

CHAPTER ONE

This cannot be how I die.

It really, *really* can't.

Naturally, I know not everyone is blessed with the whole old-lady-from-*Titanic* option; drifting off into a toasty sleep, memories of making love to a peak Leonardo DiCaprio there to soften the blow of perishing. But choking to death at the age of twenty-seven? Delphie, *no*.

As I gasp for air, my brain seems unable to compute how I might save myself from this horror show and instead fixates entirely on the mortifying circumstances in which it's playing out.

For a start, I'm choking on a burger. Not even a premium or homemade burger, but a cheap microwaveable one I grabbed from the corner shop after work. And then

there are the clothes I'm wearing as I choke: pickle-green socks paired with the worst of all my nightwear – an overwashed, oversized atrocity with a cartoon of a grinning star above the slogan 'Honey, It's Time to Sparkle and Shine!' My TV is paused a quarter of the way through *The Tinder Swindler* and my laptop is lit with one solitary tab: a Google page on which I have enquired 'are microwaveable burgers real meat?'

Who's going to find me in this state? My despicable downstairs neighbour, Cooper, who will definitely sneer when he sees my nightie? The police, rummaging through my private belongings, hunting for evidence of possible foul play? They'd have a tricky time finding anyone with motive, considering I only know three people in all of London – Leanne and her mum Jan from the pharmacy where I work, and old Mr Yoon from next door.

Oh God, what if it's old Mr Yoon who discovers me? That must not happen – his heart is way too fragile to handle something as grim as this. Sweet Mr Yoon! If I'm gone, there won't be anyone to check he's properly extinguished his cigarette before he goes to sleep. And who will make him a breakfast that isn't just a bowl of boring old cardboard-y All-Bran?

At the thought of Mr Yoon gazing sorrowfully into his cereal cupboard, I fling myself over to a rickety dining chair and slam my body over the back of it in a bid to self-Heimlich. I once saw Miranda on *Sex and The City* do this and she survived, shaken but emotionally wiser for the experience.

I bash my diaphragm down onto the chair over and over again. Then I clasp my hands together and thump myself in the stomach. Ow. Nothing. Am I punching myself in the correct place? I do it again, this

time a little lower down. And then again, higher up. It's not working! This chunk of bun and possibly not-real-meat is lodged in my windpipe and I believe it intends to stay there.

I race from one side of my tiny living room to the other, searching for something, anything at all, that might help me. My beloved *Broad City* baseball cap hanging from the hook on my front door? Useless! Box of unopened Blackwing pencils on the kitchen table? Come *on*, Delphie! My eyes zero in on my phone, peeking out from beneath a sofa cushion. I grab it to call an ambulance but my hands are trembling so much that I can't get a grip. The phone tumbles to the floor, skidding under the edge of my TV stand to live with an entire habitat of dust mites plus an antidepressant I dropped last month and never quite got around to retrieving.

Argh. Everything's going dark around the edges. My tongue feels weird, heavy, like it's lolling. Is my tongue *lolling*? My knees collapse and I flail theatrically to the ground, head landing with a thud on the lovely soft stripy rug I've spent the last three months saving up for.

Oh God.

I think . . . I think this is actually *it*?

My grand finale.

My expiration date.

The End.

Here lies Delphie Denise Bookham.

She died just as she lived: alone, perplexed, wearing something a bit shit.

‘Open your eyes . . . that’s it. Time to come to . . . Time to awaken . . . Aha, there you are! Hey, girly girl.’

The stranger’s voice is female, a wisp of melodic Irish cadence softening the edges. My eyes fly open. A woman smiles maniacally, small upturned nose barely an inch from mine. I take her in: springy butter-blond curls drawn into a high ponytail, voguish gold specs making the earnest green eyes she’s openly gawking at me with look twice the size. She’s wearing an orange lipstick that’s bled onto her large teeth, both rows fully exposed to form said maniacal smile. I squeeze my eyes shut. Then I open them again, try desperately to get my bearings. My insides immediately make a fuss when I realise that I’m not in my apartment, where I pretty much always am, but instead sitting in a strange plastic chair,

legs propped up on a floral upholstered buffet like a nana.

Where am I right now?

Bobby McFerrin's 'Don't Worry Be Happy' echoes from some unknown direction, the reverberation of it eerie and dreamlike. Wide-eyed, I scan the room: pale blue painted walls, a row of aqua-green washer-dryers lined up in front of me, spinning and gurgling and puffing out warm lavender-scented air at even intervals. Hold up. Is this a laundrette? What the hell am I doing in a *laundrette*? How did I get here? *When* did I get here?

Above the washers I spot a large, framed photo of the bespectacled woman. She's doing a double thumbs-up, her smile at pageant-winner wattage. My gaze slides from the picture on the wall, back to the real-life version crouched beside my chair. She beams like she could not be more delighted to see

me. Then she gives me a double thumbs-up exactly like the one in the photo.

Who is this? Where am I? ‘Uh . . . uh . . .’

My panicked brain refuses to assist me in delivering the questions aloud.

‘Clever, right?’ The woman grins. ‘No one ever gets scared in a launderette! Seemed smart to offset such an objectively terrifying moment with the most calming environment I could imagine. And this is it – a lobby that looks and feels like a cosy little launderette! When I was younger and things got a little *ARGH LIFE IS SO HARD, WAH WAH WAH*, I’d take myself off to the local outfit and watch all the machines spinning around and around and around for hours. All those blossomy smells, all those sloshy sounds? *So* comforting, don’t you think?’

I flinch as the woman jumps up from her squat, proudly flinging her arms around

the room like she's a game show host about to reveal the grand prize.

'The blue on the walls is identical to the colour of the sky just before the sun sets in the last week of June. Took me an age to find the exact right chromaticity. It's this paint shade *Dehydrated Goose*, discontinued in '92. But I knew a guy who knew a gal who knew a guy who knew the *right* guy and yeah, I eventually pulled it off.'

She presses her lips together and thrusts her hands into the pockets of her mustard dungarees, swaying lightly from side to side. 'The higher-ups made it *quite* clear they wanted a cleaner, more "professional" aesthetic but I said to them, I said guys, you can't expect me to be a top-tier Afterlife Therapist without allowing me full autonomy over the environment in which I therapise the deceased. I mean *come on*, guys . . . Idiots. They're everywhere! It's a gorgeous shade

though, isn't it?' She gazes up at the walls, sighs happily and runs her teeth over her bottom lip, dragging off a bunch more lipstick in the process. 'It almost changes hue with the light. Sometimes a chalky lilac grey. Sometimes denim blue. Like the eyes of Jamie Fraser. You know Jamie Fraser? From the *Outlander* books? What a ride. He's in my top ten fictional romantic leads. Maybe actually top five. Maybe even top—'

'The deceased?' I manage to cut in.

'Oh yeah . . . you're dead, sweet girl. I'm sorry.' She rubs my shoulder gamely.

'What? No . . . I . . . Is this a dream?'

I urge my brain to wake itself up. This is the oddest dream I've ever had, and I once dreamed I ran a struggling hair salon with Tramp from *Lady and the Tramp*.

'You choked, remember?' the chatty woman tells me. 'On a microwave burger? They *are* real meat, by the way. One hundred

per cent beef or, as I like to call it, *boeuf*. I recently started learning French in between client arrivals. Not that I'm bored or anything. Not really. Could things pick up a little around here?' She shrugs a smooth, tanned shoulder, mouth bunching up to the side. 'Sure. But better a steady trickle of Deads than an ambush, I guess.'

Deads?

My gut spirals as I suddenly remember what happened in my apartment. The choking. I press a hand to my throat and start gasping for air.

'Oh, it's okay. You're totally fine,' the woman soothes, crouching back down so that she's eye-level with me. 'All corporeal physical ailments are eliminated as soon as you arrive here. Most mental ones too. But the emotional transition period from living to not living can be . . . tricky. That's where I come in. I'm Merritt, twenty-eight years old

– always will be – and my absolute favourite things are curry and romance novels, the hotter the better on both accounts. I’m your assigned Afterlife Therapist.’

She shoves out her hand to shake mine and I notice that she’s wearing a different statement ring on every finger. One of them is a vintage-looking diamond rose, another is thick black enamel with a skull and crossbones dotted out in rubies. On her thumb is a silver band that says *Half Agony/Half Hope*. It’s like she dipped her digits in a lost property box and didn’t much care what came out. I can only stare, so she picks my limp hand up from where it dangles off the armrest and yanks it so enthusiastically that I sort of wobble back and forth in the chair.

‘It’s my job to make sure you get settled in, don’t freak out too much, answer any questions you may have, etc. etc. I will be

your main point of contact going forward.
Sound good? *Oui?*'

No. No, it does not sound good at all.
Non.

'I'm amazing at my job, don't worry,'
Merritt continues breezily. 'I started at
Evermore – that's what we call it here – about
six months after I died. I'm the youngest
woman ever to be made a full Afterlife
Therapist. Most of the other therapists are old
crones in their sixties and seventies, but I
guess I just showed a natural affinity for the
role. Plus, I'm ambitious as fuck.'

'Help,' I whisper.

'The other therapists don't like it one
bit – a hot young woman making waves. They
steal all the incoming Deads away before I
can get my hands on them.' She looks down
at her feet for a second, which I notice are
shoeless, her toenails painted Coca-Cola red.
'I could run circles around everyone here if I

was just given a fair chance,’ she mutters grimly. ‘Anyway, I won’t bore you with all that. The point is that two of those old gobshites are on holiday right now, so they didn’t get a chance to steal you! You’re my first arrival in a whole week! Yay for me. Boo hoo for you, obviously. But for me? Brilliant.’

I watch dumbly as Merritt marches towards a door on the opposite side of the room, a flick of her forefinger indicating that I should follow her.

‘Where . . . where are we going?’ I ask, my entire body now trembling so much that the words come out with a vibrato so rapid I sound like Jessie J.

‘My office, of course. I can’t conduct the enrolment here in the lobby, can I? What if another Dead arrives while you’re in the middle of answering an intimate question? Awkward. If there’s one thing people always

said about me back on earth it was that I was a very professional person. Privacy first. Don't fret. *I've got you, babe.*' She sings the last bit in a Cher voice.

Merritt opens up the door and I'm somewhat comforted to discover that it leads to a very nice, relatively normal-looking office. There are candles everywhere, the flames a warm, shimmering pink colour. In the middle of the room stands a glass desk, filled with knick-knacks including three absolutely thriving plants, a Chinese nodding lucky cat and a desk tidy that is empty because the pens it's supposed to be holding are scattered haphazardly across the desk. On the far wall, there's a floor-to-ceiling bookcase absolutely stuffed with books, their spines all the colours of the rainbow. Every single one seems to be a romance novel. Titles like *The Proposal*, *A Match Made in Devon* and *The Bride Test*. Merritt sees me

looking and selects one of them – a pretty cloth-covered hardback of *Persuasion* by Jane Austen. She presses it to her chest and closes her eyes blissfully like she’s cuddling a puppy. ‘You can totally borrow anything you like,’ she says, sliding the book back onto the shelf and dancing her fingers lovingly across the surrounding spines.

‘Um, thanks.’

Merritt sniffs the air, exhaling audibly. ‘Roses and blackcurrants. My signature scent.’ She points to a flickering white candle on a little wooden table. ‘Gorgeous, right? We have a Diptyque store at Evermore. *C’est magnifique*. Oh, we must find you a signature scent too. I bet you’re a honeysuckle girl, am I right? Prone to introspection, sensitive heart but with a rich inner world. Plenty of passion bubbling beneath the surface.’

I blink. What the fuck is happening right now? What is this place?

Merritt throws me a benevolent smile. ‘Okay. I can see you’re perturbed which . . . absolutely. This situation is batshit, I know. When I first arrived here, I literally spewed. Why don’t you take a seat, rest your bones a moment.’

She indicates a white leather spinny chair in front of her desk and then, before I can rest, bones or otherwise, she claps her hands decisively.

‘Right! Excellent. Okay.’ She plucks a clipboard from her desk and scans the paper atop it. ‘First question is . . . Would you like to see your life flash before your eyes?’

‘Ex— excuse me?’ My teeth have started to chatter.

‘I *said* would you like to see your life flash before your eyes? We never used to offer the service, but of course Hollywood gave humans the impression that they got to see their lives pass before their eyes when

they expire. And while I love me a well-trodden trope, that one is simply not based in reality. We had a few complaints from disgruntled Deads on arrival so now we offer it, if you want it. Totally up to you, no presh.’

I feel cold. Why is it so cold? I spot a furry blanket draped on one of the other chairs. I grab it and wrap it tightly around my shoulders, bunching it beneath my chin.

‘So . . . do you want it or not?’ Merritt repeats, fingernail tapping on the back of the clipboard.

‘Uh . . . um . . .’ I bleat, fingering the corner of the blanket. ‘Can I go home now?’

Merritt sighs lightly. ‘Shall we just say yes about the life-flashing-before-your-eyes bit? This is the only chance you’ll get to see it. If I don’t show you now and you change your mind later then you’ll probably be in a mood with me and that’s no way for us to start an everlasting friendship.’

I goggle as Merritt disappears into a closet before wheeling out a white metal trolley, atop which is a big grey nineties TV and a DVD player. ‘It doesn’t last for too long,’ she says. ‘We show what we feel are the most relevant clips, otherwise it would be a massive snoozefest and while technically we have eternity at our disposal, ain’t nobody got time for that kind of navel-gazing. Like, what’s done is done, you know?’

I can only stare as Merritt presses play. Is the DVD already in? Is the player just for show? I’m so confused.

‘Here we go!’ Merritt says. ‘Delphie Denise Bookham. This . . . was . . . YOUR LIFE!’

CHAPTER TWO

To a soundtrack of Stevie Wonder's 'Isn't She Lovely', Merritt's video fades in on an adorable montage of moments from my idyllic childhood. Way before Dad got bored of us. Before Mum got a new boyfriend and ran away to join an artists' commune in Texas. This was back when life was as close to perfect as it could be.

I drink in the clips, suddenly terrified to miss a single detail. Look how the three of us cartwheel and roly-poly through long, daisy-dotted grass, snuggle together on a Sunday morning, draw pictures of made-up sea creatures or dance on the bed to Aretha Franklin. There's Mum letting me try out her shiny cherry-flavoured lipglosses and laughing as I immediately lick the gloss off

and ask for more. There I am hanging out at various birthday parties, surrounded by other children, laughing, bright-eyed, cheeky-faced and chattering non-stop. In a few of the clips I see Gen, my childhood best friend, our arms flung around each other, the pair of us giggling naughtily at some now-forgotten mischief. I look away from the screen, a flicker of sadness sparking in my chest.

‘Oh God,’ Merritt says, pressing a hand to her chest. ‘I thought I was a teen nerd but you were something else! Adorable.’

Celine Dion’s ‘All By Myself’ starts to play as the video transitions into a clip of me sitting alone at the dining table of our home – the flat I still live in – in west London. I’m carefully cutting out pictures from *TV Guide* magazine and arranging them into collages. At the time I thought my collages were super cool and artistic. I see now they were actually rather odd.

I have all the accoutrements of an awkward teen: the rashy face; the thick glasses; the braces; and a wad of cotton wool poking out of one ear on account of the chronic ear infections I couldn't seem to get rid of. The clips fade into each other – me at the kitchen table making my collages, drawing soap stars, wincing as I put in my eardrops, tucking myself into bed. Night after night.

‘Sad.’ Merritt shakes her head.

She’s right. It does look sad. It didn’t feel sad at the time, when I was drawing and collaging alone. Did it?

The video melts into my time at Bayswater High School. I shrug off the furry blanket as my entire body immediately goes hot. The back of my head starts to thump.

‘Can we fast-forward this bit, please?’ I ask, knowing that every single memory of

that time is a bad one. Those same memories still keep me awake at night.

‘Fraid not,’ Merritt says. ‘Once it’s on, it’s on.’

My chest tightens as the screen flickers onto an image of fifteen-year-old me. My skin has cleared up now. The thick jam-jar glasses have been swapped for something lighter and the braces have successfully straightened out my wonky teeth. My wavy red hair fans out over my shoulders, pretty against the bottle green of Bayswater High’s uniform.

I’m pencil-sketching in an empty classroom, occasionally taking bites of the cheese sandwich I’d made myself that morning. And then, there she is. Gen Hartley. My childhood best friend, the girl I loved the most, the primary architect of pretty much all my trauma. She slams into the classroom accompanied by her boyfriend, Ryan

Sweeting. It's almost comedic how on the nose they look, Gen with her shiny curtain of conker-coloured hair, thick layers of blue mascara and tiny skirt. Ryan, handsome and tall for his age, wearing the school rugby kit, his blonde hair shaved close to his scalp. If this were a teen movie, you'd immediately identify them as the mean kids. Although they look smaller on the video than they did back then. Back then they seemed like giants.

'Hey Delphie!' Gen says sweetly, wandering over to my table and pressing both hands onto my desk. Ryan follows her and swings both arms around her waist. Gen smiles at me. 'Me and Ryan had a question and we were hoping you'd help us to answer it?'

I still hadn't fully learned not to trust Gen. I remember feeling excited that she was talking to me again. Maybe she missed me. Maybe she wanted to become best friends

again. Maybe Ryan, too. He was the coolest boy in our year.

‘Sure,’ I say eagerly, putting down my pencil and pushing my glasses up my nose with a grin. ‘Is it about the chemistry test? It’s gonna be a tricky one, but I’m happy to help you if you need it? Do you want to borrow my revision notes?’

Gen laughs, a bright xylophone of a laugh, tinkling a melody that belies its intention. ‘Nah, Delphie. Our question is . . . why is your hair so . . . GROSS?’ She grabs a handful of it. You can see the shock on my face. ‘Honestly, it feels like wire wool. Don’t you even use conditioner?’

My eyes fill with tears as Ryan comes around to the other side of the desk and musses his hand roughly through my hair. ‘You’re right!’ he grunts, wiping his hands on his jeans like they’re covered in dirt. ‘It’s like pubes.’

Gen shrieks with mirth. I jump up from the desk, the motion making my drawing slide onto the floor. I hurry to pick it up but Ryan gets there before me. He glances at the picture, his mouth curling up into a nasty grin. ‘Oh. My. God.’

‘Give that back to me.’ I reach out to snatch it back, but Ryan dangles it in the air.

Gen gasps, grabbing it from Ryan. ‘Is that Mr Taylor?’ she squeals. ‘You’ve drawn Mr Taylor? Do you fancy him?’

I remember wishing at the time that I was a better liar, but my red cheeks gave it away. Of course I fancied our art teacher. All the girls did. He was gorgeous, with his bright blue eyes and spiky hair the colour of toffee. He was kind too, never too busy to talk to me about composition and light and the importance of daily creative practice – a concept I’d never heard of before.

‘She does! She’s gone beetroot red. She wants to fuck Mr Taylor. She wants to fuck him and then afterwards she’ll draw him naked with his willy flopping out.’

I watch from Merritt’s desk chair, my heart pounding thickly the exact same way it had then.

‘Oh, no one will ever fuck Delphie,’ Ryan adds. ‘Jesus, they’d have to be *desperate*.’

‘Yeah, she’ll probably be a virgin forever,’ Gen adds.

‘Can . . . can I have my drawing back now?’

‘You can have it back tomorrow,’ Gen says as she and Ryan saunter out of the room.

‘Please don’t show it to anyone!’ I call after her as she leaves, the tears in my eyes now plopping onto my cheeks.

‘Promise I won’t!’ she sing-songs, folding up the paper so that a crease forms right across Mr Taylor’s forehead.

Merritt gasps and presses pause on the tape.

‘Oh no. She totally showed everyone, didn’t she?’

I nod, the memory of my Mr Taylor drawing photocopied and plastered all over the school halls. The shame of everyone laughing at me. Sadness that the whole thing had made Mr Taylor so uncomfortable that, beyond what was in the curriculum, he’d stopped talking to me about art at all.

‘What a piece of shit,’ Merritt gasps before eagerly pressing play again, like this is just some TV drama she’s binge-watching.

The video blurs into even more clips of Gen and Ryan – who had started to become known across the school as ‘The Sweethearts’ – tormenting me with increasing regularity:

pressing chewing gum into my hair; calling me a suck-up; getting the other students to turn their backs on me whenever I walked by. Making sure everyone knew that being friends with me was pretty much a death knell for their future popularity. There's me, hiding in the top-floor bathroom, munching an apple and staring at the door, alert for the sound of anyone approaching. I swallow hard. 'I've seen enough,' I say firmly. 'Turn it off.' I've not cried since the age of sixteen and I don't intend to start now. 'Seriously. I've had enough. Turn it fucking off.'

'Surely it gets better?' Merritt asks gently. 'There's only a few minutes left!'

I chew on my lip as I watch myself become an adult. The video swims into a loop of days at the pharmacy and nights watching television or surfing the internet from my sofa. Each day looks so alike that soon enough you can't tell the difference between

one month and the next. The video ends with a highly unflattering jump scare in which I'm opening my mouth extra wide to take a bite of the murderous burger.

'Yikes,' Merritt mutters, flicking off the TV and rolling the trolley back into the cupboard. 'Reader, it did *not* get better. All your days looked exactly the same as each other. You were so alone.'

I lift my chin. 'Well. That was out of choice. I was alone, yeah, but not lonely. Not at all. I'm like a giant panda. *We thrive alone.*'

'Oh that didn't look like thriving, doll.'

'And you didn't even show Mr Yoon on that video.' I protest. 'I see him practically every day for breakfast. He might not have ever spoken to me out loud, but that's only because he literally cannot speak out loud. Sometimes he writes me notes, though, so . . .'

Merritt takes a seat behind her desk, steeping her fingers beneath her chin thoughtfully. ‘We didn’t see a boyfriend or a girlfriend in there, Delphie. Or even a brief dalliance of any kind? Did you never . . .’ She trails off and raises her eyebrow.

I tut. This woman is really starting to get on my nerves.

‘If you mean *did I have sex?* then no. No I didn’t. People can have fulfilling lives without sex.’ I cross my arms. Fine, my life didn’t look very fulfilling on that video, but it was clearly a bad edit. They missed out my nice times with Mr Yoon, and my solo trip to Greece which was truly delightful. They completely neglected to include how gorgeous the view is from my living room window, the joy I feel looking out of it and watching the seasons change.

‘I wouldn’t have a clue what the satisfaction levels of a sexless person would

be, because I was a *huge* slut while alive. It was glorious. I'm sad for you.'

The spark of irritation I often feel when encountering other humans flames into a quick blaze of anger. 'I don't need your pity. Certainly not for that reason.'

Merritt stands up and comes round to sit on the edge of her desk so that our knees are almost touching.

'Have you ever even kissed anyone before?'

'Yes. Course I have! At uni. His name was Jonny Terry.'

What I neglect to mention is that it was a terrible kiss. It was sloppy and awkward, our teeth clashed and he breathed noisily through his nose the whole time. Then afterwards he wiped his mouth with the sleeve of his bobbled woolly jumper. Funnily enough I've not been keen to repeat the experience since then.

‘So . . . you’re a virgin,’ Merritt says almost to herself. ‘At the age of twenty-seven. Niche. Oh, wait . . . oh my God, Delphie, you’re a virgin . . .’ – she looks down at her clipboard – ‘. . . who can’t drive. Literally a virgin who can’t drive. Like in the seminal teen romance movie *Clueless!*’

It seems bonkers that I’m about to say these words, but I really feel like I have no choice at this point, because this is just highly inappropriate. ‘Can I speak to a manager?’

Merritt grimaces. ‘Oh, you *really* don’t want me to get Eric. He’s awful, trust me. A full-scale prick. He’s hot as hell, which makes it all the more annoying, but I promise you, I’ll get him and you’ll regret it and wish you had stuck with me.’ She lowers her voice. ‘You know, I once heard him say he didn’t like bread.’

I pull a face. This Eric *does* sound like a moron.

‘Look, I’m sorry for upsetting you, okay? I’ll try to do better. I’m a little out of practice, you know? But I promise I’m way, way better than Eric. Do you want a cookie? To say sorry.’

I sigh. Of course I want a cookie. And I would rather avoid having to meet a whole new person.

Merritt opens up her desk drawer and hands me a foil-wrapped biscuit. I unwrap it and take a bite. She has one too, shoving the whole thing in her mouth so that her cheeks are all puffed up like a squirrel’s. ‘Would you be open to meeting someone through our in-house dating service? I’ll be honest, it’s still in beta so it’s a *leeetle* glitchy, but I’m one of the team behind it so I’d be happy to get you in there. We could do with a few more willing participants. It’s called Eternity 4 U. Isn’t that cute?’

I swallow my biscuit. ‘The afterlife has a dating service?’

‘Dead people gotta get laid too. And, hey, maybe we can get to work on showing you what you’ve been missing? So can I sign you up? What’s your type? Tall, piercing blue eyes – like Mr Taylor the art teacher, right?’

I think it’s the nonchalance with which she says Dead People.

I’m dead.

I’m *dead*?

I’m stuck here? With this woman and her *energy*? Eternity 4 Me?

My body starts to tremble again.

Nope.

All the way nope.

I have to get out of here. This is a mistake. I can’t stay in this place. I can’t do this!

Heartbeat pulsing in my cheeks, I jump out of the chair and run towards the door of

Merritt's office. There has to be someone else I can talk to about all this. Someone normal.

'Delphie, wait! Don't go! Ah jeez, not again.'

I yank open the door and run out into the psychotic laundrette's waiting room, crashing immediately into the solid chest of a beautiful stranger.