

## **“Something Spooky”**

*“The Invited”*

### **Outline**

By Byron Dunbar and Alexander Gustafsson

#### **EPISODE PREMISE:**

**Log-Line:** When a girl disobeys her parents and invites a stranger into her house, it turns out that he’s a vampire who is now capable of coming and going as he pleases.

**Wish List:** I like stories with a mysterious, creepy feeling, complete with an EC comics-style snap ending. I also like stories that depict characters struggling to overcome personal weaknesses, and which teach their audiences valuable lessons.

**Possibilities:** This premise will allow me to write a fun EC-style terror tale, while conveying a strong moral.

**Audience Appeal:** It’s spooky enough for me as an adult, edifying enough for a network, and entertaining enough for kids.

**Story Challenges and Problems:** **Q:** How do I tell a story that’s truly a horror story in that it’s scary, yet appropriate for children? **A:** I will only imply the most horrific content but make certain it is present. **Q:** How do I tell a story that’s both relevant to me as an adult and of value to a young demographic? **A:** In my own life, lies have caused bad situations to develop into worse ones. Likewise, owning up to the truth is a lesson kids must learn. **Q:** The protagonist could find all the information she needs to defeat the vampire online, but this story relies on her ignorance. How will I find a natural way to address this issue? **A:** To solve that problem (and to play up the EC comics aspects of the story even further) this tale will take place in the nineteen-fifties.

**Designing Principal:** I’ll make it ambiguous until the end what exactly the vampire is up to, keeping the story both mysterious for adults and appropriate for children. Meanwhile, I’ll have the protagonist’s lies prevent her from solving the mystery. This will teach young viewers the importance of being truthful.

**Best Character:** The protagonist’s name is Tiff, a little girl who twists the truth for her own benefit, regardless of how it affects others. This makes her the character most in need of change. As great stories deal with their hero/heroine either succeeding or failing to achieve personal growth, Tiff is the perfect protagonist for this story.

**Tiff’s Psychological Weakness:** Tiff doesn’t realize that her lies both create and exacerbate her problems, rather than solve them.

**Tiff’s Moral Weakness:** Tiff is too self-centered to acknowledge that she’s mistreating others.

Story World: The story is set in a small, North American town in the mid-twentieth century. I'm taking influence from David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* and *Twin Peaks* in that, as with nearly every word out of Tiff's mouth, the town itself a lie. Like Lumberton in *Blue Velvet*, Tiff's hometown hides its dark underbelly (in this case, symbolized by vampires instead of gangsters) under a superficially benign nineteen-fifties exterior. Truth is elusive here, not least of all because Tiff doesn't have a cellphone or a computer with which to research vampires. And unlike her studious, horror-obsessed friend Peggy (we'll discuss her soon), Tiff is too lazy to head the library and read what she calls "musty old books!"

Tiff's Desire: Tiff wants to get rid of the vampire without revealing his presence to her parents.

Central Conflict: Tiff seems to be competing with the vampire over whether or not her parents will find out that she let a stranger into the house. But as the story continues, it becomes apparent that Tiff and the vampire are *truly* competing over who will wind up controlling her parents.

Tiff's Main Opponent: A four-hundred-year-old vampire named Victor, who appears to be a child around Tiff's age. Like Tiff, he wants control over her parents—but in a very different way to how Tiff does. Victor exploits Tiff's need for attention, the importance she places on maturity (or at least how Tiff defines it) the thrill she gets from misbehaving without being caught, as well as her vanity and disregard for others—particularly adults.

Moral Problem: Is lying ever a legitimate way to solve one's problems?

Theme: Lies just make things worse for everyone.

Basic Action: Tiff is forced to tell the other characters the truth about what she's done so they can help her banish Victor.

Character Change: Tiff goes from lying to others to telling them the truth, but unfortunately, she doesn't fully put this into practice until it's too late.

## EPISODE CHARACTERS:

### **Tiff –**

Tiff is a 12-year-old girl, and while she's not exactly a tomboy, she isn't particularly feminine—*or* particularly kind. For instance, Tiff places a great deal of importance upon calling all the shots, self-sufficiency and *her* version of the truth. She also loves the thrill of getting away with mischief and the satisfaction she receives from maintaining her disregard for others. Most of all, she values what she sees as maturity—but which is actually just attempting to *look* “grownup.” It's a surprisingly superficial, and dare I say, *immature* attitude!

While Tiff has the ability to uplift others, most of the time, she tears them down to render them easier to manipulate. The prime example of that is her so-called “best friend” Peggy. Conversely, Tiff also has the ability to uncover anyone's deepest potential, but generally opts not to. If she did, she'd probably grow into an excellent friend and mentor. But out of laziness, Tiff has chosen to be an arrogant, selfish bully. That said, Tiff hasn't developed this way out of the blue. She has a need for control because she spends most of the year at an all-girls boarding school. Her father chose to send her there against her will to avoid the stresses of being a parent, leading Tiff to feel powerless and abandoned. She responds by using her strong will and sharp wits to dominate her mother and father whenever she visits them (this story is set while Tiff is home for summer vacation).

Tiff's domineering attitude is not limited to her parents. In general, she is dismissive of the feelings of others and uncooperative, which drives nearly everyone away. To some extent, this self-isolating behavior is deliberate. Tiff seeks solitude because she's afraid of what she sees as the eventuality of losing people, which is a result of her abandonment issues. As mentioned, Tiff *does* have a friend named Peggy. But that's mainly due to the poor girl's low self-esteem, which leaves her willing to put up with Tiff's behavior (but only up to a point, as we'll soon see).

### **Victor –**

Like the vampires of folklore, Victor is animalistic in that he lives according to a kill-or-be-killed mentality. He justifies this worldview by insisting he's performing a service to society by rooting out the corrupt. For unlike Tiff, he places importance upon truth, justice, teamwork, and respect. Despite those ostensibly lofty principles, Victor uses idealism to justify taking advantage of others, even killing “sinners” (offscreen, of course) for their blood. And despite the lip service he pays toward honesty, Victor only reveals as much truth as he can without compromising himself. While he never outright lies, he puts his own spin on reality, allowing him to win. He does so through speaking in half-truths and leaving out crucial details—at least until his victory is ensured. At that point, he'll act as though he always made the whole truth apparent.

Note that Victor's brand of “justice” is always suspiciously beneficial for him. What he doesn't realize is that the relationships he forms are based on manipulation and subjugation, meaning that they'll ultimately leave him unsatisfied. To find true happiness, Victor must stop manipulating and even killing others to get what he wants. And what Victor wants is a family. Or

more specifically, *Tiff's* family. Given his four hundred years of life, he's had far more practice manipulating people than Tiff has, so he knows exactly what to say to get her to do what he wants. Victor's intelligence compliments his vampiric abilities, making him a most formidable foe. He uses those traits to trick Tiff into making her home safe for him to inhabit so he can drain just enough of her parents' blood to turn them into his vampiric slaves.

(The following won't occur onscreen, but for the sake of understanding the story world, it's important. In this story, new vampires are created when the original vampire only drains most of a victim's blood while draining all of a victim's blood kills them. New vampires become slaves of the original vampire until that vampire is executed through beheading, burning, or driving a stake through their heart. Henceforth, the subsequently created vampires receive free will and the ability to create their own vampire slaves. Beforehand, even if a new vampire kills a victim by draining all of their blood, no new vampire is created. Moreover, new vampires maintain their own personality, memories and values. They're simply powerless to disobey their new master.)

If Tiff only sees value in maturity and herself, then Victor sees value in youth and community. But just as Tiff has a skewed idea of what maturity is, Victor has a skewed idea of what community is. While he desires the comfort of a family unit, he only pursues the *appearance* of one, rather than a genuine connection with others. He's lived so long that he's afraid of connecting with other people because he knows they'll grow old and die. It's why he's opted to immortalize those he deems worthy as eternally young vampire slaves, while killing the "unworthy" for their blood.

### **Peggy –**

Peggy is a nerdy, friendless 9-year-old girl that Tiff hangs out with each summer vacation. She's sweet-natured but is also too much of a people pleaser. If one had to choose three words to describe her, they'd be insecure, nervous, and apprehensive. While those traits make Peggy the perfect stooge for a bully like Tiff, they drive off the other kids at the public school she attends. To escape the loneliness, Peggy (a huge horror fan) spends most of her time in the library researching the paranormal. When she's not at the library, Peggy can usually be found at the drug store reading horror comics like *Johnny Decay's Festival of Fear* or at the local movie theatre, checking out the latest creature-feature. Unfortunately, these "morbid interests" (to quote her teachers) make Peggy seem "creepy and weird" in the words of her schoolmates, isolating her further. That, combined with the abuse she receives—both from Tiff, the schoolchildren, and even her own parents, who are quite cruel—have caused a very bitter interior to form behind Peggy's shy, passive exterior.

Peggy's meek demeanor allows her to *seem* powerless, and therefore harmless. But as the story develops, we'll learn it provides Peggy with the perfect cover to take revenge on Tiff. Near the climax, it's revealed that she's actually working for Victor. Early in the story (but crucially, not onscreen) he offers to turn Peggy into a vampire. But only in exchange for helping Victor select a "deserving child to relieve of their family." Part of the reason Victor selects Peggy for this "gift" is that he's impressed that she's polite, even to her nasty parents. After "saving" Peggy by killing and feeding on her parents (again, off-screen), the girl is left with no one to take care

of her. Thus, she has little choice but to take Victor up on his offer. But that's not to say becoming a vampire has no genuine appeal for Peggy. As an outcast, she's actually had fantasies of becoming a "creature of the night" for the eternal life, youth, beauty, and status it entails. Her emotional insecurity also leaves her with the desire to avoid adulthood, which is another perk for Peggy. Plus, the fact that she'll see her enemies (in this case, Tiff) punished is icing on the cake.

After Peggy tells Victor about Tiff, he agrees to make Peggy a vampire—but only after Peggy's helped him prepare Tiff's home so it's safe for a vampire to inhabit. As a horror buff, Peggy's remembered to tell Victor about all the religious items that Tiff's mother keeps around the house; they'll need to find some way of getting rid of them. Victor decides to blackmail Tiff into throwing out these objects, while Peggy fools Tiff into believing that Victor's a ghost to prevent her from taking the correct steps to get rid of him.

Through these actions, Peggy puts stock in whatever version of the truth is most convenient for her at the time. While she needs to become proactive and confident to improve her life, she must learn to do so in a way that is not rooted in a desire for vengeance.

### **Tiff's Parents –**

Tiff's mother is named Joyce while her father is named Michael. Out of the two, Joyce is the more outwardly gentle and protective toward Tiff. She wants to be the kindest, most empathetic, family-focused and nurturing mother she can be! As a result, Joyce will do (almost) anything to keep Tiff happy. That leaves Joyce too eager to submit to her daughter, so she's an easy target for Tiff's emotional manipulation. So, while Joyce is supposedly the secondary head of the household after Michael, she's really subordinate to Tiff.

On the other hand, Michael displays more resolve in dealing with Tiff. But he takes it to the opposite extreme and cuts himself off from her emotionally. He sees this as being strict so he can't be accused of "coddling" his daughter, but that just exacerbates her problems. After all, the distance Tiff feels from her family is largely why she misbehaves. This isn't to say that Michael doesn't care, far from it. But while he values tough love, he puts too much emphasis on the *tough* and not enough on the *love*—despite deeply loving his daughter underneath it all. Nevertheless, Michael isn't even *truly* strict with Tiff. He has a bad habit of giving into frustration when faced with her attitude and simply leaves the room. In walking out on his daughter, he frees her to do whatever she wants. In this way, he goes just as easily on Tiff as Joyce does.

Tiff's parents appear to be at odds with her throughout the story, but if Tiff had been honest with them from the beginning, they would have helped her. For at their core, both parents want their daughter to grow. To do that, Joyce needs to be stricter with Tiff and Michael must learn to be warmer with her. As it stands, they have relinquished their power to their daughter, then sent her off to boarding school to avoid dealing with the consequences. They can't even admit it, meaning that Michael and Joyce are in just as much denial about the truth as any other character.

## EPISODE SUMMARY:

In the opening scene, a gang of teenage criminals are in the woods at night, hiding some loot they've just swiped...including a beautiful necklace. We get the impression it's common for gangs to use these woods as an area where they stash stolen goods, but on this particular night, the criminals are hunted down one by one. At first, the shadow-obscured culprit appears to be some kind of bat...then mist...then a wolf. The scene ends with the wolf disappearing into a rocky, shadowed area as the sun rises, holding the necklace in its jaws...

The next scene opens on a beautiful summer day in a quaint nineteen-fifties town. We pan down a sunny, wholesome street where all the houses are in a neatly ordered row, divided by cute white picket fences. It's a warm, open environment. Yet that openness also makes it seem a tad vulnerable. And in the distance, we see the same sinister forest from the first scene. It suggests that things aren't quite as innocent in this town as they might initially appear...

Sitting on the porch of the last house on the street (which is located just before the woods), we see Tiff for the first time. She looks innocent and wears a neat, tidy Catholic schoolgirls' uniform. But there's a defiant attitude in her eyes that belies her wholesome exterior. Tiff sits with her friend Peggy, who reads a horror anthology comic hosted by a ghoulish man named Johnny Decay. Tiff teases Peggy for being into "morbid junk." That hurts Peggy because she's told Tiff that the kids at her school give her a hard time about these interests. Peggy's response angers Tiff and she points out to Peggy that "at least you getta go to a public school, Peg." This makes Peggy uncomfortable and she starts looking for an excuse to leave. It's then that Peggy remembers that a horror movie she wants to see will be playing soon at the local movie theatre. "I'd uh, I'd ask ya to come along, but uh, I know you don't, uh, don't cotton to th'...uh...th' spooky stuff..." Peggy sputters, anxiously.

That just makes Tiff mad! "What, y'mean I'm too chicken? That it? Hah! I ain't some little kid Peg! I can handle a scary movie!" This leads Tiff to challenge Peggy's bravery, and she tries goading the girl into taking a walk through the nearby woods, which Peggy points out has been the location of a recent wave of disappearances. But Tiff counters with, "That's only happened at night!" In response, Peggy asks how taking the woods will prove her bravery if Tiff's certain that they're safe during the day. "Easy," Tiff snorts. "Cause I can tell yer scared anyhow!" Tiff also says that Peggy will get to the movie quicker if she takes this route, as it's supposedly a "short cut." After all, Tiff would know: the woods are outside her house and "when I'm home for th' summer, I take that route alla time." Peggy reluctantly acquiesces and after she leaves, Tiff laughs, knowing the "short cut" will actually slow Peggy down. By the time Peggy arrives at the movie theatre, she sees Tiff ahead of her in line, buying the last ticket. "Why, uh, whuh-why'd you do that?" stammers Peggy, deeply hurt. "You uh, you duh-don't even like scary movies..." With a smug smirk Tiff replies, "Easy. Cause immature kids—like you—shouldn't even be seeing scary movies!"

Due to the movie, Tiff doesn't return home until after dark. Upon her arrival, Tiff's parents (a woman named Joyce and a man named Michael) are worried sick. Joyce is relieved that Tiff's home safe. "Oh, honey—I'm so glad you're okay," Joyce declares as she fiddles with the crucifix she always wears around her neck. "And I hate to be a bother...but...where were you?"

Michael, on the other hand, is cross with Tiff, given the nocturnal disappearances. “We told you to stay on the porch with Peggy! Where in blazes did you scoot off to?” Hoping to avoid punishment, Tiff lies to her parents. “I was helpin’ this ol’ bird carry her groceries back into her place, ‘cause her, uh, her car broke down, see... ‘n...” That lie just makes Michael angrier at Tiff, “*What?* You took off with a blamed *stranger*?!” Tiff counters with “Aw, quit yer gripin’! Maybe I wouldn’t have if ma wasn’t cookin’ with garlic tonight! I hate that stuff...” Tiff says she’d rather have ice cream, but Joyce points out it’s for a special occasion. Upon hearing Tiff’s attitude, Michael attempts to punish Tiff by making her eat that night’s dinner cold. When Tiff refuses, he gives up and leaves the room while Joyce allows Tiff to have yesterday’s leftovers. As she eats, Joyce asks Tiff how her time off school is going. Tiff replies by saying that it’s awful because she doesn’t know anyone here but “that weirdo Peggy” and is annoyed that her mother asked. She feels Joyce should *know* she had a bad time, “It’s *yer* fault after all!” Tiff’s attitude prompts Joyce to leave the room as well, and Michael suggests to Joyce that they should go see a movie to get away. Joyce agrees, and decides to call a babysitter named Deborah.

Tiff is *enraged* that her parents would leave without taking her along! The tantrum Tiff throws just makes them want to get out of the house quicker. Originally, they were going to wait for Deborah to arrive but now they order Tiff not to let anyone in until Deborah gets there, then they lock up and leave as fast as possible. This makes Tiff feel like her parents don’t care about her. How could they leave her completely alone, even for a short while, after they were supposedly so concerned before? Upset, Tiff heads upstairs to the attic to brood. There, we see that she’s been unpacking her things, confirming that she recently arrived back home from an all-girls Catholic boarding school. She throws off her uniform in disgust and puts on more casual clothing, then silently reminisces about the time she’s spent at Catholic school. Through a wordless flashback, we learn that Tiff doesn’t have many friends because the boarding school she attends is very strict and isolated. Spending most of the year there also leaves Tiff feeling unwanted by her parents, which is why she grasps at any means she has of controlling them.

Upon remembering all that, Tiff decides to get back at her parents by doing whatever she wants while she has the house to herself—even breaking the rules! First, Tiff returns downstairs and calls Deborah back to tell her that Michael and Joyce have supposedly cancelled their plans. But Deborah doesn’t believe Tiff; she wants to speak to her parents. “Aw, quit’cher beefin’ Debbie, ‘course they changed their minds, what with th’ disappearances ‘n all!” Ultimately, Tiff convinces Deborah to stay home by reminding her that not only is her house located near the woods, but so far, “it’s all been teenagers who’ve disappeared,” scaring Deborah enough not to come over, despite the fact that she doesn’t believe Tiff about her parents’ change of plans.

Now, Tiff has the house to herself and can do whatever she wants! She looks outside happily, but in the woods, she catches glimpses of something slipping through the trees as it approaches the edge of the forest. At first, this something appears to be a wolf, but with each glimpse, it seems to have changed shape a little. That creeps Tiff out, and she pulls the blinds shut. Next, she decides to eat some ice cream, even though her parents are saving it for a special occasion. Then, what *appears* to be a young boy named Victor arrives on Tiff’s doorstep. He calls to her in a hypnotic tone that attracts Tiff to the window despite her better instincts. Victor introduces himself and wants to be invited in. “Something came out of the woods,” he says (which is true—he just neglects to mention that *he’s* the thing from the woods). Despite his sickly pale, gaunt

appearance, the (literally) hypnotic allure in Victor's eyes makes him seem attractive to Tiff. She also hasn't had many chances to talk to boys, considering the time she spends at boarding school, so she takes advantage of this opportunity. Victor even sort of flirts with Tiff, making her feel like an adult. She wants to let him in and do "grown-up things..."—whatever *those* are! But at the same time, she's creeped out by what she thought she saw in the woods and by the disappearances. She's not sure she should let Victor in for that reason, but Victor implores, "I look my age, do I not? What could a child do?" That sways Tiff a little, but what ultimately gets her to let him indoors is that he subsequently offers her a beautiful necklace (so mature!) which is the very same necklace the wolf took from the teenage criminals he attacked! "What can I say kid, y'got charm, nice line've patter...c'mon in," says Tiff as opens the door for Victor.

Once inside, Tiff takes a liking to Victor because he encourages her to commit acts of mischief, but in ways that likely won't get her caught. For instance, they go into the living room and watch her father's new color television set even though she's not allowed to do so without Michael there. They also play her mother's private Roy Orbison records, which Tiff has to fetch out of her parents' bedroom herself because Victor refuses to enter it. Unbeknownst to Tiff, this is because it's filled with religious paraphernalia. Victor also avoids the kitchen, because as previously stated, Tiff's mom recently used a lot of garlic to cook. He stays out of many other rooms as well, due to crosses on the walls or Bibles on the shelves, but since Tiff has no interest in horror or the supernatural, she has no idea what Victor's reticence implies. To change the subject, Victor ups the ante by telling Tiff that she should throw out some of her mother's figurines. "C'mon pal, you oughta know she'd spot 'em missin'," Tiff laughs. "Ah, but that's precisely why I'd find such an action impressive," grins Victor. "Prove to me that you don't fear your parents." Tiff looks uncomfortable, when suddenly, she hears Michael and Joyce arrive back home, with Joyce clearly wearing her crucifix. Before they see him, Victor turns to mist and disappears. Tiff sneaks the necklace under her shirt collar to hide it from her parents, just before they see her alone and question her on why Deborah isn't there. Tiff claims that Deborah never showed up "prolly cause she was scared 'a gettin' near the forest." Joyce buys it, but Michael doesn't. He calls Deborah. Once he hears the truth, he sends Tiff her up to her room.

Instead, Tiff heads up to the attic and thinks about what happened. She wonders if Victor is even real. That's when mist seeps into the attic and coalesces into Victor! It becomes apparent that Victor can now come and go as he pleases. When Tiff asks "why now?" he says it's because "you invited me, Tiff." This reveals the truth of Victor's nature without stating it outright, which is what Victor is counting on. The next day, Victor encourages Tiff to misbehave again, this time by telling her to throw out her parents' belongings; not just the figurines, but also the religious items, cooking materials, and even food (like the garlic!). Victor says that if Tiff does so, "I'll cease being your problem." Tiff doesn't believe him and refuses. In retaliation, Victor vandalizes the other rooms and makes it look like Tiff herself is committing these delinquencies. He says he'll only stop if Tiff commits to doing as he orders. Now Tiff has three choices. 1) She can obey Victor and throw out her mother's things—but wind up in a lot of trouble. 2) She can tell her parents the truth about letting Victor into the house—but potentially wind up in worse trouble. Or 3) she can ask Peggy for help in tackling whatever supernatural creature is loose in her home—but then she'd have to be truthful with the girl, despite tricking her earlier.

Tiff goes with option number three and arranges to meet Peggy at the local library. Peggy



visibly cringes when she sees Tiff still wearing the necklace Victor gave her. All the stress has caused Tiff to forget to change her clothes, so she's looking a little messier than usual, and the necklace has fumbled out from beneath her shirt collar. Meanwhile, the weather outside is gradually shifting from sunny and bright to murky and gloomy—even menacing. “What’s wrong?” Tiff asks Peggy, but Peggy is eager to change the subject and does so by convincing Tiff that Victor is a ghost. Next, Peggy shows Tiff some books on exorcism, which will supposedly get rid of Victor. But when Tiff follows the ritual, she finds it doesn’t work. She calls Peggy back and yells at her. Now when Tiff goes up to the attic to face Victor, she’s desperate. She immediately capitulates to him and, while her father is at work and her mother is out with friends, collects all her mother’s food, cooking supplies, figurines and religious paraphernalia and throws them into a river. Upon returning home, Tiff’s parents see that their once warm, ordered home has fallen into shambles! Yet they’re more concerned about Tiff than angry. “Please sweetheart,” says Joyce. “We want to help. Really, we do. But you must tell us what’s going on.” Tiff still refuses to tell them, insisting “that’d just make things worse!” Frustrated, Michael grounds her.

That night in Tiff’s room, Victor awakens her after appearing in a puff of mist to congratulate Tiff on doing as he ordered. “Now there’s only one more task you must carry out before I’ll end this,” he states. Tiff starts to refuse, but the hypnotic quality returns to both Victor’s voice and eyes. In a slight daze, Tiff asks Victor what it is. He replies by asserting that she must prove her bravery by sneaking into her parents’ bedroom while they’re asleep and remove her mother’s most prized possession: the crucifix she wears around her neck. In a suspenseful scene, Tiff does just that, but afterwards, Victor makes it clear that he has no intention of leaving. “I said I’d stop being your problem if you obeyed me,” he reminds her. “I didn’t say I’d leave.” Throughout all this, Tiff has continued to neglect her personal hygiene and is beginning to look not only unkempt but disheveled as she grows more desperate to get rid of Victor, who is looking less pale and gaunt. In fact, he seems more rejuvenated the more disheveled Tiff becomes. As dawn approaches, Victor disappears again. Tiff sneaks out her window to head to Peggy’s house for additional advice, as she can’t go downstairs to call her because she’s grounded. On her way there, Tiff notes an odd change in the weather; while previously it was summer, now it seems to be the middle of fall...

When Tiff arrives at Peggy’s house, she calls up to the bedroom window. Peggy claims to be “sick” but it seems there’s more to it than that given her behavior. She won’t approach the window even though Tiff is throwing rocks at it. Tiff goes around to Peggy’s front door and finds that—much to her surprise—the door is unlocked. Upon entering the house, Tiff finds it odd how Peggy’s parents don’t seem to be around. But she goes up to Peggy’s room to find her covered in her bedsheets. Tiff pulls the bedsheets off Peggy, allowing sunlight from the window to strike Peggy, burning her! It’s now that Peggy admits to Tiff that Victor is both a vampire and responsible for the disappearances in the area...including Peggy’s parents.

During a flashback narrated by Peggy, she explains that she met Victor in wolf form as she was cutting through the woods; he was staying there to sleep in its rocky, shadowed areas during the day and feed on the delinquents who hang out there at night. Victor didn’t attack Peggy, partly because he would risk being struck by sunlight, but mainly because he was intrigued by “the whiff of innocence mingled with deep-seated anger” that he smelt on her. He took note of

the scent and decided to track Peggy that night to learn more about her. Naively, Peggy thought the wolf had just lost interest in her. But that night, Victor followed Peggy home in wolf form. Through a window, he observed Peggy being polite to her parents even as they were emotionally abusing her. As Victor claims to only feed on “deserving” victims, he switched to human form and asked to be “invited” indoors by the parents in his hypnotic voice as he was “far from home.” Once they agreed, Victor turned into a wolf and “dealt with them” as he put it. Apparently, he only “feeds on the corrupt,” then collects their “trinkets” including the necklace he initially offers to Peggy but later gives to Tiff. The reason he offers the necklace to Peggy is because he sees it as a “fair trade for my meal,” but the terrified Peggy refuses the necklace and just begs for her life, not realizing he doesn’t intend to attack her. Victor is nonetheless intrigued and decides to play along. He offers to not only spare Peggy’s life but to give her a different reward—*eternal* life as a vampire. But only if she agreed to tell him “who amongst your companions is most deserving of parting with their parents.” Peggy immediately blabbered, “Um, uh...um, uh... Tiff! Yeah, uh, yeah, Tiff! She’s a, a brat, buh-but her parents are *nice*, *HONEST!*” Afterward, Peggy went on to assist Victor by misleading Tiff by telling her to try an exorcism technique intended for ghosts, not vampires. And last night, she’s finally received her “reward” when Victor drained “just enough blood to turn me.” But Peggy finds that being a vampire isn’t all it’s cracked up to be given its limitations. “I’m thirsty...” she moans. “I’m so, so thirsty...but I can’t drink anything, I, I can’t eat anything...” Peggy then apologizes to Tiff for lying to her as it’s just made everything “suh-spiral out of control!”

Terrified, Tiff runs home to tell her parents the truth about what she’s allowed to happen. But it’s hard, as Victor seems to be controlling the elements, and causes a horrible storm which slows Tiff down, soaks her, and covers her in mud: now she looks worse than a homeless person. Upon arriving home, Tiff finds that her home isn’t just a mess anymore...the storm has caused it to become weather beaten and even smashed most of its windows. Tiff rushes inside nonetheless and looks around for her parents: there’s no sign of them. Then she hears something in the attic. She heads up to check it out and finds Victor there with her parents. He looks fit and healthy, and now they look pale. While Tiff was out, Victor drained just enough of their blood to make them his vampire slaves. He now has unlimited access to the house because Tiff got rid of “a few complications...” meaning his mother’s garlic and religious paraphernalia! Tiff tries to run out of the attic, but Victor snaps his fingers and furniture moves on its own, blocking the exit. Then he orders Tiff’s vampiric parents to get up and grab the poor girl; they reluctantly obey, but weep as they do so; they don’t want to hurt their daughter. As her former parents take hold of her, Tiff’s composure cracks. She’s on the verge of screaming, having learnt (too late) that lying has hurt her in ways she never expected.

The attic is now a stew of tension as Victor reveals his motivation: he says that as he’s stuck as a child forever (it’s been four-hundred years so far) he needs parents...and Tiff doesn’t deserve hers. “The only question is...what to do with the likes of you?” he hisses. “I certainly don’t want a sister. *Mm*, and lest I forget...I do believe I said I’d stop being your problem if you did as I requested...and you most certainly have. I say, shall I kill two birds with one stone...?” Victor bares his fangs, overtaking Tiff as he changes into his wolf form. We pull out to an establishing shot of the weather-beaten house as we listen to Tiff’s hysterical screaming...

**THE END.**