

The Dead Should Stay Dead

By

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For V

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Cast of Characters

VIDEO GAME ANNOUNCER VOICE:

HÄXA VOICEOVER:

JANET:

HÄXA:

MOM:

JANET (OFFSTAGE):

DOCTOR VOICEOVER:

ACT IScene 1 - Monkey's Paw

*A video game grid lights up a dark stage.*

VIDEO GAME ANNOUNCER VOICE

Would you like to run it again?

HÄXA VOICEOVER

Please.

*Video game start-up noises.*

VIDEO GAME ANNOUNCER VOICE

READY TO RUMBLE!

*The video game grid fades. Light's up on Häxa's bedroom. There's a bed and an open window behind it. There's also a closet, a door to a bathroom, and a door to the rest of the apartment. It's a mess.*

*JANET knocks and enters. She stands in the doorway.*

JANET

*(like an asshole roommate)* Look, I know it's been hard with your mom's funeral and everything but... do you think you can make it out of bed today?

*HÄXA's head sticks out of a pile of blankets on her bed. She shakes her head no.*

JANET

Ok. Can I have my sweater back then?

HÄXA

I don't have your sweater, Janet.

*Janet exits with a huff. Häxa's head returns into the pile like a turtle retreating into its shell.*

*The lights from the window show the passage of a month. Häxa doesn't move.*

*Video game accomplishment noises.*

VIDEO GAME ANNOUNCER VOICE

NEW RECORD! ONE WHOLE MONTH IN BED!

HÄXA

*(head pops out of the blanket)* Hey!

*Mockingly sad video game noises.*

VIDEO GAME ANNOUNCER VOICE

DEPRESSING!

HÄXA

Leave me alone!

*Janet knocks and enters. She stands in the doorway.*

JANET

Do you have someone over?

HÄXA

What? No.

JANET

I thought I heard you talking to someone.

HÄXA

No, it was just... never mind.

JANET

Ok well, if you do have someone over you know you have to check with me right? It's in our lease.

HÄXA

I don't have someone over Janet.

JANET

Fine. *(turns to leave. pauses. turns back around to Häxa)* Also, I know you haven't been able to make it to work but rent is due tomorrow. If you don't pay I'm gonna find a new flatmate. You know... one that can shower... and actually make it out of bed.

HÄXA

Cool. Thanks for the heads up.

JANET

And I still need my sweater-

HÄXA

OH MY GOD JANET I DON'T HAVE YOUR SWEATER! GOD, COULD YOU BE ANY MORE ANNOYING?

JANET

I may be annoying but at least my Mom didn't off herself.

HÄXA

OH MY GOD GET OUT GET OUT!

*Häxa throws her phone at Janet. Janet laughs and closes the door.*

*Häxa starts to sob and puts her head in her hands.*

*Pause.*

*Häxa's phone starts ringing. Häxa wipes her face, gets up, and answers it.*

HÄXA

Hey... Yeah, thanks for being so understanding. I'm going to try to make it in today... Ok... See you soon.

*Häxa hangs up. She sniffs herself and gags.*

HÄXA

Gross.

*Video game losing noises.*

VIDEO GAME ANNOUNCER VOICE  
YOU REEK!

HÄXA

I KNOW!

*Häxa goes to her closet and pulls out work clothes and an apron. She pauses.*

HÄXA

I wish my mom were here.

*Häxa closes her eyes and starts to cry softly.*

*The sound of wind chimes swell and then go away. The curtains on the window swell and then stop.*

*Häxa stops crying.*

HÄXA

Work. Rent. Priorities. Shower.

*Häxa places the apron on her bed and exits into the bathroom, closing the door behind her. The sound of a shower starting is heard.*

*The wind chimes and curtains start again.*

*MOM enters from the window. She looks like she just dug herself out of her own grave.*

*The wind chimes and curtains stop. The shower stops.*

*Mom starts to clean. Häxa enters from the bathroom in her work clothes.*

HÄXA

Mom? Is that you?

MOM

Häxa, angel, I've told you a million times if you have people over you have to tidy up.

HÄXA

It is you! (*rushes and hugs her Mom, then pulls away*)  
Ugh! You reek!

MOM

This place looks like a pigsty.

HÄXA

Is that what you're really worried about?

MOM

Imagine if someone from my church group came in here and this is what they saw. What would they think?

HÄXA

Yeah... Cause I'm just a big fan of your church group...

*Mom pulls out a black sweater from a pile on the bed.*

MOM

Oh, now this is cute. Very classy. Where'd you get it?

HÄXA

It's my roommate's.

MOM  
Well, that explains it.

HÄXA  
Mom. You're dead.

MOM  
*(continues to clean)* I don't have time for your silly games Häxa.

HÄXA  
We have to talk about that night Mom.

MOM  
What night?

HÄXA  
The night you... died.

MOM  
If I was dead could I be here talking to you? I don't have time for this.

HÄXA  
It's just you look...

MOM  
What?

HÄXA  
Beautiful, as always. It's just um... You look dead. Not really dead. But for sure dead.

*Häxa grabs a small mirror and puts it in front of her mother.*

MOM  
My face!

*Mom sits on the bed. Häxa comforts her.*

HÄXA  
I mean it's not *that* bad...

MOM  
I thought you were joking but I'm actually dead! I look *terrible*.

HÄXA  
You thought I was joking?

MOM  
Of course. You've always loved your attention.

HÄXA  
Mom... do you remember how you got here?

MOM  
No.

HÄXA  
Do you remember dying?

MOM  
(*pause*) I don't want to talk about that right now.

HÄXA  
Then when?

MOM  
Never.

HÄXA  
We have to talk about it eventually! I have so many questions, Mom. Why did you... Could I have done something?

MOM  
When was the last time you've eaten? I know I'm hungry. Let me make you something.

HÄXA  
Don't try to change the subject.

MOM  
Then. Drop. It.

*Janet rapidly knocks on Häxa's door.*

JANET (OFFSTAGE)  
HEY! DO YOU HAVE SOMEONE OVER?

HÄXA  
Uhhh... IT'S A PODCAST!

JANET (OFFSTAGE)  
UH HUH.

HÄXA  
LEAVE ME ALONE JANET.



JANET

*(mockingly) "Leave me alone Janet!"*

HÄXA

Ugh. She is seriously the worst. Oh! I forgot I have to go to work.

MOM

Oh let me come with you! *(gets up to go to the door)*

*Häxa pulls her Mom back down.*

HÄXA

No!

MOM

Well, then I'll just go home. *(gets up again)*

*Häxa pulls her down again HARD.*

HÄXA

I sold it to pay for the funeral.

MOM

I'm confused. This is all so overwhelming. You're telling me I can't go home. And I can't leave.

HÄXA

You can't go anywhere looking like that. I don't really know what's going on but I know you're supposed to be dead and that no one else can know.

MOM

Like Janet?

HÄXA

Yes, like Janet.

MOM

*(getting up again)* Well, I'm sure if I explained the situation then-

*Häxa pulls at her mom again, this time there's a CRACK. Häxa is holding her Mom's detached hand.*

*Video game fighting music starts.*

VIDEO GAME ANNOUNCER VOICE

DISMEMBERMENT! RADICAL!

*They both scream and drop it.*

MOM  
Häxa put it back!

HÄXA  
(picks it up and tries) It's not working! Ew! Ew! Ew!

MOM  
You always do this!

HÄXA  
What do you mean? How have I done this before?

MOM  
After everything I did for you. And this is how you act.

HÄXA  
Right, I forgot you always did this. You always let me know that you think I'm a failure.

MOM  
I don't think you're a failure I think you're wasting your potential.

HÄXA  
Like you wasted yours by having me at sixteen?

MOM  
Honey, I never said that. You were the best thing that ever happened to me.

HÄXA  
Well, I didn't ask to be born. But I'm sure the ladies at your little church group wouldn't have approved of that either.

MOM  
See? This is what you do. We were having a perfectly nice morning and then... Why do you have to push me away every time we get close?

HÄXA  
I don't know. Why did I have to pry sleeping pills out of your hands at five years old?

MOM  
How dare you bring that up? It was one of the darkest moments of my life.

HÄXA  
And mine. Did you ever think about that?! You took my