

DAWN

He was fine. He wanted advice, I gave it.

HENRY

But you always take it- you took it a little too far.

(MUFFLED, AWAY FROM THE MICROPHONE)

Look, you know I love you but sometimes you don't know when to hang up. It's okay to just...end the call when it's done.

DAWN

Noted. Henry Gale, my producer and best friend, everyone! More proof that everybody's a critic. I'll keep it short and sweet from now on, like a fun size candy bar. Next caller? You're on the air, so let's get deep. What's the trouble?

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS, MUFFLED. A THUMP LIKE SOMETHING LARG BEING KNOCKED ONTO THE FLOOR

DAWN

Hello? You're on the air.

SOUND: HEAVY, LABORED BREATHING

DAWN

Okay sicko. You'd better not be doing what I think you're doing-

HENRY

Just- move over- let me-

SOUND: CLICK

DAWN

They beat you to it. So, we're getting prank calls again? Cute. Just so you all know, harassment is a crime and we are not above pressing charges. So if you're thinking about making any more calls from jerk-off junction

HENRY

Someone else is on the line?

DAWN

Okay, got it. Let's try this again...you there, caller? You're

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(CONTINUED)

DAWN (cont'd)

on! Talk to me.

ALLISON

(SHE SOUNDS A BIT MUFFLED, STUFFED UP, LIKE SHE'S BEEN CRYING FOR HOURS)

H-hi. It's me again, I'm sorry. I was trying to get somewhere safe, I don't know what I'm doing. My name is Allison, and...I don't know why I'm doing this, I don't know who else to talk to. I need to talk to *someone*.

DAWN

Woah woah, deep breaths. Let's start at the beginning, ok? Allison, right?

HENRY

I thought we said no names?

DAWN

I didn't ask, she just said it, you can't pin this one on me- it's fine! It's fine. You still there?

ALLISON

Y-yes. I'm here.

DAWN

You take that deep breath yet?

ALLISON

Trying- I'm trying.

DAWN

Start at the beginning, we've got all night.

HENRY

Actually, we've got until 2- that's when our slot ends-

DAWN

Shh, Go on?

ALLISON

I don't know how much time I have...you're gonna think I'm crazy.

DAWN

Well we're all a little crazy.

(CONTINUED)

ALLISON

No, this is beyond that. You won't believe me. No one believes me.

DAWN

Try me.

ALLISON

Okay. Okay. So. The beginning. There's this old hospital, or it used to be a hospital, now it's pretty much ruins- about an hour from campus.

HENRY

Thompson.

ALLISON

Right. Thompson Hospital. Do you know the story?

HENRY

Yes.

DAWN

(SIMULTANEOUSLY)  
No?

ALLISON

Well. It was built a few years after the town was founded. Late 1700s, early 1800s, I'm not sure. That doesn't matter. But around the 1890s, there was a massive intake of patients being hospitalized for severe delusions and paranoia. Then, the hospital just shut down. They boarded up the windows, padlocked the doors, and no one ever went inside again.

DAWN

A hospital shut down? That's not much of a story.

HENRY

That's not the end.

ALLISON

Exactly. There's an unofficial side to the events at the hospital. It's never been confirmed, but a rumor started a while back that documents had surfaced, old medical documents from the hospital right before it closed. They described the symptoms of the patients that were admitted, and it was like nothing they've

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(CONTINUED)

ALLISON (cont'd)

ever seen before. Like anyone's ever seen before. They even called in a priest to bless each one of them, to try and perform exorcisms, but nothing worked. They all believed something was following them. That something they couldn't see had latched on and wouldn't let them go. They'd wake up and find notes written to them, about things they'd never told anyone. Things no other living person could know. They'd find bruises they couldn't explain. And they would shiver! Constantly. No matter how many layers they wore or how many blankets the staff wrapped them in, they just couldn't get warm. And then, something that scared even the priests. (SHE CHOKES UP, BUT GATHERS HERSELF TO CONTINUE) Darkness started to follow them. Everywhere.

DAWN

(TRYING TO KEEP IT LIGHT, BUT BECOME UNCERTAIN)  
Girl I've got clinical depression, I've been there.

HENRY

Shh!

ALLISON

No, I mean- it was like whatever was following them, whatever they felt following them, just swallowed up light. It would start as a shadow, sometimes theirs, sometimes of something in the room with them. But it would start to darken, to become blacker than black, like it was getting...thicker, somehow. Viscous. It would lengthen, spread out like an oil spill and cover the whole floor, then ooze up the walls, until there was no escaping the dark. Gas lamps would go out when they walked by, electric lights would die, even matches wouldn't strike. They would put one of the patients in a room full of windows at noon and it wouldn't matter. You could see the sun out the window, but it was like an invisible force was pushing it out. No one wanted to get near an infected patient, so the doctors would just lock them in their rooms and slide food and water through a slot in the door, and never let them out again. And once they died, and they did die even though no one could figure out how, new patients refused to be placed in those rooms. No one knew how it spread, if it was by touch or if it was somehow...in the air. Eventually, they ran out of uninfected space. So, they boarded it all up, and left.

(CONTINUED)

HENRY

I heard they tried to burn it down.

ALLISON

They did. They tried to. But it wouldn't burn. They doused it in gasoline and struck a match but the flames died down in seconds, like they couldn't get enough oxygen to stay lit. One nurse later said she reached out a hand to touch the door to the hospital, she couldn't tell anyone why, she just knew she had to. And it felt cold. As cold as a chest of ice. They lit a fire all around it in the dead of summer and it felt frozen.

DAWN

That's a great story, but where do you come in? This isn't really my area of expertise.

ALLISON

I drove out to Thompson Hospital last week. I've been reading about it for years but I never had the guts to check it out in person, so...I drove out there. And I went inside. And...something followed me home.

DAWN

...What?

HENRY

(QUIETLY, AWAY FROM THE MIC)

I don't like this. This doesn't feel like something we should be handling. You need to end the call. Now.

DAWN

Just when the plot starts thickening? Are you kidding me?

(BACK DIRECTLY INTO THE MIC)

You still there?

ALLISON

I think so.

DAWN

You were saying? About someone following you?

ALLISON

I didn't say someone. When I got there, it looked pretty much like I expected. It's not much to look at

(MORE)

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