

Spooked  
by  
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FADE IN ON:

**INT. SUBURBAN LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

ELISE (5) sneaks downstairs; blonde and too-cute in Unicorn PJs. An adult someone SNORES on the second floor.

The girl reaches the landing. Ikea furniture casts "cheap but stylish" shadows before her. A digital clock glows satanically in the night.

But beyond that no-man's land lies Snack Nirvana. Otherwise known as: Mommy's Kitchen. Elise hurries towards the door.

**INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER**

Afraid of waking anyone, Elise doesn't turn on the light. She sneaks to the fridge, opens it a crack.

Eerie light bathes her face. Revealing: nightmare food for a child. Fruit. Vegetables. Tofu.

Wrinkling her nose, Elise looks up. Spots: a BOX OF COOKIES way up high. Her face brightens. Score!

Elisa drags over a chair. Teetering on tip-toe, she wobbles and reaches for the box.

SHARP CRACKS cause her to jump. Elise whirls around on her chair.

On the counter: A POPCORN MAKER shakes, rattles and rolls. Did it turn on by itself? Elise's eyes open wide.

The popcorn finishes, completely full. Elise climbs down... both tempted and wary.

The pantry CREAKS open. Silhouetted at the door, a large dark FEMALE SHAPE.

ELISE

Grandma?

Wrinkled feet SQUISH on tile. Fungus coats gnarly toenails. The figure shuffles forward:

Revealing: an OLD WOMAN, long past dead. A Sears nightgown floats around her bloated body, covered with mildew and stains. Her filmy eyes swivel towards Elise.

The girl YELPS and darts away.

Elise hurdles towards the stairs. Hurdles over Ikea obstacles along the way.

The TV flicks on by itself. Static, ala *Poltergeist*.

Elise trips but storms forward. Screams like a banshee up the stairs.

The old ghost wanders into the living room, a BOWL of POPCORN in a blackened hand. Upstairs, the panic starts:

ELISE (O.S.)  
Mommy, Daddy - Grandma's home!

CAROL (O.S.)  
Oh crap. Steve, wake up! Your daughter's at it again.

STEVE (O.S.)  
Carol, she's yours as well. And I calmed her down last time. Kirk called an early meeting on the database. I'm getting up in an hour - give me a break!

Ghost Grandma plops down on the couch. A puddle of ECTOPLASM spreads across the fabric. But it's intangible, so she doesn't mind. Instead, she cocks her head and listens in:

CAROL (O.S.)  
Honey, come to Mommy. You know Grandma's gone to a better place.

ELISE (O.S.)  
But I saw her. She was icky!

Ghost Grandma blinks, her feelings hurt.

CAROL (O.S.)  
Sweetheart, you know ghosts aren't real. And if they were, you know Grandma loved you. You just had a scary dream. Whatever you do, stay away from the bathtub this time. Sleep in here with us, okay?

STEVE (O.S.)  
So much for a full night's sleep. Honey, try to tuck her in, OK?

Grandma sighs and turns to the TV. She picks up the remote - which *appears* to float in the air.

She hits multiple random buttons, flipping stations - to various grisly, distorted shots. (Pop culture and otherwise.) It takes awhile for her to get it right.

Soon, TALK SHOW plays. A desk and more fill the screen:

Including: a beautiful BRUNETTE REPORTER (SAMANTHA). She wears an old fashioned prom gown, a gruesome STAB WOUND through her heart.

REPORTER

I'm your hostess, Samantha GoodGirl.  
Welcome to the Daily Spook!

Grandma settles back. CLAPS her hands in delight. They pass through each other completely. Samantha continues with her banter.

REPORTER

Tonight on DS: the growing trend of Death-Body-Shaming - a topic which many in our audience will find painful familiar. For our hard hitting report, we'll be interviewing several victims. Stay tuned, and we'll be right back!

The camera pulls in on Samantha's face. Revealing: broken veins around her eyes. She waves at an unseen CAMERAMAN.

His BLOODY FINGERS adjust the lens to zoom back. Rendering Samantha's complexion smooth again.

INSERT COMMERCIAL #1: a FEMALE ZOMBIE vacuums a bloodstained rug, dressed in a beehive hairdo and fifties clothes. Two seconds, and the stain is gone. Ms. Zombie gives the audience a rotted "thumbs-up."

FEMALE ZOMBIE

Wow - it's just like new. Call 1-800-BLU-DBGN!

Grandma spots a PURSE on the couch. She rummages through, and finds a wallet. It floats in her hand, through the air. A credit card slides out - along with a phone.

Ghost Grandma looks between the loot, and the screen. On second thought, she puts everything back.

*Daily Spook* returns. And now, Samantha's got a guest.

MARTIN (30s) sits in the guest seat. Every inch of him, roasted flesh.

REPORTER

Everyone, please welcome Martin. Martin, tell us about yourself?

MARTIN

I'm, uh, an electrician by trade. At least I used to be. Then I accidentally snipped the wrong wire. Red. Not green.

REPORTER

That's it? And it killed you?

MARTIN

To be honest, I peed myself - I was so surprised. Which grounded me. Then Zap!

REPORTER

Oh my. That's tragic. And - according to you, it just got worse?

Martin bobs his head up and down. Skin FLAPS on his face.

MARTIN

You know, I used to be good looking. Now every-time the living get a glimpse of me, they scream "Freddy" and run away!

REPORTER

(sighs)

That's so not nice.

MARTIN

Or fair. Comparing me to a child killer? That's profiling, right there!

Grandma tosses popcorn in her mouth. They slide down her half-transparent torso - tumble into cracks on the couch.

Another guest - FRANK - walks on stage. A skeletal, gawky teen, Frank wears only a small SPEEDO - displays a body covered in BUMPS.

Samantha is repulsed. But pastes sympathy on her face.

REPORTER

Frank - you've been Death Shamed, too? What's your story, Dear?

FRANK

(squeaky voice)

Duh. It's kinda obvious.

MARTIN

Ya think?

FRANK

(glares at Martin)

I died from a lousy case of Chicken Pox.  
A stupid kid's disease. Which I got at  
seventeen!

REPORTER

And Undead bully you for that?

FRANK

Constantly. The girls call me "Fester."  
And - sometimes - Pimple Dick.

Samantha's eyes slide down to Frank's Speedo.

REPORTER

Since you brought "it" up... why are you  
wearing that? Doesn't that make your  
situation even worse?

FRANK

Yeah. But I was wearing it when I died.

REPORTER

You went swimming? In your state?

FRANK

No. It was easier to scratch. But you  
know the rules: now I gotta wear it for  
eternity. Everyone staring at my junk!

Samantha turns to the camera.

REPORTER

A tragic tale. Another word from our  
sponsors, then we'll be back.

Commercial #2: An AXE VICTIM glues together shredded  
skin. A pitch scrolls across the bottom of the screen:  
Forensic Bondo. Stick with us, and buy some today!

Grandma looks down at her stomach. Puffy, but instant.  
But the popcorn in her hand grows soggy. She twists her  
wrist 360, wrings water from her floppy flesh.

The next guest on *Daily Spook*: PUDGY SHIRLEY in a clown  
costume. A TENT POLE pierces her chest, poking between  
pom-pom buttons. She wriggles sideways into her chair.

REPORTER

Shirley, you look - colorful.

PUDGY SHIRLEY

(grumbles)

It was supposed to be just a side gig. My agent *swore* the commercials would come. But no, I had to trip over a cat during my prat fall. In front of fifty kids. Now thanks to "Princess Pussy" - I'm stuck looking like Tim Curry had a fight with Lancelot. A spiky refugee from *It!*

She flips the bird at her costume. Samantha frowns.

REPORTER

Wow. That gives a whole new meaning to "Fashion Victim."

PUDGY SHIRLEY

No shit, Carrie. You're telling me?

Samantha swings away, towards the screen.

REPORTER

Folks, we've got one more guest tonight. A word of warning: this contains visuals which may be - traumatizing to see.

ANTHONY shuffles on stage. An old, hairy man wearing red socks, a white tank top - and Fruit of the Looms around his knees. PIXELS blur his groin.

Anthony shuffles towards a chair. Teen Frank stares.

FRANK

I thought I had a shit deal.

ANTHONY

Mind your elders. Clam it, kid.

Anthony sits down. His chair FARTS AIR. Pudgy Shirley GIGGLES. Anthony adjusts his crotch.

ANTHONY

You too, Pennywise.

SAMANTHA

Anthony, what's *your* story? Tell the truth. I promise, this is a Safe Place to share. We're all Ex-Survivors here.

ANTHONY

Really, there ain't much. Ever since my beloved Beatrice died, I've been living by myself. Alone.

FRANK

That's what alone means. Duh.

ANTHONY

Go stuff a sock in your shorts. Anyhow's, my son didn't wanna talk to me.

FRANK

I wonder why...

ANTHONY

And my daughter only called when she was late on rent.

Grandma Ghost sniffles. She picks up a tissue - which floats in the air - and dabs away a ghostly tear.

ANTHONY

No need to cue the violins. It was... okay. At first. But then one night, I went to the bathroom to - uh - take care of business. I guess I strained too hard. Had a massive heart attack, right on the John! They found me two weeks later, cause a neighbor bitched about the stink. Believe you me, it was a blessing to get the hell outta that bathroom. But now I gotta float through limbo like this!

REPORTER

What about Beatrice - your wife? Didn't you two... reconcile?

ANTHONY

(grunts)

She don't wanna be seen nowhere with me. Who can blame her, when I look like this!

An agitated Anthony hops to his feet. His pixilated "member" falls off onto the floor.

ANTHONY

Fuck my life. If I wasn't already croaked, I'd die of shame.

He walks away. Toilet paper trails at his feet. Samantha looks into the lens and sighs.

REPORTER

Well, that's all we have time for today. But for our viewing audience, one more word. Never forget: though it may seem strange, being dead is sometimes harder than life.



So, the next time you see a fellow phantom that doesn't look their best... please be kind. And don't take it personally when the Living scream and run. You'd feel the same, in their shoes.

Grandma turns off the TV. Finds lipstick and a compact in the purse. Applies it carefully. Ignores her reflection.

Then she puts down the popcorn, plods upstairs. Soggy feet SQUISH with every step she takes.

**INT. ELISE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

A pink paradise. A photo of Elise, Mom, Dad and living Grandma on the night table.

Grandma wanders in to find Elise asleep. One bedsheet tangled at her waist. Another on the floor, covering a TEDDY BEAR.

Wind ripples curtains at the window. Grandma tentatively approaches the bed. Elise stirs.

The old ghost hesitates. Her face isn't something she wants the child to see!

So she grabs the sheet off the floor, and tosses it over her head. Turning her into: a traditional ghost. She thinks it over - too cliché.

So she pulls it off, and drapes it over Elise. The girl snuggles up to it, toasty and warm.

Grandma tucks in the Teddy Bear besides Elise. Kisses the photo as well.

GRANDMA GHOST

Good night, Sweetheart. May you always remember me just like this.

And then, she fades away.

Elise's eyes flutter open. She blinks at the photo. And the *faint* outline of Grandma's lips. She yawns and drifts off back to sleep.

ELISE

Grandma, I love you too. Good night.

FINAL FADE OUT: