

BEST FRIENDS FOREVER

by Jerod Brennen

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1

START ON BLACK

1

ASHLEY (V.O.)

B-F-F. Best friends forever. We
used to say it all the time. Kind
of like, 'til death do us part.
Except that it didn't end there.
When she died...

The SCREECH of tires on pavement.

A girl screams.

2

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

2

MRS. DAVIS, the history teacher, stands with her back to the class, lecturing from a projected PowerPoint slideshow.

ASHLEY sits in the back, feigning attention. Her fingers work furiously beneath her desk, TEXTING her friend EMILY in the center of the room.

Emily reads: "matt wants 2 spend the nite"

Ashley reads: "no way. make him w8"

Emily reads: "what do i tell him?"

Ashley reads: "that your bff will kick his ass if he doesnt back off"

Emily reads: "lol"

MATT, sitting behind Ashley, spies the last message over her shoulder. Spiteful, he kicks her chair.

The SQUEAL of metal on linoleum, then complete SILENCE. All eyes are on Ashley.

MRS. DAVIS

Ashley?

Ashley fumbles to hide her cell phone. Too slow.

Mrs. Davis walks to Ashley's desk. She holds out her hand.

Ashley fumes at Matt as she reluctantly hands the phone over.

Mrs. Davis begins to read aloud.

(CONTINUED)

MRS. DAVIS (cont'd)
"matt wants 2..."

Ashley's eyes go wide with terror. She can't read it in front of the entire class!

Mrs. Davis reads the rest to herself silently. A few girls giggle. She walks to Emily and holds out her hand.

Emily doesn't budge.

MRS. DAVIS (cont'd)
Now, Emily.

Exasperated, Emily surrenders her phone.

MRS. DAVIS (cont'd)
You girls can stop by the office after school and beg to have these back.

Ashley slumps back to her seat, as Mrs. Davis drops the phones in her top drawer and SLAMS it shut.

3 EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

3

Ashley, Emily, and Matt sit on a bench in front of the school. The girls have their phones back.

EMILY
What a bitch. I'm paying for this phone, not her.

MATT
Your dad's paying for the phone. Besides, rules are rules. No texting in class.

ASHLEY
No getting caught. Those are my rules. And you broke them.

MATT
(leering)
So how many rules are you willing to break?

EMILY
Creep.

AMY, Ashley's younger friend, runs up to them.

(CONTINUED)

EMILY (cont'd)

Hi, Amy.

ASHLEY

Hey, kid. What's going on?

AMY

Homework. Tons of it. You?

EMILY

Davis took our phones today.

MATT

They were texting each other in class.

AMY

Seriously? You sit, like, three seats away from each other. Have you considered rehab for cell phone addicts?

Emily smolders. Sensing an impending argument, Ashley defuses the tension.

ASHLEY

I'm hungry. Let's go.

4

INT. PIZZA SHOP - DAY

4

The four friends hover over a pizza. Amy reaches for the last slice. Emily takes it out of her hands, smirking.

ASHLEY

C'mon, guys.

Matt puts his arm around Ashley's shoulder.

MATT

Yeah. Behave.

Ashley shrugs him off.

ASHLEY

So, tonight. Movie. What are we gonna see?

They all speak at once, each one offering up a different title.

(CONTINUED)

EMILY

I swear, if I have to sit through one more horror movie-

MATT

No more romantic comedies. None. See this? This is my foot. It's going down...

Emily opens her phone and starts texting.

EMILY

Fine. You guys can see what you want. I'll just find someone else to hang out with tonight.

ASHLEY

Come on, Emily. Give me the phone.

EMILY

Don't touch!

Emily stands, still texting.

ASHLEY

We can see the horror flick next weekend. Right, Matt? It'll still be out.

MATT

Yeah, but everyone will be talking about it on Monday. If I don't see it tonight, there's no point.

AMY

I'm up for anything.

EMILY

Well, I'm not.

Emily storms out the door. Ashley and Amy follow, as Matt settles up with the cashier.

5

EXT. PIZZA SHOP - DAY

5

Emily is still texting as she hurries away from the shop.

ASHLEY

Emily, stop. This is stupid.

Emily spins around.

(CONTINUED)

EMILY

No, stupid is doing something you don't want to do just to make someone else happy. You used to be a lot more fun before dickhead came along.

Ashley is speechless. Where did that come from?

Emily turns and starts texting again.

AMY

Emily!

The SCREECH of tires on pavement, then THUMP!

Emily's body FLIES through the air, struck by a car. It lands yards away, striking the pavement with a wet SMACK.

ASHLEY

Oh God!

Emily and Amy run to Emily's still form as the driver gets out of the car. Matt bolts out of the pizza shop. Nearby, a pedestrian screams.

Emily's lifeless eyes stare at nothing. She's still clutching her cell phone.

Amy stops before she reaches the body. She stares at it, whimpering.

Ashley falls to the ground and cradles her friend's body, crying.

Matt looks on with pity.

Across the street, ASHLEY'S GHOST takes the whole scene in, cell phone in hand.

6

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

6

MOURNERS, a mix of adults and high school students, drift away from an open grave.

Ashley stands at the edge of the grave, staring into it through watery eyes. Amy and Matt stand nearby, giving Ashley this moment to herself.

EMILY'S MOTHER, a trim woman with a forced smile, walks to Ashley and hugs her from behind. She whispers into the girl's ear.

(CONTINUED)

EMILY'S MOTHER

You were her best friend.

Words fail the older woman. She kisses Ashley's cheek as Emily's father takes her gently by the arm and leads her back to the line of cars.

Matt sidles up beside Ashley. He slips a tentative hand into one of hers.

Ashley pulls away. She glares at Matt.

MATT

What?

Ashley's lip trembles with anger and grief. Amy steps in.

AMY

This wasn't anyone's fault, Ashley.
It was an accident.

Amy moves closer, gently.

AMY (cont'd)

We're your friends, too. And we're
here for you. When you're ready.

Ashley's defenses drop. She starts to cry again.

In her pocket, her cell phone BUZZES.

Exasperated, she takes the phone out and snaps it open. A new text message has appeared, three letters:

Ashley reads: "bff"

Ashley catches her breath when she realizes who sent the message: Emily.

Ashley looks up from her phone, frightened. She scans the area.

Standing by a nearby grove of trees is EMILY'S GHOST!

The ghost SMILES at her and WAVES.

A stifled cry escapes Ashley's lips.

AMY (cont'd)

Ashley? What's wrong.

The ghost disappears into the grove.

(CONTINUED)

MATT

Ash?

Ashley ignores her friends and SPRINTS toward the grove.

7 EXT GROVE - DAY

7

Ashley enters the grove just in time to see Emily's ghost disappear behind another tree.

ASHLEY

Emily!

The ghost ignores her.

Ashley runs to where the ghost was, but it's gone. She looks around frantically and catches another glimpse of the ghost nearby.

She continues the chase, but the ghost eludes her. Ashley runs deeper and deeper into the grove.

Panting, drained, she stops and doubles over, half-crying.

Ashley has no idea that the GHOST is HOVERING only a few feet behind her, watching her with interest.

The ghost DRIFTS toward the unsuspecting girl, one hand outstretched.

The hand lands on Ashley's shoulder. Ashley SCREAMS!

MATT

Ash! It's me! It's okay! It's just me.

Matt and Amy have followed here into the grove. Both of their faces are etched with confusion and concern.

ASHLEY

Matt...

She throws herself into his arms and SOBS into his shoulder.

The ghost is nowhere to be seen.

Matt leads Ashley out of the grove. He doesn't notice Emily's cell phone lying on the ground nearby, or the PALE HAND that reaches down to pick it up.

8 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

8

Mrs. Davis is alone in her classroom, grading papers. It's nearly evening, and the STILLNESS of the school is felt even here behind her closed door.

She flips to the next paper in the stack. The name at the top: Emily Williams.

The teacher sighs, honestly upset. She grades the paper, marks it, then deliberates over what to do with it.

She gently crumples the paper and drops it into the wastebasket, then returns to the stack.

A BUZZING sound starts from within her top desk drawer.

She slides the drawer open. It's Emily's phone.

Confused, she takes the phone out and examines it. There's a new text message. She flips the phone open.

She reads: "my fone, bitch"

Mrs. Davis looks up.

EMILY'S GHOST is standing RIGHT IN FRONT OF HER DESK!

The ghost SNARLS and LUNGES at Mrs. Davis, just as the older woman SCREAMS.

9 INT ASHLEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

9

Ashley sits on her bed, going through a scrapbook Emily made for her. Pictures of the two girls are strewn all over the bed, going back as far as kindergarten.

Ashley's phone buzzes. She flips it open.

Ashley reads: "lets c that bitch take my fone now"

Ashley hears a TAP-TAP-TAP at her upstairs bedroom window. Startled, she looks in the direction of the sound.

EMILY'S GHOST hovers right outside the window, tapping on the pane with her cell phone.

Ashley screams.

10 INT ASHLEY'S BEDROOM - DAY 10

Ashley sits bolt upright in her bed, still screaming. It's morning. She must have fallen asleep in the pile of pictures on her bed.

Panting, she scans the room. She's entirely alone.

11 INT. KITCHEN - DAY 11

Ashley enters the kitchen. ASHLEY'S MOTHER is on the phone, visibly distraught. She hangs up the phone.

ASHLEY

Mom?

ASHLEY'S MOTHER

School's been canceled today,
honey.

Ashley is skeptical of the good news, reading her mother's body language.

ASHLEY

Why?

SUSAN

There's been... someone died last
night at the school. One of your
teachers.

ASHLEY

(whispering)

Mrs. Davis.

SUSAN

(surprised)

Yes. Heart attack, in her room. How
did you...

Ashley stares at the floor and doesn't answer the unfinished question.

12 INT. PIZZA SHOP - DAY 12

Ashley, Amy, and Matt sit around an untouched pizza. Ashley nurses a soda. Amy and Matt stare at her dumbfounded.

MATT

I... I don't know what to say.

(CONTINUED)

AMY
Have you talked to anyone?

ASHLEY
Just you guys.

Silence. Another sip of soda.

MATT
Ash... she's gone. It was just a
dream. You didn't actually see-

ASHLEY
I know what I saw, Matt.

AMY
Matt's not trying to upset you. It
just sounds...

ASHLEY
Crazy?

Amy and Matt both avert their eyes.

ASHLEY (cont'd)
How can I prove it to you?

13 EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

13

The trio stands over Emily's grave, the mound of dirt still
fresh.

MATT
Now what?

AMY
Maybe we should just go...

ASHLEY
Emily! Emily! (the tears start)
Emily!

MATT
Ash... this isn't right. Maybe...
maybe you just need some time...
alone.

Amy glares at Matt, disbelieving.

MATT (cont'd)
Look, Ash. I... I like you. A lot.
But this is too much for me, you
know?

(CONTINUED)

ASHLEY

What?

Matt glances around, as if looking for an escape.

MATT

If other people hear about this...
I don't want people talking behind
my back.

ASHLEY

Matt, I'm not crazy. I just need...
I need you and Amy to believe me.

He takes her hand, squeezes it, and WALKS AWAY.

ASHLEY (cont'd)

Matt?

Matt disappears over a nearby hill.

Ashley sobs as Amy wraps an arm around her shoulder.

Ashley's pocket VIBRATES. She pulls out her phone and flips
it open.

Ashley reads: "don't cry. i'll take care of dickhead"

Amy stares at the message, unsure of what she's reading.

Ashley looks up and sees Emily's ghost nearby, grinning
madly. The ghost closes her phone and drifts over the hill,
after Matt.

ASHLEY (cont'd)

(frantic)

Matt!

14

EXT SIDEWALK - DAY

14

Matt walks alone, hands in his pockets. He has no idea that
Emily's ghost is drifting alone behind him.

Closer, closer...

Ashley RUNS toward them, with Amy in tow.

ASHLEY

Emily! No!

Matt stops in the shade of a LARGE TREE and turns around. He
sees Ashley and Amy running toward him, but the ghost is
gone.

(CONTINUED)

MATT

Come on, Ash. Let it go. This is embarrassing.

ASHLEY

She was right here, Matt. I saw her. She...

Matt looks to Amy for understanding. Amy, pale, points to Ashley's phone.

Ashley holds the phone out for Matt to read the message.

MATT

"i'll take care of dickhead."
What's that supposed to mean?

Neither girl responds.

MATT (cont'd)

Is this some kind of sick joke. Oh, man... this is messed up. Ash, you're hot and all, but this is some serious baggage.

ASHLEY

This isn't a joke, Matt! It's real!

MATT

She's dead, Ash! Let it go! God... You should be in a mental hospital or something. You're crazy!

A loud CRACK fills the air. All three look up.

An enormous TREE BRANCH falls straight down, landing on Matt's head.

A second CRACK sounds as Matt's head TILTS at an odd angle, his neck BROKEN.

Matt's body crumples, a lifeless marionette.

Amy starts to hyperventilate.

Ashley tears up, but she's too stunned to react at first. Slowly, she looks up into the tree.

High up in the tree, Emily's ghost sits perched in one of the branches. She giggles and waves to Ashley.

Ashley takes Amy's hand in hers and RUNS.

15 EXT. ASHLEY'S HOUSE - DAY 15

A POLICE CRUISER sits parked in front of Ashley's house.

16 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY 16

Ashley and Amy sit close together on the couch. ASHLEY'S MOTHER paces around the room, while AMY'S MOTHER watches the interrogation from the edge of her chair.

The POLICE OFFICER finishes questioning the two girls and turns to their mothers.

OFFICER

Can I call you two if I have any further questions?

Amy's mother nods.

ASHLEY'S MOTHER

Of course.

After the officer leaves, an uncomfortable silence settles in the room.

AMY'S MOTHER

How are you girls doing?

Neither girl answers.

ASHLEY'S MOTHER

Why don't we-

AMY

It was Emily.

Ashley stares at Amy, disbelieving.

AMY'S MOTHER

What did you say?

AMY

Emily killed Matt.

ASHLEY'S MOTHER

You girls have been through a lot. You're upset, and you have to be exhausted. You need to get some rest.

(CONTINUED)

AMY
(to Ashley)
Tell them!

ASHLEY'S MOTHER
Ashley?

ASHLEY
I... I've seen Emily since the
funeral. She snapped that branch.
I'm pretty sure she killed Mrs.
Davis, too.

The two women just stare at the girls.

ASHLEY (cont'd)
I know how it sounds, Mom. But it's
the truth.

ASHLEY'S MOTHER
Emily's gone, Ashley.

ASHLEY
She's dead, Mom. Not gone.

Neither woman responds right away. They look at each other,
as if asking, "What do we say?"

Amy's mother reaches down and gently helps her daughter to
her feet.

AMY'S MOTHER
Ashley's mother is right. You girls
need your rest. Amy, let's go.

Amy starts to protest, but breaks down in tears. Ashley
pulls her back with a hug and and whispers in her ear.

ASHLEY
(whispering)
We'll figure this out. I promise.

Amy's mother leads her to the front door.

Amy looks back on Ashley with a mix of sorrow and fear.

Ashley's mother sits down beside her on the couch and wraps
her arms around her daughter. Ashley accepts the hug, numb.

ASHLEY'S MOTHER
I can't imagine how hard this is
for you. Losing your best friend
and your boyfriend like this. But
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ASHLEY'S MOTHER (cont'd)
they're gone, Ashley. I know it's
hard to accept, but Ashley...
they're both gone.

ASHLEY
I saw her, Mom. I saw her.

Ashley's mother pulls back from the hug and strokes her
daughter's hair.

ASHLEY'S MOTHER
Oh, sweetheart.

Ashley's expression begs for acknowledgment, but her mother
just can't accept what she's saying as true.

ASHLEY'S MOTHER (cont'd)
Why don't you go upstairs and take
a shower? Let me make you some tea.

Her mother isn't going to believe her, no matter what she
says. Ashley doesn't despair, but she gives in.

For now.

She returns her mother's hug.

17 INT. SHOWER - DAY

17

Ashley stands beneath the steaming water, surrendering to
the comfort.

She hears the CLICK of the bathroom door.

ASHLEY
I'm doing better, Mom. I'll be done
in a few minutes.

No answer.

ASHLEY (cont'd)
Mom?

For a moment, the sound of the running water is the only
sound in the bathroom.

Hesitant, Ashley peers around the edge of the shower
curtain.

Standing beside the bathroom door is EMILY'S GHOST.

(CONTINUED)

Ashley jerks the shower curtain closed, on the brink of panic. She risks another peek.

This time, Emily's ghost is RIGHT BESIDE THE SHOWER!

Ashley presses herself against the shower wall, but there's nowhere to go.

Emily's ghost just stands there, frustrated.

ASHLEY (cont'd)

Emily...

At the sound of her name, the ghost breaks into a mad smile.

ASHLEY (cont'd)

What... what do you want?

Emily's ghost opens her mouth to speak, but no words come out.

ASHLEY (cont'd)

Emily. You... you're dead.

Emily's ghost looks confused.

ASHLEY (cont'd)

You were hit by a car. You died before I could... before...

The words catch in Ashley's throat.

Emily's ghost reaches out to touch her friend. Ashley recoils.

ASHLEY (cont'd)

No! You're dead! Amy and I saw you die! You're dead!

Emily's ghost pulls back. Her expression shifts from tender to angry.

She opens her mouth, and an otherworldly HOWL fills the air.

ASHLEY (cont'd)

(louder)

You're dead! You're dead! You're dead!

The ghost drifts backward, it's face contorted in rage.

Ashley slumps down in the shower.

(CONTINUED)

ASHLEY (cont'd)
(whimpering)
You're dead.

A hand grabs her arm!

ASHLEY'S MOTHER
(heartbroken)
Ashley, baby, sweetheart...

Her mother turns off the shower and covers her with a towel.
Ashley looks up into her mother's face.

ASHLEY
She's dead.

ASHLEY'S MOTHER
I know, sweetheart. I know.

Ashley's mother leads her from the bathroom.

Neither one of them notice Emily's ghost hiding in the
shower, reflected in the mirror.

18

INT ASHLEY'S BEDROOM - DAY

18

Ashley lies pajama-clad in her bed, her hair still wet from
the shower.

On her desk, her phone begins to buzz.

She doesn't answer it. The buzzing stops. She takes a deep
breath.

The phone buzzes again.

Slowly, Ashley walks to her desk and picks up the phone. A
new text message pops up.

Ashley reads: "i'm your best friend"

Another message.

Ashley reads: "me just me only me"

ASHLEY
Oh, no.

She tries calling Amy's cell, but it rolls immediately to
voice mail.

19 INT. AMY'S BATHROOM - DAY 19

Amy is in the bathtub, a washcloth over her face.

She doesn't see EMILY'S GHOST standing over her.

The ghost GRABS Amy's neck with both hands and forces her under the water.

Amy FLAILS and STRUGGLES, but she can't escape, can't surface.

20 INT. ASHLEY'S BEDROOM - DAY 20

Frantic, Ashley paces her room.

ASHLEY
Think, think, think.

Realization dawns. She punches another number into her cell.

Amy's mother answers.

AMY'S MOTHER (V.O.)
Hello?

ASHLEY
(desperate)
It's Ashley. Can I speak to Amy?

AMY'S MOTHER (V.O.)
She's taking a bath right now,
Ashley. Can she call you back?

21 INT. AMY'S BATHROOM - DAY 21

Amy continues to struggle, still submerged. Her strength starts to fail.

22 INT ASHLEY'S BEDROOM - DAY 22

ASHLEY
No! I need to talk to her right now.

AMY'S MOTHER (V.O.)
Ashley, dear. I think it's best if you both just-

(CONTINUED)

ASHLEY

She's in trouble! Right now, she's
in trouble!

A pause on the other end.

AMY'S MOTHER (V.O.)

Hold on.

23 INT. AMY'S HOUSE - DAY

23

Amy's mother walks down the hallway, toward the bathroom.
She knocks on the door.

AMY'S MOTHER

Amy? Ashley's on the phone for you.

She listens at the door. Splashing.

AMY'S MOTHER (cont'd)

Amy?

She tries the door. Locked.

AMY'S MOTHER (cont'd)

Amy!

She POUNDS on the door.

24 INT. AMY'S BATHROOM - DAY

24

Emily's ghost ignores the pounding. She keeps Amy's head
underwater.

Amy beats on the side of the bathtub.

25 INT. ASHLEY'S BEDROOM - DAY

25

Ashley can hear the frantic pounding and screaming on the
other end.

One last chance...

She hangs up her phone and selects an entry from her address
book: Emily.

She texts three words: "you're my bff"

She presses send.

26 INT. AMY'S BATHROOM - DAY 26

Amy's nearly gone, her strength depleted.

Emily's phone BUZZES. The ghost lets go of Amy, takes the cell out of her pocket, and reads the message.

She smiles.

Everything happens at once.

Amy BURSTS from the water, GASPING for air.

Amy's mother SLAMS the door open and RUNS to her daughter.

Emily's ghost disappears.

27 INT. ASHLEY'S BEDROOM - DAY 27

Ashley sits on her bed, perfectly still, staring at her cell, willing it to ring.

It vibrates. She opens the phone in an instant

ASHLEY (V.O.)
(crying)
She tried to kill me, Ashley! She
tried to kill me!

Ashley lets the phone drift to her lap.

What now?

28 EXT. ASHLEY'S HOUSE - EVENING 28

The sun is just beginning to set.

Ashley emerges from her front door, a determined look on her face.

She runs down the front walk and tears up the street, just as her mother opens the door and calls after her.

ASHLEY'S MOTHER
Ashley!

29

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

29

Ashley weaves among the tombstones, her pace slowed. She sees her destination and stops.

EMILY'S GRAVE.

She walks to the grave, stands on the fresh dirt, and faces the tombstone.

ASHLEY

I know you're here.

Ashley continues to stare at the tombstone.

EMILY'S GHOST appears right behind her.

The ghost reaches out. It's fingertips barely BRUSH Ashley's exposed neck.

Ashley spins, gasping. This is what she came her for, but she's surprised nonetheless.

The two face each other, wordless, motionless.

Ashley draws herself up, steels herself for what she has to say.

ASHLEY (cont'd)

Emily...

The words don't come easy. A flood of memories bombard Ashley, memories of her friend, alive and exuberant.

Not... this.

ASHLEY (cont'd)

You're dead. You need to go.

The ghost hovers, confused. It lifts the phone and presses a few buttons.

The phone in Ashley's pockets buzzes. Ashley takes it out and opens it.

Ashley reads: "best friends forever"

She bites her lip, holding back tears. It kills her, but she has to do it

ASHLEY (cont'd)

Emily, you... you have to go. You need to move on. We all do.

(CONTINUED)

The ghost is still confused.

It sends another text message to Ashley.

Ashley reads: "bff?"

ASHLEY (cont'd)
Stop this, Emily. Just... go.

The ghost's expression doesn't change. Ashley's not getting through.

Then it dawns on her.

Ashley texts a message to her friend and clicks send.

The phone in the ghost's hand buzzes. The ghost is ecstatic, it's expression shifting to pure joy. It opens the phone.

As it reads the message, the smile fades from the ghost's face. It's replaced with anger.

The message reads: "not n e more"

ASHLEY (cont'd)
I'm sorry.

Furious, the ghost snaps the phone shut. It drifts toward Ashley menacingly.

ASHLEY (cont'd)
(begging)
Please, Emily. Go. Just go!

The otherworldly howl starts from deep within the ghost.

Emily realizes she's suddenly in danger.

ASHLEY (cont'd)
Emily, no...

The howl erupts full-force, rattling Ashley to the bone.

The ghost LUNGES at Ashley.

Ashley runs.

30 EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT 30

Ashley emerges from the cemetery, onto the sidewalk. She's running, panting, phone in hand.

Emily's ghost drifts along behind her, chasing her.

31 EXT. PIZZA SHOP - DAY 31

Ashley runs by the pizza shop and stops to catch her breath.

She sees a family just inside the front window: mother, father, two young boys.

The mother stares at her suspiciously. The father looks down the street the way she came to see if anyone else is out there.

The boys continue to eat their pizza, laughing over a joke, oblivious to what's going on outside.

SMASH!

The window SHATTERS into pieces. Ashley gasps.

She turns to see Emily's ghost staring daggers into her.

Ashley hears crying. She looks back into the pizza shop to see the mother cradling one of the boys. He's BLEEDING, apparently cut from a shard of flying glass.

ASHLEY

Oh, no.

The ghost's rage has gone beyond its previous limits. Now innocent bystanders are in danger.

Ashley has to do something to end this once and for all.

ASHLEY (cont'd)

(to Emily's ghost)

Come on!

She starts to run again.

32 EXT. EMILY'S HOUSE - NIGHT 32

Ashley runs to the front porch of a house and starts banging on the door.

(CONTINUED)

ASHLEY

It's me! It's Ashley! Let me in!

The front light comes on. EMILY'S MOTHER answers the door.

EMILY'S MOTHER

Ashley, what's the matter? What's-

Ashley shoves the older woman out of the way, forces her way inside the house, and SLAMS the door.

33 INT. EMILY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

33

Ashley runs to the front window and pulls the curtain aside.

EMILY'S MOTHER

Ashley, what's going on? Are you in trouble?

Ashley turns to face Emily's mother. She doesn't answer with words, but the look on her face says it all.

EMILY'S MOTHER (cont'd)

Step away from the window. I'll call the police.

ASHLEY

No.

Emily's mother stops, confused. Ashley beckons for her to come over to the window.

Hesitant, Emily's mother takes the curtain from Ashley's hand and looks outside.

Her hand goes to her mouth and she starts crying.

34 EXT. EMILY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

34

Emily's ghost stands on the sidewalk at the edge of the yard, staring into the front window.

35 INT. EMILY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

35

Emily's mother reaches for the glass and lets her fingers slide down its cool surface.

EMILY'S MOTHER

(whispering)

Emily, baby...

(CONTINUED)

Emily's mother immediately starts for the front door. Ashley grabs her arm and turns her around.

ASHLEY

Do you still have Emily's phone?

Emily's mother doesn't answer. Instead, she turns to look again at the window.

ASHLEY (cont'd)

Her phone! Do you still have her phone?

EMILY'S MOTHER

(distracted)

It's... upstairs. In her room.

Ashley bolts for the stairs.

36 INT. EMILY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

36

Ashley stops short when she enters Emily's bedroom.

The room is a perfectly preserved SHRINE to the girl. Sports trophies, academic certificates, posters... the room looks exactly as it did when Emily was still alive.

Ashley treads reverently into the room. She feels guilty about what she's about to do, about disturbing the sanctuary of this place, but it must be done.

EMILY'S MOTHER (O.S.)

(calm)

Ashley, what are you doing?

Ashley turns to see Emily's mother standing in the doorway. It's as if the older woman can't bring herself to cross the threshold.

ASHLEY

I can't explain why or how, but
Emily... her ghost is still here.

Emily's mother smiles, distant, as if she's pleased by the news.

ASHLEY (cont'd)

She killed Matt! She tried to kill
Amy...

Ashley scans the room. Emily's mother shakes her head.

(CONTINUED)

EMILY'S MOTHER

No. She would never do something like that.

ASHLEY

I know. Emily wouldn't. But that... thing... that's not Emily. Not anymore.

Ashley stops. She's found what she's looking for.

A FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH of Emily and Ashley sits on the girl's writing desk. The two girls are smiling, laughing. Best friends.

Beside the photo: Emily's phone.

Ashley gingerly picks up the phone.

EMILY'S MOTHER

Ashley?

ASHLEY

Emily's been texting me since...

She doesn't complete the sentence. Instead, she draws a deep breath.

ASHLEY (cont'd)

(to herself)

The phone.

Ashley raises the phone high, ready to smash it on the table.

EMILY'S MOTHER

No!

The vehemence of the exclamation startles Ashley.

EMILY'S MOTHER (cont'd)

You brought my baby girl back to me tonight, and now you want to take her away again? You... you can't!

ASHLEY

That's not Emily!

Emily's mother goes pale. Ashley realizes they're not alone anymore.

Standing at the foot of the bed is EMILY'S GHOST.

Emily's mother reaches for the apparition.

(CONTINUED)

EMILY'S MOTHER

Emily?

A noise emanates from the ghost. Not a howl, but something eerily bitonal and subdued.

EMILY

Mommy?

Ashley raises the phone again, ready to smash it.

EMILY'S MOTHER

No!

The woman lunges at Ashley, knocking her to the floor. The phone slips from her grasp and slides to the center of the room.

The two struggle. Ashley reaches for the phone, and the older woman wrestles to keep the phone safe.

EMILY'S MOTHER (cont'd)

I won't let you take her away from me!

The ghost watches the struggle in grim satisfaction.

Ashley swings an elbow behind her, catching Emily's mother square in face. Blood SQUIRTS from the woman's nose as she staggers back.

Seizing the opportunity, Ashley scrambles for the phone.

Emily's mother wipes tears from her eyes, clearing her vision. She flails about and grabs the first thing she finds: an elementary school spelling bee trophy.

Ashley grabs the phone.

Emily's mother screams and lunges at Ashley.

Ashley dodges clumsily. Emily's mother trips and falls hard against the bedroom wall.

The trophy slips from her hand.

Ashley snatches the trophy and raises it high over her head.

She hesitates for a split second.

ASHLEY

I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)

The ghost HOWLS as Ashley brings the trophy down hard, smashing the phone to pieces.

The howling stops.

Ashley looks up, but Emily's ghost is gone. The room is silent, except for the whimpering cries of Emily's mother.

Ashley lets the trophy fall from her hands.

Slowly, she stands. She stares at the picture on Emily's desk.

Best friends forever...

FADE TO BLACK.