

Synopsis

When four reluctant partygoers break down on a deserted forest road at night, their shared relief quickly turns to panic when one of them mysteriously disappears. As fear, suspicion, and wildly exaggerated theories take over, the remaining friends spiral into increasingly absurd conclusions while searching the dark woods. A dark comedy.

Alien Cult Bear Attack

Written by Tanya Reddin

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A dark comedy for four actors

Characters

MAYA – Practical, sarcastic, permanently disappointed.

DAN – Overthinks everything. Convinced disaster is always moments away.

LUCY – Cheerful in a way that makes people suspicious.

TOM – The birthday party host's cousin. Constantly trying to avoid social situations.

Scene

A forest road at night.

A broken-down car sits at one side of the stage. The woods surround them. A flashlight provides most of the light.

(Lights up. A car engine dies with a sad sputter.)

DAN

That's not good.

I knew this would happen.

MAYA

You know everything will happen.

DAN

And yet nobody listens.

TOM

So... we're not going to the party then?

(Everyone turns to him.)

MAYA

That's your first concern?

TOM

I just hated the idea of going.

LUCY

Me too to be honest.

DAN

Same.

MAYA

I've spent three weeks inventing reasons not to go.

(A pause.)

TOM

This is actually excellent news.

LUCY

It's kind of a miracle.

DAN

A mechanical miracle.

(They all quietly celebrate.)

MAYA

To be clear, we're stranded in a forest.

LUCY

Yes.

MAYA

At night.

LUCY

Correct.

MAYA

With no signal.

LUCY

Still somehow better than Gary's birthday.

(An owl hoots.)

DAN

What was that?

MAYA

An owl.

DAN

How do you know?

MAYA

Err because "forest."

DAN

Could've been something else.

TOM

Maybe a larger owl?

(Tom wanders a little away.)

LUCY

What exactly is Gary celebrating anyway?

MAYA

Turning forty.

DAN

He's been celebrating turning forty for five years.

LUCY

That's true.

MAYA

Last year he had a banner that said "Forty-ish."

(Tom disappears briefly into darkness.)

TOM

I'm going to find a place to pee.

MAYA

Don't wander off.

TOM

I'm not wandering. I'm peeing in this direction.

(He exits.)

DAN

He's definitely going to die.

LUCY

What?

DAN

This is exactly how people disappear.

MAYA

Nobody's disappearing.

DAN

They always say that right before someone disappears.

LUCY

That's actually true.

(Time passes.)

MAYA

Tom?

(No answer.)

DAN

See?

MAYA

Tom!

(Nothing.)

LUCY

Maybe he's shy.

DAN

Nobody pees for seven minutes.

MAYA

You timed him?

DAN

Yep it helps me panic, accurately.

(The woods remain silent.)

LUCY

Tom?

(Nothing.)

DAN

He's gone.

MAYA

Stop it.

DAN

Gone.

LUCY

Maybe he fell into a hole.

DAN

Or was dragged.

MAYA

By what?

DAN

I don't know. Something with dragging capabilities.

(The atmosphere grows darker.)

LUCY

What if he's injured?

DAN

What if he's mostly injured?

MAYA

That's not a category.

DAN

It is if enough of you doesn't work.

(They shine flashlights into the trees.)

MAYA

Tom!

LUCY

Tom!

DAN

If you're alive, make a noise!

(Silence.)

DAN

Oh God.

LUCY

What?

DAN

He's not responding.

MAYA

No shit Sherlock.

DAN

Tom!

(A distant rustling.)

LUCY

Did you hear that?

DAN

Yes.

MAYA

It's probably an animal.

DAN

Every serial killer's favourite sentence.

(The rustling stops.)

LUCY

Should we go look?

DAN

Absolutely not.

MAYA

We have to.

DAN

Why?

MAYA

Because if Tom is hurt...

DAN

Look, I think Tom would understand.

(They reluctantly move toward the woods.)

LUCY

Tom! Answer us!

(Nothing.)

DAN

Maybe we should prepare ourselves.

MAYA

For what?

DAN

Finding... parts.

LUCY

Don't say that.

DAN

Sorry. Components then.

(A loud crash somewhere in the darkness.)

LUCY

AHhh!

MAYA

What was that?!

DAN

We're all dying.

(Suddenly they notice something hanging from a tree branch.)

LUCY

What is that?

MAYA

Oh no.

DAN

OH NO.

(They stare.)

LUCY

Is that... Tom's jacket?

(Maya picks it up.)

MAYA

It's his jacket.

(Silence.)

DAN

He's been harvested.

MAYA

Nobody gets harvested!

DAN

How do you know?

(They all spiral.)

LUCY

Maybe he was kidnapped.

DAN

Maybe he joined a cult.

MAYA

In ten minutes?

DAN

It's an efficient cult.

(Suddenly a phone rings somewhere nearby.)

LUCY

That's Tom's ringtone!

MAYA

Where?

(They follow the sound.)

DAN

The final clue.

(They find Tom's phone on a tree stump.)

The classic disappearance package.

(A long, dreadful silence.)

MAYA

Should we call the police?

DAN

And say what?

MAYA

Our friend vanished.

DAN

After abandoning his belongings in the woods?.

LUCY

That does sound suspicious.

(Suddenly, from behind them...)

TOM (offstage)

Why are you holding my jacket?

(The three scream.)

(Tom enters carrying a giant birthday cake.)

MAYA
TOM?!

DAN
YOU'RE ALIVE?!

LUCY
WHAT IS THAT?!

TOM
Cake.

MAYA
Where did you get a cake?

TOM
There's a bakery.

DAN
What in the forest?

TOM
No. A petrol station, it's about five minutes that way.
(Points.)

LUCY
Bloody hell Tom, we've been looking for you!

TOM
Why?

MAYA
Because you vanished!

TOM
I shouted that I found a road.

DAN
Nobody heard that.

TOM
Then I took off my jacket because I was warm.

MAYA
You left your phone.

TOM

The battery died.

(The others stare.)

DAN

So you weren't murdered?

TOM

No.

LUCY

Kidnapped?

TOM

No.

DAN

Harvested?

TOM

...What?

(Tom sets down the cake.)

MAYA

Why buy a cake?

TOM

Because if we're not making it to Gary's birthday party...

(He opens the box.)

...we can celebrate not going.

(Everyone bursts out laughing.)

DAN

This is the happiest I've been all year.

LUCY

Do we have candles?

TOM

No.

MAYA

Good.

(They sit around the cake in the darkness.)

LUCY

Think Gary's going to be upset?

MAYA

Probably.

DAN

Should we tell him the truth?

TOM

Absolutely not.

LUCY

What do we tell him?

(They all think.)

MAYA

Bear attack.

DAN

Cult recruitment.

LUCY

Alien abduction.

TOM

Car trouble.

(Everyone stares at him.)

Fine. Alien cult bear attack.

(They nod, then they all raise slices of cake.)

(Blackout.)

END