

VANISHING ACT

Written by

Evadne Hendrix

FINAL DRAFT

A video call rings on GIDEON'S (15) desktop computer. LINCOLN (15) answers.

GIDEON
Lincoln! Do you read me?

LINCOLN (V.O.)
(through the computer)
Hey, Gideon. Yeah, I copy.

GIDEON
Good. I'll start recording the
video call.

Gideon presses a button on his keyboard. The meeting beeps to signal the start of a recorded call.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
Frequency set to 1140 Mega Hertz?

Electrical static ramps up as Lincoln turns a dial.

LINCOLN (V.O.)
Check! Goody-Go-Bar in range?

Wrappers crinkle.

GIDEON
(distant)
Check!

Lincoln types on his keyboard.

LINCOLN (V.O.)
Initiating sequence for
teleportation test 94!

Lincoln presses enter. The electrical static turns to whirring that increases in volume and intensity.

The teleporter lets out a glitchy zap leaving behind a light hiss of smoke that slowly fades.

GIDEON
The Goody-Go-Bar's gone! Anything
on your end?!

LINCOLN (V.O.)
Wait for it...

The hiss of smoke dies.

LINCOLN (V.O.)
No, nothing appeared by my
receiver.

GIDEON
WHAT? The teleportation worked
yesterday!

LESLIE (10) interrupts by knocking on the door.

LESLIE (V.O.)
(through the door)
Gideon?

The door slowly squeaks open.

LESLIE
What was that noise?

GIDEON
Nothing!

Gideon's hand slams on the door. Leslie and Gideon grunt as
they push against each other.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
Stay out of my room!

LESLIE
Ow, Let me in!

GIDEON
Stay out.

LESLIE
Stop pushing on the door!
Puleeeeeease! I want to see!

GIDEON
No!

More grunts and struggles. Gideon forces the door closed and
locks it.

LESLIE (V.O.)
(though the door)
But I knocked!

GIDEON
(shouts through the door)
Knocking doesn't automatically mean
you can come in!

Gideon returns to his computer. Leslie's protests fade.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
So, how do we fix the teleporter?
The science fair is this Saturday!

LINCOLN (V.O.)
I think it's my receiver. Can you
bring over some duct tape?

GIDEON
Sure. Just keep the video call
recording in case the Gooey-Go-Bar
comes back or something.

LINCOLN (V.O.)
Copy that.

Leslie's complaints fade back in as she continues shouting
outside Gideon's door.

LESLIE (V.O.)
(Through the door)
Are you even listening to me?!

Gideon slides something off a shelf and opens the door.

LESLIE
Hey! That's my duct tape! You've
had it this whole time!?

Gideon closes the door behind him, and the electrical static
disappears.

GIDEON
You only use it for making dumb
bracelets.

Footsteps down the hall.

LESLIE
Nuh-uh. Dad still uses the duct
tape wallet I made for him!

GIDEON
Yeah well, the science fair is more
important. I'm taking the tape to
Lincoln's.

Gideon opens the front door. Birds chirp outside.

LESLIE
Wait, Can I come?

GIDEON
No.

The door slams.

2 INT. LINCOLN'S HOUSE - DAY

2

Gideon meets up with Lincoln in Lincoln's room. We hear the same electrical static that was in Gideon's room earlier.

GIDEON
Dude, your receiver's busted!

LINCOLN
Yeah, the casing is falling apart.

Gideon peels off a strip of duct tape.

GIDEON
I don't even know where to wrap it.

Leslie opens Gideon's creaky door (sounds on the computer).

LINCOLN
Wait, look at the screen! Is Leslie
in your room?

GIDEON
LESLIE!

LESLIE (V.O.)
(Through the computer)
Gideon? Why is your computer still
on?

GIDEON
Get. Out!

LESLIE (V.O.)
This is what you were hiding? A new
controller?

Light digital pings and beeping.

GIDEON
Put it down! That's my science fair
project!

Whirs change pitch as Leslie turns the dials.

LINCOLN
(whispers to Gideon)
Tell me you disabled the remote
start on your controller.

GIDEON
(whispers to Lincoln))
No! I spent a whole month setting
that up!

LESLIE
I wanna help with your project! Is
this the "on" button?

GIDEON
NO! Don't!

LINCOLN
No! Don't!

Leslie presses a button with a satisfying click. The static
turns to whirring and builds to a loud zap. We only hear the
light hiss of smoke distorted through the computer.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
LESLIE!

LINCOLN
Is she really gone?

GIDEON
I can't see through all the smoke!

LINCOLN
It's never sounded like that
before.

The light hiss slowly fades out completely.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)
I still don't see her.

GIDEON
WE VAPORISED MY SISTER!?

LINCOLN
I'm sure she's fine. She's gotta
be...uh...

GIDEON
Did she change the coordinates?

Lincoln types on his computer.

LINCOLN
Remarkably, no. Maybe she'll turn
up here.

A beat.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)
Or maybe not.

GIDEON
My mom's gonna kill me!

Gideon's phone rings.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
Speaking of, someone's calling me.

The ringing gets louder as Gideon takes the phone out of his pocket.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
(relieved)
It's Leslie's smart watch! She's alive!

LINCOLN
Answer it on speaker!

Gideon answers the call.

LESLIE (V.O.)
(through the phone and
whispering)
Gideon?

GIDEON
Leslie! Thank goodness. I thought you were dead!

LESLIE (V.O.)
Sssssh! You're going to wake up the Rottweiler!

GIDEON
Rottweiler!?

LESLIE (V.O.)
SSSSSH!

GIDEON
(lowers voice)
You better not let that dog get my controller. Where are you?

LESLIE (V.O.)
You tell me!

LINCOLN
Leslie, you activated our teleporter prototype.

LESLIE (V.O.)
Great. Teleport me back.

GIDEON

We can't! It's glitching, and we don't know where it sent you.

LINCOLN

What do you see?

LESLIE (V.O.)

Um... a dog.

GIDEON

Other than the dog.

LESLIE (V.O.)

I'm in a backyard, but there's a big white fence blocking everything.

LINCOLN

So, what does the house look like?

LESLIE (V.O.)

Um? Red? Brick? Big?

Gideon grumbles.

LESLIE (V.O.)

I guess there are a bunch of satellites on the roof, kind of like Mr. Stewart's house.

GIDEON

Mr. Stewart's house!? Get out of there!

LESLIE (V.O.)

I'm trying, but...

Leslie rattles the gate.

LESLIE (V.O.)

The gate is locked. And before you say anything, it's too tall to climb.

GIDEON

Leslie, Mr. Stewart is the toughest judge at the science fair!

LESLIE (V.O.)

Seriously? Your project again?

GIDEON

I *am* serious! We'll never win if he finds out our project isn't working.

LINCOLN

Yeah, and he'll probably disqualify us if he learns it put you in danger.

The dog whimpers and snores.

LESLIE (V.O.)

SSHH. Okay. Fine. But stop talking so loud. And get me out of here!

LINCOLN

So, can we fix my receiver? Why did it send her across the street?

LESLIE (V.O.)

I don't know, but the antenna on your controller matches the big one on the roof.

GIDEON

So?

LESLIE (V.O.)

Soooo, could it be pulling the controller somehow? Like magnets?

GIDEON

No, that's ridiculous! Be quiet and just let us handle it!

LESLIE (V.O.)

(whispers)

I was just trying to help.

Dog growls.

LESLIE (V.O.)

I think you woke up the dog! Quick, teleport me!

LINCOLN

Did you miss the part about it not working?

The dog barks and growls.

LESLIE (V.O.)
Anywhere is better than here! It
was the red button, right?

The dog barks, he gets louder as he comes closer.

GIDEON
No!
LINCOLN
Wait!

Leslie presses a button with a satisfying click. With a glitchy zap and hiss, she teleports. She lands with a thud, and the sound of Leslie's bare feet skidding against the metal roof is audible, though muffled, through the phone.

LESLIE
Woah!

GIDEON
Leslie? Leslie!

LESLIE (V.O.)
Oof.

The sliding stops.

LESLIE
Yeah, I'm here.

LINCOLN
Where is 'here?'

Almost indistinguishable yells and clapping from MR. STEWART (60s) down on the back porch below.

MR. STEWART (V.O.)
Hey! Sparky!

Distant, almost indistinguishable barks.

MR. STEWART (V.O.)
(distant)
Settle down dog!

LESLIE (V.O.)
(whispers scared)
I'm definitely on Mr. Stewart's
roof. The metal is really hot and
slippery. I'm barely hanging onto
this pipe thing!

GIDEON
Agh, Leslie!

LESLIE (V.O.)
Can't you just bring over a ladder?

GIDEON
No! Mr. Stewart would see us! If he disqualifies my science fair project it will be your fault!

LESLIE (V.O.)
My fault? You're not even listening to me. There are soooo many antennas and satellites up here. How do you know that NONE of them are messing with your signal?

GIDEON
Those are always there, and our experiment worked just fine yesterday!

LINCOLN
Wait a minute, Leslie might be onto something.

GIDEON
Really?

LESLIE
Really?

LINCOLN
Yesterday we all got out of school early.

GIDEON
Yeah...

LINCOLN
So we experimented *early*.

GIDEON
(slowly realizing)
Mr. Stewart works during the day...

LINCOLN
Right! He probably doesn't turn on his equipment until after work! Leslie?

LESLIE (V.O.)
I haven't gone anywhere!

LINCOLN
Try disabling the antenna.

LESLIE

I can't let go of this pipe! I'll slide off!

LINCOLN

Oh. Right. Well then... let's go ask Mr. Stewart to turn it off.

GIDEON

No way! He'd ask why, and we CAN'T risk him shutting down the project.

LESLIE (V.O.)

Oh, but you can risk me?

GIDEON

That's not what I meant.

LINCOLN

If Leslie can't disable the antenna then we need to go do it.

GIDEON

Maybe if we get inside Mr. Stewart's house, we can find whatever he's using to broadcast.

LINCOLN

Great, let's go.

LESLIE (V.O.)

Hurry!

3 EXT. MR. STEWART'S HOUSE - DAY

3

Birds chirp and wind rustles trees as Gideon and Lincoln approach Mr. Stewart's house.

GIDEON

Okay, we're here! I've gotta hang up, but I'll call you back when you can teleport.

LESLIE (V.O.)

You're hanging up!?

LINCOLN

Just hang out up there a little longer, Leslie. You've been very brave!

LESLIE

Okay...

Gideon hangs up the call.

GIDEON
(softer to Lincoln)
Hey, don't lie to her.

LINCOLN
I'm not. She faced off against a Rottweiler, helped figure out all the interference stuff, and is hanging out on a metal roof. Do you have any idea how slick those things are?

GIDEON
I guess.

Gideon rings the doorbell. Mr. Stewart answers.

MR. STEWART
Hello?

GIDEON
(stuttering)
Hello, sir.

MR. STEWART
Oh, Gideon and Lincoln! What can I do for you?

GIDEON
Um, you're judging the science fair, right?

MR. STEWART
Yes. You've been emailing me all month about it, haven't you?

GIDEON
Oh right.

LINCOLN
We just want to clarify... a few more rules!

MR. STEWART
Of course you do. Come on in.

Mr. Stewart pushes the door open wider.

MR. STEWART (CONT'D)
I've been looking forward to seeing your entry this Saturday.

Gideon laughs nervously.

4 INT. MR. STEWART'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

4

Mr. Stewart leads the boys into his house. Footsteps.

GIDEON

Wow! Is that a Koga Gold Medal for radio science?

LINCOLN

Look at all these radio trophies!

GIDEON

This stuff is so cool Mr. Stewart!

MR. STEWART

Yeah, it used to mean a lot to me.

LINCOLN

Who's that girl in all these pictures with you?

MR. STEWART

That's my sister.

(sad)

She used to come to all my events.

LINCOLN

Used to? Is she dead!?

MR. STEWART

(laughing)

No, no. She just moved to Virginia. Anyway, the living room is this way.

Footsteps continue. Beeping and electrical static fade in.

LINCOLN

Hey, what's that?

MR. STEWART

Oh, just my office.

GIDEON

Can we see?

Without waiting for a response, Gideon pushes open the squeakiest door yet. A world of radios scan, blip, and hum.

Woah!

GIDEON (CONT'D)

Woah!

LINCOLN

GIDEON (CONT'D)

Is that-?

LINCOLN

No way!

GIDEON

The Rascal 3712 receiver!?

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

The Rascal 3712 receiver!?

Mr. Stewart chuckles.

MR. STEWART

Wow, you kids know your stuff!

LINCOLN

Its range goes up to 500 Kilohertz!

GIDEON

And it has the BEST AGC for filtering out noise!

MR. STEWART

If you think that's cool... just wait till you hear about the anomalies its been causing.

GIDEON

Anomalies?

MR. STEWART

Every afternoon I use the Rascal receiver to talk with a colleague in New Zealand.

Pause for dramatic effect.

LINCOLN

And..?

MR. STEWART

(getting excited)

At the most random times the signal goes static and strange objects appear out of nowhere!

LINCOLN

What kind of objects?

MR. STEWART

Well, just this afternoon this goody appeared on my desk.

Crinkle of a candy wrapper.

GIDEON
(realization)
A Gooney-Go-Bar?

Mr. Stewart slides a large plastic bin off of a shelf.

MR. STEWART
Yes, and there are more in this
small box of evidence.

The bin lands on the floor with a thud.

LINCOLN
Wow...that's a lot of chocolate
bars.

Gideon and Lincoln sort through plastic bags.

MR. STEWART
57 to be exact. Along with 9 dirty
socks!

GIDEON
(under his breath)
They aren't that dirty.

MR. STEWART
I collect new evidence every week,
but I still can't find any
substantial patterns. The radio
guild laughed me out the door.
(sigh)
I wish Cecelia were here. She would
know what to do.

GIDEON
Cecelia? Who's that?

MR. STEWART
My sister, from the photo earlier.

LINCOLN
Is she a famous radio scientist
too?

MR. STEWART
Oh, no. Far from it. She's an
artist. But she always had the
craziest ideas that turned out to
work. I could sure use one.

LINCOLN
Why don't you just call her?

MR. STEWART

Haha, well... that- we didn't exactly part on the best of terms. Ever heard the saying "you don't know a good thing till it's gone"-

Loud and suspicious thump from the roof.

MR. STEWART (CONT'D)

Did you hear that? Sounded like something on the roof.

LINCOLN

Birds! Must have been birds!

GIDEON

(under his breath)
Yeah, a big fat chicken.

MR. STEWART

Huh?

LINCOLN

(fake cough)
Hey, can I have a glass of water?

MR. STEWART

Oh, sure. Wait here just a minute.

Mr. Stewart leaves.

GIDEON

I can't believe he has been getting our teleportation experiments this whole time!

LINCOLN

Dude, I feel kind of bad for Mr. Stewart. He seems lonely.

GIDEON

I'm sure all serious scientists need to make sacrifices.

LINCOLN

I don't know. It doesn't really seem worth it.

Another bang from the roof.

GIDEON

What is Leslie doing up there?

LINCOLN

Maybe we should just tell Mr. Stewart!

GIDEON

No way! He can't know that our science fair project is malfunctioning!

LINCOLN

But Gideon--

GIDEON

Now which one of these machines is causing the interference?

Lincoln unplugs a device and it powers down.

LINCOLN

I don't know, man. Maybe we unplug 'em all?

GIDEON

Good idea.

One at a time all the gizmos power off. Beeping stops. Fans wind down, and scanners fade out. Gideon dials on his phone. It rings a few times. No answer.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

She's not answering.

LINCOLN

Maybe she already teleported back.

GIDEON

OR she might still be stuck. I'll check on her, you distract Mr. Stewart.

LINCOLN

What about the dog?

GIDEON

Here's some treats--I'll take 'em with me.

Gideon grabs the treat bag and leaves the room. Gideon's footsteps continue to the back door. In the background Lincoln tries to distract Mr. Stewart.

MR. STEWART
(distant)
Here's your water--wait where did
Gideon go?

LINCOLN
(distant)
Oh, he went to the bathroom.

5 EXT. MR. STEWART'S BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

5

Gideon slides open a screen door and sneaks outside. Birds chirp and trees rustle. The Rottweiler comes running and barking.

GIDEON
Uh- want one of these, doggo?

Gideon shakes the bag of treats. He cracks it open, and the dog whines and pants.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
Here.

Gideon throws a treat. It whizzes across the yard and lands softly in the grass. The barks retreat and turn into happy slobbers and chewing.

LESLIE
(calling down from the
roof)
Gideon? Is that you?

The dog barks expectantly at Gideon.

GIDEON
Just a sec, Leslie. Here boy, take
'em all.

Gideon throws more treats that whiz across the lawn. More pants and slobbers.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
Okay Leslie, where is the
controller?

LESLIE
Gideon, my arms are getting tired!
I'm going to slide off!

GIDEON
Well we stopped the interference.
You can teleport now.

LESLIE
You promise it's gonna work?

GIDEON
Yes! Just push the button!

LESLIE
Which button?

GIDEON
The only button!

LESLIE
Okay, I'm--

Sudden buzzing startles Leslie.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
Ah!

GIDEON
What?

LESLIE
A bee! It's hunting me!

GIDEON
Just press the button!

LESLIE
The bee's on it! Ahh!

Leslie drops the controller and it slides a short distance into the gutter.

GIDEON
My controller! You dropped it in the gutter!

LESLIE
Woah!

Leslie slides down the roof. Her bare skin rubs on the metal.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
Woah, Woah! I can't stop sliding!

GIDEON
Grab the gutter!

Leslie slowly slides until she grabs onto the gutter. It creaks and groans.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

You got it! Just hang on! I'm gonna try to get the controller down.

LESLIE

My hands are slipping!

She flails and scrambles. The gutter groans under her weight.

GIDEON

Stop kicking! If you break that gutter, my controller is going to fall!

LESLIE

But *I'm* going to fall!

GIDEON

You'll be fine. It's only as tall as a basketball hoop.
(under breath)
And a half.

LESLIE

I heard that!

The gutter creaks.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Gideon, I think it's breaking!

Gideon groans in frustration. The gutter snaps! Leslie screams as she falls. The screams end in grunts and cries of pain from both Gideon and Leslie.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

I'm... I'm alive! You caught *me*!

GIDEON

Ow! When did you get so big?

LESLIE

Where'd the controller land?

Sparky the Rottweiler barks playfully.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Oh no! The dog's got it! We have to get it back!

GIDEON

No, Leslie, we need to get inside where it's safe.

Mr. Stewart and Lincoln fade in from the house.

MR. STEWART

(fading in)

I know I heard something this time.

LINCOLN

(fading in)

I'm sure it's squirrels... or-

The screen door slides open.

MR. STEWART

Aha! There you are! And Leslie? Why are you here? You're covered in scrapes and bruises.

LESLIE

It was an accident!

MR. STEWART

What?

LESLIE

(unsure)

Well, um... I came to your backyard and was scared of the dog, so I accidentally broke your gutter, and Gideon came to help me. I'm sorry! It was all my fault!

MR. STEWART

What? How did you-

GIDEON

No. That's not true. This is my fault, not Leslie's.

MR. STEWART

Enough, explain.

GIDEON

Leslie found my science project, but didn't know how it worked. I was worried about the science fair so after she teleported I didn't really-

MR. STEWART

(surprised)

Wait, what? Teleported?

LESLIE
(nonchalant)
Yeah, Gideon's building a
teleportation controller thing.

MR. STEWART
And it actually works?

LINCOLN
I mean, define works...

LESLIE
Yeah. It does. I tested it.

MR. STEWART
Hold on...teleportation...so those
were your dirty socks this whole
time!?

GIDEON
(under his breath)
They aren't that dirty! I wash them
every month.

LINCOLN
Sorry we didn't tell you earlier.

GIDEON
Please don't disqualify us! Our
project is perfectly safe!

MR. STEWART
Disqualify you? This might be the
best invention our fair has ever
seen!

GIDEON
Really?

MR. STEWART
Yes. I'll expect to hear more about
your *thorough* safety protocols on
Saturday...

LINCOLN
Oh, yeah! Totally!

GIDEON
For sure! We can totally do
that!

MR. STEWART
...and about how you intend to fix
my gutter.

GIDEON
Okay...

LINCOLN
Yes sir.

MR. STEWART

But for now, you kids better get home and get Leslie cleaned up. I think I've got a call to make to Virginia.

LESLIE

Who's Virginia?

GIDEON

His sister. He means he wants to call his sister.

Sparky's slobbery gnawing sounds fade up interspersed with comical zaps and playful barks.

MR. STEWART

I'll get the device back from Sparky for you. It's a good thing you thought to slobber-proof it with duct tape.

Footsteps. Mr. Stewart claps and tries to coerce Sparky while the dog continues chewing on the remote.

GIDEON

Look, Leslie. I realized that today I may have been a little harsh.

LINCOLN

(under breath)
Understatement.

LESLIE

You were mean!

GIDEON

Would you just let me-

Gideon takes in a deep breath and lets it out slowly.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

You're right. I'm sorry for how I treated you today... And always.

LESLIE

It's not my fault I dropped the controller! You made it really hard to hold!

GIDEON

(slowly has an idea)
Well, *maybe* you can make a strap out of your duct tape bracelets.

LESLIE
(doubtful)
Really? You'll let me help?

LINCOLN
Oh, yeah! That's a great idea!

GIDEON
(hasty)
But you still have to ask before
coming in my room.

LESLIE
Okay, deal. I'll even use my
sparkly tape, and I can twist the
different kinds together to make it
multi-colored...

The action below fades in during Leslie's previous line.

Sparky gets shocked by the controller and barks.

MR. STEWART
Drop it!

Sparky barks playfully. The controller dials change pitch.

MR. STEWART (CONT'D)
Hey! None of that now.

Sparky slobbers and the controller starts to whirl and ramp
up.

MR. STEWART (CONT'D)
Sparky! Drop it!

Sparky bites down on the controller. Hard. With a glitchy zap
and a hiss Sparky teleports!

MR. STEWART (CONT'D)
(gasp)
SPARKY!

LINCOLN
Oh no worries. He's probably just
teleported to my...
(gasp)
My room!

GIDEON
The extra Gooey-Go-Bars! Quick,
everyone to Lincoln's house!

Leslie laughs. Electrical static ramps up and fades out.