

HAUNTED: A Love Story

A One-Act Play by Gabrielle Harrison

Characters (in order of appearance):

CLEMENTINE – young college student, about 19 years old, extroverted and outgoing, strong-willed ‘warrior’, appears confident on the outside but is desperately trying to hide her self-consciousness and anxiety issues

ANXIETY – Clementine’s anxiety personified, masculine jock type, always dressed in basketball shorts and a t-shirt, aggressive and rough around the edges, a little bit of a bully, **gender does not matter in casting**

LUNA – Clementine’s best friend, quiet and soft spoken, although she is confident and outgoing around people she is comfortable with, trying to get Clementine to open up to her

JUSTIN – a classmate of Luna and Clementine, annoying, semi-misogynist frat boy type, actively pursuing Clementine, although he is somewhat aware that she is uninterested in him

WAITRESS – the waitress who serves Clementine and Anxiety at the coffee shop

ENSEMBLE – group of additional actors used for other college students, the whispers, party-goers

SCENE 1

[The curtain opens on a completely dark, seemingly empty stage. Slowly, a single spotlight illuminates the center of the stage, where CLEMENTINE is seated on a plain chair. She sits with her head down and her body tensed. Music tinkles in the background, then it stops suddenly. She stands, facing the audience.]

CLEMENTINE: Do you ever just get the gut feeling that something is wrong? You could be having a perfectly normal day, just living your life.. (*She strolls across the stage nonchalantly.*) When suddenly – you have the sense that there’s a giant cloud of doom hanging right over your head. (*Lights flicker, ominous music plays.*) Like that feeling you get, when you’re home alone, taking a shower, and you hear a noise, and immediately your mind screams at you,

“There’s a murderer in the house! You’re gonna die!” Except, that’s not logical, because you locked all the doors and only you have the key and, even if someone were to break in, there’s an alarm that would sound as soon as they opened the door. So in reality, nothing is wrong at all, and you’re just freaked for absolutely no reason. You ever have that feeling? *(pause)* Yeah, well that’s pretty much a description of my entire life. I live with this thing called *(pause, ominous lightning noise)* anxiety. My anxiety makes me get that doom cloud, someone’s gonna come murder me in the shower, gut feeling all the time. Sounds scary, right? Not exactly the type of bone-chilling fear one usually associates with a scary story, but, believe me – it’s pretty damn terrifying. So, yes, the story I’m about to tell you is a scary one, just not in the typical fashion. And not only is it a scary story, but it’s also a story of love. Love and fear – complete opposite ends of the human emotional spectrum – although, when combined, they are able to create the strongest feeling that can exist within a person. I invite you all to sit back, and prepare yourselves for the most hauntingly beautiful love story you will ever hear.

[The lights dim for a split second, signaling a change in tone. They come back up fully a moment later, and ANXIETY pops out from behind the chair center stage.]

ANXIETY: Yo. Sup?

CLEMENTINE: *(with a groan)* Not you, not now! I have a final in an hour, can't you wait until later?

ANXIETY: Nope. You know how it goes.

CLEMENTINE: Fine, have it your way. Can you at least be quiet? I need to cram every last bit of information into my brain that I can.

ANXIETY: *(shrugging)* Why? You're gonna fail anyway.

[CLEMENTINE glares at ANXIETY, before turning and starting to stalk off stage left. ANXIETY rushes up to her and grabs her by the arm.]

ANXIETY: Hey, hey, where are you going?

CLEMENTINE: To study. Haven't you been paying attention?

ANXIETY: You can't study.

CLEMENTINE: I can't? And why is that?

ANXIETY: You...You're gonna be late.

CLEMENTINE: No I'm not, class doesn't start for another hour.

ANXIETY: Yeah, but you have to stop for coffee first, and what if the line's long? It's always long during finals week. And you're gonna want to get to class early anyway, so you can make sure you're prepared. I know how much you like to be prepared.

CLEMENTINE: *(after a thought)* Shit, you're right! I better get going! *(She dashes off stage left.)*

ANXIETY: *(with a chuckle)* Works every time. Now, to get my cappuccino for the day... *(They grab the chair and follow CLEMENTINE off stage left.)*

SCENE 2

[The lights change, showing the passage of time. It is now a bit later that day. After a moment, CLEMENTINE and LUNA wander on stage right. Both girls are carrying books and other school supplies. They look weary, yet slightly relieved.]

LUNA: Glad that's over.

CLEMENTINE: *(shrugging unconvincingly)* It wasn't too bad. Tolerable.

[Offstage, a sinister chuckle is heard.]

LUNA: *(rolling her eyes)* I'm sorry I'm not a genius like you, Clem.

CLEMENTINE: I'm hardly a genius.

LUNA: Are you serious? You get A's on every test. You know the answers before I've even finished processing the question. Sometimes, you correct the professor because they have the wrong answer and you have the right one!

[CLEMENTINE blushes and shrugs LUNA off. LUNA scoffs in semi-aggravation, but she smiles.]

LUNA: Anyway, we're still on for our movie tonight, right?

CLEMENTINE: Duh. You know I wouldn't miss it for the world.

LUNA: Good. I'm really looking forward to seeing Anna Kendrick in that one shirt. You know the shirt.

CLEMENTINE: (*exasperated*) I know the shirt. We really need to choose another movie besides Pitch Perfect for movie night, you know. This is, like, the third time.

LUNA: I know, I know. But she's just so—

CLEMENTINE: (*cutting her off*) Drop-dead, mind-blowingly, just pure *goddess* gorgeous, *I know*.

[LUNA blushes and laughs nervously, while CLEMENTINE just rolls her eyes.]

CLEMENTINE: We really need to get you a girlfriend.

LUNA: Um, yeah. That's what I've been saying for this entire semester.

CLEMENTINE: I would date you, but...

LUNA: We'd kill each other.

CLEMENTINE: Exactly.

[Both girls laugh. Unseen by LUNA, CLEMENTINE looks away anxiously.]

LUNA: While we're at it, we should get somebody for you, too. That way, we could go on double dates.

CLEMENTINE: Nah, I'm good. You know I like to be independent.

LUNA: You don't even want someone to snuggle with at night? Someone to make you breakfast in the morning when you're too lazy to?

CLEMENTINE: Luna, I told you, I'm fine. I don't need all that. It's..inconvenient. It's mushy, and messy, and we're either gonna break up or get married, and I can't handle either of those situations right now.

LUNA: You're being overdramatic.

CLEMENTINE: I'm being overdramatic?!

LUNA: That's what I just said, isn't it?

CLEMENTINE: I'm hardly the overdramatic one, Miss Sigh and Swoon at Every Girl She Sees.

LUNA: Not *every* girl.

CLEMENTINE: Enough of them.

LUNA: I can't help it! Girls are just so...pretty. And soft. And sweet. And-

CLEMENTINE: (*cutting her off, teasingly*) You're disgusting.

[LUNA grumbles, but doesn't say any more.]

CLEMENTINE: I'm gonna go take a shower and change, I'll see you in a bit, okay?

LUNA: Sounds good. Hey, do you still have that bag of Salt and Vinegar chips?

CLEMENTINE: Sure do.

LUNA: Could you bring 'em to my dorm? For movie night?

CLEMENTINE: I'm on it.

LUNA: Great. I swear, you're the only other person I know who likes the Salt and Vinegar kind. Everybody else thinks they're gross.

CLEMENTINE: Which is exactly why we're best friends.

LUNA: True that.

CLEMENTINE: Alright, I'm heading out. See you soon, Luna.

LUNA: See you soon. Bye, babe.

[LUNA exits stage left, leaving CLEMENTINE alone on stage. Suddenly, another mischievous laugh is heard, and ANXIETY pops out from stage right.]

ANXIETY: Ha, ha, that was a nice joke.

CLEMENTINE: *(sighing in frustration)* What are you talking about?

ANXIETY: *(mocking CLEMENTINE)* You know I like to be independent. What a load of crap! We both know you're terrified of being alone.

CLEMENTINE: I am not! I'm just fine being single.

ANXIETY: Yeah, right.

CLEMENTINE: I am!

ANXIETY: Tell that to all the late night mope sessions, when you drink half a bottle of wine and cry about how no one will ever love you. Or the sour feeling you get in your stomach whenever you see couples on campus. Or-

CLEMENTINE: *(cutting them off)* Okay, okay, enough! Maybe I get a little lonely sometimes, but it's not a huge deal. I don't mind being alone.

ANXIETY: Um, hello, earth to Clementine? Are you paying attention to anything I'm saying? You're clearly not just fine with being alone, you're petrified that no one will ever love you. And you're right. They won't. You're going to be alone for ever and ever. Just poor little Clem, all by her lonesome.

CLEMENTINE: Stop that! Stop it!

ANXIETY: *(taunting)* Why, am I upsetting you? Well, too bad. You're going to have to accept the truth someday.

CLEMENTINE: Will you leave me alone?

ANXIETY: Say it.

CLEMENTINE: Say what?

ANXIETY: That you're going to be alone forever, and nobody will ever love you.

CLEMENTINE: Please leave me alone. I have things to do, I don't have time for this right now.

ANXIETY: Say it! *(getting more aggressive in their teasing)* Say it, Clementine, say it!

CLEMENTINE: Stop! I won't!

ANXIETY: SAY IT!

CLEMENTINE: *(shaking and shrinking away from ANXIETY)* Okay, okay! I-I'm going to be alone forever. No one will ever love me. I'm unlovable! Are you happy now?

ANXIETY: *(with a shrug)* Yeah, I guess so.

CLEMENTINE: Do you need anything else from me?

ANXIETY: Nah, not right now. I'll stop by later if I change my mind, but for now, I gotta skedaddle. Have fun with Lina.

CLEMENTINE: Her name is Luna.

ANXIETY: Yeah, whatever. See ya later. Love you!

[ANXIETY exits stage right in a playful hurry, leaving CLEMENTINE alone on stage once more. CLEMENTINE scowls and stalks off stage left. Blackout.]

SCENE 3

[A dim, bluish haze of lighting settles over the stage, illuminating a bed in the center. CLEMENTINE lies in the bed, asleep. She is now wearing a pair of pajamas. Light, airy music tinkles in the background. Suddenly, ANXIETY enters stage right, dressed in fancy, formal clothing and a mask that hides their face. The music changes tone, becoming more jazzy and alluring. They tiptoe over to the bed and gaze down at the still sleeping CLEMENTINE. ANXIETY gently shakes CLEMENTINE awake, and lures her from the bed. They whisper something unintelligible in her ear, and then the two begin to dance. The music slowly changes to a waltz, as CLEMENTINE and ANXIETY get more intimate in their dance. Eventually, CLEMENTINE sheds her pajamas to reveal a beautiful ballgown. She and ANXIETY get closer and closer, until, suddenly, they are about to kiss. The music stops abruptly, and the two pull apart. ANXIETY pushes away from CLEMENTINE, leaving her flustered and bewildered.]

ANXIETY: (*rushed, slightly out of breath*) I have to go.

CLEMENTINE: Wait! Where are you going?

ANXIETY: (*beginning to back away from CLEMENTINE*) Time is fleeting, history repeating...

CLEMENTINE: What? Stop, don't leave!

ANXIETY: (*backing up even more, almost off stage left*) Too soon, too late, we must not avoid our fate...

CLEMENTINE: Please, please, don't leave me.

ANXIETY: I'm sorry, my love, to be like so. I'm sorry, my love, I must go.

[ANXIETY disappears off stage left. CLEMENTINE gazes after them, visibly feeling confused and abandoned.]

CLEMENTINE: (*whispering*) M-My love?

[CLEMENTINE shakes her head, confused. Slowly, she puts the pajamas she has shed to the ground back on, and crawls back into bed. The lights dim almost to a blackout, but then come back up completely, bright and alarming. It is morning, and CLEMENTINE has been jolted awake. She sits up, rubbing her eyes.]

CLEMENTINE: (*murmuring to herself*) What the hell was that..?

[Whispers are heard offstage, while CLEMENTINE looks around, confused and trying to follow the noises.]

WHISPERS: My love..Don't leave me!..I'm sorry...(etc.)

[Suddenly, there is a knocking sound offstage. A moment later, LUNA enters stage right. She is bright and energetic, and dressed in everyday clothing. Meanwhile, CLEMENTINE is getting out of bed, still confused as to what is going on. She looks at her friend quizzically.]

LUNA: Good morning sunshine!

CLEMENTINE: What're you doing here? It's early.

LUNA: (*laughing*) It's almost noon.

CLEMENTINE: (*shocked*) Oh my gosh, really? Geez, how long was I asleep?

LUNA: A long time, apparently. What time did you go to sleep last night?

CLEMENTINE: (*shrugging*) Not late.. About the same time as usual.

LUNA: Is everything okay?

CLEMENTINE: I had a weird dream last night..

LUNA: What kind of weird? Like..*(whispered)* sex weird?

CLEMENTINE: No! Luna, no! It was just weird.

LUNA: Huh. *(pause)* Anyway, you need to get dressed. We have a lecture in half an hour. And then we have to get ready for that party tonight, remember?

CLEMENTINE: *(with a groan)* Ugh, why did we agree to go to that party in the first place? We're not the party type and we both know it.

LUNA: We're trying something new. We need to have some fun, for once in our lives.

CLEMENTINE: Who is this wild child who replaced my quiet little best friend?

LUNA: What can I say, maybe I'm finally becoming an actual human being. *(She shoos CLEMENTINE.)* Go, get dressed. We're going to be late for class.

CLEMENTINE: Fine, fine. *(She sighs.)* Hey, why are you here, anyway?

LUNA: Well, I was going to walk with you to class, so we could stop for Starbucks on the way. But it doesn't look like that's going to happen anymore.. I didn't think I was going to be coming in here to wake you up.

CLEMENTINE: *(sheepishly)* Sorry.

LUNA: *(chuckling)* It's alright, you goofball. Listen, I'm going to go get that coffee. I need it; I was up late last night.

CLEMENTINE: Ooh, hot date? I knew that girl from biochemistry was just a little too friendly.

LUNA: *(flushing, embarrassed, retreating to her shy demeanor)* No! I was studying. Katy is just a good friend, that's all. As if a girl like her would ever be interested in me anyway...

CLEMENTINE: You have to start giving yourself more credit, Luna. You're a wonderful person. There's a reason we're friends, you know.

LUNA: (*brushing her off*) Whatever. I'm gonna go. I'll see you in 20, kay?

[LUNA hurries off stage right, leaving CLEMENTINE alone once more. CLEMENTINE sighs and shakes her head, grumbling as she shuffles off stage left. Blackout.]

SCENE 4

[The lights come up, albeit barely. The bedroom has been cleared, and a dim haze has settled over the stage. People stand in clusters, wearing casual party clothing and holding cups or bottles of beer. They chat amongst one another as music thumps in the background. ANXIETY slinks upstage, barely in sight. The lights brighten slightly as CLEMENTINE and LUNA enter stage left. Both girls are dressed up, possibly a little overdressed compared to everyone else at the party. They look just slightly out of place, and equally uncomfortable. LUNA shoots CLEMENTINE a nervous look.]

LUNA: You know, maybe coming to this party wasn't such a good idea after all...

CLEMENTINE: (*glaring at LUNA*) I'm going to kill you.

LUNA: Hey, hey, it was just a thought! (*She grabs CLEMENTINE's hand, dragging her forward into the mob of people.*) C'mon, let's try it out. We might have fun.

CLEMENTINE: (*sighing, grumbling under her breath*) I doubt it..

[LUNA and CLEMENTINE venture further into the party, although they stick by each other's sides. ANXIETY is still floating around in the background. LUNA and CLEMENTINE awkwardly interact with their peers, the music growing louder. Both girls take occasional glances towards the way they came. Just when it looks like they are about to leave, JUSTIN comes up to CLEMENTINE.]

JUSTIN: Hey, tangerine.

CLEMENTINE: My name is Clementine.

JUSTIN: *(laughing)* I know that. I was making a joke.

[LUNA glances at CLEMENTINE, visibly but not audibly asking her if she is alright. CLEMENTINE nods and shoos her away, so LUNA wanders off and chats with other party-goers.]

CLEMENTINE: *(shrugging, just a little flirty)* It wasn't a very good one.

JUSTIN: Your smile suggests otherwise.

CLEMENTINE: My smile?

JUSTIN: Yeah. You smiled when I said that. It was cute.

CLEMENTINE: Oh. Thanks.

JUSTIN: So, you want a beer? I was just about to get myself one, I can grab two.

CLEMENTINE: *(after contemplating for a moment)* Yeah, sure. That'd be nice.

[JUSTIN nods and exits stage left, coming back an instant later with two bottles. He hands one to CLEMENTINE, and then takes a large swig of his own drink.]

JUSTIN: This is the first time I've ever seen you at a party, I think. You don't hit the party scene often?

CLEMENTINE: Nah. I usually just hang out with my roommate. She's... *(looks around, but can't seem to spot LUNA)*...around here somewhere.

JUSTIN: Well, today must be my lucky day, if I'm catching you at your once-in-a-lifetime party experience. Maybe I can convince you to come around more often.

CLEMENTINE: *(flirting, given a boost of confidence from the beer)* Maybe.

[The music gets louder and louder as JUSTIN and CLEMENTINE chat. Eventually, it has gotten so loud that they both have to shout to hear one another.]

JUSTIN: Wanna dance?

CLEMENTINE: *(unable to hear)* What?

JUSTIN: *(shouting)* I said, do you wanna dance?

CLEMENTINE: Sure.

[JUSTIN and CLEMENTINE begin to dance to the music, beer bottles still in hand. They take occasional sips from their drinks. As the music thumps in the background, the two get closer and closer. Eventually, they begin to dance intimately – JUSTIN’s hand on CLEMENTINE’s waist, her hands in his hair, etc. As their dance grows more and more provocative, the crowd around them slows to watch. Wolf-whistles and hollers erupt from a few people. LUNA stares at the two in awe. Mingled in among the crowd is ANXIETY, who is visibly furious. JUSTIN and CLEMENTINE are having an obvious good time as they begin to grind on one another. However, as JUSTIN reaches for CLEMENTINE’s inner thigh, she stops him abruptly.]

CLEMENTINE: *(rushed)* Stop that.

[JUSTIN ignores her, continuing to snake his hand up her inner thigh.]

CLEMENTINE: *(harshly)* I said stop that!

JUSTIN: *(with a faux pout)* Aw, c’mon, baby! You like it, I know you do.

CLEMENTINE: *(through gritted teeth)* No I don’t. Stop.

JUSTIN: *(handling her a little aggressively)* Yes you do. You were practically just asking for it. Is it that you don’t want to be here? C’mon, let’s go back to my dorm.

[CLEMENTINE tries to push herself away from JUSTIN, but he just holds onto her tighter. She tries to pry herself out of his arms, and things begin to get

rough. Around them, the crowd has barely noticed, too focused on their own party fun. Even LUNA has left the crowd and is talking to someone outside of the crowd of people. The only person still staring directly at JUSTIN and CLEMENTINE is ANXIETY. After a moment, they spring forward when JUSTIN tries to grab at CLEMENTINE again.]

ANXIETY: Hey! She said stop. Get your hands off her!

[ANXIETY pushes JUSTIN in an attempt to get him off of CLEMENTINE. JUSTIN lets go of her and turns to face ANXIETY, a mixture of confusion and anger showing on his face.]

JUSTIN: Who the hell are you?

ANXIETY: Doesn't matter. (*steps in front of CLEMENTINE defensively*) She told you to stop touching her, and you didn't. Why didn't you?

JUSTIN: (*sputtering*) I-I..She wanted it!

ANXIETY: No she didn't. She was saying stop.

JUSTIN: Girls like her, they-

ANXIETY: (*cutting him off*) If a girl says she stop, she means it. Any girl. (*glares at JUSTIN*) Now, get lost, asshole, or I'll hurt you with more than my words.

[JUSTIN takes a quick glance at CLEMENTINE before turning and bolting off stage right. ANXIETY is left staring at CLEMENTINE, panting with frustration. A few people have noticed the scene, and gaze at the two nervously. LUNA stands with her mouth open, awestruck. After a moment, CLEMENTINE steps towards ANXIETY and clears her throat.]

CLEMENTINE: (*bashfully*) Thank you. That guy, he was a mess..

ANXIETY: Don't worry about it.

CLEMENTINE: I just wish I could've fought him off myself. I would've, but I froze, and...

ANXIETY: *(with a soft smile)* Hey, I said don't worry about it. He was a massive prick. I'm just here to make sure he never comes near you again.

CLEMENTINE: *(perking up)* If he does, I'll make sure he knows that you know about it, and that you're not going to let him off the hook.

ANXIETY: *(laughing)* Sounds like a plan to me.

CLEMENTINE: Thank you again, really. Is there anything I could do to make it up to you?

ANXIETY: Nah, it's fine.

CLEMENTINE: You sure?

ANXIETY: I'm sure. The look on his face was more than enough.

CLEMENTINE: *(with a giggle)* Okay.

[ANXIETY turns to leave, but then CLEMENTINE reaches out to them and blurts out.]

CLEMENTINE: Hey, have I seen you before? You look familiar.

ANXIETY: *(gulps, caught)* No, I don't think so..

CLEMENTINE: Hm. I could've sworn I've seen you before, but I guess not.

ANXIETY: Maybe in a...dream?

CLEMENTINE: *(musing to herself)* Maybe in a dream...

[CLEMENTINE looks down, lost in thought. When she looks back up, ANXIETY has disappeared. Everyone at the party stands around, awkwardly glancing at one another. LUNA takes a step towards CLEMENTINE. Blackout.]

SCENE 5

[When the lights come back up, the party scene has cleared out. The stage is empty save for a desk or two stage left. After a moment, LUNA and CLEMENTINE enter stage right. They are dressed in more casual clothing, and they cradle schoolbooks in their arms. Both girls look tired, and they shuffle into the room wearily.]

LUNA: Are you sure you're okay?

CLEMENTINE: I'm fine.

LUNA: Are you sure, though? You were pretty shaken up.

CLEMENTINE: Luna, I said I'm fine.

LUNA: I'm so sorry I wasn't there for you, I wasn't paying attention. I feel awful. I'm such a bad friend.

CLEMENTINE: You're not a bad friend. It could've happened to anybody, really. Don't worry about it.

[LUNA opens her mouth as if she is going to say something else, but then changes her mind and closes it again. She shuffles stage left and drops into one of the desks. CLEMENTINE goes to follow her, although she is stopped when ANXIETY appears behind her and taps her on the shoulder.]

CLEMENTINE: *(turning around)* Oh. Hi.

ANXIETY: Hi. *(pause)* So, um, I've been thinking about it, and I decided that I may just take you up on your offer from last night..

CLEMENTINE: Huh?

ANXIETY: *(stuttering)* N-Nevermind..

CLEMENTINE: *(with realization)* Oh! When you saved me from that douchebag.

ANXIETY: Yeah.. You offered to make it up to me, and I thought..maybe we could go out sometime? Just for coffee or something.

CLEMENTINE: (*smiling*) That would be nice. Sure.

ANXIETY: (*grinning*) Great. So, when are you free?

CLEMENTINE: Well, my last class ends at 4 today. How about we meet at the little coffee shop on the corner around 4:30?

ANXIETY: That would be great.

CLEMENTINE: See you then!

ANXIETY: See ya.

[ANXIETY nods at CLEMENTINE before heading offstage stage right. CLEMENTINE gazes after them for a moment before making her way over to where LUNA sits. LUNA looks up at her friend as she approaches.]

LUNA: Who was that?

CLEMENTINE: Nobody.

LUNA: (*teasing*) It was clearly somebody.

CLEMENTINE: (*with a sigh*) It was just..They saved me from that jerk Justin last night. We're going out for coffee after class. And it's just a friendly thing, in return for rescuing me, so don't get all weird about it.

LUNA: Gotcha. What's their name?

CLEMENTINE: I..don't know, actually.

LUNA: You don't know their name?! C'mon, Clem, how are you going to meet with somebody if you don't even know their name? Doesn't that sound just a little bit sketchy to you? They didn't seem like such the perfect angel type either.. I mean, the backwards baseball cap? You could be getting yourself into serious trouble here.

CLEMENTINE: Luna, will you chill out? We're just meeting for coffee, nothing will happen. Even if it does, there'll be tons of people around. And I'll even keep you on speed-dial, okay? Just in case. Besides..they saved me. I owe it to them.

LUNA: You don't owe anything to anybody.

CLEMENTINE: I'm going out for coffee after class, end of conversation.

LUNA: *(with a huff)* Fine. *(pause)* Call me after?

CLEMENTINE: Of course.

[LUNA nods, pleased, while CLEMENTINE lets out a soft sigh of relief. The lights go to black.]

SCENE 6

[The lights come back up to reveal CLEMENTINE seated at a small table stage right. The desks from the previous scene, as well as LUNA, are no longer on the stage. A low hum of people talking and cups clattering drifts along in the background. CLEMENTINE sits alone, absentmindedly raising a coffee cup to her lips every so often. She is visibly impatient, tapping her foot against the floor repeatedly. CLEMENTINE glances at her watch. She looks around frantically. Just as she is moving to stand and leave, ANXIETY saunters in stage left. They calmly take a seat across from CLEMENTINE, acting as if nothing is wrong.]

CLEMENTINE: *(frustrated)* You're late.

ANXIETY: *(laissez-faire)* Yeah, sorry about that.. I probably should've let you know, huh?

CLEMENTINE: That would've been nice.

[ANXIETY leans back in their chair with an amused smirk on their face. Meanwhile, CLEMENTINE looks bewildered in response.]

ANXIETY: Were you worried I wasn't gonna show up?

CLEMENTINE: Yeah, I was, actually.

ANXIETY: That I was just gonna ditch you here, all by your lonesome? That I would leave you sitting here all alone like a fool, with the whole coffee shop looking at you, wondering who stood this poor girl up?

CLEMENTINE: (*embarrassed*) I-I mean, yes.. I was worrying like that.

[ANXIETY snickers in amusement, causing CLEMENTINE's embarrassment to quickly turn to anger.]

CLEMENTINE: What's so funny?

[ANXIETY says nothing, just continuing to laugh. CLEMENTINE's anger builds.]

CLEMENTINE: I said, what's so funny?

ANXIETY: (*still snickering*) Nothing, nothing. Chill out. You don't have to be so paranoid all the time.

CLEMENTINE: I'm not paranoid.

ANXIETY: You could've convinced me otherwise.

[CLEMENTINE doesn't respond, exasperated with ANXIETY. After a pause, she seems to soften.]

CLEMENTINE: Okay, maybe I am a little paranoid. I can't help it..I get anxious sometimes. Anxiety can be a real bitch.

ANXIETY: (*with a snort*) Don't I know it.

CLEMENTINE: But I'm supposed to be returning the favor, and here I am just ruining everything. Let's start over. Would you like a cup of coffee?

ANXIETY: That would be nice, sure.

[CLEMENTINE signals for a WAITRESS, who appears stage right and makes her way over to the table.]

WAITRESS: What'll it be?

ANXIETY: Just a small latte, please. Whipped cream on top.

[The WAITRESS nods and scribbles the order down on her pad before exiting back the way she came. ANXIETY turns their attention back to CLEMENTINE.]

ANXIETY: So, your friend. Uh...Layla.

CLEMENTINE: Luna?

ANXIETY: Yeah, her.

CLEMENTINE: What about Luna? (*panicked*) She's not here, is she?

ANXIETY: No.. (*suddenly struck with an idea*) Why, is she supposed to be?

CLEMENTINE: No, no, of course not! This is supposed to be just you and I.

ANXIETY: Ah, yes. I was just..checking. You seem a little worried.

CLEMENTINE: (*nervous laughter*) Worried? Me?

ANXIETY: I just get the feeling that while you're here with me, all you can do is think about Lulu.

CLEMENTINE: (*annoyed*) Luna.

ANXIETY: Yeah, whatever. Aren't you worried that she's here, spying on you?

CLEMENTINE: No.. Why would I be?

ANXIETY: Well, I bet she was pretty nervous about you going out with me like this. I got the vibe earlier that she thinks I'm bad news.

CLEMENTINE: She just cares about me, that's all. She's my best friend.

ANXIETY: I'm just saying, maybe she cares a little too much.

CLEMENTINE: You don't even know her! How come you suddenly have the authority to dictate how she treats me?

ANXIETY: I know her better than you think I do.

CLEMENTINE: What?

ANXIETY: (*cocky*) I know you better than you think I do, too.

CLEMENTINE: W-What're you talking about? This is starting to get creepy. Maybe Luna was right..

[It is at this moment that the WAITRESS comes back on stage right. She carries a small coffee cup in her hand.]

WAITRESS: Small latte, whipped cream on top?

ANXIETY: That would be mine.

[The WAITRESS hands the coffee to ANXIETY before disappearing again.]

ANXIETY: So where were we?

CLEMENTINE: I was just about to leave, actually.

ANXIETY: (*insulted*) Huh? Why?

CLEMENTINE: You're not being very nice to me. It's making me uncomfortable.

ANXIETY: Aw, c'mon! I was just teasing. Can't I have a little fun?

CLEMENTINE: Well, it wasn't very fun for me. You're acting a lot like that jerk you saved me from last night, actually.

ANXIETY: (*genuinely shocked*) Really? I didn't mean that, I swear. I would never mean to be like that guy. I was just being myself, I guess. I can't help it.

CLEMENTINE: (*rising to her feet*) Well, I can't help but leave. Bye. Thanks for nothing.

[CLEMENTINE walks stage left, leaving ANXIETY alone at the table. She gets about halfway across the stage before pulling her phone out of her pocket. CLEMENTINE quickly dials a number and then holds the phone to her ear.]

CLEMENTINE: Luna? You were right. It was a disaster. They're just as douchey as Justin is. (*pause, continues to walk*) Yeah, yeah, I know. I should listen to my best friend more.

[CLEMENTINE is just reaching the stage right wing at this point. As she finishes her last sentence, blackout.]

SCENE 7

[The lights rise to a dim stage left, where LUNA and CLEMENTINE are seated on a small sofa. LUNA is worried about her friend, who just seems exasperated at this point. Suddenly, the doorbell rings, and CLEMENTINE jumps to answer it.]

CLEMENTINE: I'll be right back.

[CLEMENTINE crosses stage right, where she meets a bashful ANXIETY. They carry a single red rose, which they thrust in CLEMENTINE's direction as soon as they see her. CLEMENTINE takes the rose warily.]

CLEMENTINE: (*angry*) What're you doing here?

ANXIETY: I wanted to say sorry, for yesterday. I was a total asshole.

CLEMENTINE: You can say that again.

ANXIETY: Listen, I didn't mean to be that way. I just can't help it. It's who I am.

CLEMENTINE: If it's who you are, then I don't want to hang out with you any longer.

ANXIETY: I-I'll change! (*sighs*) No, that's a lie. I won't change, I can't. But..I like you, and I want to be good to you, I really do. There's so much more to me than just that side.

CLEMENTINE: Listen, I said I don't want to hang out with you. Thank you for the rose, but I can't do this.

ANXIETY: (*solemnly*) I understand.

[ANXIETY exits stage right. CLEMENTINE looks down at the flower for a moment, before re-joining LUNA on the couch.]

LUNA: That better not have been who I think it was.

CLEMENTINE: They apologized. It was weird.

LUNA: So you're saying that just because they said they're sorry and gave you a pity gift, you're going to keep seeing that jerk?

CLEMENTINE: No, no! Of course not. It was just really strange. (*pause*) I don't know, Luna, I feel almost...drawn to them. Like we're meant for each other or something.

LUNA: If your soulmate is a narcissistic ass, I think you need to find a new soulmate.

CLEMENTINE: I get the feeling that they have another side to them, though. They said it, and...I felt it. When they saved me at the party. Besides, there's somebody in there, I know there is. When I told Justin to stop, he didn't even acknowledge me. But when I said I was hurt yesterday...they looked

genuinely surprised. They kept saying they couldn't help it, and I think they meant it.

LUNA: Clem, people can be very convincing liars. C'mon, we've been over this already. My gut instinct was right, I only need to be proven correct once.

CLEMENTINE: *(with a roll of her eyes)* I'm not going back to them. I'm just saying..it's really weird. They feel so familiar, like they've been with me all along and now I'm just finally seeing them.

LUNA: That doesn't make any sense. *(takes the rose)* Are you sure they didn't sprinkle anything on this?

CLEMENTINE: *(taking the flower back)* Stop it. They're a jerk, but they wouldn't drug me.

LUNA: Are you sure?

CLEMENTINE: I'm sure. They're not that kind of person, I can feel it.

LUNA: *(sarcastic)* Just like you can feel your connection or whatever?

CLEMENTINE: *(monotone)* Yeah. *(she rises)* I'm going to bed. I'll see you in the morning. Goodnight, Lu.

LUNA: *(with a sigh)* Goodnight, Clem.

[CLEMENTINE walks off stage left, and LUNA follows her. A moment later, the lights fade to black. When they come back up, they are an eerie, sleepy blue dim. The bed is once again center stage. CLEMENTINE lies in it, asleep. ANXIETY enters stage right and gently shakes CLEMENTINE awake.]

ANXIETY: *(softly)* Clementine. Clementine, wake up.

CLEMENTINE: *(confused, sleepy)* Huh? What are you doing here?

ANXIETY: What you said was right, we're drawn to each other for a reason. We're soulmates.

CLEMENTINE: What are you talking about?

ANXIETY: It's hard to explain, but..you're stuck with me. I'm here for you. I know it may not seem like it, because I'm this huge pain in the ass and all, but I do care about you, Clementine. I love you, actually.

CLEMENTINE: Maybe Luna was right.. Where's that flower you gave me? What'd you put on it?

ANXIETY: I'm real. Trust me. Here, look. *(grabs CLEMENTINE's hand and raises it to their face)*

CLEMENTINE: This isn't a dream?

ANXIETY: Not this time, no.

CLEMENTINE: *(pulling her hand back)* Why should I trust you? How do I know this isn't just another trick?

ANXIETY: I don't know how to prove it to you, but I can say this: I mean it when I say I'm here for you. I care about you. I love you.

CLEMENTINE: *(hesitant)* I-I think I love you too. I mean, we just met, but I feel like I've known you forever.

ANXIETY: I've been here all along, sweetheart. Always have been, always will be.

CLEMENTINE: I'm afraid.

ANXIETY: Love and fear go hand in hand. You can't have one without the other, my love.

CLEMENTINE: *(realizing)* My love?

[ANXIETY nods, and leans down to softly kiss CLEMENTINE. When the two part, ANXIETY grabs CLEMENTINE's hand and pulls her from the bed. In the background, light, twinkling music has begun to play very softly. It gets more pronounced as the two talk.]

ANXIETY: Care to dance?

CLEMENTINE: Here? Now?

ANXIETY: Where else?

[ANXIETY offers CLEMENTINE their hand, and CLEMENTINE willingly accepts. The two begin to dance hesitantly, although they grow more confident. ANXIETY and CLEMENTINE part from one another, and shed their clothing to reveal the same formal clothes from before, although ANXIETY no longer wears the mask. It is clear to CLEMENTINE who they are, and she willingly accepts their loving embrace. They come together again to dance, naturally and gracefully. They lean in, and they kiss. Blackout. End of play.]