

# FIGHTING DEMONS

A One-Act Dramatic Play

by  
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### OPENING

*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 succeed. Ropes are left on floor beside CHARACTERS until DEMONS enter in scene 4.)*

CINDY: Ready or not here they come!

*(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?

ALICE: She recites nursery rhymes to calm herself. She'll be fine, I promise.

CYRUS: Doesn't sound fine to me.

TABITHA: Well you don't exactly sound or look fine. When's the last time you had a hit?

CYRUS: When's the last time you been hit?

ELI: Hey, just leave her alone. We all have issues, and we all have different ways of handling them. Look at Milton, he's gonna rub his hands raw with that hand sanitizer.

MILTON: Would you like some hand sanitizer?

ELI: No thanks, Milton I'm fine.

JEZZ: Dude, I could use more than a little sanitizing.

MILTON: Does anyone know how long we're supposed to be stuck here? 'Cause I don't think I'm gonna have enough hand sanitizer for more than a couple of hours...maybe less if I have to share.

ELI: Milton, don't worry. We'll make sure you have enough - you don't have to share if you run low.

MILTON: Thanks Eli...I don't mean to be selfish. I'll share... I just need to know how long we're here so I can accurately ration it. I don't want to run out.

ELI: I know...I understand.

MILTON: I just don't like germs- I don't liked to be touched.

TABITHA: Neither do I.

ARNOLD: I'm not much of a fan either.

WILL: I'm not a real fan of germs or being touch or hand sanitizer...but that doesn't seem to be the point right now.

ALICE: It's like limbo or something, ya know? We're somewhere that's nowhere.

ELI: Okay, think...everyone needs to really think hard about where they were before we all ended up here.

CINDY: For every evil under sun, there is a remedy or there is none. If there is one, seek 'till you find it; if there is none never mind it.

CYRUS: Twisted.

GRACE: Eli...

ARNOLD: I was in my locker

WILL: Getting your pocket protector?

TABITHA: I remember that it was after school.

ARNOLD: I said I was in my locker not at my locker.

CYRUS: In you locker? *(Laughs)*

ARNOLD: It's not funny.

CYRUS: Yeah it is.

ELI: Knock it off Cyrus! Arnold, it might be embarrassing...but it's important that we know the last thing you remember.

ARNOLD: Some guys from the football team grabbed me held me upside down and shoved me in my locker. It was dark and I couldn't breathe...

ELI: Is that everything?

ARNOLD: I'm claustrophobic...I...was crying.

CYRUS: *(Coughs)* Loser.

TABITHA: Shut up.

CYRUS: Shut up? You're a tough girl now aren't you...not quite so tough when the BF *(you may substitute boyfriend if you wish)* is slapping you around.

ELI: Lay off!

CYRUS: Oh, you gonna be the knight in shining armor Eli?

ELI: Right now you need to shut up and sit down.

CYRUS: You gonna make me?

ELI: If I have to.

JEZZ: Cyrus...sit down.

ELI: Listen to your sister Cyrus...you aren't helping. Tabitha, where were you?

TABITHA: I was just hanging out with Jimmy.

ELI: That's all?

TABITHA: That's all...

ELI: *(ELI exposes a bruise on TABITHA)* Are you sure?

TABITHA: It was an accident...he just...it was an accident.

LILAH: I was at chemotherapy...

*(EVERYONE stops.)*

You didn't think this was a fashion statement did you?

CYRUS: Yeah! That's what I was doing to...chem-o-therapy.

ALICE: I hardly call what you were doing therapy.

CYRUS: A little time with Dr. Feelgood always does the trick. Right? Little Alice B. Toklas...

ALICE: Don't think so.

CYRUS: Oh...I forgot a little brownie goes in but...*(makes vomiting noise)*

ELI: Not helping-

ALICE: Just because I'm in the bathroom it doesn't mean I'm vomiting.

MILTON: I was in the bathroom too - not the same bathroom...and I wasn't vomiting - I was washing my hands - ten times.

WILL: I was packing up for a weekend at my Dad's - or was it my Mom's

JEZZ: I was writing a note.

ELI: A note to who?

JEZZ: I don't know...to everyone.

ELI: About?

JEZZ: I don't know Eli - what about you? What were you what were you doing?

GRACE: Eli...

ELI: We're not talking about me.

GRACE: Eli...

JEZZ: Well, maybe we should be. Where were you?

ELI: I was at the river, alright? *(Pause)* Never mind...I'm just trying to figure out what got us here-

JEZZ: Why?

ELI: So I can get us out.

JEZZ: Maybe some of us don't want to get out.

ELI: Why would you want to stay?

GRACE: Eli...

JEZZ: Because it's safe.

ELI: You'd rather be trapped and safe then fight your way out to freedom?

JEZZ: Some days yes. And today is a someday.

CINDY: I was in my room...

### **SCENE 3 - PERSONAL BATTLES**

*Lights out. Using a good flashlight to light actors works well or use spotlight. If using flashlights, tech people should not be seen. Background music can also be effective. Music suggestions in directors notes.*

CINDY: There's this little glass doll I have sitting on my dresser. It was perfect and beautiful. I had for years; I got it when I was five at one of the cheesy tourist shops along the highway. I think it was called Uncle Ukulele's Treasure Palace or something like that. I would always stare at her before I went to sleep. At how perfect her skin was and how beautiful her eyes were. She seemed to have some fabulous dreams hidden behind those eyes.

One day a friend came over...at least I thought he was a friend... but...he wasn't. While he was there the glass doll fell to the floor and broke. I glued her back together the best I could and put her back on my dresser. She still has some cracks and bruises...but I still see some dreams in her eyes.

MILTON: Logically, I know that counting to ten won't stop me from getting sick or getting into a car accident or suddenly losing my vision...but how do I know it won't help? The one time I don't do it could be the one time I needed to do it. And that could mean catastrophe. And washing my hands is just good hygiene and has nothing to do with the voice in my head. Germs are bad and dirty and can cause illness, disease and pink eye, which could possibly cause blindness. And even if I don't catch anything because I don't wash my hands I could pass on illness, disease, or pink eye and I don't think I could live with myself if I ever caused someone to go blind. So I have to my wash my hands - ten times...always ten times.

LILAH: Acute Myeloid Leukemia. That's what the doctor said. I'm young but I knew when he said acute he wasn't talking about my sweater. It sucked before I knew I had cancer. I was tired all the time and I couldn't breathe. But once I got the diagnosis...it sucked even more - because now not only was I tired and out of breath I got to add vomiting and hair loss to the list. I remember when I was fifteen and couldn't wait to get my driver's license - six months seemed like forever. Now, six months seems like a blink.

ALICE: Here's the thing...I know I'm not perfect. I know I can never be perfect. But when you look around perfection is everywhere. I'm not fat, I know I'm not fat I'm just big boned, but you don't see big boned girl selling you jeans, heck big boned girls don't even sell you cat food.

So, what's a big boned girl to do? A big boned girl who likes her food. She learns to adapt and to really chew her food. And pizza is not a friend the second time around.

I don't enjoy going into the bathroom after every meal, turning on the water so no one will hear, staring into the toilet - trying to psyche myself up like I'm responsible for the winning basket at the championship game. Kneeling on the cold hard floor. Why are bathroom floors always so cold? I hate the sounds, I hate the smells, I hate how it feels. It's not easy...but neither is being a big boned girl in a skinny girl world.

TABITHA: He loves me. I know it. He really does love me. And I love him. He needs me and I don't know what I do without him. When we first started going out he was so, so sweet. He would call me every night and we'd talk until 3 o'clock in the morning. He'd always hold my hand when we walked down the hall and he would never let me go to lunch without him. But, lately umm, he's been a little stressed out. He's been yelling a lot and...um...he sometimes forgets that I'm not as strong as his buddy's and he hits me in the arm a little too hard. Today we got into a pretty big argument and... well...it was my fault... I really shouldn't be texting any other guys. We've had a few ups and downs. But, he really does love me...he just has a funny way of showing it.

ARNOLD: I just want to know why...why me? Did I wear a sign the first day of school that said, "Hi, I'm a punching bag?" I've never done anything to anyone. I just want to go about my business. I want get to my classes without be hit, tripped or sent for a swirly, I want to get my books without being shoved into the locker. I want to get from my locker to the bus without having obscenities shouted at me and I would like to just once ride the bus without being pelted with food and garbage. And not being lit on fire would be nice too.

CYRUS: High...sweet, sweet high. Beautiful, tempting and deadly. She's what drives me...the only thing that drives me. Motivates me, pushes me. She's all I think of and dream of...that next high. That next escape. Nothing else matters...not life, not death. Just her. I will do anything to be with her. Lie, cheat, steal...whatever it takes to spend one more second wrapped in her arms. She tried to kill me once. A few more minutes with her would have turned me into veggie or fertilizer. She left me lying in my own vomit on the floor, convulsing...but still I can't break her hold on me. I tried to stay away, really I did. But she's calls to me, all day and all night - even in my dreams...my nightmares - begging me...pleading with me to come back and I always do. Why stay away? It's so much easier to be with her, than to be me.

WILL: So, Mom comes home after a girl's night out - The Bad Boys of Barcelona at the Boom Chico Boom Room - aim high Mom. Anyway, she comes home about 3am and decides we need to talk. I have an eight hundred point chemistry test tomorrow and you wanna talk? So, she sits me down says, "Things aren't really working out between me and your father." Really? After 18 years you've decided it's not working?

My parents constantly remind me that the choices I make affect my future. What about you? Mom? Dad? How do your choices affect me? Are you guys going to be the ones shuttling from house to house every other weekend? Where do I spend Thanksgiving? And Christmas? And my birthdays? Who gets me on my birthday? And when you find "happiness" by getting married and having kids with some other unsuspecting victim, will you have any time for me? Will you even remember me? Will you still love me?

Then Mom tells me Dr. Phil had a show all about children of divorce and that they survive fine. Hey, mom, didn't your parents get divorced? Anyway, I guess if Dr. Phil says so it must be true. So, thanks for that 3am chat Mom. By the way, I got a 50% on my Chemistry test.

JEZZ: I have this friend; she's been having a really tough time. School, home, friends - a tough time. She's really trying. Trying to do better in school, trying to deal with the chaos at home, trying to deal with friends that talk behind her back. But...but...it gets to be too much and she just wants out. Sometimes I'm not sure what she means by out. Sometimes I don't think I want to know what she means by out.

I really try to be a good friend - I really do. I do my best to encourage her. I tell her it will be alright, that it won't last forever and that I'll always be there for her. But sometimes my words just aren't enough.

They're hollow and empty. Not enough to stop the loneliness, the darkness and the cold. It's really cold and dark. Like a deep dark hole...and it keeps filling up with water and she wants to scream...scream so loud that someone will hear and come pull me out! But I know no one's there. No one will hear me. No one will save me...I mean...I have this friend.

ELI: Everyone dies...that's what Father Morgan said. Like I didn't already know that. Of, course everyone dies. Everything dies. I learned that when I was eight. I went fishing by myself for the first time at the river and caught this little sun fish. It was way too small to keep and I wasn't really planning on catching or keeping anything. I was so excited - I brought my Dad's favorite fishing lure - without asking. I was eight, didn't know what I was doing, I just wanted to be like Dad and go fishing. So, I caught this fish and started to take it off the hook like I had done with Dad a million times before and I couldn't get it out. The stupid thing had swallowed it down past its gills. I tried so hard to get the hook out but I couldn't. I had a knife...a little dull pocket knife that I always carried in my pocket. So, I cut the line and tried again. But it just wasn't working. All I could think of was how mad Dad was gonna be if I came home and told him his lure was in the stomach of blue gill in the bottom of the river. I knew what I had to do. I held the fish down and slowly started to cut its head off. It squirmed and wiggled and did everything to save its own life but I kept cutting. I had to...I had to...

Everything dies. But not everything dies in front of you.

GRACE: Eli...let go...

#### **SCENE 4 - FIGHTING WITH DEMONS**

*DEMONS reenter one at a time and wrap the rope around CHARACTERS and move them like THEY are puppets or dolls. CHARACTERS freeze in the positions THEY are put in. Scene should build in speed and intensity as it progresses. Music can be effective. Begin to dim lights as scene intensifies. Strobe light can also be effective.*

CINDY: There's this little glass doll I have sitting on my dresser.

MILTON: Logically I know that counting to ten won't stop me from getting sick.

LILAH: Acute Myeloid Leukemia. That's what the doctor said.

ALICE: Here's the thing...I know I'm not perfect. I know I can never be perfect.

TABITHA: He loves me. I know it. He really does love me.

ARNOLD: I just want to know why...why me?

CYRUS: High...sweet, sweet high.

WILL: So, Mom comes home after a girl's night out.

JEZZ: I have this friend; she's been having a really tough time.

ELI: Everyone dies...that's what Father Morgan said.

GRACE: Eli...let go...

CINDY: At least I thought he was a friend.

MILTON: It has nothing to do with the voice in my head.

LILAH: I got to add vomiting and hair loss to the list.

ALICE: Pizza is not a friend the second time around.

TABITHA: He's been a little stressed out.

ARNOLD: I just want to go about my business.

CYRUS: She left me lying in my own vomit on the on the floor.

WILL: Who gets me on my birthday?

JEZZ: It's really cold and dark.

ELI: I was eight, didn't know what I was doing,

GRACE: Eli...let go...

CINDY: I still see some dreams in her eyes.

MILTON: I have to wash my hands – ten times...always ten times.

LILAH: Six months seems like a blink.

ALICE: It's not easy being a big boned girl in a skinny girl world.

TABITHA: He really does love me...he just has a funny way of showing it.

ARNOLD: Not being lit on fire would be nice too.

CYRUS: Why stay away... it's so much easier to be with her and to be me.

WILL: I got a 50% on my Chemistry test.

JEZZ: No one will hear me. No one will save me.

ELI: Everything dies. But not everything dies in front of you....

GRACE: Eli!

ELI: No!

*(Black out. DEMONS stay on stage.)*

### SCENE 5 - ESCAPE

***Lights up slowly. DEMONS are still on stage and exit one at a time during scene. SOME of the DEMONS exit and take ACTORS off stage. This scene is a true action scene. ACTORS should appear as though THEY are being sucked off the stage into the abyss. ELI desperately tries to save them. Timing is critical! Ropes must leave with the ACTORS.***

ELI: We gotta get outta here.

ALICE: Are we supposed to get out of here?

ELI: Yes, we're supposed to get out of here.

CYRUS: Why? I've tried leaving before and I always come back.

ELI: Because this isn't where we're supposed to stay.

JEZZ: What if this is where we're supposed to stay?

ALICE: It is what it is, except it.

WILL: Why move on?

*(As DEMON exits HE/SHE pulls WILL off stage R.)*

TABITHA: I've kinda gotten use to it.

ARNOLD: So have I. It's starting to feel normal.

MILTON: I've never been normal...this might be the closest to normal I'll ever get.

*(As DEMON exits HE/SHE pulls MILTON off stage L.)*

ELI: Come on you guys, this is not where we're supposed to stay. Do you want to be trapped for the rest of your lives?

LILAH: Eli...I know I can't win this fight...and I'm ok with it. I can live with it. *(Laugh)* No pun intended.

ELI: No, Lilah! No you can beat this. You can fight this. We're just stuck down in the rabbit hole - we have to fight our way out.

LILAH: Some things are meant to be.

*(LILAH is pulled off stage R by DEMON.)*

ELI: No! Lilah! Come on! We can fight our way out! We can be saved!

ALICE: Not everyone can be saved.

ELI: Yes, they can.

JEZZ: No... no, they can't!

ELI: Everyone can be saved.

CYRUS: No, not everyone.

ELI: Why not? Why would anyone want to stay trapped?

ALICE: It's easier.

*(DEMON drags ALICE off stage L.)*

TABITHA: It's what I know.

*(DEMON drags TABITHA off stage R.)*

JEZZ: Sometimes it's just too hard to fight anymore.

*(DEMON drags JEZZ off stage R.)*

CYRUS: Do you really know how hard the battle is Eli? Do you?

ELI: Yes, I do!

CYRUS: No, I don't think you do! I've been here before. I've fought my way out before and it's the toughest, longest, bloodiest, battle you'll ever fight and it will last a lifetime!

ELI: It's worth it.

CYRUS: Really? Are you willing to fight that hard to save all of us?

ELI: I'm willing to fight with everything I have.

CYRUS: Well, sometimes that's not enough and sometimes not everyone wants to be saved, Eli. You can't save everyone.

ELI: Yes, Yes I can. I can and I will! I can save everyone!

CYRUS: Really?

ELI: Really.

CYRUS: Not your sister Eli *(pause)* you couldn't save your sister.

*(DEMONS drag CYRUS off stage L and CINDY off stage R.)*

ELI: No! *(Tries to grab CINDY)*

## **SCENE 6 - GRACE AND REDEMPTION**

*Stage is bare except for GRACE and ELI. GRACE appears at top of stairs. When ACTORS enter at end of scene THEY bow their head after saying their line.*

ELI: Grace?

GRACE: Yes.

ELI: I didn't think I would recognize you...I was only eight when -

GRACE: When I died. *(Silence)* Say it Eli. When I died.

ELI: When you died. God I'm so sorry...I'm so sorry.

GRACE: For what?

ELI: For killing you.

GRACE: Killing me? You didn't kill me.

ELI: Yes, I did. I should've stayed away from the river that day. If I'd known, I would've stayed at home like I was supposed to. I... could've...

GRACE: Could've, should've, would've is a tough place to live Eli.

ELI: I shouldn't have been there. I shouldn't have gone in to swim...I could've held on longer. I shouldn't have let go of you. I never should've let go.

GRACE: No, you couldn't have held on longer. You were eight Eli...a child. I was your big sister and I was there to watch out for you.

ELI: But you died to save me.

GRACE: Yes...I did.

ELI: Why? It was my fault. Why did you have to die?

GRACE: It wasn't your fault. It just was. It just was. You need to let go again Eli. You need to let go of the guilt and the pain. You need to fight your way past it. Everyone has their own demons to face...this is yours. This is your battle. You have a chance to fight and to win.

*(Enter LILAH stage R and CYRUS stage L – music can be effective during the following lines.)*

LILAH: Six months - the doctor told us six months...I got ten.

CYRUS: Once she has you she won't let go – 'til death do us part.

*(Enter MILTON Stage L and WILL Stage R.)*

MILTON: Five, six, seven, eight, nine...ten.

WILL: Happy birthday to me, happy birthday to me, happy birthday dear William...

*(Enter ARNOLD Stage L and TABITHA Stage R.)*

ARNOLD: Not being lit on fire would be nice.

TABITHA: He loves me. He just has a funny way of showing it.

*(Enter ALICE Stage L and JEZZ Stage R.)*

ALICE: It's not easy being a big boned girl in a skinny girl world.

JEZZ: I have this friend; she's having a really tough time...

*(Enter CINDY Stage R.)*

ELI: Cindy? She's just a little girl...she shouldn't have to fight anything. That's not fair.

GRACE: No one ever said life would be fair. *(GRACE exits upstage)*

CINDY: One, two, three, four, five. Once I caught a fish alive. Six, seven, eight, nine, ten. Then I let it go again.

*(ELI gives up on being able to save anyone else and starts to exit up stage {stairs}.)*

Eli?

END OF FREE PREVIEW