

THE HORROR!

by

Jonny Lewis

Copyright (c) 2020

ver 1.0

www.TheHorror.film
JonnyTheActor@gmail.com
323-286-3999

AIRPORT REUNION

EXT. AIRPORT - PICKUP SPOT - DAY

Elena, 26, walks with her luggage to the waiting area for Uber/Lyft. Her half sister Sophie, 30 rushes up to meet her.

SOPHIE

Ellie!

ELENA

Sophia! So good to see you! But please call me Elena, okay?

SOPHIE

Sure. Oh, and everyone here calls me Sophie, or just Soph.

ELENA

Well, I think Sophia has so much more class. "Sophia, goddess of wisdom."

SOPHIE

Whatever. Sophia, Sophie,
(makes a doofus face)
Sophus!

ELENA

Um, yeah, so, shall we get an Uber?

SOPHIE

Got it covered. I came here with Lyft. Right over here.

Sophie leads Elena to a pretty old Ford Aspire, missing its right front fender. The driver, FREDDIE, 20-something, puts their luggage in the trunk, which creaks loudly when he opens it, and closes it with some difficulty. The sisters get in the back seat.

RIDING WITH FREDDIE

INT. CAR - DAY

SOPHIE

Yo, Freddie, meet my sister!

ELENA

Half sister.

SOPHIE

Ellie.

ELENA

Elena.

FREDDIE

Nice to meet you Elly-elena!

ELENA

So, there must be an age limit for your car, to drive Lyft?

FREDDIE

Yep, fifteen years.

SOPHIE

Freddie just made it. Right, Freddie?

FREDDIE

Well, technically, some parts are newer, but some parts are older, so yeah, it averages about fourteen, fifteen years. That fender was older, so it's cool I lost it last week.

SOPHIE

Freddie's riding a wave of good luck lately.

ELENA

I can see that.

SOPHIE

Oh, sis, come on, is that sarcasm? We said we'd be nice, remember? This is our grand adventure! Making our first film together!

ELENA

I'm sorry. It's just the New Yorker in me.

(to Freddie)

Nothing personal, Freddie.

FREDDIE

No worries. That kinda stuff doesn't bother me. It's like water off a duck's beak.

ELENA

"Back."

FREDDIE

Yeah, your sister tells me you're making a horror film, yeah?

ELENA

Yes, that's what we have the budget for:

(dismayed)

Horror.

FREDDIE

I love horror films!

ELENA

We're doing horror because it's cheap, and easy to make, and easy to sell.

SOPHIE

Horror films are awesome! I'm with Freddie on that.

FREDDIE

Yo! Horror!

ELENA

I wish I could have helped out more with the preproduction on this.

SOPHIE

It's okay.

ELENA

It's just that i just wrapped an Off-Broadway show.

SOPHIE

I'm so proud of my little sister.

ELENA

And I've got another one going up in less than two weeks. I'm the sole producer on that one, so we've only got 10 days to shoot this. You got that?

SOPHIE

You're tearing it up in NY, and I'm tearing it up in LA. Woohoo!

ELENA

It's a horror film; 10 days should be doable. I hope.

SOPHIE

Oh, totally. I called in favors from some friends.

ELENA
So the networking thing is working
for you out here?

SOPHIE
Oh, totally.

ELENA
Good. Well, you've got the
personality for it, I guess.

SOPHIE
I got it covered. You can relax, El.

ELENA
(tired)
"Elena."

FREDDIE
Elly-elena!

Elena leans her head against the window and drifts off to sleep.

THE MOTEL

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

They arrive at the hotel. Freddie opens the trunk with a creak, and gets their luggage out. Again, it closes with some difficulty.

SOPHIE
Thanks, Freddie!

ELENA
Thanks, bye.

SOPHIE
You're awesome!

She gives Freddie a thumbs-up. He winks and smiles back. The sisters go to the motel office to get the keys.

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

MANAGER
Can I help you ladies?

SOPHIE
How ya doin'? Suarez, checking in,
please.

Manager checks the computer.

ELENA
So, did the cast and crew arrive
okay?

Manager hands them keys.

MANAGER
Room 412. Have a good night, ladies.

ELENA
Thanks.

SOPHIE
Thank you!

They leave the office and walk to look for their room.

SOPHIE (cont'd)
Cast, all checked in. Crew will be
here in the morning. They're all
local.

ELENA
Really? Way out here, you got an all-
local crew?

SOPHIE
Yeah. LinkedIn, baby!

ELENA
LinkedIn? Have you met any of them?

SOPHIE
Of course.

ELENA
In person?

SOPHIE
No. LinkedIn is an online thing.

ELENA
I know...
(trying to keep calm)
what LinkedIn is.

SOPHIE
So you get it. Yeah, all local crew.
How lucky is that?

ELENA
I'm too tired to even consider that
question.

SOPHIE
Here it is! Four-twelve.

Sophie unlocks the door and they enter.

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

ELENA
I am beat. They stuck me with
cleaning up after the cast party last
night. Got about an hour of sleep on
the plane.

SOPHIE
Sis, you just get yourself a good
night's sleep. No need to think about
anything until morning.

ELENA
Yeah, thanks.

SOPHIE
This is gonna be so much fun!

ELENA
Yeah, I hope so. G'night.

SOPHIE
Okay, well, I'm gonna shower. Sleep
tight, see you in the morning.

ELENA
G'night.

Elena puts on a nightie and goes to bed. Sophia heads to the
bathroom for a shower.

INT. MOTEL - MORNING

Elena wakes, slides out from under the covers, rubs her
eyes. She starts doing yoga stretches, then suddenly hears
the shower running. Sophie enters the room with a cup of
coffee.

SOPHIE
Morning, sleepyhead!

ELENA
I thought you showered last night.
Are you warming it up for me?

Before Sophie can answer, Freddie emerges from the bathroom with a towel around his waist.

ELENA (cont'd)
Ahhhh!

FREDDIE
(cheerfully)
Elly-elena!

ELENA
Wha—! Freddie?!

Elena grabs the bedspread and tries to cover herself.

FREDDIE
(chuckling)
Sorry, didn't mean to startle you.

ELENA
What the--. Sophia! What is he doing
in our motel room?! You let a
stranger sleep in our room?!

SOPHIE
No, I wouldn't--

FREDDIE
Whoa, Elly-Elena, be relax, man.

ELENA
No! I will not "be relax," and my
name is not "Elly-elena"! How could
you let a stranger sleep in our--

SOPHIE
No no no, he slept in his car. I'm
just letting him take a shower.

FREDDIE
Hey, I'm sorry.

Freddie goes into the bathroom and shuts the door.

ELENA

What is this man even doing here? Why isn't he back in LA driving around Lyfting people?

SOPHIE

I told you, Freddie loves horror films.

ELENA

So?

SOPHIE

So, he's part of our crew.

ELENA

What?

SOPHIE

He's seen like a hundred horror films.

ELENA

That doesn't qualify him to shoot one. He's got to go home. Now.

SOPHIE

Please, El, he drove us all the way up here for free. We got to talking on the way to the airport, and we have so much in common--

ELENA

Like that's a good thing?

SOPHIE

Please, El--

ELENA

Elena. Call me Elena.

SOPHIE

Elena, please, he gave up like over a hundred dollar fee to drive us here.

ELENA

(sighs)
Geez, Sophia...

SOPHIE

Please, he's a really nice guy.

ELENA

He can watch. He can stay and watch.
He can bring us coffee maybe, but
that's it.

SOPHIE

Yeah, like a P.A. That's all I was
gonna have him do. Thank you so much,
Elena. You won't regret it.

Freddie emerges from the bathroom, dressed.

FREDDIE

So...are we good to go?

ELENA

Freddie...
(forcing calmness)
can you go get me some coffee?

FREDDIE

Sure thing, boss lady. I can find
some in the lobby, prob'ly.

Freddie leaves the room. Elena drops the bedspread, tosses
her head back, and sighs. Sophie smiles.

ELENA

Okay, so your actors at least are
from L.A., right?

SOPHIE

Well, nobody's *from* L.A. Everybody in
L.A. comes from--

ELENA

They *live* in L.A., right?

SOPHIE

Well, not all of 'em, but the main
actors, yeah. They're my roommates.

ELENA

You cast your roommates?

SOPHIE

Oh, come on, sis. You know. New York,
Hollywood...it's all about who ya
know. I know my roommates.

ELENA

Sure, that makes...perrrrfect sense.

SOPHIE

Cool.

ELENA

Remember when I said I wish I could've helped more with the preproduction? Well, I really, really wish I could've helped.

SOPHIE

Aw, no sweat, El. Glad to do it.

ELENA

"Elena."

At this point Freddie walks in with a coffee for Elena.

FREDDIE

One cafecito for...is it just "Elena," is that what you were sayin'?

ELENA

Just "Elena."

FREDDIE

I like Elly-Elena. Has a ring to it, like music: Elly-Elena! Elly-Elena!

ELENA

(ignoring Freddie)
Are your actor-roommates here? Or have they gone to the location?

FREDDIE

Your roommates are the actors? Awesome! This town, it's all about who you know, you know? And now I know you two! And you know me!

SOPHIE

Yeah, I was tellin' Ellie--
(off Elena's look)
Yeah, they're here. They've got the gear in their truck.

ELENA

Your actors brought the film gear?

SOPHIE

Sure. Can't expect the crew to bring it.

ELENA
(to herself, but
audible)
Don't kill your sister. Don't kill
your sister.

FREDDIE
Haha, Sophie! Your sister's funny!
Hey, that would be a good title for a
horror film: "Don't Kill Your
Sister."

Elena closes her eyes, squeezes the bridge of her nose.

SOPHIE
Look, we have our actors, we have our
crew, we have our gear, and our
location--which we got for free, by
the way. Let's go make something.

ELENA
Okay, I guess we can make...
something.

Elena starts to head for the car.

SOPHIE
Whoa, sis, we gotta turn our keys in
first.

ELENA
We're not staying here?

SOPHIE
No, we're staying at the ranch.
Saving all kinds of money, which we
then put into the production.

ELENA
Into the production? Your roommates
are the actors, your crew is from
LinkedIn, your location is free--your
location is free, really?--where is
there money in this production?

SOPHIE
Oooh...the money...is in...the
monster!

ELENA
Oh that's right, this is a horror
film. I can't wait to see the
monster.

FREDDIE

Oh, man, the monster is terror-rific!

ELENA

(weary)

I'm sure it is.

FREDDIE

Sophie, Sophie! Show Elly-Elena the picture of the monster!

Elena braces herself. Sophie takes out an iPad with a cracked screen, scrolls through a few photos. She shows it to Elena.

ELENA

This...this...you got this?...where'd you get this? This is your monster? This is incredible!

FREDDIE

I told you, it's terror-rific!

ELENA

Oh my god, Sophia, where did you get this? This is amazing! Is it here?

SOPHIE

The guy's putting on the finishing touches. It should be here tomorrow.

ELENA

Tomorrow? But it's coming, right?

SOPHIE

Yeah.

ELENA

Oh, Sophia, you and I are going to take your actors, and your crew-- whoever they are--and we are going to make a film! A horror film, but a film! With this monster!

SOPHIE

Woohoo!

FREDDIE

Woohoo! Terror-rific!

ELENA

Okay, I'm gonna go check out. You two load up Freddie's car, and I'll meet you. We are gonna make a horror film!

They all high-five. Elena even smacks hands with Freddie.

RIDE TO THE RANCH

INT. CAR - MORNING

ELENA

Wait, Sophia, what did you do to get this monster?

SOPHIE

I just know this guy.

ELENA

Oh no, Sophia, you didn't.

SOPHIE

No! He's just this cool guy I met in Starbucks. He's always doodling, and one day I commented on his drawings and we started talking. He does costumes for the big theatre productions when they come to town. He was in between jobs, and he loves making stuff like this, so...

ELENA

Oh, little sister, fate smiles upon you. No matter what else--if I have to do the camera work myself--we are going to make a movie. And with this monster--somehow--we are gonna make a good one!

FREDDIE

Yoohoo!

Sophie smiles, proud of herself.

PHIL WELCOMES THEM TO THE RANCH

EXT. RANCH ENTRANCE GATE

As they drive up, PHIL gets out of a pickup on the other side of the gate, unlocks the gate, and greets them when they get out of Freddie's car.

Phil! SOPHIE

Sophus! PHIL

Philzarino! SOPHIE

Sophie and Phil give each other a great big hug.

Sophus, how you been? PHIL

Great, Phil! Gonna shoot a movie, right? SOPHIE

If you say so! PHIL

I do, I do! Hey, Phil, this is my sister, Ellie. SOPHIE

"Elena." Hello, Phil. ELENA

Freddie mouths to himself: "Elly-Elena."

Nice to meet you, Ell-layna. PHIL
(grins)
Your sister says nice things about you, mostly.

Haha. SOPHIE

We, she should, I'm financing this thing. ELENA

Cool, so, where's the cash? PHIL

Phil puts out his hand, palm up. Elena is caught off guard.

Ha, just kidding! PHIL (cont'd)

SOPHIE
Yeah, Phil's working for a share of
the profits.

FREDDIE
Profits, yeah. Smart thinking.

ELENA
Oh...good.
(to Phil)
You must have a lot of faith in my
sister.

FREDDIE
I'm Freddie.

SOPHIE
Oh, I'm sorry. Phil, this is Freddie.
He loves horror films.

PHIL
Well, yeah man, who doesn't? Hey
Freddie!

FREDDIE
Philzarino!

ELENA
What's your crew position, Phil?

PHIL
Sound op!

ELENA
(to Sophie)
I thought you didn't know your crew.

SOPHIE
Oh, no, Phil I know.

ELENA
Good. Sound op is a crucial position.

FREDDIE
Crucial.

SOPHIE
I can't wait to meet the rest of the
crew.

PHIL

Yeah.
 (looking at his watch)
 Shouldn't they be here by now?

Elena looks around, sees only Phil's car.

ELENA

Shit, Sophia, where's your crew?

SOPHIE

Now, Phil.

Phil laughs.

PHIL

I'm sorry.
 (still chuckling)
 Sophus, your sister's so serious.
 (to Elena)
 They're up at the ranch, cooking
 breakfast. Come on, follow me up.

Phil gets in his truck. Sophie, Elena, and Freddie head for their car.

ELENA

(ironic)
 Your friend's a funny guy.

SOPHIE

Oh, good. I thought you might not get him.

FREDDIE

Breakfast, mmm!

MEETING RUSTY

The caretaker, RUSTY, 60-ish, greets them as they approach the nearest building.

RUSTY

Hey there! You must be the head honchos. I'm Rusty, the caretaker.

ELENA

Elena, producer.

SOPHIE

Sophie, director.

RUSTY

Nice ta meet ya, girls. Your people
are in there making breakfast.

FREDDIE

And Freddie. This place is cool.
Horrorific!

As they reach the building, there are some wind chimes
tinkling, even though there's no wind.

FREDDIE (cont'd)

Hey! These wind chimes are trinkling!

ELENA

So?

FREDDIE

But there's no wind.

RUSTY

Oh yeah, that.

(moving on)

So, about the rules.

ELENA

Yes, good. We want to make sure we
operate within whatever rules and
guidelines you might have.

RUSTY

Right. You don't wanna break the
rules. After all,

(chuckling)

this is a former boys training
center. We gotta have rules.

SOPHIE

I'm sure we'll be fine.

ELENA

What are the rules?

RUSTY

Well, there are a bunch of 'em. Too
many for me to remember, anymore.

ELENA

Do you have a list?

RUSTY

I think I have one in my office. You go ahead and get breakfast, and you can stop by and get the rules later.

FREDDIE

Mm, yeah! I'm hongry!

RUSTY

I'll be in my office. That building over there.

Rusty departs. They head into the building for breakfast.

BREAKFAST

Sophie, Elena, and Freddie enter the building where breakfast is happening. Some people are still eating, while others have finished.

SOPHIE

Hi everybody!

DONNIE

Hi Sophie!

JOANN

Hey Sophus!

A chorus of other greetings goes up.

SOPHIE

I'm Sophie, your director, and writer. This is my sister, Elena, she's producing for us, fresh from finishing a play on Broadway, New York New York!

ELENA

Off-Off Broadway.

Freddie holds up one hand, eager to announce himself, but also a bit shy in from of all these "movie people."

FREDDIE

I'm Freddie.

SOPHIE

Thank you all for coming. I hope you've had a little chance to get to know each other. And now if you could introduce yourselves. I know a few of you, of course, but introduce yourselves anyway, so everyone can know.

(MORE)

SOPHIE (cont'd)
Just say your name and what your
position is. Let's start over here.

PHIL
I'm Phil. I guess I'm your boom op.

CHINO
Fernando, but people call me Chino.
I'm the Wizard.

BRENDA
Brenda, I'm the gaffer. Maybe the
grip too, I'm not sure.

JOANN
I'm Joann, and I'm the lead actor.

DONNIE
Donnie, and I'm with her. I'm the
boyfriend.

JOANN
In the film.

DONNIE
And in real life.

ANGELA
Hi, I'm Angela, I'm the "Deep."

Angela holds up a camera to clarify that "Deep" means DP.

SOPHIE
Angela has done 48 films!

ANGELA
What? No I haven't.

SOPHIE
On your resume it said 48 films.

ANGELA
No, you must've misread that. I did a
48-hour Film Festival film. I really
appreciate being hired for this film.
People told me it would be hard to
get my first feature, but hey, here I
am!

FREDDIE
Hey, I'm Freddie, and I love horror
movies, and I'm here to do whatever
you guys need.

(MORE)

FREDDIE (cont'd)

You need something, you just say, "Hey Freddie, get me a cup of coffee," or "Hey Freddie, I'm hungry, what we got?" Lastly, I just wanna say how excited I am to be here with all you movie people, and I wanna thank Sophie and Elly-elena for letting me take part in this wonderful movie.

Rusty enters the room.

ELENA

Oh, Rusty, good timing. Everyone, this is Rusty. He's the caretaker.

RUSTY

Hi everybody. If you need anything done, just let me know, and I'll bring you the tools so you can do it yourself, haha.

PHIL

Uh, I've got a question, if I could?

ELENA

Sure.

SOPHIE

Go ahead, Phil.

PHIL

Yeah, my question is for Rusty.

WHY RANCH ABANDONED?

PHIL

Rusty, why was this place abandoned?

FREDDIE

Yeah, why there's no more delinquent boys here?

RUSTY

Well, that, gee, I don't know if I wanna go into all that. It's not a pleasant story.

SOPHIE

Oh, come on, Rusty. We wanna know the history of the place we're filming in.

RUSTY

Well, it just sucks, ya know,
because...it wasn't right. Everybody
who worked here lost their job. I
don't know where they sent the boys.
The ones who were left.

SOPHIE

The ones who were left?

FREDDIE

(eagerly)

What happened?

Everyone's ears perk up a little.

RUSTY

Well, shoot, I almost don't wanna
tell the story, 'cause me, myself, I
don't really know what to believe.

SOPHIE

Was it politics or something? Did
people not want the ranch here?

FREDDIE

Tell us, tell us.

RUSTY

Well, alright, but remember, I think
it's all bullshit. Then again, the
administrator of this place, she
don't belong in the nuthouse, that I
know for sure. She was a good lady.
Just as sane as you or I.

SOPHIE

Why'd they put her in the nuthouse?

RUSTY

Well, what they said...okay, this
part is true: three boys died.

SOPHIE

Oh no.

RUSTY

Yeah, three boys died. They were tore
up real bad, whaddya call, mutilated.

FREDDIE

Oh my God!

SOPHIE

Did they find out who did it?

RUSTY

Well, no, they never did find out.
But the administrator, she said she
saw it happen. Saw it kill one boy
and then turn on the other two when
they tried to help. Quick as a flash:
Slash, dead! Slash, dead! Slash,
slash, slash, dead!

FREDDIE

"It"?

SOPHIE

What did she see? Who killed them?

FREDDIE

You mean "what" did. What killed
those kids?

The room is deathly quiet, awaiting Rusty's answer. A smile
flickers over Phil's face.

RUSTY

I don't know what you'd call it, but
what the administrator said,...she
said it was eight, feet, tall.

FREDDIE

Whooooa. Was it a chupacabra?

Phil bursts out laughing, followed instantly by Rusty.

SOPHIE

Ohhhh, wait a minute. That's--

ELENA

That's your story you wrote in your
script. Sophus.

FREDDIE

Wow. I was really wanting to know
what happened.

ELENA

And you fell for it.

PHIL

I couldn't resist. I showed Rusty the
film's website and got him to tell
you guys that story.

(MORE)

PHIL (cont'd)

He added his own bit about the administrator ending up in the nuthouse, made it three boys instead of...what do you have, seven?

ELENA

Yeah, seven is a bit much, Sophie.

SOPHIE

Yeah, but did you see how he had everybody's attention? Man, we were rapt.

FREDDIE

Wrapped? Heck, we haven't even got started! This is a great story, wow!

Except for Elena, there is a general murmuring of agreement.

ELENA

(to herself)

Well, it's not Shakespeare, but I guess if it thrills the masses.

TARANTULAS AND BATS?

RUSTY

Are you guys gonna start shooting tomorrow?

SOPHIE

No, today, right now.

RUSTY

It's gonna take you a while to clear out the tarantulas and the bats first.

SOPHIE

Haha, no way. No, Rusty, you're not gonna get us twice. There aren't any tarantulas and bats. C'mon, everybody, let's go put our stuff in the dormitory. We can freshen up, and get our beds set out now, so we don't have to do that at the end of our shoot day.

CLEANUP TIME FIRST

They all enter the dormitory building. It's generally quite a mess.

SOPHIE

Well, this isn't too bad.

ELENA

We can set up cots and sleeping bags over there.

JOANN

Where are the bathrooms?

SOPHIE

Oh, yeah, their website said there are lots of them. Because this was a dormitory, so lots of toilets, no problem having to wait or share.

ELENA

It looks like they're over here.

SOPHIE

And showers too. Several.

They enter the entrance to the bathroom and shower area. The floor is indeed covered with dead tarantulas and small dead bats.

ELENA

Oh shit.

FREDDIE

Wow, cool. Rusty wasn't lying.

They walk gingerly through the main room, toward the toilets and showers, trying not to step on dead creatures. They see a row of urinals, filthy with rust and age, and some toilet stalls beyond those, one of whose door lies on the floor.

JOANN

Shit.

DONNIE

Damn.

FREDDIE

This isn't good.

ANGELA

Come on, people, we're here to shoot a film. We didn't expect a spa.

BRENDA

You can say that again.

SOPHIE

I'm so sorry. The website just said "lots of toilets and showers." It didn't show pictures.

ELENA

All right, people, Angela's right, we're here to shoot a film. Somebody's gotta clean this up. Who are my volunteers, aside from Sophia?

SOPHIE

Wha?

ELENA

You wanna be a director, Sophia, you have to lead. You have to show them you're not afraid to get your hands dirty.

SOPHIE

But I *am* afraid to get my hands dirty!

All eyes are on Sophie.

SOPHIE (cont'd)

What about you?

ELENA

I'm invoking producer's prerogative.

SOPHIE

What the hell is producer's prerogative?

ELENA

It means I put up the money for this movie, so there's certain shit—pun very much intended—that I don't have to deal with. So, Sophia, you are the director. Lead.

SOPHIE

Okay, alright. I'll sweep up the bats and the tarantulas, but I can't do the toilets. Please.

FREDDIE

I'll clean 'em. Whatever I can do to help this movie get made, that's what I'll do.

ELENA

Wow, Freddie. Okay, anybody else willing to help Freddie with the toilets?

ANGELA

I'll help. C'mon, Freddie, let's go ask Rusty for some cleaning supplies.

ELENA

Thanks, you two.

SOPHIE

Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Angela and Freddie go to find Rusty.

ELENA

Okay, everyone else, find something to do. If you're not cleaning, then sweep or carry out the larger debris.

PHIL

If I can get some tools I can probably fix that stall door.

Chino is over by the showers.

CHINO

These aren't too bad. I can clean these.

DONNIE

Here's a dustpan. I can help Sophie.

ELENA

Anybody who's not cleaning the bathrooms can clean up the sleeping area and set up the cots and sleeping bags.

People begin moving around looking for ways to help.

SOPHIE

So, what are you going to do?

ELENA

I'm going to town to buy some beer
for when you guys are done.

(to the group)

Everybody, I'm going to town, so let
me know what else you need for
cleaning that you can't find here.
But first ask Rusty to see if we have
it here. I'll be outside on the
bench. Come see me and I'll add your
stuff to my list.

Elena goes outside. The wind chime tinkles. She looks to see
if there is a wind. No. But was there a moment ago?

DID ANYONE DIE HERE?

Elena is sitting within sight of the wind chimes, gazing in
that direction. Rusty is passing by with a fence rail. She
hails him.

ELENA

That was quite a trick you pulled on
everyone.

RUSTY

Yeah, sorry, that was Phil's idea.

ELENA

Nah, that's alright. I wish it wasn't
true about the tarantulas and bats,
though.

RUSTY

Yeah, I just had no reason to clean
that up before. Keeping the grounds
up and the buildings from falling
apart is my main priority.

ELENA

That story got me wondering,
though...

RUSTY

Yeah? What?

ELENA

Did anyone really ever die here at
the ranch?

RUSTY

Uh, I heard a story, but I'm not sure. I could check the records in the office.

ELENA

No, that's okay. It's not relevant, really. Just curious, kinda. If it was something we could work into our story--which isn't really a strong story.

RUSTY

Do you have any T&A in the film?

ELENA

What? Oh, no, we're not going to stoop to that.

RUSTY

That would make it better, wouldn't it? I mean for getting distribution?

ELENA

Well, it's not really within my ethos, if you know what I mean.

RUSTY

Not really, but I'm guessing it means you don't like that kinda stuff.

ELENA

Yeah. Besides, our actors just broke up, so we're lucky to have them on set, let alone ask them to get naked with each other. Which I wouldn't do anyway.

RUSTY

But isn't your sister the writer-director?

ELENA

Yes, but I'm the producer. Besides, they're her roommates, so I think it would be kinda creepy for her.

RUSTY

Well, I gotta go fix a fence.

Rusty starts to leave.

WIND CHIMES QUESTION

ELENA

That was weird about the wind chimes,
though.

RUSTY

Yeah. That happens a lot.

ELENA

How much is "a lot"?

RUSTY

You know. Everyone once in a while.
But I've seen it do it like three or
four times today, though.

ELENA

Hmm.

RUSTY

Story idea?

ELENA

Oh, yeah, story idea.

RUSTY

Okay, catch you later.

ELENA

Yeah.

Elena stares at the wind chimes. They move, but there is
also a slight breeze. Are they moving too much for the
breeze?

ROOF SHOT

The crew is gathered for a simple shot of the car, with
Donnie and Joann inside, approaching the ranch. Elena
returns from her trip to town.

ELENA

I'm back!

SOPHIE

Oh, just in time for our first shot.

ELENA

You're done with the cleanup already?

SOPHIE
 Freddie and Brenda are still
 cleaning, but we don't need a gaffer
 for this shot.

ELENA
 Okay. Well, sounds like a simple,
 straightforward shot.

On the back side of the building, Chino is on a ladder just
 getting onto the roof. Rusty, down below, holds the ladder.

SOPHIE
 Yup.

ELENA
 Check in with me before you start the
 next shot, okay?

SOPHIE
 Sis, come on. I know what I'm doing.

ELENA
 I'll go inside and start cooking up
 some dinner.

Elena heads toward the building. Just as she enters, Chino
 crests the roof's centerline and settles in to sit cross-
 legged in view of the camera. Rusty now arrives at the top
 of the ladder, still on the back side, but he can see Chino.

The crew is ready.

SOPHIE
 Okay, everyone, let's get ready!
 Donnie! When I raise my arm up, you
 drive forward!

Donnie gives two short honks of the horn in acknowledgment.

SOPHIE (cont'd)
 Angela, have you got Chino in the
 frame?

ANGELA
 Yup.

SOPHIE
 Okay, let's do it.

They do the "camera rolling" protocol. Sophie raises her
 arm, and the car pulls forward.

On the roof, we hear a creak, then a loud CRACK as a weak spot in the roof opens up and Chino disappears through it!

In the kitchen, Elena hears the CRASH in the dormitory room, as Chino lands. She runs to investigate. The crew, being farther away, doesn't hear the crash.

ANGELA
I just lost Chino. He's not in the shot anymore.

SOPHIE
Well, get him back in the frame.

ANGELA
No, I mean he's not there. He's gone.

Elena appears at the door of the building.

ELENA
SOPHIAAAA!

SOPHIE
Oops.

ANGELA
I think I know what happened to Chino.

ELENA
Get a first aid kit!

Sophie and Angela run toward the building. Seeing they're coming, Elena disappears back inside.

Sophie and Angela arrive in the dormitory section to find Chino crashed onto a broken cot with sleeping bags scattered around.

ELENA (cont'd)
Where's the first aid kit?!

Chino is bleeding on one side of his face. Freddie dashes in with a first aid kit.

FREDDIE
I heard the crash. I had this in my car.

Elena takes it from him, digs into it.

SOPHIE
Chino, I'm so sorry!

ELENA

Sophia, what was Chino doing on the roof? We're so sorry, Chino.

Elena starts cleaning off the wound.

SOPHIE

I thought it would be a good shot. You know, foreshadowing, spooky. Him watching them from the roof as they arrive.

ELENA

There's such a thing as safety considerations on a shoot, you know.

(to Chino)

Can you stand up?

CHINO

I think so. Lemme see.

(he stands)

Yeah. Qué milagro, estoy bien.

ELENA

Okay, sit back down.

CHINO

I'm okay.

ELENA

No, Chino, you've got a huge slash on your face.

CHINO

Hm. That should look good for the movie, then. Spooky, like Sophie says.

ELENA

Chino, I can't believe you're being so good about this. Don't worry, we'll get you to a doctor.

CHINO

Can I see it?

Angela hands him a mirror. Chino inspects it.

CHINO (cont'd)

Oh, no, really, it's not bad. I've had worse than this.

ELENA

Well, we need to get you to a doctor.

CHINO

No, it's okay, really. It's not deep. Besides, I'm a character actor, and this gives me more character. It'll look good on camera, right Angie?

ANGELA

Uh, well,...actually it will, yeah.

Sophie smiles at this news, but Elena shoots her a look of disapproval and she straightens up.

ELENA

Can someone start lunch?

CHINO

Sure.

ELENA

No, not you, Chino.

CHINO

No, I'm okay, really. I'll do it. Freddie, can you help me?

FREDDIE

Sure.

ELENA

Freddie, you make lunch, take Chino with you. Keep an eye on him and make sure he's okay.

FREDDIE

Okay.

ELENA

The rest of you: Out.

Everyone leaves but Elena and Sophie.

ELENA (cont'd)

All I can say is, thank God I'm here. What's next on your shot list?

SOPHIE

"Shot list"?

ELENA

Aaargh.

LUNCH DAY 1

People are starting to eat, and Freddie and Brenda are making lunch for the rest. Elena and Sophie enter the room.

ELENA

Freddie, can you give me and Sophie some cheese and crackers real quick?

FREDDIE

Sure.

ELENA

And a couple of oranges. Thanks.

Freddie fulfills her request. Elena starts to leave the dining area.

ELENA (cont'd)

Okay, bring your script.

SOPHIE

Uh...

(to the room)

Has anybody seen my script?!

Murmurs, but no affirmative replies.

ELENA

Forget it, we'll use mine.

SHOT PLANNING D1

ELENA

Since elementary school, Sophia. And still. I have to clean up your messes for you.

SOPHIE

It's not like I don't appreciate it.

ELENA

You're not supposed to appreciate it. You're supposed to not make messes in the first place.

Sophie offers a weak smile.

ELENA (cont'd)

Did you at least get the shot of the car approaching?

SOPHIE

Yes.

ELENA

Okay then, let's get a simple walk-through of the place, with your actors talking about why they're here.

SOPHIE

Brenda might still be working on cleanup with Freddy.

ELENA

That's okay. If some of the shots are a little dark, it'll just look creepy. Go call your crew back from lunch.

Sophie leaves.

NEW INTRO FOR THE WIZARD

The crew are assembled and ready. Elena is the last to arrive.

ANGELA

We gonna do the walk-through now?

ELENA

Hold on. Sophia, your monster has claws, right?

SOPHIE

Right.

ELENA

And it attacks Donnie's character first?

SOPHIE

Yeah.

ELENA

But what if it attacks the wizard first?

SOPHIE

It doesn't attack the wizard.

ELENA

It does now.

SOPHIE

The wizard doesn't show up until the second act.

ELENA

If we have them meet the wizard in the first act, and he gets slashed by the monster, we can use that gash Chino got this morning.

SOPHIE

Cool!

ELENA

No, Sophia, it is not cool. One of your actors got hurt. But, we are going to use it. We'll shoot all of Chino's scenes in sequence, then the audience will see the wound healing into a scar, and it'll work.

ANGELA

We could get a close-up right now while Chino's face is still bloody.

ELENA

Yes! Good thinking, Angela!

PHIL

But we don't have our monster yet.

ELENA

That's okay. The first time you have a monster appear in a movie, you never show the monster, you just show evidence of the monster.

ANGELA

We can shoot Chino from the side, and have him turn into the shot as we see the claw slash at him.

SOPHIE

Perfect!

ELENA

Okay, somebody to get Chino.

DONNIE

On it!

ELENA
The rest of you, go look for
something we can use as a monster
claw.

The remaining actors and crew go on that mission.

CLAWING THE WIZARD - I

The crew is set to shoot. Chino arrives.

CHINO
Ready and able!

PHIL
Chino, you're still bleeding.

SOPHIE
Good.

CHINO
Whoa. Heartless lady.

SOPHIE
No, no, let me explain. See, Elena
came up with the idea that we can use
your gash, to shoot a scene where the
monster slashes you.

CHINO
Cool.

ELENA
You're such a good sport, Chino.

CHINO
Of course. I'm an actor. What do you
need?

ELENA
We need you to get clawed—fake this
time, I assure you.

CHINO
Okay, yeah. Fake is better.

Donnie arrives with a fireplace poker.

DONNIE
Hey, look what I found. This'll make
a great claw.

Joann runs up with a three-pronged hand garden tool.

JOANN
Got something!

DONNIE
Mine's bigger.

JOANN
That sounds familiar.

SOPHIE
Okay, how do we block this?

ELENA
We need to have Chino turn his face
just as the claw swings by.

JOANN
Like this?

Joann swings her clawed garden tool. Chino snaps his head sharply out of the way.

DONNIE
No, like this.

Donnie swings the fireplace poker, and Chino quickly snaps back the other way.

PHIL
That looked really cool.

ELENA
No, no, no! We already wounded the
poor guy. We don't want to finish him
off.

ANGELA
We can just use shadows. That way
Chino isn't in danger of being hit.

CHINO
I like the way this girl thinks.

ANGELA
We can use the garden tool.

ELENA
Right. Okay, so we do need a lights
and a gaffer. Donnie, go get Brenda.
Then go put that fireplace poker back
where you found it.

DONNIE

Okay. But if you decide you need it,
let me know.

ELENA

We won't. Trust me.

ANGELA

Chino, the way you swung out of the
way looked really good. Really
natural.

CHINO

I've had some practice with that.
When I was younger.

CLAWING THE WIZARD - II

Brenda and Freddie are back. Chino is standing with the non-slashed side of his face toward the camera. Brenda is repositioning the lights.

ANGELA

Okay, that's better.

SOPHIE

Okay, Chino, this time run into the
frame. When I yell "SLASH," Freddie
is going to swing the claw down--
three feet away from you--and at that
same instant you swing your head like
you've been hit.

They run the scene. The claw shadow on the wall syncs perfectly, and as Chino swings his head it looks like his cheek has been freshly slashed. BUT...Phil has decided to walk and track Chino, and he trips and falls just before Chino "gets slashed." CRASH! [LATER, in the edit, since Phil is not in the shot, this will actually make a great sound effect of the monster "crashing through" something. They'll find this when they notice that the boom is in the frame on what they think is the good take.]

SOPHIE (cont'd)

Chino, good. Phil, what are you
doing?

CHINO

You okay, Phil?

Phil dusts himself off and gets up.

PHIL
Yeah, thanks. Uh, I'd thought I'd walk along with him, to get better sound.

ANGELA
Not necessary, Phil. Just be in position.

PHIL
Okay.

Phil gets into position. They run it again. Again the shadow claw syncs with Chino's face and it looks great.

ANGELA
Got it.

SOPHIE
Excellent!

ELENA
Okay, good work. We should probably save the walk-through shot for dusk.

SOPHIE
We don't need to worry about losing light?

ELENA
No. It's a simple shot, we should be able to do it in one take--two max.

A COMPLETE DISASTER - 1ST DAY SUMMARY

NOTE: I'll write some scenes before this where almost every crew member screws up--especially Phil at boom op, and Donnie and Joann's scenes are fraught with tension because they're not getting along.

Shooting is done after a very rough first day.

JOANN
Okay, listen up, everyone! I think we all know how our first day went.

FREDDIE
It was awesome!

ELENA
I think *most* of us know how our first day went. And it was not good.

SOPHIE
Well, it wasn't a total disaster.

FREDDIE
It was fun to watch!

ELENA
In fact, it as a complete disaster. I would like to simply fire everyone, except for the fact that you're all doing this for free--

SOPHIE
Which we deeply appreciate.

ELENA
So I guess technically you were never really hired.

SOPHIE
El, they're the only crew we have.

ELENA
And my sister reminds me, that you're the only crew we have.

FREDDIE
Our monster is awesome!

ELENA
And since I spent all my savings on this monster, which will be arriving in the morning. And I have to say, the photo does look amazing.

FREDDIE
It's terror-rific!

ELENA
I'm going to try to forget all this happened, and start fresh in the morning.

THE SHUFFLE

The cast and crew, and Rusty, are eating breakfast. Elena enters, with her laptop open.

ELENA
Okay, listen up! I have some ideas that maybe--just maybe--will allow us to get this film made.

FREDDIE
Yay!

Elena shoots him a look to dampen his enthusiasm.

ELENA

I am going to shuffle some people to different positions. Angela: great job. You are still our DP. Chino: you are still our wizard. Brenda: I will take over the lighting. I've done it for plays, I can do it for film. Your one and only and very important job will be...to tape down the freaking cables, so no one trips. Which brings me to Phil—the man who puts the “boom” in “boom operator.” Phil is now our actor, because Joann and Donnie are like squabbling children and I have to separate them. Donnie, you are now the boom operator.

SOPHIE

What about the scenes we already shot with Donnie? We can't afford to waste those.

ELENA

Right you are, Sophia. We will keep the scenes we shot of Joann and Donnie, and now that we have the monster we will shoot a scene in which it kills Donnie. This will add another death to our horror film, thus making it 10% more horrible.

FREDDIE

(quietly)
Horror-rific.

ELENA

Sophia will write a new scene where Phil's character enters and consoles Joann, and from that point on Phil's character will take over Donnie's character's lines. Can you do that, Sophia?

SOPHIE

Sure. I'm still directing, right?

ELENA

Yes. Aside from almost killing Chino, you've been doing fine. And I can give you a hand when you need it.

DONNIE

What if Phil falls down during his scenes?

ELENA

If a boom operator falls, it's bad. If an actor falls, it will add dramatic tension. Fall all you want to, Phil.

PHIL

Okay.

ELENA

Try to do it when there's a monster in the scene. Freddie, I'm going to need some help with the lights.

FREDDIE

Cool! I'm officially a filmmaker! What's my title?

SOPHIE

Grip?

ELENA

No, he's got zero experience. We're not calling him a grip.

SOPHIE

Okay, then, Best Boy Grip.

FREDDIE

Yoo-hoo! I'm going to be the best Best Boy Grip ever.

ELENA

I hope so. Any other questions?

BRENDA

Do I get a title?

SOPHIE

How about Best Boy Electric?

FREDDIE

(to Brenda)
We're the best!

BRENDA

We're the best Best Boys!

RUSTY
I got a question.

ELENA
Shoot, Rusty.

RUSTY
Do you mind if I take some pictures
on my phone?

ELENA
Sure. I noticed you've been taking
some.

RUSTY
Yeah, a few. I just really like film
stuff.

ELENA
Alright, Rusty will be our official
set photographer, to document this
experience, for better or worse. So
when we're done we will know who is
to blame for what.

FREDDIE
Or who to congratulate.

ELENA
Anything is possible. Our monster
will be arriving within the hour, so
I am hopeful.

Upon hearing that the monster is coming, a chorus of Yay's
goes up from the cast and crew.

SOPHIE
Thank you, everyone, for sticking
with us. I'm sure now that we've got
the right people in the right
positions we can make this work!

ELENA
Our scenes today are in Building 2.
Meet us there in 15 minutes.

Elena and Sophie leave. The rest continue with breakfast.

MONSTER AND ZARA ARRIVE

BUILDING #2

Elena and Sophie are blocking the shots. Joann and Donnie are there too.

ELENA

Okay, so we need to find a window for the monster to peek its head in.

SOPHIE

Big Red.

ELENA

What?

SOPHIE

That's the name of the monster.

ELENA

That's not in the script.

SOPHIE

That's what Zara calls it. She says it's a she, and she calls it Big Red.

ELENA

Ooo-kay.

Rusty peeks in.

RUSTY

Just got a call. Zara's at the gate.

SOPHIE

Great! Monster's here!

ELENA

Great. Go let her in, please, Rusty.
(to herself)
I just hope it's as good as it looks in the photo.

SOPHIE

She will be.

ELENA

Big Red is a "she"?

SOPHIE

Sure, why not?

DONNIE
I didn't see any tits in the photo.

SOPHIE
That was the prototype. I had Zara
add tits afterward.

ELENA
Nooo. Sophie, please, no. You're
joking, right?

SOPHIE
(smiles)
Let's go greet her.

Sophie steps outside, as Angela pokes her head in through a
window.

ELENA
(to herself)
No tits, please. No tits, please.

ANGELA
I thought your sister was the weird
one. Is this the window the monster
pokes its head through?

ELENA
We'll find out in a minute just how
weird my sister is. Have you ever
seen a monster with tits?

ANGELA
No. That would be a whole different
kind of scary.

DONNIE
On the other hand, it could attract
some viewers.

JOANN
Perv.

DONNIE
Not me. Just "some viewers."

ELENA
Yeah, that's the window.

Elena walks outside.

ELENA (cont'd)
 (to herself)
 I don't wanna have to kill my sister.
 Half sister.

Freddie, Chino, and Phil are arriving from breakfast cleanup as Rusty pulls up in his truck, followed by Zara in her pickup truck. In her truck is an 8-foot-tall red monster, just as cool as what was in the photo. A chorus of hoots and hollers of appreciation arise from the group. Zara, 22, petite, gets out of her pickup.

ZARA
 Hi, I'm Zara. And this...
 (she points to the
 monster)
 is Big Red!

More "Wows" from the group.

SOPHIE
 She is absolutely amazing, Zara!

ELENA
 Incredible!

FREDDIE
 It's horror-rific! I bet people on
 the freeway were freaking out!

ZARA
 No, I kept her tied down under a tarp
 for the ride up here. Rusty helped me
 take the tarp off down at the gate so
 she could make a grand entrance.

ANGELA
 This is the coolest thing I've ever
 seen.

ELENA
 And she doesn't have tits.

ZARA
 Oh I'm sorry, did you want tits on
 her? If you look close, past the fur,
 she actually does have small mounds
 there. I could probably pad those out
 and groom the fur a little
 differently--

ELENA
 No!

ZARA

She is a "she," after all.

ANGELA

It would be a cinematic first.

FREDDIE

Nah, it's been done a few times.

ELENA

No T&A in my movie. Not the actresses, not the monster. Ugh! Okay, we need some hands up there to get it down.

FREDDIE

Me! Me! Me!

BRENDA

I'll help.

PHIL

I'll help.

ELENA

Mr. "Boom"? No, I don't think so.

Rusty hops up into the truck's cargo bed. Donnie climbs up too, then Freddie and Brenda. They start moving it off the truck.

DONNIE

It's pretty light, actually.

ZARA

I designed it that way, since I'll be the person inside it.

SOPHIE

Oh, that's great. We won't have to use up a crew member to operate it.

ZARA

Nope. We're a complete package.

Elena shakes Zara's hand. Sophie gives Zara a big hug.

SOPHIE

You have saved our film.

ZARA

Hey, I'm pretty excited to be able to put Big Red to work so soon.

(MORE)

ZARA (cont'd)

I've been working on her for six weeks, and it was a bit of a crunch to finish her for your shoot. Sorry I couldn't have her here yesterday.

ELENA

It's okay. We would've destroyed her yesterday.

ZARA

What?

SOPHIE

We didn't have a good day. But that is all in the past. We switched our crew around and now we're in good shape.

ZARA

Okay, so where do you need her? Where's her first scene?

ELENA

In this building here.

(to the group)

Okay, everyone! Come on inside and let's get started.

Big Red is going through the doorway now. The people carrying it angle it downward to get it through without banging its head. The rest of the cast and crew follow them in.

BIG RED TAKE 1

The shot is set up. The monster is off camera.

SOPHIE

Okay, on "action," Phil and Joann walk through the room slowly, a little on edge, then after a five-count, Big Red, you poke your head through the window.

ZARA

(off camera)

Got it!

Crew does the "rolling" routine.

SOPHIE

And..."Action!"

Phil and Joann start to walk, saying their lines.

PETER
This place is kinda spooky.

JENNIFER
Scaredy cat.

Big Red pokes through the window, waving its head around.

ZARA
Raaar! RAAAR!

Phil startles. Chuckles go up from the crew.

SOPHIE
Cut! Zara, no.

ZARA
"No" what?

SOPHIE
No roaring.

ZARA
Did I roar? I didn't roar. Did I?

SOPHIE
Yeah, hon, you did.

ZARA
I guess I was excited. I've been roaring all week in my apartment.

SOPHIE
Yeah, cool, but no. No roars here. We'll do that in post.

ZARA
Yeah, of course. Sorry.

SOPHIE
No harm done. I want another take for Joann anyway. Joann, make fun of him, but lovingly.

JOANN
Got it.
(to Phil, snickering)
You startled. She went "RAAR" and you were scared.

PHIL
No, *my character* was scared, because
he just saw a monster.

JOANN
Sophie, do we see the monster?

SOPHIE
No, the audience does, but you guys
don't.

JOANN
(to Phil)
Haha!

SOPHIE
Reset, please!

They reset. Crew does the "rolling" routine.

SOPHIE (cont'd)
And..."Action!"

Phil and Joann start to walk.

"PETER"
This is kinda spooky.

"JENNIFER"
Scaredy cat.

Big Red pokes through the window, waving its head around.

SOPHIE
Cut!

ZARA
(in fun)
RAAAR!

JOANN
RAAAR!

Phil pretends to startle, then:

PHIL
RAAAR!

FREDDIE
RAAAAAR!

SOPHIE

Okay, good job, everyone. Let's set up for the next shot.

ELENA

That's page 12, where Joann gets clawed.

SOPHIE

Right.

They are ready for the shot.

SOPHIE (cont'd)

Okay, so Phil, when the monster comes through the door behind you, you hear it, you turn and see it, and you just you take off running.

JOANN

Typical.

SOPHIE

You don't take the time to warn Jennifer, who doesn't see the monster. Joann, you catch on too late, so by the time you do start to run, Big Red grabs you by the shoulder. It claws your sweater, but your sweater comes off, and you get away.

JOANN

Got it.

ZARA

Got it!

SOPHIE

Okay, ready?

Crew does the "rolling" routine.

SOPHIE (cont'd)

And...Action!

"JENNIFER"

Your problem, Peter, is you worry too much.

Big Red appears, Peter sees it, and takes off running. Just as Jennifer starts to run, Big Red grabs her sweater, and she lurches forward. But her sweater doesn't come off.

Instead, Big Red's claw sticks to her sweater and its whole hand comes off.

SOPHIE

Cut!

ZARA

Oh no! I'm so sorry! I don't know how that happened. Too much stress on the wrist joint, I guess.

ANGELA

With the angle I shot, we didn't really see that anyway.

ZARA

I can fix it. I'll fix it. It's not too hard.

ANGELA

We can do an insert shot later of the claw on the sweater.

SOPHIE

Don't worry about it, Zara. We know you rushed to just get Big Red here in time, and we appreciate that. We'll work around it.

ELENA

Okay, we can do the shot right after that. Peter trips over a timber beam and falls, and Jennifer sprints past him.

PHIL

Typical.

ELENA

So now Big Red comes after Phil. Angela, can you keep that right claw out of the shot?

ANGELA

Sure, if Zara keeps her arm by her side instead of swinging it when she runs.

ZARA

Will do.

SOPHIE

Okay, let's run it.

They set up the shot. Crew does the "rolling" routine.

SOPHIE (cont'd)

And...Action!

Phil runs and falls, Joann sprints past him and out a side door. Big Red runs toward Phil, who gets up, runs into another room and slams the door behind him. Big Red slams up against the door. But in the last couple steps its tail snags on a nail in the beam, and the tail tears and comes off.

SOPHIE (cont'd)

Cut!

ZARA

Wow, that was fun! Was that good? Do we go again?

FREDDIE

Your tail came off!

Zara spins around to look at her tail.

ZARA

Oh no, oh no, oh no!

ELENA

Angela, what was the framing on that?

ANGELA

Tail wasn't in it. We're good.

ZARA

I can fix it, I can. I'm sorry. I was under so much pressure to finish on time.

SOPHIE

It's okay, hon. We got the shot. You did great. Phil, Joann, great job.

ZARA

I didn't roar? 'Cause in my head I did, I was so excited.

DONNIE

(chuckling)

Nope. No roar.

ANGELA

Looked very scary on camera. Good energy.

DONNIE
Sound was good.

ELENA
Okay, moving on!

MONSTER'S HEAD KNOCKED OFF

Freddie is running around with Big Red's tail against his butt, pretending to be a monster.

FREDDIE
RAAR! RAAAR!

ELENA
Okay, Freddie, knock it off! I need you to help me move the lights.

Freddie stops messing around, and hands the tail to Zara, who already has her hands/claws outstretched to receive it.

SOPHIE
(to Zara)
Well?

ZARA
It's a clean tear. The sewing pattern was spaced too far apart. But I've got some nice thick thread in the truck. I can fix it.

SOPHIE
Great. No harm, no foul.

ELENA
Okay, next scene! Setup.

ANGELA
Frame the tail out of the shot?

ELENA
Right. No tail, no right claw. Okay, with this shot we're building suspense. The characters don't see the monster coming, but the audience does. Phil and Joann are over in that room, and Big Red, you're at the end of this room.

SOPHIE
You okay, Zara?

ZARA

Yeah. I'm trying my best, really I am.

SOPHIE

We know, hon. Our deadline put you under a lot of pressure, I know. Don't worry. We'll be okay.

Zara walks to the other end of the room into position.

ELENA

So, Zara, you're going to go from the end of this room, to the doorway of the room where Phil and Joann are, and then through the doorway.

ZARA

Do you want me to attack them?

ELENA

No, we'll get that in a close shot. Just go to the doorway and through it a couple steps.

ANGELA

So, you'll want me in the room where Phil and Joann are?

ELENA

Right. To shoot Big Red as it runs toward the doorway and through it.

Angela moves into position in the other room, along with Phil and Joann.

SOPHIE

Can we do a walk-through on this one?

ELENA

Absolutely. I was going to. Donnie, can you make sure there is nothing in Big Red's path?

DONNIE

On it.

Donnie takes a broom and clears away even the smallest debris from the path.

SOPHIE

Brenda, all cables secured?

BRENDA
Taped and double-checked.

ELENA
Okay, Zara, walk it through half
speed. From where you are to just
inside their doorway.

ZARA
Ready!

ANGELA
Framing for no claw, no tail. Okay,
I'm good.

SOPHIE
Rehearsal, Action!

Zara does a fast-walk to just through the doorway. Big Red's
head just clears the top of the door frame.

SOPHIE (cont'd)
Okay, that looked good. Angela?

ANGELA
Good here.

ELENA
Okay, running it for real this time.

Crew does their "Rolling" routine.

SOPHIE
Okay, Zara, really run this time.

ZARA
Gotcha!

SOPHIE
And...Action!

Zara runs across the room, full speed. Big Red looks great,
with a bounding motion this time instead of a smooth, level,
gait. Bounding so much, in fact, that when it hits the
doorway, at the height of its bound it is a few inches too
tall for the doorway. One second before impact, everyone but
Zara--whose head is at chest level in the monster suit--sees
the inevitable. BOOM! Big Red's head hits the top of the
door and falls off backward! Reeling from the impact on the
suit--but luckily, not on her head--Zara/Big Red staggers a
bit and stumbles through the doorway, headless.

CHINO
Oh, now, that's not good.

ANGELA
Got it. I guess.

SOPHIE
Oh no.

FREDDIE
Ohhhh no.

ELENA
Zara, are you alright?

SOPHIE
Zara, honey?

A full three seconds of silence, then small sobs start to come from Zara, quickly building to big sobs, as cast and crew go over and give Big Red a big group hug to comfort her.

SOPHIE (cont'd)
It's okay, Zara.

ANGELA
It's okay, Zara. We'll work through it.

BRENDA
There, there, Zara. You can fix it, I know you can.

After a moment, Zara's sobbing slows down and finally stops.

ELENA
Okay, everybody. Not the end of the world.

One more big wail from Zara.

ELENA (cont'd)
We'll be okay. Chino, you take Big Red's tail and go with Zara back to the staging area. Everybody else, we're going to get some shots with just Phil and Joann.

Freddie picks up Big Red's head and hands it to Zara. Chino carries the tail, and the two of them sadly troop back to the staging area. Zara muffles soft sobs.

CHINO

It's okay, sweetheart. Tomorrow will be better.

MONTAGE OF CREW SHOOTING

They shoot some shots with just Phil and Joann.

RAIN ON THE MONSTER

EVENING AFTER THE SECOND DAY'S SHOOT.

Cast and crew are hanging out outside one of the buildings.

ELENA

Are we good with Big Red for tomorrow? She looks great on film, and overall we ended up with some shots we can use, but...

ZARA

I didn't really have time at home to test her out with running and other movements. But don't worry, I'm going to take her for a test run right now. if anything goes wrong, I'll fix it tonight.

SOPHIE

Great. We love Big Red! And you. You're fabulous, Zara.

ZARA

(blushing)

Thanks. Well, off I go.

Zara, in the monster suit, is walking around a spacious area in between the buildings. People come out to play with it, pretending to tease it so it'll chase them.

BRENDA

Hey monster, betcha can't get me!

Freddie runs around in circles around the monster.

FREDDIE

Over here, monster! No, over here!

Zara gets in the spirit of things and starts to chase at the two of them, in turn, pivoting one way, then the other. Freddie runs off about fifty yards.

SOPHIE
 (from afar)
 How's it going?!

ZARA
 So far, so good!

BRENDA
 Freddie, you're too far. Come back!

ZARA
 No, it's okay, I want to test her out
 running a little.

Zara/Big Red takes off after Freddie, and Brenda follows. It starts to rain.

BRENDA
 Hey, it's raining.

ZARA
 It is? I can't feel it.

Freddie sprints away another ten yards. Zara lunges after him and lurches down and onto one knee.

BRENDA
 We should go inside.

ELENA
 (from afar, joking)
 Kids, come on inside, it's raining!

Freddie runs around in circles around Zara/Big Red again.

FREDDIE
 Can't catch me! Can't catch me!

Zara/Big Red spins in circles as Freddie runs around her.

BRENDA
 Serious, guys, we need to go inside.

Freddie keeps running in circles. The rain starts coming down hard now.

ZARA
 I'm trying.

Zara/Big Red keeps spinning in circles. Elena and Sophie get up from their seats and take a few steps in the direction of "Zara/Big Red.

ELENA

Zara, come on! Maybe you can't feel it, but it's raining really hard now. Get indoors!

ZARA

I'm trying! The left hip joint is broken. I can't move the left leg forward!

She keeps spinning in circles, making small progress in the direction of the building, like a tornado making a slow path forward as it spins.

SOPHIE

Phil! Donnie! Guys! Let's go help Zara get back!

Several crew reach Zara/Big Red. They give her a big push, but only succeed in knocking her over. Rusty joins them. The rain pours down harder as they manage to get her upright.

ELENA

Phil, Donnie, you grab the left leg. Brenda, Dusty, grab the right leg. I'll lead her by the neck to make sure she doesn't fall over. Freddie, make sure there's nothing in our path.

They lift Zara/Big Red so she's horizontal head to tail and slowly manage to move her back to under a portico, out of the rain.

ELENA (cont'd)

Okay, good. Zara, you're on the patio, out of the rain. Can you see?

They get her upright again.

ZARA

Yeah, now I can. How bad is it? I mean, how wet?

SOPHIE

Not too bad.

PHIL

You're pretty soaked.

ZARA

Oh no!

FREDDIE

It'll dry.

ZARA

I'm so sorry, you guys.

SOPHIE

Don't worry, Zara. It'll be okay.
We'll just wait until it dries.

ELENA

Can you fix the hip?

ZARA

Yeah. It's the undercarriage. I'll
just need a wrench, and I brought
some with me.

SOPHIE

Alright then. It's just a setback,
not a disaster.

ZARA

Thanks, you guys.

SOPHIE

Sure, hey, we're a team. You made an
amazing monster, and we're thrilled
to have you both.

FREDDIE

Haha, "both." She means you and the
monster. I get it.

The rain has stopped.

BRENDA

Hey, the rain stopped.

ELENA

Okay good. Let's grab some firewood
and make a fire in the fire pit.

CAMPFIRE

Cast and crew are hanging out at the campfire. Phil and
Brenda come out with an improvised drying rack they built.
Freddie accompanies them.

FREDDIE

Look, everybody! Look what Phil and
Brenda made!

DONNIE

What is it?

BRENDA

It's a drying rack for Big Red. Phil and I cobbled it together from junk we found in the laundry room.

They set it up ten feet from the fire.

ZARA

Whoa whoa whoa! What are you doing?

SOPHIE

That's too close to the fire.

ELENA

She's right.

PHIL

It's ten feet away.

ZARA

That's six weeks of my life we're talking about.

Sophie walks to a spot a good thirty feet from the fire.

SOPHIE

Hang it up over here.

ZARA

Yeah, that's good.

BRENDA

Okay.

Zara and Freddie fetch the wet monster suit and Phil and Brenda hang it up to dry.

PHIL

It's never gonna dry out way over here.

ZARA

It should by morning. It's a light fabric. It dries fast.

DONNIE

As long as it doesn't rain again.

ELENA

Weather report says no more rain for
the next week.

SOPHIE

Okay, we're good, then.

Everyone gets back to their places around the campfire. They
talk for a while, then go to bed.

THE WAFTING SPARK

THE CAMPFIRE AREA

Everyone has gone to bed. The campfire is apparently out.
There is only one small ember. Suddenly it glows brighter. A
spark arises. It moves upward for a few feet, then strangles
wafts almost horizontally, toward Big Red. A foot away, it
pauses and hovers. Then it moves to the monsters suit as if
drawn by a strong magnet, and attaches itself. The ember
flares into a flame, and the suit begins to burn.

BURNT MONSTER

In the sleeping area, Zara gets up and goes into the
bathroom. No one else is up yet, but a couple people are
stirring. Suddenly, there's a terrible scream! Everyone but
Zara runs out to see. Freddie is standing by Big Red, which
is burnt to a crisp, with just a light framework remaining.

SOPHIE

Oh my God!

JOANN

Oh no.

PHIL

What the hell happened?

ANGELA

The wind must've blown it.

DONNIE

There wasn't any wind!

JOANN

Are you sure?

DONNIE

Yes. I didn't hear the wind chimes.

JOANN

We were all asleep. You wouldn't have heard them.

PHIL

And Sophie's script pages are still here by the campfire.

SOPHIE

Shit, that's where they went.

PHIL

If there was wind, they would've blown away.

ANGELA

And Donnie's Twizzler wrappers, even.

PHIL

There couldn't have been any wind, then.

BRENDA

The fire was 30 feet away. Besides, Phil doused it with water before we went to bed.

PHIL

That's right, I did.

ELENA

Well, I don't know how, but it's burned.

SOPHIE

And we're screwed.

JOANN

Zara's gonna be devastated.

A moment of silence.

PHIL

(to Freddie)

Dude, that was you screaming?

DONNIE

Yeah, not very manly.

FREDDIE

We have to catch Zara before she sees it.

A wail goes up from the doorway of the dormitory building: Zara. She runs over toward Big Red. Twenty feet away, she stops running and walks the rest of the distance like a zombie.

ZARA MOURNS

Zara comes up to within ten feet of what's left of Big Red: just the aluminum framework and the legs and feet. She has a vomit reflex, just a dry heave.

JOANN

Zara, we're so sorry. You saw Phil put the fire out last night.

SOPHIE

We have no idea how this happened.

ZARA

If only I hadn't let her get wet.

ELENA

It's nobody's fault.

ZARA

Six weeks. She was the best thing I'd ever made. I was so proud of her.

FREDDIE

Best monster I've ever seen.

ZARA

I should've had you guys hang her up farther away.

DONNIE

Zara, it's like 30 feet, I mean, c'mon.

ELENA

It's not your fault. It's nobody's fault.

ZARA

How could this happen?
(with a small cry)
It's like I'm cursed.

Zara turns and slowly walks back to the dormitory building. One by one, the others leave too, except Sophie and Elena, who stand silently looking at the charred remnants of Big Red.

SOPHIE
There goes our film.

ELENA
I thought we were gonna pull this off. I mean, I wasn't *sure*, but I thought we actually had a chance.

Elena walks away, then Sophie.

SAD BREAKFAST

THE BREAKFAST AREA

Freddie and Chino have made breakfast, but it's still on the serving table. No one feels like eating. Some people have coffee or tea in front of them. Sophie and Elena enter the room.

ELENA
Attention please, everyone.

Sophie waves her off, as if to say, "I'll do it."

SOPHIE
(a little teary)
Thank you, everyone. We got off to a rough start, but we pulled it together. I was really proud--*am* really proud, of everyone. From the bottom of my heart, thank you.

FREDDIE
What do you mean? What does this mean?

ELENA
We have no monster. So we have no film.

ANGELA
We've got a crew. We've got actors. Can we make some other kind of film?

DONNIE
Yeah. Let's make a different film.

FREDDIE
It should be a horror film.

JOANN
Any kind of film. Anything would be fine.

CHINO
I'm up for anything.

BRENDA
Romantic comedy?

ELENA
At an abandoned boys reform school?

DONNIE
Why not?

JOANN
"Mr. Romantic" here.

ELENA
We appreciate your willingness to try something, but I'm not feeling the romantic comedy thing.

FREDDIE
It should be horror.

ELENA
Where's our monster, Freddie?

Zara starts to sniffle.

SOPHIE
Okay, why don't we do this: Let's just stay here, hang out for the rest of the day. Walk around, feel the vibe, see if anyone gets an idea for a different film. At dinner we'll see what people came up with. If we get something that makes sense, we'll stay and shoot it. If not, we'll get drunk at the campfire one last time--

Zara starts sniffing again.

SOPHIE (cont'd)
We'll spend one last night, and then go home in the morning.

Nods and murmurs of assent from the group.

ANGELA
Well,...I'm hungry.

Angela gets up and helps herself to some breakfast.

SOPHIE

(to Elena)

I'm gonna go walk around the grounds.

Elena goes to get some breakfast. Others follow her cue.

MONTAGE WANDERING

Montage of cast and crew wandering the grounds in varying degrees of hope.

NEW MOVIE IDEAS

Dinner at the campfire. They are roasting hotdogs and vegetarian equivalents or substitutes. Beer is flowing. Aside from Zara, the atmosphere is one of optimism. Rusty is having a beer with them too.

SOPHIE

Okay, everyone, I think it's time to hear suggestions.

The group settles down and pays attention.

ELENA

We don't have time to find another location or get additional actors. So what can we make right here, with what we've got? Any props would have to be things we can find or make here, or pick up in town, because we'd really need to start shooting tomorrow. If we can shoot anything at all.

FREDDIE

Horror!

ELENA

Yes, Freddie, I get it. But where's our--

(remembering Zara)

I mean, what can we use as the thing the characters are scared of?

Freddie is silent.

DONNIE

Aliens?

SOPHIE
Does anyone have a concrete story
idea, of any genre?

ANGELA
Crime thriller?

SOPHIE
What's the story?

ANGELA
I dunno. You're the creative people.
I'm the camera chick.

ELENA
Okay, "crime." Anyone have a concrete
story idea for a crime film?

CHINO
Phil and Joann could be detectives.
And they're hunting down a killer.
Who fled to this place.

ELENA
And you're the killer, Chino?

CHINO
Yeah, I can play a bad guy.

ELENA
I don't want to be the PC police, but
I don't think having two young kids
track down an old Latino guy is a
great story idea.

CHINO
"Old Latino guy"?

FREDDIE
Hey, respect. This is our wizard.

CHINO
Thanks, Freddie.

ELENA
Concrete story, any genre. Going
once,...going twice,...

FREDDIE
Horror!

SOPHIE
Freddie, we don't have a monster!

Zara winces.

FREDDIE
So let's make one!

Zara starts to cry, gets up, and walks away.

ELENA
With what?

FREDDIE
No, I mean conjure one! Our wizard
can conjure up a monster. Right,
Chino?

ELENA
Freddie, I hate to break this to you,
but Chino is not a real wizard.

A small chorus of chuckles goes up among the group.

FREDDIE
(to Chino)
Well, you look like a wizard.

CHINO
Thanks, Freddie.

DONNIE
Couldn't we, like do a séance or
something?

ELENA
(big sigh)
I appreciate people trying, but
Chino's not a real wizard—because
there's no such thing as wizards—and
we can't do a séance, because séances
aren't real.

BRENDA
I know a lady back in Nebraska who
let me talk to my grandma once. She
told me things only my grandma would
know.

PHIL
Rusty, did anyone ever die here?
Maybe we could--

ELENA

Phil, please. Even if our guy-who's-not-a-wizard could conjure up a spirit-who's-not-real, you can't film a spirit. End of story.

ANGELA

Yeah, not even with a RED camera. Maybe the 8k, but this is only 4k.

RUSTY

I think there was a kid, yeah.

ELENA

Okay, I'm done. You guys have fun. I'll see you all in the morning before we leave.

Elena gets up and leaves.

DAVID'S DEAD, BUT...

NOTE: Not sure where this goes yet, but it came to me and I like it, so it's here.

Joann and Phil are doing a scene as their characters, Jennifer and Peter, after Jennifer's boyfriend David was killed by the monster.

"JENNIFER"

You know,... David was my boyfriend, but,... I hate to say it, we weren't getting along. I was actually going to break up with him after this investigation. I'm not saying I'm glad he's dead, but...

"PETER"

It does make things easier.

JOANN

Emotionally speaking, yes! I mean, David joked around a lot, but deep down he was a pretty sensitive guy. Breaking up would've killed him.

PHIL

It would've been hard on you too. Breakups are really hardest for the one who breaks it off.

JOANN
Yes! Most people don't realize that,
but yes. Peter, you're really get it.

PHIL
Hey, I'm here for you.

JOANN
I appreciate that, I do. It's been
hard.

PHIL
I can imagine.

JOANN
Anyway, lately, it was just nag, nag,
nag.

PHIL
David seemed pretty laid back to me.

JOANN
No, *me*. I was the nagger. But you
see, I had to be, he was too laid
back. He never wanted to get out
there and *do* anything. He wouldn't
even have been here if not for me.

PHIL
Yeah, well, it's clear you're a girl
who makes things happen.

JOANN
Yeah. But, maybe if I...

JOANN
If I hadn't--

PHIL
Takes charge.

PHIL (cont'd)
Gets things done. I like that.

JOANN
Yeah? Oh, you're so sweet.

The scene is done.

SOPHIE
Excellent! Great job, you two.

FREDDIE
Whoa, Sophie, you wrote that?

SOPHIE

Yeah. Like it?

FREDDIE

No, that's cold, man. She's glad he's dead 'cause it's easier than breaking up?

SOPHIE

What? Nobody else here ever just wished the other person would just... die?

PHIL

(considering)

Well,...

FREDDIE

Killed by a monster?

ELENA

Hit by a bus, is what I usually hope for.

ANGELA

Yeah, but you live in New York, so that could happen.

BRENDA

I usually hope for snake bites. Or scorpions in their shoes in the morning. Or tarantulas, for that matter.

ELENA

Earthquakes. Out here you guys have earthquakes.

FREDDIE

(panicky)

There are scorpions out here?

BRENDA

Wildfires. Mudslides.

CHINO

Or some bad tamales.

JOANN

Or just a really bad cold, that turns into pneumonia, then their lungs fill up with fluid.

(MORE)

JOANN (cont'd)
(mimics can't breath)
Hehh, hehhhh, hehhhh.

SOPHIE
No, because then they suffer, it's a
lingering death. You don't want that.

ELENA
Yeah, you want 'em dead quick: boom,
done, out of the way.

SOPHIE
Right, that's the whole point.

Freddie is incredulous, and starting to get a little scared.

DONNIE
Uh, can we move on to the next scene?

ELENA
Yeah, Donnie's right. That scene's
done.

SOPHIE
Boom, done, out of the way! Next up!

COBWEB MAN GOES ON STRIKE

Elena arrives on set.

ELENA
Okay, what's wrong now?

COBWEB MAN
I want my name in the credits.

SOPHIE
Okay.

ELENA
No.

SOPHIE
What? It doesn't cost us anything.

ELENA
No.

COBWEB MAN
You can't make this movie without me.

SOPHIE
He's right.

ELENA
We are not going to put a ghost in
the credits of our movie.

COBWEB MAN
Then I quit.

SOPHIE
You can't quit!

ELENA
Is this why you were at the reform
school? Blackmail?

COBWEB MAN
Technically, I think this is
extortion.

FREDDY
The leading man always goes in the
credits.

ELENA
He's not the leading man.

SOPHIE
That's David.

ELENA
And Freddy, you stay out of this.

COBWEB MAN
I'm the leading monster. Even more
important. You can't replace me.

ELENA
We can and we will. We will find a
way. I'm not going to be strong-armed
by a ghost.

FREDDY
He's a Cobweb Man.

Elena shoots Freddy a look.

SOPHIE
El, we need him.

FREDDY
You need him.

ELENA

No! Look, we want you on the team,
but I can't put a ghost in the
credits.

COBWEB MAN

Why not?

SOPHIE

Yeah, why not?

ELENA

Because he's dead. Because you're
dead! Jesus, I'm talking to a ghost.
I can't...I just can't...

Elena storms off the set.

FREDDY

You should get an agent.

COBWEB MAN

Yeah.

SOPHIE

He can't get an agent.

FREDDY

Yeah, it's hard when you're just
starting out.

SOPHIE

No, he can't get an agent because
he's dead.

COBWEB MAN

Don't say "dead." It sounds negative.

The three are silent for a minute.

ELENA

Freddy, why don't you go wait at the
campfire. I'll figure this out.

FREDDY

You know, I was there when the
monster burned up. That spark, it
moved a really long ways. Like
sideways, like 30 feet.

COBWEB MAN

Yeah, that was weird, huh?

SOPHIE

You were there?

COBWEB MAN

I mean, that *sounds* weird.

FREDDY

You were there! You said you can move things that are light. A spark, a whaddya you call it, a ember, that's pretty light.

SOPHIE

You burned up our monster!

COBWEB MAN

No, wait...

SOPHIE

You didn't *solve* our problem. You *caused* our problem.

COBWEB MAN

To be fair, I caused it, but I also solved it.

SOPHIE

You'll never get an agent if we tell everyone you burned up our monster.

COBWEB MAN

Whoa, whoa, hey.

FREDDY

She's right, man.

COBWEB MAN

Okay, okay. I'll keep acting. But if I'm not gonna be in the credits I got to at least get something. Like she said, I'm not costing you anything.

SOPHIE

Alright, what do ghosts need?

COBWEB MAN

I want an agent.

SOPHIE

Pfft! That's not possible.

FREDDY

Maybe a manager. It's easier to get a manager.

COBWEB MAN

No way. Managers don't do squat unless you already got an agent.

SOPHIE

Look, I'm sorry, I--

FREDDY

Wait, wait, I got it! Sophie, all these people you got for your crew, how did you find 'em?

SOPHIE

LinkedIn. Why?

FREDDY

We'll get CW Man a LinkedIn account!

SOPHIE

But he's a--

COBWEB MAN

Yeah. Get me on LinkedIn!

SOPHIE

Hmm. Freddy, go get Ellie.

Freddy goes to get Elena.

In the distance we hear Freddy yelling:

FREDDY

Elli-elena!

Elena comes back with Freddy.

ELENA

I'm listening.

SOPHIE

Okay, so Freddy came up with this.

ELENA

Okay, I'm done listening.

FREDDY

That hurts.

Elena starts to leave. Sophie grabs her by the arm and holds her there.

SOPHIE

No, El--Elena--listen. All we have to do is get CW Man a LinkedIn account.

ELENA

And?

COBWEB MAN

And what? Once you're on LinkedIn, you're all set. Everybody knows that.

ELENA

We get you on LinkedIn and you'll start working again?

COBWEB MAN

Abaolutely.

ELENA

Freddy, can you set up CW Man with a LinkedIn account?

FREDDY

Sure. I can do it on my iPad, right now.

ELENA

And no more stoppages. You work through to the end, right?

COBWEB MAN

To the end.

SOPHIE

Yay!

ELENA

(to herself)
This is even worse than dealing with New York agents.