

## Bump in the Night

By: Angela Daley

Thank you for joining us tonight on the Carlson's Show," A chubby bald man sits behind a large desk, "Tonight we have two of the four men out of the rising rock band, *Salvage!*" The man stands up and claps loudly as the crowd cheers. The camera pans out and reveals two nicely dressed young adults as they walk onto the stage. They wave to the camera and the studio audience and take a seat next to Carlson.

"Glad for you to be back, Charlie. Drake, I don't think you had the pleasure to be on the show last time. Would you like to introduce yourselves?"

"Hi, I'm Charlie, lead singer in *Salvage*," the crowd

goes wild. Charlie shifts in his seat and smiles. His sunglasses hide his eyes.

Drake chuckles, he looks at the crowd with a devilishly handsome face. He smirks up at the excited fans, "Hi, I'm Drake," The crowd cheers, "the drummer in Salvage, and no I haven't. I was actually fighting with a garage that day to get my bike back," He rests his ankle on the knee of his other leg and sit back comfortably.

"Yes, I heard about that. What happened?"

He leans forward quickly as the anger grows in his voice, "I took it in to get the carbs looked at, instead of fixing it they broke my plastics and expected me to pay for it."

"So, not only did they not fix the problem, they broke it even more," Charlie chuckles, flashing the audience his winning.

"Well, at least someone else understands what I was trying to get across," his back falls back against the cushion of the chair.

"Well, it seems obvious. So Charlie, you guys are working on your newest album now?"

"Right."

"Any names?"

"None of your damn business," laughter thunders

through the studio, "No, but really it's called, *Hostile Invasion*."

"Interesting. Now, how is this new job your band took on going to affect the process of the CD?"

"New job?" the boys look at each other with confusion.

"The reality show, *Bump in the night*."

"Oh psh, that's just another name for Charlie's bedroom," Drake nudges Charlie as more laughter roars in the crowd.

Charlie smiles as he uncomfortably adjusts his button up shirt and sunglasses, "It's not at all. We've finished writing all the songs and we have the rough version recorded, so we have enough time to be able to take off a month."

"Plus, we could do our work there."

"Don't think there'll be too much action?"

"We are hoping for it, but come on, Carlson."

"Ah, a critic in the group," Carlson say and the two boys chuckle. He looks back at the crowd, "For the people who don't know what the *Bump in the Night* show is—"

"The ones living under a rock," Drake adds.

"Yes," the host chuckles, "It is a live show that is hosted inside haunted places all over the world the contestants are to live in that area for an entire month,

whoever lasts, split 150 grand. Correct?"

"Yes, but we aren't doing it for the money."

"Oh of course not," Carlson implies a double meaning.

"No really, paranormal things intrigue Drake and me and when the writers came to us for their special Friday the thirteenth airing we jumped at the opportunity."

"Special?"

"Yes, we are the first '*famous*' people," Charlie finger quotes when he says famous, "that were asked to be on this show."

"Do you think there will be more?"

"Well, you'll just have to wait and see," Charlie urges.

"What would you use the money for?"

"We'll use the money for a treat for our fans," Cheers and shouts shake the stage.

"So, you think you can last?"

"Yes."

"Pretty sure of yourselves?"

"Yes."

"Well then, we will see you live Friday, October 13<sup>th</sup>. There you have it folks, Charlie and Drake from Salvage!"

The boat hits the bank and splashes murky water into Drake's face. He yells out in disgust whips his face on his faded black shirt.

"Well you shouldn't have been leaning so close," Charlie laughs as he stands up from his seat. He is dressed in more comfortable clothes, a black hoodie and dark blue jeans. He stretches and fixes his shades.

"Ugh, I hate boats," Drake picks up his suitcases and races off the boat before it was even tied down. He waves frantically and winks at the camera. Charlie gives a slight head nod and the two guitarists, Sade and Shaun jokingly fights over the camera's view. The boys one by one pile inside a small car and take a seat. As the car drives down a narrow dirt road through the woods, Drake rolls down the

window to get fresh air.

"I wouldn't—" the driver tries to warn him before a low tree branch whips itself into Drake's face. He quickly closes the window. Charlie chuckles until the sight of the enormous mansion silences the car. The mansion looks down at them with its soulless eyes through the windows that were still visible. Most of the windows are masked by the veins wrapping around the house like snakes trying to cut off the circulation of its prey. The two toned bricks are stained with the moss forcefully trying to take back the grounds which the mansion was built on. On the outside of the grounds a large iron casted fence cemented into the hardened soil stands ten feet tall trapping in the haunting mysteries of the damned mansion. The car peels itself out of the woods and over a small bridge into a large front yard. The stone mansion towers over the little car as they pull up to the front door.

Charlie and Drake fight to get out first; Drake punches Charlie on the arm and wins the way out.

"Hey Charlie, I don't think you will need your sunglasses here," Sade announces as he stretches his legs and peers up at the cloudy gray sky.

"Your right, does the sun ever shine here?" Charlie asks rhetorically as he takes off his glasses.

"Not since the death of Abby," The driver informs the band as he unloads the trunk.

"Abby?" The driver flashes a frightened look at Drake. Drake ignores him, "probably just a way to get inside our heads." He listens to his friends bicker back and forth about who Abby was as he walks away from the mansion. Drake walks to the far edge of the property studying the land; he approaches the ten-foot high black metal fence that shuts them out from the rest of the world.. He runs his fingers along the fence that traces the parameter. He peaks through it and tries to see past the thick tree line.

A half of dozen black birds scatter from the treetops. He clenches his chest and laughs nervously to himself. He shakes his head he circles the base of mansion. He looks up at a large balcony he smiles hoping that's his room. His eyes trail down the slithering vine as he finds his way to the opposite side. They've done their jobs well with the creep factor he thinks to himself as he spies a top of a doorway just above the messy brush that he could tell once used to be a lovely garden; curious he goes to check it out. Drake pushes the messy weeds out of the way. He leans closer and reaches out to dust off the caked on dirt. His fingers trace the top a line symbol, but the rest of the symbol is underground. Curiosity steals him away from the

world as he starts to dig.

"Drake!" Charlie calls from the front of the mansion. Drake snaps out of it and rounds the corner to Charlie waving him to come.

"What?"

"Come on," They walk up the broken brick steps, large over brush flows over the walls of the staircase. Charlie enters the house first only to be attacked by a petite blonde. She sneaks a kiss on the cheek before he has a chance to push her away.

"Sorry," she says with a guilty smile.

"Big fan?"

Her head bobs up and down, "My name is Wendy. I love you guys so much!" she says as her voice squeaks towards the end.

"Ah. Good you're here," a tall skinny middle-aged man appears from the nearby living room. He waves the driver good-bye. The driver doesn't take a second longer before he peels out from the front of the mansion and disappears into the woods again.

Charlie whispers to Drake, "Wow. He really does not like this place."

"I wouldn't either if I was paid enough," the host interrupts their snickers.



"The neighbors are very superstitious of this place. Why do you think I chose it?" The man looks around the room as the rest of the contestants gather around him, "Okay, as you all know I'm Hal, host of the, *Bump in the Night*, show. I'll explain a little more about what's going on," he smiles at the contestants, "After everyone gets settled in, my crew and I will leave. After we leave, one month from that time, we will come back to get you. You are free to go anywhere you like the only way out is the way you came in, as Drake already checked out."

"Just checking out the property," he admits and shrugs.

"Very smart," Wendy says. She smiles foolishly at him. He takes a step away from her.

"Indeed. Each of you will get a camera along with the cameras set up all over the house and property," he points to a camera in the corner of the room, "Don't worry, they are not in the bathrooms. But that is the only rooms that don't have any. So you will be alone, but not completely, my crew and I will have this whole place on visual lock down and will be on standby if anything were to arise," he pauses as everyone takes in the information, "Okay," he claps his hands together, turns his back to the group and reaches for a stack of papers, "Here's a map of the

property and house."

Drake examines the map. He doesn't pay any attention to Hal anymore. He notices the door he saw outside was not on it, "Hey what about the door outside on the side of the house?" he looks up; everyone stares at him, "Sorry."

"It's okay. It is probably just another way into the basement. So I will let you guys get comfortable so we can get this show started."

"Hey! I was meaning to ask you, do we have any coffee in the kitchen?" A young girl walks out of the double doors behind Drake and Charlie. Even though her brown hair is tied back into a hair ponytail it still hangs passed her shoulders and waves back and forth as she walks up to everyone. Her soft eyes flash to Drake then back at Hal.

"Yes, in the top cupboard. Roxy, why don't you show Wendy and Betsy their rooms?"

"I thought we get to pick our rooms?" Wendy asks. She tries to sound as innocent as possible.

"Whoa, there girly, you'll have enough time to hang with the band you don't have to be right next door to them," Wendy's face grows flush as she storms past Roxy up the stairs.

"To the left is the male hall and the right female," Hal calls after them, "I will be down here if anybody needs

anything."

"Roxy," Drake calls as she starts to make her way to the stairs. She turns her body towards him instantly clamping up.

"So when did you get here?" Charlie adds with the attempt to save his friend from an epic failure.

"A few hours ago," she says kindly, "Guess they were all just anxious to get you boys here," she turns around fast and makes her way up the stairs, she half runs to catch up with Betsy.

"Don't bother with her," A man steps next to Drake, "I was here earlier she seemed nice at first, but she came back from her room and she was cold as ice," Drake watches as her turns the corner out of his sight.

"What?"

"Man, you have it bad," the man jokes and nudges Drake, "Names Franky," Drake takes the man's hand. He's not too much older than him and Charlie, but there are definitely some grays peeking through his fro.

Drake ignores Franky's warning and he follows the boys up the grand staircase. He traces the railing with his fingertips and feels the detailed engravings. The royal blue carpet would have gone perfectly with the dark wood engravings if it was kept up with, but instead it's faded

and dirty raping the beauty from the wood. Drake sees Charlie enter a room at the far end of the hallway. He checks the room across the hall, vacant. He leaves the door open and he walks through the room. He stares up at the tall cathedral ceiling that peaked at the top of the room with a giant chandler that loosely hangs down. He tosses his suitcases on the bed and heads to the large window. He throws back the curtains. He half expects bars on the windows, but instead it is a door that opens to a balcony.

"Damn, why do the boys get the better rooms?"

Drake whips around shocked. Roxy stands in his doorway, "Hey."

"Hey again, sorry about earlier," she walks closer to Drake, she is in a whispering distance, "But I need this money. As much as I can get and I will get it," she reassures him. He nods slightly. Charlie peaks in Drakes room and sees him chatting with Roxy so he leaves him be. Roxy looks up at him her eyes silently plead as she says, "Help me," she pauses and looks at the ground for a second and then finishes, "Help me, get the money and I'll only take what I need and you can have the rest."

"Um..."

"If not then so be it," she says then disappears out the room before he could answer. He shakes his head

confused and crashes down on his bed, why does he always pick the crazy ones?

Charlie walks through the hall back down to the living room he takes a seat in front of the fireplace near Hal, "Can we light fires?"

"Only in the fire places."

"Ha. Ha. What about laundry? And supplies?"

"Everything you will need in the next month will be here, but if you can't find anything this book will tell you where everything is," Hal stands up and hands Charlie a guidebook, "All the furniture, bedding, and towels are new and the dishes and fireplaces were cleaned. We didn't want to go too crazy cleaning everything because I wanted it to look as authentic as possible."

"It worked," Betsy and the other male, George, walks in the room. Betsy sits across from George on a large plush armchair. Her fiery red hair didn't match her green eyes, but Charlie didn't stare. George is the textbook definition of dork; he pulls out his phone and begins texting immediately.

"Oh, that is another thing. Everyone has to hand in their cell phones," their groans echo each other as they enter the room, "Sorry that's the rules. Plus no signal out here anyways, okay, everyone all settled in? Any

questions?"

"Food?" Franky asks as he rubs his stomach.

"There is food in the pantry and in all the cabinets. Fridge is stock full, but if you run out there is another fridge and freezer in the basement."

"What if there's an emergency?" Betsy asks.

"Huh? I don't think there will be, but like I stated before my crew and I have this place on video lock down we'll see everything."

"Anything else?" He pauses and over looks his lab rats, "Perfect," he motions his tech crew out the door, "I will see you in a month," He smiles widely at them and waves good-bye.

"Wait. Aren't you going to tell us the back story?" Wendy asks quickly.

"Oh hun. No, it is for you to figure that out yourselves," he winks then disappears out the door.