Investigate A Strange Noise

By

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FADE IN:

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Quirky Halloween decorations populate the counters and hang from the ceiling. The large flat-screen T.V. displays a paused horror movie.

LAUREN PRESCOTT, 17, cute nerd, leans back on the couch, her feet propped up on a narrow coffee table.

Framed accolades cover the house’s walls. Lauren’s academic achievements. Her senior portrait graces the top of an antique shelf.

Lauren’s fingers move at a whirlwind pace, typing up a quick text message to BOBBY CAMPBELL, her boyfriend. The text reads: They’re about to leave.

She hits send and looks back at the T.V. The movie’s scary opening credits still wait to be played.

Lauren’s parents, RANDY, 44, bookish gentleman, and JAMIE, 43, devout intellectual, enter from the hall.

    RANDY
    Lauren.

Lauren jumps and looks at them.

    RANDY
    We didn’t scare you did we?

Lauren smiles and stands.

    LAUREN
    No.

Jamie points at the television.

    JAMIE
    Ugh, I can’t believe you’re watching this crap.

    LAUREN
    Whatever. It’s not even that scary.

    JAMIE
    Why don’t you just come with us, honey? You’re gonna get scared being here all by yourself.

Lauren reacts quick, desperate to shoot down the idea.
LAUREN
No, I’m fine. I’m just gonna watch this then go to bed.

Jamie retrieves the car keys from her purse.

JAMIE
Alright. It’s your call.

She leans in and pecks Lauren on the cheek.

JAMIE
Don’t say we didn’t warn you.

LAUREN
Mom.

Randy looks back toward the long hallway.

RANDY
Billy, you ready?

BILLY (O.S.)
I’m coming.

BILLY, 8, Lauren’s rambunctious younger brother, enters the room. He slides a hockey mask over his face. Perfect serial-killer costume.

Lauren smiles and leans down.

LAUREN
Whoa, cool costume.

Billy raises his plastic machete with pride.

BILLY
I’m gonna scare the crap outta Tommy and Savannah.

LAUREN
I bet.

She lifts Billy’s mask and kisses his cheek.

LAUREN
Be safe. I love you.

BILLY
I love you too.

Jamie leads Billy into the kitchen.
BILLY
Don’t let the boogeyman get you.

LAUREN
I won’t.

Randy kisses Lauren.

RANDY
We’ll be back by eleven.

JAMIE (O.S.)
Call us if you need anything.

Jamie opens the front door. Randy and Billy go outside.

Lauren’s phone vibrates. She glances down at it. Incoming call from Bobby.

LAUREN
Alright.

JAMIE (O.S.)
Lock the door, honey.

LAUREN
Alright, I will.

JAMIE (O.S.)
I love you.

Jamie exits and closes the door behind her. Lauren lets out a sigh of relief as she answers Bobby’s call.

LAUREN
Hey, where are you?

EXT. HOUSE - FRONT YARD - NIGHT

Rural. No neighbors. A grinning jack-o’-lantern sits on the porch, greeting nobody.

Jamie, Randy, and Billy step inside Jamie’s SUV. She cranks the car and flicks on the headlights.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Quiet. A large window shows the SUV’s headlights leaving the driveway.

Lauren holds the phone to her ear and talks to Bobby.
LAUREN
But you said seven-thirty?

BOBBY (V.O.)
I know, I know. I’ll be there when I can, baby. I just got held up.

LAUREN
Ugh.

BOBBY (V.O.)
Look, just start without me. I’ll be there at like eight, I swear.

The restless Lauren glances at the T.V.

LAUREN
You always say that.

BOBBY (V.O.)
I mean it this time.

Lauren flicks off the light, trying to set the mood.

LAUREN
Whatever.

KITCHEN

Cluttered. More Halloween decorations line up on the counters. Spotless containers hold a wealth of candy.

Lauren enters and heads for the sweets. She can’t help herself as she snags a few pieces of candy corn.

BOBBY (V.O.)
I’ll make it up to you, baby, I swear.

LAUREN
Alright.

Lauren locks the front door.

BOBBY (V.O.)
I always do.

LAUREN
Bye.

Lauren hangs up.

LIVING ROOM
Lauren crashes on the couch. A loud VIBRATION draws her attention. She checks her phone.

Bobby’s newest message: I’m sorry. Wait 4 me :)

Lauren sends a reply: Whatever.

Afterward, Lauren throws her cell on the coffee table. She grabs the remote control and presses play.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Ninety minutes later. Lauren sleeps on the couch.

The T.V. replays the DVD’s Main Menu screen, the movie now long over.

Loud BANGING and RUSTLING awaken Lauren. She looks around. The NOISES grow louder and louder, sounding like they’re coming from the basement.

   LAUREN
   Oh God!

Lauren turns and faces the basement door.

Incessant VIBRATING goes off. Lauren grabs her cell phone. A call from Bobby.

   LAUREN
   Shit.

Lauren answers. The basement noises stop.

   LAUREN
   Hello.

A deep, ominous voice greets her ears.

   BOBBY (V.O.)
   I’m coming for you, Lauren.

   LAUREN
   Ugh, knock it off.

   BOBBY (V.O.)
   Are you alone in the house?

   LAUREN
   I’m not falling for that shit again, dumbass.
Bobby laughs on the other end. He returns to his normal, non-creepy voice.

BOBBY (V.O.)
I know, I know.

LAUREN
Are you on the way?

BOBBY (V.O.)
Yeah.

LAUREN
Well, hurry up. Mom and dad are going to be here.

BOBBY (V.O.)
We’ve got plenty of time, baby. Chill.

LAUREN
You’re the one that keeps forgetting--

A SLAM interrupts her. Lauren jumps, terrified.

LAUREN
Oh God!

Bobby’s call cuts off.

LAUREN
Bobby? Hello?

Lauren looks down at her cell, confused.

LAUREN
Shit.

Another SLAM, this one much louder. Lauren turns and looks toward the kitchen. The next SLAM causes glass to RATTLE.

KITCHEN

Lauren enters. She shudders and focuses on the large, fogged-up window. Sees nothing except suffocating darkness.

LAUREN
Hello?

Lauren glances toward the counter and notices a sharp knife. She snatches the weapon, gripping it tight.
LAUREN
Bobby?

Lauren holds the knife out and approaches the window, her walk so slow and methodical.

LAUREN
I know it’s you, asshole.

Lauren reaches for the window. Loud KNOCKS erupt at the front door, startling her. She screams and drops the knife.

LAUREN
Oh God!

BOBBY (O.S.)
Hey, it’s me.

He BANGS on the wooden door. Lauren glares and marches toward it.

BOBBY (O.S.)
Open up.

LAUREN
Ugh.

Lauren swings the door open. Bobby lurches forward. An operatic psychopath mask disguises his face. A faded jumpsuit with dry blood stains covers his body.

The costume terrifies Lauren. She stumbles back, crashing against the counter.

LAUREN
Shit.

Bobby takes off the mask and cackles like a maniac. Lauren pushes him back.

LAUREN
Asshole.

She punches his shoulder several times.

BOBBY
Ow. What the Hell, Lauren?

LAUREN
You fucking scared me.

Bobby lays the mask on the table.
BOBBY
Damn, it’s Halloween, baby. What’d you expect?

Bobby closes the door.

LAUREN
I expected my boyfriend to be here two hours ago.

Bobby puts his hands up, downplaying the situation.

BOBBY
Okay, my bad.

LAUREN
Ugh.

Bobby wraps his arms around Lauren and draws her in.

BOBBY
Look, I’ll make it up to you, I swear.

LAUREN
Whatever.

BOBBY
I always do, don’t I?

The two share a kiss. Bobby caresses Lauren’s chin. She notices his creepy jumpsuit and reveals a weak smile.

LAUREN
What’s with the suit?

BOBBY
My costume. You like it?

LAUREN
It’s pretty scary.

BOBBY
Yeah. I was freaking out some of the kiddies earlier.

LAUREN
I bet.

Bobby leads her to the living room.
BOBBY
Come on, let’s go watch the movie.

LAUREN
I fell asleep on the first one.

BOBBY
Damn, I thought I had heard it was pretty good.

EXT. HOUSE - FRONT YARD - NIGHT

It’s getting late. The jack-o’-lantern remains on the porch, its carved eyes looking on toward the rural road. Nobody drives by.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Lauren and Bobby hold hands and snuggle up on the couch together. Both of their cell phones lie on top of the coffee table.

The couples’ eyes stay glued to the T.V. screen. Another horror flick. The film’s second act climaxes with a terrifying scare. Lauren and Bobby both jump.

BOBBY
Whoa!

LAUREN
Oh God.

She grabs Bobby’s arm, clutching it tight. He doesn’t mind at all.

BOBBY
You scared?

Lauren leans in for another kiss.

LAUREN
Yeah. You gonna protect me?

Muffled CRIES and RUSTLING echo from the basement.

LAUREN
Shit.

BOBBY
Whoa.

Lauren turns and looks toward the basement door.
Bobby stands up.

**BOBBY**

What the Hell was that?

Lauren watches Bobby head for the basement door.

**LAUREN**

No. Bobby.

He holds his hand up, trying to calm her.

**BOBBY**

Chill.

Lauren rises off the couch.

**LAUREN**

No, Bobby. Wait.

Bobby grabs the door handle.

**BOBBY**

Look, I’m just gonna go check.

Lauren snags his shoulder.

**LAUREN**

No.

Bobby holds her back.

**BOBBY**

Look, it’ll only take a sec.

**LAUREN**

This is crazy. There could be a killer or--

**BOBBY**

Or what? A vampire. Lauren, I’m just gonna look.

**LAUREN**

This is like the biggest mistake you can make. We just saw this shit in the movie!

**BOBBY**

This isn’t a damn horror movie, okay. There’s not gonna be any ghosts or zombies or whatever.

He opens the CREAKING door. The long staircase awaits.
LAUREN

Bobby.

More muffled CRIES echo from within the basement, terrifying the couple. Bobby faces her.

BOBBY

Look, just wait here.

LAUREN

Okay, but--

Bobby enters the basement, SLAMMING the door behind him.

Lauren fidgets in the living room. She looks over at the T.V. The movie now features a violent, graphic scene. Countless blood and SCREAMING.

LAUREN

Ugh.

Lauren turns off the T.V. Silence now permeates through the room. She paces around, unsure what to do. She grabs her cell phone.

Lauren glances back at the basement door. It’s still closed. No noises, no Bobby, nothing.

LAUREN

Shit.

Lauren looks down at her phone and goes through the contacts. She calls Jamie’s number. The phone RINGS and RINGS. No answer.

LAUREN

Come on.

Lauren walks toward the basement door. A faint RING echoes behind it. The shocked Lauren lowers her phone and stares at the door.

The call cuts to Jamie’s VOICEMAIL. Lauren trembles and opens the door.

BASEMENT

A dim light shines downstairs. Lauren ends the call and stumbles down the steps.

LAUREN

Bobby?
Lauren reaches the basement. She takes a step and SPLASHES a sticky puddle. Lauren lifts her foot and looks at it, disgusted. Red drops DRIP off the shoe’s sole.

    LAUREN
    Oh God!

She raises her phone and calls Jamie back.

A beam of light glows on the ground.

    LAUREN
    Shit.

Lauren goes toward the light and glances down. Jamie’s cell phone. Smeared blood covers the screensaver image of Jamie with her family.

    LAUREN
    No.

Lauren hangs up and steps back. She trips up against a body lying on the floor. She looks down and screams.

Jamie’s hacked corpse sprawls across the ground. Deep slices penetrate her chest and head. Duct tape bounds her wrists and covers her mouth. Blood flows everywhere.

    LAUREN
    Oh God! Mom.

Lauren turns and sees two other dead bodies lying next to Jamie’s cadaver. Randy and Billy, both of them bound-and-gagged in duct tape.

Blood pours from Randy’s slit throat. Rough slices dissect Billy’s chest. Billy’s dead eyes stare right at Lauren.

    LAUREN
    Oh God.

Lauren cries and backs away.

Bobby emerges from a dark corner. He wraps Lauren up. Covers her mouth. A long, blood-stained axe dangles from his hand.

    BOBBY
    What’s the matter, Lauren?

Lauren whimpers and struggles to break free. No chance.
BOBBY (CONT’D)
You scared?

Bobby grins and slides Billy’s hockey mask over his face.

FADE OUT.

THE END