

The Bookstore Vampire

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A Tragedy in One Act

## Cast of Characters

Echo- Trans-Femme, mid 20s (she/they)

An employee of the Glad Day Bookshop in Toronto. She is very passionate about LGBT+ issues. She passes for a woman, as she has been on HRT ever since she was diagnosed with gender dysphoria as a kid.

### Premise

The Glad Day Bookshop is having materials, often relating to LGBT issues, confiscated. Along with Little Sister's in Vancouver, they are beginning to question how this activity aligns with 'free speech'.

Our main character, Echo, is a transgender employee at Glad Day. Her job is to organize the new shipments, marking what is missing. Due to the constant reminders, Echo begins to hate their job.

When we see her first, Echo is attempting to rationalize why she should go to work that day. Though she has not been able to find many new LGBT books recently, she continues to read a book almost every day. Echo will often read a book and without thinking, connect it to her everyday life. It helps her understand the world. The night before our play, she finished a book about vampires (Carmilla most recently, has read Dracula). She begins to make the audience aware of similarities between transgender people and vampires as she talks aloud. They are both afraid to go out into the sunlight, have unforgiving souls, and are not able to see themselves in mirrors.

Eventually, she comes to a conclusion: her bookstore is not enough. She should be able to be accepted regardless of where she is in town. This leads her to dream of a land where all can feel they can walk into the sunlight and be accepted: Trans-sylvania (Dracula).

### Costumes

No makeup due to not preferring it at bookstore shifts.

Echo's first costume is her 'vampire outfit'. It is a simple black dress with white shoes. Possibly has white/black leggings/tights. Her hair is flowing out, very performative and trying to show she is definitely a girl.

Her second costume is her 'bookshop outfit'. It is what she wishes she could dress in normally (as it is what other girls wear while there). This includes a pair of comfy jeans/leggings along with a sweater or comfy shirt.

### Setting and Time Period

2000's Toronto, Ontario. The setting is Echo's apartment, but all we see is half of one room. This is her living room, which is next to her door outside. The time period is sometime during the 'Little Sisters Book and Art Emporium v Canada' case.

### Audience

As mentioned before, this is only one half of a hang out space. The audience is located where the other half would normally be. Echo speaks to them as if they are dear friends that are listening to her complaints about the world which is why she often looks as though she is talking to the audience. The large difference here would be that the audience will see inside Echo's brain as she becomes more aware of their presence. This is in order to sympathize even more with their character.

## ACT ONE

SCENE: Curtains set up on corners of the stage to box us in. Should symbolize an empty void. Around center stage, there is a couch probably from around the 1980s. It is obvious that Echo either thrifted this couch or has kept it a long time due to sentimental value. To the right, there is an end table and a chair. The end table sits right next to the couch, and has an answering machine/telephone on it for Echo to check continually. The chair has a collection of books, probably from the bookstore randomly arranged on it. To the left, are another 2 chairs. These both have random items on it to signify how messy this character is. And finally, in front of the couch is some type of rug. Probably does not match with the couch.

LIGHTS: There is a purple hue that envelops the stage as Echo comes into view and lays on the couch. Lights rise, focused on the couch and Echo.

*AS THE SCENE STARTS, ECHO STARTS TO SPEAK TOWARDS THE AUDIENCE.*

ECHO.

I don't want to go to work today. (Beat.)

*ECHO SIGHS*

Ever since they started taking our books, it hasn't been the same...

*ECHO SITS UP.*

I suppose I still get free books though. That's a plus. In fact.. I was reading this book about a lesbian vampire last night, Carmilla? Got right past customs. Guess they thought it was just a spin off of Dracula or something.. and as I was reading it I couldn't help but think of the similarities between me and Carmilla!

*ECHO STARTS TO WIPE HER CLOTHING WITH HER HANDS, BEFORE NOTICING SHE MUST EXPLAIN.*

Oh shoot! I guess I should explain. I'm not saying I am going to suck your blood!

*ECHO MIMICS A VAMPIRE.*

I'm transgender! Duh! More than that though, I consider myself like a vampire because we both do not wish to go outside!(Beat.)

*ECHO, SADDENED, RESTS HER HEAD ON HER HAND.*

ECHO.

You see, you should understand. Safety for me is more fiction than monster.(beat.)

*THE LIGHTS CHANGE TO A SHADE OF GREEN, WHICH VARIES UNTIL THE COLOR CHANGES. ECHO TAKES A DRINK OF **WATER**.*

God, I do not know what to do. Ever since I have been in Toronto, Glad Days has always been where I have felt safest..

*ECHO GETS UP TO PASSIONATELY SPEAK.*

Ever since I was a kid I have dreamed of paradise.. a place I call TRANS-ylvania. A place where us vampires may live without the extreme judgement that I face when I go outside..

*ECHO FALLS. THE STAGE IS IN DARKNESS. IT COMES UP IN A LIGHT RED LIGHT WITH ECHO SUDDENLY LAYING DOWN ON THE STAGE WHILE LOOKING STRAIGHT TOWARDS THE AUDIENCE. SHE IS WEARING BLACK UNTIL NOTED.*

I have something to tell you... I am a transgender woman... and I go by Echo..

*THERE IS OBVIOUS UNSPOKEN DIALOGUE. BEAT. ECHO SADDENS AS SHE REALIZES WHAT IS GOING TO OCCUR.*

No, I know I didn't tell you.. but when was I supposed to??

*ECHO PUTS HER HANDS UP AS IF THEY HAVE A WEAPON.*

*SMALL BLACKOUT, ECHO BEGINS PACING ACROSS THE STAGE AS LIGHTS RISE. THIS IS TO SHOW HER CONTINUED ANXIETY.*

So many people have actually experienced what I describe.. with a worse ending. At my bookstore, they respect me and call me she. Outside of it.. they kill those who dare be a vampire.

*ECHO BEGINS TO LAUGH.*

Another similarity I have with vampires? I do not die simply by bullet. They had to pierce a stake through the heart to kill Carmilla and Dracula.. mine is not so easy. I shall only die if

I am unable to be myself.. I break down when I even have a thought of such a thing..

*ECHO FALLS AGAIN. SMALL BLACKOUT. BRIGHTER RED. ECHO CONSUMES 30 SECONDS AS SHE SHOWS THE AUDIENCE VARIOUS EXAMPLES OF HER MENTAL BREAKDOWNS SUCH AS CRYING AND PULLING OUT HAIR. THIS IS TO SYMBOLIZE DEALING WITH IDENTITY AS A TRANS PERSON BEING HELL. SHOULD BE CHAOTIC, WITH LIGHTS REFLECTING THAT.*

*ECHO EVENTUALLY LAYS ON THE FLOOR AS SHE HYPER-VENTIALTES LOUDLY UNTIL EVENTUALLY GROWS QUIET. SMALL BLACKOUT. GENERAL WASH AGAIN. ECHO IS STANDING AGAIN THIS TIME IN HER COMFORTABLE OUTFIT, TAKING ANOTHER SIP OF WATER. ECHO STARTS TO LOOK AROUND, PACING WITH LESS HURRY.*

ECHO.

I dream of TRANS-ylvania everyday you know? I imagine it as a big bookstore, much like mine used to be before customs raided our shipments.. that bookstore is filled with people who hate me now. Just because we stopped carrying gay books.. they must think we did it on purpose.

*SHE TUGS AT HER CLOTHING.*

Sometimes to be recognized as a woman I have to put on what I call my 'vampire outfit'.. something that does not draw too much attention, something bland. But always a dress that highlights my figure.. for the men, of course.

*ECHO SHAKES HER HEAD IN DISAPPOINTMENT.*

I feel deeply for the young vampires as well. They do not have such freedom, due to their parents. Forcing the young female vampires to wear a baggy t-shirt and shorts, always.

*ECHO SITS.*

I want to show you something.

*ECHO PULLS OUT A CARD WITH TWO CLEAR OPTIONS: MALE AND FEMALE. SHE CALMLY CONTINUES.*

This is similar to what I receive upon picking up books. They tell me to mark one of these two options.

*ECHO RAISES THEIR VOICE AGAIN.*

The world thinks that we are one of two options. Always. No options for those who are just vampires. No he or she. Just they..

*ECHO BEGINS TO GET EMOTIONAL AS SHE SITS BACK DOWN.*

Maybe the answer is to mark a random spot and call it good! Maybe just write it in the margins?? Can I sift through our inventory then, SIR?! Why the hell do you need to have paperwork to pick up books? They told you my name! I have an ID!!

*SHE SHOWS THE AUDIENCE HER ID. BEAT. SHE PUTS IT AWAY. BEAT.*

Tell me again, friend, how you understand. You are no vampire and your safe spaces are not constantly invaded. You always have had some sense of certainty, while the only thing vampires are certain of? Is uncertainty.

*ECHO TEARS HER CARD IN HALF, THROWING IT SOMEWHERE ON THE FLOOR. ECHO BEGINS TO CALM DOWN, BREATHING HEAVILY AND DRINKING WATER TO DO SO.*

ECHO.

I can hope that one day I will move to TRANS-ylvania, to be finally accepted. That it will be like my bookstore. But I can not be certain, once again, that it exists.

*BEAT.*

I am also uncertain.. that the next time I leave this house, I will come back.

*ECHO, EXHAUSTED, PICKS UP HER RADIO. SHE CLICKS ON IT TO PLAY MUSIC. SHE LOOKS TOWARDS THE AUDIENCE.*

I have to leave now. I'm gonna put on a quick tune as I gather the rest of my stuff. But I'll see you when I get back! If I get back..

*ECHO STARTS TO EXIT THE STAGE. JAZZ IS HEARD.*