

# UNINVITED GHOST

A MYSTERY-COMEDY IN ONE ACT

By **Le Roma Greth**

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### CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 MEN, 7 WOMEN)

BETTY (f).....More timid than the rest of her friends.  
(43 lines)

MADGE (f).....Not intimidated by a ghost. (49 lines)

BILL (m).....Seems to get the worst end of  
everything; easily frightened. (34 lines)

RICHARD (m).....“Rich.” Dashing, brave, and handsome.  
(49 lines)

NANCY (f) .....Always ready for an adventure.  
(17 lines)

ELAINE (f).....Follows the crowd—especially to a  
haunted house. (7 lines)

SISSIE (f).....Along for the ride. (9 lines)

DOROTHY WARREN (f).....Twenty-year old haunted by the desire to  
find her family and true identity.  
(20 lines)

JIM ELLIOTT (m).....Attracted to Dorothy. (35 lines)

MR. FLINCH (m).....Realtor with a raspy voice, gray hair, and  
glasses. (19 lines)

HORTENSE GARDNER (f).....The ghost during most of the play, she  
wears a flowing black robe which  
conceals her face and body. (21 lines)

**PROPS**

- Flashlight—Madge
- Handbag—Dorothy
- CD player—Rich
- Cake with candles—Elaine
- Bag, supposedly with sandwiches—Sissie
- Water bottle—Sissie
- Gift-wrapped boxes—Bill/Nancy
- 2-(Toy) guns—Hortense/Jim
- Very small package—Rich
- Handkerchief—Jim
- Piece of rope—Jim

**PLACE:**

The dining room of the deserted Redcay Mansion in Cayville.

**TIME:**

The present; an afternoon in late summer.

DO NOT COPY

**SETTING:**

*The curtain rises on a dimly lighted stage. A barren table and plain wooden chair are right center, three other occasional chairs are also in the room; one in the upper right hand corner, another directly center against the rear wall and the third down left against the wall. A window is in the right wall. In the rear wall are two doors, the one on the right leads into the main entrance hallway, and the one on the left opens into a closet. A door in the left wall leads to another wing of the mansion. When the curtain rises, the stage is empty. Immediately, the door up right opens and a flashlight beams at the audience.*

**BETTY:** *(Offstage.)* W-what's in there?

**MADGE:** *(Entering and coming boldly to center stage. The lights gradually brighten the stage.)* This looks like the dining room . . .

*Betty timidly follows Madge to center stage; Madge turns off the flashlight.*

**BETTY:** The dining room! *(Turning in fright to look at the table and chair)* Then that must be the table where –

**MADGE:** *(Exploring the room; opening doors and looking in them. At the door up left she interrupts herself to mutter “Uhh – a closet.”)* We're lucky we decided to come here during the day – think how dark this place would be at night!

**BETTY:** *(Still standing center stage, terrified, staring at the table.)*  
Oh, I'm scared!

**MADGE:** Don't be ridiculous!

**BETTY:** *(Turning.)* Well I am! I don't like to explore haunted houses! I just came along this afternoon because you wanted to come. Let's go!

**MADGE:** There's nothing to be afraid of. All right – so twenty years ago some wealthy old guy nobody liked was murdered here – so what?

**BETTY:** *(Returning her gaze to the table.)* And they found his body right by that table with part of an uneaten meal on his plate!

**MADGE:** *(Still wandering around the room.)* Don't tell me you believe in ghosts?

**BETTY:** I'm not that dumb, but suppose the murderer is still here? Suppose he shoots us—

**MADGE:** *(Laughs.)* After twenty years? The murderer's long gone.

**BETTY:** *(Unconvinced.)* But they never found out who did it!

**MADGE:** *(Stooping near the table.)* Hey! Look! You can still see the blood stains on the floor!

*An eerie laugh comes from offstage, right; Madge rises.*

**BETTY:** *(In a hoarse, terrified whisper.)* M-Madge! What was that?

**MADGE:** *(A bit frightened herself.)* I – I don't know.

**MR. FLINCH:** *(Offstage and still speaking in that eerie voice.)* This house has been empty a very long time.

**BETTY:** *(Raising her voice.)* It's a ghost!

**MADGE:** Shh! Let's get into the closet!

*They duck into the closet up left; a second later the door up right opens and Mr. Flinch enters, followed by Dorothy Warren and Jim Elliot. They come to center stage.*

**MR. FLINCH:** As I was saying . . . this house has been empty soooo long, it's no wonder it seems a bit murky and dusty. But with the shutters open and some new paint – I think you'd be amazed. *(He gives a professional laugh.)* Newlyweds would definitely brighten up the place.

**JIM:** *(Looking at Dorothy.)* Well, we're not married—yet.

**MR. FLINCH:** *(With professional joviality.)* It's a practical first step to locate a home before the ceremony. Now then, this is the dining room! Large...roomy...just the thing for entertaining and family get-togethers.

**DOROTHY:** For being such a wealthy man the former owner – what was his name?

**MR. FLINCH:** Ah, Mr. Redcay. Edgar Redcay. He, uh, "died" twenty years ago.

**DOROTHY:** (*Uncertainly looking around the room.*) Well, for being such a wealthy man, Mr. Redcay certainly didn't spend much on furniture.

**MR. FLINCH:** No, indeed. (*Looking with distaste at the table and chair*) All that stuff should have been removed long ago. Nobody wanted to touch anything here after the mur—uh, after the, well, after! (*Hurriedly continuing, hoping they won't notice the slip.*) Mr. Redcay was very tight with his money. He always bought very plain, cheap clothing, furniture – everything.

**JIM:** (*Suddenly.*) There's a story that this house is haunted isn't there, Mr. Flinch?

**MR. FLINCH:** (*Pretending to be horrified.*) Haunted? Why whatever gave you that -

**JIM:** (*Sternly.*) Oh, come, Mr. Flinch! Even if we are strangers in town, we have ears! We've heard more tales about this house than we can count.

**MR. FLINCH:** (*Trying to back out.*) Oh, such stories are perfectly ridiculous, of course –

**JIM:** This is the room in which Mr. Redcay was shot to death, right?

**MR. FLINCH:** (*Reluctantly.*) Well – yes.

**JIM:** Right by that table and chair?

**MR. FLINCH:** Yes. Mr. Elliot, I –

**JIM:** Just a moment, Mr. Flinch. I'm not a superstitious man, but if I'm going to buy a house I want to know its history.

**DOROTHY:** (*Staring at the table and chair.*) A man was killed – there!

**MR. FLINCH:** (*Nervously.*) Of course, there are no stories to the effect that Mr. Redcay haunts the place – no stories at all. And that is the truth.

**JIM:** (*Trying to sound casual.*) Then who supposedly haunts the place?

**MR. FLINCH:** Well . . .

**JIM:** You might as well tell us. We'll find out sooner or later.

**MR. FLINCH:** (*Defeated.*) All right. I'll give it to you straight. The night of the tragedy – twenty years ago – passersby heard a baby crying in the mansion.

**DOROTHY:** (*Suddenly showing more than casual interest.*) A baby?!

**MR. FLINCH:** Yes. Redcay lived alone – couldn't stand servants. He didn't like children. His wife had been dead for years. He didn't have any friends and never had any visitors. People thought it was odd, that's why they remembered.

**JIM:** Redcay didn't have any children?

**MR. FLINCH:** Well, yes. He had a son – but the boy ran away from home about three years before the murder. Redcay had been as cruel to him as to everybody else. Police couldn't find a trace of him. Later that night, the night of the murder, old Jenkins, the watchman on the Chatham estate across the road, swore he saw a woman, dressed in a black robe, carrying a baby. He said she came out of the front gate of the mansion grounds and ran up the road, away from town. He called to her, but she just kept going.

**JIM:** (*Attempted casualness.*) Where is this – Mr. Jenkins?

**MR. FLINCH:** In the Cayville cemetery on top the hill. He's been dead for ten years.

**JIM:** And he was the only one who saw the woman and the baby?

**MR. FLINCH:** That's right. The police investigating the murder thought he was crazy as a bedbug, they didn't believe him. Folks, everyone in town, hated Mr. Redcay. He'd hurt people just for the fun of it. He loved to foreclose mortgages, cut salaries, the list is endless.

**DOROTHY:** He must have been an evil man!

**MR. FLINCH:** Well, the police at that time were glad – along with everybody else – that he was gone. They investigated, of course, but I don't think they really cared if they found out who did it or not. Mr. Redcay had an awful lot of enemies.

**JIM:** And where do the ghost tales fit in?

**MR. FLINCH:** (*Uncomfortably.*) Well, sometimes, even in daytime, people passing on the road hear the sound of a baby crying. And quite a few claim to have seen the lady in black.

**DOROTHY:** (*Suddenly breaking down.*) Oh, please! I want to get out of here!

**JIM:** But, Dorothy –

**DOROTHY:** (*Her voice rising hysterically.*) Please, Jim!

**JIM:** Okay. Let's go, Mr. Flinch.

**MR. FLINCH:** *(Fading out as they leave the stage by the door up right.)* I hope I didn't upset you, Miss Warren. Of course, nobody really believes the house is haunted. It's just a good 'ole ghost story.

**MADGE:** *(Peeping out of the closet door.)* Okay, they're gone.

*The two girls enter and drift center stage.*

**BETTY:** Did you hear what I heard?

**MADGE:** Yeah – they're thinking of buying the place, ghost and all.

**BETTY:** D-don't say that! Let's go!

**MADGE:** Aw, this is fun!

**BETTY:** Suppose we see the Lady in Black?

**MADGE:** *(Disgusted.)* Act your age, but don't crawl!

*Suddenly, through the door down left Bill, carrying gift wrapped boxes; Richard, carrying a CD player; Elaine, carrying a cake with candles; Nancy, carrying more gift wrapped boxes; and Sissie, carrying a bag with sandwiches and a water bottle, burst through shouting "Surprise!" "Happy Birthday, Betty," etc. They swarm around her and place the stuff on the table.*

**BETTY:** *(Surprised and delighted.)* Wow!

**MADGE:** *(Indicating the table.)* Put the rest of the stuff on there too.

*Those who have not set everything down do so now.*

**BETTY:** But—but I don't understand!

**RICHARD:** Let's pull her ears! *(He grabs an ear and pulls it, counting.)* One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, SIXTEEN!

**ELAINE:** You see, Betty, we figured the only way to surprise you was to do something really different.

**BILL:** *(Looking over his shoulder.)* And what's more different than having a birthday party in a haunted house!

**NANCY:** We wanted to surprise you.

**SISSIE:** Were you surprised, Betty?

**BETTY:** Surprised! I practically fainted!

**MADGE:** (*Proudly.*) And you can thank me for that! After all, who was the decoy?

**BETTY:** (*Laughing.*) Frankly, I thought Madge was a little crazy when she suggested coming here! I figured I'd better humor her!

*Everybody laughs. Sissie is looking around the room, peering in doors, she exits through the door up right.*

**RICHARD:** See any ghosts yet?

**BILL:** (*Nervously.*) That's enough!

**MADGE:** He's as scared as Betty!

**SISSIE:** (*Reappearing at the door up right.*) Hey, guys! There's a great room for dancing right down the hall. I'll bet it used to be a real ball room. Grab the CD player.

*With a babble of voices and Richard carrying the CD player, everybody exits up right, leaving the stage empty. From the door down left, a woman, draped entirely in black enters slowly and glides center stage. She goes to the table and stands looking at it for a moment, then she stoops and fumbles around under the table. Offstage, the voices of Madge and Betty start low and become louder. The woman straightens, glances around the room and glides back to the closet door, where she exits. Madge and Betty enter up right.*

**BETTY:** (*Almost in tears.*) Madge, this is a great surprise!

**MADGE:** Then what are you bawling about?

**BETTY:** I—I don't know. I'm so happy! (*Apparently forgetting all about ghosts, etc. she sits down in the chair beside the table, her back toward the closet and contemplates the cake. Madge hovers at her right, also momentarily looking at the cake.*)

**BETTY:** Oh, it's a beautiful cake—and the candles—I can't wait to light them and make a wish! I wonder if anyone would mind if I opened just one of the presents now . . .

*Slowly, the closet door opens and a hand rises from a flowing black robe and points a gun at Betty's back, slowly taking aim.*

**MADGE:** Uh uh. No fair. You can't open presents until after we eat.

**BETTY:** Just one?

*Madge lifts her eyes and sees the gun, poised to shoot. She screams, long and loud. The gun withdraws into the closet. Betty jumps to her feet, not knowing what it's all about, but scared out of her wits anyway. Richard and Bill come running into the room.*

**RICHARD:** What's wrong?

**MADGE:** *(Pointing to the closet.)* A gun! It – it came out – and w-  
was pointed at B-Betty's back!

**RICHARD:** A gun! Bill, go look in the closet! Betty, are you all right?

**BETTY:** I – I don't know!

**BILL:** Me? Go look in that closet?

**RICHARD:** Are you a man or a mouse?

**BILL:** Just get me a piece of cheese!

**MADGE:** You dummy! Do something!

**BILL:** *(Starting up right.)* I'll call the police.

**RICHARD:** *(Grabbing his arm.)* We're going to look in that closet!

*Nancy, Sissy, and Elaine enter from up right.*

**SISSIE:** What's going on?

**NANCY:** You guys are having way too much fun in here.

**BILL:** *(Pointing to the closet.)* There's a gun and a hand in there!

**ELAINE:** *(Amazed.)* Doesn't the hand have a body attached?

**RICHARD:** That's what we're going to find out! Stand back, girls!

*The girls huddle together in frightened silence up right above the table. Slowly and cautiously, the boys creep toward the closet.*

**RICHARD:** *(At the closet door.)* All right, open it!

**BILL:** Me?

**RICHARD:** All right, I'll open it and you grab whatever comes out.

**BILL:** Oh, no! I'll open it!

*Closing his eyes tightly, he grabs the closet knob and jerks it open to reveal – nothing!*

**RICHARD:** *(Who's been poised to grab anything)* Hmm.

*The girls draw a little closer, staring at the closet.*

**BILL:** What happened?

**RICHARD:** Open your eyes and find out.

**BILL:** *(Opening his eyes.)* Where's the ghost?

**BETTY:** It disappeared! It must really be a ghost! A woman in black – and she tried to kill me and if she's a ghost nobody'll stop her!

**RICHARD:** Slow down. None of us saw a thing except Madge. Did you see it, Betty?

**BETTY:** *(Slightly mollified.)* N-n-no . . .

**RICHARD:** *(Angrily.)* Is this your idea of a joke, Madge?

**MADGE:** *(Earnestly.)* No, Rich! No! Word of honor!

**ELAINE:** Maybe she was imagining things.

**BILL:** Sure – a mirage.

**SISSIE:** You only see them on a desert.

**NANCY:** Are you sure you saw something, Madge?

**MADGE:** *(Uncertain herself by this time.)* I – I thought I saw –

**RICHARD:** You only thought you saw something.

**MADGE:** But, Rich –

**BETTY:** I'm still scared.

**RICHARD:** There's nothing to be afraid of. You can see the closet is empty – always was. I'll step in and prove it to you!

*Richard steps into the closet and Dorothy Warren's limp body practically falls into Rich's arms. He staggers out of the closet with it.*

**BILL:** Now I'm seeing things!

**MADGE:** I knew it wasn't my imagination – Betty! It's the girl who was looking at the house!

**BETTY:** *(Almost forgetting her fear.)* The one with the young guy.

**RICHARD:** What young guy . . . what girl?

**MADGE:** Before you guys got here we had to hide in that closet, a realtor was showing this girl and her fiancé around the place. They acted like they wanted to buy the place.

**NANCY:** Maybe she was the one pretending to be a ghost!

**ELAINE:** Why, she's only twenty-something! How could she be haunting a house all this time?

**RICHARD:** She was stuffed back in a corner of the closet, no wonder we didn't see her at first.

**SISSIE:** What's – what's wrong with her?

**BILL:** *(Looking at her closely.)* She's got an awful big lump on her head.

**NANCY:** Maybe something fell down and hit her on the head while she was hiding in there.

**RICHARD:** How could that be? The closet is empty now.

**MADGE:** What are we going to do – let you stand there and hold her the rest of the day?

**RICHARD:** I guess we better call the cops.

**ELAINE:** And in the meantime?

**RICHARD:** Stuff her back in the closet! She's not going anywhere.

**SISSIE:** You are so cruel. Even if she is a crook or something!

**NANCY:** That's right! We should try to revive her and see what she has to say before the cops get here.

**ELAINE:** And we'd feel pretty stupid if there's a logical reason for her being in the closet!

**RICHARD:** Well, do something! I'm tired of holding her!

**BILL:** Douse her with water.

**MADGE:** There's no water in the house.

**BETTY:** Isn't that water bottle you brought full of water?

**SISSIE:** No, lemonade.

**BILL:** *(Going to the table and getting the bottle.)* Well, close enough.

*At the director's discretion, Bill can douse Dorothy Warren with the "lemonade" from the water bottle and then Rich exclaims, "She's coming to!" If the director does not want to use this action, Bill can raise the bottle as if ready to throw the liquid in her face and she can begin moaning and moving. In that case, Richard would shout, "Wait, Bill! She's coming to!" In either case, Dorothy regains consciousness and the others draw expectantly closer.*

**RICHARD:** *(Shaking her gently and setting her on her own feet.)*

Okay! Snap out of it!

**DOROTHY:** *(Holding her throbbing head in her hands.)* Ohhhhh! My head!

**MADGE:** What hit you?

**DOROTHY:** *(Slowly raising her head and looking around. She appears to be terrified.)* W-who are you?

**RICHARD:** We asked first.

**DOROTHY:** *(Her voice rising to a shriek.)* Who are you?

**RICHARD:** Don't get so excited –

**DOROTHY:** *(Still shrieking.)* Where's Jim? What have you done with him? He didn't mean any harm - he was only trying to help me! Where is he? What have you done with him?

**MADGE:** Do you suppose she's putting on an act?

**NANCY:** I'll bet she is!

**BILL:** Sure. There's something fishy around here – and she's mixed up in it!

**RICHARD:** *(With determination.)* That settles it! Back in the closet!

**DOROTHY:** B-but –

*He gently pushes her into the closet, closes the door, and stands with his back against it.*

**RICHARD:** Now, she'll stay in there until the cops get here. This is too big for us to handle. Who wants to go call them. *(Silence)*  
Don't everyone shout at once.

**SISSIE:** Elaine and I will go.

**ELAINE:** Yeah – I'll be glad to get out of this house!

**BETTY:** Please hurry! I'm scared!

**SISSIE:** We'll try.

*Exit Sissie and Elaine through the door up right.*

**RICHARD:** Now then, Bill, you stay and guard this door. The girls and I will explore the house and see if we can't find something. It would be good to have a little more evidence before the cops get here.

**BILL:** You want me to stay in here – alone!

**RICHARD:** Sure, you can take care of yourself. I'll take care of the girls.

**MADGE:** Don't be such a coward, Bill.

**BILL:** B-but you said she had a gun, Madge! We didn't take it. Suppose she shoots me!

**NANCY:** Then you'll get your picture in the paper. Hey! If we find something, maybe we'll all get our pictures in the paper!

**MADGE:** Oh, boy! Let's go!

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