Ghost in the Graveyard

by

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A light breeze blows through the almost leafless trees, as the sun sets to the West. Long shadows dance eerily.

The headstones, mausoleums, and statues are in various states of decay, covered by withered vines.

EXT. JUST OUTSIDE MT. HOPE CEMETERY - CONTINUOUS

JACOB and RICKY, both 11, Dutch boy haircuts, walk along a weathered sidewalk. A wrought iron fence separates them from the graveyard.

An entrance gate is some twenty yards in front of them...and open. It SQUEAKS, as the wind blows.

JACOB
You gonna meet us tomorrow night after that sissy concert?

RICKY
I don't know if my Dad will let me. Savannah loves Hannah Montana, and Mom and Dad still do that stupid Achy Breaky Heart thing.

Jacob laughs. Starts dancing.

JACOB
(singing)
Don't you tell my heart, my achy breaky heart...If you break my heart, my achy breaky heart...

RICKY
Shut up! Hannah Montana's really pretty. I like her, too.

They continue to walk.

JACOB
Yeah, right. You wouldn't even know what to do with a girl...you've never even kissed one before.

Ricky pushes Jacob.

RICKY
Like you have?
JACOB
I told you I did at Summer camp, tongue and all, like in the movies.

RICKY
Yeah right! You're lyin'. Why do you always have to lie?

As they approach the gate, an eerie SCREAM emanates from inside the cemetery. They both stop in their tracks.

They stare wide eyed into the cemetery...frozen in place.

EXT. MT. HOPE CEMETERY - CONTINUOUS

CHET and LUKE, both 16, dressed from head to toe in black, run towards the boys, arms waving madly over their heads, SCREAMING at the top of their lungs.

EXT. JUST OUTSIDE MT. HOPE CEMETERY - CONTINUOUS

The boys remain frozen where they stand.

RICKY
C'mon, let's get outta here!

Ricky tugs on Jacob's sleeve. Jacob relaxes as Chet and Luke come into view.

JACOB
It's just Chet and Luke. Don't be scared. That's just what they want. C'mon, help me close the gate...we'll lock 'em in.

Both boys grab a hold of the heavy gate, and slam it shut. It locks with a thunderous CLANK.

RICKY
Let's go! C'mon!

They run off as Chet and Luke reach the gate.

EXT. MT. HOPE CEMETERY - CONTINUOUS

Chet shakes the gate hard, but it's definitely locked.

CHET
You little shits! You're dead meat!

LUKE
We're locked in? You kiddin' me?
CHET
There's an opening in the fence on
the other side...c'mon.

They turn around, head back into the interior of the cemetery.

EXT. MT. HOPE CEMETERY - CENTRAL MAUSOLEUM - NIGHT

The sun has set completely now. It's dark except for the
Harvest moon, which casts a yellow glow everywhere.

Chet and Luke walk along, each smoking a cigarette. A large
mausoleum stands directly in front of them.

LUKE
So, we're on for tomorrow night?

CHET
You know it.

LUKE
Rebecca and Samantha up for it?

Chet stops, puts his hands on his hips.

CHET
Of course they are. You don't trust
old Chet, or what?

Luke stops as well.

LUKE
I trust ya, buddy. I'm just
sayin'...are you sure they're gonna
be up for doin' it in a graveyard?

CHET
I stole a joint from my brother. A
couple puffs and they'll be up for
anything, anywhere. You just wait.

LUKE
Let's get outta here...my Mom's makin'
fried chicken, and I'm starvin'.

They start up again, walk beside the big central mausoleum.

A SCUFFLING SOUND alarms them. They both stop.

ZACHARY, a black man in his 60's, bottle of bourbon in his
hand, jumps out, shines a flash light on them.

ZACHARY
Boo!
Both boys jump back, clearly frightened.

CHET
What the...

Zachary saunters up to them, aims the light away, a scowl on his weathered face.

ZACHARY
What you two doin' out here? Cemetery's closed after dark.

Chet smiles, while Luke still looks scared.

CHET
Damn, old man, you scared the bejesus out of us. We ain't doin' nothin'. Just got locked in, is all.

Zachary shines the light back into their faces. Looks them over through furrowed brows.

ZACHARY
Show some respect to your elders, boy...Zachary's the name.

LUKE
He don't mean no disrespect. You just scared us a tad...that's all.

Zachary shines his flashlight underneath his face, smiles a mischievous, toothless grin.

ZACHARY
Y'all should be scared. Devil's Eve be a scary night in this here graveyard. Ya best be on your way.

CHET
We don't want no trouble with ya.

Luke looks to Chet, who continues to eye down Zachary.

ZACHARY
Then go, dammit!

Both boys jump back again, as Zachary staggers closer.


CHET
We don't scare that easy.

LUKE
Let's just leave. I'm hungry.
Zachary takes a swig from his bottle.

ZACHARY
I gotta story that'll scare y'all.
And it be the truth, too.

Chet crosses his arms, stands his ground.

CHET
Let's hear it, old timer.

Zachary takes another slug.

ZACHARY
Well, back in 1809, Abram Maury, the founder of Franklin, had a bastard son out of wedlock, named Jeb. The townsfolk wasn't too keen on him.

Zachary swigs down more bourbon.

CHET
That ain't too scary.

Zachary pulls in close to Chet.

ZACHARY
Not yet, it ain't.

Luke looks around nervously.

ZACHARY (CONT'D)
Fifty years later, old Jeb got caught stealin' a horse. The town caught him, tied him down, opened him up, and left him to rot. They tossed his bones in an unmarked grave somewhere in this here cemetery.

Luke squirms uneasily.

LUKE
Let's just go, Chet. C'mon.

CHET
Hold up...let's hear this out.

The wind whistles through the tree branches. Several dried, brown leaves float down from above.

ZACHARY
He was buried on Halloween.
(MORE)
ZACHARY (CONT'D)

Ever' fifty years, his old bones
walk this graveyard...I tell ya, as
God's my witness, I saw 'em fifty
years ago with m'own two eyes.

Chet breaks into laughter. Luke takes a step further away.

CHET
OK, riiiight. So some old skeleton
haunts this place, and we shouldn't
be messin' round here, huh?

ZACHARY
I saw 'em back in '59. He took
m'friend Caleb, and he ne'er be seen
since. I be tellin' the truth, boy.

The boys turn to leave.

CHET
That shit may work with the youngins,
but not us, old man. Happy Halloween!

ZACHARY
Ever' fifty years, Jeb's old bones
come a walkin' and takes one with
'em back to the grave...this be the
year, so don't you come back here.

EXT. JIM WARREN PARK - DAY

SUPER: Saturday, October 31

A banner hangs over the entrance to the park. It reads,
"Franklin's Annual Halloween Festival Welcomes Hannah Montana
and Billy Ray Cyrus".

Black and orange dominate the palate, with Jack o Lanterns
smiling through crooked mouths, witches on zip lines, and
giant spiders and bats suspended from strings.

Ricky, dressed as an alien, walks into the park with his MOM
and DAD, both 40's, and sister, SAVANNAH, 6, cute as a button
in a Hannah Montana costume.

They find an empty picnic table and set up camp. Savannah
SCREAMS as a witch flies down a zip line above her head.

SAVANNAH
MOM!!

She breaks into tears, as Mom picks her up and comforts her.
MOM
Don't worry, baby. That's a good witch. Let's go get a candy apple.

Savannah nods in excitement and her fear is forgotten.

MOM (CONT'D)
We'll be back with some treats.

DAD
OK, Hun, we'll hold down the fort.

Ricky turns to his Dad with wide, innocent eyes.

RICKY
Dad...can I ask you a question?

Dad smiles down, as he pulls out sodas and sandwiches.

DAD
Of course, you can, son. What's up?

Ricky shifts uneasily from foot to foot.

RICKY
Well, I wanted to ask about, uh, kissin' girls...like when is it OK?

Dad laughs out loud and rubs Ricky's thick head of hair.

DAD
Huh? Where's that coming from, sport? Can you clarify just a tad?

Ricky looks up nervously, rubs his eyes.

RICKY
Well...Jacob told me he kissed a girl and said that I wouldn't know how to do it. I was just wonderin'...

DAD
Listen, son, when the time is right, you'll know it. Doesn't matter how old you are or what your friends tell you. You'll know it, and you don't need to worry about anythin' that Jacob or anyone else says...OK?

RICKY
Really?

DAD
Really. No kissin' girls, though yet.
Ricky looks away, smiles, then hugs his Dad.

EXT. JIM WARREN PARK - AFTERNOON

The festival is in full swing, with HANNAH MONTANA performing in front of a packed house. CHILDREN dance in front of the stage, while witches fly back and forth overhead.

Mom has Savannah on her shoulders. Ricky watches Hannah with a gleam in his eyes. Dad shakes his head, smiles.

DAD
She sure is pretty, ain't she?

RICKY
Yeah, she's OK for a girl.

EXT. JIM WARREN PARK - PUMPKIN PATCH - EVENING

Chet and Luke walk hand in hand with REBECCA and SAMANTHA, both 16 and cute. They stop in front of a huge pumpkin, decorated as a clown.

HANNAH MONTANA (O.S.)
Thanks you guys! We're gonna take a break and my Dad will be up next. Happy Halloween!

REBECCA
I like this one the best. He's cute.

SAMANTHA
Me too, I don't like the scary ones.

Chet pulls Rebecca over in front of a sinister looking Jack o Lantern with sharp fangs and melted wax face.

CHET
Nah, this one here's the winner. He's an evil looking SOB.


LUKE
Lookie here...it's old Jeb.

The girls look confused.

REBECCA
Huh? Who's old Jeb?

CHET
No one...just a dumb joke. C'mon, let's get goin'. Party time, girls!

EXT. JIM WARREN PARK - NIGHT

BILLY RAY CYRUS performs onstage. The band finishes a song. The crowd applauds wildly.

BILLY RAY
Thank you, Franklin! Good to see y'all. You ready for a little Achy Breaky? C'mon up and let's see if y'all remember how she goes.

Ricky rolls his eyes, as Mom and Dad get up to dance.

RICKY
Dad, no! No dancin'.

DAD
Oh yes we are, and you two are gonna join us. C'mon.

The song begins, everyone dances. Dad spins Ricky in the air, while Savannah implores Mom to pick her up as well.

EXT. MT. HOPE CEMETERY - CENTRAL MAUSOLEUM - NIGHT

It's dark and quiet, except for the rustling of dead branches. The moon is full again and everything is bathed in a spooky yellow glow.

Chet and Rebecca walk hand in hand ahead of Luke and Samantha. Chet carries an open bottle of wine.

Luke tries to hold Samantha's hand to no avail.

CHET
Let's put the blankets down over here, you guys. Looks like a creepy spot, huh?

REBECCA
Yeah...like too creepy. I don't like it out here.

CHET
You'll like it in a few minutes when you girls see the little surprise I brought along. Huh, Luke?

Luke raises his eyebrows.
LUKE
I sure hope so.

They lay blankets out next to the mausoleum. Chet and Rebecca immediately snuggle up, take turns with the wine.

Luke puts his arm around Samantha, pulls her close. She gives in and they share a kiss.

CHET
There we go! That's what I'm talkin' 'bout. See? What did old Chet tell y'all? Pretty cool, ain't it?

SAMANTHA
So what's this surprise all about?

Chet passes the bottle over to Luke, who takes a long pull, and hands it over to Samantha.

Chet reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out a joint and lighter. He holds it up for all to see.

CHET
This, m'darlin' is the surprise. Courtesy of my big brother, Toby.

REBECCA
I ain't never smoked that stuff before. Will we be OK?

Samantha's eyes light up.

SAMANTHA
I have. We'll be just fine. Fire that bad boy up.

EXT. JIM WARREN PARK - NIGHT

The stage is empty and the crowd has thinned out. Witches continue to fly along their zip lines overhead.

Savannah is asleep in Mom's arms. Dad leads the way toward the parking lot, with Ricky bringing up the rear.

DAD
Now, that's what I call good old fashioned fun. Ain't I right?

RICKY
Yeah, that was fun. Even the dancin'.
DAD
That's my boy. Let's get home and watch a scary movie.

MOM
Honey...

RICKY
Yeah! And let's have some popcorn!

EXT. MT. HOPE CEMETERY - CENTRAL MAUSOLEUM - NIGHT
Both couples go at it on their blankets. Chet pulls away from Rebecca, gets up quickly, staggering.

CHET
I don't feel so good, Becca. My head's spinnin'.

REBECCA
Are you kiddin' me? You've been trying to kiss on me for weeks and here I am, all ready, and you don't feel good?

Chet walks over to the mausoleum, disappears behind it.

SAMANTHA
I feel fine!

LUKE
Me too.

They continue kissing.

REBECCA
You gonna be sick?

The sounds of barfing from behind the mausoleum.

LUKE
I'd say he's already sick.

Rebecca picks up the empty bottle of wine, rolls her eyes.

REBECCA
He chugged the whole bottle. No wonder he's sick.

Luke gets up.

LUKE
I'll go help him. Chet, you OK?
A high pitched SCREAM from behind the mausoleum, followed by another. All eyes go wide.

Luke quickly moves forward, toward the old stone structure.

    LUKE (CONT'D)
    Don't be messin' 'round, Chet.

Skeletal fingers wrap around the vine covered wall, followed by a grinning skull. JEB lurches into view.

Rebecca and Samantha both SCREAM. Luke grabs them both and pulls them away.

    LUKE (CONT'D)
    Holy Mother of Mary! It's Jeb. That old man wasn't lyin'. C'mon, lets get outta here! Run!

The three take off as fast as they can.

EXT. JUST OUTSIDE MT. HOPE CEMETERY - MOMENTS LATER

Luke, Rebecca, and Samantha run along the sidewalk at breakneck speed, all SCREAMING at the top of their lungs.

A car speeds by, going the opposite way.

INT. RICKY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Mom turns in her seat towards the three runners, outside.

    MOM
    Honey, you see that? Should we stop?

Ricky is already glued to the window.

    RICKY

    DAD
    Just some Halloween funnin'.

Through the window, Ricky sees Jeb glaring out through the cemetery gate. His skull rolls from side to side.

    RICKY
    Dad! A skeleton! In the graveyard!

    MOM
    No scary movies for you, Mr.