



**Sample Pages from
David and Delaney's Guide to the Perfectly
Nifty Prom**

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HORROR MOVIE 101: FAILING CAN BE DEADLY

A Collection of Five Hauntingly Bizarre Tales

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT BY
Steven Stack



Cast of Characters

Heirlooms (2W, 1M)

Tara: Female. 16, very rough, lives in squalor.

Dane: Male. 16, is trying to build a life with Tara.

Nicole: Female. Current “Hook Hand.”

The Girl on the Side of the Road (3W, 1M)

Cal: Male. 18, very caring, has family issues.

Jane: Female. 18, comes off as cold and unfeeling but really isn't. For the most part.

Hazel: Female. A girl that needs to get home to Mother.

Mother: Female. Rather scary, out for vengeance.

The One (4W, 2M)

Spencer: Female. Sarah's girlfriend. 17, smart, self-assured, and willing to make tough choices.

Sarah: Female. 16, Spencer's girlfriend, the nice one of the group.

Mark: Male. 18, the logical one, Liam's best friend.

Liam: Male. 15, the goofy one, dating Ava.

Sophie: Female. 16, obsessed with horror movies.

Ava: Female. 17, very smart but believes there is more out there than can be proven by science or logic.

Isolation (5W)

Karen: Female. 18, Cassie's older sister and protector.

Cassie: Female. 16, Karen's younger sister, the favorite of the family.

Marcy: Female. 17, Karen's best friend, hiding something.

Taylor: Female. 17, attacked by Jenny, currently tied up.

Jenny: Female. 17, has been attacked, currently running through the woods like some type of crazed animal.

David and Delaney's Guide to the Perfectly Nifty Prom (2W, 1M)

Kate: Female. 18, Delaney's best friend and possessor of a well-manicured ancient burial ground.

David: Male. 17, Delaney's dedicated boyfriend who doesn't like dirt or gross things.

Delaney: Female. 17, David's girlfriend since they were 6, dead.

Horror Movie 101: Failing Can Be Deadly was first performed in October of 2016 at Forte Studios in Mt. Horeb, Wisconsin. Here is the original cast.

Heirlooms

Tara: Gracie Hamburg

Dane: Carter Coon

Nicole: Evelyn Santoirre

The Girl on the Side of the Road

Cal: Kobi Johnson

Jane: Grace Haroldson

Hazel: Chloe Stack

Mother: Evelyn Santoirre

The One

Spencer: Evelyn Santoirre

Sarah: Sara Thompson

Mark: Carter Coon

Liam: Kobi Johnson

Sophie: Gracie Hamburg

Ava: Camille Ginther

Isolation

Karen: Evelyn Santoirre

Cassie: Gracie Hamburg

Marcy: Grace Haroldson

Taylor: Camille Ginther

Jenny: Justine Mattson

David and Delaney's Guide to the Perfectly Nifty Prom

Kate: Sara Thompson

David: Carter Coon

Delaney: Justine Mattson

Dedication

Dedicated to Prentiss Alexander Bledsoe

David and Delaney's Guide to the Perfectly Nifty Prom

Setting: Outside of Hilmore High. By a bench. And perhaps a tree.

At Rise: DELANEY is standing between DAVID and KATE wearing an old looking dress that is also quite dirty. KATE is looking off awkwardly. DAVID is smiling at DELANEY.

DELANEY: So... how do I look?

KATE: (to DELANEY) Like you came back from the dead, then walked across town to St. Claire's Graves on a Mound, found a grave that belonged to a woman with a Victorian-sounding name, dug it up, and stole her dress.

DELANEY: Nailed it. Her name was Constance Stanbury, by the way. (turns to DAVID, who is smiling at her) Hello, Mr. Smiley Pants.

DAVID: You're... back. And I think you look beautiful. Well, except for the dirt and... the worms in your hair.

DELANEY picks around in her hair, finds one, looks at it, and laughs.

DELANEY: (dismissive) Oh, those are maggots.

DAVID: Awesome.

DELANEY: (Turns to KATE. Silence.) So... how have your kids been?

DAVID: Not too good, actually.

DELANEY: Because of my dying?

DAVID: Yeah. And I have a rash. On my stomach.

DELANEY: You should probably get that checked out. (to KATE) What's wrong, Kate? Do you not like the dress? Or is it the maggots?

KATE: It's not either of those things. It's... how do you... feel, Delaney? Do you feel like attacking us or... I don't know... eating us or something?

DELANEY: (stares at her confused, as does DAVID) Um... no to both. I feel surprisingly well for, you know, dying a couple of weeks ago. Oh, I was thinking that maybe I could shower at your house before going to see my parents? I certainly don't want them to find out that I came back from the dead looking like this. (to

DAVID) And you and I can start making sure we are ready for our perfectly nifty prom. Not a lot of time, but we do have the manual.

DAVID: That's right.

KATE: You didn't tell her?

DAVID: When would I have told her?

DELANEY: Tell me what?

DAVID: Nothing.

KATE: It's not nothing, David. (to DELANEY) David and I are going to the prom together.

DELANEY: Why would you be going to the prom with David?

KATE: Because of the last thing that you said to me as you lay dying.

DELANEY: About wanting banana pudding? I don't know—

KATE: The next to last thing you said.

DELANEY: About the fact that I was the one who stole your mom's sweater?

KATE: That was you?

DELANEY: (Stares at KATE. Unconvincingly.) No.

KATE: I missed the band trip because of that!

DAVID: It was a good band trip. (to DELANEY) And you looked really nice in that sweater.

DELANEY: Thank you. And it really was a nice trip. (turns to KATE, who's staring at her angrily) So, judging by your response and your lack of knowledge of my taking of your mom's sweater, I'm gathering that I don't remember what I said—

KATE: You said to take care of David.

DELANEY is shocked and saddened. She looks at KATE and then DAVID.

DELANEY: Did I?

KATE: Yes, you did.

DELANEY: That's why you were going to go to the prom with him. (understands) That's very sweet.

KATE: Thanks.

DELANEY: And now I understand why you brought me back.

KATE: I... wait, what?

DELANEY: You brought me back because you knew that if you two went to the prom together, it would mess up *David and Delaney's Guide to*—

KATE: I didn't bring you back!

DELANEY: Sure. You're the one that has the well-manicured ancient burial ground in her backyard and—

KATE: Look, I don't mess with that burial ground since Ralph. You know that.

DELANEY: Really? (*KATE nods*) But if you didn't do it, then... (*silence as they both turn to DAVID*)

KATE & DELANEY: David.

DAVID: I had to. Delaney, we've talked since we were six about going to the prom together. It was our dream. Look. (*pulls out book*) *David and Delaney's Guide to the Perfectly Nifty Prom*.

DELANEY: (*gasps*) Our manual.

DAVID: I haven't stopped carrying it around since you died. After your funeral, I didn't know what to do. I ran to my room, clutching the book, and I sat there for days, just looking at the life-sized cutout of the two of us dressed in what we were going to wear to the prom and Kate standing by... well, no one, because we didn't know who her prom date would be.

KATE: You have a cardboard cutout of me?

DAVID: Of course, you're number 13 on the list. Right after "Must Have Time to Bake the Most Perfectly Nifty Prom Cake." And don't worry, your cutout is very flattering.

DELANEY: It really is. It's based on when you get out of this, you know, 90s grunge period you're in right now. Which by the way, is 7th on the list: "Take the Plunge, Get Kate out of Grunge." (*to DAVID*) You know, that was my least favorite rhyme.

DAVID: Mine too, although it does get the point across. (*to KATE*) You are really grungy, you know. The 90's called and said they want their style back.

KATE: Clever. Can you get back to your story so we can understand your horrible decision?

DELANEY: Horrible decision? Are you saying—

DAVID: Don't worry, Delaney. After she hears the rest, she'll understand.

*DELANEY smiles at DAVID and nods "Go ahead."
DAVID takes a moment and then looks off.*

DAVID: As I looked at those cutouts, I cried because our dream of the perfectly nifty prom was dead. Like you. Then, moments later, I got that rash I mentioned earlier, which caused me to consider joining you in the afterlife. It's very itchy. Then, moments after moments after that, Kate climbed in my window and told me we were going to prom together. I tried to protest, but she said that it was what you wanted. I didn't believe her because nowhere in *David and Delaney's Guide to the Perfectly Nifty Prom* did it say "In case of Delaney's death, David should go with Kate." It doesn't even rhyme! But I said yes anyway just in case it was true. After she left, I put mine and Kate's cutouts together just to see... but there was no connection there, no cardboard spark. Because it wasn't the way it was meant to be. Kate was meant to be number 13 on the list: "Find Kate the Perfectly Nifty Mate So that We Can Double Date." Alas, I may have been the perfect mate for Kate, but Kate was not the perfect mate for me. Only (to *DELANEY*) you were. I had to find a way to bring you back. And that's when I remembered Kate's well-manicured ancient burial ground. So I went to your grave, dug you up, carried you through town, and then reburied you in Kate's well-manicured ancient burial ground.

DELANEY: That is the sweetest thing I've ever heard.

KATE: It really is, but David—you have no idea what you've done.

DAVID: Oh, I do, and (to *DELANEY*) seeing you tonight proves something to me. For the longest time I couldn't figure out if I really loved you or just had that teenage like/lust thing that we teenagers call love when it's clearly not. But seeing you like that, all dirty and decaying with wor... maggots in your hair... it couldn't be lust. It could only be love because you are so not att—

DELANEY: You can stop there. And I love you too. (*moves to kiss him*)

DAVID: (*stopping her*) And I would kiss you now, but you smell terrible and I don't want to throw up in your mouth.

DELANEY: I don't want that either. (to KATE) Do you mind if I go freshen up in your house?

KATE: Sure.

DELANEY: Thanks. (to DAVID) And I'll see you in a bit. I figure you two have some things to talk about. (exits)

DAVID: (to KATE) Look, I'm really sorry—

KATE: I seriously don't care. What the hell were you thinking bringing her back?

DAVID: I was thinking that I love her and I wanted her to be able to go to her prom.

KATE: Well, now we have to kill her.

DAVID: No, we don't.

KATE: Yes, we do. Before she goes wrong.

DAVID: What are you talking about? She seems fine.

KATE: Oh, innocent child. I was once like you. But not anymore. Look: when I moved here, I was so excited to find out that we had an ancient burial ground right in our backyard. I mean what girl wouldn't be, right? But then my next-door neighbor Sophie, a horror movie buff, came over and told me not to tamper with it because of Horror Movie 101.

DAVID: Is that a class at school?

KATE: It should be. But it's not.

DAVID: What does it—

KATE: In this case, Sophie told me, Horror Movie 101 states that if you use an ancient burial ground to bring someone back, they'll come back wrong. They wouldn't look like it at first, but soon their wrongness would come out and everyone around them would suffer. I laughed at her and said she was being dumb. She said she was like me until what happened to Sarah happened. I told her this and what happened at the haunted house had nothing to do with one another and she just said "We'll see" and left.

DAVID: Great story.

KATE: It's not done.

DAVID: Of course.

KATE: The next day, Ralph died.

DAVID: Your cat?

KATE: Yeah. The only thing, besides Delaney, that I actually cared about in this world. I knew what I had to do. I took his broken carcass and buried in my now well-manicured, because of Delaney's help, ancient burial ground. The entire time, I kept hearing Sophie's warning.

DAVID: In your head? Like in a movie?

KATE: No, it was her car that hit Ralph, so she had guilt and she was walking behind me, warning me. Despite her warnings, I buried Ralph in my well-manicured ancient burial ground. Nothing happened for days, and then the morning of the International Hole Digging and Refilling Contest came. Sophie, a skilled refiller, and I, an ace digger, were sitting in the kitchen eating breakfast when we heard it.

DAVID: Heard what?

KATE: A soft meow and a gentle scratch. Sophie tried to hold me back, but you can't keep a girl from running to open the door for her returning from the dead cat.

DAVID: I've heard that.

KATE: Have you?

DAVID: No.

KATE: Anyway, I opened the door and there was Ralph looking... quite awful, actually. I mean, Sophie has a really big car and she was speeding as always so she nailed him pretty hard. Flew about 50 feet and then Sophie, not aware that she hit a cat because she was eating a burger, ran over him. Also, Ralph had been decomposing for a couple of days, so there was—

DAVID: (*shudders and holds up a hand*) Stop. Please. But how did he act?

KATE: Sophie?

DAVID: No. I said "he." Ralph.

KATE: Just like he had before. Ornerly, but purring and rubbing up against my leg. Even though I knew it was a setup, I was so happy. And then Ralph saw Sophie.

DAVID: What did she do?

KATE: Well, Sophie was standing behind the table just staring at Ralph when he came around the table and (*looking away*) rubbed against her leg too.

DAVID: That doesn't sound—

KATE: It wasn't. And I was a little mad because Ralph was being all loving to her and she was the one who smashed him to bits in the first place and didn't want to bring him back. Then it happened. Sophie, trying to get away, stepped on Ralph's tail and Ralph hissed. Sophie yelled "We're all going to die!" and ran out the door, followed by the pursuing Ralph.

DAVID: Oh no.

KATE: Oh no is right. I ran outside and watched Ralph chase Sophie right into the field where the International Hole Digging and Refilling contest was being held.

DAVID: Did she fall in a hole?

KATE: No, she avoided the holes. But she didn't avoid running off Dead Man's Cliff just past the field. And Ralph, consumed by an anger that perhaps I had seen before, followed her right off that cliff, where she was caught by a hawk in midair and eaten. (*shakes her head*) I lost a cat and a friend that day.

DAVID: Wait, I didn't know that Sophie died too.

KATE: Oh, Sophie didn't die. She was fine, some cuts, scrapes and bruises. But she refused to talk to me anymore. She even convinced her parents to move.

DAVID: Wow.

KATE: That's right. If it weren't for the hawk eating Ralph, I don't know what he would have done. Oh no, I do. He would have gone on a killing spree.

DAVID: You don't know that. Even when he was alive, Ralph was all messed up. He always used that purring and rubbing against your leg technique to get you to let your defenses down so he could tear into your flesh.

KATE: Don't you dare talk of Ralph that way! Even though it's completely true and I basically said the same thing earlier. But you didn't see the look in his eyes when he went wrong—I did. And the same thing is going to happen to Delaney. Do you want your girlfriend—my best friend—to become some crazed monster?

DAVID: No, I don't, but I can't believe that she's wrong just because of Ralph.

KATE: It's not just Ralph, though. It's what happened to Sarah, Dane and Tara, and don't forget Jane. Car accident? I don't think so. Car accidents don't choke you to death. Something's messed up in this town, and I'm not willing to risk Delaney being the one oddity that proves none of these things are related except for the fact that we're friends.

DAVID: Okay. What do you want us to do?

KATE: Kill her.

DAVID: I can't kill the love of my life. It will probably damage our relationship.

KATE: I know. I don't expect you to. I expect you to distract her while I kill her.

DAVID: How?

KATE: (*picks up a rock*) With this.

DAVID: A rock? I can't. What if she came back normal? Then—

KATE: Doubtful, but tell you what. I'll only use my "stun 'em" club instead of my "kill 'em" club. Then we'll tie her up to see if she does go wrong. If not, it's all good. You'll have your prom date back and I'll have my best friend back.

DAVID: And if she does go... wrong?

KATE: We'll cross that line when we come to it.

DELANEY: (*offstage*) Hmm. That was so good.

KATE: All right. Here she comes. Play it cool. Distract her, and at some point, I'll give her the "stun 'em" club. If she shows any early wrong signs, I'll use the—

DAVID: How do you even know—

KATE: I took a class.

DELANEY enters.

DELANEY: Sorry I took so long. I was busy eating your parents'... (*A look of horror comes over KATE and DAVID's face. KATE prepares her rock.*) fantastic blueberry pie. (*DAVID and KATE relax. A little.*)

DELANEY notices that they are uncomfortable.) What's wrong with you guys?

DAVID: Um nothing. You look amazing. Like you haven't been decomposing for two weeks. More like two days.

DELANEY: Thank you! I was going for "only four days decomposing," but two days... you really know how to sweet talk a girl.

She turns to KATE and rushes over to her. KATE freaks out as DELANEY's hands go around her neck. Then she... gives her a massage.

So tense.

DAVID: So much for playing it cool.

DELANEY: And you, mister... *(walking over to DAVID)* I've got a bone to pick with you.

DAVID: Um... what?

DELANEY: Some... unfinished... business. I'm a little hungry for something.

She moves towards him and KATE springs into action. DAVID, seeing this, shoves her out of the way and gets hit by the rock. He falls.

David, oh no! *(She kneels and checks him. She turns to KATE.)* He's dead.

KATE: Well, it was my "kill 'em" club.

DELANEY: Wait, you were trying to kill me?

KATE: Yeah, I thought you had gone wrong. Like Ralph.

DELANEY: Why would you think I was going "wrong?" Whatever that means?

KATE: Because you gave David a creepy look.

DELANEY: That was my seductive look.

KATE: Oh. But then you said you were hungry for something. I thought you were going to eat him.

DELANEY: No. I was hungry for a kiss. With the combo of the look and the seductive line I thought maybe he could forget my smell.

KATE: Oh. Well, that's the worst seduction that I've ever seen.



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