

OCTOBER'S SHATTERED GRAVES

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October's Shattered Graves

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The Cast of *October's Shattered Graves*

Noah Swan – One of the two drama teachers at the Stewart Hollow Regional High School. His gory demise quickly sends the town back into an all too familiar panic.

Sheriff Ben Carter – Stewart Hollow's prized Sheriff. He's a year older, a year wiser and much more confident this time around. He's engaged to be married and is looking forward to his future.

Deputy Jamie Dart – The officer who worked his way up to Deputy following the murder of Allan Reed last October. He's more dedicated this time around and is out to prove his importance.

Doug Roberts – The shy senior who wrote *October's Shattered Graves* as a tribute to last fall's innocent victims. He has an increasingly obsessive crush on Charlotte Sheldon, and a very overconfident attitude towards everything he does.

Kevin Maida – Doug's loyal best friend since middle school. He scored the leading role in the play, per Doug's request. He always seems to have his pals back, but sometimes, he's not sure if he should.

Charlotte Sheldon – An attractive and popular senior who was instantly engrossed by the *October's Shattered Graves* script. She calls it 'edgy and spine chilling'.

Levi Cole – A popular junior who is more obsessed with who he's seen with than actually being in the play. He's on a mission to snag the hottest girl in school – Charlotte – but then again, who isn't?

Harper Cole – The Sheriff Department's new, fresh out of college dispatcher, and Levi's older sister. She has a knack for not being as bright as her predecessor, Bethany Kidd.

Jude Coffman – The shy junior desperately wants to 'come out of his shell' before his senior year by joining the cast of *October's Shattered Graves*. But he's also the first one to drop out.

Libby Hatcher – A neighbor of Doug's, the unattractive senior joins the cast primarily because there is something she has been desperately trying to tell him since they were little.

Samantha Weber – Charlotte's best friend has a reason to be upset. Someone she can't stand screwed her out of her last chance at performing in a high school production.

Jasper Finch – His best friends are girls - Samantha and Charlotte. Growing up in an all woman household, you'd think he'd want to branch out a bit.

Thomas Murdock – The other drama club teacher is behind *October's Shattered Graves* 110%. He shows this by going through drastic measures to make sure the play is a success, but that also might mean there's something in it for him.

Principal Molly Bain – The seldom seen high school principal always seems to be the bearer of bad news. She makes a major decision midway through the killing spree that causes someone to snap.

Bud Lockwood – The creepy, middle-aged groundskeeper at the Hollow's End Cemetery discovers something on the property that could be of grave importance to the new string of murders.

Mayor Bernard Hopkins – Stewart Hollow's Mayor is running for re-election in November and he does everything he can to stop the killings. He brings in an old acquaintance from his days in Portland, to assure the town's safety.

Agent Spencer Holland – The old friend of Mayor Hopkins' travels in from a Portland FBI hub to prevent another serial killer from walking all over Stewart Hollow – or is he just there to simply make the Mayor look good?

Riley Little - The young woman, who recently welcomed her first child into the world, becomes mysteriously connected to the recent slaughters.

Amber Gibson – Sheriff Carter's fiancé came into his life at just the right time. They have plans for their future together, which possibly includes leaving Stewart Hollow behind.

CHAPTER ONE

September 30th – 9 PM

He sat in the dark room, rocking back and forth in his chair, listening to the pitter-patter of the rain on the roof.

She was asleep on the bed in front of him – brittle in her old age. He was dedicated to her and her past; ignoring what she truly was.

He'd smile at times, but it was rare anymore, especially because of what lied ahead. Stewart Hollow had a storm brewing – one fifty years in the making.

The first warning was only a couple short weeks away, and in three hours, the final warning would be only 31 days away. Then, in just over a year, the ghastly storm would arrive in Stewart Hollow.

He'd patiently wait for the old woman's final requests, and then carry them out.

First, the eldest. Second, the condemned. Last, the Lores.

A sickness grew in his stomach.

11:59 PM

Rain dumped down on Stewart Hollow as midnight grew closer. It'd been raining for the better part of a week and the

skies had remained dark and tedious through the incessant storm. The weather had been clammy with early signs of cooler temperatures arriving.

The grandfather clock in Noah Swan's house struck midnight, and the solid gold pendulum inside began to sway back and forth. A bold chime rang out in the house, waking Noah from his slumber.

He got out of bed and walked downstairs and into his kitchen. He grabbed a clean glass from the dish drain and filled it halfway with cold water from the tap. He poured it back into his mouth and rested the glass back in the dish drain.

Noah looked at the digital clock on his stove – 12:01 AM. October had begun. There was a lot to do in the coming weeks before the play. It was going to be performed one time only, and on Halloween night – honoring the nine innocent people who were senselessly killed a year ago.

Noah walked back into his living room, crossing it to the stairwell. With his bare feet, he stepped in something cold and wet. He looked down, but couldn't see anything in the dark. He reached over to the lamp next to the stairs and flipped it on. He looked at the floor – mud.

Noah squinted, making sure he saw it right, then looked all around the living room floor. There were muddy shoeprints everywhere.

“What the heck?” he quietly spoke to himself. There was a noise that came from the dining room to his right. He looked up and stared into the blackness the room sat in.

“Hello?” he called out.

There was no answer.

Noah stayed quiet and listened. The sound occurred again – it was a creaking sound from the finished wooden floor in the dining room.

He focused his vision on the dark room. “Show yourself, or I’m calling the Sheriff’s Department!”

In the dining room, a dark figure could be seen materializing from the black abyss. Noah squinted again to try and make out the trespasser, but it was useless without his glasses. He stepped forward and saw a shining glare coming from the dark room.

“What the...”

The glare shifted, and Noah was able to see that it was the light reflecting off of a steel butchers knife. The attacker made a move and blood was spilt.

October 1st

The bell rang to begin classes for the day at the Stewart Hollow Regional High School. The halls were filled with students rushing into their respective classrooms. The halls emptied out, and classes began.

The hallways were decorated with orange and black construction paper cut outs of pumpkins, ghosts and bats. Black and purple streamers were strung on the tops of the lockers that lined the hallways.

Classroom doors all over the two-story, brick building were plastered with 8x10 advertisements for the upcoming school production. It read: *One Night Only! Never forget the Innocent Souls we lost last year! Halloween Night Only – ‘October’s Shattered Graves’.*

It was lunch period, and senior Doug Roberts walked into the empty band room with his backpack over his shoulder. He was stocky, wore glasses, had disheveled brown hair and fit in perfectly with the ‘geek crowd’. He carried a brown paper bag with his lunch in it and a bottle of Pepsi in his other hand. Out of the office in the back of the band room, Mr. Thomas Murdock walked out, wiping ketchup from his mouth with a dirty napkin.

“Doug! You’re here,” Murdock said with his mouth full of hamburger. “Excuse me.” He swallowed his food and pointed at a chair against the wall. “Have a seat.”

Doug pulled up the chair and faced the thirty-year-old teacher with a buzzed cut and thick-rimmed glasses. Doug pulled out a packet of papers held together by a messy makeshift binding of string and paperclips. It was a script he had written; a play titled *‘October’s Shattered Graves’*. He handed it to his teacher.

“I made the changes you asked for. I changed the names and cut out a few scenes.” Doug said.

Murdock flipped through the script, which was plagued with red marks, crossed out words, and added dialogue.

“This is going to be great, Doug,” Murdock was inspired. “I think the town is really going to appreciate what you’ve done here. This is so original. And with the Mayor canceling the Halloween Festival again this year, I think the public will find your play very fulfilling.”

Doug smiled. “I hope so.”

“I know they will.”

“So, did you cast it?” Doug asked, tearing into his bagged lunch.

“Of course. I went through everyone’s auditions and came up with the best six we had. Jude Coffman, Libby Hatcher, Levi Cole, Jasper Finch, Charlotte Sheldon, and your buddy Kevin Maida.”

Doug smiled again. “Kevin is going to be so pumped. He’s playing Dev Liles, right?”

“Yes he is. The rest of them, obviously, are playing the Innocent Souls.”

“Good enough for me. Do they all have scripts yet?”

“I am going to get everyone their scripts by the end of the day and have a meeting with the cast and stage crew tomorrow after school. You still want to direct it?”

“If you don’t mind.”

“I’ll have to run it by Mr. Swan – you know how he always likes to be in charge – but I’m sure he’ll be fine with it since it’s not a typical school production.”

Doug smiled again, satisfied with how smoothly everything was running, and took a bite into his sandwich.

1:00 PM

Police cars flooded Franklin Street, particularly in front of Noah Swan’s home. The house was being torn apart – the discovery by a neighbor of Noah Swan’s slain body did not sit well with anyone – especially on the first day of October.

Sheriff Ben Carter – a year older and a year wiser – walked from his department issued Jeep, and up to the front door. Deputy Jamie Dart was there to greet him.

His thick, black mustache and shoulder length black hair, made Dart appear more experienced, but he really wasn’t. There hadn’t been much action in Stewart Hollow since the previous October, aside from a few fatal traffic accidents and a bank robbery or two.

Carter appointed Dart as his new Deputy because of the help he had given in the Harvest Slasher case. Allan Reed's unfortunate demise left an opening, and the eager Jamie Dart showed his hustle at the time, and it was just enough for Carter to give him a promotion.

Carter was graying in the hair, and wore a thick scruff around his neck, chin and cheeks. He loosened the cuffing around his wrists and looked Dart straight in the eye. He knew what had happened here. It was a day that he was dreading, but a day that he knew would come. He felt queasy at times during the past year just thinking about what would, or could, possibly happen as October grew closer.

"I don't want to know, do I?" Carter asked.

Dart shook his head.

Carter walked into the house where blood had been spun on the walls, and soaked deep into the fine fibers of the carpet. Noah Swan, a drama teacher at the Stewart Hollow Regional High School, was dead – stabbed to death in his own living room.

Carter stood in the room and cuffed his hand over his mouth and nose – the stench was already getting to him. Carter looked around. Forensic officers were flashing photographs and dusting for prints, but by the looks of it, they had yet to find anything significant.

“Over here, Sheriff.” the Deputy said, tapping Carter on his arm. He turned around and saw Dart was pointing to the wall behind them. There was a message written in blood – Noah Swan’s blood.

*Kelly, Kelly
Rise from your tomb.
Stalk and Kill
Under the autumn moon.
Kelly, Kelly
It’s blood you crave.
Kill and Kill,
Then return to your grave.*

The message lingered in his mind as he tried to make heads or tails of it. Dart interrupted his thoughts:

“It’s an urban legend.”

“What?” Carter asked, captivated by the menacing words.

“It’s almost like ‘Bloody Mary’. It’s been going around the high school for a few months now. They say the ghost of Kelly Rodgers is suppose to come back this October and start killing again.”

“That’s ridiculous.”

Dart pointed to the bloody body on the floor. "Obviously someone doesn't think so."

“This is simply the work of a sick individual; someone looking to stir up some panic this month.” Carter pointed to the slain carcass. “Who is this man?”

“Noah Swan. He’s a teacher at the high school.”

“Any known enemies?”

“Not that we know of, but it’s still early.”

Carter took quick notice of the muddy footprints. “What’s the deal with these?”

“We’re not sure yet. It’s been raining for like a week straight. Obviously the killer came in from outside.”

Carter took another look around at the gory mess. “If you find anything, let me know.”

Dart nodded as Carter left the scene. The Deputy looked at the writing on the wall again. He was deeply concerned.

CHAPTER TWO

October 2nd

School ended for the day, and the students who were going to make up the cast and stage crew for '*October's Shattered Graves*' gathered in the band room right down the hall from the auditorium.

Doug Roberts walked into the room with his buddy, Kevin Maida. Kevin dressed in an oversized flannel button up shirt and faded blue jeans. The two of them had been friends since middle school. He and Doug set their backpacks down in the corner, and joined the rest of the students who were all sitting around in chairs, chatting with one another.

Doug looked around – Mr. Murdock wasn't there yet. He looked over at a small section of chairs that were occupied by Charlotte Sheldon – a gorgeous girl who was out of his league – and her two friends, Samantha Weber, who was equally as pretty, and Jasper Finch – a junior who seemed to get along better with the girls than the guys for some reason.

The band room doors busted open and Mr. Murdock came in, in a huff. He appeared to be short of breath and was sweating. He quickly gathered his thoughts, and grabbed everyone's attention.

“Alright, guys. Sorry I’m late. I just received some news that I have to attend to, but before I leave, I’d like to talk about the play – written by our very own, Doug Roberts,” Murdock said, pointing at Doug.

The room applauded softly and Doug stood up.

“Doug, if you could just quickly speak to the group about what you’re trying to accomplish, we can get moving.”

Doug cleared his throat and looked out among the fifteen or so students. Speaking in front of groups was not his idea of a good time, and his shaky voice proved he was uncomfortable. “I wrote *‘October’s Shattered Graves’*, as a tribute to the people who were killed last year by the Harvest Slasher. In a nutshell, it tells the story about five Innocent Souls, whom a man named Dev Liles, kills. A year later, they return from their graves to haunt Dev, and torture him with visions of Hell, as well as the shattered lives of the families in which he’d destroyed. It’s basically a redemption story.”

The idea behind the play seemed to go over well with the students. Mr. Murdock, once again, took center stage.

“We are looking for a one night only performance, on Halloween night – very fitting if you ask me. Tickets will cost \$10 a person, and all the proceeds will go towards a scholarship in the victims’ names. I have assigned everyone their roles, so I suggest you start learning your dialogue tonight, and we’ll begin some early rehearsals this Friday after school. I’m going to need

the stage crew to start coming in tomorrow after classes are finished to start creating the sets. There will be bedroom setting, a city street setting, as well as a cemetery one. So please, use the next few minutes or so to get to know your cast mates and the crew!”

Mr. Murdock grabbed his briefcase from against the wall, and left the room almost as quickly as he’d arrived.

Doug and Kevin looked around and everyone was starting to chat and introduce themselves with one another.

“Did you suggest me to Mr. Murdock for the Dev Liles role?” Kevin asked.

“Yeah,” Doug said. “I figured with all the Facebook stalking you do to half our class, you could pull off a psycho-creep perfectly.”

“Um, excuse me, but you’re the one who is constantly hopping onto Charlotte’s page with the mouse cursor hovering over the ‘Add as a Friend’ button,” Kevin said, glancing over in Charlotte’s direction. “Why don’t you just talk to her, man?”

“She’s out of my league, dude. Plus, we have nothing in common.”

“Well, I think you do actually. You wrote this play, and she answered the call sheet. She obviously wants to be in it.”

“Well, what I am supposed to say to her?”

“Just say you appreciate her interest in the play, or something. You’re going to have to do it sooner or later.”

“You’re right.” Doug stood up and saw Jasper Finch break away from the small group.

“Now’s your chance, dude,” Kevin said, giving Doug a small nudge in Charlotte’s direction.

Doug stumbled for a moment, and slowly made his way to the two girls. He stood over them and saw they were skimming through a copy of the script. Charlotte’s character’s name was highlighted throughout the pages. She and Samantha looked up at him.

Charlotte smiled.

“You wrote this script?” she asked.

“Yeah,” Doug responded. “Did you like it?”

“Loved it. I think it’s a great idea. People are going to love it. You have some serious talent, Doug,” she said, still smiling.

Doug looked at Samantha, who was missing her smile.

“I liked it too. That’s why I auditioned. But I guess Libby Hatcher was a better choice – a freckled, fat, loser. Is that what you imagined the character to look like?” Samantha was rude. Doug had not known that about her. He didn’t know anything about their group of friends, aside from the fact that they hardly ever interacted with Doug’s crowd.

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