

THE IMMORTAL'S GUIDE TO DEATH

CHARACTERS:

HENRY	25-40, A vampire from 1392, Britain
MAGGIE	25-40, A vampire from 1713, Boston
QUINN*	16-22, A vampire from 2011, Wisconsin
GUARD	30+, The museum guard

* While QUINN is written as female the character can also be played as male.

ACT 1

SCENE 1 - HENRY'S HOUSE

(In center stage, an armchair and a couch sit on either side of a small coffee table. Behind them the floor is covered with cardboard boxes labeled various things like: BOOKS, BOOKS ETC. and FRAGILE OLD BOOKS.)

(HENRY is anxiously pacing behind the couch and armchair. MAGGIE knocks on the door. HENRY crosses to the door and opens it.)

HENRY: Maggie! Come in!

(MAGGIE enters and hugs HENRY.)

MAGGIE: Henry, it has been too long!

HENRY: I know, it has. It's so nice to see you. How was your drive?

MAGGIE: Long but nice. I'm sorry I'm late.

HENRY: You're alright. You're right on time.

(MAGGIE looks around the room.)

MAGGIE: Is anyone else coming tonight?

HENRY: Yes, her name is Quinn. I don't think you two have met.

MAGGIE: When is she from?

HENRY: 2011.

MAGGIE: That early? I don't think I've ever met a vampire from this century.

HENRY: She is quite different. This new breed of vampire confuses me. Do you want to sit?

(HENRY gestures to the couch. MAGGIE crosses to the couch and sits.)

HENRY: Would you like anything to drink? I could get you something? Water -

MAGGIE(interrupting): No, thank you.

HENRY: Alright.

(HENRY sits in the armchair.)

MAGGIE: So, how have you been?

HENRY: Fine, fine. Just fine. (hesitates) So, how about you? How have you been?

MAGGIE: I've been fine.

HENRY: That's good.

(They sit in awkward silence for a moment.)

HENRY: We're turning into humans. How have you really been? I mean, the last time I saw you was... what, twenty years ago at Ed Collins' funeral?

MAGGIE: Twenty-five. It's been a while. But really, I've been doing alright. I did have to move again about five years ago. I'd been living in South Carolina since ... well I guess I moved in right around the time that Ed was killed. It was time to leave. You know, you can only use plastic surgery as an excuse for so long. But when I was looking for a new place, I found a group of vampires living out in Washington state so I moved out by them. They're very nice. But really Henry, I've been alright. I've just been keeping busy avoiding my neighbors and working on that scarf I started in the 80's.

HENRY: You've been working on the same scarf for 40 years?

MAGGIE: Oh, not those eighties.

HENRY: Which -

MAGGIE: That doesn't matter. It makes me feel old. What have you been up to these past twenty-five years?

HENRY: I've been churning out Professor Tobias Drake murder mysteries.

MAGGIE: Well, I know that. Other than that.

HENRY: Playing solitaire? I don't know. I don't do much, Maggie.

MAGGIE: Are they still selling well?

HENRY: What?

MAGGIE: Your books - are they selling well? The bookstore near me still carries them but I'm afraid they only stock them for me and my book club.

HENRY: Oh yes, they're still selling well.

MAGGIE: That's good.

HENRY: My publisher is happy the writing talent has passed down to another generation.

MAGGIE: How many Henry Gores' have there been now? Three?

HENRY: Four. My publisher thinks he's communicating with Henry Gore the fourth right now.

MAGGIE: Does he suspect anything?

HENRY: No. The only thing he and the publishing house suspect is nepotism. Which they're fine with since it makes them money.

MAGGIE: How much longer do you think you'll be able to turn out Professor Drake novels?

HENRY: I don't know. There are only so many murder mystery plots and characters out there. This might be the last generation of Henry Gores'. But then, I don't know what else I'd do for a living.

(QUINN knocks on the door.)

HENRY: That must be Quinn.

(HENRY opens the door.)

HENRY: Come in.

(QUINN enters wearing headphones and singing.)

QUINN: Call me up we'll talk about gerbils all night long. I just wanna-

HENRY: Quinn. Quinn!

(HENRY takes one of the earbuds out of QUINN'S ear.)

QUINN (speaking with a British accent): What?

HENRY: Turn that off.

QUINN: What? Do you want Gregorian Chants? I have those too. I know they were all the rage when you were a kid.

HENRY: No, no, no. You're not doing that here.

QUINN: Doing what? Gregorian Chants?

HENRY: The British accent.

QUINN: Oh, come on! No one will take me seriously otherwise.

HENRY: You're from Wisconsin, Quinn!

QUINN: Exactly, who in their right mind is going to take a vampire from Wisconsin seriously? (exaggerated Midwest accent) Ope! Sorry I drained you of all your blood - I was hungry.

HENRY: Vampires don't drink blood - that's a myth. As long as we get enough iron in our diet, we're fine.

QUINN (with her normal accent): Oh my gosh - it was a joke. I know I don't have to bite humans to survive. You are preaching to the immortal choir, dude.

HENRY: What happened to your accent?

(QUINN sticks her tongue out at HENRY.)

(From this point on Quinn speaks with her normal accent.)

QUINN: I hate you.

HENRY: Why are you late? There can't be much traffic this time of night.

QUINN: Trust me, I have a really good excuse. Just give me a few minutes to think of it.

(QUINN crosses to MAGGIE.)

QUINN: Hey, I'm Quinn.

MAGGIE: I'm Maggie. It's nice to meet you. Henry tells me you've been a vampire since 2011?

QUINN: Yeah. Twilight was, like, super popular and my parents thought I was going through, like, a vampire phase.

MAGGIE: Oh.

QUINN: So, who else is coming?

HENRY: No one. Everyone's here.

QUINN: You have only two friends? That is sad, dude.

HENRY (completely over QUINN'S jokes): Okay.

QUINN: So, why are we here?

HENRY: Are you serious?

MAGGIE: He's missing something.

QUINN: Really?

HENRY: Quinn, you know this! You read my email! You're here.

QUINN: No, I skimmed your email. Your emails are way too long.

HENRY: I'm not even surprised.

QUINN (sarcastically): Oh no, I'm becoming predictable in my old age.

MAGGIE: You're not old.

(QUINN sits next to MAGGIE.)

QUINN: True. But this guy - dude, you use email, you're ancient. Hey, also, I have been meaning to ask you: where did you stay on Noah's Ark?

HENRY: I'm from the Middle Ages not the beginning of time.

QUINN: Huh, you don't look that young. (to MAGGIE) When are you from?

MAGGIE: 1713.

QUINN: Where?

MAGGIE: Massachusetts.

QUINN: Dude, you would have been so useful to know during high school. Wait, how'd you get bit?

MAGGIE: My fiancé at the time was a vampire. He wanted to take the 'death till we part' out of our relationship. We had a very messy break up in the forties.

HENRY: Can we get back to my problem?

QUINN: You broke up with him after thirty years? That's insane.

MAGGIE: Oh, not those forties. Yes, Henry?

QUINN: Wait, which forties?

HENRY: Quinn, can you focus for -

QUINN: No.

MAGGIE: Quinn, please. Let Henry talk.

QUINN: Sorry.

HENRY: You're listening to her? Alright, fine. I asked you both to come here because I need your help getting something back.

QUINN: Something?

HENRY: A book. I was cleaning out my house - I've been living in this neighborhood for too long and I need to move before they start to suspect.

QUINN: Can you speed this up? I don't have all night.

MAGGIE: You are aware that you're immortal?

QUINN: Yeah, but I was just getting bored.

MAGGIE: Henry, please continue.

HENRY: While I was cleaning, I was also babysitting my neighbor's cat because they were out of town for the weekend.

QUINN: Wait, you actually talk to your neighbors? (to MAGGIE) Get out the pitchforks and torches, he's a monster!

HENRY: I'm ignoring her. So, what I think happened is that when I was going through my books the cat knocked the book I didn't want to get rid of into the box of things I was getting rid of, and then I donated that box to a thrift store without looking in the box again.

(MAGGIE and QUINN stare blankly at HENRY for a moment.)

QUINN: This is extremely far-fetched - you can just say you had donator's remorse.

HENRY: When I noticed the book was gone - which was weeks after I donated the boxes - I searched through my whole house. I didn't find it so I thought that it might have somehow ended up in the thrift store boxes so I went to the thrift store and looked everywhere - but it wasn't there.

QUINN: Okay so, I don't mean to be rude -

HENRY: Why do I have a feeling you're going to be rude now?

QUINN: But you lost a book.

HENRY: Yes.

QUINN: I know they weren't around when you were a kid but have you ever heard of this thing called a library?

HENRY: This isn't a book I can just go and get from a library. It's special. It's one of-a-kind.

QUINN: What book is it?

HENRY: It's - well, it's not a book really. (hesitates) It's my diary.

MAGGIE: Quinn, shut up.

QUINN: For once, I didn't say anything.

MAGGIE: How long have you had this diary?

HENRY: Since before I was a vampire. It has my whole life in it. I need to get it back.

QUINN: Wait, why did it take you weeks to notice your diary was missing? It's a diary, weren't you, like, I don't know, writing in it daily or something?

HENRY: I had writer's block.

QUINN: On a diary?

HENRY: I don't know, the last hundred and fifty years were kind of depressing for me. And now I feel like if I start to write I have to fill in what happened during that time and I just don't know how to even begin doing that.

QUINN: Okay, that actually makes sense.

MAGGIE: So, do you know where your diary is? I'm assuming you wouldn't have called us here if you didn't.

HENRY: They were advertising it on television. The authenticated diary of the fourteenth century knight Sir Henry Gormlaith, is the newest exhibit at The Museum of Postmodern and Medieval Art in Chicago.

QUINN: Woa woa woa woa wait, you're a knight? Like a real sword dueling, village pillaging, maiden saving knight?

HENRY: Well, yes but -

QUINN: Why am I just finding this out? That's so cool! Did you fight with King Arthur?

HENRY: King Arthur isn't - (he sighs) No. Just no.

QUINN: That's lame. Okay, so anyway, so you want us to break into a museum and steal your diary back - is that what I'm hearing?

HENRY: Well, yes - no. Sort of.

QUINN: Okay, cool. Just checking.

MAGGIE: How are we supposed to help you break into a museum?

HENRY: You both have expertise that could be useful.

MAGGIE: I have no experience breaking into art museums, Henry.

HENRY: But you told me how you helped smuggle slaves up North during the Civil War - that might help us now.

MAGGIE: It really won't.

QUINN: Ooh! What about me? What's my expertise?

HENRY: Well, you're - you. I'd be surprised if you hadn't broken into somewhere already.

QUINN: First of all: how dare you. Second of all: of course, I have.

MAGGIE: Henry, I know you want your diary back but what if we get caught? Have you thought about that? If we're caught, we're sure to be exposed to sunlight.

HENRY: No, you don't understand. I'm not asking either of you to come with me, I just need your help figuring out how to get into and out of the museum.

MAGGIE: You can't go alone!

HENRY: I'm not taking anyone with me. You are completely right - if we get caught, we will be exposed to sunlight. And I'm not risking that for anyone but me.

MAGGIE: You are not going alone.

HENRY: Yes, I am. This is my mistake I have to be the one to fix it. It won't be right for anyone but me to risk exposure to the sun.

MAGGIE: I am not going to lose you for the sake of a diary. I am coming with you.

(HENRY grabs MAGGIE'S hand.)

HENRY: This isn't a suicide mission. There's just a chance that I could get caught. That's it, a chance. I'm going to come back. I promise.

MAGGIE: A diary is not worth your life.

HENRY: But all of my life is in that diary. There is no part of my soul that I haven't turned over and bled out onto those pages. All of my secrets, all of my dreams, all of my feelings are in that book. I need to get it back.

MAGGIE: Henry -

HENRY: I'll be okay.

(HENRY and MAGGIE gaze into each other's eyes for far too long.)

QUINN: Are you two in love? Gross. (pause) I'm hungry. You got any food?

HENRY: Uh. (thinks about it) Oh! I made garlic bread and steaks.

QUINN: You're not funny. Seriously, is there food anywhere in your house or did your cat accidently donate all that to the thrift store too?

MAGGIE: Quinn!

HENRY: I didn't make a meal, but there are plenty of snacks in the kitchen. Knock yourself out.

QUINN: Thank you.

(QUINN exits into the kitchen.)

MAGGIE: I coming with you.

HENRY: Maggie, I don't want to argue about this.

MAGGIE: I don't want to, either.

(Offstage) QUINN: Yo, Henry! Why do you have kale chips? You're immortal, you don't need to worry about your health.

HENRY: I like them. Don't judge me.

(Offstage) QUINN: It is far too late for that. Ooooh, what does this do?

(Offstage, the whirring of a blender is heard.)

HENRY: Don't touch that!

MAGGIE: So, how did you two meet?

HENRY: A midnight showing of Twilight. She had been turned into vampire a year before.

(Offstage) QUINN: You know, these kale chips taste like they were made before you became a vampire. Which was like what: 700BC? Or whenever they were building the pyramids.

HENRY: I made them last week.

(QUINN enters holding the bag of kale chips.)

QUINN: You made these? You need cooking lessons.

(QUINN exits.)

MAGGIE: I think the best way to avoid being detected would be for us to go into the museum while it's still open and hide somewhere inside until they're closed. I think we could all fit in a closet or something.

HENRY: You are not coming with me.

(QUINN enters without the kale chips.)

QUINN: Look, I'm with Mary on this one -

MAGGIE: Maggie.

QUINN: You going alone is a worse idea than those kale chips.

HENRY: Look, I just need your help -

QUINN: To eat the kale chips?

HENRY: No! Will you let me finish?

QUINN: The kale chips? Definitely.

MAGGIE: We're coming with you.

HENRY: No, you are not!

QUINN: Wait - I actually like this idea. So, we go into the museum, hide somewhere and once the museum is closed, we sneak

over to your diary, take it, and I know what you're thinking-

HENRY: I seriously doubt that.

QUINN: (mimicking HENRY'S voice) Quinn, what if we come across a guard? And that's exactly what you sound like, by the way. Well, if we do come across a guard, I'll bite them, turn them into a vampire and then we escape out into the night like bats - except we can't turn into bats because apparently that's a myth. Anyway, boom! Perfect plan! Once again Quinn to the rescue. You. Are. Welcome.

HENRY: Quinn - no.

QUINN: Quinn, yes.

HENRY: We are not turning anyone into a vampire.

QUINN: You are so boring. This is why I don't read your emails.

HENRY: Turning someone into a vampire doesn't stop them from attacking you - it just makes them a vampire.

QUINN: But I haven't bit anyone yet and that's like a vampire rite of passage. (QUINN runs her tongue over her teeth) By the way, when do I get my fangth?

HENRY: You don't. Fangs are a myth.

QUINN: What? I never get fangs, I can't turn into a bat, and I can't do mirror mazes anymore? Remind me what the perks of being a vampire are again?

MAGGIE: Immortality.

QUINN: Oh yeah, that is nice.

HENRY: Will both of you stop? Neither of you are coming with me!

MAGGIE: Alright, then I won't help you.

(MAGGIE stands up.)

HENRY: What are you doing?

MAGGIE: Leaving. Why should I stay - since I can't do anything to help.

(QUINN gasps.)

QUINN: A lovers' quarrel.

HENRY and MAGGIE: Shut up!

QUINN: This is fun.

(HENRY sighs and stands.)

HENRY: You really want to come with me?

MAGGIE: Yes!

(HENRY thinks about it.)

HENRY: Alright. Against my better judgement - alright. You can come with me.

QUINN: Whooo! We're breaking into a museum! We're breaking into a museum!

HENRY: Quinn, don't. Please, just don't.

(QUINN sticks her tongue out at HENRY.)

MAGGIE (to HENRY): Thank you.

HENRY: How do we do this?

(HENRY sits in the armchair. MAGGIE and QUINN sit on the couch.)

MAGGIE: I say we leave now and drive down to Chicago while it's still dark. It will only take a few hours. Once we're there we can get a hotel to stay inside during the day.

HENRY: Okay.

MAGGIE: Then close to closing - what time does the museum close?

HENRY: I don't know.

(QUINN: pulls out her phone and begins typing.)

QUINN: On it!

MAGGIE: Thank you. We'll go close to closing and hide in a backroom or closet or something like that. We can figure that out when we get there.

HENRY: Holdup, how are we going to get into the museum? We have to be invited in to places.

MAGGIE: We'll find someone to ask if we can come in. We can say we weren't sure if they were still open and we wanted to make sure we could come in.

HENRY: But are you sure that will work? That doesn't seem like a foolproof plan.

MAGGIE: It will work. I do it all the time when I go shopping.

QUINN: Why do you need to do it when you go shopping? Walmart has greeters.

MAGGIE: I got tired of shopping at Walmart.

QUINN: But Walmart has everything.

HENRY: Alright, can we get back to the museum?

MAGGIE: Sorry, Henry.

QUINN: Sorry.

HENRY: Alright, so once the museum is closed -

QUINN: Oh yeah, it closes at 8.

HENRY: Good. So once the museum closes at 8 ... we do what?

MAGGIE: We'll stay in our hiding spot for an hour or so then come out, find the diary, steal back the diary and escape out into the night - like bats.

QUINN: I like you.

HENRY: But how are we going to avoid being arrested? Even if we don't get caught actively stealing the diary, they're sure to see us on the security cameras.

QUINN: No, they won't.

HENRY: What do you mean?

QUINN: Wait, you don't know this? A-hah! Professor Quinn to the rescue! We are vampires.

HENRY: I did actually know that.

QUINN: Okay, shut up. Listen, we are vampires and vampires don't show up in photos or videos. When you look at the photo or watch the video back, we are nowhere to be seen - it's like we weren't even there. Drove my mother crazy. She thought I was doing something to her computer.

MAGGIE: Are you serious?

QUINN: Yeah, my mom was so mad.

HENRY: No, not that. About not showing up in the photos.

QUINN: Yeah. How do you not know this? You guys have been vampires since before wheels were invented.

MAGGIE: No one goes around trying to take photos of us.

HENRY: Are you sure we won't show up on the security cameras?

QUINN: Positive - it's happened to me before.

(HENRY looks curiously at QUINN)

QUINN: I didn't steal anything. I worked overnight shifts at a grocery store. My boss fired me for never showing up for work - I was there, he just couldn't see me on the security cameras.

MAGGIE: That's awful.

QUINN: Yeah, it was a shame.

HENRY: There's a punchline coming.

QUINN: My boss really didn't see what a hard worker I was! Bum-dum-tish!

(Neither HENRY nor MAGGIE laugh.)

QUINN: Get it? Get it? He didn't see me because I was invisible. That's the joke.

MAGGIE: Do we have to take her along?

HENRY: She knows too much.

QUINN: You know I can hear you right?

(HENRY stands.)

HENRY: Alright, let's do this. I'll go grab some snacks. You guys get ready to go.

MAGGIE: I'll pull my car up.

(MAGGIE stands and heads for the front door. QUINN stands and pulls out keys from her pocket.)

QUINN: Here. (She throws the keys to MAGGIE) Let's take my car instead. It has a bunch of leg room and I just filled it up on the way here.

MAGGIE: I can't argue with that.

(MAGGIE exits and QUINN follows HENRY.)

HENRY: And what are you doing?

QUINN: Making sure you don't pack the kale chips.

(HENRY sighs. HENRY and QUINN exit into the kitchen.)