

Ghostly Rights for Saint Stuffins' Yard

A one-act play

By Drew Petriello

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CAST

IT WHICH IS CONDEMNED TO NARRATE: Genderless. Ageless. Demon.

TOADIE DROLLWAGON: Male. 40-60. Human. An over-the-hill ghost rights activist.

TAUT CORD: Male. 19. Human. A chipper, passionate, and highly prepared ghost rights intern.

GHOST WHOSE STOMACH BURST DURING A HOTDOG EATING CONTEST: Female. Age is a construct for the living. Ghost. Recently dead and excited about being spectral.

EXPULSS THE EXORCIST: Female. 40-60. One of the most feared exorcists in the Exorcist's Guild.

VARIOUS OTHER GHOSTS THAT ARE NOT AS IMPORTANT: They are ghosts. Sometimes they're individual. Sometimes they're an ensemble. You know how it is.

NOTES

This show is designed to be of flexible cast size. It can even be done as a solo show.

Recommended cast size is between 3-5 actors.

Any stage directions can be spoken aloud by the Narrator -- in the case of a solo show, this will be almost certainly be necessary.

SCENE 0: INTRODUCTION

IT WHICH IS CONDEMNED TO NARRATE

We are in a graveyard with many headstones.
As you can see, several are of typical tombstone shape
But others are in the shape of food items.
A chicken bone
An apple core
A peanut butter jar
To name a few.

Ghosts rise from behind the headstones.

GHOSTS

Ooooooh...

(beat)

OooooOooooOoooooh...

(beat)

Trouble... trouble in the graveyard...

Ooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooh...

(beat)

OooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooH

ooooooooooooooooooooooooooooOooooooooH

IT IS US, POOR GHOSTS

In the Graveyard of Those Who Perished in Food-Related Accidents

Also known as Saint Stuffins' Yard

The affliction upon us ghosts in Saint Stuffins'

Is an exorcist on the premises!

OooooooooooooooooooooooooooooH no no no...

Her name is Expulss... a powerful and most feared exorcist of the Exorcist Guild

She came to banish us ghosts from Saint Stuffins' Yard

Didn't we suffer enough in life?

Haven't we suffered enough in undeath?

Haven't we...?

Expulss dumps a bucket of water over the
ghosts. The bucket is labeled "100% Pure
Distilled Carcinogen-Free Holy Water".

EXPULSS

Shoo.

Ghosts scream.

A GHOST

My spectral non-body!

ANOTHER GHOST

I... I can't believe I died a virgin... again!

YET ONE MORE GHOST

Makes you really think about the fleeting nature of...

NARRATOR

This is a terrible tale indeed
 Expulss, exorcist extraordinaire of the Exorcist's Guild is excavating these poor ghosts
 From their mortal...ish coils
 A duo of ghosts rights activists have been alerted
 By the psychic cries of the exorcised ectoplasm excreters
 The famous and esteemed Toadie Drollwagon
 And his intern, Taut Cord
 The ghost rights activists arrive at Saint Stuffins' Yard
 To put an end to the ghost rites of Expulss.
 It is quiet.

SCENE 1: THE ARRIVAL OF THE GHOST RIGHTS ACTIVISTS

Taut arrives wearing an overfull backpack that is clearly very, very heavy.

Toadie wanders into Saint Stuffins' Yard looking tired.

TAUT

Do you think it's just some kids making out behind grandpa's headstone again?

TOADIE

That psychic distress... nuh-uh... no way. When it's kids, the psychic distress feels...

(beat)

I guess I'd say it feels more like a... a gelatin wobbling sensation in my brain. Kinda like... uh... like...

(gestures)

Wobble wobble wobble.

And this one was more... uh, you know.

(gestures, but a little more stiffly this time)

Wobble wobble wobble.

You know? It's like... it's more solid. Not gelatin it's um...

(stiff gesture again)

Wobble wobble wobble

(beat)

You know?

TAUT

No no... I get it. Totally. Wobble wobble wobble and... wobble wobble wobble. Yeah.

Wow. Like, wow, you must have experienced loads of psychic distress to be able to distinguish between such minute, um... wobbles. Yeah, like it basically felt the same to me. Wow.

Um, do you think its an exorcist? Because if it is and the whole graveyard is emptied of ghosts again...

TOADIE

It won't be emptied.

TAUT

Okay, it's just — I don't want my ghost rights activist credentials revoked...

TOADIE

We'll deal with it.

TAUT

The last two graveyards...

TOADIE

Intern.

TAUT

I'm just saying, three empty graveyards is ground for expulsion —

TOADIE

Intern.

(beat)

Chill.

Taut does not chill, but does go quiet.

NARRATOR

Toadie and Taut have yet to see a ghost in Saint Stuffins' Yard, however
 Toadie asks Taut to unfurl the standard-issue ghost rights activist ghost-seeking device:
 A bedsheet with two holes cut in it
 Taut gasps at the magnificent contraption
 Passes it to Toadie
 Who holds it up stoically
 Then lets go.
 The blanket with the two holes hurls deeper into the cemetery
 Over headstones
 Around creepy trees that never grow leaves
 Until it wraps around a ghost.

GHOST WHOSE STOMACH BURST DURING
 A HOTDOG EATING CONTEST

Hey...

TOADIE

Ah-ha! Ghost!

EATING CONTEST GHOST

Oh no... don't come near! I'll... I'll ectoplasm you, It'll really hurt, but I'll do it!

TOADIE

Nay, good ghost! My trusted ward and I are certified ghost rights activists! We have
 come to —

EATING CONTEST GHOST

Show me your credentials, my dudes.
 (beat)

TOADIE

What?

EATING CONTEST GHOST

Your credentials. Show them to me!

TOADIE

Oh come on, seriously?

EATING CONTEST GHOST

Credentials! Or you'll be ectoplasmed!

TOADIE

I don't carry it on me! I am the famous —

EATING CONTEST GHOST

Prepare to be 'plased, my dudes!

Taut takes a thick binder out of his backpack.

TAUT

I have my ghost activist intern license right here in triplicate.

EATING CONTEST GHOST

Oh... I see...

TAUT

And I have a copy of Master Toadie Drollwagon's here too.

TOADIE

You really should know me. I am a beloved savior to ghosts all over the Place.

EATING CONTEST GHOST

I'm newly dead, I don't know what's up. Could you remove the sheet, my duderinos? It's stuffy.

TOADIE

Intern.

TAUT

Yes sir. Right away sir.

Taut removes the blanket with two holes from the ghost.

EATING CONTEST GHOST

Thanks, my dudes.

TOADIE

You seem a little on edge. So. What's up?

EATING CONTEST GHOST

My dudes... Expulss the exorcist is here.

TOADIE

(sharp inward hissing breath)

Ooohh...

TAUT

Expulss... that vile exorcist.

TOADIE

Yes. Um. No. We can't have her exorcising a whole graveyard. Not on my watch. No. Not at all.

EATING CONTEST GHOST

I would really appreciate it if you didn't let her get to me. I was just starting to get used to my undeath. Dude... my dudes... I just learned how to do this:

NARRATOR

The ghost levitates a hundred feet in the air.

EATING CONTEST GHOST

BoooooooOOOOOOoooooo...

TAUT

Don't go too high up! The Municipality Enforced Spectral Containment Field will zap you!

TOADIE

Yes, very cool. Now could you tell us —

NARRATOR

The ghost is zapped by the Municipality Enforced Spectral Containment Field
The ghost lowers back to the ground.

EATING CONTEST GHOST

OoooooOOOOooooohhh too high... My ghastly innards... Ooooooooh I can feel them vibrating, my duuuUUUUuuudes...

TAUT

Graveyards are just big ghost cages... It's a real shame that we treat the unbodied so poorly. I empathize with your plight, I —

TOADIE

Cool your burgeoning savior complex. Where is Expulss?

EATING CONTEST GHOST

I just wanna levitate...

OooooOOOOOOOOOooooooooooooooooohhhh...

TOADIE

Oh, go choke on whatever food killed you in the first place.

TAUT

Master Toadie!

EATING CONTEST GHOST

My stomach burst during a hotdog eating contest. You know, you're a pretty rude dude for a ghost rights activist.

TOADIE

I'm sorry, I just... I need to find Expulss. She is... she is very dangerous and you know, she makes me, you know...

EATING CONTEST GHOST

More jittery than an energy drink enthusiast after a spinal tap?

TOADIE

I... Hey, I am doing no such thing!

Toadie jitters like an energy drink enthusiast after a spinal tap.

TOADIE

You'd all do well to be afraid of Expulss, she's one of the most dogged and cruel exorcists around... and all exorcists are dogged and cruel!

TAUT

Oh yes! I've read her dossier...

TOADIE

In fact, you should be so afraid that you are staying right here while I go and find her.
Where is Expulss?

EATING CONTEST GHOST

I last saw her skulking around Rich Folk Hill.

TOADIE

Thank you, ghost.
Taut, stay put until I return.

TAUT

Aye!

Toadie starts for Rich Folk Hill.

TAUT

Master Toadie, you haven't got your anti-exorcist spray — here, let me —

TOADIE

Hm? What? Oh, I've got some.

Toadie takes out a fancy spray bottle.

TAUT

That's not standard issue...

EATING CONTEST GHOST

My husband used to have a bottle like that, my dude.

TOADIE

I don't know why he would, it's an experimental anti-exorcist spray. I'm off to tussle with
Expulss!

TAUT

Okay... be safe, Master!

TOADIE

(leaving)

Yes yes...

Toadie disappears towards Rich Folk Hill.

NARRATOR

There is an incredibly painful silence that I'm going to skip over
You should thank me.

EATING CONTEST GHOST

Well, I'm going to go back to levitating, my dude.

TAUT

Cool. Sounds cool.

NARRATOR

The ghost which perished in an eating contest
Rises ninety-five feet in the air.
There is yet more painful silence which I shall skip.

EATING CONTEST GHOST

Oh my goooOOOOOOooooodness! The rude dude! I see him and Expulss in a struggle!

TAUT

What do you see? What do you see?

EATING CONTEST GHOST

They're... they're grappling! Locked in combat!

TAUT

Oh my god... oh my god...

EATING CONTEST GHOST

He has her up against the Burger Mistress' headstone patty!

TAUT

Yes!

EATING CONTEST GHOST

Oh...
OoooooOOOOOOooohh...

TAUT

What is it? What is it?

EATING CONTEST GHOST

She's broken free... she's pushed him onto the ground... I think... I think she's strangling him!

TAUT

No... oh no...

EATING CONTEST GHOST

He's writhing!

TAUT

He... he told me not to leave, but he... he...

EATING CONTEST GHOST

He's stopped writhing!

TAUT

Oh god, oh god...

Taut takes out a bulky spray canister labeled:
"Anti-Exorcist Spray."

TAUT

I'm going in... I have to... I have to...

EATING CONTEST GHOST

Yes, my dude... you must! For the rude dude! For the sake of all in Saint Stuffins' Yard!

NARRATOR

With his bulging backpack bundle,
Taut clumsily runs for Rich Folk's hill.

SCENE 2: UPON RICH FOLK HILL

NARRATOR

At the base of Rich Folk hill
In Saint Stuffin's Yard
It is easy to spy the massive
Gleaming gold

Ground beef patty which marks the grave of the Burger Mistress
 Taut jitters like an energy drink enthusiast after a spinal tap
 But steadies himself by recalling the ghost rights pledge:

TAUT
 (raising a hand)

I pledge to help the incorporeal
 Because they are still real
 And real things deserve real help.

NARRATOR

Taut shakes the anti-exorcist spray
 And charges up Rich Folk Hill
 He spies the vile Expulss
 Standing above a kneeling Toadie.

TAUT

I banish thee, banisher!

EXPULSS

Hm?

TOADIE

Taut, no — !

Taut screams and sprays.

Expulss screams.

She falls.

TAUT

Master Toadie! I've done it, I've...!

The kneeling Toadie holds an open ring box with
 a diamond ring inside.

TAUT

T...Toadie?

TOADIE

I can explain...

TAUT

Is that... some kind of... experimental anti-exorcist device...?

NARRATOR

The ghost of Expulss rises out of her body.

EXPULSS

What happened, Toadikins? I felt something spray me...

TAUT

You're a ghost.
Toadikins?

EXPULSS

I'm a... I'm a... a what? A what? A... what? Oh! No ew ew ew ew, I can feel the ectoplasm, this is so gross make it go away! Make it go away!

TOADIE

Ah! Expulss! I see my... intern has dispatched you with the anti-exorcist spray before I could use my... anti-exorcist ring beam... ring!

EXPULSS

How long does the spray last? How long does the spray last? Tell me, small boy!

TAUT

It's a four-hour de-bodying...
Anti-exorcist... ring beam... ring?

TOADIE

Yes, the anti-exorcist ring beam ring. Good work, my intern. Good work.

TAUT

Why did a vile exorcist just call you Toadikins?

EXPULSS

A whole four hours... as a ghost... why, I should just exorcise myself right now. Alas... I cannot dump the holy water on myself..

My insubstantial form will not allow me to pick up a bucket... Oh, the pain of being ghostly... OOOooooooooohhh...

TOADIE

Excellent ghost rightsing tonight, Taut.
Lets head on home!

Taut doesn't move.

TOADIE

Brave intern?

NARRATOR

Toadie shakes Taut
Taut sniffs deeply of Toadie's aroma
This weirds Toadie out.
The aroma... it is not Toadie's usual scent
The sort of musk exuded by middle-aged sad men
But rather, it is a
Slightly alcoholic
Somewhat manufactured
Mango fragrance...
Cologne...

TOADIE

...you okay?

Toadie waves a hand in front of Taut's blank
face

TOADIE

...hello?

TAUT

Toadikins.

TOADIE

A um, vile nickname from a vile exorcist...

Taut
 Toadikins...
 Cologne...
 The ring..

Taut's arm swings upward, his finger points stiffly, accusingly.

Taut
 You.

Taut's other arm snaps up, pointing a stiff, accusing finger at Expulss too.

Taut
 Her.

Taut slowly, stiffly, mashes his hands together.

Taut
 T O G E T H E R . . . ?

Toadie
 Kid, you are jumping to conclusions. The adrenaline...

Taut
 TRAITOR!

Toadie
 She's doing psychological warfare! Don't listen!

Taut
 Watching your show inspired me to become a ghost rights activist, but this whole time you've been... you've been...

Toadie
 Kid...

Taut
 YOU'VE BEEN A BAD, BAD PERSON.

TOADIE

Hey, whaddya say we pop over to Donuts N' Molenuts and chat it out like a couple of guys, yeah?

TAUT

You were proposing to an exorcist! You — !

NARRATOR

A sticky, glowing substance strikes Taut on the back!

EXPULSS

Oops.

TAUT

(trying to feel the very middle of his back)

Have I... have I been...

TOADIE

Taut...

TAUT

ECTOPLASMED?!

EXPULSS

I haven't a clue how I did that. Whatever that was, it hurt like a —

TOADIE

It's okay boy, everyone gets ectoplasmmed every now and then. The important thing is not to let it stay on too long. Here, let me use my Ecto-Removo...

(feels pockets)

Drat, I left it at home.

TAUT

I... I have an Ecto-Removo.

TOADIE

Of course you do. Good intern.

Toadie rummages through Taut's backpack and takes out a putty knife and a dog poop bag that has "Ectoplasm Containment Device" written on it.

TOADIE

Lay on your front.

TAUT

Why should I do anything you say anymore?

TOADIE

Kid, do you want a spectral hole in your chest?

Taut pouts. He lays on his stomach all the same.

NARRATOR

The ectoplasm upon Taut's back
Pulses and glows
It's very spooky-ooky.

TOADIE

Yeesh. That sure is some 'plasm kid.

Taut pouts.

Toadie scrapes at the lump of ectoplasm with the putty knife — er, Ecto-Removo.

TOADIE

Look, I know ghost rights activists and Exorcist's Guild... like, we're enemies. Like, totally. Totally enemies. But like, hey, you know, maybe they're not all bad, you know?

Toadie continues to pick at the blob of glowing pulsating ectoplasm.

TOADIE

That's all I'm sayin'.

SCENE 2.5: A SINFUL DIVERSION

NARRATOR

For all of Toadie's pathetic post-hoc justifications
 He and Expulss really do love each other deeply.
 They hated each other at first, of course
 Being on opposite sides of the ghost rights war
 But they kept running into each other
 And in order to keep themselves sane
 Their rivalry developed into something playful.
 One night, five years ago
 Toadie responded to psychic distress at a haunted house
 Of course Expulss was there
 And neither of them were into it anymore
 With their jobs
 Toadie was getting sick of being constantly outcasted by society
 Of not making ghost rights progress
 The ghost rights pledge never felt more hollow...

TOADIE

(exhausted)

I pledge to help the incorporeal
 Because they are still real
 And real things deserve real help.

(beat)

And real fucking funding.

NARRATOR

Expulss was feeling the futility of her task
 She could exorcise all the ghosts she could
 And there would still be more ghosts
 The Exorcist Guild motto never felt more hollow...

EXPULSS

(mocking voice)

I am a proud footsoldier
 Defending the bodied from the unbodied
 Shoo, shoo!
 You dumb spooky ghosts!
 Blech!

NARRATOR

And in that haunted house
 With them both thinking
 They really didn't want to be there
 They got a bite at a nearby Donuts N' Molenuts
 And talked about everything other than ghosts
 Until the next morning's rush forced them to leave.
 That's the secret to their relationship:
 Work is a hundred percent separate.
 Ah... love.
 Let us see how it all get's ruined, shall we?

SCENE 3: UPON RICH FOLK HILL ONCE MORE

NARRATOR

Taut can hardly believe his ears
 This man who inspired him
 He wants to marry an exorcist?
 It's a cruel joke.

EATING CONTEST GHOST

My dudes. Just checking in on you dudeskis. What's up? Ah, my dude, you been 'plamed. That sucks. Something smells like the cologne my husband used to wear...

TAUT

What are your thoughts on not being able to leave Saint Stuffins' Yard?

TOADIE

I don't know what you're trying to pull, kid, but all this chatter is making it hard for me to use the Ecto-Removo properly.

EATING CONTEST GHOST

I mean, Saint Stuffins' Yard is nice, but like... you know, it would be cool to see the sights in my undeath, you know, my dudes? Go places I haven't been.
 The Hot Dog Fields...
 The Relish River...
 The Mustard Slopes...

TAUT
(standing)

Yes... exactly!

TOADIE
You've still got some ectoplasm on you!

TAUT
(not paying attention to him)
You can't see the world — you can't do anything! It is so unfair that the law prohibits ghosts from existing beyond their assigned homes! I want to see a world where the unliving are free to walk alongside the living on the street!

TOADIE
Kid, I gotta get that ectoplasm off, you'll get this big hole —

TAUT
I envision a world where the unbodied enjoy equal rights with the bodied! Imagine: Phantoms free to fly above traffic! Imagine the beauty it would grant to those poor, corporeal commuters.

TOADIE
Alright kid, that's enough...

NARRATOR
As Taut gives his speech
The remaining ghosts of Saint Stuffins' Yard gather around him.

TAUT
All ghosts deserve to be free!

Ghosts cheer.

A GHOST
But how do we override the Municipality Enforced Spectral Containment Field?

TAUT
Well then, it's good that I...
(holds up a thick binder)
...have the override codes!

Ghosts cheer.

TAUT

Ghosts of Saint Stuffins' Yard, I — ah!

Taut grabs his chest.

Ghosts gasp ghastily

TOADIE

(gasp ing humanly)

Taut! The ectoplasm!

TAUT

The ecto...aah!

NARRATOR

A hole opens up in Taut's chest

Take a look at his chest now — can't you see the gravestones of Saint Stuffins' Yard through it?

Taut looks at the hole.

He pokes his finger into it.

He sticks his hand through his chest.

Taut chuckles, which transforms into mad laughter.

TAUT

I'm part ghost... I'm part ghost!

TOADIE

You just have a spectral portion of your body, not the same as —

TAUT

Ghost brethren!

Let us be free of Saint Stuffins' Yard!

Graveyards are ghost prisons!

GHOSTS

Graveyards are ghost prisons!

TAUT

Gather 'round. Let us recite the override code together.

TOADIE

No! You can't!

Silence.

TAUT

I can't?

TOADIE

No! We can't just commit an act of terrorism to free these ghosts... ghosts rights activists have been fighting for years in the lower courts, not-so-low courts, middling courts, average courts, adequate courts, and upper courts for decades to allow more freedoms for ghosts...

TAUT

When will the change come, huh?

TOADIE

There's a weekend furlough deal allowing family visitations for ghosts confined to graveyards! That's going to pass in... like...

(quietly, quickly)

Twenty-one to twenty-nine more years.

GHOSTS

BoooooooooOOOOOOOOooooooooOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

TOADIE

You've got to be patient! Change takes a while.

TAUT

It doesn't have to. Not all of us are encumbered by old feeble minds such as yours. Some of us still have imagination! Do you even remember the ghost rights pledge?

TOADIE

Of course I do, it's really easy —
I pledge to help the incorporeal
Because they —

TAUT

Wrong! You have strayed from the path.

TOADIE

...but that was right —

TAUT

All ghosts who want to wait for their freedom and be exorcised during all that waiting, say aye!

A REALLY ANNOYING CONTRARIAN
GHOST

Aye!

TAUT

Everyone who wants their freedom now, say aye!

ALL OTHER GHOSTS

Aye!

TAUT

That settles it — read the codes aloud over my shoulder and you will be free, my kin!

NARRATOR

As one, Taut and the ghosts of Saint Stuffins' chant the code to override the Municipality Enforced Spectral Containment Field
It goes as follows:

GHOSTS AND TAUT

Rounded asses
Champagne glasses
Sex like molasses
Gotta clear up
These sexy rashes.

This repeats underneath the following.

TOADIE

No... no no no... Expulss! Do something!

EXPULSS

What's it look like I can do, Toadikins? I don't know how I ectoplasmed him in the first place!

TOADIE

Your holy water — where is it?

EXPULSS

There's a bunch of buckets...

TOADIE

Great!

EXPULSS

...inside that scary mausoleum over there.

TOADIE

Not so great!

EXPULSS

Well, excuse me, Toadikins.

TOADIE

Expulssums... my sweetie.

EXPULSS

Toadikins...

NARRATOR

They attempt to embrace each other
 But she passes right through him
 They both shudder
 It's not... exactly... one of... discomfort.
 It's a little...
 Well
 Let's not talk around it
 Orgasmic
 The searing pleasure of their embrace is stronger
 Than the most passionate nights of lovemaking ever produced.

TOADIE

Oh... oh my...

EXPULSS

Ghosts don't deserve to experience such pleasure and that's why they must all be —

TOADIE

I'll return as quick as I can. It'll take them sixty-nine recitations before the Municipality Enforced Spectral Containment Fields are overridden.

EXPULSS

Sixty-nine? Really?

TOADIE

Look, Lubiss our programmer... she just got out of a long-term relationship...

EXPULSS

Shoo!

SCENE 4: SPOOKY-OOKY MAUSOLEUM

NARRATOR

Toadie, jittering like an energy drink enthusiast after a spinal tap
 Approaches the mausoleum of Saint Stubbins' Yard
 Even for a professional ghost rights activist
 Mausoleums are still
 — and this is a technical term amongst ghost rights activists —
 "Spooky-ooky."
 Toadie shudders as he creeps through the mausoleum
 Something crawls over his foot and he shrieks.
 Various undead things snicker in their vaults.

TOADIE

Yuk it up, that's right, that's — EEK!

NARRATOR

There is more snickering in the mausoleum.
 Toadie continues deeper, pretending to be unfazed
 This makes the various undead things snicker more.
 Several buckets of holy water
 As well as empty ones
 Sit beside open vaults.
 Toadie snatches one, spilling a little holy water on the mausoleum linoleum
 And starts to scamper out the mausoleum.
 A ghost blocks his path.

OBSTACLE GHOST

'Ey. Ain't youse Toadie the ghost rights activist?

TOADIE

Go choke on whatever it is that killed you. I need to get through.

OBSTACLE GHOST

I chokes'd on bluesberries. Very tragics. In orders to gets past me, you'll's haves to reveal youse to be the ultimate hypocrite and throws holy water on me.

NARRATOR

Toadie walks through the ghost without a problem.

OBSTACLE GHOST

Drats... 'Ey, gets back —

(shuddering with immense pleasure)

OooooOOOOOOOOooooohhh... makes me feels alives agains...

SCENE 5: THE CLIMAX IS HAPPENING AT RICH FOLK HILL

NARRATOR

Taut and the ghosts still chant:

GHOSTS AND TAUT

Rounded asses
 Champagne glasses
 Sex like molasses
 Gotta clear up
 These sexy rashes.

TOADIE

Expulssipoo!
 I have it I have it I have it!

EXPULSS

How swell!

NARRATOR

Toadie steps onto a golden gravestone shaped like a baguette
 Lifts the bucket over his head...!

(long silence)

But

He doesn't dump it.
 He shudders, knowing what he must do, and yet...
 He sees these spectral beings
 Surrounding his intern
 And something stirs in him
 Having spent decades as a ghost rights activist
 Facing years and years and years of hardly any forward progress
 Has left him jaded
 And for the first time in a long time
 He sees the ghosts below
 And feels that spark of passion that made him want to become a ghost rights activist so
 long ago
 The ghost rights pledge slips from his lips, unbidden:

TOADIE

I pledge to help the incorporeal
 Because they are still real
 And real things deserve real help.

NARRATOR

These poor ghosts
 They can hardly interact with the physical world
 They don't deserve the imprisonment society has foisted on them
 The bad reputation
 They are merely bodiless, and for that, they are persecuted, othered.
 They don't deserve exorcism...

EXPULSS

What are you waiting for, Toadikins?

TOADIE

Ah!

NARRATOR

Toadie jumps, loses his grip on the bucket
 Backwards, it tips!
 With a splash, holy water douses the grass of Saint Stuffins' Yard
 A piercing shriek rips the air —
 Taut and the ghosts cease reciting the code phrase, so unnerving is the scream
 All turn and see
 The spectral Expulss melting away from holy water.

EXPULSS

OooooOOOOOOOOHH, it hurts! It hurts! Is this the suffering I've caused all along?

TOADIE

Expulss! My darling dearest!

NARRATOR

Toadie tries to clutch her ghostly body
But cannot.

EXPULSS

I deserve this
Because I
Am a filthy ghost
And this is what ghosts deserve.

TOADIE

Expulss, oh my sweet Expulss
I'm so sorry, I was frightened...

EXPULSS

I was looking forward to our life together
Life
Life...
Life!

TOADIE

You've got holy water on... I don't know what...
I can't...
Darling, please don't leave me...

NARRATOR

But Toadie is talking to air.

Long silence.

Toadie stands there, mouth agape.

He waves his hands uselessly through the air, as though trying to cling onto where he last saw her.

TOADIE
(kneeling)

No...
Noooooooo...

Toadie tries to gather the holy water in his hands.

TOADIE

Are you in there?
Darling, can you hear me?
Please come back, you're the only thing that made life worth living the only...
I...

Toadie becomes aware of Taut and the ghosts watching him.

TOADIE

Go away
Leave me alone
Have your fun
Floating all over the Place
Just leave me alone...

TAUT

Wow...

Taut kneels beside his mentor.

TAUT

What a huge sacrifice you made for ghost rights... I didn't think you had it in you.

TOADIE

I didn't mean to —
Whatever. Leave me alone. Have fun with your revolution.

TAUT

Maybe radical change is something that should be thought through more... Change takes time... I'm sorry, I didn't mean to be so immature.

A TICKED OFF GHOST WITH PERFECTLY
VALID CRITICISMS

Oh yeah, that's fine. We can stay chained up to a single location for a few more decades.
What the hell, a few more centuries! It's only like, our freedom. We don't really need that.
Go through the official channels.

It's fine.

We don't need radical change now in order to be treated with basic dignity.

That's fine.

It's fine.

Really.

It's fine.

Totally fine.

It's fine.

TAUT

(bowing)

Thank you for being so understanding, my kin.

CRITICAL GHOST

(shakes ghostly head)

The living, man. They just don't get it.

NARRATOR

And so status quo has been restored
Albeit, Taut has that spectral hole in his chest
And Expulss is quite truly, fully deceased
But I mean, you know
In the grand scheme of things
Status quo has been restored.
Yep, all perfectly normal status quo —

Toadie grabs the binder from Taut, clambers
onto the baguette-shaped tombstone.

TOADIE

Rounded asses
Champagne glasses
Sex like molasses
Gotta clear up
These sexy rashes.

EATING CONTEST GHOST

Wait, are we really doing this?

CRITICAL GHOST

I've long longed
 For the day
 When the manacles
 Placed on the unbodied by the bodied
 Would be shattered.

TAUT

Wow... I've never been prouder to be your intern...

ALL

Rounded asses
 Champagne glasses
 Sex like molasses
 Gotta clear up
 These sexy rashes.

NARRATOR

This goes on for a while
 You don't want to hear it recited sixty-nine times
 I don't want to hear it recited sixty-nine times
 So, to the last repetition:

ALL

Rounded asses
 Champagne glasses
 Sex like molasses
 Gotta clear up
 These sexy rashes!

NARRATOR

Upon the last repetition of the code phrase
 Wind blows and it blows and it blows
 The ghosts howl and they howl and they howl
 And they spiral and they spiral and they spiral
 High, high, high into the night sky
 A spectral tornado
 So strong are the winds that gravestones tip over
 A wave of headstones toppling from the epicenter of the wind

Like spooky-ooky dominoes!
 Thunder crashes
 The ghosts cackle
 The spiral of ghosts tightens, tightens into a single thin column of spectral energy
 And then, unable to get any tighter
 The spiral of ghosts bursts apart
 Ghosts are flung from Saint Stuffins' Yard
 All over the Place
 Into amusement parks
 Into restaurants
 Into cinemas
 Into the homes of lonely people squirreled away and forgotten by relatives and friends
 with no one to talk to
 The specters come into their homes
 And now the lonely have someone to talk to.
 These ghosts...
 They are free...
 They are free...
 They are free...
 The ghosts of Saint Stuffins' Yard.

(beat)

Or... they will be for a while.
 This is quite a major felony you see
 It is highly likely there will be a governmental crackdown
 To put the ghosts in their place
 The Hand will probably sic the Demon Hunters on these poor ghosts
 The Exorcist's Guild will have lucrative business for certain
 What will become of Taut and Toadie?
 Likely the law will be after them too
 And so our story ends.

(beat)

Well, there's one more tiny matter...
 The body of Expulss.
 You can't just leave a dead body in a graveyard it doesn't belong in
 No one has heard from Toadie or Taut since these events happened
 But there is a rumor
 That Toadie keeps Expulss' body perfectly preserved in a large icebox
 Which he carries with him at all times
 Upon his back
 And that he spends his days seeking out someone

Who can go where exorcised ghosts go
Into the Dead Place
But that
That is a tale for another time.
Go forth into the world, my friends
And if you see a ghost, be kind to it
Most are quite harmless, despite what you may have heard from the propaganda of the
living
So say hello and listen
Because one day you too may be a ghost.

THE END.