

THE OUIJA BOARD WARNING



By Jenny Dee

It was the night of All Hallows Eve. The neighborhood had gone dark, save for a few mischievous teenagers with their cans of shaving cream and dozens of eggs ready for some traditional after-hour debauchery.

Nearing midnight, the youthful trick or treaters were now snuggled into bed with their visions of candy jackpots, and all you could hear was the whispering howl of an enigmatic wind.

For it carried on its breath the sounds of the other worlds, who were ready to join the living once again.

It was also the evening we had closed the sale on our childhood home, which had become as barren as the full moon lit streets. My sisters and I were tasked with taking the final inventory, making sure that nary a trace of our existence remained in the hallowed corridors of the past.

It had to be a three-person effort; for this home we lived in for over 20 years was not as empty as it would appear to be. For decades, we had heard the sighs of unidentifiable entities roaming the hallways. The creaks of remains treading not so lightly above us in the cobweb-infested attic, a place in our home I had never allowed myself to explore.

We knew we would not be alone. We were aware of our land's historical background: our home had been built atop of an Indian burial ground; a fact that we were reminded of way too often on many sleepless nights as we felt the eyes that watched us from the darkest corners of the room.

The dark was not just for monsters, but for those spirits whose kind souls were disturbed by the construction of suburbia over them. And although we sensed they would not harm us, they delighted in sending those prickly shivers of fear down our Irish skin as a reminder that they were always with us.

So, why we expected any different on the night we said goodbye to our home, on a sacred evening where it is said that the veil between worlds was lifted, I do not know. Yet contradictorily, we were counting on that very miracle to perhaps call in the spirits of our grandparents to join us in a final farewell to the home we all shared together.

We moved through the obscure, cold mysterious rooms one by one, recalling fond (and not so fond) memories that now belonged only in the secret keepings of these walls.

Every last piece of life was now tucked away into a box and loaded onto the moving truck. All that remained was a vacuum for one last plugged in breath across the already immaculate carpets.

Well, a vacuum, some candles and a Ouija board.

I don't know which of us sisters thought of the idea, but we wanted to have a little séance like we did when we were little girls. As we prepared our little ceremony, we reminisced about how we had sleepovers down in the basement, where our mom would tell ghost stories and then go upstairs to make noises and shine lights to make us believe the phantoms that haunted our house were real.

We'd try to levitate each other: "light as a feather, stiff as a board." Sometimes successfully, too.

Then there was the Ouija board, where we would ask it questions about the initials of the man we would fall in love with or maybe say hello to grandma. It had always been harmless before.

But not on this night. Not on the night of All Hallows Eve, with our invitation way too enticing for those who have hungered to make contact with humans again.

It started out innocently. We turned off all of the lights in the entire house after our final check. Having shut down the heat thermostat earlier, we could feel the chill of the late October air settling within the old wood structure. All doors and windows except for the front entrance were locked, and we were ready to begin our séance sendoff.

In the open-air living room with the big bay window, we lit a circle of candles, which were further illuminated by the ray of full moon light that shone in upon

us. Within the circle we sat, opening up the board and preparing to connect with our ancestors.

"Is anyone here with us tonight?" my one sister asked, as she and I each took a side of the planchette and awaited its response.

'Yes,' we were driven to discover by the game's magical fortune teller. We allowed the goosebumps and giggles to collide in excitement. Oh, how much fun this was!

"Who are you?" I questioned, beginning to tremble in anticipation.

'No,' it pointed us to. No? That was an unusual answer. Isn't it supposed to spell out a name at this point, or give initials or something?

My sister asked it a different way.

"Who is guiding us? Is it you, Nanny?"

'No,' it defiantly repeated.

Maybe our questions needed to be more specific. Our other sister, who was watching from the side awaiting her turn, suggested that we ask its name.

"Tell us your name," I finally demanded, though gently, for fear of angering whoever we were speaking with. I wanted clarity, not confrontation, after all. After a brief pause, our guide began its journey to the answer.

'G-E,' it started to spell. George!! George!! It was our grandfather!

We were so happy to have connected with him, that the joy in the room was overpowering. We hardly paid any attention to its next movement, expecting the "O" next.

"Poppy, is that you?" we asked in unison, tickled that this was working out exactly as we planned. We couldn't wait to tell our mom how he had come through to say hello to us!

But, 'T-O' were the next two letters.

G-E-T-O? Did it accidentally add the "T" in there? Maybe it wasn't our grandfather after all, but someone else. Quizzically, we looked at each other: who do we know whose name started with "Geto?"

Then we froze with horrid realization. Fear chilled our bones and drained us of our blood. The last two letters revealed themselves before the planchette drove itself off the board completely, as if to make its undisputed ultimatum.

'U-T.'

GET OUT.

We were paralyzed from head to toe, moving on instinct to blow the candles out, and screaming at each other to throw the board back into the box and run from the house. We were too petrified to even think about going down the hallway to get the vacuum; the new owners were welcome to it, we decided instantly, as self-preservation was our only goal.

It took us no less than 30 seconds to leave our childhood home forever, not flinching to pursue who we could be talking to or why they wanted us out. We ran and ran until we got to our neighbors' safe sanctuary of a house, where we thankfully had already decided to spend the night.

Boy, did we have a story to tell our friends and family after we found our breath, blood and life restored again. Never had we ever been so frightened before—or since.

Whoever asked us to "Get Out" would get his wish. We never looked back or stepped foot in that house ever again—nor have we ever touched another Ouija board.