

Emily Gil

Explanations

SCENE

Present day. Nighttime. OLIVIA, a 17 year old teenage girl, sits on a chair by a bed with a book in her lap. ELLIE, her 7 year old sister, stands by the bed.

OLIVIA

(staring intently at ELLIE)

Come on. Give it to me.

ELLIE

(faking innocence)

I have no idea what you're talking about.

OLIVIA

Ellie, the *phone*. I can see the outline in your pillowcase.

(ELLIE moves to cover the pillowcase with her hands)

I'll give you three seconds to put my phone back in my room.

(ELLIE runs out the door and runs back a few seconds later)

It's in your pocket now! God, it's like you think I don't have eyes or something. Go put it back. I'm serious.

(ELLIE sulks out and sulks back in a few seconds later)

OLIVIA

Thank you.

(ELLIE sits on the bed and pulls the covers around herself)

(OLIVIA opens book and flips through pages before stopping)

And then, steam began to bubble from the test tube Dr. Tell had been about to throw away. But that was impossible! He had run countless tests on the mysterious substance, every single one of which had tested negative. He placed the test tube down on his desk and backed away in horror as green goo burst from the top and landed on his desk. He watched helplessly as the goo began to grow larger and larger, becoming a huge slimy mass. As he tried to figure out what to do, the mass MOVED!

(pauses and makes a shocked face at ELLIE)

(ELLIE giggles)

Dr. Tell extended a shaky hand to dial the number of the security guard. Five, long minutes passed as he waited for help to arrive. Then, a man burst through the door with a ray gun. He pointed it straight at the green mass.

(ELLIE stops giggling)

OLIVIA

(continues to read without noticing)

A flash of blue light shot through the air and blasted through the goo, leaving a steaming mess on the floor the size of your butt.

(looks at ELLIE expectantly, waiting for her to laugh)

(ELLIE gives OLIVIA a blank stare)

OLIVIA

Do you just not want me to read to you or something? What's wrong?

ELLIE

What's an active shooter?

OLIVIA

(extremely confused)

What? Where is this coming from?

ELLIE

We had a lockdown drill today and we were just sitting in the corner of the classroom while Ms. Kelly locked the doors and Jake crawled to where me and Anne were sitting and told us there was an active shooter in the building. Remember what we saw on the news? Those kids coming out of the school with their hands on their heads? Is it like that?

OLIVIA

Well, I mean, that was pretty far away, Ellie.

ELLIE

It was in Florida. We went to Florida for Disney, remember? Did they have an active shooter?

OLIVIA

Well... Don't you just wanna read the story, Ellie?

(points to image in the book)

Look, this page has a drawing with Dr. Tell and the security guard shooting the...

(hesitates before flipping to another page with forced dramatism)

It's the goo monster coming back from the dead! Ahh, look at it, it's alive!

ELLIE

(momentarily distracted)

That's not even that scary, Olivia.

(refocuses on her line of questioning)

What is it? Come on, tell me!

OLIVIA

It's just... nothing. You'll be fine.

ELLIE

Tell me! What is that? Come on, tell me!

OLIVIA

No, okay? It's not something you need to worry about. And don't listen to Jake or anything. Jake is weird.

ELLIE

(growing angry and sitting up straighter)

At least Jake tells me things. He even--

OLIVIA

(visibly frustrated)

It won't happen, okay?

ELLIE

What won't happen? And you didn't even answer my question I had before.

(crosses arms and flops back on the bed)

You never tell me anything.

OLIVIA

I'm *telling* you that we should just read the story. Think happy thoughts or something.

(they sit in silence)

OLIVIA

(resumes reading, not as enthusiastically as before)

Dr. Tell slumped against his desk in relief. He was saved! But... What was that? The goo had begun to reform. Dr. Tell--

ELLIE

Is it true they have big guns? Jake says they have big guns. Guns that can shoot a lot of bullets at once.

OLIVIA

(shuts book with force)

Ellie, I'm serious. Drop it.

(they sit in silence, neither one of them attempting to read from the book anymore)

ELLIE

I don't want to go to school tomorrow.

OLIVIA

You have to. You don't have a fever or anything. Unless you had some sort of weird butt disease. *Do you have some sort of weird butt disease?*

(pause while OLIVIA waits for ELLIE to laugh)

(ELLIE doesn't laugh)

ELLIE

I just don't want them to come here.

OLIVIA

Who?

ELLIE

Those active shooters.

OLIVIA

They... they won't.

ELLIE

How would *you* even know? Do you know *everything*? If you knew everything, you wouldn't have gotten a C on your history test like Mom said you did.

OLIVIA

She *talked* to you about that?

ELLIE

Yeah, she did.

OLIVIA

My C in history doesn't have anything to do with this.

(OLIVIA shakes her head)

I don't know how to explain this to you.

ELLIE

Do your best. I'm not expecting that much anyway.

OLIVIA

There are just... Bad people exist, right? Like that goo monster in the book.

ELLIE

I know that. Do you think I'm stupid?

OLIVIA

I don't know. Maybe?

(ELLIE scowls, kicks OLIVIA through her blankets)

You know what I mean, Ellie.

ELLIE

(glares at OLIVIA)

No, I don't. And if you say that again I'll make Arby throw up in your shoes.

OLIVIA

Arby doesn't even listen to you! And what, you suddenly have the power to make dogs throw up at will? Is your face that ugly?

(they both giggle and the tension dissipates)

ELLIE

Can you tell me what an active shooter is now?

OLIVIA

(looks around the room, avoiding eye contact with ELLIE)

An active shooter... is basically someone that wants to hurt people. And they go to schools because there are a lot of people at once.

ELLIE

And they hurt kids too?

OLIVIA

(pause)

Um. Yes.

ELLIE

Why?

OLIVIA

I don't really think there's just one reason people do it. They want to scare people. But your teachers can keep you safe okay? And, hey, you have Ed the security guard!

ELLIE

Ed is like eighty. And we don't have anything else in the classroom to help us.

OLIVIA

Well, even outside of school people are trying to protect you. Like the people that make laws and stuff, people in the government.

ELLIE

If that's so true then why do you always complain about the government? You're always saying that nothing's ever happening. Or no one's doing anything to change anything.

OLIVIA

I mean... yeah. But that doesn't mean that *you* have to believe the same thing.

ELLIE

Why not?

OLIVIA

Well, I've been alive for longer, for one. I can make my own opinions out of the stuff I see.

ELLIE

If you think your opinion is so important, I can have the same opinion too.

OLIVIA

(sighs angrily and leans closer to ELLIE)

Okay, fine. The government's not going to help, Ed the security guard can't help, and your teachers can't help. Does that make you feel better, Ellie? Knowing that no one can help? I'm... I'm trying to give you something to make you feel better, so that you can go to school tomorrow without feeling scared or upset or anything and-

ELLIE

Will that make the active shooter stay away?

OLIVIA

What?

ELLIE

Pretending like people can help?

OLIVIA

No. I mean, yes. I mean... Bad people just find a way. No matter how many other people try to stop them. Which really... sucks.

ELLIE

(pause)

So it's going to happen?

OLIVIA

You never know. It's just one of those things where you never know what's going to happen.

(pause)

I wish I could tell you it could never happen to you. But you're obviously way too smart for me to be able to say that.

(laughs softly)

When did *that* happen?

ELLIE

(giggles but turns serious quickly)

None of that makes me feel any better.

OLIVIA

(laughs awkwardly)

Yeah. I... I know, right?

(looks at ELLIE for a few seconds)

ELLIE

Yeah.

(they sit in contemplative silence)

OLIVIA

(enthusiastic tone to make up for what was said earlier)

But you know what you can do to make yourself feel better?

ELLIE

What?

OLIVIA

You can think about all the people that can help. Do you know why you don't have to be afraid?

ELLIE

Why?

OLIVIA

Because I'll be there. If anything happens, I'll just come down to your school in a bulletproof cape and get everyone under it. When the active shooter comes, I'll punch the gun out of his hands and drop kick him from a chair.

(ELLIE giggles)

And then, when we've made sure that there's nothing else he can do to hurt us, we'll all take turns kicking him. And punching him.

ELLIE

And we'll tie him up and wait for the police to come take him away to jail.

OLIVIA

See? Now you're getting it. And all the other active shooters will see it on television and it'll scare them into never even thinking about coming into another school ever again.

(hugs ELLIE goodnight and gets up from the chair to walk to the door)

Good night, Ellie. Get some sleep, okay?

ELLIE

Night.

(pause)

Hey, Olivia?

What?

OLIVIA

I know you just made that all up.

ELLIE

(pause)
I know you do.
(OLIVIA switches off the lights)
(Blackout.)

OLIVIA