

# The Retirement of the Witches of Ipswich



by Owen Lewis

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**The Retirement of  
the Witches of Ipswich**

**Cast**

Molly: A witch  
Agnes: A witch  
Moirra: A Witch  
Nurse: Carer  
Matron: Carer  
Steven: Caretaker and part time magician  
Bill: Retired window cleaner.  
Ghost 1  
Ghost 2  
Ghost 3  
Extra children to make up the entertainment troupe that appear at the witches' home

*The action takes place in Elder Wood Retirement Home for Witches, Wizards, Warlocks and Window Cleaners in Ipswich. The time is the present.*

**Act one  
Scene One  
One Spring Morning**

Molly  
So I said to her, it's eye of salamander not eye of newt and the result was hilarious.

Agnes  
Oh go on, what happened dear?

Molly  
Well grass grew very thickly in such an awkward spot that he couldn't sit for a month.

Moirra  
Oh nothing worse than grass growing on your chair.

Agnes  
Don't be silly it grew on his a...

*(Nurse is tending to a resident on the other side of the room.)*

Nurse  
*(Interrupting)* Err Molly we'll have less of that thank you.

Agnes  
Oh how funny! Bet he didn't know if he had to go to the barber or the garden centre to get it cut.

Molly  
It was hilarious. She never mixed the two up again.

Moirra  
Who was this any way?

Molly  
That thick witch from Norwich.

Agnes

Oh I thought you were talking about the daft witch from Northwich.

Moira  
Not the Green Witch from Greenwich?

Molly  
I have told which witch already. Oh you girls you always mix your witches up.

Agnes  
Well I never used to.

Moira  
Nor me, I could switch from whichever witch to which witch I wanted no problem.

Molly  
Well dear, age gets to us all eventually.

Agnes  
You speak for yourself dear.

Moira  
I always do apart from when that spell went wrong; when I was speaking for somebody else for a while.

Molly  
Who were you speaking for?

Moira  
Margaret Thatcher, the old prime minister.

Agnes  
Oh I hate speaking for them, you know, prime ministers and politicians and the likes.

Moira  
I know, there was nothing I could do about it. She had lost her voice and contacted our coven and asked if we had anyone who could do the metamorphic spell.

Agnes  
How did she ever know about the metamorphic spell? Only witches know that.

Moira  
There's your answer dear. Anyway, I agreed to help and had to appear at the miner's conference.

Molly  
Oh hello, I can sense an imminent disaster story pending.

Moira  
Well yes. I got up to the podium, so far so good, but I had mixed up tongue of lamb with tongue of dragon.

Agnes  
Oh, oh, I know what's coming.

Moira  
Well I was supposed to be telling the miners that I was going to double their salaries and open even more mines. But as you know the mixing up of tongues makes you speak in opposites; so once I had said that I was going to slash their wages and close their mines the government couldn't go back on it and the rest they say is....

Molly

History. I know what you mean though. I had a phone call from that lovely Mr. Hitler and I was supposed to apologise for Germany's part in the First World War. Mixed the tongues up next thing I know, oops invaded Poland.

Agnes  
Oh such a shame.

Molly  
I know what can you do eh?

Nurse  
Well ladies, time for afternoon tea. Any preferences?

Moira  
Oh I would like tail of Jack Russell with ear of hare please.

Molly  
Oh you're so exotic.

Nurse  
We go through this every day ladies, do we not, you are all in retirement and we don't do spells here do we?

Moira  
Oh Nurse you need to lighten up. We are bored.

Nurse  
That may well be but you can't go zapping spells here there and everywhere! Where would we be then eh, where would we be?

Agnes  
Oh we can't imagine. It could be terrible...

*(Whilst Nurse is addressing them Moira secretly waves her magic wand over at Bill the retired window cleaner; he is asleep in his chair. She then waves it at Nurse. Bill instantly wakes up.)*

Nurse  
Ah General it's been pretty bloomin' tough over the top sir.

Bill  
Yes; well these are the toughest troops we have ever faced.

Nurse  
I have lost a few good men sir.

Bill  
I am not surprised, it was only to be expected.

Nurse  
Sir will I ever get to see good old England again?

Bill  
I shouldn't think so. We are here to fight. If we get home it's a bonus, if we die we will be heroes. Put thoughts of home out of your mind soldier and fight on.

*(Land of Hope and Glory starts playing. Nurse stands straight to attention and Bill stands beside her. He is addressing her as she stands saluting.)*

Bill

I turn my head to the hills of war and I hear the rumble of hatred and I know that it must be silenced. I hear the scream and sirens of the death machine and I know I must do my part; I must play until the game is won. I must remember; I am an Englishman. My people need me, my queen needs me, my country needs me; and I will never give up. Land of Hope and Glory? Oh how true, how right, how honest. This is my land and it will never, never, never, ever be defeated. Go my soldier, go forward, take with you the pride of a nation and the weight of the love of all its people. Destroy all that tries to stop our sun from rising. You are a man of steel and it is steel that made us great... go now and fight. Share that steel and don't come home until you have bathed in the blood of the foe that dares to question England.

Nurse  
Yes Sir, yes Sir, yes, yes, yes!

*(At this point the witches start giggling. Bill falls back into his chair and Nurse doesn't realise they have been under a spell.)*

Nurse  
*(Continues as before)* So no spell zapping here thank you very much.

Moira  
You are absolutely right Nurse. We just can't, it would be dangerous for one thing.

Nurse  
Exactly.

*(Nurse turns to straighten some things on the table and Moira waves her wand again. Bill jumps up straight away)*

Bill  
*(In a posh Noel Coward type voice)* Oh my Darling I shall miss you so very, very much, so very, very much.

Nurse  
Oh my darling I shall miss you too. That we have met just this once in a cold clinical waiting room, amongst the steam and the train whistles we have found love and we must never, never pursue it.

Bill  
How right you are my lovely, lovely darling.

Nurse  
Oh that we were to throw caution to the wind and jump on that train now. But Gerald is a good man, a kind man, a man who knows what his wife needs. I cannot leave him.

Bill  
I cannot ask you to leave him. I will just carry the pain of this encounter to the grave with me and I will never forget you.

Nurse  
Nor I, you, my love. You have cut a channel of pure love through my faltering heart and that channel, whilst tempting and inviting, must be allowed to flow without me meddling or changing as I can not swim in it.

Bill  
Oh Darling how very, very terrible.

Nurse  
I know my love I know and now my Gerald waits for me.

Bill

Then you must go.

Nurse

But what about you, what will become of you?

Bill

Oh me? Don't worry. I will jump in front of the 16.14 to London Paddington and on a surge of whistle steam and smoke my broken body will be carried to oblivion.

Nurse

Oh but my darling that is terrible.

Bill

Life without you is worse.

Nurse

Then it really is goodbye forever.

Bill

Goodbye forever, and take this as something to remember me by.

*(Bill reaches under the chair and throws a chamber pot. She catches it and kisses it.)*

Nurse

I will remember you forever my darling, each time I see this.

*(Moira waves her wand again and Bill falls down into his chair asleep again and Nurse looks puzzled at the chamber pot she is holding. She puts it down.)*

Nurse

Erm, right where was I? Oh yes tea. Bill would you like tea?

*(Bill awakes.)*

Bill

Cor, Blimey would I; my mouth is parched.

*(Exit Nurse; Bill falls back to sleep.)*

Agnes

Oh you've still got that touch Moira.

Molly

We have some fun here don't we?

Moira

Oh you've got to have a laugh or else where would we be eh?

Agnes

I am still bored though, I want something special to happen.

Moira

Well what like?

Agnes

I don't know and probably won't until it's happened.

Bill

Eh what oh eh gercha!

Moira  
Oh the Master stirs.

Agnes  
Morning Sir William.

Bill  
Eh ,what, eh, urrrrrrgh, eeeeeew biddle.

Moira  
Coherent as ever Bill. Have you no windows to clean?

Bill  
I'll give you windows. Spobbly dobbly.

Moira  
Why on earth is he talking like this?

Molly  
He always does after a spell.

Moira  
Oh, I wouldn't have done it if I had known, he's getting right on my witches hat.

Bill  
Just you spibbly bibbly you doobly pobbly.

Moira  
Oh shut up you silly man.

Agnes  
*(Waves her wand)* There we are that should do it. *(Bill is fast asleep again. Enter Steven.)*

Steve  
Afternoon girls.

Agnes  
Oh here he comes, Ipswich's answer to Paul Daniels.

Steve  
Oh don't be like that girls, I have a new trick to show you.

Moira  
Oh spare us Lord.

Steve  
Oh come on! Here Moll you're interested aren't you?

Molly  
Oh really?

Steve  
Come on pick a card any card.

*(He takes out a pack of cards fans them and offers Molly one.)*

Steve  
Right, don't tell me what it is, have a good look and put it back in the pack. *(She does so)* That's it now I will shuffle them and by placing the cards flat on your hands you will see before your very eyes your card sliding out of the pack. *(He does that and puts them on Molly's hand. Nothing happens.)* And any

moment now, here we go... any moment now... here it comes, watch now here comes your card, any moment here it is... here it is.....

Molly  
Nothing's going to happen is it?

Steve  
Give it time thank you.

Molly  
I don't have time. I am 86 now by the time you get this right I will be 110, forget it.

Steve  
Oh I am hopeless.

Agnes  
Well we have said, Steven.

Steven  
Yes, but what's to become of me? Eh? What am I to be? Not a janitor in a rest home for witches, not that forever surely. Moira isn't there something you can do with your magic? Could you please help me?

Moira  
How?

Steven  
Can you make a spell and turn me into a brilliant magician?

Moira  
You know under the Witches Broom Square conference we are not allowed to set spells that will benefit us; ever since those three from Macbeth set a lottery winning spell and all retired as multimillionaires.

Steven  
Ha, Macbeth witches. Even I know that they were in a Shakespearean play over four hundred years ago they ain't gonna be around now are they?

Moira  
Oh really that's interesting. Not around eh? Right what's this?

*(She goes in her handbag and takes out a photograph.)*

Steven  
It's a photograph.

Moira  
I know it's a photograph, what's on it?

Steven  
Looks like a witch on a jet ski.

Moira  
Exactly, now turn it over and read what it says.

Steven  
Hubble bubble no holiday trouble; love from the Mac three! Kiss, kiss, kiss.



Moira  
I rest my case.

Steven  
Anyway even if that was real I don't care. I need help, just a little spell is all I need to help me. No one would know and I could escape this life.

Agnes  
You are asking the wrong one, Steven. Moira made the rules because she was the editor of the Which Witch is Which? A kind of who's who but for witches. She had more power than any witch ever. She's not going to break the rules now.

Steven  
Which Witch is Witch? I have never heard of it.

Agnes  
With respect; why would you?

Steven  
I would have just thought I might that's all.

Moira  
Well you haven't but no spell is allowed that will cause personal gain, as the witch field is already depleted.

Steven  
Oh heck.

Agnes  
We are a dying breed young man.

Steven  
You are in here that's for sure.

Molly  
I beg your pardon young man?

Steven  
I said I need some oil for that door.

Molly  
Don't you get saucy young man.

Steven  
I won't.

Molly  
Well that's good then.

Steven  
Yes it is isn't it?

Molly  
Good.

Steven  
Well yes.

Molly

Yes.

Steven  
Well good.

Molly  
I am glad.

Steven  
So am I.

Molly  
Well that's good.

Steven  
Yes it is.

Molly  
Fine.

Steven  
Good.

Molly  
Good.

Steven  
Fine.

Agnes  
Oh for goodness sake the pair of you, enough already.

Steven  
She started it!

Molly  
He did.

Steve  
She did.

Molly  
He did.

Steve  
She did.

Molly  
He did.

Steve  
She did.

Moira  
Enough, the pair of you. I don't care who started it. *(She waves her wand)* For the next five minutes you will talk backwards and confusion will rain down on your head.

Steve  
Now enough that's.

Molly  
Enough than more.

Steve  
Sorry am I.

Molly  
Am I no.

Steve  
Arguing stop let's well.

Molly  
Please yes. More agree couldn't I.

Agnes  
Oh for goodness sake that's almost worse than before can you just shut them up immediately please.  
Just stop them altogether.

Moira  
Oh no this is far too much fun, really.

Steve  
Anyway about fighting were we what remember can't I.

Molly  
Me nor!

Steve  
Again friends?

Molly  
Again friends.

*(Enter Matron. She is a bossy lady, quite buxom and cartoon like.)*

Matron  
Who did this?

Agnes  
What Matron?

Matron  
I wasn't born yesterday. Someone has set the reverse spell.

Agnes  
Well it wasn't me!

Matron  
Well I don't think it was Bill.

Bill  
Snuffle berble warble schnozzly bop!

Matron  
I thought as much, Moira it's you again, isn't it?

Moira  
Matron they deserve it – they were arguing away like children.

Matron  
What strength did you use?

Moira  
Just a five minute one that's all.

Molly  
Tea for time it is Matron ah!

Matron  
No it is not! Steven, go and find something to do and Molly, sit down for five minutes and just rest ok?

Steve  
Matron yes.

Molly  
Well very.

*(Steven leaves and Molly sits back down.)*

Matron  
Look ladies I have had to speak to you about spell making willy-nilly all over the shop before. It has to stop.

Moira  
It's only a bit of fun Matron. You know to pass the time.

Mat  
That's all well and good but you girls never know when to stop!

Molly  
Eh why know anyone does, funny bit a feel I say just I can.

Mat  
Yes; because some silly witch planted a backward spell on you.

Molly  
So thought I, again?

Matron  
Yes I am afraid the backward spell has still got a couple of minutes to run.

Molly  
Then quiet be will I.

Matron  
I think it's best.

Agnes  
Bored, bored, bored.

Matron  
Well this will please you. There are some school children coming to see you and do some songs and dances for you tomorrow.

Moira  
Oh no.

Agnes

Oh why?

Matron

Because they are coming out of the goodness of their hearts to make you happy.

Moira

Would make me happier if the bus that was carrying them went over a cliff.

Matron

You are so ungrateful.

Agnes

I hate kids, they are spotty and smell and eat sweets and expect me to be grateful for an orange at Christmas and some rubbish stupid pantomime.

Matron

That's a horrible thing to say.

Moira

Well what you forget is witches are horrible. It's sickening how the like of Disney has made us out to be nice sweet old dears that do magic tricks and love our cats. It's a bad press that's all.

Agnes

She's right dear. We enjoy being bad.

Moira

I mean look at you lot you get Easter, Christmas, birthdays, anniversaries all manner of reasons to celebrate and we get one, one lousy day to mark all our brilliant work. Just one day and that has been spoiled.

Agnes

By children and their ghastly trick or treating: It's our day and what happened to it? Might as well call it Childaween.

Moira

Or Scroungeaween!

Matron

Well these children aren't to blame. They just want to come and do a show for you and you will have the good grace to be grateful. Thank you very much.

*(Bill has woken up.)*

Bill

Eh oh what's going on?

Matron

Ah Bill, good afternoon.

Bill

Good afternoon Matron.

Matron

I was just saying the children are coming to do a show for us tomorrow. You like them don't you Bill?

Bill

Oh yes Matron, sounds like a lovely idea. What do you think girls?

Moira

You are just so out of step with us aren't you? You silly simple little man.

Bill

I was just saying that's all.

Agnes

Probably best you don't dear.

Matron

Bill is right ladies. It will be a lovely day and you will show them you're grateful and you will clap and cheer in all the right places. Is that clear? I said is that clear? (*Ladies mumble and mutter*) If you don't the coach trip we were planning to go and look at The Witches of Wookey Hole will be cancelled. Now is it clear?

Moir

Yes Matron.

Agnes

Yes Matron.

Matron

Good now I will leave you to rest.

*(Exit Matron.)*

Moir

*(Imitating matron)* Good, now I will leave you to rest; stupid woman.

Agnes

Yes who does she think she is? Eh, laying on entertainment like that for us, silly woman.

Molly

Ah I can talk properly again. Well it's just another day lets just endure it eh? I really want to see Wookey Hole.

Moir

Yes you'll see Wookey Hole but don't think I am not going to try and have some fun tomorrow with the little angels *(cackles like a witch)*.

Matron

*(From off stage)* And no cackling either.

*(Lights fade.)*

## Scene Two The show

*(For this scene you will need at least 6/7 children to make up the entertainment troupe.)*

*(Bill and the three witches are sat in their chairs at an angle from up stage left to down stage left. Steve is standing up alongside them and Nurse is too. Matron is addressing them as stands facing them all.)*

Matron

Well these Children have travelled from all over town today to entertain you.

Moir

Oh such hardship in a town this size. The one who travelled the furthest can have only travelled about 300 yards *(the witches cackle and Bill looks blank)*.

Matron

Thank you Moira I am sure if the children need a stand in for their comedian they will ask you.

*(One of the children pulls on Matron's skirt and whispers in her ear.)*

Matron

Right well they haven't got a comedian.... erm.... ok, *(three hands claps like a fussy Nanny)* never mind let's make a start. Ladies and gentlemen of the Elderwood Nursing Home for Witches, Wizards, Warlocks and Window Cleaners, please put your hands together and welcome the children of St Thomas, Home of the Blessed Mother, Father and everything Irish, Roman Catholic, C of E, Fund Holding, Grant Maintained Primary School and Steiner Nursery, Or S.T.H.O.T.B.M.F.A.E.E.I.R.C.C.O.E.F.H.G.M.P.S.A.S.N. for short. Here they are.

*(Lukewarm applause as the first two come on and do a poor mime to a pop record.)*

Moira

Put some umph into it.

Agnes

Boo you're rubbish!

Matron

Agnes, Moira enough of that, give them a chance.

Moira

They said that about the Yorkshire ripper, probably.

Molly

Oh look out; this might be better.

Child A

Ladies and Gentleman it is my pleasure to present to you today a most unusual trick.

Moira

Oh good are you going to disappear, hope so.

Matron

Moira I am warning you!

Moira

Oh hear that, she's warning me? Ha!

Child A

Now I will stand on my hands whilst singing the first verse of the national anthem.

Agnes

Clever I suppose, let's see.

Matron

Sssssh....

*(The boy then just puts his hands under his feet and sings the national anthem. The witches boo and hiss.)*

Moira

Oh come on let's see something worth while.

Molly

I had more fun at Hitler's funeral.

Agnes  
Did you go to that?

Molly  
Well yes I did,  
the whole back three rows of the church were reserved for girls like us.

Agnes  
I got an invite too actually. Didn't go, I hated the nasty man.

Moira  
Yes well he did do a few naughty things, oh and all those people in gas chambers.

Agnes  
Oh heaven forbid that had nothing to do with it. I once played him at scrabble and he cheated. He claimed Fuehrer was a word every country should recognise. I told him on the contrary and oooops over the table went. It was appalling.

Matron  
Now let's be quiet, the students have more to show us.

*(At this point all the students with acts to perform and show shall do so. One child will be needed to compere it, addressing the audience as witches, ladies and gentlemen. Director, put whatever you like in this slot but don't let the show run for more than about five minutes)*

*(All witches clap at the end and even Bill is awake and applauding. Steven now comes in and wants to perform. He walks up to the performance area and starts to do a card trick.)*

Steve  
Witches, ladies and gentlemen now I have your attention let me show you the trick called the Missing Eastern King. Now in my hand is a deck of cards, just an ordinary deck of cards... I shall shuffle them like this.

*(At this point he drops all the cards and kneels to pick them up.)*

Steve  
Oooops that didn't quite work out really did it? Don't worry I have more to show you.

Matron  
I have a good trick you can show us.

Steve  
Yes Matron anything at all.

Matron  
Well could you make like a caretaker and leave immediately and get on with your job.

Steve  
Oh come on Matron only wanted to cheer up the troops that's all.

Matron  
Troops? Troops? Where are on earth do you think you are? Belize?

Steve  
No the retirement home for witches, wizards, warlocks and window cleaners.

Matron  
Precisely, the retirement home for witches, wizards, warlocks and window cleaners. And your function in all this?



Steve  
Eh?

Matron  
Your function, your purpose your *raison d'être*, if you like. What's that, if you don't mind answering?

Steve  
My raison what?

Matron  
*D'être*. It means what do you do?

Steve  
Oh well I am the caretaker.

Mat  
And does your contract say resident magician too?

Steve  
No Matron.

Matron  
No Matron indeed ha! This silliness is always wrong, bad, unfunny and usually embarrassing, please stop it. If you are the caretaker shouldn't you be somewhere taking care?

Steve  
Yes Matron.

*(He looks crestfallen and the audience should say 'ahhh' for him at this time.)*

Matron  
Now ladies and gentlemen that's enough excitement for one day. Let's just settle down into a nice relaxing frame of mind and rest for the rest of the afternoon.

Moira  
Oh yes we mustn't get over excited.

Matron  
Exactly Moira. You understand.

Moira  
Only too well.

Matron  
Good, well that means I can go about my duties now and you can all relax *(she exits.)*

Moira  
*(Sarcastically mimicking Matron)* Oh that means I can go about my duties and you can all relax...

Agnes  
She'll catch you one day.

Molly  
I want to see that. Matron versus Moira, what a contest.

Moira  
I would beat her hands down.

Bill

*(He has just been sitting quietly listening until now)* Ha, I wouldn't be so sure.

Molly

Oh look out Bill the window speaks.

Agnes

And what words of wisdom does he offer now I wonder?

Bill

All I was saying was that Matron has a few good tricks up her sleeve. You can't just take her on.

Moira

Tricks? What do you mean tricks?

Bill

Well, you know, just things that you wouldn't expect her to do.

Moira

I might ask our window cleaner here who side is he really on.

Bill

It's not about sides is it? I mean I just want a peaceful life. I don't want all this trouble and back-biting. I just want a peaceful happy retirement.

Agnes

Of course you do dear.

Moira

Well don't involve yourself in our conversations in future and your life could become so much more peaceful.

Bill

I have every rights to offer my opinions though.

Moira

Well I am not sure about every right...

Bill

I have as much rights as you do.

Molly

Ah but can you do this?

Bill

What?

Molly

This! Imish manus, imish muck, make Bill talk like Donald Duck!

*(She waves her hands and Bill starts to quack like a duck.)*

Moira

Oh Molly you are so naughty.

Agnes

Yes, funny though.

Bill

*(Like a duck)* I don't think it's funny.

Agnes

Well don't take us on then.

Bill

I don't think I did, did I?

Moira

You don't want to go round sounding like a duck for too long.

Agnes

Too right; you might end up with a big bill.

Molly

Yes think on!

Bill

I am fed up of you lot always trying spells on me.

Molly

Imish manus, imish muck, please stop Bill from being a duck.

Bill

*(Back to normal)* Oh thank you; why did you do that to me?

Molly

Oh Bill you need to relax we are bored that's all.

Bill

You just keep doing things to me and to be honest I have had enough. Every muscle in my body hurts because you've either squashed them, stretched them or pinched them, and I have had enough.

Moira

Oh stop your whinging.

Agnes

*(She has been looking at the paper)* Here look at this... '*three ladies in later age wanted to spend the night in a spooky old theatre.*' That sounds like something we could be good at. Why would they want three old ladies eh?

Moira

I don't care what they want old ladies for but I am up to it.

Molly

I am too.

Bill

Well it would give me some peace if you were to go out for the night. Get the telly to myself and not end up as a duck or a dog or a frog or something else that takes your fancy.

Molly

Well we could all have a rest.

Moira

The haunted theatre it is then.

All three

The haunted theatre!

*(Bill raises his tea cup.)*

Bill

The haunted theatre. And peace and quiet.

## Act Two

### Scene One

#### The Haunted Theatre

*(The stage is in pitch darkness and the three ghosts float down the aisles of the auditorium and run around on stage. All that should be seen is a ghost costume, maybe fluorescent paint. There is to be no noise and no pattern. Less is more but send plenty to scare the audience. This should last for at least three to five minutes eventually enter the three witches from stage left.)*

Agnes

Oh it's so dark in here. Hang on lets find a light.

*(She switches on a light.)*

Molly

Oh that's better.

Moira

This is an interesting place. Look, we have walked onto the stage.

Agnes

I always wanted life on the stage you know but just never got round to it.

Moira

Oh why not?

Agnes

I don't know, once you have turned your first person into a frog everything else kind of looks a lot less appealing.

Molly

Oh I know what you mean.

Moira

Anyway here we are, a haunted theatre. Wonder what we might see.

Agnes

Oh I don't know I just hope it ends up better than that awful ghost hunt we did in the tower of London, do you remember?

Molly

Do I? One rotten ex queen with no head and an asthmatic raven who stayed behind when the others left, it was rubbish.

Moira

Anyway this is the theatre and promises to be full of all the greats. Olivier, Gielgud, Brannagh, Burton and her that plays Dot Cotton. Oh yes all the greats will have been in here and left a little of their story behind.

Agnes

Not wishing to seem rude but I must say that half of them are still alive.

Moira

Typical of you that, to split hairs. Just go with the flow of the thing.

Agnes

Happy to, if anything happens worth seeing.

Moira

Oh something will happen. This is like the ghost of the Palladium in Grantham, Lincoln.

Agnes

Well who on earth has ever heard of that dear?

Moira

Only the most terrifying theatre ghost that ever hovered the boards.

Molly

Oh do tell us! I am in the mood for a good ghost story before we settle down for the evening to see who might pay us a visit.

Moira

Alright but first Agnes, pour some tea out of the flask please I think it might be a long night.

Agnes

I think I might find something a little stronger than tea somewhere in my handbag.

Molly

Hurrah for Agnes she knows how to travel. Crack it open Aggy.

Agnes

Yes I think I might.

Moira

No getting too blotto that we can't or don't see the ghosts though; agreed?

Molly

Agreed.

Agnes

Agreed.

Moira

Still a few scoops won't do any harm and, as my doctor used to say.

Molly

It's for purely medicinal purposes.

Agnes

Oh yes what are those?

Moira

I am *sick* of not having a drink.

Moira

I like, I like it!

*(All of a sudden the lights start to flicker and off stage a ghost's voice is heard.)*

G1

*Whooooooooo!*

Agnes  
*Whoooooo* who?

G1  
Meeeeeeeeeeeeee!

Molly  
Who's meeeeeeeeeeeeeee?

G1  
Meeeeeeeeeee!

Agnes  
*Whooooooooooooo?*

G1  
Meeeeeeeeeee!

Agnes  
*Whooooooooooooo?*

G1  
Meeeeeeeeeee!

Agnes  
Yooooooooooooo?

G1  
Yes meeeeeeeeeeeee!

Agnes  
Ooooooooooooooooooh!

G1  
And I am a ghost!

Agnes  
Not a very good one though?

G1  
Whyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyy?

Agnes  
Because I said soooooooooooooo.

G1  
I am, I'm a scary ghooooooooooooooooooooost!

Agnes  
Nooooooooo you're noooooooooooooot!

G1  
*(Ordinary voice)* Oh forget it then if I am not frightening you.

Agnes  
Well you're not.

G1  
*(Appears from stage left)* Not even a little bit scary?

Agnes  
No.

Moira  
Not in the slightest.

G1  
Oh it's not fair! I was told I would horrify everyone; so far I am still to score in the terrifying people stakes.

Molly  
Oh you poor dear come and sit with us and let's get to know each other.

G1  
I would love a chocolate digestive and a piece of camembert.

Agnes  
What together?

G1  
Yes we ghosts can't taste anything we go on texture only and those two together are a great spiritual delicacy.

Molly  
Sounds disgusting.

G1  
Oh no all my friends love it.

Moira  
How many ghosts do you have here?

G1  
We don't like to be called ghosts in polite company we like to be referred to as the passed on or gone before.

Molly  
Fascinating, we are learning so much.

Moira  
Ok, so how many of the gone before are here?

G1  
There's three of us; wait I'll call the rest.

Agnes  
Yes it will be nice to meet them.

G1  
*(She whistles loudly and claps her hands three times enter G2 stage left G3 stage right)*  
Ah here you are.

G2  
What do you want? I was just rehearsing my big scare movements.

G3  
And I was settling down for a nice evening with the skeleton in the cupboard.

G1

Well I have called you for a reason.

G2

What is it?

Agnes

Well I think that's my fault actually dear.

G2

Go on?

Agnes

We are spending the night here for something to do and I wanted to meet you to tell you not to be frightened.

G3

Us frightened? That's a bit rich! We are the ghosts of the theatre we can chill your blood and cause your heart to stop. We can give you nightmares and fill your waking thoughts with horror.

Molly

Yes, yes that's all well and good. But you aren't really very scary are you?

Agnes

Molly's right dear. What do you do to frighten people?

G1

Well we do the usual ghostly things like making noises. Rattling chains, scaring people in corridors, you know – the whole lot.

Moira

That's just so old fashioned; you want to learn to scream so blood turns to ice. To rattle chains like a ship on slipway and to show red eyes and blooded fangs in the darkest of nights.

Agnes

Oh she's right love. That's what you have to do nowadays. All the best ghosts do it.

G1

I used to get the *Ghost Times* and we were on top of all the new ideas. But one day I just didn't buy it and kind of fell out of the habit of buying it, and now they are leaving us behind a bit.

Moira

Oh you should see what the ghosts are doing elsewhere. I mean how about Buckingham Palace, the British Museum or even the **Tower of London**.

G2

Maybe we should but we couldn't get that Tower of London gig. It's a brilliant one too. There's no-one there at night so you can do all you want.

G1

Such a famous place to play. So many things you can do.

G3

So many Beefeaters to frighten.

G1

Oh yes a classy gig! I did read that one of the ghosts down there actually screams as though he is just about to be executed and then carries his own bloodied head under his arms. You can imagine how it must look with a bloody head under your arm.



G2  
Language.

G3  
No I actually mean bloody as in covered in blood. A truly class act.

G2  
Oh I wanted to go there. I did the exam and everything.

Agnes  
Exam?

G2  
Oh yes you don't just get in to these great haunts, you have to earn your place.

Moira  
But supposing you weren't ever seen there when you were alive doesn't that raise, er, questions?

G3  
It has no bearing at all; people just think they know less about history than they actually do and of course no one will own up to that. So everyone keeps quiet and the haunting continues.

Moira  
Well now we have met you is that the end of our ghost hunt?

Agnes  
Well I am not going back home yet, I am having too much fun.

G1  
Well there is a bar.

G2  
And we don't need the keys.

Agnes  
I hope you are not suggesting that we take advantage of your ability to get into places you shouldn't.

G3  
Oh go on let's treat it like a holiday.

G1  
It's true we never get visitors; everyone runs away.

Moira  
Ha.

G1  
Well they do, it's not every day three witches come to see us.

Molly  
And it isn't everyday we get out and meet new friends. We sit there every day, we are fed, watered and put out to grass when we get too old to contribute.

Moira  
Yes it can be quite dreadful.

G1  
Well what do you do to pass the time? At least we can scare people a bit.

Moira

We do spells on the least suspecting there is one man, Bill, a retired window cleaner...

G2

I never did understand that. Why have they started putting window cleaners in retirement homes with witches?

Molly

Something we are not sure of either. Anyway we give him such a hard time don't we girls?

Moira

Well it amuses us. We spell on the Nurses and Matron too.

Agnes

And the handyman.

Moira

Oh yes and the handyman. But none of it seems to have the wickedness of witching gone by! Oh we used to have so much fun. Like the time you turned all the cows' milk to cheese because the farmer said you had a warty nose.

Agnes

Well he never said it again did he?

Molly

Do you remember the Three Blind Mice? You gave them all sight and the farmer's wife ended up standing on a stool for hours. Waving her carving knife around shouting 'I'll kill you all'.

Moira

Oh that was funny. Anyway ghosts, who's going to the bar then eh? Don't steal anything, put the money in the till but get us something nice. Girls all give the ghosts a tenner each.

Agnes

Oh I love a party don't I dear?

Moira

You do Agnes, you do.

G1

What shall I get?

Agnes

Bacardi.

Molly

Gin for me.

Moira

And a drop of Irish whiskey for me.

G1

Very well I will return.

G2

Hurry along then.

Moira

What a kindly helpful ghost.

