

IS IT THEM

A Horror-Drama Play

By

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CHARACTERS

ALICE	Female. Radio Communications Worker. Serious and nervous.
BONNIE	Female. Scout. More downplayed than her dialogue.
ALAN	Male. Alice and Bonnie's Supervisor. Too friendly.
PAUL	Male. The Supply Guy. Blunt with a good heart.
SIR	A V.O character. Alice and Bonnie's Higher-Up. Official.

SETTING

The setting is deep in the mountains and woods, during the Cold War.

The play spans a few months.

A working door can be seen onstage.

NOTES

"..." means that the speaker is trailing off.

"-" means that the speaker is being cut off.

IS IT THEM

ACT ONE - SCENE ONE

Lights flicker on.

A cabin in the middle of nowhere.

It's old and not very homey. There is little there, except a few books, two small beds in the corner, and a table with worn-out radio equipment on it. There is a visible door.

Alice sits at the table, fiddling with the radio equipment and making notes, though she's getting little more than static.

There's a knock on the door, so Alice gets up and presses the intercom.

ALICE: *(In Russian)* Who is it?! кто это

BONNIE (THROUGH INTERCOM): *(In Russian Accent)* Why, it's me Comrade!

Alice sighs and opens the door.

Bonnie enters, dressed in mountaineer gear.

ALICE: For the last time, stop talking like that. You'll get us both killed.

Alice heads back to the table while Bonnie closes the door behind her.

BONNIE: Hm. Buzzer still not fixed?

ALICE: Obviously not. Remember to lock it.

BONNIE: Yeah, yeah.

Beat.

Was this place always such a shithole?

ALICE: You haven't been gone that long.

BONNIE: Must have blocked it from my memory then.

ALICE: Wasn't expecting you back for another month.

Bonnie starts taking off her outwear and unpacking, having a good look around the cabin as she does so.

BONNIE: I know, but I did it all easy as Larry.

ALICE: Right.

BONNIE: Well, those guys at the old base were dicks again, but I actually managed to get all the beacons out in half the time I expected.

ALICE: Hmm.

BONNIE: I even timed it; tied up one on my own in a quarter of the time it usually takes me. Not too shabby, eh?

ALICE: Why not stay out there then? I recall you saying before you left that you'd "rather eat your own frozen feces than stare at these four bloody walls any longer."

BONNIE: Well, funnily enough, there was a point where I'd ran out of rations, and I'd just done this massive-

ALICE: You're teasing me, right?

Bonnie smiles at Alice.

ALICE: Right?

BONNIE: I was gonna stay out, but I was practically getting frostbite through my gloves, so figured I'd head back to annoy you. So, any new signals? Any *nuclear* threats?

ALICE: One day I'm going to say yes, and you're going to feel very stupid.

Beat.

Oh, guess you should know, Harry's coming tomorrow, and Alan's coming next week.

BONNIE: Ugh, not fucking Alan again. I should have stayed out, frostbite and all.

ALICE: I know, but he says he has some urgent business to discuss or something. He'll be an extra face to talk to, at least.

BONNIE: Yeah, if I don't punch it first.

ALICE: You say all that, but then I'm always the one who has to deal with him.

BONNIE: Yeah, because I refuse to put up with his shit.

ALICE: I don't think being rude to him is the same as not putting up with his...

BILIE: His...?

ALICE: You know.

BONNIE: Come on you Cathy, just say it.

ALICE: I'm not stooping to your level. I'm an adult.

BONNIE: So am I.

ALICE: Then act like it.

Bonnie rolls her eyes.

ALICE: Anyway, I'm kind of glad you're here. I didn't want to be around him on my own.

BONNIE: Yeah.

Pause.

So, what do you wanna do tonight?

ALICE: I need to do more work. Unlike some, I don't get to finish early.

BONNIE: Why not? You're good at that stuff, right?

A 50s commercial crackles on the radio. It's slightly ominous.

What was that?

ALICE: The frequency's been really odd lately. I keep getting random signals, like there's something that keeps interrupting it. At first I thought it was them, but it doesn't match any of their patterns.

BONNIE: Hmm.

The lights flicker.

Ugh, haven't we got that fixed yet?

ALICE: Be my guest.

Lights flicker out.

ACT ONE - SCENE TWO

Lights flicker on.

Alice is at the table, studying the radio equipment and taking notes. We mostly hear static, but occasionally some beeping and Russian voices can be heard.

Bonnie is sitting somewhere near her, tying and retying knots in some climbing rope, and looking bored. She keeps tapping her foot, which is annoying Alice.

ALICE: Could you please be quiet?

BONNIE: Sorry.

Pause.

How long do you have to do that for?

ALICE: Until it's done.

BONNIE: When will it be done?

ALICE: When it's done.

Bonnie makes a noise of annoyance.

ALICE: You've been here for a day, Bonnie. Stop acting like you're about to claw the curtains.

BONNIE: We'd need curtains for that. We'd need a window.

Pause.

I don't get how you can stay sane spending all day in here. I'm so fucking bored. I'm bored of being bored. How do you not tear your hair out?

ALICE: It's not that hard. I just do my job.

BONNIE: Implying that I don't?
ALICE: I didn't say that. Forget it.
BONNIE: I did all my admin, you know?
ALICE: I know.
BONNIE: I patrolled, checked all our perimeters.
ALICE: Yes, I-
BONNIE: I even checked the water filter for-
ALICE: I know, Bonnie. I know.

Pause.

BONNIE: Any new transmissions?
ALICE: No.
BONNIE: Come on Alice, or else I'll claw the curtains.

Alice tries to ignore her.

BONNIE: Please?

Beat.

ALICE: It's hard to tell. I'll have to talk to Alan about this when he comes. The radio keeps giving off unreliable data, and, well, see when I fiddle with this?

Alice turns one of the knobs on the radio equipment. We hear a quick flit of Russian voices, and then Elvis Presley's "Devil in Disguise" comes and goes through the radio.

It keeps giving off this rubbish. And it's not them who's playing it.

BONNIE: How very dare you, Elvis Presley is not rubbish! He's a legend.

ALICE: I don't care, he's messing up my work. And so are you.

BONNIE: How? I'm just sitting here.

ALICE: You're not just sitting there. You're bothering me.

BONNIE: Oh well I'm very sorry, your highness. Anyway, I can't help it, I'm bored.

ALICE: Really? I had no idea.

BONNIE: Give me a decent TV and I'd be happy, but there's fuck all here to do.

ALICE: There's books.

BONNIE: Hmm. Not much of a bookworm.

ALICE: Go on another walk then.

BONNIE: I would, but my equipment's down to the bone as is. Alan'll be right pissed.

ALICE: I don't know then. You think of something.

BONNIE: Hm. Back home I'd go to the pub, you know, go out with someone. But can't exactly do that here, can I?

ALICE: *(Distractedly)* Give it a try. If anyone could do that here, it'd be you.

BONNIE: You don't know that.

ALICE: I think I do.

BONNIE: *Actually*, dating isn't really my thing anymore.

Pause.

You not gonna ask why?

ALICE: Nope.

BONNIE: Fine. Bitch.

A knock on the door.

BONNIE: Thank fuck.

Bonnie jumps up and presses the intercom.

BONNIE: *(In Russian)* Who is it?/ кто это

PAUL (THROUGH INTERCOM): Paul.

BONNIE: Ahh, good of Paul to stop in for a long chat.

Bonnie opens the door and Paul enters.

BONNIE: Hiya, Paul!

PAUL: Ayup.

Paul dumps food packages on the table efficiently.

ALICE: I thought Harry was delivering this month.

PAUL: He's quit.

ALICE: Oh. Why?

BONNIE: Something about one of his mates disappearing on the other route.

ALICE: Goodness. Do you think he was spotted?

PAUL: Dunno.

Paul passes Alice a clipboard.

Just sign this and I can piss off.

BONNIE: So how ya been, Paul?

PAUL: Fine.

BONNIE: How was the trip up here?

PAUL: Fine.

BONNIE: Any gossip?

PAUL: No.

BONNIE: Anything special in the parcels?

PAUL: No.

BONNIE: Any alcohol?

PAUL: No.

BONNIE: Damn. Well then, how's the family?

PAUL: Don't have one.

BONNIE: Aw, you wanna stay for a cuppa then?

PAUL: No.

BONNIE: You wanna stay for a sleepover then?

PAUL: Goodbye.

Paul takes the clipboard from Alice and exits, closing the door behind him.

BONNIE: See, that's why I like Paul. He's real chatty.

Alice locks the door.

ALICE: Poor fella just wants to get on with his job and go home.

BONNIE: I know the feeling.

ALICE: This place is our home.

BONNIE: Right. And some home it is, eh?

ALICE: It would be if you'd appreciate it.

BONNIE: What, you want us to start playing happy families?

ALICE: No, I...forget it.

Bonnie starts eating some of the food in a very messy manner.

ALICE: Do you have to eat like that?

BONNIE: Like what?

ALICE: Like an animal.

BONNIE: We're in the wild. Why can't I eat like this?

ALICE: People could be watching.

BONNIE: Honey, the only good thing about this place is that no one can see this type of stuff. We can truly be ourselves.

ALICE: Well then stop complaining about being here.

BONNIE: You're seriously not looking forward to this job being done?

ALICE: I'm not bothered either way.

BONNIE: What about what we were just talking about? Doing stuff back home, pubs and shit. Or is drinking and dating a heinous sin for you?

ALICE: Catholics aren't that strict. But they're not my thing either.

Bonnie looks at Alice, as if quizzing her on something. Alice quickly averts eye contact and goes back to her work.

ALICE: If you have a problem with this place, bring it up with Alan next week.

BONNIE:

Hah, I'm not asking that guy for fuck all. And I bet you he's not actually gonna help with anything, he's just coming 'cause he likes creeping around.

The lights flicker.

BONNIE:

Though maybe you should bring that up with him.

The lights flicker out.

ACT ONE - SCENE THREE

Lights flicker on.

*Alice is fiddling with the radio and making notes. **Bonnie** is looking at some maps. They are sat separately.*

*There's a knock on the door. **Alice** and **Bonnie** look at each other. **Bonnie** sighs, gets up, and presses the intercom.*

BONNIE: *(In Russian)* Who is it?!/ кто это

ALAN (THROUGH INTERCOM): *(In Russian Accent)* Ah, it's best supervisor in all of Russia!

Alice stands up and also goes to the door. The women look at each other.

ALICE: Be nice.

*Alice opens the door and **Alan** enters. **Alice** closes and locks the door.*

ALAN: Good day, ladies. How are my little Russian workers?

BONNIE & ALICE: Hi Alan.

***Alan** takes his coat off and shoves it towards **Bonnie**. She reluctantly hangs it up.*

ALAN: Your accent's getting pretty good **Bonnie**. You haven't turned full-commie, have you?

BONNIE: Hm.

ALAN: Maybe that would explain why you're here when you're supposed to be out working.

BONNIE: I finished early. I don't have to go out again till tomorrow.

ALAN: Hmm, maybe we'll have to schedule you more trips then, since you're so good at them. Keep you busy, so you're not bothering Alice.

BONNIE: I'm not bothering Alice.

ALICE: Yes you are.

BONNIE: Well if you do schedule more trips, you'll have to get me more equipment. A lot of my stuff's busted, look.

Bonnie shows Alan her damaged equipment. He tuts at it.

ALAN: That's Russian craftsmanship for you. Anything happen out there? Or Alice, anything exciting to report? Or have you been slacking off as well?

ALICE: Oh, no, course not!

ALAN: Course you wouldn't, you're my little star!

Alan squeezes Alice's shoulder for a little too long.

ALICE: Um, there is actually something that I wanted to talk to you about. About the radio.

ALAN: Sure- Oh, Bonnie, get me a drink, would ya?

BONNIE: The only drink we've got is water from the tap outside.

ALAN: I guess I can stomach that.

Bonnie looks at Alice, then gets a glass and goes outside. Alice locks the door behind her.

ALAN: Thought I'd get her out of your hair for a while.

ALICE: Oh, hah, thanks.

ALAN: Good that you're locking the door.

ALICE: Got to keep the bears out.

ALICE: There's also a lot of nasty people out there that'd wanna get in here. Especially for a lady. Shame there's no one keeping guard.

ALICE: Well, Paul comes along every month, and he keeps an eye on us. In his way.

ALAN: Yeah, well, I'm not so sure about that Paul. He alwa-

The radio starts playing static, subtly repeating the word "Paul."

ALAN: What's up with that thing?

ALICE: That's what I wanted to talk to you about. I think we need to get a new one, this one keeps playing static. Static and Elvis songs.

ALAN: Elvis? It might be picking up on a music station.

ALICE: But there aren't any music stations around here. And I doubt they'd be playing American music.

ALAN: True. Can't you fix it?

ALICE: Nothing I do seems to make it work. Are you able to fix it?

ALAN: Ah, Alan must always play the hero, mustn't he?

He looks at the radio slightly.

ALAN: As long as you're still able to send in your reports, there's no real problem, is there?

ALICE: Well, no, but it's just a bit...I worry it'll go off when we don't want it to, you know?

ALAN: Hmm. I could get someone to come and look at it, but to be honest, we're a little short-staffed at the moment.

There's a knock at the door. Alice presses the intercom.

ALICE: *(In Russian)* Who is it?/ КТО ЭТО

BONNIE (THROUGH INTERCOM): *(In Russian)* Let me in, would you?

Alice lets Bonnie in, locking the door behind her.

Bonnie hands Alan his drink.

BONNIE: So what's this urgent business you came to talk to us about?

ALAN: I was just getting to that. I came to give you this.

Alan pulls out a ka-bar knife and puts it on the table.

BONNIE: A k-bar? I already have one.

ALAN: Alice doesn't. And it's a new policy for all workers in this sector.

ALICE: Why?

ALAN: Well, I can't say much, but there's been some funny goings-on lately, ladies. As I was saying to Alice, we're a tad short-staffed at the moment. Which is due to the fact that a lot of them have, well, gone missing.

ALICE: Missing?

BONNIE: There haven't been more accidents, have there?

Bonnie and Alan exchange a look.

ALAN: No, no accidents this time, Bonnie. It's happening far too often. At first we were worried that the Commies were onto us, but now we're pretty sure it's just an animal.

BONNIE: Then why do you still seem so worried?

ALAN: Well... alright, there seems to be this pattern with everyone that goes missing around this area.

They say that they keep getting calls from people, like really funny calls. One tech guy from the south base got a call from a previously fired officer, which is obviously a sanctionable offence, but when we interrogated him about it, he was adamant that he hadn't spoken to that officer in years. And then...he just vanished. They all just vanish. Like something's taken off with them in the night.

ALICE:

Has anyone been found?

ALAN:

Well, yeah, actually, almost all of them have been found eventually. It's just that they're found dead. Bodies ripped apart. It's horrific, girls. No human could do that, not even in times like this.

BONNIE:

So like you said, it's an animal then?

ALAN:

Most likely. But then there was my friend Ben, great lad, bless his heart, anyway he didn't show up for work for 4 days. We were all going crazy, thinking something had happened to him. But then I got a call from him, and he had no recollection of ever missing work. Then the next day, he was found. Dead.

Beat.

ALAN:

I'll be honest with you girls, no one's really sure what to make of it. So since you're miles away from anyone, I would keep a lookout. Alice, learn how to use the k-bar.

ALICE:

...Right. Okay.

BONNIE:

Guess you were right about keeping that door locked.

ALAN:

Now don't be too scared girls, I'm sure you'll be fine. Remember, you have a job to do.

ALICE:

But Bonnie's job, wouldn't it be dangerous?

BONNIE:

Shit, yeah, I've got to head out tomorrow for almost a week! You couldn't get us a shotgun or anything?

- ALAN:** It's not that serious.
- BILLIE:** It could be, you said you didn't know what to make of it.
- ALAN:** Well, what I mean is that we don't have anything that's need-to-know. And a lack of information is your best protection right now.
- ALICE:** Do you think it might have something to do with the Russians? Even if it is just an animal?
- ALAN:** Who knows. It's the atomic age, ladies. Anything's possible. Now, I've got to head back. I'm staying near the Dyalto Pass for a bit, so I shan't be too far if you need me.
- ALICE:** You're staying out here?
- ALAN:** Yeah, I've got to check up on you more often while all this is going on, so I'm in a shack like this one for the foreseeable future.
- ALICE:** How is it?
- ALAN:** Terrible, like this one. But at least I don't have to deal with the wife for a while, eh? Maybe you're onto something, Alice.
- BONNIE:** Onto what?
- ALAN:** Well, she was practically racing to get out here, weren't you? Tired of the old hubby.
- ALICE:** That wasn't why I came here.
- ALAN:** Oh, sure. Your secrets safe with me. I do miss my daughter though, being out here. Here, look.

Alan takes a photo out of his wallet.

- We took these together at Brighton, just before I left.
- ALICE:** Aw.

ALAN: Yeah, she's gorgeous, ain't she? She's gonna be fighting off the boys with a stick when she gets older.

ALICE: She's lovely.

Bonnie goes to look at the photo, but Alan snatches it away and puts it back in his wallet.

ALAN: I don't want you looking at her.

He grabs his coat and starts putting it on.

Now, both of you need to keep your reports coming in, and don't let this animal give you an excuse to slack off.

ALICE: Of course not. This operation's too important to mess around.

ALAN: Hear, hear. Wish Debra understood that as well as you. Shame you can't take her place.

Alan laughs. Alice forces a laugh.

Alan catches Bonnie looking at them.

ALAN: What's with that face?

BONNIE: You shouldn't talk to her that way.

ALAN: What?

ALICE: Bonnie.

BONNIE: I said you shouldn't talk to her that way.

ALAN: Maybe you shouldn't talk to your superiors that way, Bonnie. Stone isn't here anymore to take the fall for you.

Pause.

BONNIE: Right. Sorry.

ALAN: I'll be making a note of this later. Get the door for me. Now, stay strong Alice, alright? It's how we'll win this war!

Bonnie opens the door for Alan.

ALICE: Yes, hear hear!

The lights flicker.

ALICE: Oh, Alan, I meant to say, the lights keep-

ALAN: Sorry Alice, but I've got another meeting in an hour. I'm sure you girls can handle it!

Alan exits, with Bonnie closing the door behind him.

Alice locks the door.

BONNIE: Guess I'm fixing them then.

Beat.

BONNIE: I didn't know you had a husband.

Lights flicker out.