

GHOSTED

by Brigit van Gemeren

A play to be performed over Zoom

Characters:

F3 M2

Eden - She's obsessed with ghost hunting. She believes she can find evidence of ghosts and prove once-and-for-all that they're real. Kind of no regard for her own safety. Mental health? Don't know her.

Curtis - A very confident theater boy who's really into Eden. An "arrogant ass". Probably peaked in highschool, like an ex-quarterback, but of theater. Believes in ghosts casually.

Eric - A staunch skeptic and cynic. Curtis' closest confidant. Not your Hollywood "sassy gay best friend", is actually just kind of a know-it-all dick. Loves him some cereal.

Gloria - A practicing Catholic. Totally believes in ghosts and is scared of them. On the cusp between an uptight highschool bookworm and a fun-loving college kid. Sensitive to stress and feelings in general. Most certainly a closeted lesbian. Probably would've made some gross guy's dream TradWife before she got a liberal arts education.

Sarah - Outspoken, hilarious, unapologetically herself. Believes in ghosts in theory, but maybe not completely. Addicted to arts & crafts. Totally an art major even though it never comes up. She's the kind to give herself stick-n-poke tattoos and shave all her hair off.

Scene Notes:

SCENE 1: Curtis' behavior should be slightly different from when Eden isn't on the call VS. when she is.

SCENE 2: Eric's antagonism should be playful, not cruel. Don't worry, the audience will begin to notice on their own how grating it is after a while. Also, Curtis genuinely is an arrogant ass. This should come across when he blows Eric off at the end.

SCENE 4: It's not that Eden doesn't care about Curtis' old stories and photos. It's just that she's probably seen them a hundred times before by now.

SCENE 5: Gloria prays the Hail Mary's because she genuinely believes this will solve the problem. This cannot come across as satirical, comedic, or fanatical.

SCENE 1:

[GLORIA is on a zoom call. She plays with the way she looks. Maybe she puts on a little makeup, using her computer like a mirror. SARAH comes into the call. She puts the makeup away.]

GLORIA: Hey!

SARAH: Hey!!!

GLORIA: How are you?

SARAH: I'm ok! I'm actually in the middle of doing a little embroidery.

GLORIA: Oh nice! What are you making?

[SARAH holds up an embroidery hoop that says "GAMER GIRL T". GLORIA leans into the computer.]

What's it supposed to say?

SARAH: It's gonna say "GAMER GIRL TOES", with a heart around it.

GLORIA: Oh. Very classy.

[ERIC joins the call. He's eating cereal.]

SARAH: Eric!!!

GLORIA: Eric, hey!

ERIC: Hi!

SARAH: How're you doing?

ERIC: Uhhh, as bad as anyone else probably.

GLORIA: Yeah, for sure.

ERIC: But what about you guys?

[SARAH holds up her embroidery.]

ERIC: "GAMER GIRL TOES", nice. And you Gloria?

GLORIA: Oh, the usual. Doing homework, watching Mass on the TV with my parents.

ERIC: Oh, *that* must be fun.

GLORIA: Well, yes and no. But don't tell God I said that.

ERIC: Oh don't worry, that's not possible.

[CURTIS joins the call.]

ERIC & GLORIA & SARAH: Curtis!!!

CURTIS: Guys!!! Hello!!!

SARAH: Curtis, I feel like I haven't seen you in literally forever.

CURTIS: Well I did leave one whole day sooner than everyone else.

SARAH: That must be it.

ERIC: Dude, are you growing out a beard?

CURTIS: Hell yeah, I've been cultivating this for a minute.

SARAH: Fuck yeah. Razors are for corporate slaves.

ERIC: You look like the kind of twink on Grindr who puts "no fats no femmes" in his bio.

GLORIA: It reminds me of the teeth on a venus fly trap.

CURTIS: Yeah, a hot venus fly trap. Hey, was Eden gonna join this call?

SARAH: Yeah she'll probably be on in a second.

CURTIS: Yeah, I just wanted to make sure she knew, so she didn't get left out or anything.

ERIC: Mmhm, that was it.

GLORIA: Hey Curtis, I'm really sorry to hear your play got cancelled. I really thought they were just gonna pick it up next semester.

CURTIS: Yeah, I thought they would too, but I guess it would've fucked with the next show season too much. It's ok though. It could be worse, so I can't be too sorry for myself.

GLORIA: Ok, but it's ok to be a little sorry for yourself, as a treat.

CURTIS: Yeah... Who knows, maybe we'll perform it over Zoom!

SARAH: Curtis, I love and support you, but no one wants to watch Zoom theater.

[EDEN joins the call.]

ERIC & GLORIA & SARAH & CURTIS: Eden!!!

EDEN: Hi guys!!! Woah, Curtis, you have a beard!

CURTIS: Yeah! Like it?

[Small, awkward pause.]

EDEN: [Lying] Uh huh! [Normal] I'm just glad to see no one's killed themselves yet.

ERIC: Yeah, *yet*.

GLORIA: Hey, I could be a ghost.

EDEN: Oh my god, don't even. All I ever watch now is Ghost Adventures and Ghost Nation.

SARAH: How about BuzzFeed Unsolved?

EDEN: God, no. They're just fucking around most of the time. They're never gonna get evidence of a ghost like that.

ERIC: I think they're a lot of reasons they're never gonna get evidence of a ghost.

SARAH: Haha.

EDEN: Eric, I hope I die before you so I can come back as a ghost and beat you up from the great beyond.

CURTIS: Why wait 'til you die? We're here now!

ERIC: I'm protected by several hundreds of miles between us, so too bad.

EDEN: Well Eric, since you're so firm in your beliefs -

ERIC: In facts.

EDEN: - I guess I won't invite you to Zoom with me while I take a midnight cemetery walk this Saturday.

SARAH: Woah, what?

EDEN: Yeah, I'm bored as shit and I wanna do a little ghost hunting of my own. Who knows, I might find something!

GLORIA: Yikes Eden, don't you think that's kind of scary?

CURTIS: Seriously Eden, you could get jumped!

GLORIA: Or haunted!

EDEN: God, I hope I get haunted! That'd be sick!

SARAH: I think it's cool. I wish I were there to go with you!

EDEN: Aw, I want that so bad! But you'll just have to be there virtually.

ERIC: You better keep 911 pre-dialed dude. I'm pretty sure walking around alone in the dark of night isn't something most women I know would recommend.

GLORIA: I wouldn't!

SARAH: Yeah, I probably wouldn't either, but who's gonna hurt you when you're on the phone?

ERIC: Uh, anyone?

CURTIS: Bring a knife. Do you have a knife?

EDEN: I don't need a knife. Guys, seriously, what's most likely to happen is that I'll be alone there, with a few ghosts.

ERIC: Serious disagree on that one.

CURTIS: If I sent you a knife, would you bring it?

EDEN: I really appreciate the concern, but it's really fine. It's not a dangerous town, and no one ever goes to this cemetery anyway. I just need an adventure, you know?

GLORIA: Ok, ok. We won't get worked up. But you have to stay on the call with us the whole time, ok?

EDEN: Yes, of course! I want you to be with me in case I get evidence.

CURTIS: And that's this Saturday?

EDEN: Yeah, at midnight my time.

CURTIS: I'll be there! On Zoom, not in real life.

SARAH: Same.

ERIC: I'd love to watch too, if my cynicism hasn't barred me from it.

EDEN: Yes, even you can be there Eric. You might even learn a thing or two.

ERIC: Joke's on you, I haven't learned anything in months and I don't plan on starting anytime soon.

GLORIA: We've only been out of school for, like, two weeks.

ERIC: I know.

CURTIS: Well hey, we have something to look forward to this Saturday night! So how are we gonna entertain ourselves 'til then?

[Long pause.]

SARAH: Wanna watch Love Island?

[Resounding agreement.]

EDEN: Hold on, if we're gonna go on a Love Island marathon, I've gotta get some snacks.

GLORIA: Same.

SARAH: Snack break! Reconvene ASAP!

[Everyone steps away from their computers, except ERIC, who just sits there and continues to eat his cereal.]

SCENE 2:

[CURTIS calls ERIC. He's shaved the beard. ERIC gets on the call.]

ERIC: Boomer! Did you accidentally call me?

CURTIS: No dude, I called you on purpose.

ERIC: Oh. What's up?

CURTIS: Not much. Just really bored and stressed.

ERIC: Yeah.

[They sit in silence for a while. Think Last of the Mohicans chapter 3.]

What's stressing you?

CURTIS: I dunno. School, family... Eden.

ERIC: Oh, we're talking about Eden. Do you mind if I have my cereal during this? 'Cuz I probably won't be doing lots of talking, so I'm just gonna go for it.

[ERIC pours milk into his cereal.]

CURTIS: Yeah, go ahead. But seriously! I thought that being away from her over the summer would help me move on but I'm just more obsessed with her! We text, like, every day, and -

ERIC: Woah, you text Eden every day? I text you and you take 3 days to get back to me!

CURTIS: Yeah dude, I don't always have the energy to concoct a reply to the weird TikToks you send me.

ERIC: [Mouth full of cereal] You're an ingrate.

CURTIS: Well we text every day, but the only times we call are in the group. I mean, if she liked me back wouldn't she wanna call me? Just the two of us?

ERIC: Wow, you actually are a boomer. No one flirts face-to-face anymore! Too risky.

CURTIS: Yeah... I just wish we were back in school.

ERIC: Why, so you can avoid asking her out, but in person this time?

[Small pause]

Look, I'm not gonna tell you she likes you, because I really don't know if she does -

CURTIS: Helpful as usual, Eric.

ERIC: - BUT, I think you should ask her out anyway.

CURTIS: Then I can make everything weird and lose Eden entirely and all my friends.

ERIC: OR, it sucks for a few weeks, and by the time we're all back in school, everyone's over it and no one cares.

CURTIS: Huh... I didn't really think about it like that.

ERIC: [Mouth full of cereal] What can I say, I'm a genius.

CURTIS: And all this distance from her would make it easier, you know, if I didn't have to see her every day. The real problem right now is that the distance didn't actually cut the cord. I didn't get rejected.

ERIC: Yeah. And dude, another possibility that we're not considering is that she likes you back and wants to date you.

CURTIS: Don't even jinx it.

ERIC: Dude! What's wrong with you? You're usually an arrogant ass and suddenly you're too scared to even think about getting what you want.

CURTIS: I am not an "arrogant ass".

ERIC: Really? Every time you audition for something, you say that the audition went great and you're not scared and you think you got in. And then you do get in, like an arrogant ass.

CURTIS: I call that confidence.

ERIC: You don't think it's because you're one of ten men who ever audition for anything, of whom only 3 have any talent?

CURTIS: ... No, it's because I'm the best.

ERIC: Ok, can I go eat my cereal in peace now?

CURTIS: No no no, I'll stop. But this stuff is hard, especially when it's a friend and especially when you care this much.

ERIC: Curtis, you are smart and handsome and confident, and you're going to ask her out and no matter what, it's all going to go your way. Just relax.

CURTIS: Ok. Thanks dude, you're right. I gotta relax.

ERIC: Yeah... So, wanna hear about how I'm doing?

CURTIS: Yeah, for sure! I'm really busy though, so text me? Love you man!

[CURTIS leaves the call.]

ERIC: Thought so.

[ERIC takes a huge bite of cereal.]

Dick.

SCENE 3:

[Scene notes: Improved lines are encouraged! The lines here can be paraphrased as is deemed de cemetery. Everyone else should react as their character would, either verbally or nonverbally.]

This scene is where shit gets really tricky “tech”-wise. The actress for Eden has to be out near a cemetery after dark, and she has to devise some way to have “apparitions” show up at the right times. The apparitions can be any variety that works: lights, shadows, human shapes, whatever. They just have to look realistic. Having another person to help would be easiest, but is obviously not always possible. We’ll figure something out.]

[GLORIA is in the zoom call. EDEN joins. She’s already outside in the dark, under a street light.]

GLORIA: Eden! Are you at the cemetery already?

EDEN: No, I’m in town just outside the cemetery.

GLORIA: I’m already scared for you.

EDEN: It’s so fine. The police station is right down the street anyway, so someone would have to be pretty dumb to go on a killing spree around here.

[CURTIS joins the call. SARAH then also joins the call. She’s cutting up some paper.]

Hey guys! I’m gonna start walking in a second. I’ll wait for Eric.

CURTIS: Are you sure about this Eden? This all looks sketchy as hell.

EDEN: It’s safe, trust me. But it is a little spooky, I’ll admit.

GLORIA: Trust your intuition if this feels scary.

EDEN: No it’s scary like a Halloween haunted house, not like real danger.

[ERIC joins the call.]

Eric! Ready for this?

ERIC: I was born ready.

EDEN: Alright, then I’ll start walking.

[EDEN starts walking toward the cemetery. Some silence while they just watch.]

SARAH: Ooo! Guys, let's turn the lights off in our rooms, so it's extra spooky.

CURTIS: Hell yeah, real immersion.

[Everyone gets up and turns out their lights. They come back.]

GLORIA: So Eden, how did you explain to your mom that you were taking a midnight stroll through the graveyard?

EDEN: I didn't tell her. I just left.

GLORIA: You just *left*? And she doesn't know where you are?

EDEN: I left a note just in case, but I doubt she'll wake up anyway. When she's out, she's out.

GLORIA: Well, ok.

CURTIS: Did you bring a knife?

EDEN: Yes Curtis, I brought one from home like you said. But it looks really criminal, so I just have it in this bag.

[EDEN holds up a reusable grocery bag.]

If anyone's out there, it's me they should be scared of. I look like the main character in a slasher film. But besides that, how are you guys? You look comfy cozy at home.

ERIC: I guess that's one way to say "bored as hell".

GLORIA: Yeah, seriously. I don't like to think that I'm wasting some precious time of my youth trapped inside.

SARAH: Don't even remind me! Here I am, a young adult in my sexual prime, and I'm single and stuck in my parent's house. And now I can't even meet anyone new for months, because we're not gonna be on campus in forever.

CURTIS: Well you're doing something there.

[SARAH holds up what she's doing.]

SARAH: I'm scrapbooking! It's fun, but it's not a date.

ERIC: Download Tinder and date someone in your hometown.

SARAH: Every eligible bachelor here is someone I went to highschool with. If I have to see the Tinder bios of the boys who used to Juul in the single-stall bathrooms, I'll kill myself.

GLORIA: SAME Sarah! And it's just impossible to find a guy cute enough to have a crush on, you know?

SARAH: Eh, I dunno, I usually have no standards for liking somebody.

ERIC: What's your type anyway, Gloria? You never say you're into anyone, even celebrities.

GLORIA: I'm just picky, I guess. I don't like muscular guys 'cuz all the muscles kinda look like skin-colored water balloons, and I don't like skinny guys 'cuz you can see their bones, and -

CURTIS: Maybe you just don't like guys, period.

ERIC: Ooo, that's it. Repressed Catholic girl, never had a crush. Spot-on.

GLORIA: What, like I'm a lesbian? No, that's ridiculous. I definitely like guys. You guys just don't get what it's like to be a girl. Not everything is considered gay like it is with boys. I mean, every girl can agree that boys are gross, right?

SARAH: Yeah, but, like, as a joke, and usually not for real.

GLORIA: And yes, I do think lots of girls are pretty, but that doesn't make me a lesbian! It makes me an honest person who can acknowledge what they see, and a woman who supports other women. I don't see how finding women beautiful is lesbian-exclusive!

EDEN: You know guys, I think this is just one of those things that we pretend we don't notice until she comes out.

ERIC: But we're definitely gonna talk about it behind her back, right?

SARAH: I know I am.

GLORIA: [Not angrily, just in defiance] Screw you guys, as usual.

ERIC: I'm gay, I can say what I want.

EDEN: Ok! Guys, I'm at the entrance. Are we ready?

SARAH: Hell yeah!

GLORIA: Yes!

CURTIS: Go for it!

EDEN: Ok, I'm goin' in!

[EDEN enters the cemetery. Silence while she walks around and looks around.]

Welp, it is creepy alright.

CURTIS: Yell that you have a knife.

EDEN: If I say that I have a knife, that only gives the weirdos more time to get *their* knives out. And I don't wanna scare the ghosts.

ERIC: How can the living one scare the ghosts?

EDEN: I don't know, but I'm not taking any chances.

[Silence while she walks around.]

GLORIA: Do you see anything?

EDEN: Lots of graves... Most of them are from the 1800s, or early 1900s. And some of them are kinda busted.

[Silence.]

It's really sad, actually. I straight-up can't read a lot of these.

ERIC: That sweet-sweet acid rain. That shit melts stone.

EDEN: But we're so rural here... Damn.

[Silence. EDEN stops dead in her tracks. Everyone waits with bated breath.]

Oh, Jesus! A squirrel just scared the shit outta me.

[Everyone laughs nervously as they relax again. She's safe.]

God, there's lots of beer cans lying around.

SARAH: You know all the goth kids gotta go drink in a graveyard and take aesthetic photos for Tumblr.

GLORIA: Was that what you use to do, Sarah?

SARAH: Oh you *know*.

CURTIS: I was more of a drink-at-the-cast-party-after-closing-night kind of guy.

ERIC: Oh god, I would've loved to bully you in highschool, dude.

CURTIS: *You* bully *me*? You were in robotics club.

ERIC: And we got nothing but W's, bitch.

GLORIA: Geez, tell me what it was like to have friends outside of school.

EDEN: I would've been your friend in highschool!

GLORIA: Oh dude no you wouldn't. I wasn't a good person for most of highschool... Eden, should you be walking through the graves like that?

EDEN: Like what?

GLORIA: Like, over the bodies? Won't that just make the ghosts angry?

EDEN: It's the only way I can get a look at the inscrip-

[EDEN turns her head abruptly. Pause.]

Fuck, did you guys hear that?

ERIC: Probably another squirrel in the leaves, dude.

CURTIS: What was it?

EDEN: Uhhh... I don't see anything... No, wait, it was a squirrel.

ERIC: 1 for 1!

EDEN: God, don't squirrels sleep at night?

SARAH: You woke them up!

EDEN: Yeah, I guess...

[Silence. They watch while EDEN walks around.]

Some of these graves are for babies.

ERIC: That's pretty normal. Babies have to be buried somewhere.

EDEN: [Frustrated] *Yes*, Eric, I know it's *normal*, but that doesn't mean it's not *sad*.

ERIC: Ok, ok. I'll back off.

[Silence.]

CURTIS: So Eden, I listened to that album you told me to listen to.

EDEN: Aw, you did? How'd you like it?

CURTIS: It was great! I loved it.

SARAH: What's the album?

CURTIS: Kintsugi by Death Cab For Cutie.

EDEN: It's my favorite album of all time. Hands down.

SARAH: I'll have to listen to it! Favorite of all time is a pretty big deal. I could never pick one favorite.

EDEN: No? Am I the only one who does that?

ERIC: No, I'd say my all-time favorite is Tourist History

EDEN: Two Door Cinema Club! Nice.

GLORIA: Geez, if I had to pick, I'd say Ceremonials by Florence and the Machine.

SARAH: Dark spiritualism with both Pagan yearning and plausible Christian deniability. On-brand, Gloria.

GLORIA: I don't know what those words meant, but sure.

CURTIS: My favorite has been and always will be the original 1957 Broadway cast recording of West Side Story, the one BEFORE the movie. With Chita Rivera as Anita? [Pause] And Carol Lawrence as the Original Maria [Pause] and Leonard Bernstein????

ERIC: Come on, musicals don't count.

CURTIS: Musicals *absolutely* count! Tony is my fucking *dream role*. And I'd kick it's ass too, if I didn't go to a high school too white to do it.

EDEN: And now you go to a college too white to do it, too.

CURTIS: Well, someday. Somewhere...

[Silence.]

That was a reference, by the way.

[Silence.]

You guys suck.

[EDEN takes a turn. Something was behind her, in the distance.]

SARAH: **WOAH**, oh shit! *Eden, turn around!!!*

[EDEN whips around. Tense pause.]

EDEN: What did you see?

SARAH: Do you not see anything?

EDEN: No, what am I looking for?

SARAH: [Here, Sarah will describe what she saw. This line will depend on what the actor of Eden is able to set up in the cemetery.]

GLORIA: Oh no, I didn't see it!

CURTIS: I thought I saw it too.

ERIC: No you didn't, dude.

CURTIS: Do you see through my eyes, Eric?

ERIC: You're just glomming onto what Sarah said.

EDEN: Well I'm screen recording, so if there was anything there, we'll see it later.

[Silence.]

I wish you guys were with me. There's just this weird feeling being here.

SARAH: It's a liminal space.

EDEN: Yeah... It kinda makes you feel like you're the only living person left...

[Silence.]

Fucked up, huh?

GLORIA: Yeah...

[Pause. ERIC picks up a bowl of cereal and starts crunching really loud.]

CURTIS: DUDE, breakfast happens between 5am and 10am!

ERIC: [Mouthful of cereal] It's a midnight snack.

EDEN: It's 1am where you are!

ERIC: I'm grazing! Look, just, try provoking a ghost so nothing can happen and you can go home so we can sleep.

EDEN: I'm not gonna provoke anything. And something will happen, even if I - ...

[EDEN trails off. Her eyes are fixed on something in the distance]

ERIC: "Even if I -..."?

[Silence. EDEN becomes afraid, shocked, and awed.]

EDEN: Oh my god...

[EDEN flips her camera around. There's something there in the cemetery. Everyone reacts as is appropriate for themselves. The camera swoops away as EDEN starts running. They're yelling for her, but she's not responding. Her camera is just swinging back and forth like some kinda Blair Witch Project shit. Eventually she gets to the street. She's panting so hard, she can barely breathe.]

GLORIA: *Eden, what was that?*

CURTIS: Tell us something Eden.

EDEN: Oh fuck. Oh, Jesus. Guys, did you see that?

ERIC: [Blandly] Yes, we all saw.

EDEN: Oh my god...

[Her horror turns into absolute joy. She realizes she has finally caught a ghost on camera. She cheers really, really loudly. Illegally loudly for the time of night, but she's taking her victory lap. She starts walking home.]

EDEN: Uh! Yeah! Suck it Eric! In your fuckin' face, man!

ERIC: I will suck nothing. You were clearly just messing with us.

EDEN: What? You think I faked that?

ERIC: Well that, or some weirdo was out there messing with you. In which case yeah, you better call the cops.

GLORIA: Was it a weirdo, Eden?

EDEN: No! Fuck you man! I'm your friend and you think I'd lie to you that hard? I'm not a psycho! That was real!

CURTIS: Dude, I saw that shit. That was something, for sure.

ERIC: Oh, it was something alright.

EDEN: Eric, I'd have to be one sick freak to lie about this - something this important to me.

GLORIA: [Panicking] I knew this was a bad idea.

EDEN: Gloria, it's ok! It's a good thing. I *finally* caught a ghost *on camera*!

GLORIA: [Shaking her head] No. No.

SARAH: This is so dope. You gotta send this shit into one of those paranormal shows!

EDEN: Do you think so? Did the camera get it good?

SARAH: Crystal clear quality. None of that blurry bigfoot shit.

EDEN: Oh my god, I have to see it.

GLORIA: Not until you get home! You have to stay on the call til you get home!

EDEN: Wait.

[EDEN stops walking and looks all around. Pause.]

I thought I heard more footsteps, but I think that was just my echo.

CURTIS: Ok, you're actually starting to scare me a little right now.

GLORIA: Eden, you're gonna get possessed.

ERIC: No, you're gonna get stabbed.

[Pause. EDEN keeps looking around. She readies her knife.]

EDEN: Don't worry, I'm ready.

SARAH: They'd have to be stupid to jump a bitch on a video call.

ERIC: I'm looking up the number to your police station dude. There's someone out there.

EDEN: Eric, if you call the cops, I'm gonna get in deeper shit than if there was a creep out here.

ERIC: Dude, I'm not gonna let you get murdered.

SARAH: [Sarcastically] 'Cause cops always *prevent* murders. Nice one Eric.

[EDEN pans her camera all around her.]

EDEN: There's. No. One. Here. See? Now chill out. The only things that are out here tonight are the squirrels, me, and the ghost we saw.

[Pause.]

I've gotta watch this video. I'm going off call for a second.

GLORIA: NO! Eden, you promised you'd stay on the call 'til you got home.

EDEN: I'll be right back when I'm done!

GLORIA: No, absolutely not.

EDEN: I'll be right back! Just one second! Wait for me.

[EDEN leaves the call. Long pause. GLORIA is panicking hard.]

CURTIS: What the fuck?

END OF SAMPLE