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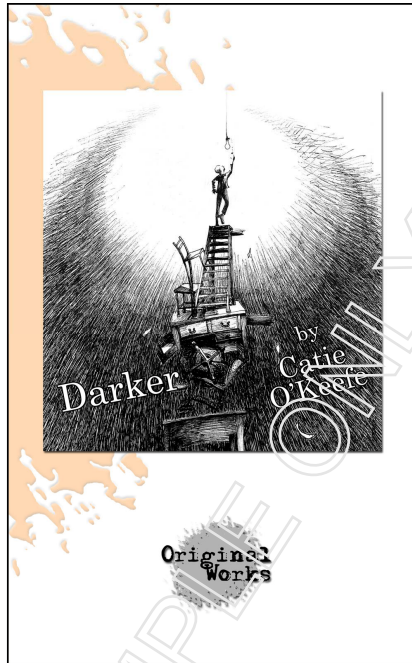
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**DARKER** by Catie O'Keefe

**Synopsis:** In search of a job, Max finds himself the new kid at the Industri-Light Bulb Factory. But his surroundings are all too familiar... and he's certain he has seen his boss somewhere before. Is he losing his mind, or is this the start of a very sick- and ultimately deadly- game? Max must uncover the truth, or accept a fate that will keep his life in a mind-numbing limbo.

**Cast Size:** 2 Males, 1 Female

**STUPID GHOST**  
by Savannah Reich

SAMPLE ONLY

Characters:

GHOST, female.

RONNIE, female.

JJ, male.

POLTERGEIST, no gender in particular.

LECTURER, any gender.

MAN IN CAR - played by JJ.

BARISTA - played by Ronnie.

DRIVER - played by JJ.

Note: The actor's genders do not necessarily need to match those of the characters they play.

*Stupid Ghost* was first presented at Carnegie Mellon University on April 23, 2015. The production was directed by Ben Gansky. The cast was as follows:

Ghost- Amanda Jerry  
Poltergeist - Ryan Avalos  
Lecturer - Stanley Weiner  
Ronnie - Erika Olson  
JJ - Adam Stern-Rand

## STUPID GHOST

### *PART ONE.*

*(The sound of radio static.*

*Three ghosts in the woods. They wear bed sheets with holes cut out for the eyes.*

*The GHOSTS hold up umbrellas, clothes hangers and other pieces of trash into the air, searching for the sweet spot. Sometimes they make ghost noises, like “wooo wooo”.*

*One GHOST throws off her bed sheet to reveal that she wears clothes caked in dirt, and a sign around her neck that says “GHOST”.)*

GHOST: Boo! *(pause)* Just kidding. It's funny because I am a ghost. The joke is that a real ghost would never try to scare you, because ghosts would never want you to feel bad. You might be like, “What? I thought ghosts were sneaky and gross and they live in the bathroom mirror and try to reach out with their icicle fingers and steal your soul!” Wrong. It's not your fault but you're wrong.

*(The GHOSTS find the radio signal - the oldies station. They “woo” with pleasure.)*

GHOST: The real deal is that ghosts don't actually do anything. They just hang out in the woods and listen to the radio. It's pretty boring, and they're pretty bad at it, but they don't have anything else to do and it isn't bothering anyone. They don't want to get in the way. Ghosts are nice! Right guys? Guys!

OTHER GHOSTS: Woooo.

GHOST: They don't remember anything except for being in the woods. They don't care about anything or think about anything. They're just kind of there. This one ghost lived in the woods, and she definitely would have just stayed there forever, except for this one day something happened to her, and that something was that she saw this girl.

*(Enter RONNIE, wearing headphones and singing. She has a cardboard around her neck that says "PRETTY GIRL". The GHOSTS lose their radio signal and stare.)*

GHOST: And because she saw the girl some things ended up happening. But it's important to remember that everything that she did was just what anyone would have done, if anyone was a ghost who had been living in the woods, mostly in silence, maybe forever.

*(RONNIE sings.)*

*(The GHOSTS follow her. The GHOSTS sing along. This is perhaps a full musical number.)*

GHOST: Sometimes these ghosts followed someone for just a little ways, but it wasn't a big deal. The person wouldn't even notice. And they would stop really really quickly. Usually they would stop right here.

*(The GHOST stops. Another ghost, the POLTERGEIST, goes on following RONNIE.)*

GHOST: What are you doing?

*(POLTERGEIST stops. They throw off their bed sheet, revealing a sign that says "ALSO A GHOST". RONNIE walks offstage.)*

POLTERGEIST: Beg your pardon?

GHOST: Are you stopping?

POLTERGEIST: I thought I might go just a little further.

GHOST: Oh!

POLTERGEIST: Unless you think I shouldn't.

GHOST: No, I don't mind.

POLTERGEIST: She won't even notice.

GHOST: Right, absolutely.

POLTERGEIST: Unless... you were going to?

GHOST: Oh no!

POLTERGEIST: I don't want to step on your toes.

GHOST: I don't follow people. I mean, I'm sorry.  
I don't mean to criticize you.

POLTERGEIST: No, no!

GHOST: I just wouldn't do it personally. Because I wouldn't want to scare her or anything. But if you want to...

POLTERGEIST: No, you're right. I don't want to scare anyone.

GHOST: Yeah, you never know.

POLTERGEIST: Can't be too careful.

GHOST: That's what I always say.

POLTERGEIST: All right, have a nice evening!

GHOST: You too! Don't follow anyone! Ha ha!

POLTERGEIST: Ha ha! Right, you either!

*(POLTERGEIST exits. GHOST looks at the audience.)*

GHOST: Ghosts are nice!

*(GHOST looks around, quickly catches up with RONNIE and follows her through the woods.)*

GHOST: This ghost usually never followed people. And she definitely never followed anyone all the way home and into their bedroom. It was a one-time thing.

*(RONNIE walks into her bedroom and begins undressing. The GHOST follows her.)*

GHOST: Hi. Can you hear me? Okay, so let's pretend that we're in your bedroom and we're friends and you invited me to come over. And you had this weird day and I'm like, ohmigod, tell me all about your day! Can you hear me? You can't hear me. Can you hear me?

*(Pause.)*

GHOST: Omigod, tell me all about your day!

POLTERGEIST (off): Veronica!

RONNIE: I'll be out in a minute!

GHOST: Veronica. Hi, Veronica. Hi.

POLTERGEIST (off): Sweetheart, is there a lock on your door?

RONNIE: Hold on, I'll get it.

*(RONNIE unlocks the door. Enter the POLTERGEIST, in a housedress and wig. The sign around their neck now reads, "MOTHER (POSSESSED)".)*

POLTERGEIST: Now, darling, I hardly think that's necessary.

*(The POLTERGEIST waves at the GHOST while RONNIE isn't looking.)*

GHOST: What are you *doing*?

RONNIE: I'm sorry. I just thought a little privacy could be nice.

GHOST: Get out of here!

POLTERGEIST: Do you think that you need to lock the door against anyone in this house?

GHOST: That's not your mom!

RONNIE: All the girls at school have them.

POLTERGEIST: I don't find it very "hip" to keep your own mother locked out of your bedroom.

RONNIE: I'm sorry.

GHOST: Oh my *god*.

POLTERGEIST: It is my own home, after all.

RONNIE: I know. I'm sorry.

POLTERGEIST: It's all right, darling. I just don't want you to get swept up in trying to impress the popular crowd.

GHOST: What are you even *talking* about?

RONNIE: I'm not sure why I had it at all.

POLTERGEIST: I'll just hold on to it and we won't speak of it again. And I'd like you to stay home tonight.

RONNIE: But I was going to meet up with JJ.

POLTERGEIST: Not tonight, dear.

*(The POLTERGEIST kisses RONNIE's head.)*

GHOST: Don't touch her!

*(The POLTERGEIST winks at the GHOST and leaves the room. RONNIE shakes her head, gets a towel and exits to the bathroom.)*

GHOST: The girl didn't act like she noticed anything weird, which the ghost thought was crazy. But maybe she did notice and just didn't say. It was hard for the ghost to know what the girl was thinking because she was so pretty. It always looked like she was thinking about flowers or something.

*(In another part of the house, the POLTERGEIST is doing something odd with kitchen utensils and white flour.)*

GHOST: Um. Excuse me.

POLTERGEIST: Yes?

GHOST: Sorry if I was rude, before. I was just surprised to see you here.

POLTERGEIST: No problem.

GHOST: Since you said you were going back.

POLTERGEIST: Sure. I understand.

GHOST: Um. What are you doing?

POLTERGEIST: Oh, you know. Cooking dinner.

GHOST: Okay. But-

*(The GHOST indicates the POLTERGEIST's appearance.)*

POLTERGEIST: Oh, this? This is actually her mother. Cute, right?

GHOST: You can't do that.

POLTERGEIST: Oh please. I do it all the time.

GHOST: Are you serious?

POLTERGEIST: Don't be so dramatic. Do you want me to help you? It's really easy.

GHOST: No. No thank you.

POLTERGEIST: Okay. My mistake.

GHOST: You said you didn't follow people.

POLTERGEIST: So did you.

*(The POLTERGEIST "cooks" gleefully.)*

GHOST: It's not the same thing!

POLTERGEIST: Do you see any eggs?

GHOST: Did you hear me? It's not the same thing!

POLTERGEIST: Fine, that's fine. Why don't you go check on her, she's about to get out of the bath. Dinner's almost ready.

*(The GHOST turns to the audience.)*

GHOST: It was not the same thing.

POLTERGEIST: Of course!

*(The GHOST returns to the bedroom. RONNIE's arm shoots out from behind the bathroom door, groping for her bathrobe. The GHOST hands it to her. RONNIE enters, tying the sash of the robe, and sits at her vanity mirror. She makes faces in the mirror. The GHOST stands behind her, looking at their reflections in the mirror and copying RONNIE's every move.)*

GHOST: Don't worry about anything because I'm going to keep you safe. You know like when someone has a ghost but it's their friend? I'm going to stay right next to you and you'll be like "huh, why do I feel so safe" and you won't know it's because I'm with you all the time, every second, I'm right here with you.

JJ stands in the front yard. He wears a sign around his neck that says "TEENAGE BOY".

JJ: Hey! Ronnie!

GHOST: This was the first time the ghost ever saw JJ.

*(RONNIE opens her second-floor bedroom window. She and JJ have both looked forward to this moment all day.)*

RONNIE: Hi!

JJ: Hey! I guess everyone's going down to the lake tonight.

RONNIE: I can't go out.

JJ: Aw, for real?

RONNIE: My mom wants me to stay in. I have a lot of homework anyways.

JJ: Lame.

GHOST: At first the ghost did not really think he was that great.

RONNIE: Will you miss me?

JJ: Nope.

RONNIE: Stop it!

JJ: I'll just get a new girlfriend.

RONNIE: Shut up!

GHOST: Not even funny, in her opinion.

RONNIE: You don't have homework?

JJ: I dunno, not really. College stuff.

RONNIE: Your applications?

JJ: Yeah.

RONNIE: Did you decide which ones you're gonna do?

JJ: I don't know, kind of. Look, I don't really like to talk about this stuff with you.

RONNIE: Why not?

JJ: Because, you know. Because I'm leaving next year and you're not. And I feel weird talking to you about it, because I get to leave in like less than a year. And I'm gonna be in some cool city meeting all these new people and seeing all this cool stuff without you, and I just don't want to make you feel bad.

RONNIE: Oh.

*(Pause.)*

JJ: I feel like I said something wrong, but I don't know what it was.

RONNIE: No, it's fine. Have fun at the lake.

JJ: Wait, Ronnie, what's up? Are you mad?

RONNIE: I'm not mad.

JJ: Don't be mad.

RONNIE: I said I'm not mad.

JJ: Hey, I was thinking about you today when I was in ceramics.

RONNIE: Oh yeah?

JJ: Yeah, I was making this like, jar? Only it was coming out really really bad. And then I was like, how do I know it's bad? I've only ever seen like ten kinds of jars. I've only ever known like 100 people. How do I know what I think about anything? Like maybe everything I think I know is wrong.

*(The GHOST walks closer to JJ, examining him closely.)*

RONNIE: You said you were thinking about me?

JJ: Oh yeah. I don't remember now.

RONNIE: Oh.

JJ: Hey, I finished that song. If you still want to hear it.

*(For an alternate scene where JJ does not sing, see appendix. Each production may set the song to music however they choose.)*

RONNIE: Oh great!

JJ: Is that- should I just?

RONNIE: Sure. I have time for one song.

GHOST: Just one, though.

JJ: Okay. It's not like one hundred per cent done so, whatever, if you don't like it that's okay.

*(JJ plays guitar and sings. It is simple and sweet. Maybe the GHOST joins in.)*

SONG: "You Make It Look Easy"

Getting out of bed  
Wearing pants that are  
The nice kind  
Walking down the road  
Waving hello at

The right time

You make it look easy

Smiling with your face  
Sitting quiet with  
Your feet still  
Dancing with your mom  
Asking waiters for a refill

You make it look easy  
You make it look so easy

*(The song ends. JJ is suddenly embarrassed.)*

JJ: Yeah, so.

RONNIE: It's really good.

*(The GHOST stands very close to JJ. She sniffs him.)*

JJ: I'd actually prefer if you didn't say anything about whether you liked it or not. Just, like... I should probably just go.

RONNIE: I liked it!

JJ: Kay. You don't have to say that though.

RONNIE: It's really good.

JJ: Okay. Whatever. See you in class.

RONNIE: Bye.

JJ: Bye.

RONNIE: See you tomorrow!

GHOST: And the ghost was like: whoa.

*(RONNIE goes back into her bedroom and sits at the vanity. GHOST puts her hand to her ear like a telephone.)*

GHOST: Ring ring. Ring ring.

*(RONNIE answers her actual telephone.)*

RONNIE: Hello?

GHOST: Hi. Is “Ronnie” there?

RONNIE: This is she.

GHOST: Hi. It’s me.

RONNIE: Who?

GHOST: You know.

RONNIE: Alison?

GHOST: Yeah.

RONNIE: Your voice sounds funny.

GHOST: Yeah. Um, I’ve got a cold.

RONNIE: Listen, my life is falling apart.

GHOST: Omigod, tell me all about it.

RONNIE: My mom is being so weird.

GHOST: You're so pretty.

RONNIE: What?

GHOST: Like, your hair seems really clean, and the way your face looks and everything.

RONNIE: Oh... thank you?

GHOST: Your boyfriend is pretty too. I think you should get married.

RONNIE: Alison!

GHOST: And maybe don't talk to your mom ever again.

RONNIE: What?

GHOST: She's just jealous of you. Because, you know, not everyone can understand what it feels like to be a really special person like you are. And you're just so pretty, and you go to high school and live in a house, and some people are just going to get jealous.

RONNIE: Do you have a fever or something?

GHOST: No. Why?

RONNIE: You sound kind of funny.

GHOST: What do you mean?

RONNIE: I don't know. I guess I'm just tired. I should go do my homework.

GHOST: But your life is falling apart!

RONNIE: You know, it's not really that big of a deal. I was just being dramatic. I should probably just do my homework and forget about it.

GHOST: Are you mad at me?

RONNIE: No, of course not! I'm gonna hang up the phone now though, okay? You should get some sleep.

GHOST: I'm not tired!

RONNIE: Okay, well, I've gotta go. I'll see you tomorrow, okay Alison?

GHOST: We're friends, right?

RONNIE: Yeah. We're friends.

GHOST: Can I call you later?

RONNIE: I have to go! Bye!

*(RONNIE hangs up the phone.)*

GHOST: I'm sorry. You think I'm weird. Oh god, I shouldn't have called. I should have just left you alone. Aren't you glad I'm here? Just a little bit? Can't you just kind of tell?

*(RONNIE walks out of the room, brushing right by the GHOST.)*

*(Crushed, the GHOST goes to look in the mirror again. She picks up a headband that RONNIE was wearing earlier and puts it on. She checks her reflection.)*

GHOST: This is the part where the ghost decided that she should probably just go home.

*(She starts to take the headband off, hesitates, then decides to keep it.*

*The GHOST walks out of the house and shivers in the cold. She steels herself to walk back into the woods.*

*JJ enters.)*

JJ: Whoa! Hey! Ronnie? Hello? Are you okay?

*(The GHOST looks behind her, then realizes with a start that he is talking to her.)*

GHOST: What?

JJ: I thought you had homework.

GHOST: Yeah.

JJ: Okay. Did you finish it?

GHOST: Um, no. I'm just, um.

JJ: Taking a walk?

GHOST: Yeah.

JJ: Um, okay. Well, do you want to hang out later, or...?

GHOST: Oh, no. I should... I should go.

JJ: Back home.

GHOST: Yes.

JJ: To do your homework.

GHOST: Yes.

JJ: Okay. Are you... sad?

*(A pause. She answers honestly.)*

GHOST: Yes.

JJ: Is it like, cause you can't go to the lake with everyone?

GHOST: Yes.

JJ: Well, let's go out to the lake tomorrow. Okay?  
We can use my dad's canoe.

GHOST: All right.

JJ: Okay. Well, I'll see you tomorrow.

*(He leans in to kiss her on the cheek. She flinches away.)*

JJ: High five?

*(He holds up his hand. Instead of slapping it, she touches it softly.)*

JJ: Oh. Um, okay. I'll see you.

GHOST: I'll see you too!

*(JJ exits. The GHOST looks at the audience, too dazed to know what to say.)*

POLTERGEIST: As it turns out, she did not go home.

GHOST: No.

POLTERGEIST: She walked downtown and stood under a streetlight. Every now and then someone would walk right past her, and some of them would even nod. Cars honked at her because they could see her.

*(The GHOST looks around, amazed.)*

MAN IN CAR: Hey baby, you need a ride somewhere?

POLTERGEIST: Silence.

MAN IN CAR: Hey, what's the matter with you?

POLTERGEIST: Silence.

MAN IN CAR: The hell with you.

POLTERGEIST: She went into a coffee shop and waited in line. When it was her turn, the woman looked right at her and spoke to her.

BARISTA: What can I get for you?

POLTERGEIST: Silence.

BARISTA: Hello? Can you hear me? You want a coffee or something? All right, come on, I've got customers waiting here. Let's go, get out of the way. Nope, you can't sit in here. Go on. Shoo.

POLTERGEIST: And after the shops all closed she just walked in the street, right in the middle of the road. Every now and then a car would come and she would just stand there, not moving. And the car would stop.

*(The GHOST stretches her arms out. The SCREECH of a car braking.)*

DRIVER: Get out of the road! What are you, crazy?

GHOST: It would stop for her.

*(BLACKOUT.)*