



## SHORT AND SCARY

By Deirdre Girard

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# **Short and Scary**

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A full evening of ten-minute horror plays

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# Short and Scary

## Concept Overview

*Short and Scary* is a full evening of ten-minute horror plays perfect for the Halloween season or any time of year when the audience is looking for something fun. Because the plays are short and have an entertaining concept, they will draw audience members far beyond traditional theatergoers. They also work well for episodic filming.

*Short and Scary* includes a wraparound section to end the evening by calling back the opening play. These nine horror plays with a feminist twist include *Under the Bed* where you know what's coming and that makes it even more frightening, *Camp Lumberjack* in which Heloise finds herself trapped in a haunted camp, *The Perfect Boyfriend* which opens with Abby terrified because someone has broken in and cleaned her apartment, *Whispering to the Dead* featuring a perfect first date until Kyle finds out what Elise does for a living, *15 Minutes in a Haunted House* that takes us on a journey that doesn't end well for Madison's boyfriend, *The Rest of Your Life* with its haunting death (or maybe not), *The Night Visitor* which probes the demons that follow us, *Take My Place* with cries from the attic that never end, and *Ghost Pond* where a new friend isn't convinced the local Ghost stories are real, that is until...

## Customization

This first edition of *Short and Scary* contains nine original ten-minute plays. I suggest that a producer choose anywhere from six to eight depending on their preferences, casting needs, whether they are hosting the event, etc. Plays can be adjusted to be more family friendly or to include local references.

## Casting/Directing

The plays can be done with a fixed ensemble cast of 6-8 people who perform in multiple plays, along with one or two directors who each direct multiple plays. This can be more time efficient. Alternatively, to increase tickets sales and/or involve more people, each play can be directed separately with separate casts, creating a strong community event that is likely to sell out by drawing on the family and friends of the many people involved.

## Added Impact

To create a powerful horror event that is sure to draw extra publicity, producers can decorate theater lobbies and hallways in the style of a haunted house, have ushers dress in scary costumes, host the event and open with a scary local story, offer the arriving audience small bags of candy, have the ushers use mechanical arms to tap people on the shoulders during scary moments, etc.

## Run Order

The plays can be produced in any order. However, *Under the Bed* includes an optional callback or wrap-around section. This wrap-around gives the evening a nice, polished feel. If used, *Under the Bed* should open the show, with the *Under the Bed* wraparound closing the show.

# **Under the Bed**

## **CHARACTERS**

Maddie	30's, female
Josh	30's, male, Maddie's partner

Characters can be any race/ethnicity, and any and all genders; names may be changed accordingly.

## **SETTING**

Maddie and Josh's bedroom. There is a large bed with a bed skirt or bedspread.

## **TIME**

The present.

## **NOTE**

/ (backslash) indicates the next line should be said in overlap fashion. // (double backslash) indicates the overlap is over and the remaining part of that line should be said when the previous character is finished speaking.

## UNDER THE BED

*AT RISE: The middle of the night. Josh is asleep. There is a hammer by Maddie's side of the bed. Maddie wakes up and begins to get out of bed to use the bathroom. She puts her foot on the floor and screams, then jumps back into bed. Josh wakes, groggy at first.*

JOSH

Maddie?

MADDIE

(whispering and terrified)

Oh my God, oh my God, oh my God...

JOSH

What?

MADDIE

Shhhhhhhhh!

JOSH

(whispering)

What?

MADDIE

I was getting up to pee and... there's something under the bed!

JOSH

A mouse? Shit. Don't worry, the poor guy's probably more afraid of you than you are of him. I'll set out traps in the morning.

*Josh starts to go back to sleep.*

MADDIE

No! Something grabbed my ankle!

JOSH

You mean, like brushed by you?

MADDIE

Grabbed! Like with fingers.

JOSH  
(placating her)

Okay. I'll take a look.

MADDIE  
(grabbing him)

Are you crazy? He's under the bed! Call 911!

JOSH

Honey, if—

MADDIE

Don't "honey" me! Call 911, my phone's downstairs!

JOSH

You need to calm down. If someone's under the bed, obviously he can hear us talking about calling the police and he would have murdered us by now, right?

MADDIE

I'm not imagining things!

JOSH

Look.

*He puts both feet on the floor. Maddie screams, then looks over at Josh's feet and starts to calm down.*

JOSH, cont.

See? No one's grabbing my ankles. Just like there was no one breaking into the house last week and no one looking in your window the week before.

(beat)

You know why you're suddenly getting all these creepy feelings...

MADDIE

It has nothing to do with—

JOSH

Of course it does. You need help. Anyone would. Ever since you were mugged you jump at everything. And you're literally sleeping with a hammer next to the bed! I'm afraid if I roll over in the middle of the night I'm going to be bludgeoned to death in my sleep!

MADDIE

You're exaggerating...

JOSH

We both know I'm not. It's PTSD. And I'm begging you to get therapy. For us. I don't know how much more I can take.

MADDIE

You? I'm the one who was—

JOSH

I know he scared you, but all that happened was you lost an old pocketbook. / Things just can't go on like—

MADDIE

That's not all!

JOSH

What?

(no response)

Maddie, what are you saying? Talk to me.

MADDIE

He...he...

(beat)

I can't.

JOSH

(gently)

You can tell me anything sweetheart.

MADDIE

Don't you get it? He follows me everywhere. I feel his big hairy hands all over me again every time I take a bath or get undressed—sometimes even walking to work or in the middle of the office! And I just want to scream!

JOSH

Oh my God, did he—

MADDIE

No! But he touched me, all over. I just couldn't tell you before. It was so awful.

JOSH

(hugging her)

Of course it was. This explains a lot of what's been happening. All those sounds you think you're hearing in the house—

MADDIE

But I am!

JOSH

Only when I'm not home?

MADDIE

(unsure now)

That doesn't mean it isn't real...

JOSH

You're scared. Some creep jumped you in the dark, and now you tell me he assaulted you too. I'm so, so sorry. But you're letting all that fear take up way too much space in your beautiful brain, and you've got to find a way to let it go.

MADDIE

(after a few moments of contemplation)

I...you're right...I know I have to do something.

JOSH

So how can I help?

MADDIE

You?

(beat)

I guess you can't. Not really. Maybe that's the problem. It's about what I have to do for myself isn't it?

JOSH

I'm always here for you though.

MADDIE

But I don't think I'll ever really get past this unless I take charge and stop leaning into the fear or whatever.

(beat)

First thing, I'm getting better locks for the doors—

JOSH

Good start, I'll put them on.

MADDIE

Or I could put them on myself. Let's face it, I'm better with a hammer than you are, and I'm perfectly capable of reading directions.

JOSH

True.

MADDIE

And maybe I should take self-defense classes so I won't feel so helpless if it happens again.



JOSH

That's not likely sweetheart...

MADDIE

Just if. And can we maybe get a dog? I know you wanted to wait, but I think I'd—

JOSH

Of course we can.

MADDIE

Really? A big one?

JOSH

If that's what it takes to make you feel safe.

MADDIE

Can we name him like Killer or Butch or something scary like that?

JOSH

(laughing)

Sure.

MADDIE

Actually, no. I always wanted a dog named Eddy. And I'm not letting some hairy creep change who I am.

JOSH

Good. Because I love you exactly the way you are.

(They kiss)

If you're feeling a little better now do you think we should maybe get some sleep and talk more tomorrow?

MADDIE

I just have to do something first.

(Taking a deep breath to screw up her courage)

Look under the bed.

JOSH

Let me do it for you.

MADDIE

No. I need to do this for myself— take back my goddamn life.

*Maddie tentatively puts both feet on the floor, waits a moment, laughs at her own nervousness, and stands up. She smiles at Josh, more confident now.*