

MISTER HISLOP'S DATING AGENCY
A Ghost Stage Play
(with smatterings of humour)

The Hislop Dating Agency is for dead people.

By Tom Baines

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Mr Hislop's Dating Agency

Estimated playing time: 80-90 minutes.

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A Brief Synopsis

Four people (two men and two women) meet in a room with an eerie atmosphere, which is part of a derelict house. They were previously unknown to each other, and are there as a result of a meeting arranged by the Hislop Dating Agency. Their uneasiness in being there is suddenly compounded into stark terror – a room mirror giving evidence that they are ghosts – in fact, dead! They try to get out of the house, but find that they are locked in. ... Any hopeful doubts they had over being ghosts are eventually toppled when they get involved with a BBC producer and his assistant, who are searching for a ghost-like property for an episode of the Doctor Who series.

Eventually two more ghosts join them, they being a vicar and his fiancé. Much to the couple's chagrin and embarrassment, a telephone conversation eventually reveals the true relationship between them.

When Mister Hislop, the person responsible for them being there, unexpectedly turns up, the others are desperately hopeful that he can explain why all this has happened to them and how they can get out of their horrible state. His explanation why each of them is there comes as a great shock to them. ... They eventually do get away from the building, but in a way that is not expected – they are going on a journey into the great unknown!

The Hislop dating Agency is for dead people only.

The script highlights various worries the victims have and the personal frictions between them that result. I have endeavoured to avoid making this an oppressive story by interposing humour into many of the situations and personal clashes.

The script includes an alternative ending

SCENES

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CAST:

There are Nine Characters.

Four are possibly aged between thirty and forty-five, and dressed in their respectable 'outside' clothes.

They are:

- *JANE
- *FRANK
- *HELEN
- *GEOFFREY

Two more are bohemian-like in appearance:

- *JULIAN: Is the artistic type (being a TV Producer). Possibly in his late-thirties, most likely having longish hair (perhaps with a ponytail), flared trousers and a trendy duffle coat.
- SAMANTHA: Possibly in her mid-twenties. Wearing her hair in a ponytail, colourful slacks and a bright duffle coat. ... She has a shoulder strap handbag.

Then there is:

- *NIGEL: A youngish-looking clergyman (clerical collar and suit to match) – he is aged about thirty-three. He normally has that pious look and contented countenance that so many of them strive to attain.
- *EMILY: Is a rather timid-looking woman of about twenty-five. Being dressed soberly in a two-piece outfit with low-heeled shoes, she is the type who can be readily judged to be a fit companion and fiancé for her clerical escort.
- *MISTER HISLOP: A bright-looking man in his forties. Dressed in smart outside suit (with tie).

In addition is the sound of a woman's demanding voice coming from a mobile phone (perhaps indistinctly so).

* = Their clothes require to have pockets for mobile phone and or handkerchief.

PROPS:

The same stage layout and props are used throughout the play.

A sparsely furnished room that includes a long full-length mirror (in a swing frame or wall mounted) – also, a plain light upright chair. ... The room requires to have a slight eerie aspect about it – perhaps brought about by the décor and lighting.

The sound (Off Stage) of a door being slammed to (alternative ending only).

The sound (Off Stage) of a gale-like wind blowing.

Various members of the cast use their own mobile phones.

Various members of the cast use handkerchiefs.

Mister Hislop glances at his wristwatch.

Scene One

The STAGE CURTAINS SLOWLY OPEN

Jane walks slowly On Stage from the house's entrance hall. She looks about herself in a hesitant and slightly nervous way. ... She finally stops at Mid Stage and continues to appear unsettled.

After a few seconds her attention is distracted by something she has evidently heard Off Stage (the direction she came from). She appears apprehensive as she continues to stare there.

Jane appears to be very uneasy as Frank walks slowly On Stage from the entrance hall. ... He looks about himself in a rather puzzled way.

On noticing Jane he momentarily stops:

FRANK: Oh, hello!

Looking somewhat relieved as he walks to join her:

JANE: Em, oh what a relief! I heard you coming, but I didn't know what to expect. ... This place is so creepy.

FRANK: Yes, it is a bit strange. I wonder why Mister Hislop chose it?

JANE: Oh, you're one of those who he arranged for us to meet here. ... Me too.

FRANK: Well, I suppose I'd better introduce myself. ... I'm Frank, and I'm from —

JANE: No! No! Mr. Hislop said we were to only give our Christian names at first.

FRANK: Oh, yes. Sorry, I forgot. ... Well?

JANE: Well, what?

FRANK: Your name?

JANE: Sorry! I'm Jane!

There is then a pause as neither knows what to say next.

Then:

JANE: I, em, I-I don't really know why I came here.

FRANK: Same here.

JANE: It was that leaflet that did it.

FRANK: What leaflet?

JANE: Well, I was just walking out of the hospital when somebody thrust it into my hand. It was a kind of advert from Mister Hislop. ... It had a curious effect on me. I felt that I just had to phone the number given on it. ... He was very persuasive, and before I knew what I was doing I agreed to meet here.

FRANK: It was the same with me. ... I was driving along when his advert came over the radio. I had a sudden compulsion to phone him. ... I just don't know why I did it!

A short pause, then (indicating that she has a cold shiver):

JANE: This place really gives me the creeps - as though it could be haunted!

FRANK: I doubt it. I don't believe in ghosts. ... It's all those books and films that make people think that places like this could be haunted – it's a load of rubbish!

Clearly irked:

JANE: It's not rubbish! Lot's of people believe in ghosts.

FRANK: Have you ever seen one?

JANE: Well, no!

FRANK: That's what I mean. All that's necessary is for someone to be feeling insecure in a dismal place like this then right way their minds get to work, remembering the drivel that's been put into their heads.

JANE: Are you saying that I'm stupid or something like that?

FRANK: Well, no! But there's too many peop—

JANE: Wh-Who do you think you are? How dare you try to lord it over me! I know your type – always trying to show how clever they are, as though they know better than other people.

FRANK: I-I wasn't trying to do anything of the sort! I was merely trying to —

JANE: I'm entitled to my opinion like anyone else. If I think this place could be haunted, then I don't need the likes of you trying to be clever at my expense!

Letting a sigh of exasperation:

FRANK: Look! Let's drop the subject. I wasn't trying to lord it over you – it's-it's just that I don't believe in the supernatural – that's all. ... After all, we're supposed to be here in order to meet one another. If I've upset you, then I apologize. ... What do you say?

JANE: But I'm not upset! It's just that your att... ... Yes, alright then, let's forget that the matter was ever raised.

FRANK: Good!

There is a short pause. Then as he looks about himself in an inquisitive way:

FRANK: Though I must say that Hislop has certainly chosen an unusual place.

She looks about herself:

JANE: It's as though Mister Hislop is trying to create an air of mystery. Perhaps the agency goes in for this kind of thing – maybe in order to make the first meetings memorable.

FRANK: Could be! ... Perhaps it's some kind of gimmick. After all, would either of us have been keen to come if the meeting place was a café in the high street? But Handslow Hall – well, that sounded something special. Perhaps he's hired it for the day.

As Frank is speaking he has started to walk about the room, he looking about himself as he gives the room a kind of semi-interested visual inspection.

A short pause, then:

JANE: But I had no need to be here. I had been going out with James for some time, and once we saved enough money we were planning to get married.

FRANK: Same here! I had just started going out with Shirley, and everything was going along fine.

Continuing to walk around the room and as he approaches the mirror:

FRANK: ... By the way, why were you at the hospital?

JANE: I'd-I'd rather not sa—

She is suddenly interrupted by Frank shouting in a loud voice:

FRANK: Oh, no! It-It's unbelievable! Tell me it can't be right! ... I-I've no reflection! No reflection!

As Frank stares in shocked disbelief at the mirror, Jane looks at him in startled way.

Then:

JANE: But it's n-not possible!

Still staring at the mirror:

FRANK: It's-It's true – I've no reflection! ... C-Come and look.

Jane, looking horrified, hesitates then walks cautiously towards the mirror. ... She stops at the side of Frank, who looks at her as he pulls her closer to him – he exclaiming:

FRANK: Look! See for yourself.

Jane looks. ... Then exclaims:

JANE: Oh my god! ... It can't be! It-It can't be!

Frank is now visibly shocked as Jane pushes against him in order to get a better view.

Then in a state of panic:

JANE: Oh, no! Oh, no! ... I can't see myself. ... I-I can't see either of us.

She immediately, buries her head in her hands. But soon regains her composure by straightening up and slowly walking away from the mirror at the same time dabbing her eyes, sniffing and then giving her nose a blow into a handkerchief she has taken from her pocket. ... Frank follows her back to their original positions.

Then:

FRANK: Well, th-there's got to be a rational explanation.

JANE: But it-it could mean that we're ghosts – we're dead!

Frank looks bewildered. ... Then he exclaims:

FRANK: Th-That's impossible! ... I'm not dead! I'm no ghost! Nothing's happened to me. ... I would have to die first, and that definitely didn't happen.

JANE: Me too! I'm definitely alive. ... But there must be an explanation.

They both stand there, obviously trying to find a solution to the puzzle.

Then after a few moments:

JANE: I know what it could be – it could be a trick mirror. ... Somebody's trying to play a joke on us.

FRANK: That's it! That explains everything. ... It could be that Hislop character. ... But I wonder why?

Then after slowly looking around the room he suddenly has an idea:

FRANK: I know what we can do – we can test the mirror by using that chair over there.

He looks in the direction of a chair situated near to the mirror.

JANE: W-What do you mean?

Jane watches intensely as he starts to walk in the general direction of the mirror:

FRANK: I'll show you.

Frank goes to the chair and places it in front of the mirror.

He then says, prior to sitting on the chair:

FRANK: This should show if it's a trick or not. ... If the chair with me sat on it is not visible, then it definitely is a trick mirror.

He then sits on the chair, facing the mirror. ... Then at once, staring at the mirror, lets out a cry of despair - he exclaiming:

FRANK: It-It can't be! It-It can't be!

Jane is immediately alarmed as she hurries to the mirror.

As Jane reaches him, Frank, still staring at the mirror, exclaims:

FRANK: Look! The chair is there, but nobody is sat on it! ... I'm not there!

Jane stands behind Frank and looks at the mirror.

Immediately, she shrieks:

JANE: Oh! Oh, we're definitely dead – dead!

Frank stands and joins her as she then slowly walks back from the mirror – both are clearly horrified.

Then:

FRANK: Well, that seems to confirm it – we're no longer alive!

Jane can do no other than look at him and nod her acceptance in a sombre way.

Then they both look grimly ahead at the floor as they obviously try to puzzle out what to do about their precarious situation. ... This lasts for a few moments.

Then:

JANE: W-What can we do about it?

After a pause for thought Frank appears to be determined:

FRANK: Well there's one thing I'm not going to do – that is to stay in this place one minute longer! ... Want to come with me?

Jane gives a guarded nod. She quietly saying:

JANE: Yes, I'm with you! Th-This place really frightens me.

FRANK: Come on then. We could feel a lot better once we get outside. Then we could try to find a rational explanation for all this.

She nods, signifying her agreement.

Then they both slowly exit the stage in the direction of the entrance hall. ... Jane gives a nervous glance back at the room just as she exits.

THE STAGE CURTAINS QUICKLY CLOSE.

End of Scene One

Scene Two

The STAGE CURTAINS SLOWLY OPEN

There is a pause of a few seconds, then Frank and Jane re-enter the stage. They slowly walk to the Mid Stage position - both look crestfallen.

Then:

FRANK: Well, that's certainly put paid to that.

JANE: But the main door was slightly open when I arrived.

FRANK: It was the same when I got here.

JANE: But who could have locked it?

FRANK: The same people who have locked the other doors.

Appearing as though she could be breaking into tears:

JANE: W-What can we do? W-What can we do? What's going to happen to us?

Letting out a sigh of exasperation and annoyance:

FRANK: I don't know. ... How the hell should I know? Your whingeing is beginning to get on my nerves!

Suddenly irked:

JANE: Don't speak to me like that! It isn't my fault that all this has happened.

FRANK: Well, how can I be expected to —

Frank breaks off speaking as he suddenly stares in the direction of the entrance hall — he has obviously heard a sound coming from there. ... JANE, puzzled, also looks in the same direction.

Then:

FRANK: Hold-on – somebody's coming.

They stare apprehensively towards the entrance hall.

After a short pause Helen and Geoffrey slowly walk On Stage.

Then on noticing Jane and Frank, they momentarily stop, with him exclaiming:

GEOFFREY: Mister Hislop's Dating Agency's gathering?

Nodding in confirmation:

FRANK: Y-Yes. We, em, we haven't been here long.

HELEN and GEOFFREY join the other two.

Then:

HELEN: Hello! I'm Helen.

GEOFFREY: And I'm Geoffrey.

Note: Throughout the following verbal exchanges Frank and Jane are initially somewhat reserved and guarded in their contributions.

FRANK: I-I'm Frank, and th-this is Jane.

Greetings nods are exchanged.

Then:

HELEN: The front door was open so we walked straight in. ... Em, I just met Geoffrey outside the place - we didn't know each other.

Looking around in a puzzled way:

GEOFFREY: I wonder why our Mister Hislop chose a strange place like this? ... Personally, I didn't like the sound of the man when I phoned him. But he was very convincing – so here I am in this eerie dump.

HELEN: Y-Yes, it's all looks very sinister!

FRANK: How-How, em, how come you two got involved with him?

HELEN: Well, I was —

Interrupting:

GEOFFREY: Does it matter how we got involved with that man? One way or another he's got us here! ... I don't know about the rest of you, but I wasn't looking for another partner – not after the way that that bitch ... Well, I definitely wasn't – not at the present.

HELEN: I definitely had no wish to meet someone else. ... After all, Jonathan had only just ...

She breaks off, and after taking a handkerchief from her pocket, starts sobbing into it.

The others are obviously sympathetically embarrassed.

Then after a few seconds when Helen has seemed to calm down a little and the sobbing ceases:

GEOFFREY: Does anyone know anything about this Hislop character?

There is a quick shaking of heads, signifying their ignorance of him.

Then:

GEOFFREY: Here we are in a place like this because of a damned stranger! A man who we know nothing about. ... Strange - it's bloody strange!

HELEN: H-He could be a con man. But-But why has he got us together in this place? ... I don't like it – not one little bit!

There is a short uneasy pause, then GEOFFREY, after looking at Frank and Jane in a puzzled way, says pointedly:

GEOFFREY: You two don't look very interested in what we've been saying. And you look a bit strange. ... Is there something wrong? Is there something going on here that we should know about?

FRANK: Well, em, ... It, em, ... Well, it, em —

Helen appears to be alarmed, as Geoffrey is clearly annoyed in exclaiming:

GEOFFREY: Come on, man, spit it out! ... Is there something you're trying to hide? ... Perhaps you can tell us, Jane?

With Frank stood in a kind of transfixed mute way, Jane just looks very embarrassed as she tries to look away from Geoffrey's gaze.

Both Geoffrey and Helen look very puzzled and mystified as they witness the other two's behaviour

Then in an angry manner:

GEOFFREY: What's wrong with you two? What the bloody hell is going on?

Frank braces himself then says:

FRANK: Well, em, it's very difficult to explain – but we're —

Helen is now clearly more alarmed – she interrupting in a distressed way:

HELEN: Geoffrey! Th-There's definitely something wrong here – it frightens me! Let's get out here - now!

Geoffrey is about to say something but stops, for he has seen that Helen is becoming upset. Instead, he puts a comforting arm around her shoulders, at the same time saying to her:

GEOFFREY: Yes, of course. ... Come on, let's go.

He leads Helen away towards the entrance hall, then pauses and looks back at the other two as he exclaims:

GEOFFREY: It's all very strange! ... There's something weird about you two!

Geoffrey then leads Helen Off Stage.

There is a pause as Frank and Helen watch them depart. ... Then Jane says to Frank:

JANE: Why—Why didn't you tell them what had happened to us?

FRANK: Well, it was a very difficult th—

Suddenly becoming annoyed:

FRANK: If you're so concerned, why the hell didn't you tell them?

JANE: H-How could I tell them that we're dead – ghosts?

Suddenly having calmed down:

FRANK: Em, that was the difficulty I had. After all, I find it very difficult to acknowledge to myself that I'm no longer alive.

JANE: Same here! ... And I didn't want to frighten them – especially Helen.

FRANK: It wouldn't have frightened that Geoffrey. He'd have thought we were taking the pis... em, the mickey out of them.

Suddenly looking alarmed:

JANE: I've just had a thought – perhaps they are ghosts!

FRANK: Oh, I don't know. It wouldn't be very lik... Hold on! They came here because of that man, Hislop – perhaps they could be!

JANE: Oh, no, that can't be! Hislop wouldn't be able to just pick dead people.

There are a few moments of bewilderment, with both of them staring ahead in a tense way.

Then, said in a thoughtful way:

FRANK: Perhaps we weren't dead when we arrived. Perhaps something happened to us once —

In a panicky way:

JANE: Oh, no! That makes it even worse than before.

FRANK: Just think about it. We were alive before we reached here!

JANE: But nothing's happened to us once we got here.

FRANK: If that's true, how did we become ghosts when I know for certain that I was alive before then?

JANE: Well, em ... I-I don't know! ... Perhaps we're not ghosts. Perhaps there's a rational explanation for the mirror business.

FRANK: But what? ... Ghost or no ghost, there's something very strange going on!

Both are obviously bewildered in staring ahead, trying to make sense of it all.

After short pause, Jane looks at Frank and says:

JANE: Perhaps Geoffrey and Helen are still alive and not yet ghosts.

FRANK: You never know.

JANE: Like us, they came here because of Mister Hislop – why should it be different for them?

FRANK: Well, perhaps ...

He suddenly bethinks himself, and pauses before continuing:

FRANK: ... Em, there's one way to find out if they are in the same situation as us – if they can't get out of the building, then ...

Frank gives a knowing look at Jane. ... She responds in a likewise manner.

Then they both look towards the entry hall.

After a few moments, Jane is about to say something:

JANE: But if —

Frank interrupts her:

FRANK: Shh! Shh! I thought I heard something.

They both look towards the entry hall, each trying to listen for the sounds.

Then:

JANE: I-I think they're coming!

FRANK: Yes, yes – it could be them.

Geoffrey and Helen walk slowly On Stage from the entrance hall – both look mystified.

As they approach Frank and Jane, Frank addresses them in a knowing way:

FRANK: I suppose the front door was locked and you couldn't get out of the place.

GEOFFREY: Well, yes, it — ... How the hell do you know?

FRANK: It's because, em, it's because the same thing happened to us.

HELEN: Happened to you? What do you mean?

JANE: We also tried to get out – but everything was locked!

GEOFFREY: Locked? ... Are you two trying to take the mickey out of us? What's your game?

FRANK: There's no game. Like you the main door was open when we first came in, then —

HELEN: It could be that man, Hislop. He could have done it!

GEOFFREY: But why should he —

He suddenly breaks off. He now glaring at the other two in a belligerent way and demanding:

GEOFFREY: You two know something! What is it? What aren't you telling us?

FRANK: No, em, there's nothing to —

JANE: Tell them, Frank! ... They've got a right to know.

With the others looking expectantly at him, Frank hesitates, obviously trying to think how to put the bad news to them.

Then:

FRANK: Well, em, the truth of the matter is that we are all most likely g—

He breaks off, then suddenly appears more confident in his demeanour. ... After a quick glance in the direction of the mirror, he, giving a half-hidden smirk, says:

FRANK: Geoffrey! Why don't you go and look into that mirror over there.

Helen and Geoffrey glare at him in amazement.

Then, angrily:

GEOFFREY: What the bloody hell are you on about? Have you gone completely off your head?

HELEN: What? What—

GEOFFREY: Helen! It's all a big con! These two are up to something – they're in league with that Hislop character.

JANE: No we're not! ... Just do as Frank says – it's the best way of explaining everything.

FRANK: She's right. Just do as I say – it will go a long way to breaking the news to you.

GEOFFREY: What news? ... You've just got to be taking the piss!

FRANK: Go and sit in the chair there. ... It will shock you, but —

GEOFFREY: Shock me? Shock me? ... Shock me indeed – well, we'll soon see!

As Helen looks very apprehensive, she, along with others, watch Geoffrey storm across to the area of the mirror.

Geoffrey, looking angry, goes and plonks himself on the chair then glares at the mirror. ... He then shakes his head in bewilderment then stares there again.

He is really shocked. ... He tries to speak but the words will not come forth at first:

GEOFFREY: It-It's! It-It's!

Then after quickly composing himself:

GEOFFREY: It's-It's not possible – not possible!

Obviously alarmed:

HELEN: What is it? ... What is it, Geoffrey?

Still staring at the mirror:

GEOFFREY: I-I've, I've no reflection – no reflection! ... The chair's there – bu-but not me!

HELEN: But that's impossible!

GEOFFREY: It's true – come and look.

Now in a frightened state:

HELEN: No! No! ... I- I don't want to look.

As he continues to stare at the mirror Geoffrey let's out sigh of desperate annoyance then says:

GEOFFREY: There's got to be an explanation for this – there's just got to be one.

FRANK: Well, there could be a very good one.

Geoffrey turns his attention to him:

GEOFFREY: What's that?

In a sombre way:

JANE: It's possible that we're all ghosts – all dead!

With Helen suddenly looking alarmed:

GEOFFREY: That's ridiculous – bloody ridiculous!

FRANK: Can you think of another explanation?

Suddenly standing:

GEOFFREY: I can think of a better one.

FRANK: What's that?

GEOFFREY: It's the mirror! Somebody's playing a cruel joke on us – the mirror is a trick one! ... Have you examined it for that?

FRANK: Well, em, no we haven't.

GEOFFREY: That's it! ... We'll soon see!

Then with the others watching intensely, he pushes the chair back then immediately gives a mirror a close inspection, both visually and by use of his hands (Note: If it is the swing frame type he of course also examines the back and the frame).

Then as he discontentedly walks to join the others:

GEOFFREY: I couldn't find anything! ... But there's still got to be a rational explanation – I don't go along with that ghosts bull.

JANE: What about us not being able to get out of here?

GEOFFREY: Oh, that can easily be explained.

FRANK: But when you group the two things together – well?

GEOFFREY: You two don't really go for that ghost rubbish – do you?

FRANK: I know it's terrible, but it's the only possibility we came up with. We're trapped here, and there's nothing we can do about it!

HELEN: But-but nothing happened to us! We-we can't be dead! We can't be ghosts!

FRANK: Well, Geoffrey, can you come up with a good reason for everything?

GEOFFREY: Well, I, em. ... Let's try to get out of here again, then we can get away from this place and that bloody mirror! Then we should soon be able to prove that we're not dead.

JANE: What are you going to do about us being locked in – break down the front door?

GEOFFREY: Yes, if necessary!

FRANK: Somehow, I don't think that will work. There's something supernatural going on.

GEOFFREY: Well, supernatural or not, I mean to have a bloody good try! Who's coming with m—

Interrupting in a sure way:

HELEN: I know a way we could find out about everything. ... We use our phones to get in touch with people on the outside. If we're ghosts, we won't be able to get in through to them.

FRANK: But that wouldn't do an... ... Yes, it's worth trying. ... I'll try phoning Shirley.

With the others watching, he takes his phone out of his pocket and presses the necessary keys in order to connect to Shirley.

There is a pause as he listens for the call to connect. Then in a puzzled way:

FRANK: That's strange! I'm getting the unobtainable signal. ... Hold on, it could be a fault with the signal – I'll try phoning my brother.

Frank repeats the phoning process. But with the same result.

As Frank stands there looking very puzzled, Geoffrey proceeds to take his own phone out of his pocket – at the same time saying:

GEOFFREY: Could be a fault with your phone – I'll try phoning my sister.

Geoffrey repeats the same procedure as Frank did – but with same result. ... He repeats the process for another phone number, but with the same result.

Then:

GEOFFREY: That doesn't mean that there's anything supernatural about it. It could just be us being inside a building where the signal can't be picked up.

FRANK: But you've got to acknowledge that something funny is going on – the mirror, the locked doors, the trouble with the phones.

There is a short pause, then:

GEOFFREY: I still don't think that has anything to —

HELEN: We-we've just got to do something. We could be trapped in here forever!

GEOFFREY: Why don't we try to get out of here by breaking a window or something like that? Then we can get out of this horrible place and at least check if there is a fault with the phone signal.

FRANK: I tried forcing a couple of windows open but their catches were rusted in. Breaking the glass didn't work – they're the leaded in type.

Looking and sounding slightly distressed:

HELEN: It-It means that we're really never going to get out of here!

GEOFFREY: I still don't go along with that ghost business – we are definitely not dead! There has got to be a plausible explanation for everything.

Cynically:

FRANK: Well, with your brain, I'm sure that you should have no difficulty in finding it.

Clearly annoyed:

GEOFFREY: Look! I don't have to put up with that kind of crap from you! All I'm trying to do is find out the real reason for what is happening here.

FRANK: You're not making a good job of it, are you?

GEOFFREY: Well at least I'm trying to do something about it instead of frightening the ladies with that 'being dead' rubbish!

In an irritated way:

FRANK: You-You are nothing but a conceited bighea—

Interrupting in a distressed way:

HELEN: Stop it! Stop it! What good will this arguing do?

There is a short pause, giving time for tempers to subside and for obvious personal thoughtful reflections to take place.

Then in a comparatively subdued way:

GEOFFREY: I'm-I'm sorry Helen, Jane.

FRANK: I must apolog—

He suddenly stops – all being conscious of the distinct sound of a telephone ringing, apparently emanating from the pocket of his jacket. ... Hurriedly taking out the phone, and with the others staring intently at him, he speaks into it:

FRANK: Hello! Hello! ... Ye—

He stops trying to speak as he listens.

Then, angrily:

FRANK: Oh, sod off! ... What-What, em – oh!

With the others watching him in shocked or surprised ways, he terminates the phone call and returns the phone to his pocket. ... He explaining:

FRANK: It was one of those bloody ambulance chasers – wanting to know if I've had a recent accident that wasn't my fault! ... Then I realized it was a recorded message.

As it is seen that his anger is abating, the others have looks bordering on incredulity.

Then:

JANE: It means that we can receive calls. Perhaps somebody we know may get in touch with us, then we can communicate with the outside world.

GEOFFREY: Yes! Everybody make sure that their phone is switched on.

He, with Jane and Helen, take out their phones in order to ensure that they are in the receive mode. ... All return their phones to their pockets.

Then:

HELEN: I've just had a thought, Frank – why don't you use your return call facility – you may get through to them, then —

FRANK: It's good idea, Helen. If I get through we can use them to get in touch with others.

The others watch as he takes the phone from his pocket and presses the requisite keys. ... The disappointment then shown on his face indicates a lack of success.

As he returns the phone to his pocket:

FRANK: It's the unobtainable signal again. ... That's it! There's nothing we can do about it.

A short pause, then:

GEOFFREY: Mirror, or no mirror, I still maintain that there is no real indication that we're anything but alive!

In an irksome manner:

FRANK: Try as you like, but in no way can you prove that we're not dead!

Suddenly in an exasperated way:

JANE: Look you two – drop the matter! It's too frightening a subject to argue about.

HELEN: Please do as Jane says – it's beginning to make me feel ill.

There is then an air of embarrassment present.

Then suddenly looking in the direction of the entrance hall, and said in a tense way:

JANE: I-I think I can hear somebody coming!

The others follow her example in looking anxiously in the direction indicated by her.

There is short pause, then Julian, followed by Samantha, slowly walks On Stage from the entrance hall. ... They slowly progress towards the Stage Centre – both looking around the room in an interested way.

The Foursome, each looking somewhat relieved, view the newcomers with interest.

The newcomers stop walking a little way from them.

Then looking about himself in a kind of confirmatory way:

JULIAN: This looks ideal – the whole place could be what we've been looking for.

SAMANTHA: You could be right.

Frank walks across – he has decided to talk to them:

FRANK: Here for Mister Hislop's get together? ... I'm Frank and this is —

Frank suddenly stops speaking, for Julian interrupts him in saying to Samantha:

JULIAN: All day looking, then we find the ideal one.

SAMANTHA: Yes, the last one on the Estate Agent's list.

Frank and the three others look concerned. Then Frank decides to interrupt the duo:

FRANK: I say! I was speaking to you. You could at least —

Julian interrupts him by carrying on with his conversation with Samantha:

JULIAN: This room is especially good – I can imagine most of that Doctor Who episode taking place in here.

SAMANTHA: Yes, it looks spooky enough.

The Pair then start to individually slowly stroll around the room, with each obviously showing avid interest in what they see, and completely ignoring the Others.

Frank is temporarily speechless as he joins the Other Three, being so because of a terrible realization that has descended upon him and they – the newcomers can neither see nor hear him or the others. They don't know that they are there.

The Foursome all stand as though transfixed by a sense of shock – here was a ready confirmation that they are no longer alive. ... They stare at Julian and Samantha as they continue their walkabout.

The resultant stark atmosphere is eventually broken – Helen has burst into tears. As she cries into her handkerchief Frank goes across and puts his comforting arm around her shoulders – he saying in a soft voice:

FRANK: I know they don't know we're here, but —

He breaks off speaking as Helen brushes his arm aside.

Then:

JANE: I can't stand it, I want them out of here!

Giving a sigh of exasperation:

GEOFFREY: I wish we could do something about them. ... I wish they had never come.

FRANK: But their presence confirms that we really are ghosts!

GEOFFREY: I know. So it proves that you were right about us, but it means that any hopes we had have disappeared with them being here.

As Samantha approaches the mirror she shouts to Julian:

SAMANTHA: This mirror will be ideal. It's got that real old-fashioned look.

Julian, now having nearly finished his walkabout, nods at her. ... As Julian then looks about himself Samantha reaches the mirror. She then stops there and has a good look at herself in it. ... With the Foursome now staring intently at her, she takes a lipstick tube from her bag and proceeds to watch her reflection as she carefully applies a touch-up of red lipstick to her lips.

FRANK: Her doing that is confirmation of the awful truth!

In a resentful way:

JANE: It would have been better if we had never looked at the thing!

As Samantha then joins Julian, and as the two of them return to their original stage position, the Foursome watch and listen in a kind of awe of the duo.

JULIAN: Well, Samantha, it seems ideal. ... Judging by the dilapidated state of the place we could get it for a song.

SAMANTHA: Do you think that the buildings requisition department will let you have it?

JULIAN: Well, they'll at least let me lease it – they may even consider buying it for any future productions. ... That big space outside at the front would make an ideal area for all the vehicles and the temporary changing rooms.

SAMANTHA: Just when we've given up hope, it seems that we've found the perfect place. So sinister and ghost-like.

JULIAN: Yes, funnily enough, it feels as though there are actually ghosts present in this room – as though they're watching us.

GEOFFREY: I wonder what makes him think that?

SAMANTHA: Same here – there was one part of the room when I suddenly felt cold with a sudden drop in temperature. ... That could indicate their presence.

JULIAN: It's just the sinister aspects of the room – nothing else! ... You don't really believe in ghosts do you?

SAMANTHA: No! Em, no I don't.

GEOFFREY: I wish we could put that right – that would put the shi, em, wind up them.

He gives the other Three a mischievous look. Then in with a kind of sinister tiptoeing walk he creeps up to Julian. ... He taps him on the shoulder, but Julian ignores him as though he did not feel it.

Geoffrey appears at first surprised by Julian's non-reaction. He then takes a couple of steps backwards, and with a return of the mischievous look he leans forwards and raises his arms in a ghost-like threatening manner – at the time shrieking at him:

GEOFFREY: Whoo! ... Whoo! ... Whoo!

Julian is seen to suddenly give a resultant startled shiver-like reaction.

Geoffrey and the Other Three exchange knowing smirks as Samantha exclaims in an alarmed way:

SAMANTHA: Wh-What is it Julian? What's wrong?

Appearing somewhat disconcerted:

JULIAN: I-I don't really know. ... I suddenly felt very cold, as though somebody has walked over my grave.

SAMANTHA: It-It's most likely this place just getting the better of you.

JULIAN: Yes – even so But that confirms it – the ghost-like features here really makes this place ideal for that Doctor Who episode. And what a find for any future haunted house series!

Then a mischievous Geoffrey is seen creeping in Samantha's direction with his ghost tiptoeing walk, but hesitates on hearing:

JANE: Don't overdo it, Geoffrey!

Geoffrey stops and looks in her direction, pauses then gives her a slight nod. ... He then walks away in order to stand away from the couple.

After a quick confirmatory glance about the room:

JULIAN: Yes this really is ideal. ... I'll phone the Estate Agent right away – give me his leaflet for the phone number.

Samantha gets the leaflet from her bag. ... Julian, after taking his phone out of his pocket, reads from the leaflet as he presses the necessary keys.

All the others watch and listen with keen interest as Julian waits for the call to connect.

Then:

JULIAN: Hello! Is that?

p

Oh, it is you.

p

This is Julian Cartwright.

p

Yes, well there is one that seems really suitable.

p

Handslow Hall – it looks as though it could be ideal for us.

P

Oh the front door was actually stood ajar.

p

Obviouly I'll have to report back to my superiors at the BBC in order for an official okay. But there shouldn't be any trouble for it to go through.

p

No that's not possible, we have to dash back to London.

p

Yes, well, you should have something in writing within a couple of days.

p

See you soon – goodbye!

After Julian has returned the phone to his pocket, and as he is returning the leaflet to her:

SAMANTHA: I assume that Mr. Hislop was very pleased at the chance to get rid of this dump.

Immediately on her saying 'Mister Hislop', the Foursome have looks of amazement and shock.

As Samantha returns the leaflet to her bag:

JULIAN: Come-on let's get going – I could do with a meal before we get back.

After a final glance around the room Julian, together with Samantha, walks Off Stage in the direction of the entrance hall.

As the Foursome watch them depart:

JANE: What's Hislop got to do with everything? Dating agency, estate agent, ghost houses?

FRANK: It's very strange – there must be a common denominator – I wonder what it is?

Then looking a little excited:

GEOFFREY: The front door! It must be open for those two to have come into the house – Stay there! I'll go and check.

He then dashes Off Stage.

The others stand looking in his direction, being initially dumbfounded by Geoffrey's sudden departure.

After a short pause:

HELEN: I think we should go with him.

FRANK: You go. It will be a waste of time!

HELEN: But why?

JANE: Because it's —

FRANK: Hold on! He's coming back.

After a few moments a disconcerted-looking Geoffrey slowly walks On Stage and joins the others.

Then:

GEOFFREY: They had gone through the door as I dashed after them. Then it suddenly closed and locked.

HELEN: Oh no!

GEOFFREY: Nothing's changed, we are all trapped – bloody well trapped!

With the other looking grim, Helen starts to sob.

FRANK: Well, there's nothing we can do about it. It looks as though all we can do is grin and bear it.

JANE: Surely, we can't be locked in here for ever!

HELEN: Please! Please! Please don't just talk about it – somebody do something in order for us to —

Interrupting in an exasperated way:

FRANK: Your moaning is beginning to get on my tits! Why don't you just keep quiet?

Angrily:

GEOFFREY: Don't you speak to Helen in that manner!

In a belligerent way:

FRANK: I'll speak to anybody in any way I want, without the likes of you sticking his nose in!

Clearly annoyed:

GEOFFREY: Somebody needs to teach you a lesson on how to behave!

FRANK: You for example? ... If you want to pursue the matter, then why don't you come outside and settle it in a manly way?

After a slight hesitation:

GEOFFREY: Yes! Em, yes! ... Come on, let's go!

FRANK: Good!

As they both, looking determined, start to walk towards the entrance hall, and said in an exasperated way:

JANE: You're behaving like children. ... Two grown men going to have a fight! What are you trying to do, show off your masculinity? ... It's pathetic, especially coming from you two – just look at you!

Both men stop their exit.

Then:

GEOFFREY: How dare he speak to me like that!

FRANK: Well, I wasn't going to let him ...

He pauses, then after letting out a sigh, smiles as he says:

FRANK: Yes I suppose Jane is quite right. But we couldn't have had a fight, at least not outside – we can't get out of the house.

Frank and Geoffrey join the other two.

There is then a short pause, then:

GEOFFREY: What do we do now? I'm finding being a ghost is a bit of a bore.

JANE: Me too!

HELEN: I wonder if it's going to be like this all the time?

FRANK: Heaven forbid! ... Well, like it or not, we're stuck with it.

JANE: It looks that we can't even have a bit of fun frightening any possible visitors.

HELEN: But isn't that the kind of thing ghosts are supposed to do?

JANE: It appears to be only on the films – we are experiencing the reality of it all.

After giving the matter a little thought, and said in a light-hearted manner:

GEOFFREY: Well, we'll have to find something to do – we could get bored to death.

FRANK: We can't sit around just doing nothing.

JANE: Perhaps being a ghost means we are committed to permanent purgatory.

JANE: Good God, no! Not that – I'd be better off dea...

There is a short thoughtful interlude.

Then:

GEOFFREY: I've been thinking.

JANE: What?

GEOFFREY: Well, when I went up to that Julian character and tapped him on the shoulder, he didn't feel it.

FRANK: So what? ... Of course he wouldn't feel it – we're ghosts.

GEOFFREY: I know. But ... Look! This should explain what I'm getting at.

With the others watching in a puzzled way, he gives Jane's arm a squeeze. ... Her reaction is to shake his hand away.

With the others looking at Geoffrey in a mystified way:

FRANK: What was all that about?

GEOFFREY: Don't you see?

JANE: See what?

GEOFFREY: It means that we can touch each other as though we're still alive.

HELEN: But it shouldn't be so! After all, we're ghosts – like a kind of gas.

GEOFFREY: I know. But we never knew what ghosts are really like.

FRANK: I was able to move that chair.

JANE: But ghosts are supposed to be able to move inanimate objects.

GEOFFREY: Perhaps they are, but, but ...

JANE: What's all this leading to?

GEOFFREY: Well, it-it means that we could have normal em, relations with each other.

HELEN: Normal relations? What do mean?

GEOFFREY: Well, it em, em. ... Well, after all, we're all here to meet someone about joining a dating society.

JANE: Dating? ... You mean sex?. ... I'm having nothing to do with that!

Helen begins to look uncomfortable over what is being said, and she appears a little distressed.

GEOFFREY: Well, yes! ... I still have feelings – the rest of you must have as well.

HELEN: It-It's disgusting. ... How dare you! ... It has nothing to do with reason I'm here.

JANE: Men! ... That's all that some of them think of. ... I didn't come here to find a mate.

GEOFFREY: What about you, Frank?

FRANK: It-It, em, it's a natural thing that, em. ... Yes, I still have feeling towards the ladies.

GEOFFREY: Precisely!

JANE: There will be none of that kind of thing here!

GEOFFREY: Time will tell.

JANE: If you try anything with me I'll —

GEOFFREY: Well, it will at least help to pass the time away.

Addressing Geoffrey:

FRANK: But as ghosts, p-perhaps the two of us may not still be able to do it.

GEOFFREY: Do it? ... Oh, you mean not able to, em. ... We-we could always try Viagra.

FRANK: But where would we get it from?

Angrily:

JANE: This conversation has to stop – now! Apart from any other reason, it's very upsetting to Helen - after all, she's recently lost her husband

Helen starts to sob.

Both men appear to be embarrassed.

Then:

GEOFFREY: I-I'm sorry. ... Sorry for upsetting you, Helen. ... It was meant to be just a bit of fun to relieve the boredom. ... That's right, isn't it, Frank?

FRANK: Y-Yes, that's all it was, that's all. We-We would ne-never think of even ...

JANE: Let's hope that's all it was. But if there is ever —

She at once stops speaking – being interrupted by the ringing of her phone.

Jane, along with the others, is obviously surprised. ... They watch and listen intently as she takes the phone out of her jacket pocket and answers the call in a tense way:

JANE: Hel-Hello.

p

Oh, it's you Ruth.

Addressing the others:

JANE: It's Ruth Hollins – she's the secretary of our Skittles League. I'm secretary of our club's team.

Returning to her phone conversation, she is initially at a loss what to say:

JANE: I, em, n-nice to hear from ...

p

Oh, yes – em, John did tell me.

p

Oh, yes.

p

Yes, em, I had made a note of it.

p

That's all right, Ruth. Good of you to phone about it. ... Oh, em, before you ring off, there's something I want to tell you ...

p

... It-It's the fact that I, em, em, am a gh.... ... Well, believe it or not, but ...

She appears to be struggling to find the words about their predicament, thus prompting:

FRANK: Come-on, Jane, get on with it. What's wrong with you? Tell her!

JANE: I'm-I'm trying to tell you that I, we, are all ...

p

... Oh, there's nothing really wrong – well it's, it's ... I- I'll tell you again.

p

Right – speak to you again soon. Goodbye.

As Jane, with phone now held by her side, stares ahead with a blank look, Frank is clearly frustrated and annoyed:

GEOFFREY: What the hell's wrong with you? Why didn't you tell her?

In a bewildered way:

HELEN: Why didn't you? Why?

Angrily:

FRANK: Have you gone completely bonkers? It was the chance for someone to help us – and you blew it!

Jane at once seems to come out of her trance-like posture, and dropping the phone on the floor, at once with head forward, buries her head in her hands and sobs.

There is a pause of uncertainty as the others don't appear to know what to do. ... Then Geoffrey walks over to her, and after picking the phone off the floor, puts a comforting arm around her shoulders, at the same time saying in a comforting way:

GEOFFREY: Now, now. ... Come-on, wipe those tears away.

After a short while Jane stops sobbing then slowly adopts a semi-upright posture. And after quickly taking a handkerchief from a pocket, proceeds to wipe her eyes and give her nose a short sharp blow. She holds the handkerchief tightly in her hand as she looks ahead in a kind of tense way.

As he withdraws his arm, and said in a kindly manner:

GEOFFREY: That's better.

There is a short pause, then said in a quiet way:

FRANK: Why didn't you tell your friend?

At first in a faltering way:

JANE: ... I-I was going to, but, well I just didn't know what to say.

HELEN: But you could have at least got one of us to help you.

JANE: How-how could I She would have thought I was mad. Imagine someone telling you that they are a ghost – I-I ask you?

There is a short pause during which everyone considers the matter.

Then:

GEOFFREY: Well, I suppose so. ... Anyhow, there was most likely nothing she could do to help us.

In a prickly way:

FRANK: Well at least she could have tried to do something about us. ... Really, Jane, you wasted a golden opportunity. You should have used what little sen—

In an agitated manner:

HELEN: Don't – Don't let's start that kind of thing again! It solves nothing.

There is a tense silence as though each is waiting for someone to say something.

Then in a quiet way:

JANE: I'm sorry – I don't know what I was —

Interrupting as he looks towards the entrance hall:

GEOFFREY: Quiet! Quiet! I think someone's coming!

The Other Three also look in that direction.

Then:

