

Spreadsheet (Dead-Sheet)

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. OFFICE - DAY

An accountant, NATALIE SCOTT (20s), scrutinizes spreadsheets at her desk. Her vibe: neat, efficient, serious.

This wing of the office has no other workers. Alongside Natalie's workspace are two empty desks.

A MAINTENANCE DUDE (30s) arrives with a grungy cardboard box.

MAINTENANCE DUDE

Hey, Natalie, Mr. Orr wants to put up some Halloween decorations in this space. Is that cool?

Natalie, captivated by her work, barely looks up.

NATALIE

Go for it.

The dude unpacks a plastic jack-o-lantern, a black cat figurine, and some dollar-store-quality accessories.

His decorating snaps Natalie out of her accounting Zen.

NATALIE

Hold on. It's only August sixth.

With Intel processor speed, she does the math in her head.

NATALIE

Halloween is still eighty-six days away. You're leapfrogging the rest of summer and most of the fall.

MAINTENANCE DUDE

You know how Mr. Orr is.

Natalie's eye-roll says it all: I'm among idiots.

MAINTENANCE DUDE

I've got one more thing for you.

He leaves the room for a few moments and returns with a six-foot tall animatronic ghoul.

The ghoul has a blue-gray face, stringy purple hair, and a dark cloak.

Natalie's efficiency gives way to utter shock.

NATALIE

Whoa. You can't be serious.

The maintenance guy nods and unspools an extension cord. He leaves the room to plug the creature in.

A moment later, the ghoul surges to life, gyrating and speaking with cheese-grater harshness via a voice box.

GHOUL

I'll eat your guts!

The ghoul pivots mechanically.

GHOUL

I'm coming to get you!

Another shift. Natalie stares with disbelief.

GHOUL

You cannot escape!

NATALIE

You've gotta be freaking kidding.

She urges the maintenance worker to return to the room.

NATALIE

Hey! This isn't going to work!

GHOUL

I'll eat your guts!

Natalie rushes out of the room to find the worker. The ghoul keeps repeating his lines in her absence.

GHOUL

I'm coming to get you...You cannot escape.

Natalie returns--no luck finding the worker. She pivots immediately to the ghoul and searches for a way to mute him or kill his power.

Her investigation goes high and low but turns up nothing.

There's no shutting up this monster.

GHOUL

I'll eat your guts!

Natalie retreats to her desk and slumps into her chair. She eventually resumes her spreadsheet work but cannot focus.

She covers her ears, but that doesn't work.

LATER

Frazzled by a whole day with the ghoul, Natalie paces alongside her desk. Her work sits untouched.

She snatches the ghoul's power cord and gives it a yank, but it doesn't shut him down. To the hallway she goes.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Natalie follows the ghoul's extension cord for several yards and finds that it feeds through a small hole in the wall.

Whatever outlet the ghoul is plugged into is in some unseen and inaccessible portion of the building.

Natalie tugs the cord, but nothing happens.

She can hear the ghoul calling for her back by her desk.

GHOUL (O.S.)
You cannot escape!

INT. NATALIE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

In the peace and quiet of her home, Natalie washes her face and peers into the mirror. Her reflection shows fatigue and unhappiness.

She scratches her ears.

NATALIE
I can still hear that thing.

Natalie mimics the ghoul.

NATALIE
I'll eat your guts. You cannot
escape. I'm coming to get you.

She shakes her head.

NATALIE
I wanna rip his stupid head off.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Sluggish Natalie gets to her desk in the morning and is instantly greeted by the ghoul.

GHOUL

I'm coming to get you!

Natalie chugs her coffee and mutters.

NATALIE

Fuck off.

She flips on her computer and winces as the ghoul speaks.

LATER

Natalie studies her spreadsheets with her hands over her ears, but the ghoul's yammering continues.

She can't take it anymore, so she dials her phone and begins a conversation.

NATALIE

(on the phone)

Mr. Orr, this is Natalie. I want you to listen to this...

She holds up the phone so her boss can hear the ghoul.

NATALIE

That's from the decoration that you put into my space yesterday. It's a massive distraction...

She listens to Mr. Orr's response.

NATALIE

I know you love Halloween, but...

Frowns.

NATALIE

Can I move temporarily to another area?

She frowns at his response.

NATALIE

Okay, can you at least tell me how to turn down the volume? I tried to find the controls but...

Her fingers tighten around the phone. Her face goes sour.

NATALIE

Well, if the volume isn't adjustable, how about providing me with some goddamn ear plugs. I'll buy them myself if the company is too cheap to do it...

The connection suddenly goes dead.

NATALIE

Mr. Orr? Mr. Orr?

She glares at the phone.

NATALIE

Did he just hang up on me?

GHOUL

You cannot escape!

NATALIE

He better not have hung up!

Natalie trembles with anger.

GHOUL

I'll eat your guts.

NATALIE

Doesn't he realize what a disaster this place would be without me? I work through lunch. I barely eat. And I'm constantly taking home work. And this is how I'm treated?

She takes a deep breath and laments.

NATALIE

I just want to do my job. Just let me get to the bottom line.

Her anger grows again. From her drawer, she pulls out a scissors. She stomps toward the ghoul and cuts his cord.

The ghoul dies, and for a blessed moment the office is quiet.

But then the intercom on Natalie's phone immediately blares. The voice of MR. ORR fills the room. Deep, dark, commanding.

MR. ORR (V.O.)

(via intercom)

Natalie, I'd like to see you in my office.

Ominous static crackles from the intercom. Natalie takes a step back. The noise is unnerving.

NATALIE

Mr. Orr?

MR. ORR (V.O.)

Now, Natalie. Come to my office.

(static and reverberation)

Immediately!

The intercom goes dead, but at the same instant, the ghoul surges back to life, talking and moving as it did before.

Natalie picks up the severed cord. How is this thing still working?

GHOUL

You cannot escape!

With great trepidation, Natalie begins her walk to Mr. Orr.

INT. NATALIE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Natalie's face is puffed with exhaustion. She rubs gobs of cream over it and mutters to herself.

NATALIE

I'm sorry, Mr. Orr. So, so, sorry.

Let me make it up to you.

She studies her gooey face closely.

NATALIE

I'll eat your guts. I'm coming to get you. You cannot escape.

With vacant eyes, she rubs even more cream over her brow.

NATALIE

You cannot escape!

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Natalie has her spreadsheets on her desk, but she barely looks at them.

GHOUL

You cannot escape!

NATALIE
(whispering)
I cannot escape.

GHOUL
I'll eat your guts!

NATALIE
(whispering)
You'll eat my guts.

She walks over to the ghoul and looks closely at its features. She strokes the ghoul's face and rubs his dark cloak, her eyes full of dazed wonder.

INT. NATALIE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Natalie's face is smeared with goopy face cream.

In her hand she has a dark blanket, similar in color and texture to the one worn by the ghoul.

With scissors, she cuts a hole in the blanket, pulls it over her head, and caresses the material.

NATALIE
You cannot escape!

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Natalie and the ghoul now wear matching cloaks. Natalie also has gobs of facial cream on her cheeks. A striking change.

Transfixed by the ghoul's words, she doesn't even attempt to get any work done.

She approaches the ghoul and runs her fingers through his stringy gray-purple hair. A twisted smile emerges.

INT. NATALIE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Natalie douses her hair with purple paint, a makeshift dye job. She assesses herself in the mirror with wild eyes.

NATALIE
I'm coming to get you!

Her hair color matches the ghoul's, but it's much too thick. So Natalie clutches fistfuls of her locks and rips them out.

She winces with pain but pulls out more.

NATALIE
You cannot escape!

LATER

The crude hair removal is complete. Only a few wispy purple strands remain, which resemble the ghoul's hairstyle.

Natalie's attention falls upon her skin, which is far lovelier and more natural than the ghoul's gray-blue tones.

But that's about to change. On the sink is a can of blue-gray oil-based paint, certainly not suitable for use upon skin.

With her hands, Natalie slathers the paint upon her face, howling in pain when it drips into her eye. But can't stop.

Soon, her old face is buried under the toxic oil-based gray sludge.

NATALIE
I'll eat your guts!

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Lurching into the room is ghoulish Natalie, her transformation complete. Her hair, skin and clothes now perfectly resemble that of the ghoul.

But her eyes widen with surprise when she discovers that the Halloween ghoul is no longer in the room.

It's been replaced by a large-scale plastic Santa Claus.

Ghoulish Natalie's lips tremble with disbelief. Where has her inspirational ghoul gone?

She searches the room, looks under the desk.

NATALIE
You cannot escape!

She knocks over the plastic Santa in anger. His jolly face mocks her.

NATALIE
I'll eat your guts!

She flings open her desk drawer and snatches scissors. She plunges them into Santa's eye.

Over and over she stabs him, destroying his cherubic face. She claws into him with rage, ripping off shards of his hard skin.

NATALIE

I'll eat your guts! I'll eat your guts!

She stuffs her mouth with pieces of Santa's face. She chews.

NATALIE

I'll eat your guts!

The Maintenance Dude strolls into the room.

MAINTENANCE GUY

Mr. Orr switched things up. He ordered that the Halloween decorations be replaced with Christmas stuff. Did you...

For the first time, he takes notice of ghoul Natalie eating the hard plastic face of Saint Nick.

MAINTENANCE GUY

Uh, Natalie? Is that you?

She turns to him with full rage.

NATALIE

I'll eat your guts!

MAINTENANCE GUY

Are you okay?

NATALIE

You cannot escape!

He takes one step back.

MAINTENANCE GUY

Let's run this by Mr. Orr.

Natalie lunges at him, and he dashes out of the room. She chases.

From the hallway come his screams along with shouts from Natalie.

NATALIE (O.S.)

I'll eat your guts!

LATER

Ghoulish Natalie sits at her desk and rips her spreadsheets.

As she does this, she mutters the ghoul's stock phrases. She's so captivated with her destruction that she doesn't see Mr. Orr enter the room.

His face isn't in view, but he places his hand upon Natalie's shoulder, his thick fingers adorned with ancient rings.

His voice: Deep, dark, entrancing.

MR. ORR

You've done fine work here,
Natalie.

NATALIE

You cannot escape!

MR. ORR

I'm quite impressed. Very pleased.

Natalie snarls.

MR. ORR

You're due for a promotion.

She sputters.

MR. ORR

Follow me. We'll get you started on
the next phase of your career.

Natalie's horrific face trembles.

NATALIE

I'm coming to get you!

Mr. Orr's face remains out of view, but his hand guides Natalie out of her seat and out of the room.

All that is left in the room are ripped spreadsheets and a mutilated Santa Claus.

From the hallway, comes one final sad statement from Natalie.

NATALIE (O.S.)

You cannot escape.

The empty room grows dark. The numbers no longer add up.

FADE OUT: