

Cast of Characters

<u>Dr. Gawkler:</u>	A Frankenstein-esque mad scientist who fancies himself a genius, but whose ill-considered actions speak louder than his words
<u>Igor:</u>	The put-upon, but fairly faithful assistant of Dr. Gawkler
<u>Emily:</u>	A woman, 20s-30s. Nervous daughter-in-law of Mrs. Rogerson
<u>Mrs. Rogerson:</u>	A woman, 50s-60s. Mother-in-law to Emily and more than she seems
<u>Addison:</u>	Mystery-addicted woman, sister to Zoe/Zach
<u>Zoe/Zach:</u>	Straight-laced sister/brother to Addison
<u>Kerri Bandersshore:</u>	Confident business woman who runs business retreats for CEOs
<u>Todd:</u>	Kerri's new quirky male assistant
<u>Glen/Glenda:</u>	Kerri's rival in the world of business retreats
<u>Meghan/Marco the Monster Hunter:</u>	A social media influencer
<u>Frank N. (Monster):</u>	Dr. Gawkler's creation (<i>Non-speaking role</i>)
<u>Executives:</u>	A handful of businesspeople who are taking Kerri's retreat (<i>Non-speaking roles</i>)

Scene

The living room of Dr. Gawkler's run-down house/"Lair bnb"

Time

Springtime, early evening

ACT I

(The curtains open on the living room of DR. GAWKLER, a messy, run-down room that includes a sofa and a table. Besides the front door, there is a door to the kitchen, a hallway, and some stairs, as well as a secret door. We hear the electrical buzzes and hums of unseen mad scientist equipment. Thunder and lightning strike and the lights in the house flicker. From off stage we hear a monstrous roar followed by a mad laugh.)

DR. GAWKLER *(offstage)*: It's alive! ALIVE!!!

(The noise is interrupted by the doorbell.)

DR. GAWKLER *(offstage)*: You have got to be kidding me!

(A secret door opens and DR. GAWKLER enters, holding a brain in his gloved hand. He grumbles his way across the stage towards the door, pausing to find somewhere to set the brain, then struggles to open the door with brain-goopy gloves on, eventually managing. EMILY rushes inside.)

EMILY: Please, tell me she's not here yet!

DR. GAWKLER: What? Who isn't here yet? And who are you?

EMILY: Oh, you'd know if she was here. Those eyes. So cold and uncaring. Wanting nothing more than to devour me. The scariest monster you've ever seen.

(DR. GAWKLER throws himself protectively across the secret door.)

DR. GAWKLER: Monster?! How do you know about the monster?

EMILY: She's my mother-in-law.

DR. GAWKLER: *(Relaxing)* Oh. That kind of monster.

EMILY: What kind of monster did you think I meant?

DR. GAWKLER: What? Who said anything about a monster?

EMILY: I did. And then you did.

DR. GAWKLER: Who are you?

EMILY: Emily. Emily Rogerson. Nice to meet you.

(EMILY holds out a hand, which DR. GAWKLER almost shakes before realizing he's still wearing his gooey gloves.)

DR. GAWKLER: Dr. Gawkler. Lovely to meet you, and I insist that you leave immediately!

EMILY: Leave?

DR. GAWKLER: Yes! This is my house! My personal property! You can't just waltz in here like you have...

EMILY: A reservation? Because I do. I found this place on *(checks phone)* Super Awesome Vacation Homes For Super Cheap dot com.

DR. GAWKLER: Well, I do rent out my extra rooms to help fund my...research. But I wouldn't have accepted any reservations for this weekend of all weekends. *(Takes off his gloves then pulls out his phone.)* See, I don't have any reservations until...today? Curses! I must have misread the dates. That's my mistake. I'm sorry, but I simply cannot allow you to stay here.

EMILY: But we have an electronically signed contract. And my husband and my horrible mother-in-law haven't even...

(MRS. ROGERSON enters through the front door carrying her luggage.)

EMILY: Mrs. Rogerson! Hi! You made it!

(EMILY tries overly hard to give her a good welcome, holding out a hand before realizing MRS. ROGERSON hands are filled with luggage. EMILY starts to go in for a hug, but hesitates and pulls back, eventually settling on awkwardly giving her mother-in-law a good natured punch in the arm.)

MRS. ROGERSON: Emily! I hope you haven't been waiting long.

EMILY: No! Not at all! I hope you haven't been worrying long that I've been waiting long.

MRS. ROGERSON: What?

DR. GAWKLER: Look, everyone! Can I have your attention please?

(The lights flicker, more monster noises.)

DR. GAWKLER: Talk amongst yourselves. I'll be right back.

(DR. GAWKLER exits through the secret door.)

MRS. ROGERSON: And where have you hidden my son?

EMILY: He's not here yet. We had to come in separate cars. Not because we're having problems! We just work in different places. So we take different cars. Our marriage is great, though! I love

your son! Like, a lot! And he should be here any minute.
(*Awkward silence.*)

MRS. ROGERSON: So how are you doing?

EMILY: Fantastic! I mean, I'm okay. I mean, not just okay like in a bad way. I'm married to your son, which is great! He's great! I'm just normal. I'm normal amounts of okay. And my marriage is fantastic. What about you, Mrs. Rogerson?

MRS. ROGERSON: My husband's been dead for ten years, so that has put a crimp in our marriage.

EMILY: Oh. Oh, I didn't mean...

MRS. ROGERSON: I think I should go get settled in my room before my son gets here. I'm assuming the rooms are all upstairs.

(*MRS. ROGERSON picks up luggage and exits up the stairs.*)

EMILY: (*Calling after her*) Yeah, I think so. And you can just pick whichever room you want. I want you to be comfortable...(*to herself*) and love me.

(*DR. GAWKLER enters from the secret door.*)

DR. GAWKLER: Now, all of you...where did the other one go?

EMILY: She can't stand to spend more than a few minutes with me.

DR. GAWKLER: That's convenient. Now if you will just leave, too, please.

EMILY: She didn't leave the house. She just made an excuse to go hide in her room.

DR. GAWKLER: No! No! No! She can't stay here. Not this weekend!

EMILY: Why? What's so important about this weekend?

DR. GAWKLER: This weekend? This is the weekend where I make history. This is the weekend where I do what even God wouldn't dare to do! This is the weekend that I create...(*remembering himself*) laundry.

EMILY: Laundry?

DR. GAWKLER: Yes. You know...sheets. Towels. There won't be anything for you to use because I've got to launder it all.

EMILY: We'll make do.

(EMILY exits up the stairs.)

DR. GAWKLER: No, really if you don't get out this instant, I will come up there and throw you out! *(Pause)* So be it!

(DR. GAWKLER starts to head for stairs when the lights flicker and there's a roar and a crash from the lab.)

DR. GAWKLER: I'll just see what's going on in my lab, and then I will throw them out!

(DR. GAWKLER exits through the secret door. ADDISON bursts through the front door, wearing her trademark trench coat and deerstalker hat.)

ADDISON: Aha!

(ZOE enters carrying luggage.)

ZOE: Addison, you have to stop entering rooms that way. Look! There's nothing here to "aha!" about.

ADDISON: But there could have been! And how cool would it be if I had burst in and aha'd it? I can't risk missing out on that! Besides, this is a mystery weekend, right? There's going to be a lot of aha moments. So let's get this thing started! Where's the body? Oh, is that part of the mystery? Someone's been murdered and now the body's gone missing, and only an intrepid detective like Addison Holmes can find it and solve the mystery!

(ADDISON starts hunting for the body.)

ZOE: I guess the moment has come. Addison, you are my sister and I love you, but we need to talk.

ADDISON: This is no time for talking, Zoe! This is the time for deduction! For observation!

(DR. GAWKLER enters through the secret door, unseen by ADDISON, who he comes up behind.)

ADDISON: For noticing the minute details. For clue finding. For motive...figuring out.

DR. GAWKLER: Excuse me.

ADDISON: *(Surprised)* Aaaaah! I mean, aha! The first suspect! Who are you?

DR. GAWKLER: This is my house!

ADDISON: A likely story! And where were you when it happened?

DR. GAWKLER: When what happened?

ADDISON: The murder!

DR. GAWKLER: Who was murdered?

ADDISON: You tell me!

DR. GAWKLER: But I don't know.

ADDISON: Well, neither do I!

DR. GAWKLER: Then how do you even know there was a murder?

ADDISON: I don't...yet. But I will!

(ADDISON goes back to looking for the body.)

DR. GAWKLER: That's great, but you're going to have to figure it out somewhere else.

ZOE: Just ignore my sister. We have a reservation.

ADDISON: For Addison Holmes and Zoe Watson.

ZOE: Stop telling people those are our names! It's Addison and Zoe Holson.

DR. GAWKLER: Unfortunately there was a mix-up and we can't have guests this weekend. I'm right in the middle of some very important...*(monster noises and flickering lights)*...laundry.

(IGOR rushes through the secret door.)

IGOR: Master! You should get back in there. It's trying to break loose and...oh, Igor didn't know Master had visitors. This seems like a strange time for guests.

DR. GAWKLER: They were supposed to rent rooms this weekend...

IGOR: Oh, Master, they cannot stay!

DR. GAWKLER: I know, Igor.

IGOR: There are things that they should not be here to see or hear, Master!

DR. GAWKLER: Yes, I know, Igor!

IGOR: The kind of things that would drive a person right out of their mind, never to recover!

DR. GAWKLER: Shut up, Igor!

IGOR: On the other hand, if Master doesn't let them stay...*(Quietly to DR. GAWKLER)* Master will get bad reviews on Super Awesome Vacation Homes For Super Cheap dot com.

ZOE: Actually we made the reservation through Relaxing Escapes for Cheapskates dot com. And if you make us leave, you're going to have to refund our full payment.

DR. GAWKLER: *(To IGOR)* Curses! I already used that money to pay the grave robbers. *(To ZOE)* Alright, you can stay. But you're going to have to sign some waivers. Igor, go type up some waivers. And make sure they say we can't be held responsible for personal injury, death, act of God, and act of someone acting as God.

IGOR: Yes, master!

(IGOR exits out the hall.)

DR. GAWKLER: I'll just go check on some things. Make yourself at home. And if you hear strange noises coming from anywhere, it's just me...doing the laundry.

(DR. GAWKLER exits through the secret door.)

ADDISON: This is a good mystery weekend. I don't have a clue what's going on.

ZOE: That's because it's not a mystery weekend. I lied to you. This is an intervention, Addison.

ADDISON: What?

ZOE: You're addicted to mysteries. I mean, look at you.

ADDISON: What's wrong with this?

ZOE: You wore it to Aunt Helen's funeral last month! And if that weren't enough, at the memorial when they invited people to share memories of Aunt Helen, you got up, declared that Aunt Helen had been murdered and that the murderer was someone in that room.

ADDISON: So?

ZOE: The memorial was only for close family. Those were our cousins! And our parents! And Grandpa Earl, who's almost a hundred years old!

ADDISON: I know those people are our family, Zoe! Do you think I would get up and accuse a bunch of strangers of murder?

ZOE: And that's why this is a one-person intervention. No one else from the family wanted to be cooped up with you for a whole weekend. But I'm not letting this go. We are spending a

mystery-free weekend out here and you are going to detox and learn to live a normal life without mysteries. I'm taking your phone *(ZOE grabs ADDISON's phone, then picks up ADDISON's suitcase, puts it on the couch and starts to open it.)*...and I'm taking any mystery books you brought with you!

(ZOE opens the suitcase, which is filled with nothing but books.)

ZOE: This is all you brought for the weekend? Where are your clothes?

(ADDISON motions to what she's wearing.)

ZOE: Really?

ADDISON: Well, there's also a pair of underwear tucked into each of the Agatha Christies, but yes. I don't find a large wardrobe as comforting as being able to lose myself in the grizzly discovery of a violently discarded body...okay, saying it out loud now, I can see where you might have some concern. But just taking my books and my phone won't do it. Trust me! This house is overrun with secrets that I will uncover. Come, Watson! To the bedrooms, which I deduce are behind this door. Aha *(She throws open the kitchen door.)*...oh. That door was just a red herring built to confuse me. But I believe we will now find the bedrooms we are looking for upstairs!

(She charges up the stairs. ZOE trudges up after her. DR. GAWKLER enters from the secret door and looks for IGOR.)

DR. GAWKLER: Igor? Have you finished those waivers yet?

(KERRI BANDERSHORE enters through the front door followed by her assistant, TODD.)

KERRI: Well, it's not the Plaza Hotel, but we can make this work. You can go ahead and tell the others to come in, Todd.

TODD: Right away!

(TODD exits through the front door.)

DR. GAWKLER: No! Don't bring anyone else in, Todd!

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