

The Ghost
by
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April 12th 2010
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ACT I

Scene 1

A typical bedroom in an old house. A queen bed, diagonal to the audience, takes up the left side of the stage. Against the far wall is a dresser, covered in homely knick-knacks, and a wide, square window. It is dark outside. A lamp stands beside the dresser, filling the room with warm light. To the left, beside the bed, is a door left ajar to the beginnings of a small hallway. The room has a cozy, familiar feeling to it.

Lisa Goldwin, thirty years of age, sits on the edge of the bed. She's a thin, tall woman and has a slight nervousness about her. She's wearing only a housecoat and slippers. Her husband, Matthew Goldwin, is a little older looking. He is a dark haired man who appears frustrated. He's wearing pajamas and watching his wife intently. It is clear that something has disturbed them very late at night.

LISA

It can't be the cat, Matthew. It couldn't possibly be just the cat.

MATTHEW

It has to be the cat. There is no other explanation.
(sweetly)

Lisa, when did it start happening?

He gets closer to her, but she turns her head. When he puts his hand on her knee she turns further. He stands again.

MATTHEW

When you brought that cat into the house, that's when.

LISA

(quickly, defensive)

It's a coincidence. That cat is harmless. You've seen it, Matt. It just lies around all day.

MATTHEW

(mockingly)

Then what is it?

Lisa, having looked at Matthew, turns away again. After a moment she lies on the bed and pretends to sleep.

(CONTINUED)

MATTHEW

How do we know it doesn't get up and move things around? How do we know it's not the one who tore up Tori's pajamas? How do we know?

(beat)

You think it's a ghost.

LISA

(frightened)

I'm asleep. Go away.

MATTHEW

Ghosts don't exist, Lisa.

LISA

Go away!

Matthew opens the CREAKY door.

MATTHEW

Fine.

LISA

(sitting up)

What if it is a ghost?

Matthew and Lisa look at each other for a moment before Matthew sighs and gets onto the bed. He holds her as she clings to him.

MATTHEW

It's the cat.

LISA

But what if it's not?

MATTHEW

Then we'll deal with it. It shouldn't be that hard; ghosts don't exist.

LISA

I've told you, that cat has been with me during some of the hauntings.

MATTHEW

(at hauntings)

The what?

LISA

A ghost makes sense!

(CONTINUED)

MATTHEW

We're not going to call them hauntings.

LISA

Well that's what they are.

MATTHEW

(struggling)

No. We'll call them... Occurrences.

LISA

That's stupid.

MATTHEW

So is believing in ghosts.

The lights go out, leaving them in almost pitch darkness. Lisa screams.

LISA

(realizing)

Tori. Where's Tori? Tori!

(yelling)

Tori, are you okay?

MATTHEW

Quiet, I'm trying to find the flashlight. Stop grabbing at me.

LISA

It's in the drawer.

MATTHEW

Got it.

The light from a flashlight moves around the room and settles on an ominous shape in the opened doorway. Lisa jumps and runs to the other side of the room. The lights flicker back on and we see Matthew, still in bed, holding the flashlight; Lisa, on the other side of the room and pointing a finger at the doorway; and a CHILD in the doorway, weeping. Lisa goes slowly over to the child, shaken.

LISA

Tori. Tori, are you okay, honey?

TORI

I woke up and was stuck in the blackness.

LISA

Oh, dear, it's okay. The lights just went out again, honey. It'll be okay.

MATTHEW

Go back to bed, buddy.

TORI

Can I stay here?

LISA

No, no, it'll be okay. I'll take you to your room. Don't worry about the blackness. Soon you'll be back asleep and dreaming.

Lisa takes Tori into the hallway. Matthew gets out of bed and looks out the window.

MATTHEW

It can't be a ghost. Ghosts don't exist.

Lisa returns and goes directly to bed. Matthew sits on the edge and notices something under the bed. He reaches down and, after a moment, pulls out a black cat. The cat sits harmlessly in his arms, but Matthew's expression reveals his horror. He looks at his wife and the curtains close.

Scene 2

A small living room, with a similar worn-in feel as the bedroom. Knick-knacks and pictures cover the walls and comfortable furniture sits on the carpet in no particular arrangement. On the left wall there are windows to the outside, showing a dark evening. At the back of the room is an entrance to the stairway leading to the bedrooms. Everything looks like it's in a state of disarray except for a set of speakers and a CD player, which are on a small table at the front of the room quietly playing classical music.

In the very middle of the room sits a small animal cage. Matthew is deep in one of the armchairs, staring at the cage and fingering a baseball bat. He looks incredibly tired but is obviously trying not to fall asleep. A creaking from the stairs signals Lisa, who enters and looks at Matthew sadly.

(CONTINUED)

LISA

Tori is finally asleep. He's been having nightmares, but I gave him a flashlight so he won't panic next time the lights go out.

Matthew grunts.

LISA

At least one of us will sleep tonight. Nothing strange has happened since last night; maybe whatever is haunting us has left. Wouldn't that be wonderful? To be able to sleep again, without worrying about ghosts or noises or Tori or bombs or aliens or circus clowns are you listening to me?

Lisa walks up to Matthew, who by now has almost fallen asleep, and tries to take the baseball bat from him. He jerks awake and she looks at him suspiciously, then notices the cage.

LISA

What's in the cage, Matt?

MATTHEW

Your cat.

LISA

What? Why did you stick him in there?

MATTHEW

Like you said, nothing crazy has happened since last night.

Lisa tries to pick up the cage but Matthew pulls her violently away. The cat meows as they struggle, but even when Lisa pulls away she doesn't try to touch the cage again. They stare at each other.

MATTHEW

You don't get it. We'll be okay now; that stupid cat is trapped and he can't hurt you or Tori anymore. Everything will be okay!

LISA

You're insane. Do you really think a tiny cat could do all of this?

MATTHEW

Are you really sure it couldn't?

LISA

Let's think about this logically.

MATTHEW

I'm done thinking logically! I want to get out of this house! I want to get rid of that cat! I don't want to be afraid!

LISA

(after a pause)

You don't really think it's the cat, do you?

Matthew buries himself in the chair, sobbing. Lisa is torn between comforting him and leaving him alone. She decides to pick up the cage again, but the cat's meow betrays her and Matthew stands.

MATTHEW

Don't let it out, Lisa. You don't know what you're doing.

LISA

You don't know what you're doing. After all this talk of bravery and not believing in ghosts, you were the one who broke down. Not me.

MATTHEW

Give it to me.

LISA

No.

Matthew lunges toward Lisa. After a few moments of chasing her, Matthew gives up and stands defeated in the middle of the room. Lisa puts the cat cage on the chair. A loud thud is heard from upstairs and multiple thumps follow. The couple try to reach each other but the lights flicker and go out. Creepy creaking sounds, followed by thumps and moans, are heard over the music.

MATTHEW

Lisa. Lisa, where are you? I can't find you!

LISA

Matt, it's okay. It's just the lights.

MATTHEW

What's that noise?

LISA

I don't know. Calm down, don't panic.

MATTHEW

(with growing anxiety)

What is it? Who's there?

The moaning and creaking get louder and stop. For a moment it's just the music playing.

MATTHEW

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Please don't hurt me, I don't want to die. Please don't hurt me.

(desperately)

Ghost! Ghost!

The music flares, blaring into a crescendo and stops. A small click is heard and the lights flicker on, revealing Lisa beside the light switch, Matthew cowering in the middle of the room and Tori standing beside the CD player. He is fast asleep.

LISA

Tori? Tori, wake up!

TORI

Momma? Where am I? I was trying to get out of the blackness, Momma. The lights don't work.

LISA

Oh honey...

TORI

What's wrong with Daddy?

MATTHEW

(coming out of a daze)

Tori?

LISA

It's time for bed. You can sleep with me tonight, okay?

TORI

Okay.

Tori starts to go upstairs, revealing the strange creaking and thumping sound; since he can only use one foot at a time, he uses the second foot to thump his way up. Matthew stares at him blankly.

LISA

See, Matthew? A logical explanation. No ghosts. Although I am glad I got to see the real you.

Lisa follows Tori upstairs. Matthew slowly stands and picks up the animal cage, then carries it with him to the stairs. He looks up, then clicks the light switch. The lights flicker out.