

# *THE DEER BONES*

An Incomplete Supernatural Mystery

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## Cast

RYAN MAYHEW

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A 20-year-old man who is currently on his winter break from college. He is not happy to be home in Serling Hills, Michigan.

ANNA JODELEC

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A 20-year-old woman who is currently on her winter break from college. She is having an awesome time in Colorado at a ski resort.

SADIE

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A 21-year-old woman who dated Ryan two years ago. She is currently in a loving relationship with someone else.

DAVE

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A 20-year-old man from Ohio on vacation in Colorado. A dumb lunk of a man that has no idea what he's in for when he tries to hit on Anna Jodelec.

## Setting

SERLING HILLS, MICHIGAN, AND A SKI RESORT IN COLORADO

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These two locations are represented as parallel spaces on stage and are only represented by minimal set dressing, such as a bed and a nightstand for scenes 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7. Scene 5 is represented by parallel café tables.

## Author's Note

While the names of the scenes are never mentioned in dialogue by the characters, it is worth noting that they are all song titles from the 1973 blues rock album *Tattoo* by Irish guitarist Rory Gallagher, released by Polydor Records, London. This is not essential to the plot in any way, shape, or form. However, these songs inspired each scene in the play in one way or another. They can be, and should be, used as inspiration accordingly.

## Scene Four - Sleep on a Clothesline

*[The lights go up on the right side of the stage. Ryan is rifling through a stack of papers, staring at the individual pieces of paper. He looks worried. He's dressed in thicker clothes. It's getting colder outside. He shakes his head.]*

RYAN

Jesus...

*[Ryan picks up his phone and dials. Anna immediately picks up, lighting up the left side of the stage. She's in a really beautiful spring dress. For some reason.]*

ANNA

Hey! What's up?

RYAN

Not much. Just sorting through the mess you put me in.

ANNA

What are you talking about-

RYAN

I wish I never looked into these bones. I should have kept that story to myself. I should have kept bitching about how boring and soulless Serling Hills is and left it at that. I should have just gone to see *Krampus* in theaters by myself and kept my fucking mouth shut-

ANNA

What. Is going on?

RYAN

It's fucked up man. It's just fucked up-

ANNA

What's fucked up-

RYAN

1957. My first grade teacher wasn't joking around. I'm never touching those bones, I'm never removing those bones, I'm never going to see those bones again. I ain't solving shit. Fuck mystery man. I'm fucking OUT.

ANNA

I- Just tell me what's going on. What happened in 1957?

RYAN

I've got it right here in front of me. I went to the library and looked at my local newspaper, just to see what might have happened in 1957. Some shit went down. Bad shit. In 1957, a second grade student by the name of Adam Wells murdered a fellow classmate, Samuel Wentz.

[*Long pause.*]

ANNA

Um... That's fucked up.

RYAN

Oh don't you worry, it gets better.

[*Ryan clears his throat. He prepares to read what he's holding.*]

RYAN

"Police have arrested seven year old Adam Wells after he brutally assaulted one of his friends, Samuel Wentz. Samuel was admitted to the hospital after the attack, but died in transit. According to witnesses, Adam attacked Samuel with a painted deer skull, striking him in the head-"

ANNA

Holy shit.

RYAN

"While police have no doubts that Adam Wells initiated the attack, they have been unable to locate the deer skull used in the killing. Adam's classmates claim that the skull was taken from a larger skeleton, also painted. However, the children and the police were also unable to locate the remaining skeleton. Debates are already being made about trying Adam Wells as criminally insane as local law enforcement attempt to figure out what to do with this heinous case."

ANNA

Well then.

RYAN

Yeah. I think I'm done looking into those bones. I did more research on this just through Google and it manages to get even worse. Adam Wells was in an institute for the criminally insane until 1999 when he killed himself with a sharpened toothbrush. He painted, and I'm quoting another article here, "strange and undecipherable symbols on the walls with his blood." Doctors could never properly diagnose him with any known mental illness in the DSM. No one knows what happened to him. He had symptoms that might have made him a paranoid schizophrenic, but then some doctors said he was a sociopath or... The list goes on and on.

ANNA

You think that the bones-

RYAN

Those bones fucked him up. He removed the deer skull and it drove him crazy. Do you know how rare it is for a child to develop schizophrenia? It usually sets in during your late teens or early 20s. Childhood schizophrenia is a technically a thing, but almost impossible.

ANNA

I mean... I don't know. But what happened to the bones then? They got up and walked away? And why would they suddenly re-emerge now?

RYAN

I found those bones when I was eight years old. That was twelve years ago, 2003. They could have been there before. They might have been all around town for all I know. But it doesn't matter. I'm done with that. I'm not looking into this any further. This isn't worth solving. This sounds like some demonic bullshit and I'd rather be bored than end up beating someone to death with a deer skull.

[*Long pause.*]

ANNA

That's fair. But... What are you gonna do now?

RYAN

I'm thinking I'm just going to start going to the movies every weekend, see what's out. I was serious about watching *Krampus*, that movie looks kind of rad.

[*Long pause. Again.*]

ANNA

That's all?

RYAN

That's all.

ANNA

Ryan... Is that all there is to do? Watch movies?

RYAN

I mean, that's all that's here for me. And I don't even really like movies that much.

ANNA

Man, I can't imagine anyone wanting to live there. You've pretty much sold me on that-

RYAN

That's not true. Plenty of people want to live here. Just not me.

*[Anna rolls her eyes. He's about to pontificate like a motherfucker. She crouches next to the bed and pulls the phone away from her face. She's trying to put the phone into speaker mode without him noticing.]*

ANNA

I don't follow.

*[Anna's phone is in speaker mode. She carefully moves around the room and opens up her nightstand. She pulls out a bubbler pipe, a green medicine bottle filled with a bit of weed, and a grinder.]*

RYAN

I- I'm not sure how to explain this... Actually, maybe I can. I used to be obsessed with garage sales when I was in middle school. I would bike everywhere back then, but especially to garage sales. You know how I have a Dreamcast? Back in my dorm?

ANNA

Yeah.

*[She quietly tears a bit of the weed off to plug the bubbler. She begins to fill the grinder. As he talks, she begins to quietly grind up the weed.]*

RYAN

I got it at a garage sale back in those days. It was \$15, got the system, a controller, and two games, Sonic Adventure and Crazy Taxi 2. Awesome deal. After that, I got obsessed with buying old video games. It was probably because I was watching a lot of Angry Video Game Nerd episodes, but whatever. Point is, I went to garage sales all the time. One time, I went to this one that was being run by this guy in his mid-30s. He was selling mostly baby stuff, cribs, toys, that kind of thing. My best guess is that he was trying to sell it so that he could get new toys for a toddler. But I looked anyway, figured he was old enough that maybe he would be selling at least an NES, maybe an SNES.

*[Anna begins to put the weed in the bowl out of the grinder. She suddenly pats at her dress for a bit, and begins to search for something around her.]*

RYAN

He had a friend over at the garage sale, about the same age. They were both talking about living in Serling Hills. The guy running the garage sale talked about how he loved the community, how it gave his daughter so much to do. His friend though, he said something that I was never able to shake. He said, "This ain't a place to be a man. It's a place to grow up." You know?

ANNA

I don't know. Or maybe-?

RYAN

You sound weird.

ANNA

Oh, I had to put you on speaker. But I'm listening, trust me.

*[She finds what she's looking for: A lighter. She prepares to take a hit, but waits to hear if he has anything to actually say.]*

RYAN

Trust you? Didn't you say you'd tune out if I talked about how shitty Serling Hills was?

ANNA

So you do remember!

RYAN

Hey, you asked a question, I'm giving an answer.

ANNA

Yes, I did ask a question. And the answer's taking a long LONG fucking time. No offense.

RYAN

You want me to stop?

ANNA

Maybe? ... You know what, try to reign me back in. Get to the point.

RYAN

Fine. Let me say it another way. If you're a kid, growing up here isn't so bad. I had a lot of friends, that sense of belonging where you could walk up to the neighbor's house, knock on the door, and next thing you knew you were running through a pond catching frogs. It was great. But once you graduate from high school, a place like this changes. The community isn't there anymore. People scatter to the four winds, for better or for worse. We're not neighbor children anymore. We're adults. In a place like this, you have debts that you pay when you're an adult. Not monetary, but social. There's a sense of obligation that you don't really find anywhere else.

*[Anna sets the bubbler and the lighter on the nightstand. She picks up the phone, takes it off of speaker mode, and puts it next to her ear. He actually has something to say.]*

RYAN

But what's amazing is that you don't owe anyone anything when you're a kid. You don't owe the town having children, you don't owe the town attending your kids' Boy Scout meetings, you don't owe a damn thing. But when you cross that line into adulthood, you have to make a choice. And that choice is to stay and give the town what it wants or leave it all behind. The only adults that can survive in Serling Hills are adults with kids. Because you foster that community, you put all of your energy into your kids. But if you don't have any, then there's nothing to focus your energy into. Nothing local, nothing truly fun. Except for the movie theater. That's all right-

*[Ryan suddenly jerks the phone away from his face and looks at it.]*

ANNA  
You still there?

*[He puts the phone back up to his face.]*

RYAN  
Sorry. Yeah, I'm still here. Just got a text.

ANNA  
From who?

RYAN  
Not sure, didn't look at my phone fast enough. Probably Dylan asking if I got tickets to *The Force Awakens* before-

ANNA  
What if it's Sadie?

*[Long pause.]*

RYAN  
I'm willing to bet that it's not Sadie.

ANNA  
How much?

RYAN  
What?

ANNA  
How much are you willing to bet?

RYAN  
Hm... .. I'm willing to bet... A 1.75 liter bottle of Baileys that it's not Sadie.

ANNA  
Okay.

RYAN  
And you?

ANNA  
I'm willing to bet three six packs of Mike's Hard Lemonade. Cranberry flavor.

RYAN

You're on.

*[Ryan pulls the phone away from his face and taps at it a few times with a confident grin. His face rapidly changes into a look of total dismay. He drops the papers he was holding.]*

RYAN

Holy shit. Holy fucking shit.

ANNA

What did you say? You don't have your phone up to your face, do you?

*[Ryan slowly brings the phone back up to his face.]*

RYAN

She wants to hang out.

*[Long pause.]*

ANNA

Looks like someone owes me some Bailey's-

RYAN

WHO GIVES A FUCK ABOUT THE BAILEY'S WHAT THE FUCK AM I SUPPOSED TO DO OH FUCK FUCK FUCK-

ANNA

Jesus man! Calm down! Calm down. What did she say? And I need exact words.

RYAN

Fuck... Fuck... All right. She said that she wants to catch up.

ANNA

Okay. You need neutral ground. Don't invite her to your place under any circumstance. Don't go anywhere with too much sentimental value. Do you have a local coffee shop you can go to?

RYAN

We have a Tim Hortons and a Starbucks.

ANNA

I said local-

RYAN

I know what you said. It's Serling Hills, that's as close we have to local.

ANNA

You really weren't kidding- Nevermind. Okay. Go to Starbucks. Make sure it's the middle of the day, just in case you need to work off nervous energy afterwards. BY YOURSELF. If you meet too late, you're more prone to make a decision you're going to regret. Got it? Oh, and make sure you don't talk about the deer bones. You might sound completely batshit to her.

RYAN

Got it.

ANNA

And last but not least... Be honest. Actually honest. Don't beat around the bush, don't half ass this shit. Fucking tell her the truth. Like you used to. And you just might be able to move on.

*[Long pause.]*

ANNA

Can you do-

RYAN

I can do that. I can do that.

ANNA

Okay. Good luck.

RYAN

Thanks. I'm probably going to need it.

*[They both hang up. Ryan sits, nervously shaking his leg. Anna picks the bubbler back up, and finally takes a hit. A long hit. A really long hit. She violently coughs out a plume of smoke, coughing so violent she almost throws up, but stops just short of it. The lights go down on both sides as both characters bring their heads down, Anna's from the coughing, Ryan from bowing his head in almost repentant manner.]*