

HAUNTED BY GOATS

By Bradley Walton

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HAUNTED BY GOATS

A One Act Comedy

By Bradley Walton

SYNOPSIS: The atmosphere hanging over an abandoned house is terrifying...and highly photogenic. Cathy drags along her boyfriend and sister to take pictures of the creepy house. While exploring, they encounter an odd woman who tells them something very strange...that the house is haunted—by goats. Cathy keeps clicking, John wants to leave and Cathy's sister just wants a date with John. Looming over all of them is one very absurd question: Is the house really *Haunted By Goats*?

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 female, 1 male, 3-6 either; gender flexible, doubling possible)

CATHY (f).....	17; A photographic artist taking pictures in an abandoned house. (157 lines)
JOHN (m).....	17; Cathy's boyfriend. (114 lines)
ROBIN (f).....	16; Cathy's sister who likes John. (120 lines)
ETTIE/EDDIE (m/f).....	50's; A strange woman who dumps her trash in the abandoned house. (38 lines)
EARL/EDNA (m/f).....	A vagrant sleeping in the house. (35 lines)
SHARON/SHAWN (m/f).....	A vagrant sleeping in the house. (21 lines)
JEFF/JEN (m/f).....	A college student who comes to stay overnight in the house on a dare. (25 lines)
BRIAN/BRITTANY (m/f).....	A college student who comes to stay overnight in the house on a dare. (16 lines)

TAMI/TEDDY (m/f)..... A friend of Jeff and Brian who's come with them against her better judgment, also a college student. (16 lines)

CAST NOTE: ETTIE, EARL, and SHARON can double as JEFF, BRIAN, and TAMI.

DURATION: 30 minutes

TIME: It is late afternoon in early November.

SETTING

The play is set in the living room of an abandoned house, strewn with broken furniture and trash. The script mentions a broken flat screen TV and a broken computer, but both of these items may be “just offstage.”

COSTUMES

The play is set in early November, so everyone is dressed for cool weather.

CATHY, JOHN, and ROBIN – Dressed as contemporary teenagers.

JEFF, BRIAN, and TAMI – Dressed preppy.

ETTIE – Old, stained clothes with muddy rubber boots and a head scarf or bandana.

EARL and SHARON – Are both vagrants, and their clothing should look like it has seen better days.

PROPS

- Camera With a Neck Strap
- 3 Backpacks or Duffel Bags
- 3 Sleeping Bags

SOUND EFFECTS

- Bleating Goats
- Thump/Clattering

AT RISE: *The living room of an abandoned house, strewn with broken furniture and trash, much of it probably dumped here after the house was abandoned. The kitchen and stairs leading to the second floor are off right. CATHY, ROBIN, and JOHN enter from the front door at left. CATHY is carrying a nice-looking camera with a neck strap and begins snapping close-up pictures of things in the room. ROBIN looks around with a mixture of exasperation and disappointment on her face. JOHN is wide-eyed and nervous, trying—and failing—to hide just how much he wants to turn around and leave. During the course of the play, the stage lights should gradually dim as the sun sets.*

CATHY: Wow. Look at this place.

ROBIN: It's a dump.

JOHN: What were you expecting?

ROBIN: Given how creepy this house looks on the outside? I was figuring the insides would be gothic and ominous. But this is just...trashy.

JOHN: It's still plenty creepy.

ROBIN: Yeah, but it's not upscale creepy. It's low-rent creepy.

JOHN: It's an abandoned house, Robin. Abandoned houses are pretty much low-rent by definition.

ROBIN: But this is an *old* abandoned house. Old things are supposed to be classy. Even after they've been abandoned.

CATHY: I doubt the broken flat screen TV originally came with the house. Or the computer on the floor in the corner. (*Looking behind a piece of furniture.*) Or the other computer on the floor behind the sofa. (*Change last word as necessary to match whatever furniture is actually being used by the production.*)

ROBIN: (*Looking offstage.*) There's a bunch of trash on the floor in the kitchen. Some of it's even in bags.

CATHY: I think somebody's been using this place as their personal dumpster.

ROBIN: Well, that's just sad.

JOHN: That somebody can't bother to drive all the way to the landfill?

ROBIN: That they have so little respect for this house. I bet this place was awesome once.

CATHY: (*Snapping a close-up photo of something.*) It's still pretty awesome. There's tons here to photograph.

ROBIN: You have a weird idea of awesome, Cathy.

CATHY: (*Gesturing around the room.*) I like taking pictures of old stuff.

ROBIN: Ever considered going to an antique mall?

CATHY: That would be really lame. Like a wildlife photographer shooting pictures of animals in a zoo.

JOHN: She likes to photograph junk in its natural habitat.

ROBIN: Yeah, I know. But why?

CATHY: Because old, broken things weren't always old and broken. There's a story behind them. History. Like you said, this place was probably awesome once. Now it's not. That's history. The goal of my photography is to capture that sense of history.

ROBIN: Do they offer a major for "junk historian"? Because if they do, you should totally go for that when you start college.

JOHN: We should probably leave now.

CATHY: John, we just got here.

JOHN: We didn't just get here. We've been here for two or three full minutes. And every additional minute we stay, we're probably pushing our luck. This place doesn't seem very safe.

CATHY: That's why I brought you.

JOHN: If a drug addict with a gun stumbles in here, what are any of us really gonna do?

CATHY: I have no idea. You were the one who said I shouldn't be going into abandoned buildings alone.

JOHN: What I meant was that you shouldn't be going into abandoned buildings, period.

CATHY: That's not what you said.

JOHN: I was trying to be nice. I really didn't mean for you to invite me along.

CATHY: You came, though. Thanks for driving.

JOHN: Did I have a choice?

CATHY: You're a good boyfriend.

ROBIN: So no, he didn't have a choice.

CATHY: Of course he had a choice.

ROBIN: Would you have been mad if he'd said no?

CATHY: Irritated, maybe. But not mad.

ROBIN: Same thing. So no, he didn't have a choice.

CATHY: Robin, why are you giving me a hard time?

ROBIN: I'm your sister. I'm supposed to give you a hard time.

CATHY: And?

ROBIN: You dragged your boyfriend into a creepy old house in the middle of nowhere so he could be your bodyguard while you take pictures.

CATHY: You make that sound like it's a bad thing.

ROBIN: Cathy, look at him. He's scared.

JOHN: Um. I'm standing right here, you know.

ROBIN: I know. I'm looking right at you. That's how I can tell you're scared.

JOHN: Well, that's a blow to my ego.

ROBIN: You're in a haunted house. You have every right to be scared.

CATHY: Who said anything about the house being haunted?

JOHN: Yeah. Do you know something that maybe we ought to know?

ROBIN: Well, look at it. It looks like it should be haunted.

CATHY: You said it looked like a dump.

ROBIN: It can be a dump and still be haunted.

CATHY: Whoever heard of a haunted dump? *(To JOHN.)* Have you?

JOHN: Um, no.

CATHY: Why do you suppose that is?

JOHN: Alliteration, probably.

CATHY: What?

JOHN: Alliteration. It's when you have two words that both start with the same consonant sound. You say "haunted house" and that alliterates. "Haunted dump" doesn't. It just doesn't sound as cool.

CATHY: I know what alliteration is! I just...no. I look around this place and I don't feel like it should be haunted.

ROBIN: You also don't believe in ghosts.

CATHY: Yeah, well, there is that.

ROBIN: But I do. And I think this totally has the makings of a haunted house.

JOHN: So you think we should leave?

ROBIN: Not yet. We're probably okay until dark.

JOHN: Oh, come on!

ROBIN: John, if you want to go outside, it's okay. No shame. I came along because I figured being in a place like this would freak you out.

JOHN: Do I really come across as that much of a sissy?

ROBIN: You're not a sissy. You're just...not adventurous. Your idea of stepping outside of your comfort zone is riding a roller coaster or eating sushi.

JOHN: Eating sushi was a really big deal for me!

ROBIN: My point exactly.

JOHN: So you have no respect for me?

ROBIN: I know you, John. I know you're way outside of your comfort zone right now. You being here for Cathy says a lot. You're an awesome boyfriend. So, yes, I do respect you. More than she does.

CATHY: (*Offended.*) Hey!

ROBIN: You totally take him for granted!

CATHY: No, I don't!

ROBIN: You *expected* him to come along.

CATHY: He suggested it.

ROBIN: You twisted his words.

CATHY: I took his words literally.

ROBIN: But you knew what he meant.

CATHY: Well, yeah. If I didn't agree with him, I wouldn't have brought him.

ROBIN: You could've brought mom or dad.

CATHY: They wouldn't have let me set foot in here.

ROBIN: Because John was right.

CATHY: He had a good point.

ROBIN: And yet, here you are.

CATHY: (*Defensively.*) So are you. (*Beat.*) Why *are* you here, anyway? If you wanted to give me a bunch of grief, you could've done it at home.

ROBIN: I'm watching your back.

CATHY: It feels more like you're stabbing me in the back.

ROBIN: I can multitask.

CATHY: You're keeping me from taking pictures. You know that, right? You're defeating the entire purpose of us being here.

ROBIN: Of you being here, you mean.

CATHY: Why are you "watching my back" if it's not so I can take pictures?

ROBIN: I came to watch your back so John wouldn't have to.

CATHY: He's not that worthless.

ROBIN: No, he isn't. He's pretty great.

CATHY: Maybe you should be the one dating him instead of me.

ROBIN: Are you offering?

CATHY: Are you accepting?

ROBIN: It sounds like a terrific idea to me.

CATHY: Fine! He's all yours!

ROBIN: Thank you!

JOHN: Did I just switch girlfriends?

CATHY and ROBIN: Yes!

JOHN: Do I have any say in the matter?

CATHY and ROBIN: No!

JOHN: Okay. Well. This isn't awkward at all.

From off right there is a thump and clattering noise, like a garbage bag landing and spilling its contents after being thrown.

What was that?

ROBIN: I think whoever's been leaving their trash just made a delivery.

ETTIE: *(From offstage R.)* Is sumbuddy in dere?

CATHY: *(Calling offstage R.)* Um...hi?

JOHN: What'd you go and say that for?

CATHY: What else was I supposed to say?

JOHN: Nothing!

CATHY: She'd heard us already.

JOHN: She wouldn't have asked if she was sure.

ETTIE enters from R. She seems not quite right.

ETTIE: I's right. I did hear sumbuddy in here. I hear's the talkin's and I says to myself, "Ettie Matthews, there's sumbuddy in dere." And then I did the askin's and you said you was in here. And so I come and do the lookin's and here you all are. You can't get nuttin' past ol' Ettie, I'll tell ya that.

JOHN: *(Timidly.)* No, I guess not.

ETTIE: Now. Ol' Ettie knows you's here. Ain't no goin' back.

CATHY: Going back where?

ETTIE: Makin' Ettie think you ain't here. Cause Ettie knows whut Ettie sees.

CATHY: Are you sure about that?

ETTIE: You think ol' Ettie's stupid!?

CATHY: No. Not at all. I mean obviously, you're not stupid. No one could ever, possibly think that. But you seem like maybe you're *trying* to convince yourself that you know what you see. Like maybe you're really not sure.

ETTIE: Ol' Ettie done seen some strange things in her time. Weird things. Things Ettie ought not be seein'. But Ettie done seen 'em, so they must be real. Ettie knows what Ettie sees.

CATHY: What kinds of things?

ETTIE: Things that just ain't right.

CATHY: Here?

ETTIE: Here. In this very house. *(Beat.)* Whut're you doin' here?

CATHY: Just taking pictures.

ETTIE: Pictures fer whut?

CATHY: Art.

ETTIE: Ain't no art here. This's all just junk.

JOHN: It's a long story.

ETTIE: You can't be in here. This here's private property.

CATHY: We didn't see any signs.

ETTIE: Still private.

CATHY: Is this your property?

ETTIE: Heck no, ain't my property. You think I'd be dumpin' my trash on my own property?

CATHY: Do you know who owns it?

ETTIE: No.

CATHY: But someone does own it?

ETTIE: It's here, ain't it?

CATHY: It is, yes.

ETTIE: And it's supposed to be here, 'cause this is where it's always been. But not you. You ain't always been here and Ettie knows full well this ain't where you's supposed to be, so's you's trespassin'!

CATHY: If we're trespassing...wouldn't you be trespassing, too?

ETTIE: Shhh!

CATHY: What?

ETTIE: Don't let 'em hear! Don't wanna make 'em mad!

CATHY: Make who mad?

ETTIE: Them.

CATHY: Who's "them?"

ETTIE: Never you mind 'bout that none.

CATHY: Um...okay.

ETTIE: I'd best be leavin'. We'd all best be leavin'.

CATHY: Why?

ETTIE: Been here too long as it is.

JOHN: Too long for what?

ETTIE: Them.

ROBIN: Who we shouldn't mind about none?

ETTIE: S'right.

ROBIN: But if we need to leave because of "them," then that means we actually should mind about them some.

ETTIE: You confusin' ol' Ettie.

CATHY: Ettie, what have you seen here?

ETTIE: I don't want t'talk 'bout it.

CATHY: Are you scared?

ETTIE: Ettie Matthews ain't scared of nothin'! Nothin'...'cept this house.

ROBIN: This house where you leave your garbage?

ETTIE: S'right.

ROBIN: If it scares you, why do you toss your garbage here?

ETTIE: Closer'n the dump.

CATHY: Tell us about this house, Ettie. We'd really like to know.

ETTIE: No, you don't.

CATHY: Yes, we do.

JOHN: Maybe we don't.

CATHY: Please ignore him.

ETTIE: Once you know, you can't un-know.

CATHY: Lay it on us.

ETTIE: You sure?

CATHY: Positive.

ETTIE: This house is haunted...by goats.

CATHY: What?

ETTIE: This house is haunted by goats!

CATHY: I'm sorry. It sounded like you said this house is haunted by goats.

ETTIE: Cause that's what I said.

CATHY: Don't you mean this house is haunted by "ghosts?"

ETTIE: I said goats.

CATHY: Right. But you *meant* “ghosts.”

ETTIE: Goats!

CATHY: Are you correcting me, or do you just not understand what I’m saying?

ETTIE: This house is haunted by goats and Ettie’s been here too long! Ettie’s goin’, and so should you if you know what’s good for ya!
(Exits.)

JOHN: Well, that wasn’t weird at all.

CATHY: Goats? That’s what she said, right?

ROBIN: Sounded liked it.

CATHY: She meant ghosts. She had to have meant ghosts.

JOHN: She seemed rattled.

ROBIN: That’s one word to describe her.

CATHY: Could she have meant ghosts that are goats? Goat ghosts? Boy, that’s hard to say.

ROBIN: You don’t believe in ghosts, remember?

CATHY: I didn’t say I believe her. I’m trying to make sense of what she was saying.

ROBIN: I’m not sure that’s possible.

CATHY: But in her mind it made sense.

ROBIN: Her mind is a place you probably don’t want to go.

CATHY: Probably not. But I’m intrigued. Aren’t you?

ROBIN: I’m sort of mildly curious in the way that I’m mildly curious to see if the *Star Wars Holiday Special* is as bad as I’ve heard.

JOHN: It is. You don’t want to go there.

ROBIN: Like Ettie’s mind?

JOHN: That’s an alarmingly spot-on comparison.

CATHY: So do we see if we can figure out what she was talking about?

JOHN: No.

ROBIN: (Overlapping JOHN’S “no”.) Okay.

JOHN: What?

ROBIN: But just for a little while.

JOHN: How long is a little while?

ROBIN: Until dark.

JOHN: Are you nuts?

ROBIN: It won’t be that long, John, and she’s going to do it regardless. There’s no point arguing with her. You can wait outside.

JOHN: Alone in the creepy yard?

ROBIN: The yard's not that creepy.

JOHN: Ettie could be running around out there somewhere.

ROBIN: Okay, mildly creepy.

JOHN: How about you and me hang out in the yard and let Cathy stay in the house?

ROBIN: One of us is supposed to stay in here with her, remember? And she's not your girlfriend anymore, but I'm still her sister.

JOHN: Um. Yeah. We need to talk about that. The girlfriend part...not the sister part.

CATHY: Shh!

ROBIN: What?

CATHY: (*Pointing off R.*) I think I hear somebody coming down the stairs.

JOHN: You mean there's somebody else here?

EARL and SHARON enter from R.

EARL: (*Startled.*) Ah!

SHARON: (*Startled.*) Ah! I thought you said there wasn't nobody here 'cept sometimes for that woman who leaves her trash!

EARL: There never has been!

SHARON: Well, Earl, there is now!

EARL: How'd you all get in here?

SHARON: They probably walked in through the front door, like us.

EARL: Shush. Let me do the talkin'.

CATHY: We walked in through the front door.

SHARON: Told ya.

EARL: Will you let me do this?

SHARON: Well, I was right, wasn't I?

EARL: Yes, Sharon, you were right. Now, let me handle this. These people could be dangerous.

SHARON: They're kids, Earl.

EARL: Do you have any idea what kids are capable of these days? These three could be hardened killers!

SHARON: Are you three hardened killers?

EARL: Are you out of your mind, Sharon? You'll make 'em mad!

SHARON: All I did was ask if they was hardened killers.

EARL: Do you think a hardened killer likes to be called a hardened killer? Does that sound like a polite thing to say?

SHARON: I guess not.

EARL: Well, there you go. Now think—if these three are hardened killers and we throw it in their faces, they might get violent.

SHARON: Or they might just stand there and look at us funny.

EARL: What makes you think they'd do that?

SHARON: Well, I pretty much asked 'em already, and they're standin' there lookin' at us funny.

EARL: You're right. They are.

CATHY: Um. Hi.

EARL: *(To SHARON.)* This could be bad. You never want a hardened killer lookin' at you funny, 'cause that means they're thinkin' about killin' ya.

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