

ALICE'S BEST FRIEND MIGHT BE A KILLER ROBOT

by Scott Mullen

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ALICE'S BEST FRIEND MIGHT BE A KILLER ROBOT

A Darkly-Comedic One Act Play

by Scott Mullen

SYNOPSIS: Alice's former friends, Hannah and Sara, come to see her, and are surprised to find her hanging out with a teenage girl, Jane, who they don't know. Alice turns out to have been grounded because of a party her friends threw at her house, and Alice is ready to move on from her wild behavior. But Alice's former friends are shocked to realize that Jane is an android, and it soon turns into a battle for Alice's friendship.

DURATION: 30-35 minutes.

TIME: Present.

SETTING: Alice's living room.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 females)

ALICE (f)..... Settling into life as a good girl. *(162 lines)*

JANE (f)..... Alice's new perfect best friend. *(117 lines)*

HANNAH (f)..... Alice's former best friend, has a big wild side.
(129 lines)

SARA (f)..... Hannah's sidekick. *(55 lines)*

SET: The room could be decorated as minimally as a few chairs and a table, or with a sofa and other living room items. Various sides of the stage lead to either the offstage basement and front door, or to the kitchen. The invisible front window faces the audience.

COSTUMES: Alice and Jane are dressed comfortably. Hannah and Sara are dressed to impress boys.

PROPS: A chess board and pieces. Snacks. Cell phone *(Sara)*. Two glasses of water. Something that looks like blood.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES: Have dark fun with it.

AT START: ALICE and JANE sit across from each other at a small table playing chess. ALICE studies the board, then moves a piece. There's a real looseness between them; the two are good friends.

ALICE: Check!

JANE: Very nice.

JANE studies the board.

ALICE: You better not be letting me win.

JANE: I am not letting you win.

ALICE: But you could be playing better.

JANE: Of course.

ALICE: That's letting me win!

JANE: I am playing at a strong level. Moving my king.

JANE moves her king. ALICE looks at the board.

ALICE: I didn't expect that. You really aren't letting me win.

JANE: I definitely am not.

ALICE: Now I feel stupid.

JANE: Hey! You are not stupid. Say it.

ALICE: Jane—

JANE: Say it.

ALICE: I'm not stupid.

JANE: Are you happy?

ALICE: I am. Very happy.

JANE: You know I'm your best friend. Right?

ALICE: Of course. And I am yours.

JANE: That makes me happy. Do you want some snacks?

ALICE: I definitely want some snacks.

JANE heads off, exiting. ALICE looks at the board. Moves a piece.

ALICE: Ha. (Loud.) Check!

A knock on the door.

JANE: (*Offstage.*) Are you expecting anyone?

ALICE: No.

HANNAH: Alice! We're coming in!

Entering from the other side of the stage to where JANE exited are HANNAH and SARA. ALICE doesn't look thrilled.

HANNAH: Surprise!

ALICE: How did you get in here?

HANNAH: I still had the key you gave me.

ALICE: I never gave you a key.

HANNAH: Well, let's just say I acquired it last time I was here.
Where have you been?

ALICE: My parents decided to homeschool me.

SARA: I knew it!

HANNAH: Well, that explains a lot. You could have called—

ALICE: My parents didn't think that was a good idea.

JANE enters with some sort of snacks.

HANNAH: Who is this?

ALICE: A friend.

JANE: Jane.

HANNAH: Jane.

JANE: I am Alice's best friend. Would you like a snack?

JANE holds out the snacks. HANNAH ignores the snacks.

HANNAH: I don't know you. And I'm Alice's best friend. (*To ALICE.*) You're playing chess? You hate chess.

ALICE: You hate chess. And I can't hang out with you. I'm grounded.

HANNAH: Still?

ALICE: My parents don't want me seeing either of you.

SARA: Just because of the party?

ALICE: Yes.

HANNAH: Since when do you listen to your parents?

ALICE: I just... wanted to make a change.

HANNAH: Well, good news. Luke broke up with Emily, and he's interested in you.

SARA: So, we were thinking about another party—

HANNAH: Here.

ALICE: No, no, no—

JANE: Parties are not allowed here.

HANNAH: But your parents are out of town.

ALICE: How do you know that?

HANNAH: My mother is still their travel agent. They're thousands of miles away! Come on, you know you want to party.

ALICE: That's how I got into trouble last time!

SARA: Not a big party. Just some boys. Dave, Connor, and Luke.

JANE: That's not going to happen.

HANNAH gives JANE a dismissive look.

HANNAH: If your friend wants to stay, I'm sure they can dig up someone for her.

SARA: Maybe Logan.

HANNAH: Ew.

SARA: He's desperate enough.

HANNAH: True.

JANE: Parties are not allowed here.

HANNAH: This is none of your business.

JANE: You need to leave.

HANNAH moves toward JANE. Close. Stares her down. Sniffs. SARA moves close too.

HANNAH: Jane. Plain Jane. Where did you come from? Some homeschooling after-school program?

SARA: What is she wearing?

HANNAH: What's going on with her hair?

JANE reaches up to her head, self-consciously.

ALICE: Be nice to Jane.

JANE: It's time for you both to leave.

HANNAH: I think you need to leave. I've been Alice's friend longer than you. Since we were three years old. Tell her, Alice.

JANE: She is not your friend any more.

ALICE: Jane—

JANE: (To SARA.) Or yours.

SARA: Who are you?

JANE: Alice's parents have forbid your presence.

HANNAH: Oh, forbid—

JANE: Take your friend and go.

SARA: (To ALICE.) Seriously?

JANE: Leave.

HANNAH: This is Alice's house. It's her decision.

JANE: Her parents do not want you in the house. That's why I'm here. I will give you ten seconds to leave. Ten, nine, eight—

HANNAH: Who is this girl?

JANE: seven, six, five, four—

ALICE: Jane, please pause.

JANE stops counting down.

HANNAH: What's going on?

ALICE: Nothing. Please go. I'll call you, I promise, once things have settled down—

JANE: She will not call you—

ALICE: Jane, quiet.

HANNAH: What did she mean, "that's why I'm here?"

ALICE: Nothing.

JANE: I am here to keep Jane safe and happy.

SARA circles JANE, studying her.

HANNAH: Wait—did your parents hire her to be your babysitter?

ALICE: ... Not exactly.

JANE: I am her best friend.

HANNAH: Did your parents hire her to be your best friend?

ALICE: Not exactly.

HANNAH: What does "not exactly" mean?

SARA: I think she's a robot.

HANNAH laughs, then notices no one else is laughing.

HANNAH: She's not a robot.

SARA: You sure?

HANNAH: If I knock on her head, will it make a metal sound?

HANNAH goes to knock on JANE'S head, but JANE grabs HANNAH'S wrist and squeezes.

HANNAH: Ow!

JANE immediately lets her go.

JANE: I am sorry.

HANNAH rubs her wrist.

SARA: Did she feel super strong?

HANNAH: That doesn't mean she's a robot! *(To ALICE.)* Does it?

ALICE sighs.

ALICE: Am I allowed to tell them?

JANE: It is not a secret.

ALICE: Jane is an android.

SARA: I knew it!

HANNAH: No way.

ALICE: I admit that when my parents bought her for me, I thought it was strange. But she's sweet. I think if you gave her a chance...

JANE: They can not give me a chance. They have to leave.

HANNAH: Your best friend is a killer robot!?!

ALICE: She's not a killer robot.

HANNAH: Have you seen movies? They all want to take over the world!

JANE: I do not want to take over the world.

HANNAH: Though if she is a killer robot, we could send her after Principal Giddings—

SARA: Or the cheerleading squad.

ALICE: She's really nice.

SARA: Programmed to be nice.

ALICE: That still counts.

SARA: She's a companion robot?

ALICE: Yes.

JANE: I am here to keep Alice safe and happy.

SARA: You said that already.

HANNAH: So, she's like a giant doll.

ALICE: No—

HANNAH: Does she eat food? Does she drink water?

SARA: When I was four, I had a doll who could drink water. Then she'd pee. Does Jane pee?

JANE: I do not pee.

SARA: I wonder if she cries.

HANNAH: Does she wear the same thing every day?

SARA: I bet she does.

ALICE: Stop!

JANE: It is okay. I know what they are trying to do. They are trying to bully me and make me feel inadequate and upset. It is not very positive behavior. It is clear why your parents dislike them.

HANNAH: Are you upset?

SARA: Are you capable of having feelings?

JANE: I am programmed to react with human emotions.

HANNAH: So, you are getting angry.

JANE: I am feeling like you are taking advantage of Alice and the situation.

HANNAH: Do you want to punch me? Because if you touch me, my family will sue you so fast—

SARA: Companion robots are programmed not to hurt or kill humans. That's one of the basic rules. Did you see how fast she let you go when you said "Ow"? And she said she was sorry.

HANNAH: She did. (*To JANE.*) Is that true? You can't hurt us?

JANE: That is true.

HANNAH: Even if I do this?

HANNAH slaps JANE across the face. JANE doesn't flinch.

ALICE: This isn't funny anymore.

SARA: Did she feel real?

HANNAH: She did. This is so creepy.

ALICE: It's not creepy.

SARA: What if someone was going to kill Alice, and the only way to stop them was to kill them?

JANE: I... would look for other ways.

SARA: If there were no other ways? What if a bus was coming, and you could only save Alice, or me?

JANE: I would save Alice.

HANNAH: Killer robot!

ALICE: These are ridiculous scenarios. No one is going to kill me! There are no buses inside this house!

HANNAH: But there are times when you leave the house, right?

ALICE is silent.

HANNAH: When was the last time you left the house?

ALICE: Everything I need is here.

SARA: Oh, Alice.

HANNAH: Is Jane your jail guard?

ALICE: She's my friend!

HANNAH: She's a machine!

ALICE: She's more than that. She's caring. She cares more about me than you ever did.

SARA: This is not you. Your parents are turning you into what they want you to be.

ALICE: Maybe it's who I am.

SARA: You can't really think that a toaster is your best friend.

ALICE: She's not a toaster!

HANNAH: Or a killer robot—

ALICE: She's not that either!

JANE: Alice, your parents would want them to leave.

HANNAH: See? At the end of the day, she's a guard. Your parents have locked you up.

ALICE: I'm happy here!

JANE: Safe and happy.

SARA: Are you?

JANE: Alice, they need to leave.

ALICE: They'll leave soon, Jane.

HANNAH: I'm not going anywhere.

JANE: I can force you to leave without hurting you. I know thirteen ways. Do you want to see them?

HANNAH: (*To ALICE.*) Do you hear what she's saying to me?

ALICE: I don't think you want to see the thirteen ways.

JANE: Ten, nine, eight, seven, six—

HANNAH starts laughing.

HANNAH: You're not the first robot Alice has had, you know. There was one before you.

JANE: Alice?

ALICE: That's not true!

HANNAH: She was a nice girl. But I think Alice got tired of her. Turned her off and threw her away. She's in the basement.

ALICE: There's no robot in the basement!

HANNAH: Do you want to see her?

JANE: I want to see her.

ALICE: She's lying to you!

HANNAH: Follow me. Stay here, Alice.

ALICE: I'm not staying here!

SARA gets in ALICE'S way. ALICE tries to push past her, but SARA blocks her, as HANNAH and JANE disappear offstage.

ALICE: There's no robot in the basement!

SARA: We know.

There's a huge offstage crash.

ALICE: No, no. No-no-no.

SARA grins. ALICE shoves her to the side, then stops as someone appears. It's HANNAH.

HANNAH: There's a robot in the basement now.

ALICE: What did you do?

HANNAH: Just a little shove down the stairs. Gravity did the rest.

ALICE: If you hurt her—

HANNAH stops ALICE from going that way.

HANNAH: She's in pieces.

ALICE: No! Why would you do that!?

HANNAH: I just saved you!

ALICE: I didn't need to be saved!

SARA: You're basically locked in your house—

ALICE: I'm not.

HANNAH: Forbidden from seeing your friends—

ALICE: She was my friend!

SARA: She wasn't real.

ALICE: She was more of a friend than either of you ever were.

HANNAH: I think you're just upset because you know your parents will be really mad—I'm sure she was expensive.

SARA: Crazy expensive.

HANNAH: We have your back. Just tell them the robot went crazy—

SARA: She went full killer robot. She was going to choke you to death!

HANNAH: And we saved you. We're heroes! They'll let you hang out with us again, and everything will be perfect.

SARA: Maybe they'll buy us cars as a reward!

HANNAH: And they totally won't care if you have a party here tonight. To celebrate saving your life! I'm going to call the boys. They were supposed to be here by now.

ALICE: Don't call the boys!

HANNAH: Alice!

ALICE: I hate you both!

HANNAH: You don't mean that.

ALICE: I need to get to her. Maybe she can be fixed.

ALICE pushes past HANNAH, then stops. Entering is JANE. She might have a limp or other visible signs of damage.

ALICE: Jane!

ALICE goes to JANE and helps her sit down.

ALICE: Are you okay?

JANE: My head hurts. I feel strange. What happened?

HANNAH: You don't remember?

JANE: I am having memory issues. I am running a diagnostic.

HANNAH: We were so worried! You went to get a mop from the basement, and I guess you fell down the stairs!

JANE: I did?

SARA: We were here, and we heard a big crash.

HANNAH: It was so scary.

JANE: Alice, is this true?

ALICE: No. Hannah pushed you.

HANNAH reacts to this betrayal. Then quickly—

HANNAH: It was an accidental push. I lost my balance on the stairs. But I'm sorry, and I'm so happy you are okay.

JANE: I was just lying there on the floor. I was scared. I didn't know what was happening, or where you were, Alice.

ALICE: I'm sorry.

JANE: I had to put my arm back on. And my foot.

ALICE: Are you okay?

JANE: I believe so.

ALICE: I'm glad.

ALICE sits next to JANE. Hugs her. ALICE leans into it. HANNAH watches, tense. ALICE makes eye contact with her, and HANNAH makes a motion, like "break her neck". ALICE shakes her head "No". HANNAH turns, frustrated, then smiles.

HANNAH: Here come the boys. Only three, just like I promised.

ALICE: They aren't allowed in.

SARA: Luke looks pretty good, Alice.

JANE: No boys.

HANNAH: Sorry, Jane. There's no boy for you. Maybe you can make out with the vacuum cleaner.

SARA: That's hilarious.

JANE: House, close metal shutters on windows.

The loud sound of metal shutters crashing down.

JANE: House, lock all doors.

HANNAH: What are you doing?

SARA exits in the direction of the front door.

JANE: Boys are trouble. They are not allowed in here.

HANNAH: House, unlock doors.

JANE: The house only recognizes my voice.

SARA enters.

SARA: I can't open the door.

HANNAH: Alice, this is ridiculous. Make her let them in.

ALICE: They aren't coming in.

HANNAH: Then we're leaving.

ALICE: That's what I want!

JANE: The doors will not be unlocked until the boys are gone.

SARA pulls out her cell phone.

HANNAH: You can't be serious.

SARA: I'm not getting a signal.

JANE: There will be no phone calls.

HANNAH: This is ridiculous!

The sound of knocking.

SARA: They aren't going to go away.

JANE: I will go out the back door to talk to them.

JANE heads in the direction of the kitchen. She exits.

HANNAH: Alice, open the doors.

ALICE: I don't have any control over that.

SARA: You can't hold us prisoner.

ALICE: As soon as the boys leave—

HANNAH: You can't let a robot ruin your life!

ALICE: You ruined my life! Your stupid party that you had to have in my family's house. Where a lot of stuff got broken, and someone stole my mother's favorite necklace—

HANNAH: She probably misplaced it.

ALICE: And Tommy Edson got into a drunk driving accident—

HANNAH: Tommy's a jerk.

ALICE: He broke his leg! It could have been worse!

SARA: How long are you grounded for?

ALICE: I don't know.

HANNAH: Until you're forty—

ALICE: It's not like that!

SARA: And Jane is like your—electronic ankle bracelet.

ALICE: She's my friend!

SARA and HANNAH look at her.

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