

# Halloween Getaway

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"Don't you think it's a little late for us to be trick-or-treating?"

Amanda struggled to keep her voice steady as she stumbled through the brambles, wrapping the cape of her Harry Potter costume around her shoulders to protect herself against the frigid October breeze. Her best friend, Elizabeth, cast her a sharp look under her disheveled red wig.

"Don't be silly, Amanda," she chided. "Let's just cut through the cemetery and go to a couple more houses, and then we can head home."

Amanda agreed submissively. When the two girls reached the tall, wrought iron fence surrounding the cemetery, Elizabeth shoved the gate open and sauntered through the graveyard, seemingly indifferent to the tombstones around her. Amanda followed in her wake, her heart throbbing in her chest. The weathered, cracked gravestones loomed in the darkness, but she forced herself not to be afraid.

"Hurry up," Elizabeth called, exasperated. She waited while Amanda caught up to her. As they trudged together in silence through the cemetery, the iron gate which they had left open suddenly clanged shut in the distance behind them. Both girls froze and glanced at each other, panic written all over their faces.

"Maybe it was just the wind," Elizabeth whispered, but there was a note of fear in her voice.

"I'm not taking any chances." Amanda grabbed her best friend's hand and dragged her as she scurried past the gravestones. They heard a sickening groan echo throughout the cemetery.

"What was that?" Amanda whimpered, speeding up her pace.

"I don't—" Elizabeth's sentence was cut off as a decaying, bloody hand emerged from the soil, clawing at the ground. She screamed, horrified, and attempted to crush it under her foot. Instead, the hand wrapped its bony fingers around her ankle and held tight.

Amanda gripped Elizabeth's leg and tugged as hard as she could until the hand released its grip. They scrambled across the loose dirt, their costumes constantly getting tangled up on tombstones as they sprinted for their lives. Tears streamed down their faces and each breath came out as a sob. Never before had they been so terrified.

Amanda tripped over a tombstone and tumbled to the ground, landing in the soil with her face pressed into the dirt. "Get up, get up!" Elizabeth shrieked, yanking her to her feet. But Amanda's cape was caught in one of the tombstones. As Elizabeth struggled to untangle it, a hand reached out from the soil and wrapped its fingers around the back of Amanda's neck. It pressed her face into the ground, suffocating her. She couldn't breathe, and when she attempted to scream, dirt filled her mouth. Elizabeth snatched up a rock and pounded it into the hand repeatedly

until it let go. Amanda rose unsteadily to her feet, sobbing as she wiped the clumps of dirt from her eyes.

"Amanda, we have to go," Elizabeth begged, dragging her behind her as she sprinted between the gravestones.

"We're going to die," Amanda whimpered repeatedly. "We're going to die."

They were almost at the gate, which would let them out of the cemetery. But Amanda tripped and toppled on top of Elizabeth, who landed on the hard stone surface of a tombstone. Elizabeth swore loudly, probing the wound on her forehead with her fingers. Her hand came away soaked in blood.

Amanda pressed her hand over her mouth in shock. "You're injured," she said. "Oh my god, are you okay?"

Elizabeth swiped the blood off her forehead with her costume sleeve. "Of course not," she snapped. "You pushed me over. Come on, let's go."

They finally reached the gate. Elizabeth shoved it hard, but it refused to open. She gripped the iron bars and rattled them back and forth, but it would not budge. Behind them, they heard a low-pitched, monotonous groan. Glancing back, they saw a group of zombies staggering towards them.

Amanda screamed in terror and yanked the gate as hard she could. It swung open. "Go go go!" she shouted. The two friends rushed through the gate and

slammed it shut behind them. They sprinted to Amanda's house and stumbled inside, crying and panting.

"That was the worst night of my life," Elizabeth sobbed as she wiped the dried blood off her forehead with a wet towel. "My face is a mess."

"And my Halloween costume got ruined," Amanda said, inspected her tattered, dirty Harry Potter cape in the mirror.

"Hey," Elizabeth pointed out, "on the bright side, at least we still have our Halloween candy!"