

HAUNTING FOR BEGINNERS

Written by:
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DELL -- SHORT MALE GHOST

FRANK -- MIDDLE-AGED LAWYER GHOST

OLD WOMAN -- OLD FEMALE GHOST

UNIFORMED WOMAN -- YOUNG FEMALE GHOST IN A BLOOD-STAINED
MILITARY UNIFORM

WALTER -- A MORTALLY-CHALLENGED MAN (DEMON)

IMPS -- A FEW LITTLE MORTALLY-CHALLENGED PEOPLE (DEMONS)

GHOSTS -- ENSEMBLE OF RANDOM PEOPLE TO FILL OUT THE CHAIRS

(When 'GHOSTS' appear in the action lines, it is referring to Frank, the Old Woman, the Uniformed Woman, and the ensemble of ghosts unless specified.)

INT. ROOM, A HALF-CIRCLE OF CHAIRS.

A short ghost, DELL, is sitting in the middle chair. He holds a clipboard. He is checking over papers on the clipboard when GHOSTS start entering.

OLD WOMAN

Oh, Lord up above! Am I dead? I can't tell...

FRANK

My head hurts... Am I supposed to be here?

Dell stands abruptly from the chair.

DELL

Yes, yes! Come in!

Ghosts start to settle down in the chairs.

DELL

Well, you must have a lot of questions.
I am here to answer all of them! Right
off the bat, you are dead and are now
ghosts. Congratulations!

Ghosts collectively gasp and scream. Some check over their
shoulders, wondering if this is some sort of sick prank.

DELL

Now, my first questions were -- "Oh my
God, I just died, where's the light at
the end of the tunnel?" "What am I
still doing here?" "Why can't I move
on?" -- and these are perfectly normal
things to wonder about! Another one of
my questions was, "What is my purpose
as a ghost?" Well, I'm here to tell
you.

OLD WOMAN

What if I don't want to be a ghost? I
want to see my son.

DELL

Nobody cares! You won't care soon
enough. I barely remember my daughter.

Old Woman starts crying.

DELL

(Talking over Old Woman)

Our purpose is to give people warnings
via hauntings so that they won't become
one of us. I, personally, died a
mercenary, fighting over a piece of
land filled with gravel -- the Gravel
Wars of 1968. You ever heard of 'em?

Ghosts shake their heads, except for Old Woman, who is still
crying.

DELL

(Slightly disappointed)

That's okay. I worked for Reliable
Explosives and Demolition, but enough
of that.

Dell starts to hand out papers from his clipboard.

DELL

Anyway. We ghosts will get visions, faces and places of people susceptible to becoming ghosts. It's our job to decipher who. These pamphlets are templates of what you're supposed to say, but most ghosts will add a personal twist. Can somebody read it out loud for me?

Dell eyes UNIFORMED WOMAN.

UNIFORMED WOMAN:

(Strained)

Please don't.

Dell starts to lean towards Uniformed Woman.

UNIFORMED WOMAN

Fine!... fine.

She stands from her chair, brushing down her clothes. She dramatically unfolds the paper, and starts reading it in a sarcastic and unenthusiastic tone.

UNIFORMED WOMAN

"Boo! I'm a ghost and I worked for, *insert your employer's name here*, and did, *insert your job here*. I died doing, *insert thing you died doing*, and now I can't rest in peace! Now, change your ways or become one of us -- a relentless ghost, one of pain and suffering!"

She scowls at the paper, sitting down again.

DELL

Good! But make sure to make it sound scary and vague. It helps.

(To Frank)

Sir, what was your occupation when you were alive?

FRANK

I'm Frank Steere, a prosecuting attorney. I work for Ornstein and Smough Law Services.

DELL

I... hold on. Point out your name on here.

He presents his clipboard to Frank.

FRANK

(Beat)

I don't see my name.

DELL

Oh, sir. I'm so sorry. This sort of thing doesn't usually happen. I'll have to take this up with my superiors. Just a moment, please.

Dell turns around and takes out a cell phone. He dials a number quickly, then presses it to his ear. Ghosts start talking amongst themselves.

FRANK

(To Ghosts)

See? I knew I was in the wrong place! The Lord has corrected Himself and I am going to Heaven!

DELL

(Into the phone)

Yes. I have a lawyer here. Frank Steere? He's... no, he's not on the list... Worked for Ornstein and Smough Law Services... Oh?... Yes, I'll tell him immediately. Can you have someone swing by to show him down?... Yes, thank you.

(To Frank)

I apologize for the inconvenience, sir. Someone'll be here to take you away.

FRANK

Of course! I knew I deserved better.
I've done nothing wrong.

DELL

(Struggling for words)

Yes... Well, I was on the phone with my
superiors and they've told me that
you're... there's no other way to say
this, but... you're not going to be
haunting anyone anytime soon.

FRANK

What do you mean? Of course I'm not.

Dell shifts nervously.

DELL

You're not going to be living in
eternal bliss, either... sir, you're
going to Hell.

FRANK

Hell? I'm not going to live the rest of
eternity with demons!

DELL

(Shocked)

Sir!

Dell looks around, then starts whispering to Frank.

DELL

'Demon' is an offensive term! Please,
if you're going to refer to the
residents of Hell, refer to them as the
mortally-challenged.

WALTER and IMPS enter.

WALTER

Dell, you called?

DELL

Walter! So nice to have you here. And,
uh, yes. There was a mix-up in the
sorting.

Dell puts a hand on Frank's shoulder.

DELL

This man... is a lawyer.

WALTER

Oh. I'll take him right away. Sorry about this mix-up, sir.

Walter gestures to the Imps.

FRANK

Don't lay a hand on me, you vile beasts! You demons!

Walter, Dell, and the Imps all look taken aback.

WALTER

Oh, you're a lawyer, alright. Take him away. Fifth circle for sure.

Imps nod. They take Frank offstage, kicking and screaming.

FRANK

No, you've got the wrong guy! All of my clients were innocent! I never paid off the judges!

WALTER

(In Frank's direction)

Jesus, shut up!

(To Dell)

I'm really sorry about this. You got stuck with the tenderfoots, now this? You get the short end of the straw damn near every time.

DELL

Oh, it's okay. I like showing people around.

Dell goes silent and still for a second, then reanimates.

DELL

How about we tell them about that one haunt? The one with that one kid.

WALTER

Oh! Yeah, sure.

DELL

(To Ghosts)

Alright, gather around.

The Ghosts start to settle back down into their chairs.

WALTER

So, I don't usually help with haunts. But there was this one kid -- haunted for kicking stray dogs, scaring them and chasing them around. Stuff like that. We looked into his future and saw some animal cruelty charges. Many frogs in many blenders.

Dell and Walter laugh. The Ghosts look very unsettled.

DELL

Yeah, I teamed up with Walter to help melt the kid's electronics and leave some burns. It was a very good team-building exercise!

WALTER

Say, why don't we go down to Hell right now and pair up some new ghosts with some new mortally-challenged?

DELL

That... actually sounds like a good idea!

Dell turns to the Ghosts.

DELL (CONT'D)

Say, who's ready to go out into the field and meet some new coworkers?

END.



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