

GHOSTS

By Bradley Walton

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A TEN MINUTE DUET

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SYNOPSIS: Quinn and Hayley want to do something interesting with their Halloween, so they visit an allegedly haunted house. When Hayley chickens out, Quinn ventures inside alone and encounters the ghost of a little girl reliving the events that led to her death. When the little girl vanishes, Quinn is confronted by the ghost of the child's mother, and tries to help her come to peace with the night she failed her daughter.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 EITHER)

CASTING INFORMATION: Actor two plays multiple characters. ANNIE and MOTHER can be changed to ANDREW and FATHER if the actor is male, and all dialogue should be adjusted as necessary to match the genders of the actors.

ACTOR ONE

QUINN (m/f) A young adult with a daughter. *(78 lines)*

ACTOR TWO

HAYLEY (m/f) Quinn's friend *(26 lines)*

ANNIE (m/f) A ghost who is a child *(30 lines)*

MOTHER (m/f) Annie's Mother who is also a ghost
(21 lines)

AUTHOR NOTES

My goal in writing this script was to provide opportunities for interesting choreography in duo forensics competition. Please feel free to experiment and have fun with your blocking.

Props can be mimed if performed for competition.

AT RISE: QUINN and HAYLEY, on a bare stage.

HAYLEY: Do you still want to do this?

QUINN: Yeah. I do. Why? Are you getting cold feet?

HAYLEY: Maybe.

QUINN: Hayley, you've talked about this constantly for the past three weeks. You were completely excited about it in the car on the way here. Why the change of heart?

HAYLEY: I don't like the way the place looks.

QUINN: It looks like it's always looked.

HAYLEY: Yeah, I know. But I've never been here at night before. It's different. Creepier.

QUINN: It's an old, dilapidated, and supposedly haunted house. Of course it looks creepy.

HAYLEY: No, it's not *just* the way it looks. It's... the way it feels. It's like there's something off... wrong. Really wrong.

QUINN: We haven't even set foot in the place yet and you're already letting the stories get to you.

HAYLEY: Even if I didn't already know that the woman who lived here committed suicide after her kid disappeared and then the house never sold because of all kinds of assorted weird stuff... I think I'd still be feeling the urge to get back in the car.

QUINN: Hayley...

HAYLEY: Are you still seriously thinking about going inside?

QUINN: I opted out of trick-or-treating with my daughter tonight so I could do something more interesting with my Halloween than wander the streets with a bunch of kids dressed as Iron Man and Dora the Explorer (*Update references as necessary.*)

HAYLEY: I thought you liked kids.

QUINN: I love kids. I love my daughter. It's the endless stream of licensed characters roaming the neighborhoods that grates my nerves. That's not what Halloween is supposed to be about. So yes, I'm going inside.

HAYLEY: We don't know what's in there.

QUINN: Are you scared you'll see a ghost?

HAYLEY: I just know that I'm scared. Aren't you?

QUINN: I don't know. I've never seen a ghost before. So I'm really not sure if I need to be.

HAYLEY: Supposing—just supposing—you do see a ghost, what are you gonna do?

QUINN: Probably take a picture of it.

HAYLEY: Quinn. I love TV shows about real-life paranormal stuff. I thought this would be fun. But standing here, this doesn't feel like watching TV feels. I don't like how this feels. Come on. Please. Let's just go.

QUINN: I'm here and I'm going in.

HAYLEY: I'm not.

QUINN: Fine. You stay here. *(Pulls out a flashlight.)* I'll be back in a couple of minutes.

HAYLEY: Quinn, don't.

QUINN mimes opening a door and stepping into the house.

QUINN: *(Sarcastic.)* Ooh... there's a living room here. I'm so scared.

HAYLEY: You're going to at least leave the door open, right?

QUINN: No.

QUINN mimes slamming the door. HAYLEY shifts to a neutral or "offstage" position. QUINN talks to herself as SHE looks around the inside of the house.

QUINN: She acts like she's never seen a house before. *(QUINN's cell phone rings. QUINN pulls it out and looks at it.)* Oh, for crying out loud. *(Answers phone, irritated.)* Hayley, I am going to walk through this house and I am—you saw a face in a window? Like a ghost? You think you saw a ghost? Great. That makes one of us. Funny how it's the one who didn't actually come into the house. *(Beat.)* Hayley? *(Looks at phone.)* And the call just suddenly ends. Of course it does. Because she's trying to scare me into leaving. Not happening, Hayley.

ANNIE: *(Voice.)* Play with me.

QUINN: Is somebody there?

ANNIE: *(Voice.)* Play with me.

QUINN: Come out where I can see you.

The actor playing HAYLEY “enters” as ANNIE and moves about in a dancelike manner that suggests floating.

ANNIE: Will you play with me?

QUINN: I can see through you. Holy cow!

ANNIE: Will you be my friend?

QUINN: You’re floating and I can see through you.

ANNIE: Will you be my friend... please?

QUINN: Okay... yeah... sure. I’ll be your friend.

ANNIE: I haven’t had any friends to play with for a really long time.

QUINN: What’s your name?

ANNIE: Annie.

QUINN: Do you... live here, Annie?

ANNIE: Uh-huh.

QUINN: By yourself?

ANNIE: No.

QUINN: Who lives with you?

ANNIE: My mommy.

QUINN: Where is she now?

ANNIE: She’s asleep. She’s always asleep.

QUINN: Where is she sleeping?

ANNIE: Upstairs. Are you visiting us?

QUINN: Yeah. I’m visiting.

ANNIE: That’s nice. People don’t visit us very often.

QUINN: What do you want to play?

ANNIE: Tag.

QUINN: Tag. Like chase each other around tag?

ANNIE: Yeah!

QUINN: Can I even touch you to tag you? Guess we’ll find out.

ANNIE dodges out of the way as QUINN tries to tag her.

ANNIE: Be careful not to break anything!

QUINN: Right. Sure.

ANNIE: Mommy doesn’t like it when I break things.

QUINN: I won’t break anything. I promise.

ANNIE: Mommy punishes me when I break things.

QUINN: Almost got you.

ANNIE: This is fun!

QUINN: Hey, can you please hold still, for just a second?

ANNIE: You'll catch me!

QUINN: No... just a quick time out. I won't cheat. *(Pulls out cell phone.)* Can I take your picture? Will you let me do that?

ANNIE: You're not gonna get me!

QUINN: Hold still just for a second.

ANNIE: Oh no!

QUINN: What?

ANNIE: It broke!

QUINN: What are you talking about? What broke?

ANNIE: The clock! I broke the clock!

QUINN: What clock? I don't see any clock.

ANNIE: There! On the floor! It's mommy's favorite! It's in so many pieces! I broke it!

QUINN: There's nothing there but a dent in the floor.

ANNIE: Mommy's coming. She heard it and she's coming. I have to be punished.

QUINN: Punished. How?

ANNIE: I have to go outside. In the snow. Without a coat.

QUINN: It's not snowing. What are you talking about?

ANNIE: Thank you for playing with me. I have to go now.

QUINN: No, don't go yet.

ANNIE: Mommy will let me back in when I've learned my lesson.

QUINN: Wait...

ANNIE: Mommy... mommy... *(Shifts to a neutral or "offstage" position and speaks softly.)* you'll let me back in... won't you... please? Mommy... please let me in.

QUINN: Hello? Annie? Are you still there? Come back... please? I just want to take a picture of you. Will you let me do that?

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