too. Crazy stuff.

VEE

Oh. Yeah... That's... my house.

CHRIS

Holy shit. People live there?

VEE

Well. I do.

CHRIS

You wanna meet up? We could like, summon something really cool.

VEE

Are you crazy? I--

CHRIS

Just a little.

VEE

What?

CHRIS

I'm just a little crazy, but I'm not like a murderer wacko.

(realizing)

Even though I... basically grew up with a cemetery in my backyard... and watch a lot of horror movies... but I'm not-- I promise I just like... weird... things.

VEE

Alright... Um... How about we don't meet up? And I--

A loud *thud* comes from off-screen shaking
Vee's laptop.

VEE

(getting up)

Oh no.

Vee goes off-screen to fix whatever has fallen.

CHRIS

Um... Are you okay?

VEE (O.S.)

I'm fine. Something just fell off my shelf, and uh, almost hit my laptop.

(sitting down)

It's nothing.

CHRIS

Okay, so your house is definitely possessed and all that. But I can help. I can like ward away the spirits that don't like your tech stuff. Or just turn the angry ghosts into friendly ghosts.

VEE

I don't think that's how that works.

CHRIS

No, it totally works. Trust me, I've done it before.

VEE

What?

CHRIS

Yeah. It's a ritual, you know? But no one can be in the house when it happens. It could complicate things.

VEE

Well, I mean... I like the stories, but ghosts aren't real.

A radio in Vee's room turns on and plays *I
Wanna Be Loved By You* by Marilyn Monroe.
Vee goes to turn off the radio.

CHRIS

What was that? What's going on?

VEE (O.S.)

My radio. It's just acting up.

CHRIS

Do you see any specter entities? Are there translucent people?

VEE

(returning)

No, it's just the house. Uh, the house seems to have a mind of its own. Especially, when my parents are out...

CHRIS

If the house is getting angry, the old couple could appear. You need to get out of there. You should sneak out.

VEE

No, they-- Wait... How can I get out?

CHRIS

If your parents aren't there you could just go out the front door, right?

VEE

The front door. It's, um, it doesn't open all the time for some reason. And the windows downstairs they... they don't work. They don't open.

CHRIS

Oh okay, so you live in an asylum. Lucky for you, I am the master of midnight escapes through my window on the second floor.

VEE

Really? Like in *High School Musical*?

CHRIS

Ha, yeah, just like *High School Musical*. Because that's such a great representation of high school.

VEE

Well... I'm homeschooled.

CHRIS

Whoa, so you're like, in that house 24/7. Do you even know anyone?

VEE

I mean I guess not really, but I heard you could... meet new people on here.

CHRIS

Oooh, I see. But still, sneaking out is a skill very girl needs to have. Is your room high up or first floor?

VEE

Um, second floor.

CHRIS

Well, that makes things significantly harder.

(demonstrating on a chair)

Okay, do not, I repeat, do not go down like this.

Chris drapes herself over a chair.

CHRIS

You will slam your chin into the window sill.

(pointing to the chair)

This is the window sill. And then wham your face into the wall as you fall.

VEE

I'm not supposed to be doing this so you might want to hurry.

CHRIS

(demonstrating on a chair)

You want to put your butt here, and then both legs out, and then you just leap out the window like my dad when my mom kicked him out.

Beat.

CHRIS

Got it?

VEE

(nervous)

HA ha... That's-- that's funny... With your dad...

CHRIS

(serious)

That wasn't a joke, Vee.

Beat.

CHRIS
(laughing)
AHAHAHAHAHA! YOUR FACE WAS SO SCARED!

VEE
Jesus Christ.

CHRIS
(laughing)
Seriously though, I'm just gonna keep telling you things about me until I guilt you into telling me more about yourself, other than your house being evil.

Vee's camera flickers on and off. She hits the screen trying to get it to work.

VEE
(trying to fix her computer)
Uh oh.

CHRIS
Dude! Those spirits are coming after you. Where are your parents?

VEE
Uh-- I think I fixed it. They're out. They aren't around too often. Just tell me how to get down.

CHRIS
Do you have blankets? You can tie them together.

VEE
(getting blankets)
I have a few.

CHRIS
(getting blankets)
Okay. So you're gonna take the ends and scrunch 'em up like my teacher did with the pride flag I brought to school.

VEE
Oh my god. I'm sorry...

CHRIS
(smiling)
Girl you are so up tight. True story, horribly funny.

VEE
(tying blankets)

Oh, hehe, yeah... Like this?

CHRIS
Perfect. Is it long enough to get down from your princess tower?

VEE
I think so, but we need to hurry. I, uh, I think my parents will be home soon.

CHRIS
Have you ever seen the two ghost parents?

VEE
Um... no... I mean they're not real, right?

CHRIS
There have been sightings.

VEE
Have you seen them?

CHRIS
No, but it would be so cool if we could find them.

VEE
We?

CHRIS
Yeah! It's perfect! You have the creepy house, I have the creepy knowledge. There could be a T.V. show about us!

VEE
Right... One thing at a time, continue with the sneaking out lesson.

CHRIS
Okay, but this next step is essential to a proper escape.

Chris starts playing *I Think We're Alone Now* by Tiffany.

CHRIS
You need to put on some sneakers and start dancing.

VEE
What? Why?

CHRIS

Because you need to be okay with looking stupid as you climb out of your room. The neighbors will judge you.

VEE

But you're my neighbor.

CHRIS

Yeah.

(starts dancing)

Come on. It's fun. You need to get the blood flowing. If you just jump out your window all stiff, you'll get hurt.

VEE

I'll get hurt either way. I don't have time--

CHRIS

(dancing)

You know you want to. It's like in those cheesy teen movies. Everyone wants to be quirky like that. Loosen up, a bit.

Vee starts dancing with Chris. She's finally laughing, having fun.

CHRIS

(laughing)

Woooo! Go girl!

Vee is laughing, but then a message pops up from Chris:

Remember what happened the last time you tried to leave.

VEE

Chris, Chris, wait. Turn that down.

Chris turns down the music. She doesn't see any of the messages that are supposedly from herself.

VEE

That's not funny, Chris.

CHRIS

What isn't funny?

VEE

The... The message...

Another message:

The basement is cold. We know you don't like the cold.

VEE

I, uh, we need to do this now.
(going to the window)

There's a lock, and I don't have a key. What do I do?

CHRIS

Got a bobby pin?

VEE

Yes.

CHRIS

Pick it.
(Vee begins picking the lock)

One time I picked open the lock to the Little Free Library in Altamont Park because some asshole--

VEE
(lock clicking, surprised)

I did it.

Vee opens the window.

VEE

Alright, I'll--

Vee sees a shadow casted on Chris's wall.

A new message:

A friendly neighbor killed our little boy.

VEE

Chris... Are you... alone? Are you...

Chris looks around.

You can't be rid of us, Vivien.

Freedom is earned, Vivien.

Stop the call, Vivien.

Vee?

CHRIS

Don't move, Chris.

VEE

We won't be mad.

You won't be punished.

Vee? You good?

CHRIS

I am so sorry, Chris. I have to go.

VEE

Wait I--

CHRIS

I have to go. Sorry. I'm sorry.

VEE

Vee closes the Omegle call and is alone in her room. Her door opens, and someone enters her room off-screen.

Beat.

I didn't do anything wrong. I can open a window, that's not against your house rules.

VEE

Beat.

Why can't I-- ugh! I just want to do stuff!

VEE

Beat.

VEE
Why can't you let me be normal?

Beat.

VEE
Can't you see that I'm so, so... lonely?

Beat.

VEE
Say something!

Beat.

VEE
I don't-- I don't care anymore, just do whatever you want.

We hear the door shut. Vee paces in her room, then lets out a frustrated scream.

Then Chris's camera miraculously turns on, reconnecting to the Omegle call.

VEE
Chris? Chris, are you there?

Two shadows appear behind Chris.

VEE
No, I didn't mean-- I take it back I-- Don't hurt her! Please!

Chris sees the two figures behind her.

CHRIS
Oh my god! OH MY GOD!

Chris's camera turns off.

VEE
No... Please, Chris didn't do anything!

The Omegle call disconnects and Vee is left alone by herself.

END OF PLAY