

A High Stakes Proposal

A short vampire comedy

by
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Summary

He's a sweet Midwesterner. She's a vampire who has roamed the earth for hundreds of years. They're in love. But can Nora trust Steve enough to show him her authentic self? A 15-minute comedy.

Cast of Characters

A note from the playwright on gender references, below: These are only suggestions. Gender is just a performative social construct, anyway. Do whatever feels right to you.

NORA: Female, 30s, any race/ethnicity. A vampire who is hundreds of years old, presenting as a goth in her 30s. A swirl of confidence and anxiety. An independent thinker.

STEVE: Male, 30s, any race/ethnicity. A sweet Midwestern therapist. Nora's partner. Patient, honest, earnest, adaptable.

Setting

The connected kitchen and living room in Steve's apartment, present day.

We hear dubsteb music, cranked up loud, in blackout. Lights up on the kitchen in Steve's one-bedroom apartment. We see STEVE, an endearing Midwesterner in his 30s. bopping around to the music while doing dishes. He wears headphones and an apron over his flannel. After a few beats, NORA enters, a goth in her 30s.

NORA

Steve, have you seen my flask?

STEVE doesn't hear NORA over the music.

NORA

Steve!

STEVE is really getting into the dancing. Maybe he's still holding the sponge, or whipping around a dish towel. He's not a great dancer. NORA leans against a cabinet and watches, smiling. During a particularly embarrassing dance move, STEVE turns so NORA is in view. He grins sheepishly and stops.

STEVE

Hi! Hi. Hello.

STEVE picks his phone up off the counter hits the volume button a few times. The music gets quieter.

NORA

Please, don't stop on my account. It was just getting sensual.

STEVE

I'm sorry, were you saying something? Before? When I was...

NORA

I was just asking if you've seen my flask.

STEVE

Your silver one?

NORA

Well, it's not silver. It's steel. But yes.

STEVE

Right! Right. The silver allergy. I remember.

NORA

Have you seen it?

STEVE

I think the last time I saw it, you were taking a sip on the drive home.

NORA starts to exit.

NORA

I'll go check your car, thanks.

STEVE

Kiss?

NORA pivots, practically runs
into his arms. They kiss.

NORA

Now back to your dance party.

NORA picks up his phone and
turns the volume back up.
STEVE starts grooving again.
NORA exits.

STEVE looks after where NORA exited to make sure she's really gone. He pulls a ring box out of his pocket, opens it, smiles, puts it back in his pocket. We are treated to another dishes and dance break from STEVE until NORA storms in with her hands behind her back.

STEVE

(Not looking up from the dishes.)

You find it?

NORA

Steve, turn off the music NOW.

STEVE grabs his phone, stops the music, and stuffs it in a pocket.

STEVE

What's wrong?

NORA

I just found something in your car. And I need an explanation. Right now.

STEVE pats his other pocket, double-checking that the ring box is still there.

STEVE

OK... Not your flask, I'm guessing?

NORA

I found the damn flask. It was under the seat. But first I looked in the glove box.

STEVE

(Confused.)

What'd you find?

NORA

Why don't you tell me?

STEVE

(Genuinely.)

Nora, I really have no idea what you're talking about. I don't even remember what I keep in the glove box. Extra napkins? Latex gloves for the gas pump? I have nothing to hide from you.

NORA

What the hell is THIS?

NORA takes a sharpened wooden
stake out from behind her back.

NORA (CONT'D)

Start talking. Now. What the HELL IS THIS?!

STEVE bursts out laughing.

NORA (CONT'D)

I don't see anything funny here, Steve! Why the hell do you have a wooden stake in your glove box?

STEVE

(Barely able to get the
words out between laughs.)

In case I run into a vampire!

NORA goes very still. Her eyes
narrow.

NORA

Excuse me?

STEVE

It was my great-grandfather's. I found it in his old Studebaker after he died. My mom says he traveled everywhere with it, you know...

(More laughing.)

... Just in case.

NORA

And now you keep it in YOUR car. A weapon passed down through the generations.

STEVE

Yeah, I guess it's a family tradition now.

NORA

(Examining it more closely.)

It doesn't look used.

STEVE

What? Of course not! He was just superstitious. I keep it around as a tribute to him.

NORA

Text your mom right now and ask her about it. Do it in front of me. I want to see your phone.

STEVE

Are you serious?

NORA

Do it now.

STEVE

Why are you being so weird about this?

NORA

Why are YOU being so weird about this?

STEVE

(Taking his phone out of his pocket.)

OK, fine, if it makes you feel better.

NORA

Good.

STEVE

"Hey, mom, remember Great-Grandpa Henry's vampire stake?"

STEVE's phone makes a noise indicating it sent the message. NORA puts the stake down, somewhere far away from STEVE. She pulls out her flask and drinks.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Do you want a snack? I haven't seen you eat all day. Maybe you'll feel less cranky if you --

NORA

(Crankily.)

I'm not cranky!

STEVE's phone dings. NORA is by his side in a flash.

STEVE

Wow, that was fast.

NORA

Show me.

STEVE hands his phone over.

NORA (CONT'D)

"You mean this one?"

STEVE's phone dings again in her hands.

NORA

What the hell?

STEVE

She said that?

NORA

No, she sent a photo. Of another wood stake. On HER bed.

STEVE takes the phone back and
looks at it.

STEVE

(Typing.)

"Haha, what?"

Another "sent" noise from
STEVE's phone.

NORA

Steve, why does your family have easy access to multiple
vampire stakes?

STEVE

(Gesturing to the stake that
was in his car.)

Hey, I thought that was the only one! This is some cool
family history I'm learning.

STEVE's phone dings. STEVE
reads off the screen.

STEVE

"Grandpa Henry gave this to me when I was traveling home late
one night. I've kept it in my nightstand ever since."

NORA

In her nightstand?! This seems like more than superstition,
Steve. This sounds like generational trauma.

STEVE

Come on, it's not that deep.

STEVE'S phone dings. STEVE
reads the message aloud.

STEVE (CONT'D)

"I'm pretty sure your great-grandpa kept one in every room of
his house. Love you!"

NORA

I have to go.

NORA gets up and starts
putting on a jacket.

STEVE

Wait, what? Why?

NORA

This is... this is too... I don't feel safe.

STEVE

Talk to me. Help me understand.

NORA

I don't want to talk.

STEVE crosses to NORA.

STEVE

We've been through this, Nora. You can't just run away every
time something makes you anxious.

NORA

Yes, I can. Watch. I'm doing it now.

STEVE

Can we just take a deep breath and count backward from five?

NORA

I'm not one of your patients, Steve. I don't need a coping
mechanism.

STEVE

We all need coping mechanisms. Let's just try it, together.

NORA grabs the stake.

NORA

I'm taking this with me.

STEVE

That was my great-grandfather's! It's practically a family heirloom.

NORA

Sure, some people inherit a porcelain soup terrine. Some people inherit cameo brooches from Milan. But, no, not you. Your family heirloom is a LETHAL WEAPON.

STEVE takes a deep breath in,
then starts to let it out.

STEVE

5, 4, 3, 2, 1.

NORA

Stop it.

STEVE takes an even louder
deep breath.

STEVE

(Exhaling.)

5, 4, 3, 2, 1.

NORA

I said, stop. It's stupid.

STEVE

Let's be stupid together.

(Deep breath.)

5, 4, 3, 2, 1.

STEVE slowly takes NORA's hands. He inhales deeply, then pauses, looking into her eyes and smiling warmly. Hesitantly, NORA takes a deep breath. She exhales slowly as STEVE counts.

STEVE (CONT'D)

5, 4, 3, 2, 1.

They take a deep breath together. NORA closes her eyes and exhales. She puts down the stake. She starts taking off her coat.

STEVE

I would never hurt you, Nora. Never.

NORA

I know. I don't think you could hurt anyone. It's just not who you are.

NORA holds STEVE like a treasure.

STEVE

Thank you for not running away. Thank you for staying. With me.

NORA

I'm tired of running. So tired.

(A pause. She's made up her mind.)

Steve, there's something I have to tell you.

STEVE

There's something I have to tell you, too. Well, I mean, ask you. I'm sorry. I'm messing it up already. You go first.