

“Miss Hannah Comes Back”

Side #3 –Miss Hannah, Radio Announcer, Cathy, and Paula

CATHY. What are you doing?

MISS HANNAH. Nothing.

(MISS HANNAH hides the syringe, scuttles to the wall right.)

MISS HANNAH. Just looking for a little ol’ hole that was in the baseboard here. When I lived here. I used to hide things in it.

*(MISS HANNAH is busy with the syringe at the baseboard.
CATHY sees the bottle, picks it up.)*

CATHY. Ant eggs? What the hell? *(Goes over to MISS HANNAH.)*

MISS HANNAH. You stand back, now.

CATHY. What’s wrong with you?

*(PAULA enters, carrying a tray with a French press, coffee cups,
sugar, milk, etc.)*

MISS HANNAH. I said, stand back!

(MISS HANNAH threatens CATHY with the syringe.)

MISS HANNAH. Those that live by the sword shall perish by the sword!

PAULA. What?

MISS HANNAH. The sword!

PAULA. Miss Hannah, are you okay?

CATHY. *(Suddenly realizing.)* Hannah! Hannah dryad.

MISS HANNAH. *(Correcting CATHY.)* Hamadryad.

CATHY. *(To PAULA.)* She's the spirit of the tree! *(Stabbing her finger at the tree stump.)* She's doing a sword for a sword thing.

MISS HANNAH. That's "an eye for an eye," young lady.

CATHY. Poison for poison!

PAULA. *(Still bewildered, grasping at something to say.)* Oh, Cath, if it were poison for poison, she'd put arsenic or something in our...

(PAULA looks down at the coffee.)

PAULA. Oh.

(PAULA sets tray down, as far away from MISS HANNAH as she can. CATHY makes a grab for MISS HANNAH'S arm, trying to get the syringe away from her, but she pulls her hand back with a gasp of pain, dropping the bottle of ant eggs.)

MISS HANNAH. *(Maliciously.)* Weed killer stings, doesn't it?

CATHY. Oh, God, Paula, call Richard right away.

MISS HANNAH. Too late! *(Laughs.)*

PAULA. He's dead.

CATHY. Shit.

(During the following, MISS HANNAH snatches up the bottle and hobbles around the room, gleefully scattering ant eggs as she goes. CATHY tries to stop MISS HANNAH, but burns her hand each time she touches her. PAULA watches, alarmed, not sure what to do.)

PAULA

MISS HANNAH

CATHY

Too late. Too late! Y'all never gonna get rid of all of them. They'll burrow into y'all's house and eat their way up, killing the house from

Ow!

Fuck!

Give me that goddamned bottle!

Cathy? Maybe I should call 911.

(Goes to the phone and dials.)

(Into phone.) Um, I'm reporting – Cathy! What are you doing?

My Lord, Cathy! You'll hurt her! You'll kill her!

the roots, eating away the plumbing, chewing the insulation off the wires, drying out that lovely new roof y'all put on, y'all never going to be able to stop it, only thing y'all gonna be able to do is take a chainsaw to it and cut it down. Cut it down!

(MISS HANNAH trips and falls behind the sofa.)

(Gets the hatchet and chases MISS HANNAH around the room.)

You old bitch! This is my house. We don't want you here.

(Starts chopping up MISS HANNAH.)

Die, you old bitch, die!

(Bits and chunks of wood begin to fly out from behind the sofa as CATHY keeps chopping. Suddenly she stops. Silence.)

PAULA. *(Into phone.)* I'll have to call you right back. *(Hangs up.)*

CATHY. We killed her, Paulie. We really killed her.

PAULA. Set the hatchet down, sweetie. Please. You're scaring me.

(CATHY lets the hatchet drop to the floor. PAULA carefully picks it up and sets it outside.)

CATHY. We did it. She's dead for good now. God, I'm thirsty.

(CATHY pours herself some coffee, sits. Before she can drink:)

PAULA. Cathy, you killed that old lady!

CATHY. *(Looking at the wood.)* We should have a big cookout.

(CATHY raises the coffee cup to her lips.)

PAULA. We should get the bug spray. *(Looks behind the sofa.)*

CATHY. We'll burn it all, have the biggest bonfire –

(CATHY Drinks some coffee.)

PAULA. Stop! We need to call an exterminator.

CATHY. *(Frowns.)* Oh, God.

(PAULA begins to pick up the wood, shaking, taking it out the side door and stacking it on the porch. The radio gets louder.)

RADIO ANNOUNCER. Folks have been calling in about the accident that killed Richard DeGrassi earlier this morning. And I thank y'all for it, because those state investigators ain't saying a thing anymore. So here's what I've been able to piece together.

Richard's truck – a Ford F150, one of those older ones with a long bed that a fellow can actually do something with – the front end of it is wrecked up but good, and most of the front bumper is missing.

(PAULA has picked up something that is not wood. It's part of the bumper of a pick-up truck. She stares at it, then holds it out to CATHY. They look at it, at each other. CATHY takes it. We hear a police siren in the distance, coming closer. During the following, CATHY looks around, then hides the bumper under the sofa.)

RADIO ANNOUNCER. Now, here's where it gets strange, folks. There's lots of bark and wood stuck there in the front of the truck, but there ain't no tree in the area shows signs of being run into. Some sharp eyed folks report seeing marks around Richard's neck, like he'd been strangled, and overheard investigators talking about a bunch of Spanish moss on the seat and around his neck.

Only thing investigators are saying is, that they've identified a "person of interest," and are planning to bring that person in for questioning. Leo and Marjorie thank everyone for their kind attentions, and they'll let you know when the funeral will be just as soon as the investigators release the body to the funeral home.

Y'all be careful out there, now, you hear?

(CATHY and PAULA sit. Numbly PAULA picks up CATHY's coffee cup, drinks, frowns, adds sugar. We hear maniacal laughter. The lights fade, leaving only a light on the tree stump. Lights out.)