

There's a knock at the door. JUDY BARCUS enters from the kitchen dressed as a nun. Around her waist is a tool belt holding a cross, and a spray bottle filled with holy water. SHE takes the cross from her belt, holds it in defense of some unseen evil, and goes to the door.

JUDY

(Looking through the peep hole)

Crystal, is that you?

CRYSTAL (O.S.)

Yes it's me, open the door.

JUDY

(Opens the door and sticks the cross in CRYSTAL'S face. CRYSTAL takes the cross from Judy. As she hands it back, JUDY grabs it, along with CRYSTAL's hand, and pulls both inside.)

Quick, get inside.

(JUDY locks the door.)

I saw him again today.

CRYSTAL

The warlock, right?

JUDY

Of course the warlock.

CRYSTAL

What form did he take on this time bird, Volkswagen, eggplant?

JUDY

He was a dog. You didn't see a dog out there did you?

CYRSTAL

Actually I saw a basset hound digging around your fence in the back yard. You better go check it out.

JUDY

Wait here, and while I'm gone, don't open the door for anybody!

(Exits to the kitchen)

CRYSTAL

(Opens the front door)

Shannon, the coast is clear. Get in here.

SHANNON

(Standing in the door)

Mom, I don't want to be here. This place gives me the creeps, and Mrs. Barcus is just plain weird.

CRYSTAL

You're calling Judy weird? Shannon, you're dating a kid who has a stud piercing his lower lip, and another one piercing his tongue. Every time he sneezes sparks fly out of his mouth. Now quit your whining and get in here.

SHANNON

(Enters)

I'll bet my dad would never make me do this.

CRYSTAL

(Closes the door)

I'll tell you what; if you can find your dad you can go live with him.

(Gestures to the hallway)

Now, go through there to the right, at the end of that hallway are some stairs. The stairs that go up, lead to the attic. The stairs that go down, lead to the basement. You go down to the basement and grab as many bags as you can, load them in the car, and take them to the nearest dumpster. Now get going.

SHANNON

Aren't you going to help?

CRYSTAL

I gotta keep Judy busy so she doesn't catch you. Whatever you do, don't get caught. Now get going.

SHANNON

This sucks.

CRYSTAL

Remember that next time you stay out all night with Sparky.

(SHANNON exits through the archway S.L.

CRYSTAL exits to the kitchen. RYAN BARCUS enters through the front door carrying a gym bag.)

RYAN

Mom..., Emily..., are you guys here? It's me Ryan.

(Exits through the archway S.R)

(JUDY enters from the kitchen holding her spray bottle like a gun, as CRYSTAL follows.)

JUDY

Are you sure you didn't hear anything?

CRYSTAL

I'm sure. I didn't hear a thing.

JUDY

The door! Did you unlock the door!?

(Locks the front door)

CRYSTAL

No, of course I didn't unlock the door. You told me not to, remember?

JUDY

Then why is the door unlocked?

CRYSTAL

It's a dilemma.

JUDY

I'm sure I heard something. Emily...? Emily, are you home?

(Raises her spray bottle in defense and exits to the bedroom. CRYSTAL follows.)

(SHANNON enters from the archway S.L pulling a trash bag. She gets almost to the door when CRYSTAL enters from the archway S.R.)

CRYSTAL

I told you I didn't hear anything.

(Sees Shannon)

But let's make sure. Let's check again.

(Just as JUDY enters the room CRYSTAL pushes her back into the hall, S.R., keeping her from seeing Shannon.)

JUDY (O.S.)

But I checked everywhere back here.

CRYSTAL (O.S.)

We checked the bedrooms upstairs, but we didn't check the back hall to the kitchen.

SHANNON

(Begins to work the locks, but stops and inspects her fingernails.)

Oh my god... I broke a nail.

RYAN (O.S.)

Mom, is that you?

(SHANNON ducks into the closet, leaving the trash bag.)

RYAN

(Enters from the kitchen)

Mom...? Emily?

(Notices the trash bag)

What's this...? Come on, somebody's gotta be home. Mom? Emily?

(Exits through the archway S.R.)

(SHANNON comes out of the closet and starts for the front door.)

CRYSTAL (O.S.)

Well it didn't hurt to double check.

(SHANNON jumps back in the closet. JUDY and CRYSTAL enter from the kitchen.)

CRYSTAL

Don't you feel better knowing that there's no one here except you and me.

JUDY

If no one's here, how do you explain that?

(Points to the trash)

CRYSTAL

Well I –

JUDY

Oh my god, the door's unlocked again. It's the warlock! He's been in the house.

CRYSTAL

You think?

JUDY

Who else would be trying to steal my trash?

CRYSTAL

Another dilemma.

JUDY

I'll bet we scared him off. He's terrified of the cross, and the holy water.

(Locks the door)

I got to get this back down stairs.

(Moves to the trash)

Would you help me?

CRYSTAL

I'll get it. You stay here and exorcise the spirits, or whatever it is you do.

(Drags the bag back through the archway S.L)

(There's a knock at the door. JUDY looks through the peep hole. SHE swaps the water bottle for the cross and opens the door to EMILY BARCUS who is carrying a plastic grocery sack. THEY exchange the cross and JUDY pulls EMILY inside.)

JUDY

Quick, get inside.

(Closes and locks the door.)

He was here today. He was in the house, and this time I have a witness.

EMILY

You have a witness?

JUDY

Crystal. She was here. – Did you get the garlic and the string?

EMILY

I got it. It's all right here.

(Hands the bag to JUDY)

So Crystal was here?

JUDY

She's still here. The warlock tried to steal a bag of our trash. Crystal's taking it back down to the basement. - What about the holy water? Did you get the holy water?

EMILY

It's in the bag. Did you actually see someone trying to steal the trash?

JUDY

No, I didn't actually see anybody, but I found a bag of trash sitting right there.

(Points to a spot on the floor)

Did the priest bless the water?

EMILY

Yes, he blessed it. So where is the warlock now?

JUDY

Crystal and I scared him off.

EMILY

(Patronizing)

Well thank god for that.

(Picks up several pieces of dripping wet mail)

Mother, how many times have I told you, you can't wash the mail?

JUDY

I have to. That warlock has powers we don't understand. We can't take any chances.

EMILY

Mother, I can't read the mail when it's been soaking all day in dishwater.

JUDY

It's easier than dealing with open sores and boils that you might get if I didn't soak it.

EMILY

Here's a letter from the department of corrections and I can't read a word.

JUDY

You think it's from Ryan?

EMILY

How can I tell? All the inks run together. It looks like a water color without any color.

(CRYSTAL enters from the archway S.L.)

CRYSTAL

Hey Emily, there you are.

JUDY

Crystal, tell Emily about the warlock. Tell her how we scared him off after he tried to steal the trash.

CRYSTAL

We think he was here. We didn't actually see him.

JUDY

He was here. How do explain the bag of trash on the floor by the front door?

CRYSTAL

Okay, he was probably here, and we probably scared him off.

JUDY

(To Emily)

I told you so. - I need to fill my spray bottle with the holy water, and finish sorting the trash. While I'm gone, don't open the door for anybody!

(EXITS to the kitchen)

CRYSTAL

Sorry about that. I had Shannon trying to help me get some of the trash hauled out of the basement, but as usual with Shannon, things got screwed up.

EMILY

Well it was a nice thought.

CRYSTAL

Did you get it? Did you get the job?

EMILY

I didn't even get to interview for it.

CRYSTAL

They promised you an interview. Why didn't they give you an interview?

EMILY

They didn't interview anybody. They just gave the job to Heather.

CRYSTAL

Heather? The sixteen year old with the pair of silicon lungs? She's only been there 6 months.

EMILY

The manager said she has a better rapport with the customers than I do.

CRYSTAL

She has better rapport? What is rapport? Is that like French for rack?

EMILY

Let's face it Crystal, I've been over looked all my life. I'm pretty used to it by now.

CRYSTAL

It's obvious the guy wasn't looking for a head checker. That job should have been yours.

EMILY

It wasn't even the job. Heather can be the boss, I don't care. It was the money. I was counting on the extra money to get some help with mom.

CRYSTAL

I know sweetheart.

EMILY

Crystal, I don't know how much longer I can deal with her. I rush home on my breaks to check on her because I'm afraid to leave her alone for more than a few hours. I don't get any sleep because she wakes me up in the middle of the night to make sure I'm not in a warlock-induced coma. I have no personal life.

CRYSTAL

I feel that pain.

EMILY

I bring a guy home, and she either sprays him in the face with holy water or clobbers him with a cross. I'm tired, I'm broke, and I'm lonely. I could deal with tired and broke if I weren't so lonely. It's lonely being lonely.

CRYSTAL

Look, if you wanna go out, find a guy, get a room and stay out all night. I'll stay with your mom.

EMILY

The first date isn't the problem. The problem comes on the second date or the third date or, if I'm lucky, the fourth date. Sooner or later I'll have to bring him home, and when I do, he'll either be hosed down or stabbed in the eye with a cross. After that he'll be harder to find than Osama Bin Laden.

RYAN

(Enters from the archway S.R.)

There you are. I was beginning to think you'd moved.

EMILY

Ryan, what are you doing here?

CRYSTAL

And how soon are you leaving?

RYAN

Well if it isn't the neighbor from hell.

CRYSTAL

Well if it isn't the pin head from prison.

EMILY

Ryan, you shouldn't be here. You can't be here.

RYAN

It's here or a half way house. I told the parole board you wouldn't mind.

EMILY

I thought you had two more years to go before you were even eligible for parole.

RYAN

That's right, but they let all us nonviolent offenders out on probation cause of overcrowding. They were supposed to send you a letter.

EMILY

I don't think you staying here is such a good idea.

RYAN

Of course it's a good idea. Don't give it a second thought.

EMILY

Ryan, you can't stay here. It's tough enough trying to work and take care of mom. I can't deal with anything else.

RYAN

Don't worry about it. I'll stay in the room in the attic. You'll hardly know I'm here.

EMILY

It's just not a good idea.

RYAN

Emily, I'm not gonna get in any trouble. In fact I already got a lead on a job. Willie Fingers thinks he can get me on at "Joey's Pizza" deliverin' pizzas.

EMILY

Ryan, Willie Fingers is a crook.

RYAN

Alleged crook, he's never been convicted of anything.

CRYSTAL

Well that makes him smarter than you.

JUDY

(Enters from the kitchen; seeing Ryan she holds up the cross and draws her spray bottle.)

Oh my god, Emily. Don't let him touch you.

RYAN

What's with the nun?

(JUDY sprays water in RYAN'S face.)

RYAN (continued)

Hey, what's the deal here?

EMILY

Ryan, don't you recognize your own mother?

RYAN

What...? Mom...? Geez it is you. Wow, when did you become a nun?

JUDY

Who's a nun?

EMILY

She wears the habit because she thinks there's a warlock trying to cast a spell on her. It's like a disguise.

JUDY

It's not a disguise, it's protection.

RYAN

A warlock? You mean like a man witch?

CRYSTAL

After being in jail, you're probably more familiar with a man itch.

EMILY

Mom, Ryan was just released from jail.

JUDY

Just in time. He can help protect us from the warlock.

EMILY

Mom, I really don't think it's a good idea for Ryan to stay here.

RYAN

Of course I'll protect you from the warlock. What kind of son would I be if I didn't protect my own mother from a nasty old warlock?

JUDY

And he could help me sort the trash.

RYAN

That's right. I could help sort – sort the trash?

JUDY

If the warlock gets hold of any of our bodily fluids he can use it to cast a spell on us.

EMILY

We're collecting our trash in the basement to keep it safe from the warlock. We sort out anything that may have come in contact with bodily fluids and we don't let it out of the house.

RYAN

That's disgusting.

JUDY

Come on to the basement. I'll get you started.

(SHE grabs RYAN and drags him through the archway S.L.)

RYAN

Is she serious?

CRYSTAL

Welcome home, Ryan.