

A Reader's Theater Script for  
*Dead City*  
Written by James Ponti  
Script Adaptation by Aimée van Heyst, TBA Committee Member

**Readers:**

Molly Bigelow	Narrator 1	Narrator 2
Natalie	Dr. Hidalgo	

**Molly:** I do realize that it's not normal for a girl of my age to hang out at the morgue. Okay, I realize that it's not normal for a girl of *any* age to hang out at the morgue. But I guess the first thing you learn about me is that I'm not exactly a cookie-cutter kind of girl.

Even if I wanted to be, I think my mother had other plans.

When I begged her to put me in ballet class, she somehow convinced me that Jeet Kune Do was a better fit. So after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays, when the rest of the girls were learning *pirouettes* and *grand jetés*, I was down the hall mastering the martial art of the intercepting fist.

**Narrator 1:** One summer day, Molly's mother couldn't leave her at home alone, so she took her to work. She was a forensic pathologist for the New York City Office of Chief Medical Examiners and she used to love to say that "even after someone dies, they still have a story to tell."

**Narrator 2:** It has been two summers since her mother passed, but she still, out of habit, spends Fridays during the summer hanging out with Dr. Hidalgo and his intern, Natalie. Like Molly, she is a student at MIST – the Metropolitan Institute of Science and Technology. The school is made up of four buildings on Roosevelt Island that originally housed a mental hospital in the late 1880s . Natalie is in the upper school and Molly in the lower school.

**Molly:** On the last Friday of the summer, Dr. Hidalgo invited me to go to a crime scene. He led us to the New York Marble Cemetery.

**Narrator 1:** While they waited for someone to open the gate, Natalie noticed something

stuck at the top of the gate.

**Natalie:** What's that?

**Dr. Hidalgo:** Let's find out.

**Narrator 2:** He pulled out a silver pointer and extended it until he could tap at the object which started to fall. Molly went to catch it.

**Molly:** Got it!

**Dr. Hidalgo:** You might not want...

**Narrator 1:** It was too late. Molly caught it and realized it was a severed human finger.

**Dr. Hidalgo:** ...to touch that.

**Narrator 1:** Molly tossed the severed finger at him as if it were a hot potato.

**Dr. Hidalgo:** Impressive catch, though, especially with the sun in your eyes.

**Molly:** Thanks!

**Narrator 1:** Molly noticed that Dr. Hidalgo didn't use an evidence bag for the finger. He put it in a regular Ziploc baggie. That was strange. When the caretaker let them in, the caretaker quickly rushed off, leaving Dr. Hidalgo and the girls to find the crime scene alone. When going into the marble crypt, Molly discovered there were no dead bodies. What happened to the bodies?

**Molly:** We looked around the cemetery for a little while longer, but found nothing else that seemed out of the ordinary.

**Dr. Hidalgo:** My guess is grave robbery, but that's something for the police to figure out.

**Narrator 1:** Dr. Hidalgo treated the girls to lunch and then it was over. The last Friday of the summer was gone and it was time to think about going back to school.

**Molly:** MIST is a place I never would have thought of applying to if it weren't for my mother being a MIST grad. I started there last year around Thanksgiving. I was sitting alone in a

corner of the cafeteria when Natalie surprised me. She came and sat with me bringing along two of her friends, Alex and Grayson.

**Narrator 2:** Alex and Grayson grilled Molly throughout lunch as if interviewing her for the school paper. When they were through, they abruptly left to set up for the start-of-the-school-year assembly.

**Narrator 1:** After the assembly, most kids headed for the tram to get off of the island. With her fear of heights, Molly headed for the subway. She took so long getting down to the subway, that she missed the train. That's when she noticed a creepy guy. She was completely alone and unprotected in a subway station one hundred feet below ground.

**Narrator 2:** She looked over to see the guy staring right at her.

**Molly:** He was tall like a basketball player, and super thin. His hair had been dyed shoe-polish black, and he had dark circles under his eyes. He wore mismatched earrings and, judging by the splotches along his jawline, he also wore makeup. Very bad makeup.

**Narrator 1:** When he smiled, it got even weirder. His teeth were an unforgettable blend of orange and yellow. Molly smiled politely and then headed to the escalators. Molly could hear his boots thud as he walked across the floor behind her.

**Narrator 2:** Molly tried to defend herself by swinging her backpack at him, but he put his arm up and stopped it. He ripped the bag out of her hands and tossed it across the floor.

**Molly:** He reached for me, and out of nowhere I flashed back to my Jeet Kune Do classes. I turned my body to the side, and when his fist went past me, I punched him right in the ribs. It must have been pretty hard because I actually heard his ribs break. It didn't seem to bother him at all.

**Narrator 1:** He grabbed Molly by the shoulders and slammed her against the wall. He started sniffing the air around her face.

**Molly:** (panicked) What do you want from me?

**Narrator 2:** He only responded with gurgles. He ripped Molly's necklace off and in the process cut into the flesh along the back of her neck. Molly was surprised when she heard...

**Natalie:** Dude, you'll want to give that back. It's a family heirloom.

**Narrator 2:** The guy seemed to recognize my rescuer. The second he saw her, he let go of me, smiled, and started sizing her up.

**Natalie:** (confidently) I can tell by your expression, you know what I am. (pauses) What do you have to say for yourself? (pauses) Come on! Use your words!

**Narrator 2:** He kept trying to say something, but eventually he just charged at Natalie. She somehow slammed him into the tile wall.

**Molly:** I'll call the police!

**Natalie:** Don't, I've got this.

**Narrator 2:** As he got up, he had a huge cut across his forehead, but for some reason there was no blood. He also had three fingers completely dislocated. He calmly snapped each one back into place.

**Natalie:** If you think you're some sort of tough guy Level 2 who can make his reputation by taking me out, you are sadly misinformed. You're an L3, and that's all you'll ever be. I don't know what you've heard, but there's no climbing back up the evolutionary ladder.

**Narrator 2:** Molly had no clue what Natalie was talking about. The taunting made him even angrier and he ran straight at her again. This time Natalie sent him sprawling on the floor and then kneeled down so that her knees pinned his shoulders to the ground.

**Natalie:** Did he sniff you? (pauses) (demanding) Did he sniff you?

**Molly:** (creeped out by the memory) Yeah, like a dog.

**Natalie:** Get the vanilla. (point at bag) It's in the front pocket.

**Molly:** The vanilla extract from the morgue?

**Natalie:** It's more useful than you might imagine.

**Narrator 1:** Molly handed Natalie the bottle and she proceeded in shoving it up and squirting it into his nostrils. He sneezed and gagged.

**Natalie:** (to Molly) That should take care of that. (to him) Now, do I have your attention? The way you roughed up my friend over there was not cool. I want to give you a little reminder so you don't make the same mistake again.

**Narrator 2:** She yanked on one of his earrings and ripped off most of his ear. More than half his ear was dangling from the earring in her hand.

**Natalie:** I want you to go back to where you belong and spread the word among all your little troll buddies that if any of you mess with me or my friends, some very bad things will happen. Very bad! Do you understand?

**Narrator 1:** He slowly said "Un-der-stand" and then she tossed his ear into the darkness of the tunnel. Molly started to throw up onto the subway tracks.

**Natalie:** Go right ahead, it's really a lot to take in all at once. I threw up my first time too. Did he say anything to you?

**Molly:** Omaha.

**Natalie:** Not Omaha, Omega.

**Molly:** Why Omega?

**Natalie:** It's actually a longer story than we have time for at the moment. But I promise to tell you everything. For right now, though, we need to get you aboveground quickly.

**Molly:** Where are we going?

**Natalie:** The tram.

**Molly:** (panicked) No way! I am not riding in the dangling death cage.

**Natalie:** (laughingly) What? Are you really willing to take a chance that the next thing out of that tunnel is the F train, and not the creeper with a dozen of his friends? Because frankly, I don't think we're ready for that yet.

**Molly:** (softly) Okay, maybe the tram's not as bad as I think.

**Narrator 2:** Who was the creep? What will happen on the tram? What are Omegas? Why should Molly not be underground? What's up with the vanilla? You'll just have to read this awesome Sci-Fi book to discover the truth.

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