

**THE BUNNY MAN**

Run Time: 15 minutes

Stephen Thompson

Concept and Characters

by

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### Cast of Characters

**Andrew Nelson:** Male, 22 years old, Senior at St. Mary's College, Computer Science major. He is skeptical of the supernatural and concerned about his future. Dating Kayla.

**Kayla Thomas:** Female, 23 years old, Graduate of St. Mary's College, Education major, current bartender. She is pragmatically skeptical of the supernatural and hopeful for the future. Dating Andrew.

**Hannah Bonfield:** Female, 22 years old, drop out from St. Mary's College, waitress at the local dive bar, Kayla's roommate. She is a first-time ghost hunter with a short attention span.

**Bunny Man:** Male, an infinitely old being in the form of a 70-year-old Virginian farmer. He is a wise, old spirit who is completely misunderstood by internet bloggers.

### Setting

The back roads outside Clifton, Virginia.

### Time

Early August.

Scene 1

At Rise:

(An older model sedan is driving down a wooded two-lane road outside of Clifton, Virginia. Night.

ANDREW, a 22 year old college senior is driving, KAYLA, a 23 year old, bartender is sitting in the passenger seat, playing with her phone, while her roommate and coworker HANNAH, 22 years old, rides in the backseat, looking out the window at the porch lights blinking through the trees. )

HANNAH

Anybody want some Jame-o?

ANDREW

I'm good, you know, driving and all.

HANNAH

Suit yourself.

(HANNAH unscrews a squeaky flask and takes a sip.)

HANNAH (cont'd)

So, is this supposed to be scary?

ANDREW

Well that depends, are you afraid of getting arrested?

HANNAH

No.

ANDREW (Spooky Voice.)

Escaped convicts?

HANNAH

Not really.

ANDREW (Spooky Voice.)

What about skinned animal carcasses hanging from trees?

HANNAH  
Is that an option?

ANDREW (Monotone.)  
Probably not.

KAYLA (Distractedly.)  
Andy, you're an idiot. Hannah, it's just urban exploring —Some old buildings covered in beer cans and graffiti.

HANNAH (Sarcastically.)  
Cool. So glad you invited me along this evening.

KAYLA  
Ahem. You begged us to come along. I seem to remember a certain someone complaining about how boring August is in a college town.

HANNAH  
I know, I know, but you guys make it sound so exciting: Haunt Hunting! We've been driving for two hours.

ANDREW  
This is actually one of the closer ones.

HANNAH (Insincerely.)  
Cool.

KAYLA  
What else were you going to do with a Wednesday night? It's not exactly a busy bar night.

HANNAH  
Ok, ok. I admit I asked to come along. Where are we going again, by the way?

ANDREW  
Bunny Man Bridge!

KAYLA  
You know, this was actually the first site we put on our haunt hunter list... Somehow, we just never got around to it.

ANDREW  
Oh, oh! Kay, remember Tower 12?

KAYLA  
Oh my god, yes!

KAYLA (cont'd)  
(Turning to HANNAH.)

So, we were in Delaware at this abandoned military tower, it's a state park now or something. But I was zoomed in super close, taking pictures of the windows--

ANDREW  
(Correcting her.)

Gun ports.

KAYLA  
And then, all of a sudden there was just *this guy* standing there, staring at us!

HANNAH  
Holy Shit!

KAYLA  
I know!

HANNAH  
(Pointing out the window.)  
No, what is that?

(KAYLA turns around and screams.

ANDREW slams on the breaks.)

ANDREW  
Ok, new rule: No screaming!  
(Pauses.)  
It's just a dead animal in the road. Wait, is it dead? Hang on, let me check.

(ANDREW puts the car into park and gets out.)

KAYLA  
Sorry about that, I'm just a little on edge.

HANNAH  
It's ok. Are you alright?

KAYLA  
Yeah, it's nothing...just me and Andy.

HANNAH  
Like nothing, nothing or... like something?

KAYLA

We're not talking.

HANNAH

Oh, about the move? T. F. A?

KAYLA

Yeah, of course my Teach for America position. Hannah, it's all I've wanted for so long, and now its only weeks away and Andy won't even talk about it. We've been together for three years and... nothing.

HANNAH

Crazy idea, what if he moved with you?

KAYLA

He won't even consider it.

HANNAH

Why, what's he got going on?

KAYLA

Nothing. He says he wants to take a little time off after graduation.

HANNAH

Well, that doesn't sound so bad.

KAYLA

Coming from you? You've been taking a little time off since Freshman year.

HANNAH

And it's pretty nice. It leaves me open to opportunities.

KAYLA

Yeah, I guess. I just wish--

(ANDREW gets back in the car.

KAYLA and HANNAH are silent.)

ANDREW

Everything OK in here?

KAYLA

Yeah. What was it?

HANNAH

And was it dead?!

ANDREW

A fox. And, um... I don't know. It was pretty hurt, so I helped it to the side of the road.

HANNAH

Did you touch it?

KAYLA

Gross!

ANDREW

Well, yea. It was pretty banged up.

KAYLA

Andy, you touched it?!

ANDREW

What?! I was helping it.

(Pauses.)

Let's just get going, I think I saw a person a little ways back...

KAYLA

Creepy.

(ANDREW puts the car in Drive and slowly pulls out.)

HANNAH

(Looking out the window.)

It's probably dead.

(ALL are silent.)

ANDREW

Anyways Kay, GPS says we're almost there. Do you wanna read it?

KAYLA

Oh yeah, let me pull it up.

(To HANNAH.)

So, as you know I always research the sites we're going to and put together a little narrative of the site's history.

HANNAH

Ah, yes. The Haunt Site Story. Kayla, only you could make ghost hunting educational.

ANDREW

Shut up, I love the Haunt Story!

KAYLA

Ok, ok. Both of you cool it.

(Beginning to read.)

The town of Clifton Virginia is pretty picturesque these days. They've got some art galleries, a few restaurants, even a general store. But it wasn't always so peaceful.

(HANNAH sighs loudly.)

KAYLA (cont'd)

Back at the turn of the last century Fairfax County used to have a prison for the criminally insane here. The Asylum housed 328 of Virginia's most dangerously insane inmates, murderers, and rapists. Now, the Asylum made the farmers of Clifton very uncomfortable and they pleaded with the magistrate to close it. Finally, Fairfax County conceded and arranged to have all of the prisoners moved to a brand-new prison being constructed in Lorton.

(Pause.)

On Halloween Night, 1904 the final prisoners were loaded into the back of a police transport bus. Exhausted and anxious to get home the driver decided to take a short cut and as they pulled around a tight corner on Newman Road, the overloaded bus veered into the far lane. Its wheels lost traction. The bus flipped and slid into a grove of trees killing everyone inside.

HANNAH (Sarcastically.)

Pretty spooky.

ANDREW

What about the other part?

KAYLA

What other part?

ANDREW

Where he gets his name.

KAYLA

I'm not done with the prison bit yet.

ANDREW

Ok, let me tell it then...

(In a ghost story voice.)

So, several months after the crash the residents began to find skinned rabbit carcasses hanging in the woods.

ANDREW (cont'd)

They reported it to the authorities but what else could the cops do, but just cut them down. This one time there was an old man at the scene, however when police approached him, he just vanished! The local papers started calling him...

(Pauses.)

The Bunny Man.

HANNAH

The bunny... man.

ANDREW

The Bunny Man.

KAYLA

Ok, so back to the bus crash—

(Reading.)

After that, a reporter began researching the area and started to piece some things together: the prison, the crash, the skinned rabbits. Now, turns out that the bus that night was carrying 35 people, but authorities only recovered 34 bodies. It was just assumed one must have burned up in the crash, or that someone miscounted but the prisoner that was never found was Douglas J. Grifton. Grifton was serving four consecutive life sentences for

(Breaking.)

Get this!

(Reading.)

Killing and skinning each member of his family early one Easter morning, with just a hatchet and his bare hands. When police arrived at his residence, they found his family's skinned bodies hanging from the trees in the front yard. One young detective said their bodies looked like peeled tomatoes. When they finally apprehended Grifton, he was just sitting in the kitchen laughing.

(ALL are silent.)

HANNAH

Ok, great road trip. Thanks so much for inviting me.

(ANDREW and KAYLA both laugh.)

ANDREW (Jokingly.)

Again, I don't know that we so much invited you as...

HANNAH

Yeah, yeah, yeah... This Haunt Hunting stuff is so...hokey!

KAYLA

We love it! I've already started researching spots in Wyoming.

The Bunny Man

(ANDREW stops laughing. KAYLA is quiet.)

HANNAH (Jokingly.)

So... the Bunny Man, huh? Do you think he wears a bunny costume or is he like half rabbit or something?

ANDREW

Actually, in one of the stories...

(Pauses.)

Oh shit...

HANNAH

(Looking out the front windshield.)

Now, that's creepy.

KAYLA (Cheerfully.)

Oh, we're here!

## Scene 2

At Rise:

(The edge of a long, dark, single lane tunnel in the woods. The car is parked offstage.)

ANDREW and KAYLA shine their flashlights around the area.

HANNAH has no flashlight and is wandering around looking at her cellphone.

The BUNNY MAN, a 70-year-old farmer, sits on a tree stump at the end of the stage, unnoticed by the others.)

HANNAH

You know, Kayla, like only half the stuff you said is even on the Wikipedia page for this place. Like, where'd you get that he murdered his family? Also, turn of the century? The first sighting wasn't until the 70s.

(KAYLA and ANDREW ignore HANNAH.)

HANNAH

And according to this article, there was never a prisoner named Grifton incarcerated in Fairfax County. Ok, wait... nope, never mind. There wasn't even a Michael Walster.

KAYLA

Michael who? What are you talking about?

HANNAH

Walster. This article says that there *was* a guy murdered here in the 1970s named Michael Walster, but according to this *other* article, he never existed.

(HANNAH stops directly in front of BUNNY MAN.)

BUNNY MAN

That's because they spelled it wrong. It was Halster, with an H.

(HANNAH jerks her head up.)

BUNNY MAN (cont'd)

And the damned fool wasn't murdered

(Gesturing to HIS head.)

He slipped on a patch of ice and cracked his head open.

(HANNAH quickly backs up, trips, and falls down.

KAYLA and ANDREW stop where they are and shine their lights in BUNNY MAN's direction.)

BUNNY MAN

Also, I didn't kill the rabbits. That was a group of tormented teens. They were more than touch offset...

ANDREW

I'm sorry?

BUNNY MAN

For what?

KAYLA

Who? –Are you?

BUNNY MAN

(Standing up.)

The Bunny Man.

BUNNY MAN (cont'd)

Well not *the* Bunny Man, but you folks call me the Bunny Man so... Anyhow, I believe y'all came here to see me.

KAYLA

The Bunny Man?

(BUNNY MAN humorously gestures bunny-ears behind his head and waves with his other hand.)

HANNAH

(Standing up.)

Oh!

ANDREW (Dismissively.)

Hannah, shh.

(To BUNNY MAN.)

Look sir, I'm sorry if we're trespassing--

BUNNY MAN

You and everyone else.

KAYLA

What do you mean you're the Bunny Man?

HANNAH

The story you just read...

KAYLA (Dismissively.)

Hannah, shh.

BUNNY MAN

(Making a grand gesture.)

The Bunny Man. These are my woods.

HANNAH

What are you the Lorax?

KAYLA (Simultaneous.)

Hannah!

ANDREW (Simultaneous.)

Hannah!

BUNNY MAN

As I was saying, these are my woods. They have been mine, since... always.

BUNNY MAN (cont'd)

This was a deer path here originally, and that carried over to the road....then eventually the railroad came. You know, I always liked it here. Calm, peaceful, quiet. You know, I made this tunnel. Well, in a manner of speaking.

(BUNNY MAN Chuckles to himself.)

KAYLA

(To no one, in particular.)

From my story? But...but my story was like 60% fiction, and the rest of it, I just made up!

BUNNY MAN

I understand this is your last hunt.

ANDREW

Ok, we're out of here.

BUNNY MAN

(To KAYLA.)

You and Andrew. This is your last haunt hunt.

(To HANNAH)

And Hannah's first. Don't get your hopes up girl, they don't all turn out like this. Now understand, I don't make in person appearances every day. This is a special one —For each of you.

HANNAH

Ah, ha!

ANDREW

Hannah, be quiet.

HANNAH

No. I won't be quiet because I just figured it out! You gave yourselves away. You gave yourselves away when he said Andrew's name. How would the Bunny Man know *our* names? But that was good! You really had me going for a minute.

KAYLA

(Speaking in a hushed tone.)

Hannah, honey, come over here.

HANNAH

(Moving towards KAYLA.)

This is nuts! How long have you been working on this?

BUNNY MAN

As I say, the railroad brought the people, and the people brought more people, and so on, and so on... I tell you, people are worse than deer. Deer come and go, but people...they stay put.

(Looking at KAYLA.)

Usually, anyways...

ANDREW (Whispering.)

Kay, he is crazy. We need to go, now!

(KAYLA approaches BUNNY MAN.)

KAYLA

Ok, so you're the Bunny man. And this is your bridge... But how do you know us?

BUNNY MAN

I know each of you. You're in my home, my guests. I wouldn't have strangers into my home after all. I know that Andrew is an anxious, cat person, and I know that Hannah is an adventure seeker, a real Goblet of Fire kinda gal.

(Pauses.)

And I know you...are leaving soon.

(ANDREW looks around incredulously. HANNAH scoffs.)

KAYLA

I am. I'm moving to Wyoming in three weeks. I was selected for Teach for America.

ANDREW (Resolutely.)

Kay. We. Have. To. Go.

KAYLA

No, Andy. That's him. That's, that's really the Bunny Man!

HANNAH (Laughing.)

Ok, ok. So, you're the Bunny Man, right? So... do something, Bunny man-like.

(Beat.)

Not murder! Something Bunny Man-like, other than murder, please.

(KAYLA, HANNAH, and ANDREW are surprised by a skittering sound offstage.)

BUNNY MAN

What's a hunt without a fox?

ANDREW

Is that... the fox from before?

BUNNY MAN

(Chuckling to himself.)

Of course not. The fox you saw is dead.

(KAYLA and HANNAH look at ANDREW.)

BUNNY MAN (cont'd)

This one is from a different skulk entirely. He did, however, come because I called him. The fox you saw earlier, I've known him since he was a kit. I knew his daddy, and his daddy's daddy...and all their mommas.

BUNNY MAN (cont'd)

(To ANDREW.)

He wanted me to thank you. What you did at the end there, that was very kind.

ANDREW

Ok, This is ridiculous. This is completely ridiculous.

KAYLA

Andy, this is *real*.

ANDREW

No, no it's not. This is some lunatic screwing with us.

KAYLA

Andy, this is real He *is* real.

(ANDREW looks at BUNNY MAN.

BUNNY MAN smiles at ANDREW.)

ANDREW

Well great. This is fucking great! We've been going on these road trips for years —for years! And now, on the very last one we find out: It's real! It's all fuckin' real. So, what I thought was fun and exciting all this time, is actually goddamn terrifying.

(To KAYLA.)

I know you're leaving; I get that. I know this is the end. We don't have to talk about it. There is *nothing* to talk about. But what I don't get is why *he* is here! Why now? We've had all these great experiences, made all these great memories —And I keep feeling them, over and over. The laughing, the running through the dark, all that hokey shit...

(ANDREW laughs to himself.)

ANDREW

I wanted you to be happy and I wanted you to pursue your dreams and I wanted to believe. But now I see him. And now I don't want it anymore.

KAYLA

Andy, this *is* what we wanted.

ANDREW

No, no. What I wanted was long car trips with you, and adrenaline rushes, and the unknown. What I do *not* want is resolution.

(There is a long pause between KAYLA and ANDREW.)

ANDREW

(To BUNNY MAN.)

So, thank you for your time.

(To KAYLA and HANNAH.)

Like I said, we should go.

KAYLA

Andy, you've never said any of that... Andy, just – Just look at him! Acknowledge him! This moment is important. All of those other moments were important, are important, too. If we, if *you*... just had the courage...

BUNNY MAN

To see.

(ANDREW glares at the Bunny Man.)

ANDREW

And on that note.

(ANDREW exits to the car.)

HANNAH

Kayla, I'm sorry, but this is just a bit too weird for me. It was fun, but then it got weird. I'm going back to the car.

(HANNAH starts exiting to the car.)

HANNAH (cont'd)

You coming?

KAYLA

Yeah. I'll be there in second.

(HANNAH exits to the car.)

BUNNY MAN

Well, I should be getting along, too. I've got work to do.

(Starting to exit to the tunnel.)

If you do take another trip, up around Beltsville, y'all stop in and see the goat man. He's not actually a goat, but he *is* ugly as a mule.

KAYLA

So, what happens now?

BUNNY MAN

You know Kayla, for all the critters in the forest, birds in the trees and fish in the streams, people are the most temperamental creatures on this earth. Three folks stand together in front of a vast ocean. One blind, one whole, and one with his eyes closed. Does it help the blind one if you close your eyes? Should you push the other, unaware into the surf? All you can do is look and see, live and just be.

(Pauses.)

I suspect you'll be alright, Kayla Thomas. I suspect you've got an unobstructed view.

(BUNNY MAN stops at the edge of the stage.

HE humorously gestures bunny ears behind his head and waves.

KAYLA smiles at BUNNY MAN. HE exits to the woods.

KAYLA exits to the car.

End of Play.)