

NOT ALONE

A Ten-Minute Play

by

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

CHARLOTTE: the ghost of a young woman who lives in
ASHLEY's apartment

ASHLEY: a down-on-her-luck college student who
can neither see nor hear CHARLOTTE

SETTING

The kitchen of ASHLEY's small apartment. There is a table with a chair on either side, and a cup on the table. The time is present day.

(CHARLOTTE sits sideways in one of the chairs, her eyes on the floor, tracking the movement of something unseen running across the stage.)

CHARLOTTE

There you go, little mousey... There you go. Right towards the yummy cheese. Doesn't it smell good? Go on, take a bite. Take a- Yes! Snapped the neck!

(grins and drops to the floor, crouching down like someone trying to lure a kitten.)

Alright now, come on, mouse. Come on. That was a nice, clean death. This shouldn't take long at all. Come on... Come to Charlotte...

(waits. Nothing happens. She snarls with frustration, gripping her hair)

Ugh, what is wrong with you! Are you really so eager to find out what's on the other side? You don't want to stick around and play for a while? God, you stupid rodents. You never stay.

(sighs, sits back against a table leg)

Sometimes I think I made the wrong choice...

(a few moments of melancholy, and she perks up again, scrambling to her feet)

Ashley's home!

(ASHLEY enters, talking on the phone, wearing a backpack and holding a keyring. Harried. Walks past CHARLOTTE like she isn't there. CHARLOTTE watches her, grinning like she's the world.)

ASHLEY

No, I haven't had time yet, I just got out of class.

(drops her backpack on the floor near one of the chairs)

Yes Mom... No Mom... No Mom... No, Mom!

CHARLOTTE

Sounds like a very productive conversation.

(tries to pick up the backpack, but can't seem to get a good grip on it. Sighs.)

You really shouldn't just leave this on the floor like that, you're going to trip over it one of these days.

ASHLEY

(still on the phone)

Look, I don't know, okay? I'll let you know when I know! Just trust me, alright? ...yes, you can. Just trust me.

CHARLOTTE

Oh, Ashley...

ASHLEY

When I have something to tell you, I'll tell you, okay? Okay.
Bye.

(ASHLEY hangs up the phone, puts it in her pocket,
lets out an exasperated sigh, rubbing her eyes.
Charlotte comes up next to her.)

CHARLOTTE

You should take a break. Watch some Netflix before you need to
do homework. That always makes you feel better after talking
with your mom.

(ASHLEY looks at the ground, noticing the dead mouse)

ASHLEY

Oh, ew.

(takes out her cell phone, types)

Note to self: buy more mousetraps.

CHARLOTTE

You know, sometimes I wish you didn't need to kill the mice.
It's nice to have a sign of life in here when you're out... But
maybe one of them will stick around, one of these days.

(looks at her hands)

Do you think I'd be able to touch them? It'd be just like having
a pet.

(beat)

It's selfish, isn't it, to hope for something like that? I'm
really not what I used to be.

ASHLEY

(putting her phone back in her pocket)

The last thing I need is any more rat poop under my bed.

CHARLOTTE

I'd keep it well out of your way. It wouldn't even make a sound.
I know it wouldn't, not anything you could hear.

(beat)

It wouldn't be able to...

(ASHLEY crosses to the table, picks up the cup)

ASHLEY

One of these days, I'll remember to do the dishes.

CHARLOTTE

You always say that.

(ASHLEY contemplates the cup)

CHARLOTTE

Based on how long it's been sitting there, I don't think you should drink that.

(ASHLEY puts the cup to her mouth. CHARLOTTE shrugs)

CHARLOTTE

Ah, well. It probably won't kill you. But... it wouldn't be so bad if it did.

(ASHLEY takes a sip from the cup, makes a face)

ASHLEY

(setting the cup on the table again)

Ugh! Never mind.

CHARLOTTE

I'm sorry, that was even more selfish of me. A mouse is one thing, but you... But what if you did choose to stay behind, like I did?

(reaches out towards ASHLEY)

I could touch you...

(ASHLEY doesn't notice the gesture. She walks past CHARLOTTE, stops, shivers)

ASHLEY

(taking out her phone again)

Damn heater's still broken!

CHARLOTTE

Oh, don't call the electrician again. You can't pay him; all you have left is grocery money. Besides, it isn't the heater's fault.

ASHLEY

(sinking into one of the chairs)

...shit.

CHARLOTTE

(sighs)

Yeah. I know.

(sits in the chair across from ASHLEY)

I know I should keep out of your way. Stop making you cold all the time... That's selfish of me, too.

(reaches out towards the cup, but can't pick it up, either. She flexes her fingers behind it a few times, trying.)

Maybe if I could do some of the chores, and make it up to you...

(ASHLEY holds her phone out in front of her, scrolling with her thumb)

CHARLOTTE

Did any employers call you back today? Or email you?

(beat)

...I take your silence as a no.

(sighs)

I remember how hard it was. Saving money. Working for it. Spending it. It was a long time ago, but I remember.

ASHLEY

I just need one. One lousy little job, that's all.

CHARLOTTE

You'll get one. Just keep trying.

ASHLEY

One job. Then I won't be a failure anymore.

CHARLOTTE

You're not a failure! These things take time.

ASHLEY

I'll finally get Mom off my back.

CHARLOTTE

She's just worried about you. It's what mothers do.

ASHLEY

And maybe finally get out of this tiny-ass apartment. God, how'd I get stuck with this place?

CHARLOTTE

I know, I always thought it was small, too.

ASHLEY

Oh, right, I couldn't afford anything better.

CHARLOTTE

It's not that bad, is it? I mean, it could use a fresh coat of paint, but...

ASHLEY

And I could only afford this one because they lowered the price due to the last owner dying in here!

CHARLOTTE

Now, there's no need to get personal.

(ASHLEY sets the phone on the table, directing her words to it, while CHARLOTTE continues to speak directly to her.)

ASHLEY

I can't do this.

CHARLOTTE

Don't say that, of course you can.

ASHLEY

Why do I even try getting people to believe in me?

CHARLOTTE

Because you're worth it.

ASHLEY

I'm a failure.

CHARLOTTE

A couple bad test scores don't make you a failure.

ASHLEY

I'm not worth anything.

CHARLOTTE

Please don't say that. I remember how hard it was, being alive.

ASHLEY

There's nobody here for me.

(puts her head in her hands)

And why would they be?

CHARLOTTE

(leaning forward, reaching out, but can't touch)
I am. I'm here for you. Please look up.

ASHLEY

It's just me, all alone.

CHARLOTTE

But you're not alone! I'm here! Just listen to me-- Please, just hear me!

(Several silent beats. Ashley starts to cry, softly.)

CHARLOTTE

Ashley... Ashley, please, I want to help you... I know it's hard... I know you're lonely... But you wouldn't be, you wouldn't be if...

(ASHLEY starts to cry more loudly. CHARLOTTE's hands form fists on the table)

CHARLOTTE

You wouldn't be lonely if you could see me! If you only knew I was here, everything would be alright. I could help you, I... I wouldn't be lonely anymore, if you could see me. Please see me.
(leans across the table, almost climbing onto it)

See me.

(beat)

Ashley, see me!

(beat. Shouts:)

Just open your eyes and see me! Open your ears and hear me! I'm here for you, I'm always here, this is my home! I died here, Ashley, don't you realize? Don't you get it? Why can't I get through to you? This is our home, and you're not alone here! We're together. We could be happy. You could be happy! If you only knew I was here! If I could just-- If I could just touch you!

(CHARLOTTE strikes at the table, accidentally knocking the cup to the floor. ASHLEY lifts her head, startled. They both stare down at the cup. It is the first time that CHARLOTTE has ever managed to move an object.)

ASHLEY

What the heck...?

CHARLOTTE

(whispers)

I did that...!

(ASHLEY stands, walks over to the cup and picks it up, looking at it, her brow furrowed, perplexed. CHARLOTTE watches, daring to hope.)

CHARLOTTE

Ashley?

(ASHLEY looks from the table to the cup in her hands.)

ASHLEY

I'm going crazy.

CHARLOTTE

No. No, you're not.

(Charlotte steps forward, reaches out, takes the cup. Holds it just a few inches from ASHLEY's hand. ASHLEY gapes. She can't see or hear who's holding it, but it's a start.)

ASHLEY

What...?

CHARLOTTE

You're not alone, Ashley. You're not alone.. And neither am I.