

## 'The So-called Phantom of Eglington Drive'

by Chris Brake

### Synopsis

A homeowner reflects on his connection to the ghost that haunts his house.

### Age Range

40+

### Gender

Male

### Length

3-4 minutes

### **THE HOMEOWNER:**

She's moaning out in the hallway again.

Our ghost.

The so-called 'Phantom of Eglington Drive'.

She's a reputation around these parts.

The last lot who lived here found her disruptive.

I think that's why they sold up.

Had quite enough of the old bird howling whilst trying to watch their soaps.

They'd christened the spectre 'The Lady in Grey'.

A solid 'nul points' in the creative department, but it sums up her dress sense nevertheless.

But *I* didn't know her by some hackneyed monicker.

*I* knew her name was Phil.

Or Phyllis Pickle if we're being fastidious, but we just called her Gran.

She once dropped the Pickle, her maiden name, when she briefly married Gramps.

But he hid his own pickle in a fitness instructor, so that was the end of that.

I remember visits to her house as a nipper.

A Sunday ritual after swimming, it was.

We'd be spoilt something rotten, when we arrived.

Walked in as paupers, treated as Kings.

Had bottomless buffets of raspberry jam sponge and dog-eared Beezers on tap.

Heaven on Earth it was, or at least a cul-de-sac in Leeds.

She loved this two-bed semi, did Gran.

As did we all, when she were here.

But life has a way of swiftly imploding when it senses you've got too content.

So one Sunday morning we found her, expired.

Folded like a toddler's attempt at origami, crumpled at the bottom of the stairs.

She'd slipped from her Stannah whilst disembarking.

Fell arse over tit for twelve steps.

We think an ill-fitting espadrille did it.

Quite the sad end for an advocate of house shoes.

After her passing, the house hit the market and sold to a family of four.

It was hard, walking past, on the way to our school, and seeing these strangers inside.

How they mangled the decor and phased out her taste, morphing from floral to beige.

And odd, it was.

I'd see *us*, but through a glass darkly.

Snippets of happy times in the house that we'd no longer have.

But the years rolled by and the kids moved out, so the parents fucked off too.

But *I'd* bided my time.

*I'd* saved every penny.

So I bagged it back for myself.

I got the sense they were desperate to sell.

That the racket Gran made was too much.

I've a theory though, that she did it on purpose, longing to drive them out.

Reckon she missed our visits on Sundays, and wanted to get back her clan.

So I'm here now, with Grandma, as she wails away.

Into the wee hours of the night.

I can't be sure she knows who I am though.

When I last paid a visit I was eight; bowl cut, freckles, bandy legs, and I've shed *that* former skin.

But every Sunday I go through the ritual, so she knows it's me that's here.

Jam sponge fingers and a flick through the Beezer.

It's like a time machine.

And I think she's knows, on Sundays.

I think she knows it's me.

It's the only day her soul stays quiet.

No moans.

No wails.

No howls in the hall.

Just peaceful.

Just as she was.