

GHOST LIGHT THEATER

ACT 1, PLAY 1: THE BLACK FOREST

EPISODE 1: CAMPGROUND WHISPERS

By: Elijah Gabriel

ANNOUNCER
Ghost Light Theater would like to
present: The Black Forest.

OPENING THEME:

EXT. THE BLACK FOREST - NIGHT

SFX: Running over leaves.

ALYSSA
(panicky)
There's something wrong with this
forest. There's no way out.

SFX: Distorted voices.

ALYSSA (CONT'D)
(scared)
Oh no. They're here again.

SFX: Tripping.

ALYSSA (CONT'D)
(verge of crying)
I-I can't. I shouldn't have come
here.

SFX: She gets up.

ALYSSA (CONT'D)
(sharp, fast intake of air)
Oww. Shit. I have to keep moving.
They're coming.

SFX: Speed walking with faster running in the background.

ALYSSA (CONT'D)
(sniffling)
Matt, I hope you get this. Hell, I
hope anyone gets this.
(beat)
Please make it online.
(beat)
The disappearing people, the
forest, nothing's normal. Do not
come here.
(pleading)
Matt don't follow me here. Please.

SFX: Rustling.

ALYSSA (CONT'D)

Damn it.

SFX: Recorder click off.

FADE IN:

EXT. BELLTIDE TOWN - DAY

SFX: Walking.

MATTHEW

E-excuse me? I'd like to ask you a question about the forest.

SFX: Quick, hurried steps.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Okay then...

SFX: Walking.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Uhh h-hello. I have some questions about the Black Forest. I would really appre--

SFX: Running away.

OLD MAN

(hard coughs)

You should leave it alone lad.

MATTHEW

(confused)

Why? I just had some questions about the disappearances.

OLD MAN

I know why you're here. The whole town knows. Walking around, wearing those clothes.

(exhale)

Tourists.

MATTHEW

Why won't anyone answer me? My sister went missing a week ago and--

OLD MAN

I see.

(cough)

You should give it up now boy.

(MORE)

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

There's little chance that she's
alive by now.

MATTHEW

(angry)

What the hell do you mean!? Tell me
what's going on with the forest?

OLD MAN

(sigh)

Many in this town are wary and
tired. Their families are broken by
the group in the forest.

MATTHEW

Group in the forest? Who are they?
Are they the ones taking everyone?

OLD MAN

(cough)

They are.

(beat)

Those disappearances you've heard
of are cause of them. For some
"cause" as they've said.

MATTHEW

You've talked with them?

OLD MAN

Aye. They came to our town. They
called it, reaping day. I thought
it was my time, but they only
wanted healthy, younger lads and
lasses.

MATTHEW

Why?

OLD MAN

I don't know. Trafficking perhaps.
There was a young lass that I knew,
Iris was her name. About your age.

(beat)

She was dragged into the forest
last reaping. I haven't seen her
since. I pray to the spirits that
she's alright.

MATTHEW

Why doesn't anyone call th--

SFX: Bus honk.

OLD MAN

If you're headed to the forest you should go now. There won't be another bus heading that way for a while, boy.

MATTHEW

Hold on a second! What abo--

OLD MAN

Good luck and may the spirits protect you. Now go.

FADE IN:

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

SFX: A bus leaves. Phone call ringing.

ALYSSA

Hey! You've reached Alyssa Poe of Poe Investigations. Sorry, I'm not at the phone right now. I'm out investigating. You can find my latest logs on my site. Please leave a message.

SFX: Beep.

MATTHEW

Damn it Aly. Answer your damn phone. Please. Anyway, I'm at the bus station near The Black Forest. Call me back soon. Love you sis.

SFX: End call.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

(sigh)

Where are you Aly?

SFX: Matthew walks.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

(sigh)

I wish I went with you. I'm sorry I didn't believe you. I should probably see if there are other people living here. That's where you'd start. Right?

EXT. THE BLACK FOREST - DAY

SFX: Button click. The recording starts. Matthew enters and walks on the forest floor.

ALYSSA

Audio Log # 1: It's Alyssa Poe from Poe Investigations and I'm heading to the mysterious Black Forest. That's right. The same forest that people have been disappearing from. I hope I can get to the bottom of this. I'm now on my way to find some locals. Bye for now. Aly out.

SFX: Button click. The recording stops. He stuffs the mp3 player into his pocket.

MATTHEW

Aly, please be alright. At least I was right. Aly went to find some natives. I hope there's more people than just that group in here.

SFX: He trips.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Damn it. What the --

SFX: He kicks the wooden doll.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Why the hell is a doll out here in the forest?

(beat)

It... looks... so life like. That's not weird or anything.

SFX: He walks away. Stomach growls.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

I should also set up camp somewhere first.

(chuckle)

Poe Investigation has come a long way. I was so mad the day you told me about it.

SFX: His footsteps fade away.

FLASHBACK:

SFX: Hands slamming on a table.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

MATTHEW

(angry)

You're what? And are you still recording?

ALYSSA

I'm dropping out and starting my own business. I call it Poe Investigation and duh. I'm always recording.

MATTHEW

(angry)

Why the hell are you dropping out!?

ALYSSA

Did you not hear me? I'm. Starting. My own business.

MATTHEW

(angry)

You only got two years left. Why can't you wait until you're done. You don't even know if it'll be worth it.

ALYSSA

(agitated)

Two years? Ha. I'd be lucky if I finished in four the way things are going.

MATTHEW

It's not that bad sis. I know you've changed your major... a couple of times but --

ALYSSA

But nothing. This is something I'm really good at.

MATTHEW

(angry)

And what if you're not? Like how you thought you were "good" at chemistry, or math.

SFX: Alyssa walks towards the door

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Aly wait. I didn't mean it like that.

SFX: Door Slam. Fades back to Matthew's walking.

END FLASHBACK:

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

(chuckle)

You got so angry at me. I don't think you talked to me for three weeks, but you proved me wrong.

(beat)

Only thing you did was eat and work. You got it up and running and then built up a clientele by yourself.

(sigh)

Sorry I doubted ya.

SFX: Stops walking. Places bag on the floor.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

This should be a good spot to set up.

SFX: He rummages through his bag and starts setting up his tent.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

I should probably go check around. Make sure nothing's here.

SFX: Stomach growling.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

After I finish eating.

(beat)

These MRE's aren't the greatest, but I'll make do.

SFX: Forward time. He gets up.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Okay. Time to explore.

SFX: He walks.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

I didn't think this place would be this freaking big. Damn. It's going to take a while to find Aly.

SFX: He stops.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Another doll? What the hell?

SFX: He walks a bit closer then stops again.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
It looks like the other one, but a
little different. A male? Someone
had to have left them here.
(hopeful)
Maybe it's the locals that Aly went
to look for.

SFX: He walks for a bit more. Faint and distant whispering.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
Hello? Who's there?

SFX: The whispering gets a bit louder.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
(louder)
Hello? Who's there?

SFX: The whispering continues. Matthew walks faster.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
(excited)
Is that people talking? There's no
way, right?

SFX: Matthew wades through bushes.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
Is someone there?

SFX: He stops, but the whispers get louder.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
(confused)
No one's here? But, I still hear
something.

SFX: Rustling.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
(excited)
Hello? My name is Matthew Poe and
I'm here looking for my--

SFX: Bear roar.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
Oh, shit!

SFX: Matthew runs. Bear chases after him.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
(panting)
There wasn't anything about bears!

SFX: He continues to run stumbling here and there. He runs through bushes.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
(panting & short of
breath)
Okay. Where should... I go?

SFX: He falls on the ground.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
Shit. It's over. Not like I
could've outrun a bear anyway.

SFX: The bear stops.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
(confused)
It's not attacking?

SFX: The bear sniffs at Matthew.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
(confused)
What is it doing? Why isn't it
attacking me?

SFX: The bear moves closer.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
(nervous)
H-hey there.

SFX: Matthew slowly stands up.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
(cautious)
I'm... just going to stand up
slowly and...

SFX: Matthew runs away. After a bit the bear follows.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
Come on. Give me a break!

SFX: He runs for a bit and then stops to start climbing.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
(grunting)
Damn it. Why'd this happen?

SFX: The bear runs and stops near the tree. It sniffs around the tree.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
 (quietly)
 Shoo. Go away.
 (beat)
 Bears can't climb right?

SFX: It stops sniffing and scratches at the tree.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
 Are you kidding me?

SFX: The scratching stops. A thud.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
 I've gotta get down... on the other side.

SFX: He slowly climbs down, but the bear hits the tree and he falls down onto the ground.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
 (in pain, groaning)
 Ughhhhh.

SFX: He lays there. After that he slowly gets up and runs.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
 Shit, I've gotta go.

SFX: He steps over breaks fallen twigs and branches as he runs.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
 (confused & panting)
 I'm... back at the entrance?

SFX: He stops running. The bear stops and disappears into mist.

EXT. THE BLACK FOREST ENTRANCE - AFTERNOON

MATTHEW
 (exhale)
 What the hell? Where'd the bear go?

SFX: He walks for a bit. He touches the fence.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
 That's strange. I didn't see these signs earlier.
 (MORE)

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

(beat)

Let's see here.

(beat)

"Please use caution when entering the forest." Heh.

SFX: He walks a bit and stops.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Huh? This one's pretty old.

SFX: He scratches at the sign.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

"Littering -- Forest is illegal -- comes with -- fine and -- jail."

(sigh)

That's a weird sign for this place.

(beat)

Doesn't seem like it matters. No one's taken care of this place in forever it seems.

SFX: He walks a bit and stops again.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

What's this?

SFX: He rips the paper taped to the poster.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

"Be quiet. Be safe. Stay hidden. Do not run.

(beat)

They are watching you. They do not want you here. I know not the reason, but leave as quickly as you came."

SFX: He balls the paper, throws it away and walks away.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

There's no way I'm leaving without Aly. I can't leave. Not yet.

EXT. THE BLACK FOREST - NIGHT

SFX: He walks on the forest floor for a while.

MATTHEW

What did happen earlier? Where'd the bear come from and how'd it just disappear?

(MORE)

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Did Aly see things like this when she was investigating?

SFX: He steps on a doll.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

These dolls are everywhere! What the hell!

SFX: He walks for a bit. The doll creaks a bit. He stops.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

What was that?

(beat)

It couldn't have been the doll, right?

(dismissive)

Nah, there's no way that's possible.

SFX: He runs, weaving through bushes here and there.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

(slight panting)

Almost back... I think.

SFX: Banging on a drum. He stops running.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

(frustrated)

What now?

(beat)

First day here and I'm already tired of this place.

SFX: He walks towards the drum banging. It gets louder as he walks.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

That has to be the locals that Aly went looking for.

(excited)

Maybe they know something. Heck, maybe Aly's with them right now.

SFX: Matthew stops walking and crouches down.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

(confused)

I found the locals, but what are they doing? They're huddled around in a circle huddled on a... symbol of sorts?

SHAMAN XAVIER
I bring forth Maximilian.

SFX: The drum banging stops.

SHAMAN XAVIER (CONT'D)
He is next in line to be
sacrificed. We hope his sacrifice
can help towards the revival, nay
arrival of our God.

MATTHEW
(quietly)
Sacrifice? What the hell? They
can't be serious right now? They're
going to sacrifice that guy?
(scared)
I don't see Aly anywhere. T-they
didn't sacrifice her too, right?
(beat)
These... can't be the locals.

SFX: Low chanting.

SHAMAN XAVIER
Maximilian was a devout follower.
One of our best actually. Always
ready to lend a hand. Whenever the
situation arose.

SFX: Drum Bang.

SHAMAN XAVIER (CONT'D)
His sacrifice will not be in vain
as he helps us towards our goal in
resetting this world.

SFX: 2 drum bangs & louder chanting.

SHAMAN XAVIER (CONT'D)
We are all of one mind, body and
spirit.

SFX: 3 drum bangs and then silence.

MATTHEW
(quietly)
T-they're serious. Holy shit. I...
I got to get out of here.

SFX: Matthew steps back and breaks a branch.

SHAMAN XAVIER

Who goes there?

(beat)

Damned spirits. Making light of our ritual.

MATTHEW

(quietly & confused)

Spirits? What the hell is he talking about?

SHAMAN XAVIER

(loudly)

The spirits are too active tonight.

(beat)

We can't have them interrupting our ritual. We shall resume this on the next full moon.

SFX: Xavier and his group start walking away.

MATTHEW

(quietly)

I'm saved. I think.

Wait.

(beat)

I think one of them left something.

SFX: Matthew walks towards it.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

A book? Their bible or something?

SFX: He picks it up.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

I better get out of here. They might come back for it.

SFX: He walks away for a bit. His footsteps fade away to rain.

FLASHBACK:

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON - RAINING

SFX: Car driving. Rain in the background.

MATTHEW

So, how's the business coming along?

ALYSSA
It's not like you care.

MATTHEW
I asked. So, obviously I do.

ALYSSA
Well it's doing just fine.

MATTHEW
That's good.

ALYSSA
Yeah.

MATTHEW
(sigh)
Come on Aly. How long are you going to be like this? I said I was sorry.

ALYSSA
(agitated)
And? Is that supposed to make everything better? You still don't like the fact that I dropped out and you don't like the business idea.

MATTHEW
I don't like the idea. It's dangerous. Being a P.I. isn't easy and you can get a lot of enemies if you're not careful.

ALYSSA
You don't think I know that already? I'm gonna be careful and until I get some help, I'm not going to take on shady cases.

MATTHEW
(sigh)
What if it doesn't work Aly? Have you stopped to think of that? You won't have anything to fall back on and I won't be able to support us both forever.

ALYSSA
Then I'll move out, so I won't be a burden anymore.

MATTHEW
 (frustrated)
 Arghhh. Listen to me damn it!
 That's not what I'm saying.

ALYSSA
 Then what are you saying?

MATTHEW
 I wanted you to think about this
 before you threw everything on this
 one idea.

SFX: The car stops.

ALYSSA
 How long did you want me to wait?
 One year? Two? Until I graduated?
 (offhanded)
 If that was ever going to happen.
 (beat)
 I hated it. Couldn't stand it
 actually. Why can't you just be
 happy for me?

MATTHEW
 I am, but --

ALYSSA
 Really? Cuz it sure doesn't seem
 like it.

MATTHEW
 I just don't want you to regret
 your choice and wish you'd stay in
 school.

ALYSSA
 (laugh)
 Oh trust me. I will never regret
 it.

MATTHEW
 You never know. Hindsight's 20/20
 after all.
 (beat)
 Can this person drive.

SFX: Honk.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
 (agitated)
 Come on people. Can we move!?

SFX: Long honking fades to Matthew plopping down on his sleeping bag.

END FLASHBACK:

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

I'm finally back.

(yawn)

What am I going to do about those... people? There's no way I'm going to get info from them. Honestly, I don't think I'd even want it.

(beat)

I accidentally saved that guy's life, but I'm not any closer to finding out what happened to Aly.

SFX: Button click. The recording starts.

ALYSSA

Audio Log # 14: I think I'm getting used to this strange forest. I wouldn't call it home or anything, but it's grown on me. I wake up in the morning prepared for anything and that's refreshing.

(beat)

But, I have this feeling that something is in this forest. Something we have no business knowing.

(cough)

I don't know why and I have nothing to base it on, but it won't go away. I hope this feeling goes away and I can find what I'm looking for.

(sigh)

Only time will tell.

SFX: Button click. The recording stops.

MATTHEW

(sigh)

I hope you found what you were looking for Aly.

(beat)

Honestly. I don't know if that'd even be a good thing seeing this place.

(yawn)

SFX: A lull for a bit, then light snoring. He starts shuffling his body.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
 Argh! All these damn bugs are making it hard to sleep.

SFX: He slaps his arm. He sits back up.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
 There goes another one. Fuckin' hate spiders.

SFX: More spiders start crawling out of places. He starts scouting back until his back hits a tree.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
 (scared)
 W-where'd all these spiders come from?

SFX: He starts kicking and viciously slapping himself thrashing.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
 (scared)
 Get away!
 (beat)
 Leave me alone!

SFX: More start crawling on top of him.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
 (screaming)
 Stop! STOP!

SFX: His voice gets lower and lower as more and more pile on him covering him.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
 (muffled screams)

SFX: He suddenly sits up.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
 (hyperventilating)
 Just a dream... I'm okay.
 (more resolute)
 I'm fine.
 (deep exhale)

SFX: Low whispering.

SPIRIT
(distorted voice of
Alyssa)
Don't be so sure of that.

MATTHEW
H-hello?

CREDITS
Thank you for listening to the
first episode of The Black Forest,
Ghost Light Theater's first play.
It was written and directed by
Elijah Gabriel. Sound design by
Kristina Manente. The composer for
the theme song was Andrew Perdue.
The role of Matthew Poe was Richard
A Dresden, Alyssa Poe was Kaitlyn
Kliman, Old man Leon was J.D.
Sutter and the role of Shaman
Xavier was Kyle Gould. Like what we
do? Consider becoming a patron at
patreon.com/throtopro. That's t h r
o t o p r o. Thank you for
listening and we hoped you enjoyed
it. Catch us next month for episode
2, Mist of the Lost

End of Episode.