

Astonishing  
by  
Patrick Sweeney

7525 Garden Gate Drive  
Citrus Heights, CA 95621  
(916) 588-5078  
[firefly.games@gmail.com](mailto:firefly.games@gmail.com)

INT. ATTIC - DAY

The attic is dusty and barren. A shaft of sunlight from a lone window illuminates a corner. In the corner rests a large trunk plastered with railway stickers.

SIRENS outside. Distant SCREAMS. A helicopter THUNDERS overhead, shaking dust from the rafters.

A door SLAMS downstairs.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

HALLEY, 20s, athletic and trim, catches her breath at a granite countertop.

HALLEY

Blake, next time you find an ancient codex of ultimate evil, don't read it!

BLAKE, 20s, fraternity sweatshirt, bends over, panting, against the kitchen door.

BLAKE

You blame me for everything.

JEN, 20s, wearing a pagan pendant, points out the window.

JEN

Shush!

They duck and peer outside. A ghastly mob of ZOMBIES shambles down the suburban street.

Halley glares at Blake.

BLAKE

Come on, Halley. How could I know?

HALLEY

Like "cursed tome of vilest darkness" wasn't a clue.

BLAKE

I'm just saying, "kick off the zombie apocalypse" is a little extreme on the curse-o-meter. Right, Jen?

Jen ignores the byplay.

JEN  
Think they saw us?

A window SHATTERS in another room. More zombies stagger across the lawn toward the kitchen.

JEN  
Attic?

HALLEY  
Dead end, but defensible space.  
Yeah.

Halley, Blake, and Jen race from the kitchen as zombies BANG on the windows.

JEN (O.C.)  
Mom's gonna be so pissed when she gets back from Hawaii.

INT. ATTIC - DAY

The door BURSTS open. Halley, Jen, and Blake rush in and SLAM the door.

Jen regards the barren attic in surprise.

JEN  
Mom kept talking about cleaning out the attic after I left for college. I didn't think she'd do it.

Footsteps TROMP up the stairs. MOANS and GROANS.

BLAKE  
I don't think we exactly fooled them. Can we block the door with that?

He points to the trunk.

JEN  
Must be Grampa's old prop trunk from his magic act.

Blake looks interested. Jen shakes her head.

JEN  
Stage magic. Not the same.

HALLEY  
Still, there might be something we can use. Blake, hold the door.

BLAKE  
Hello, zombies? Strength of the  
undead?

HALLEY  
Put your back into it.

BLAKE  
Gee, thanks a bunch.

The door CREAKS open. Blake SLAMS his body against it,  
pushing it shut.

BLAKE  
Looks like they mastered doorknobs.  
Just our luck, attacked by the  
zombie Mensa club.

Faded, ragged stickers cover the heavy trunk. Buffalo.  
Cleveland. Schenectady. Indianapolis. Milwaukee. Across the  
lid: The Astonishing Abner, Feats of Legerdemain.

HALLEY  
The Astonishing Abner?

Jen shrugs ruefully.

The two women open the trunk and hastily pull out magic act  
props - interlocking steel rings, a top hat, decks of playing  
cards, colorful silk handkerchiefs.

Zombies POUND on the door.

Jen pulls out a saw.

JEN  
Sawing ladies in half? Really,  
Grampa. So embarrassing.

Blake struggles to keep the door closed. A rotted fist  
PUNCHES through a panel next to his head.

BLAKE  
Hurry up, you two! This isn't  
nearly as much fun as it looks.

HALLEY  
Jen, check this out.

She holds up a wand.

JEN  
A prop wand. Just another gimmick.  
Do flowers pop out the end or what?

HALLEY

I don't think so. Here.

Jen takes the wand. The hairs on her arm stand up.

JEN

A charged wand! But, how?

HALLEY

You're a witch, Jen. Magic runs in your veins. That doesn't come out of nowhere. Is it possible your grandfather-

The others catch on.

BLAKE

Had the power of true magic, too, except he hid it-

JEN

By posing as a stage magician? Because everyone knows-

HALLEY

Stage magic's not real. It's the perfect cover.

JEN

It's brilliant. And I thought-

SMASH! More putrid fists bash through the door. Jen puts on the top hat and rises, wand in hand.

JEN

Bring it on, moldy oldies.

Blake dives aside as the door SHATTERS. The pustulent LIVING DEAD shamle into the attic, MOANING.

Jen gestures with the wand. Takes a breath. And- Nothing. Moldering zombies stumble across the room at her.

Halley delivers a spinning kick to the lead zombie's face, knocking him over into his cohorts. More zombies crowd in through the door, GROANING.

HALLEY

Jen?

JEN

Sorry. Stage fright.

She clears her throat.

JEN

To Abner Hotchkiss came powers  
unbidden,  
A secret carefully hidden.

The gift of true magic flowing,  
To granddaughter unknowing.

A terrible curse,  
Our powers joined to reverse.

Grandsire, I implore and admonish,  
Time now for us to astonish.

A brilliant burst of light fills the attic.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Light flares from the attic window across the city.

INT. ATTIC - DAY

Jen, Halley, and Blake blink furiously. No zombies. Shattered door as good as new. Blake WHOOPS in triumph.

Jen smiles. She doffs the top hat and sets it carefully on the trunk lid.

JEN

Thanks, Grampa. I love you.

The three friends walk to the door.

BLAKE

Fighting zombies always makes me  
hungry.

HALLEY

Pft. The door fought more zombies  
than you did.

JEN

Enough, you two. Let's get some ice  
cream.

The door closes. The top hat tips and rolls off the trunk lid to the floor.

A white rabbit hops out. Another. And another ...

FADE TO BLACK.