

SCAMMER HAUNT

A PLAY BY CHRIS BALLARD

Scavenger Haunt

A Play by Chris Ballard

Synopsis

Each year at Halloween, Glenwood High School sponsors a Scavenger Haunt for local charity and school spirit for the season. Students participate at the town's local Haunted House to test their intellectual capabilities in answering questions from trivia and searching for clues related to various school subjects. Kate and Chip head out early to piece together clues before the other students arrive. Determined to win, they become caught up in the game of circumstance as they learn the true history of the mansion. No longer sure if they were part of a school prank or in real threatening danger, they must overcome their own fears and rely on each others strengths to get through the challenge.

Cast

Kate: Senior student at the high school. She carries a gothish personality with a dark outlook on life. Although intelligent in English and the Arts, she is independent, yet tends to distance herself from others.

Chip: Freshman student and Kate's neighbor, Chip is a school nerd as he is more of a bookworm than an adventurous explorer. He does possess a quick wittiness that helps with his own insecurity, yet does not often engage in social activities.

Malcolm: Another Senior student who won last year's Scavenger Hunt prize.

Mrs. Nesser: An English teacher at the high school and the event coordinator.

George Hallows: An escaped convict.

Police Sergeant Janson: Police Sergeant in search of the escaped prisoner.

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SCENE



Scene 1:

Setting on stage: An old cemetery lies below the hillside of the haunted mansion. Grave markers and tombstones decorate the forefront of the stage. The haunted mansion is a silhouette against a stormy sky and a full moon. Smoke fills the stage (dry ice) to create a mystical atmosphere. As the curtain rises to reveal the stage setting, lightning strikes and thunder rolls as both Kate and Chip begin walking from the audience to the stage to give the audience a sense of participation as well. Kate is dressed very Goth-like in black tattered clothes as Chip has on casual clothes, but has decided to wear a cap with an axe that appears to protrude through his head.

(Thunder and Lightning)

KATE: Hurry up, Chip! We're gonna be late, already. Besides, looks like a storm's brewing.

CHIP: I'm coming...I'm coming...Don't get your panties in a bunch, Kate! We're almost there. I just don't understand why we didn't take the bus like all the other students.

KATE: I told you...I wanna get here first to check things out. The very thought of Malcolm winning this year's high school scavenger hunt again just makes my stomach turn sour. He's so full of himself, always bragging about it and I wanna be the one to put it in his face! I really should've won last year...he just got lucky when he remembered the name of Ichabod Crane's horse.

CHIP: "What was the name?"

KATE: "Malcolm. He's the quote, stud, unquote of the football team as well. Such a loser. I don't know how he has enough room for a single thought in his helium-expanded mind. There's nothing in there but a bag of oxygen that sucks up the rest of air around him."

CHIP: "I meant what was the name of the horse."

KATE: "Oh, uhmm...let me think. Oh yeah, it was "Gunpowder." The only reason I remember is because he found the final clue in the gun case. He got to take his family to Disneyworld and can't stop talking about it. Anyway, this year's prize is a family vacation trip to Cosa Ruba and I'm determined to win!

CHIP: Don't you mean Costa Rica?

KATE: Whatever! Anywhere other than here is a vacation.

CHIP: I just can't image you in the sun. You're so Goth! You're always so dark and sinister that I can't even tell that you've changed costumes for tonight. By the way, how do you like mine?

KATE: Well, it's a major improvement from your everyday nerdiness.

(There is a noise of sirens in the distance.)

KATE: What's that? You hear something?

CHIP: Sirens! Always something crazy happening on Halloween.

KATE: I hope they haven't gotten here yet. We need to get inside to check things out before they arrive.

CHIP: We left in plenty of time to get here early. The rest of the students should be here shortly, though.

(Chip checks his cellphone)

CHIP: Dang! My cellphone's out of range. I'm not getting service out here, so I can't check the time. What about yours?

KATE: I must've left mine at home.

CHIP: Maybe I'll pick up the satellite signal once we get to the haunted mansion. We're almost there. There may be a phone inside as well.

KATE: I wouldn't count on it. The place has been deserted for years. Folks say that it really was a haunted house back in the day and that's why nobody wants to live there. My dad tells me he went to school with one of the guys who was murdered here.

CHIP: Murder!? Here? What happened?

KATE: I don't know all the details, but the guy who originally owned this place was named Von Ruden. He was big business guy and a high-society member that had lots of parties with politicians and big corporate people. He was somewhat arrogant, but did a lot to build the community in helping to restore the economy. All the same, some believe he was a warlock...you know, sort of a man-witch. He used to have rituals and seances to raise the dead. That's why there's a graveyard here.

CHIP: You mean, he killed all these people?

KATE: No, silly. On Halloween night, people say he would try to raise the dead from their graves to help understand life after death. The police came one night and found him with a dead body. He was arrested and taken to jail, but they had to let him go. The victim had died many years ago and they had to release Von Ruden. There wasn't even a trial...do you know why?"

BOTH CHIP AND KATE TOGETHER: Double Jeopardy!

KATE: Well, technically...that's not really Double Jeopardy...it's really a game show with Alex Trabek.

CHIP: Right! So what about the murder?

KATE: Oh, the murder happened years later. Some nutjob thought the stories were true and killed someone here. He is now on death row and is set for execution.

(Lightning and Thunder)

KATE: Yikes! Feels like the storm is right on top of us.

CHIP: Yeah...I think I felt some raindrops. Let's get inside before it starts pouring rain.

Both actors run through backstage.

(More Lightning and Thunder as the lights dim.)

End Scene 1.

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SCENE



Scene 2

Scene Setting: The main living room inside the mansion. The fireplace is the only visible light and the stage is dimly lit until the scene progresses.

(Screeching of a door opening. Actors walk on from stage right.)

KATE: Look, the door is open. (Shouting) ANYBODY HERE? (pausing after no reply) Looks like we got here before the others. What time is it?

CHIP: Still no signal. We're still out of range.

KATE: I thought all you nerds wore a watch.

CHIP: What's the point of wearing a watch when my cellphone tells me the exact time...and stop calling me a nerd!

KATE: You're right. Your not a nerd...you're more of a Neeb.

CHIP: What's a Neeb?

KATE: That's someone who is halfway between a nerd and a dweeb!

CHIP: (Sarcastically) Gee, Thanks! I guess that's a compliment coming from the Goth-Queen of the Damned...everyone at school thinks you're weird!

KATE: Weird? I like weird. At least I'm different...and it keeps others guessing.

CHIP: Guessing WHAT? That you're mental!

KATE: Oh, Chip...You're too young to understand.

CHIP: I understand that you ARE different...and Weird.

KATE: Well, I'd rather be myself than follow rules and try to pretend that I'm accepted by the social norm. Some of the most brilliant minds of our time came from those who were totally misunderstood. They were able to think outside the box of social prisons and helped create a better

world for all. That is how we evolve...Those who are different set new standards.

CHIP: Evolution...right. I guess we've come a long way from being monkeys...well, at least one of us has!

KATE: Very funny. Which one of us? You're the one with an axe through your brain!

(Kate stumbles, losing her balance and falls to the floor as she steps on something on the ground.)

KATE: Woah! Help!

CHIP: What happened? Are you OK?

KATE: I just stepped on something...or someone! Can't see a thing in this place. See if you can find a light.

CHIP: The lights in this place don't seem to work, but here's a candle...someone must've been here recently. I'll light another one of these candles with the fire from the fireplace.

(Chip walks over and lights another candle by the fireplace. Stage lights illuminate the scene as he walks back over to Kate laying on the floor next to another figure.)

CHIP: What is it?

KATE: Don't you mean, "Who is it?" It looks like a clown.

(Stage lights reveal a figure laying on the ground in a clown costume.)

CHIP: Yeah, well...he doesn't look very funny to me.

KATE: No one is here yet. It must be a prop for the Scavenger Haunt.

CHIP: Are you sure? He looks real to me!

KATE: I'm sure. Don't freak out on me, it's all just part of the game. I told you this would be exciting.

CHIP: I'm not freaked out! It's just that I have this "Dead Clown in a haunted mansion phobia!"

KATE: Relax, willya! This is just like Mrs. Nesser.

CHIP: Mrs. Nesser? You mean the English teacher? What's she got to do with this?

KATE: She's the organizer of the Scavenger Haunt. It's been her thing for years. She's really the only teacher I like because she's the coolest. This was her idea from the start and she encourages others to think for themselves rather than following preexisting ideas of what we've been told throughout history.

CHIP: I was told her classes were hard and that she gives too much homework.

KATE: True...But she allows you to think for yourself and those who complain are usually the ones that struggle with their own intellect. Last year's event was more of a movie monster theme where you had to solve trivia questions to find the next clue. It looks like she's added a few more details this year. A dead clown...what do you think that means?

CHIP: It means there's a dead clown and we need to get out of here!

KATE: Don't be such a nincompoop! She's just added a layer of horror to the game to raise the bar of excitement. Mrs. Nesser is always telling us about symbolism in English literature. Obviously, this is the first clue. I'm thinking maybe this is the death of comedy!

CHIP: I don't think I would use 'death' and 'comedy' in the same sentence! It's poor grammar. Besides, this guy is real! Not even Shakespeare could cast a more tragic drama.

KATE: Oh, Good Grief, Chip. It's just part of the act. You know how realistic movies are these days. She knows lots of people and probably hired a Hollywood makeup artist to come out and help set up the scene to make it extra creepy.

CHIP: Well, if it's the death of comedy...I'm not laughing.

KATE: Of course not...after all, he's dead...Look! What's that in his hand?

(Chip takes a Key from the dead clown's hand.)

CHIP: A Key!

(Kate snatches the key from Chip to get a better look.)

KATE: That's it! Our first clue. The key is...the key! We've just got to find out what it goes to.

(A clock begins to chime)

CHIP: Hey! The clock! Let's count the chimes.

BOTH CHIP AND KATE TOGETHER: (as the clock continues to chime) Eight, nine, ten, eleven...twelve!

CHIP: That can't be the right time! The clock is way off.

KATE: Time...That's it...another clue! Maybe we'll find out more when we go look at the clock. It's upstairs...Let's go and see before it's too late!

(Actors rush hurriedly towards the stairway as the lights dim.)

End Scene 2

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SCENE



Scene 3

Scene Setting: Kate and Chip upstairs in the library facing a very large antique grandfather clock tower. Note that the library shelves are half empty.

KATE: Here it is...the clock. It must be our next clue.

CHIP: This is a library. English, of course...but look at the bookshelves...there almost empty.

KATE: How disappointing for you, Mr. Bookworm. I'll bet you could spend all night here. Then again, you could probably read all this at home online.

CHIP: Yes, you're right. One of the benefits of technology is that all this information is now digitally collected and instantly retrieved from some memory cloud bank server in heaven.

KATE: Right, and all the government secrets are kept on a computer hard drive in a bathroom closet based in Denver, Colorado.

CHIP: Libraries like this one will become extinct...a thing of the past. Real books will no longer exist. Such a waste.

KATE: A waste of natural resources for sure. Do you realize how much money goes into the production of printing from the paper industry? It's such a massive quantity that our government refuses to let it go. Newspapers are now government funded at taxpayer dollars just to continue operation.

CHIP: Since when did you become so political?

KATE: I'm all for technology if it saves our greenspace. Besides, this room would be better served as my fashion studio.

CHIP: Right, like you need a library for all your clothes.

KATE: I plan to go to college to become a fashion designer.

CHIP: Really! There's not much variety in your wardrobe collection...everything is black!

KATE: So What! Black is always in fashion. I'm going to start a new line in the fashion industry. I'll be the next Versace!

CHIP: Meanwhile, back at the mansion, we're trying to discover clues that will lead Kate to Fashion Greatness... There's an inscription there on the clock. Can you see it?

(Chip points to the clock.)

KATE: Yes, but barely. This whole house needs to be dusted thoroughly.

CHIP: There's a keyhole! Try the key, Kate!

(Kate tries to fit the key in the clock's keyhole.)

KATE: That's strange. It doesn't fit. The clock is locked and the key is too big. Let me dust off the inscription... There! Can you read it?

CHIP: Almost... Here...hold the candle up to it.

(Kate holds the candle close to the clock face while Chip begins reading.)

CHIP: “On this night, All Hallow’s Eve
Time is turned and minds deceived
The harvest moon has come at last
as Death contains the Hidden Past
Spirits rise as world’s collide
The Inner Sanctum holds the Prize
The Fiery Passage and Portal Gate
Will become your last escape.”

KATE: Now that’s an odd poem! I wonder what it really means? It must be another clue.

CHIP: Of course! It’s a riddle about Halloween...All Hallows Eve and the Harvest moon.

KATE: So?

CHIP: You may know about fashion and literature, Kate... but your history sucks! The tradition of Halloween began with farmers appeasing the Gods during the time of harvest. It was a respectful thing to honor the dead and show

blessings for the crops that had been raised. Think of Halloween as the time when life both ends and begins again. It became a cultural ritual and is the reason why we celebrate death as a new beginning to life.

KATE: Oh, So sorry Mister Halloween expert! Maybe you should start carrying a chainsaw!

CHIP: There's always this axe in my head should I need to defend myself! Seriously...People would dress up in costumes and wear masks because they believed the dead spirits walked the Earth this time of year and would haunt them. It was their way of fitting into a society of strangeness and those who were crossing over from the afterlife to the living dimension.

KATE: Very interesting! I think I know a few crossovers, myself. But, what does it all mean here in this life?

CHIP: It's a riddle...We have to figure it out, I guess.
(Reading again) 'Time is turned and minds deceived.' The clock struck midnight, but we both know it's not that late...our minds have been deceived in that time is later than we think...

KATE: And what did it say about the prize?

CHIP: (Reading) ‘The inner sanctum holds the prize...The Fiery passage and portal gate is where you make your last escape.’

KATE: So, in other words...we have to find this inner sanctum, fire passage, and portal gate to escape? Sounds fun!

CHIP: Not so much fun for the clown...he’s dead!

KATE: Maybe this old key opens the door to the portal gate fire passage where I’ll find my tickets to Cosarabia!

CHIP: You mean Costa Rica!

KATE: Whatever! Come on, let’s keep looking for this gate thing. It must be something really big and old from the looks of this key.

(The two actors walk from the second level down the steps back to the main floor living room. As the lights dim, the clown disappears from the stage below.)

KATE: Keep a close watch on anything with a lock around here? This is Scavenger Hunt has me on edge and I don't want to miss the smallest detail that may be our next clue.

(Lightning strikes and thunder rolls as their candles go out in the darkness.)

CHIP: Cripes! My candle blew out. I can't see a thing. We need more light. We've been upstairs and now we're back downstairs where we started.

KATE: And the fire has gone out from the fireplace. How odd. Here! (Kate pulls out a lighter and strikes a sparking flame.)

CHIP: There! Let there be light. (Chip's candle lights up again as the stage lights reveal more of the scene.)

KATE: Finally. We can see again. It's strange that the fire in the fireplace went out so fast. I get the feeling that we're not really alone. I don't know...Can't seem to put my finger on it, but something's missing...

(Chip points to the floor where the clown had been lying on the ground. The clown is no longer there.)

CHIP: Hey, Look! The Clown...He's not here!

KATE: O.M.G! Jesus Chrysler!

CHIP: You should never take the auto industry's name in vain!

KATE: Well, what happened to him? Where did he go? Obviously, we are not alone.

CHIP: It's getting really weird around here. Maybe this place really is haunted. We should go.

KATE: (Shouting) COME OUT! WE KNOW YOU'RE IN HERE!

CHIP: This is totally creeping me out...let's get out of here now!

KATE: Somebody's just pulling a big joke on us, Chip.

CHIP: Right...Time displacement...Halloween riddles...a key to nothing...and a disappearing dead clown!
(Sarcastically) I think we've just about wrapped up this mystery! Let's go!

KATE: It's gotta be a prank.

CHIP: Where is everyone? The other students should've been here by now. Seriously, we need to get out of here!

KATE: Oh, No...not so fast. Someone's been here alright...to help set all this up...Where did the clown go and who started the fire?

CHIP: Maybe the clown's killer!

KATE: Don't be silly. We're being 'Punked.'

CHIP: 'Punked?' What do you mean?

KATE: You know...like the show on tv where they videotape people they're playing a joke on. The school set all this up knowing we would be here and are making fun of us with all these random circumstances. There's

probably hidden cameras all over the place to get our reactions. They're probably in a studio somewhere dying laughing at us.

(Kate begins to dance around and show strange faces in all directions as if to amuse an unknown audience.)

CHIP: Did you tell anyone we were coming out here on our own?

KATE: No.

CHIP: Me neither. I didn't tell nobody.

KATE: You mean 'anybody.' Talk about poor grammar.

CHIP: No, I didn't tell nobody...not even my parents! They think I'm over with a friend studying biology. So nobody knows we're here. Let's get out while we still can, Kate!

KATE: Would you just listen to yourself! We can't quit now. I just know it's all a big prank...they're just watching and laughing at us hysterically...Trying to scare the wits out

of us. Let's look around, find out more about the place so I can win the vacation trip to Coastal Arabia!

CHIP: Costa Rica. You don't even know where you're going!

KATE: Let's find out what this key goes to...take the prize...and then we'll have the last laugh.

CHIP: (Big sigh, then pauses) I don't hear any laughing, but then again...this has been the death of comedy!

KATE: Just relax. The school is not gonna sponsor an event like this where students are in danger. It's just a game...or...a test! Yes, that's it! This is probably a test of our character and our will. That's more important than learning Algebra or anything else in life.

CHIP: Oh, Great...You just reminded me...I have an algebra test on Monday. I really need to get back to study!

KATE: Oh, Good Grief...algebra. Like you're ever gonna need that in the real world! I made straight A's in that class. Surely you can pass that test.

CHIP: (Sarcastically) Right...Straight A's in Algebra. I've never seen you study...EVER!

KATE: Well, to be honest...I got the tests from the guy I was dating at the time who had already taken the class. Why study when you already have all the answers? The test questions were the same every year!

CHIP: You borrowed the tests from the guy you were dating? Nice! What happened to him?

KATE: Oh, I stopped dating him as soon as I passed the class. I didn't need him anymore after that. He was a geek anyway! I've still got the tests if you want them.

CHIP: No thanks...I'd rather "Think" for myself!

KATE: That's scary. Touche! Now just look around here, willya...and let's find that portal gate. It's gotta be around here somewhere.

CHIP: There's really nothing here but old newspapers. Here's one about this place!

KATE: Maybe it's another clue...what's it say?

CHIP: It doesn't say anything...you have to read it!

KATE: OK, smartypants...what does it read?

CHIP: (Reading the paper) Charges were dropped yesterday against the Count Von Ruden as previous evidence had already substantiated the victim's death which had occurred three years ago due to medical complications. Von Ruden was, however, ordered by the Judge to complete a psychiatric evaluation at Westside Center. Wow...this was like 30 years ago. Has this paper been here all these years?

KATE: (Walking over to look at the paper for herself) Hey! Maybe this is what this is all about. It's a mystery, for sure. Another clue to help solve what's going on around here. It's no coincidence this was left here recently. Someone put this here for us to see. It must be a clue! To me, this all seems like a research assignment. Mrs. Nesser always has us doing research!

CHIP: (continued reading) Von Ruden's cemetery has been closed and disbanded until further notice, County officials say due to unorthodox ceremonial practices. The Chief Administrator of Westside Institute stated the Count Von Ruden is obviously insane to think he can communicate with the dead. "Let bygones be bygones" he stated. In a related story, Police Sergeant Janson claims that the mansion had been investigated thoroughly and that there was no evidence the house contained a key to the spiritual world.

KATE: The Key! Maybe that's what this IS! We may have found the Key that they were looking for!

CHIP: You mean the key we took from the dead clown? Maybe that's what happened to him...he found the afterlife and crossed over...that's why his body is missing!

(Kate drops the key to the floor. Chip bends down to get it. There is a loud moan heard throughout the house.)

KATE: What was THAT!

CHIP: That was probably the demon spirits ready to take us over to the dark side because we have the key.

KATE: (Fumbling with a door nob) What's this door lead to?

CHIP: A preposition. You can't end a sentence without a supportive conclusion. I thought you knew basic English.

KATE: (Laughing Sarcastically) HA! HA! HA! Is this really the time for a lesson in Language Arts? Put your criticisms on hold while we do some research into this mystery.

CHIP: It must be the cellar. We're in the kitchen, so it must go down to the basement. All these old mansions had a cellar back in the day. Where else could it lead?

KATE: I think you're right again. The moaning seemed to have come from down there...Let's go see!

CHIP: Great! Maybe we'll find some Dom Perignon '47 wine while we're down there!

KATE: Go ahead...I'll follow you.

CHIP: Oh, No...Ladies First!

(Stage Lights dim as the actors walk through the door.)

End of Scene 3.

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SCENE

4

Scene 4

Scene setting: Chip and Kate are now in the cellar. Steps lead upwards towards the mansion. There are barrels, caskets, and wine bottles all around. In the corner of cellar a large sarcophagus can be seen with chains covering it with a large antique lock.

CHIP: This place is just too creepy! We shouldn't be here. Look at all the cobwebs and dust in this place. (Coughing) Nobody's seems to have been down here in ages.

KATE: Oh, Yes they have...Look! Footprints. Somebody's been down here and very recently. (Kate follows the trail of the footprints that lead her to the sarcophagus.) Hey! Take a look at this!

CHIP: (Turning back around) It's a sarcophagus.

KATE: A What?

CHIP: You know, the thing they used to bury Pharoahs in Ancient Egypt. It looks authentic and this one's in good

condition. The Count Von Ruden must've paid a fortune. Too bad it's all shackled up like this.

KATE: Wait...the lock...That's it! Let's try the key!

CHIP: You're right! This is an old lock. (Chip inserts the key and opens the lock) Well, what d'ya know...it works!

KATE: Excellent. Maybe THIS is the Portal Gate to the other world!

CHIP: Why not. The Ancient Egyptians seemed to think so.

(They both unwrap the chains around the sarcophagus)

KATE: OK...Let's see inside.

CHIP: Wait! (pausing) Do you really want to see what's inside? I'm not sure about this. It's like we're waking up the dead.

KATE: Oh, Come now, Chip...Don't be such a baby. It's all part of the game.

CHIP: Seriously, the Ancient Egyptians put curses on those who disturbed them in the afterlife.

KATE: Don't be so superstitious. It's gotta be the portal gate we're looking for. Let's open this thing up, get the prize, and get out of here.

CHIP: OK, but don't say I didn't warn you.

(They open up the sarcophagus to find a mummy inside holding a very large book)

KATE: You're Right...It's a Mummy!

CHIP: I told you. What's that he's got in his arms?

KATE: It's a book. Grab it! Maybe the tickets to Corabella are in there!

CHIP: Costa Rica...You need to learn some Geography!
(Pulling the book) Come on...almost there...

(Chip has pulled the book outwards, but the Mummy quickly pulls it back in)

CHIP: Woah! He doesn't wanna give it up!

KATE: Oh, for Pete's sake, Chip...I'll get it! (Kate grabs hold of the book) If you want something done around here, ya gotta get it for yourself!

(Once again, the Mummy pulls the book back)

CHIP: Well, you've gotta hand it to Mrs. Nesser...she went all out on the props. Here, I'll get it...It's a man's world, so deal with it!

KATE: Oh No, Mr. Chauvinist! I got this!

(Finally both tug on the book and finally release it from the grips of the Mummy. The book goes flying to the floor and scatters a few pages)

BOTH KATE AND CHIP TOGETHER: GOT IT!

(They scramble to get the pages together that have fallen out of the book onto the floor. Chip grabs the book.)

KATE: So, what is it?

CHIP: It's the Egyptian Book of the Dead.

KATE: Do you see the prize tickets?

CHIP: No. But this old book looks very valuable and could probably take you anywhere you wanna go. It's the ancient Egyptian book they used to prepare themselves for the afterlife.

KATE: Just another clue? What does it say?

CHIP: It doesn't SAY anything! You have to read it! Besides, it's all hieroglyphics...you know, symbols and pictures they used before they learned to type on a cellphone. I don't know what it all means.

(The Mummy begins to Groan...louder and louder)

KATE: IT...IT'S ALIVE!

CHIP: I knew this was a bad idea.

(They both back away and fall to the floor as the mummy comes out of the sarcophagus. Note there are still papers lying on the floor. The Mummy holds out his hands in true Mummy fashion and stands over the two.)

MUMMY: (Groaning) Arrrrgh! At last! I made it! I'm Free once again!

CHIP: (Whispering loudly) Kate! What do we do?

KATE: (Speaking to the Mummy) Ye...Yessss...You're Free! You've been 'Reborn.'

MUMMY: (Looking down at the two on the floor) You must be the Gatekeepers.

KATE: Yes....That's right...

BOTH KATE AND CHIP TOGETHER: We ARE the Gatekeepers!

KATE: And Who might you be to pass the gate?

MUMMY: Hallows be thy name...George Hallows! Thank you for getting me through the portal gate...I just about died in there!

KATE: You're welcome...and how long were you in there?

MUMMY: Felt like an eternity. But now I'm here and Free at last! I have escaped death!

KATE: Did you say this was the portal gate? How did you get here?

MUMMY: Are YOU not the gatekeepers?

KATE: (stumbling for words) errr....right....yes....we are...

CHIP: (Helping Kate to recover) And...As Gatekeepers...We welcome you to the spiritual dimension. You have crossed over from the world of reality to the afterlife where you will live freely for all eternity?

MUMMY: (Groans) Oh, I am famished! Now I must eat!
(The mummy pauses, turns around and then back to the two) And what do we have to eat here in the Spirit World?

KATE: Eat...right...Well, I think that here in the afterlife...we simply feed on the remorse of our past.

MUMMY: I'm really in the mood for some Fried Chicken!
(Another Groan)

CHIP: Or...Fried Chicken!.....Chicken's good here!

MUMMY: Yes! Fried Chicken...Just like Mummy used to make....HA!HA!HA!HA!HA! (Mummy laughing at his own joke)

CHIP: Good one! It's good that you keep a sense of humor...even after death.

(The Mummy begins to take away many of the bandages that are wrapped around him and slowly begins to reveal a prisoner outfit showing the standard black and white stripes.)

MUMMY: I feel so much more alive now. Don't know what happened to me. All I can think of is Fried Chicken. I am absolutely starving. (He notices some wine bottles in the cellar) Ah! Here's some wine. (He pops the cork and tastes) Tastes bitter...bad year!

CHIP: Right...well, it's the spirit of the spirits!

MUMMY: (Pointing to the axe on Chip's head) Looks like you came to a bad end yourself. That's a rough way to go!

CHIP: Oh...THIS! (realizing the mummy had noticed his gimmick cap) Yes, right! I've had a splitting headache ever since!

MUMMY: (Huge Laughter) HA! HA! That's the Spirit, Spirit!

KATE: So tell us Mr. Hallows...How exactly did you get here through the portal gate?

MUMMY: It was my escape from death. Something about this place is a gateway to another world. I've know about it for years and finally got that clown to show me the way.

BOTH CHIP AND KATE: The Clown???

MUMMY: Strange bugger. Thought I was gonna have to kill him...He didn't want to show me at first, but I took some drastic measures and he finally showed me the way. (Another loud Groan) Aaarrrgh! Now, if you don't mind...I've got to get something to eat...before I starve to death! (Huge obnoxious laughter) HA!HA!HA!HA!HA!

(Chip and Kate both laughing reluctantly as the mummy walks off stage. Their laughter dwindles to sarcastic impersonations of the mummy's laugh. They both stop laughing instantly.)

CHIP: Bizarre!

KATE: What a trip! This is gettin' weird!

(The two actors begin looking through the sarcophagus.)

KATE: So this sarcophagus is the Portal Gate? I can't remember...what was the riddle we found?

CHIP: (Quoting from his notebook) “On this night, All Hallows Eve...Time is turned and minds deceived. The Harvest moon has come at last, Death contains the hidden past. Spirits rise as worlds collide...The Inner Sanctum holds the prize. The fiery passage and portal gate is where you make your last escape.”

KATE: So THIS MUST BE the portal gate...but how does it work? I don't see anything special...and there's no prize tickets in here anywhere that I can see.

CHIP: It's a mystery. But, like you said earlier, it's probably symbolic of something. The Ancient Egyptians believed so much in the afterlife that they went to extremes to prepare for the next world. Maybe we're missing a clue of some kind.

KATE: (Noticing more papers on the floor that had not been picked up from the Book of the Dead) Hey! Here's something that fell out from the book.

CHIP: What is it?

KATE: It's a map. (Looking at the paper map) And down here at the bottom, there's a line that reads...The Path of the Dead.

CHIP: I wonder what that means?

KATE: It's a drawing...a blueprint plan of the cemetery.

CHIP: Let me see (Chip swipes the map away from Kate)
Yes, You're right! This is the backside of the house...see!
And this is the front of the cemetery.

KATE: (Frustrated that Chip stole the map, but sees more on the back of the paper) Look! There's more on the back of it...what does that say?

CHIP: It doesn't SAY anything...you have to READ it!

KATE: OK, Smartypants...what does it read?

CHIP: (Reading) "Only the brave at heart may tread the path of the dead...the guiding light will brightly shine upon the gate ahead."

KATE: Geez...More riddles. Can't we just get a map with an X that marks the spot!

CHIP: (Showing the map to Kate) Well, actually...There is an X here on the map...in the cemetery!

KATE: Great! I'm tired of all this drama...especially mummies! Let's get out of this dingy cellar so I can find the real prize!

CHIP: So...Why is it that it's "WE" when it comes to finding and solving riddles, but only "YOU" when it comes to getting the prize?

KATE: Because I'm older...and more mature. Besides, this was MY idea in the first place!

CHIP: You need to learn how to share! I'm the one who's pointing us in the right direction.

KATE: The right direction? So far we've not gone in any direction at all. We've just been on some wild goose chase with nothing to show for it. All these rhymes and riddles

and we still don't have a clue. Besides, who said life was fair?

CHIP: I'm just saying that I'm playing my part. I knew the Halloween riddle on the clock tower...otherwise, you wouldn't even know what you were looking for.

KATE: Big Deal! I found this map that will probably be more useful! The X here must be important and that's where we'll find the prize.

CHIP: I just feel that I should get to win too, that's all.

KATE: I'm a Senior, Chip...You're just a Freshman. You'll get your chance. This is my last year to win.

CHIP: What does our grade have to do with anything?

KATE: It's just important for me to win. I should've won last year and came real close...I just couldn't remember what's his names horse at the end.

CHIP: So this year we came out before the others so you could get a head start and cheat to win? That doesn't seem fair either.

KATE: I just need a break. You've gotta bend a few rules sometimes to get ahead. I'm just not very popular in school...You're right, others think I'm weird. Maybe if I win this year's Scavenger Hunt they'll have more respect for me.

CHIP: I don't think winning the prize is gonna change anything.

KATE: Well, at least I'll have some bragging rights...and I won't have to listen to Malcolm ever again. It's so frustrating listening to him brag when I should've won last year. Tell you what...let's see this thing through and figure it all out...then we can decide who gets the prize. Deal? C'mon, it's getting late.

CHIP: (Big Sigh) OK.

END SCENE 4 - Intermission

SCAVENGER HUNT

A PLAY BY CHRIS BALLARD

SCENE



Scene 5

Scene setting: Chip and Kate are back in the graveyard behind the haunted mansion. There is one large tombstone that is prominent in the middle. Dirt appears scattered all around as it looks as if the gravesite has recently been disturbed. Also note there are a few plastic cylindrical objects scattered about the graveyard.

CHIP: Well, here we are...back where we started...in the graveyard. At least it's not raining. Look! The clouds are breaking up and it's a full harvest moon.

KATE: Yeah, it's bright out here. We don't even need these candles. Let's check the map and find out where the X is located.

CHIP: (Looking at the map and pointing towards the large tombstone) About 3 rows up...now to the left about 6 graves ahead.

KATE: And six feet under. (Kate points to the tombstone's grave) It looks like someone's beat us to it. This grave has

recently been disturbed. The ground is empty. The casket has been removed as well.

CHIP: Another dead end.

KATE: That's one way to put it. Strange. Maybe it was the mummy. He said he escaped death...I wonder if he may have been here?

CHIP: Or maybe the clown dug him out of the ground. None of this is making any sense and everything's just getting weirder by the minute.

KATE: Whoever was here didn't stick around very long...there's dirt everywhere. They didn't bother to clean up their mess...Hey, what's this? (Kate bends down to pick up one of the plastic cylindrical objects.)

CHIP: (Walking over to look at the object) That's a glow stick...Look, they're lying all over the place.

KATE: Glow sticks?

CHIP: Yes. Watch...(He breaks open the glow stick) When you break them in half they begin to glow. Some people use them at Halloween to light pumpkins and decorations. The only problem is that you can only use them once until they burn out.

KATE: But of course they're glow sticks...everybody knows THAT! (Kate says sarcastically to defend her own insecurity because she didn't really know what it was) The real question is why are they here? Didn't the map say something about a 'guiding light?'

CHIP: Yes, you're right. "The guiding light will brightly shine upon the gate ahead."

KATE: Maybe we should light a bunch of them...(Kate breaks another one and then another that is near the tombstone) Hey! Come look at this!

CHIP: There's something written on the tombstone...and you can only read it with these glow sticks. It's another clue!

KATE: I can barely make it out...what does it say?

CHIP: It doesn't SAY anything...

BOTH TOGETHER: YOU HAVE TO READ IT!

CHIP: (Reading the tombstone...mumbling)

KATE: Well?

CHIP: It's not really a riddle...more of a story.

KATE: Who's grave is this anyway?

CHIP: It says Jack O' Lantern.

KATE: No, really...who is it?

CHIP: Really...it's Jack O' Lantern. The story is about A man named Jack and how he became caught up in a web of deceit and made a deal with the devil to save his own soul. After his death, however...his faith was not strong enough to enter Heaven. The devil, true to his word would not take him either...so he became trapped here on Earth between the two dimensions.

KATE: Interesting! What's that got to do with anything?

CHIP: (Continuing to read) Jack wanders amongst the living as a spirit on Earth during All Hallows Eve as the gatekeeper. He is neither in this world nor the next...

KATE: So the Jack O'Lantern is the GATEKEEPER?

CHIP: Wait, there's more...The devil gave Jack a turnip and a burning coal to light the way for other spirits. Over the years, he burnt out the turnip and began to use pumpkins.

KATE: The things you learn in the graveyard in the middle of the night!

CHIP: (Still reading the tombstone) Oh...And here's a riddle down below... "He carries the fires of burning coals to light the way of wandering souls...and still he roams until this day...with fiery passages to light the way."

KATE: That must be it! This Jack O'Lantern knows the way to help US find OUR tickets to Casajawia!

CHIP: ERRR...Yes...exactly Casajawia...that's where we're both headed alright!

KATE: Where EVER! At least we're on the right track again. But, where do we go from here?

CHIP: I don't know. I'm not too sure about where we are now...Let's recap. First, a dead clown that suddenly disappeared. That was the death of comedy, so to speak. Then there was this time displacement...I guess the spiritual world is on a different clock dimension! Our minds were deceived...The Count communicated with the dead...We finally find the key to help the mummy escape death and all he wants is fried chicken...and now we're out here in the middle of the graveyard on Halloween trying to find this Jack O'Lantern's guiding light. Does any of this make sense to you...if so, then please...enlighten ME!

KATE: (Thinking) Maybe it's not supposed to make sense. Maybe we're a lot like this Jack who became lost in this world and just looking for the light.

CHIP: You know...that's pretty deep...even for you. I think you're onto something. In any event, it seems as though we've crossed over to the other side and are now trying to make our way back to reality.

KATE: Exactly. We both are lost and need to see this through...and I guess, have a little faith in each other.

CHIP: We just need to follow the light...right?

KATE: Yes...the light. (Kate suddenly looks up towards the haunted mansion) LOOK! In the mansion...there's a light. Do you see it? At the top.

CHIP: So there is! Do you think it's the light we're looking for? I don't remember that room...it must've been hidden above the library...probably the attic.

KATE: That light wasn't on just a minute ago. Someone has just gone in there.

CHIP: Maybe it's the Mummy looking for fried chicken...or the disappearing dead clown.

KATE: We should investigate. Follow the light. Besides...what've we got to lose?

CHIP: Our minds!

KATE: C'mon, let's go...Just have faith that it will lead us both in the right direction!

End Scene 5

SCAVENGER HUNT

A PLAY BY CHRIS BALLARD

SCENE



Scene 6

Scene setting: Chip and Kate are now in the attic. Many boxes are piled on top of each other and various interesting antique artifacts are randomly scattered throughout the stage area, along with numerous outdated newspapers. At the left corner of the stage there is a rather large home-spun spider web which spells out the words “Web of Deceit.” Hanging from the web are various puzzle pieces. Chip and Kate begin walking from the right side of the stage to make their way through the various antique objects, boxes, and newspapers.

KATE: It’s a good thing you finally noticed that drawstring hanging from the portrait on the wall...otherwise, we would’ve never found this attic.

CHIP: A secret passage in this old haunted mansion...we could easily lose ourselves in this place.

KATE: I don’t see the mummy...or the clown, but somebody was here...notice the candles are still lit.

CHIP: Maybe we’re not the only one’s lost here...
(shouting) COME ON OUT IF YOUR IN HERE!

(Kate and Chip pause for a response, but soon begin looking through the interesting things in the attic.)

KATE: Look at all this stuff. Wonder what's in these boxes?

CHIP: All these antiques and stuff must've belonged to the Count and the police probably never found this attic.

KATE: Well, someone else knows it's here...We're not alone in this haunted mansion.

CHIP: The real question is what are we really looking for?

KATE: I'm not sure, but we'll know it when we see it.

CHIP: (Scouring through the items in the attic)

Photographs...a box of candles...newspaper clippings...Hey! This one looks like our mummy!

KATE: Find something? Here, let me see! (swiping the newspaper clipping from Chip) Hey! You're right! It's the mummy guy we found in the cellar! (She pushes the

newspaper clipping back into Chip's hands) Here! What does it say...errr...I mean, what's it read?

CHIP: (Reading) After a long and bitter legal battle, the jury sentenced George Hallows today for manslaughter and first degree murder of two young teenagers. The evidence was conclusive in the brutal slayings which has led to further investigation. (Chip pauses as he reads and then picks up the lines) Sergeant Janson spoke on behalf of the Sheriff's office claiming that justice had finally been served. He was quoted as saying "The jury's decision will finally give closure for the victims' families and the entire community to finally put that dreadful event to an end."

KATE: Omigosh! STOP! Don't read anymore!

CHIP: What's wrong?

KATE: This CAN'T be happening!

CHIP: I thought that YOU thought THIS was all a big prank!

KATE: I'm not so sure anymore! This is CRAZY! That guy was a murderer...and we set him free! What're we gonna do? We've got to tell someone.

CHIP: Right! Let's get out of here now...Forget about Costa Rica and the prize...I just hope we get through the night before people read about US in the paper...like in the obituary!

KATE: Chip, now I'm really scared! I wonder why he didn't just kill us down in the cellar?

CHIP: I don't know...obviously, he's a mental nutcase. Probably a serial killer who bought into the whole voodoo next world thing and actually believes he's crossed over to the next world.

KATE: (Standing up and backing away until she reaches the web on the left side of the stage) He must've been the one who killed the clown! He said he was going to...

CHIP: (Noticing Kate as she's walking into the web) Hey! Watch out for that...Web!

KATE: (Kate becomes tangled as Chip shouts warning)
YIKES! HELP!

(Chip rushes over to help untangle Kate from the web)

CHIP: It's just string. It's not a real spider web!

(Kate is free of the web and they both turn to look)

KATE: Look what it says...or reads... "Web of Deceit."
I wonder what that means?

CHIP: Another clue, maybe?

KATE: I'm tired of clues and riddles...Let's just get out of here!

CHIP: Wait! What are these things attached to it?

KATE: Who cares! THERE'S A MURDERER ON THE
LOOSE IN THIS HAUNTED MANSION!!!

CHIP: Now look whose afraid! There's just something
very, very strange about all this...It's just too creepy to be
real.

KATE: Forget it! I don't care if it's a prank or not...I just wanna get outta here!

CHIP: Right! OK. But, it seems to me that somebody's got a real twisted sense of humor to be playing us this way...it must be the clown!

KATE: I'm NOT Laughing! Let's Just GO!

CHIP: (Calming Kate's hysterics) Just hear me out, Kate... Remember the Jack O'Lantern grave...It specifically said...or read that he was lost and was caught up in a web of deceit...meaning a distortion of the truth. This is just another part of the game that's misleading us into a false sense of insecurity. I think all this is just an act and we're supposed to be frightened to prove that comedy isn't really dead, but just missing in life. I think you were right...we're being Punked!

KATE: I've changed my mind! All these clues and riddles aren't gonna stop the mummy from chopping our heads off! Let's get out of here!

CHIP: OK. Right. You may be right...but we were following the light, which led us here to the attic...and now we're caught in the web of deceit...isn't that too much of a coincidence?

KATE: I just have a bad feeling about all this...We need to get out of this place.

CHIP: There are puzzle pieces on this web. Let's at least put them together to see what it means.

KATE: PUZZLES! WHO CARES ABOUT PUZZLES?
THERE'S A KILLER ON THE LOOSE!

(There is a sound of clinking chains down below)

KATE: Oh, God! What is THAT?

CHIP: Sounds like chains being dragged across the floor downstairs...

KATE: WE'RE GONNA DIE!

CHIP: Snap out of it, Kate! Let me go take a look. I'll be right back!

KATE: Famous last words!

End Scene 6

SCAVENGER HUNT

A PLAY BY CHRIS BALLARD

SCENE



Scene 7

Scene setting: Chip and Kate are now back in the main living room of the haunted mansion. The fireplace is burning again. The chains from before are lying on the floor.

CHIP: Come on down, Kate...the coast is clear.

KATE: Are you for sure?

CHIP: Yeah! There's nobody here now. Whoever it was must've disappeared.

KATE: You mean, like the dead clown? There's just something strange about this place...I don't understand what's going on here.

CHIP: (Pointing to the chains on the floor) Look! There's those chains again! Someone must've been dragging them up from the cellar. I wonder why?

KATE: It's locked again...Where's the key? Do you still have it?

CHIP: No. I must've left it in the lock when we opened up the sarcophagus with the mummy.

KATE: You mean the escaped murderer from prison!

CHIP: So it would seem...but do we know that for sure?

(Chip begins fumbling with some puzzle pieces he took from the attic previously)

KATE: We should get out of here just in case.

CHIP: AHHH! I've got it! It's another clue!

KATE: Please, Chip! No more riddles, puzzles or clues! I've just got a bad feeling about all of this!

CHIP: We've come this far...and now I think I have the final answer...it's the fireplace!

KATE: Look!...Now the fire is burning again. (Kate points to the fireplace) Who started the fire? Was it the Mummy Serial Killer or the Dead Clown?

CHIP: (Holding up the puzzle pieces together) The puzzle fits together to reveal a diagram of this very room...Look here! It has a message... (Chip reading) “The real key to your escape has been found at last...Turn back time to turn off the gas.”

KATE: That makes NO SENSE!

CHIP: Of course it makes sense! The answer was right in front of us all along...We just had to go through all the steps to see it.

KATE: (Frustrated and becoming more concerned about their safety than solving the mystery) Chip! I DON'T CARE ANYMORE about this stupid Scavenger Haunt!!! Let's GET OUTTA HERE! NOW!

CHIP: Don't you see it! The key...the clock...the inner sanctum...the Jack O'Lantern and the web of deceit! They're all related. It's just that we have to put it all together in perspective...like this puzzle to see the answer!

KATE: The only perspective I want to see is us walking out of this haunted mansion...NOW!

CHIP: Don't be over-dramatic! Let me show you...

(Chip walks to the side of the fireplace and turns the key that turns off the gas to the fire. As the fire goes out, the fireplace turns around to reveal a secret passage.

KATE: Another secret passage!

CHIP: Yes through the fireplace...Let's go!

***Note: The actors continue speaking while there is a change to the set in the darkness. They are off to the side holding a candle and slowly making their way to the middle of the stage as the scene changes.

KATE: How did you discover the fireplace was the portal?

CHIP: (Holding the puzzle to show Kate as she holds the candle to see) The 'real key' is the the fireplace. If we retrace our steps backwards, it gives us a better perspective of where we've been.

KATE: You pieced together the puzzle from the web of deceit to find the answer.

CHIP: Exactly! But, we could not have possibly found the answer until we had gone through all the stages.

KATE: What about the Jack O'Lantern? What was THAT all about?

CHIP: I think that had something to do with being lost. We had to find the light to find our way back...That's where we found the glowsticks and saw the light up in the attic.

KATE: That's right! We never would've found the attic had we not been outside and noticed the one light in the mansion!

CHIP: Yes...and before that...we discovered the map that led us to the Jack O'Lantern's tombstone...it came from the book of the dead in the sarcophagus with the mummy...

KATE: So...I guess that guy was just playing a role?

CHIP: It seems to me that he played it well. I hope he found some fried chicken.

KATE: Yes...that was weird...But what about those newspaper clippings...were they just put there to scare us?

CHIP: Probably. It seems to be a theme that we've done a lot of research tonight...only an English teacher like Mrs. Nesser would go to extremes to have us do homework on Halloween night!

KATE: Yes! I think you're right! It's also very symbolic of life itself!

CHIP: How So?

KATE: Well...hindsight is 20/20 vision. You don't always see the future until you've experienced the past. That must've been the reason for the clock being set ahead...It's symbolic that we get ahead of ourselves at times and get lost on our way to move forward.

CHIP: Makes sense. I never thought of it that way, but then again, I'm more of a science and facts guy...while you have a deeper understanding of art and literature.

KATE: Thank you, Chip. That's so wonderful to hear. Not many people give me compliments. It's nice to get a little reassurance every now and then.

CHIP: Yes. Respect is hard to come by these days and you have to work hard to earn it...I'm just glad you gave me the opportunity to take part in this.

KATE: We make a Great Team! Now let's go get OUR Prize Tickets together!

Lights dim.

End of Scene 7

SCAVENGER HUNT

A PLAY BY CHRIS BALLARD

SCENE



Scene 8

Scene setting: Chip and Kate have made their way through the secret chamber. The lights slowly begin to illuminate the stage as they converse. The stage then shows a brick wall with painted Halloween murals everywhere. Large pipes are also visible at the top of the walls all around. The front center of the stage has a large pedestal with a Jack O'Lantern that is lit facing the audience.

KATE: I see a light up ahead...almost there!

CHIP: Just watch out for that snake!

KATE: (Shrieks) Aaiii! Don't scare me like that! (Kate slightly punches Chip.) You know I hate snakes!

CHIP: I see how it is...at least it's not mummies and dead clowns!

KATE: Here it is!

(Chip and Kate stand at one side of the stage as they look directly at the Jack O'Lantern in the center.)

CHIP: This is it, no doubt! The secret passage...the inner sanctum...the fiery path to the portal gate...an wallah!

BOTH CHIP AND KATE: The Jack O'Lantern!

CHIP: WE finally found it, I guess...

KATE: Well, actually...YOU found it, Chip! I was the one wanting to escape, but you helped me gain the strength and courage I needed to keep going. I was selfish to not think of you. You've earned it!

CHIP: I think since we did this together and it was YOUR idea that YOU deserve the prize.

(Chip reaches just below the Jack O'Lantern on the mantel and shows a set of tickets to Costa Rica.)

CHIP: And Look here! The tickets to Costa Rica. Game Over!

(Suddenly there is loud clapping of hands as the Clown walks onstage)

CLOWN: (Clapping) Congratulations! You're BOTH Winners!

BOTH CHIP AND KATE: (Surprised) THE CLOWN!!!

CHIP: YOU TWISTED CLOWN! We thought you were dead!

KATE: Is this YOUR IDEA of a JOKE!

CHIP: WHO ARE YOU!

(The Clown takes off his mask to reveal his true face.)

BOTH CHIP AND KATE: IT'S MALCOLM!!!

MALCOLM: In the Flesh!

CHIP: We weren't sure if you were just a prop or really dead! Then you disappeared...and...

KATE: WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?

MALCOLM: Hey! Relax, Guys! I can explain...

KATE: So start talking! (Shouting impatiently) NOW!

MALCOLM: It was all Mrs. Nesser's idea...She had me come out earlier today to set up a few more things before it all began. Since I won last year, she wanted me to help other students to win.

CHIP: Speaking of the other students...Where are they?

MALCOLM: I don't know. You're the only one's I've seen here...except for that weird guy that was here earlier.

CHIP AND KATE: YOU MEAN THE MUMMY?

MALCOLM: Oh, so you've seen him. I thought I locked him up down in the cellar. I didn't know what to do when he started becoming very violent and smashing everything...something about a portal gate to freedom.

KATE: SO, George Hallows is REAL?

CHIP: I've got news for us all...He is Free...and he's a murderer!

MALCOLM: No way! I chained him up down in the cellar...He's as good as captured until the others get here.

CHIP: (Clearing his throat) Errr...We actually set him loose, Malcolm. We thought he was part of the game!

MALCOLM: But I've got the KEY! (He reaches into his pocket and suddenly realizes the key is not there)

WAIT...Where IS IT?

KATE: We took the key when we first came into the living room. You were lying on the ground. We thought you were just a prop and the key was a clue to something else.

CHIP: I thought you were REALLY DEAD! Kate thought it was just part of the game...Why were you lying on the floor?

MALCOLM: Oh, Yeah! Now I remember. I was upstairs in the attic putting together the web and puzzle pieces and when I came down the stairs I tripped and fell...I must've knocked myself unconscious for a while. I'm still a little dizzy from the fall.

KATE: Did you also put those newspaper articles in the attic?

MALCOLM: What newspapers?

CHIP: Oh, dear!

KATE: (Hysterical) THERE'S A MURDERER LOOSE IN THIS HAUNTED HOUSE! WE NEED TO GET OUTTA HERE!

(At that moment, George Hallows the escaped prisoner walks onto the stage with an axe. He is still dressed in his prison clothes with some of the mummy bandages.)

GEORGE HALLOWS (MUMMY): THERE YOU ARE! ALL OF YOU! You LIED to ME! I'll TEACH YOU TO PLAY GAMES WITH ME!

(George Hallows, the Mummy raises the axe high in the air. The others shriek and cry out as they slowly back away from the threatening escaped convict.)

GEORGE HALLOWS: Now Which ONE of YOU GETS IT FIRST!

(The three students plea for reason as George Hallows raises his axe high up in the air again...)

(A police officer suddenly rushes onstage with a gun pointed in the convict's direction.)

SGT. JANSON: (Pointing his gun at George Hallows)
FREEZE! POLICE! HOLD IT RIGHT THERE GEORGE!
DON'T YOU MOVE A MUSCLE OR THIS BULLET'S
GONNA BE YOUR FINAL EXECUTION!

GEORGE HALLOWS: (Slowly lowering his axe, but then raises it high in the air as he lunges for the officer.)
NOOOOOOOO!!!! THIS IS MY ESCAPE!!!!

(A bright light flashes as a gunshot is heard. Lights onstage turn off abruptly. The sound of thunder resonates.)

End Scene 8

SCAVENGER HUNT

A PLAY BY CHRIS BALLARD

SCENE



EPILOGUE

Scene 9: Epilogue

Scene setting: Police Sergeant Janson's office. He is sitting behind a desk talking on the phone as Chip, Kate, and Malcolm walk on stage into his office.

SGT. JANSON: (Speaking on a telephone) That's correct, Mrs. Nesser and thank you and the Glenwood High School for your concerns and patience in this investigation. What's that? (pausing) Oh, the kids are doing just fine...just a little rattled from the night's events. As a matter of fact, they're here with me now... We just need to go over some details and fill out some paperwork, but they're doing great, considering...

(There is a long pause while the Sergeant is on the phone. He motions to the three students while he covers the phone.)

SGT. JANSON: Please...Have a seat.

(The three student sit in chairs set to the sides of the Sergeant's desk.)

SGT. JANSON: (Speaking on the phone) I understand. Those are the rules, but sometimes rules are meant to be broken. (Now sounding agitated) Mrs. Nesser, these kids went through a lot and I think their courage is admirable...

(another pause)

SGT. JANSON: Yes...I agree...and thank you once again for your help. I'll call you tomorrow to follow up. Good by Mrs. Nesser.

(The Sergeant hangs up the phone and turns to the kids in the chairs)

SGT. JANSON: That was your English teacher...Mrs. Nesser. Boy! I would hate to be in her class...she seems to be very strict.

(The students groan as if in agreement)

SGT. JANSON: That being said... (as he looks to Chip and Kate) The two of you have been placed on suspension for breaking school protocol. The school system is obligated

under law to administer safety and provide transportation to all students to community events...such as the Scavenger Haunt. It's my understanding that you did not board the bus at the school with the others. Why is that?

KATE: It's my fault. I wanted to get to the haunted mansion early to maybe find a few clues so I could win. I asked my neighbor Chip to come with me so I wouldn't be alone. He's just a Freshman...and a really smart kid, so please don't punish him.

SGT. JANSON: I understand. But, rules are rules and I cannot supersede the school board's decisions. In my opinion, this was what we call a 'circumstance of events' that led to danger unintentionally. In other words...all of you were unaware of the situation and could not possibly see that you were playing a part in the police search.

CHIP: I'm confused... How much danger were we in? Did you know we were there?

SGT. JANSON: Not at first. George Hallows escaped from prison. He had been tried and found guilty for murder and was sentenced for execution by the state. At some point he

began to talk about his escape plan when he learned the history of the haunted mansion. The man who owned it many years ago was committed to psychiatric care due to the fact that he was convinced he could resurrect the dead. Both he and George Hallows shared some jail time together and I had a gut-instinct that the escapee would be at the haunted mansion.

ALL THREE STUDENTS: Whoa!

SGT. JANSON: I had the school bus held up before they could arrive to check out the place. Mrs. Nesser was concerned because she knew that Malcolm was already inside helping to set up the event. She did not know, however...that other students were involved. That is why she has become insistent on some type of punishment for the two of you... (pointing to Chip and Kate) She was simply concerned for your safety and wants to teach you both a lesson!

(Chip and Kate groan as they realize the concerns they caused for others)

CHIP: We're so very sorry, Sergeant. We had NO IDEA!

KATE: Yes...So Sorry for everyone's concern.

SGT. JANSON: Well, that pretty much wraps it all up... Like I said, these were unintentional consequences that occurred. In my opinion, you three were brave and ambitious and should not be punished. You all helped us to contain the prisoner during our search and that should be rewarded. I am an officer of the law and must not only abide by the rules, but I also must protect and serve those in society who break them. I am a believer in fate and circumstance, and I think in this case the three of you were there tonight due to fate and helped bring about justice to society. Therefore...our department has kicked in some extras so that all three of you and your families get an all-expense paid vacation to Costa Rica!

(All three students shout out with relief and joy.)

SGT JANSON: And just one other note...This vacation will come during the week of your suspension while on Summer break...but that's just between us...the school doesn't need to know the details.

MALCOLM: That's AWESOME!

CHIP: WOW! COOL!

KATE: Thank You, Sergeant! We can't thank you enough!

SGT. JANSON: No, Thank You. In the end, it's about making the right decisions...even if you must break the rules. We can't always see the future, but good intentions should be rewarded. The Scavenger Haunt seems to be a reflection of life...searching for the clues that reward all and helping the community at large. You should be proud of your actions. Just don't break the rules again or I'll be there to put you back in Mrs. Nesser's class!

CHIP: Thank You, Officer...Sir...

MALCOLM: Yes Sir!

KATE: So....I guess we all won the game! Thank you, Sir.

SGT. JANSON: Yes, Kate. We ALL WON! Thank You for taking part in this year's Scavenger Haunt!

(Lights dim)

END OF PLAY