

BEN

(as the doll)
Have a pony. Feel better now?

EMILY

(as the doll)
Yes. Much better. Thank you.

Emily begins crying in earnest.

BEN

It's okay. It's okay.

MOM (O.S.)

Kidda? Baby Girl?

Ben and Emily quickly change their demeanors.

BEN

(urgent, confidential)
Wipe your face. Quick. She's coming.

Emily wipes her face. Ben quickly grabs a more masculine toy, like a Ninja Turtle. They smile and feign happy play.

Mom enters and watches them from the doorway, not approaching or interrupting.

BEN

Dance party!

EMILY

Dance party!

BEN

Come on, pony! You dance too!

They make the dolls dance, somewhat lifelessly for a moment. Mom, satisfied, leaves them to play alone.

The dance party continues a moment while they wait for Mom to walk further away, but their faces are no longer smiling.

They put down the toys. Ben looks at Emily very seriously.

START-----

BEN

Hey. Try not to do that, if you can.

EMILY

Do what?

BEN

Cry.

EMILY

Mom said it's alright to cry.

BEN

That's what she says, but she can't take it, okay? She is sad ALL THE TIME. Us crying only makes it worse.

EMILY

But-

BEN

Do you want to hurt her?

EMILY

No.

BEN

Then try really hard. Just think about something else.

EMILY

Like what?

BEN

(rapidly)

You know that episode of Full House where Papouli dies and Stephanie tells Michelle to stop herself from crying in front of Uncle Jesse by picturing Joey sticking a whole doughnut in his mouth?

EMILY

Yeah.

BEN

Well, do that. Or something else funny. Anything to not have to feel this stuff. At least, not in front of Mom. Okay?

EMILY

Okay.

BEN

I know it's hard, but it's the only way she'll get better.

EMILY

Okay. Ben?

BEN

Yeah?

EMILY

Are you very afraid? Of the ghost?

BEN

No. I'm not scared. I'm the man of the house now.

EMILY

Oh. You're brave.

BEN

Don't say that.

The kids exit. Omar takes the dolls away.

END-----

Scene 4

Penny takes center.

PENNY

Ya know, scary movies are different once you've lived one. It gives you a point of reference. The way a real doctor might watch a doctor show and go, "Well, that's just completely inaccurate". We'd do that with scary movies.

Where a normal viewer might go, "DON'T GO DOWN STAIRS!" We'd go, "Why don't they just go outside and look through the basement window?"

You rank the movie on the feeling it gives you. Does this movie give me the same feeling I have on my own at 2AM, or is it mild in comparison?

You begin to use the movies as shorthand to describe your own experience. "I'd say our ghost feels like a combination of the playful ghoul from Poltergeist, the malicious demon from The Amityville Horror, with just a soupçon of the entity from... The Entity".

The characters in these movies were normal people. Their hauntings were what made them special. We see them on TV and movie screens because a ghost selected them. The afterlife got involved. Where some people stay up nights wondering if there really is a God, we'd stay up wishing that the Devil was less real.

There was no need of faith. Everything was as real as moonlight. We were haunted, but we were chosen. We were terrified, but we were special.

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