

FIGHTING DEMONS

By Angela Hill

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FIGHTING DEMONS

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SYNOPSIS: "It is better to conquer yourself than to win a thousand battles...then the victory is yours. It cannot be taken from you, not by angels or by demons." ~ Buddha ~ Ten teenagers find themselves trapped and fighting their own demons. Cindy is hiding a tragic secret, Milton is fighting OCD, and Cyrus is fighting addiction. Alice and Lilah are battling bulimia and cancer, Tabitha has an abusive boyfriend, and Arnold is dealing with abuse from bullies. Will is struggling with his parent's divorce, and Jezz is struggling with thoughts of suicide, while Eli is trying to save everyone in a desperate attempt to redeem himself. In the end, they must choose to stay trapped or fight their way to freedom. This play offers an opportunity for ensemble work and provides strong monologues. It also has opportunities for movement, creativity, and film work, if desired.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 male, 6 female, 1 either)

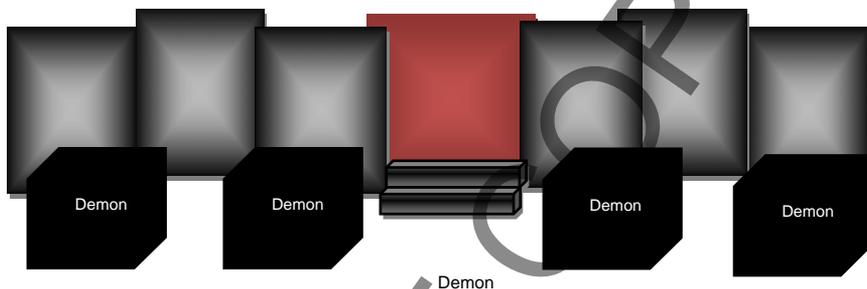
ELI (m)	Teen boy with tragic past searching for redemption <i>(67 lines)</i>
CINDY (f).....	Young girl with tragic secret <i>(18 lines)</i>
CYRUS (m)	Teen boy fighting addiction <i>(33 lines)</i>
MILTON (m)	Teen boy fighting OCD <i>(15 lines)</i>
LILAH (f).....	Teen girl battling cancer <i>(11 lines)</i>
ALICE (f).....	Teen girl battling bulimia <i>(21 lines)</i>
TABITHA (f).....	Teen girl abused by boyfriend <i>(18 lines)</i>
ARNOLD (m).....	Junior high boy abused by bullies <i>(15 lines)</i>
WILL (m).....	Teen boy dealing with divorce <i>(11 lines)</i>
JEZZ (f).....	Teen girl dealing with depression and suicide <i>(22 lines)</i>
GRACE (f).....	Eli's sister <i>(22lines)</i>
NARRATOR (m/f).....	<i>(1 line)</i>
JIMMY (m).....	Video only. Tabitha's boyfriend <i>(Non-Speaking)</i>
DEMONS (m/f)	5-10 Demons <i>(Non-Speaking)</i>

Some roles are gender flexible: Narrator, Milton, Will, Jezz. Feel free to change names if gender flexibility is needed for you group. Five demons are necessary; more may be used- although it might get crowded on stage. If using more than five, they could take turns on stage. The goal is to have as many students involved as possible.

“FIGHTING DEMONS” SET & GENERAL BLOCKING

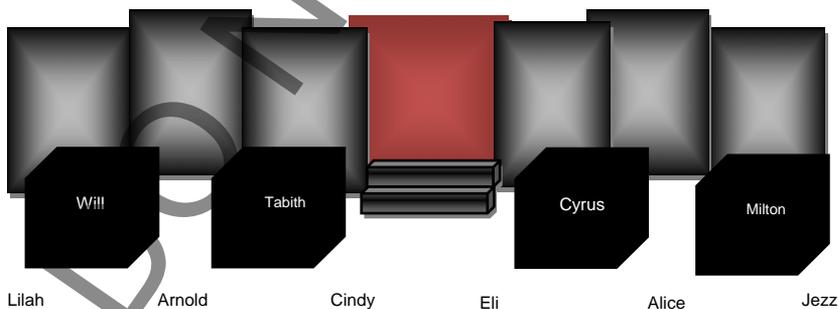
OPENING

The following is only suggestions; set can be simplified or make it more elaborated – whatever your budget allows. Six flats (Kindred used insulation board – it is light weight & inexpensive,) screen- lit red (if using video) upstage center, stairs up center and four black blocks. Demons begin on blocks and bring actors one at a time to their marks. Use of flashlights for lighting during demons dance scene can be effective. Have a flashlight for each demon. Let tech people play with different movement of the flashlights.



SCENES 1, 2, 3

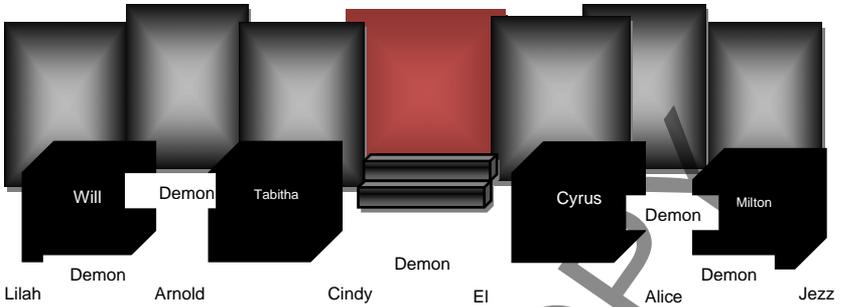
With the exception of Eli (and at one brief moment in beginning – Cindy), actors must stay in their “space” they may stand, shift, etc. but they must stay within their little area unless moved by a demon.



FIGHTING DEMONS

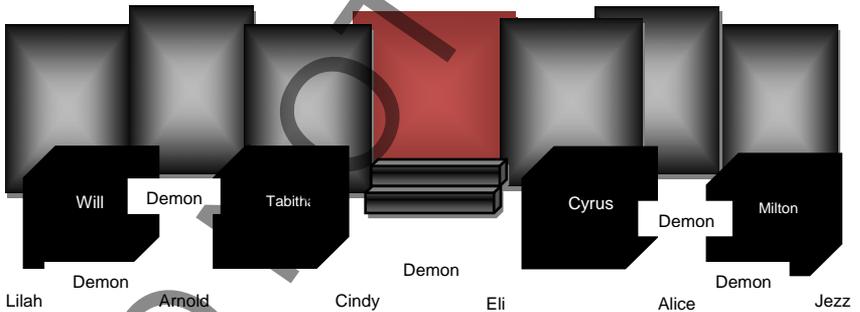
SCENE 4

Demons wrap rope around actors & move them into different positions.

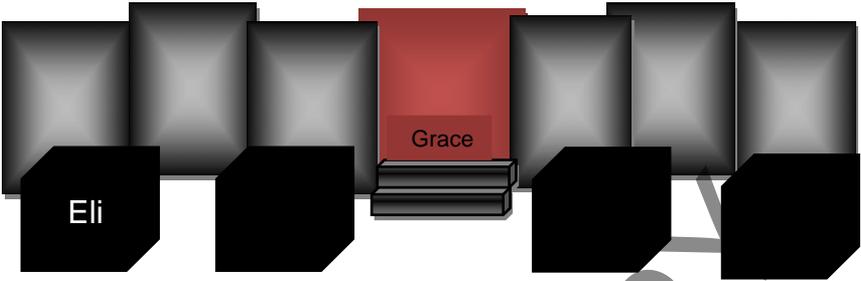


SCENE 5

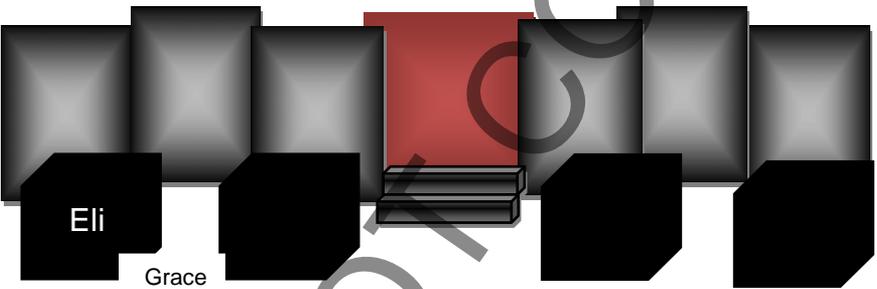
Timing in this scene is crucial. This is an action scene and Eli should literally be chasing after actors as they are pulled off the stage. Demons exit one at a time – some will exit while taking an actor – others will re-enter and grab an actor. The actors never see demons - this includes Eli.



SCENE 6 (1)

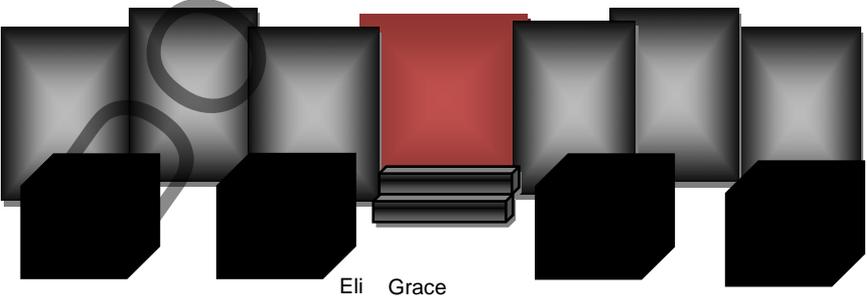


SCENE 6 (2)



SCENE 6 (3)

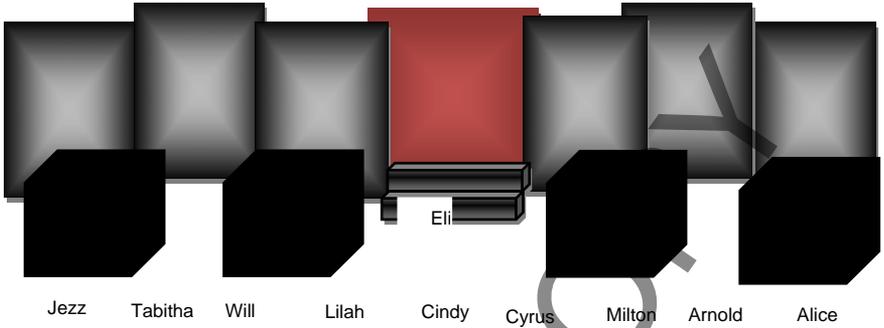
Grace exits upstage center (stairs)



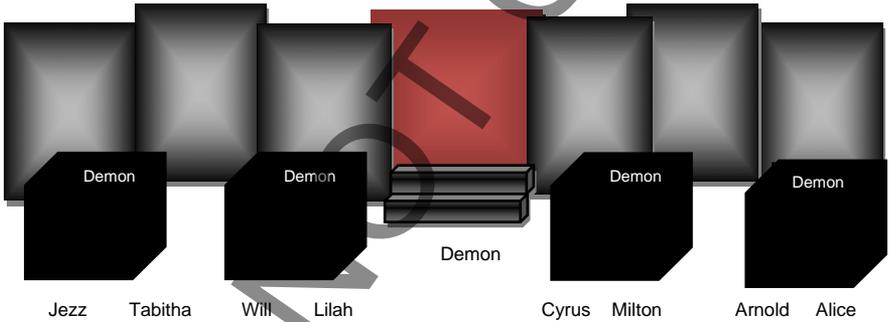
FIGHTING DEMONS

Scene 6 (4)

Actors enter by themselves – ropes are now tied around wrists. Eli unties Cindy and they exit holding hands upstage (stairs) then they exit off stairs to the left and right separating and letting hands go.



Scene 7: Entrance of Demons



DIRECTOR'S NOTES

“Fighting Demons” Costume/make-up Suggestions

The following are only suggestions. Be creative and remember to use what you have – costuming, set, and make up does not have to be expensive.

Characters go barefoot. This solves numerous problems, including issues of loud shoes on stage during the more active scenes. Demons wear red and black. Actors wear shades of grey and black with a little white. Kindred also added thin black or white rope to costumes as belts, bracelets, etc. Keep in mind costumes should look worn, torn and like characters have been in a battle. Other than demons, make-up and hair should be simple and not distract.

DEMONS - Red dance dress, long sleeves with black fish nets (feet cut out.)

Shred both the dress and the fishnets. Hair is crazy, messy and big – Aqua Net should be used in great quantities. Make-up should be zombie/demon like – have fun with it.

GRACE - Something flowing and long – ghost like without being cliché.

Kindred used a vintage blue tie dyed evening dress

WILL - We took grey and black t-shirts cut them up the middle in a zigzag pattern and safety pinned one grey side and one black side to together to form one shirt. Safety pins should be seen. A grey tank was worn underneath and grey sweat pants – again shredded. Shirt also had holes cut into it.

ARNOLD - White t-shirt under a grey printed sweater vest – shredded.

Grey/black shorts shredded.

LILAH - Black leggings, Grey sweater dress (shredded) with hood and a head scarf.

JEZZ - Grey long sleeve shirt (shredded) - black jeans

ALICE - Grey dress (shredded) black rope belt, black leggings

MILTON - Black pants, Grey shirt with front pocket (shredded)

CYRUS - Grey Pants, black & grey shirt (shredded) and bandanna tied around arm.

TABITHA - Black leggings, Black & grey plaid vest dress (shredded) with white t-shirt underneath. Should have make-up for black eye.

CINDY - Black & white checked dress. This dress was too long so the ruffle on the bottom was cut off and safety pinned back on – with safety pins showing. Cindy should wear pig tails.

ELI - Black fishnet shirt (sleeves cut off & shredded) with grey tank under, grey pants (shredded)

FIGHTING DEMONS

PROPS

Red rope to tie hands (10) – No other props should be used. The simple implication of hand sanitizer works. Having an actual bottle on stage only distracts.

VIDEO

Video can be used if you wish, but the play can stand without it. Video allows the students an opportunity to be creative and experience another form of acting.

VIDEO 1: Runs during the first Demon Dance. It should be snippets of each character fighting with their demon. Examples: Lilah finding her pillow full of hair; Alice going into the school bathroom to vomit; Tabitha fighting with boy friend; etc. In between all the characters pieces Elis' story should run. Try to use a little Eli and a grown Eli. Shots going fishing, walking down the road, throwing flowers in the river, standing at a grave, etc. Have shots of Grace in the background watching Eli. Also have shots of Eli & Grace's hands trying to hold on to each other. Do this for both big Eli and little Eli. Kindred used black and white old time film effects for opening video.

VIDEO 2: Video at end it should be young Eli and grown Eli walking down a road and grown Eli putting his arm around young Eli- short and simple. Kindred started with same old time film effect then faded to color.

For inspiration watch Kindred's videos on YouTube at

www.youtube.com/user/mrsndintl

MUSIC SUGGESTIONS

Students are so talented, see if there is someone to compose for the production. Background music during the monologues can add to the characterization and also help with timing. Live music would be amazing. The following are musical suggestions only. For performance of any songs and recordings mentioned that are in copyright, the permission of the copyright owners must be obtained or other songs and recording in public domain must be substituted.

OPENING:

- Back ground music during narrator's voice over: "Welcome to the Real World" by Don Davis the "Matrix Soundtrack"
- Demon Dance: Cutting from *Dig* (Everything and Nothing Remix) by Mudvayne from "Resident Evil" Soundtrack

- Data track “We’re all going to die down here” from “Resident Evil” Soundtrack

SCENE 1:

- “The Tangent Universe” by Michael Andrews from “Donnie Darko” Soundtrack

SCENE 3 (Monologues):

- CINDY - “Liquid Spear Waltz” by Michael Andrews from “Donnie Darko” Soundtrack
- MILTON - “Creepy Grandfather Clock” Horror Sound Effects, Ultimate Horror Sounds, “Halloween Chopped Up”
- LILAH - “How It Ends” by DeVotchka “Little Miss Sunshine” Soundtrack
- ALICE - “Bulimia Queen” by Jonathan Thomas Miller “1,000 Ways to Die” Soundtrack
- TABITHA - “The Whole Truth” by Force Theory “Jesus Camp” Soundtrack
- ARNOLD - “Cafeteria” by Force Theory “Jesus Camp” Soundtrack
- CYRUS - “Freebird” California Guitar Trio “Echoes”
- WILL - “Breaking Cups” by Force Theory “Jesus Camp” Soundtrack
- JEZZ - “Caves” by Force Theory “Jesus Camp” Soundtrack
- ELI - “Ave Maria” by Geoff Zanelli “Hitman” Soundtrack

SCENE 4:

- “Saw Blade” Corner Stone Cues Presents Eton Path featuring Joseph Peters

SCENE 5:

- Entrance of actors: “Night Terrors” Corner Stone Cues Presents Eton Path featuring Joseph Peters
- Eli rescues **CINDY**: “Ave Maria” by Geoff Zanelli “Hitman” Soundtrack

FINALE:

- Demon Dance: Cutting from *Dig* (Everything and Nothing Remix) by Mudvayne from “Resident Evil” Soundtrack

GENERAL HINTS AND TIPS

It is crucial in Scene 1 for the actors to be frantic and desperate – but not crazy. The energy needs to stay up. At Kindred, students watched a clip from the movie “The Killing Room” (be aware this movie is violent, graphic and uses strong language) then actors were tied with hands behind their backs and did the scene while trying to get untied. It helped tremendously. It is also a good idea to have the actors discuss where their characters were and exactly what they were doing before they found themselves trapped.

Only Cindy and Eli can move without demons. Other actors may move within their space (stand, lie down, etc) but they cannot leave without a demon.

Remember that only the audience sees the demons. The actors on stage should never react to the demons. In Scene 5 Eli only reacts to the disappearance of the actors and not the demons taking them or the other actors.

The biggest challenge in the monologue scene is to keep it interesting and to make sure there are ups and downs. Young actors seem to think that drama means, slow and sad. Remind them that they need humor, anger (not just loud anger), happiness, and energy. The monologue scene should be a roller coaster ride not a slow plodding walk thru the mud. I gave a prize to anyone who could make me smile during their monologue at practice.

Movement of demons needs to be usual and disturbing – think “The Grudge” or “The Ring.” It helps to have actors that are dancers and that are willing to try anything movement wise. They must move well and quietly. All of the Kindred demons had previously been in plays where they had lines – all agreed being a demon was one of their favorite roles. The actors must commit to the character and go all out. These are not funny characters they are scary and disturbing—but that doesn’t mean it’s not fun to play. One judge at regions commented that the opening scene reminded him of a “Saw” movie – that’s just what you are looking for...it needs to provoke an instinctual, primal fear.

Any and all pop culture references may be changed or updated as needed.

SCENES

Breakdown of scenes is not only for mood and directional change, but also meant to help the director in scheduling rehearsals. Most directors have a very limited time to rehearse and must be as productive as possible. The scene breakdowns allow for scheduling rehearsals into easy chunks that are productive for everyone.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Fighting Demons was first performed by Kindred High School in Kindred, ND November 5, 2010.

Original Cast & Crew

Narrator/Jimmy	Cole Jungberg
Demons	Tessa Heitkamp Ava Hill Kelsey Kowalski Madison Miller Brittany Schumm
Grace	Kendra Gudgel
Cindy	Bobbi Braaten
Milton	Ben Gilbertson
Lilah	Sarah Roehrich
Alice	Nicki Sneed
Tabitha	Thea Klinnert
Arnold	Nick Kuzas
Eli	Spencer Hill
Will	Cole Girodat
Jezz	Brittany Wise
Cyrus	Casey Wise
Sound/Assistant Stage Manger	Jess Erickson Angie Johnson
Stage Manger/Understudy	Savannah Norberg
Lighting Director	Cameron Gilbertson
Cinematography	Philip Rostad
Tech Crew/Lights	Cole Jungberg Gage Dougherty Riley Flom Matthew Rieger
Choreographer	Ava Hill
Set	Spencer Hill Ava Hill
Costumes	Nicki Sneed

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OPENING

AT RISE: *FIVE DEMONS frozen on stage gargoyle like. GRACE walks around them as NARRATOR speaks. As SHE walks by them THEY unfreeze and move as if their bodies have been blown by the wind and then freeze again. Background music is very effective in this scene (See director's notes.)*

NARRATOR: *(Voice over as GRACE walks across stage.) It is better to conquer yourself than to win a thousand battles. Then the victory is yours. It cannot be taken from you, not by angels or by demons. (Buhda.)*

DANCE OF THE DEMONS: Show Video 1 *(optional)* Demon Dance should not be longer than 1:30 *(Suggested music Data track & "Dig"— see director's notes.)*

DEMONS bring each CHARACTER on stage one by one during dance. CHARACTERS have hands in front of them tied by red rope. DEMONS seat them either on the floor or block. Their heads are down and THEY are frozen.

SCENE 1

THEY ALL speak as if THEY are in a trance.

CINDY: One, two buckle my shoe; three, four shut the door...five...

MILTON: ...Five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, ten, ten...one, two, three four, five, six...

LILAH: Six months...that's what the doctor told us. Six months maybe a few more...

ALICE: More, more, I want more I can't stop...once I start, I can't stop...

TABITHA: Stop! Stop! Stop! I want to scream it as loud as I can -but I can't, I'm too scared...

ARNOLD: Scared every day. Scared every minute of every day. Scared to death...

ELI: Death comes to us all. Everyone dies. There's no control over whether you will or you won't. You will.

WILL: “Will” she said, “Will, your dad and I just don’t love each other anymore. Do you understand?”

JEZZ: Understand, Understand? I don’t expect you to understand...I don’t understand. I just want to stop the pain.

CYRUS: Pain, stress, fear, loneliness...she washes it all away. She’s beautiful, tempting and deadly. And once she has you, she will not let go.

GRACE: (*Voice off stage.*) Let go, Eli, let go.

SCENE 2 - TRAPPED

Timing is crucial to this scene- it must be fast paced. The ACTORS must portray a believable sense of fear and panic. This does not mean THEY yell.

CINDY & GRACE’S lines are over each other.

CINDY: One, two...

GRACE: Eli...

ELI: Hello?

CINDY: Three, four, five...

GRACE: Eli...

ELI: Hello!

CINDY: Six, seven...

GRACE: Eli...

ELI: Hello?

CINDY: Eight, nine...

ELI: Are you alright?

CINDY: Ten!

ELI: Are you alright?

ELI unties CHARACTERS in the following order: ALICE, tries CINDY, MILTON, JEZZ, CYRUS, TABITHA, ARNOLD, LILAH and WILL. CHARACTERS should ALL try to untie themselves but not succeeded. Ropes are left on floor beside CHARACTERS until DEMONS enter in SCENE 4.

CINDY: Ready or not here they come!

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ELI starts to untie CINDY. SHE screams and backs away –SHE stays tied through the whole play until end. Other than ELI, CINDY is the only CHARACTER that moves from spot without being moved by a DEMON.

ALICE: Shhh...Cindy...everything's gonna be fine...shhh. Sorry she doesn't much care for men.

MILTON: One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten...ten... ten (*HE starts the count again and repeats it three times while ELI unties him.*)

ELI: Milt? Milton? You good?

MILTON nods and continues to count and rubs his hands– ELI goes to JEZZ and unties her.

Are you ok?

JEZZ: Yeah, watching people lose their minds is great, never been better. What is his deal?

MILTON: I felt people touching me. I don't like to be touched. I'm not a fan of germs and there were people touching me.

ELI: Milton, you'll be ok. There was no one touching you.

ELI pats MILTON on the shoulder – MILTON cringes.

MILTON: But I could feel them...One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten...ten...ten...

ELI: It's ok! Relax...

ELI unties CYRUS.

CYRUS: Eli? Is that you? (*CYRUS is more at ease than the others- HE has been here before.*)

ELI: Yes, Cyrus it's me.

CYRUS: Is Jezz here? Is she ok?

ELI: Yes, she's ok.

JEZZ: That's a matter of opinion.

ELI unties TABITHA.

CYRUS: This is rough man, every time—it's ugly...hasn't changed a bit.

ALICE: What are you talking about?

ELI: He's tripping. (*Goes to untie ARNOLD.*)

TABITHA: He's always tripping.

ELI starts to untie ARNOLD.

ARNOLD: (*Cowers away.*) I don't have any lunch money on me - so please just leave me alone.

ELI: What? I just want to take off the rope.

ARNOLD: Oh, ok. That's a new one, how did that get there?

TABITHA: More importantly, how did we get here?

CYRUS: Oooo! I know! Let me answer that one!

TABITHA: I wasn't talking to you.

ELI: I don't know how we got here, Tabitha. (*ELI unties LILAH.*)

GRACE: Eli...

LILAH: You mean we're not dead? I thought for sure I died...

ELI: No, Lilah...we're not dead...

LILAH: 'Cause I closed my eyes and when I opened them I was here... thought here was dead.

JEZZ: I wish it was...

ELI unties WILL.

ALICE: You don't mean that.

WILL: So, if we're not dead what are we?

CINDY: There was a little man, he had a little gun, and his bullets were made of lead, lead, lead...

ALICE: Shhh...Cindy, it's ok...

CINDY: He went to the brook, and saw a little duck...

ALICE: Cindy, look at me...it's ok.

CINDY: And shot it right through the head, head, head. (*SHE starts to hum a familiar children's song.*)

CYRUS: Ok...she's seriously messed up.

ALICE: She's ok.

CYRUS: No, she's not. Listen to her. She's twisted

ELI: Cyrus, she's fine.

CYRUS: She's a sick twisted little girl -

ELI: This is just how she deals with stress. Right Alice?

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