

Cored

by

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ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

Lights up on the inside of a derelict house. There is a desk and a few worn chairs, as well as three or four doors lining the walls. There is a sign on the desk that says “Henrietta’s Haunted House: Tours Available” and underneath it, “Contact Jenny to schedule the most unsettling tour of your life!” LUCY stands next to the desk and sighs.

LUCY

As an amateur paranormal investigator, you gotta start small. That means local. Or, near-local. It took two hours and over a quarter of a tank of gas to get to Ashere, Iowa, a small town on the Western side of the state. Not much happens here, or at least, that’s what it looks like. There are two gas stations and three stop lights in the entire town, a Walmart in the next town over – only slightly more populous than Ashere.

She sighs again and pulls out her phone. She types in the number on the sign and calls, donning a bright voice that is completely unlike her monologuing voice.

Hi! Is this Jenny? I was just calling to let you know that I’m here for my tour. I know I’m a few minutes early. I did what you asked about. For the... sacrifice?

A beat.

Great! I just wanted to confirm, it’s okay for me to record the experience, right?

A beat.

Awesome, I’ll see you soon! Yep, buh-bye!

She pockets the phone, setting her backpack on a chair and rifling through it. She procures a camcorder from her bag, turning it sideways to turn it on. She slings the backpack back onto her shoulders.

The Haunted House of Ashere, Iowa isn’t the most exciting first episode for a YouTube series – *Looking with Lucy: Paranormal Misadventures*. It is accessible, though. And cheap. The tickets to tour the house were only twenty bucks. It’s cheaper to go tour this haunted attraction than it

will be to drive there and back. Even though it's a bit... unappealing, I am looking forward to recording content. I think it will be a good first step into the world of paranormal investigating.

She pauses.

Unlike other investigators, I'm not doing it for the money or fame. I've always been interested in ghosts, ever since I was young. When I was a kid, I lived next to a cemetery. I know for sure that I lived in a haunted house. I remember having 'imaginary friends' who were adults. But I don't think they were *just* imaginary. One only had half his head, like he had been shot. Another had no right arm, as if it was sheared clean off. They weren't like normal imaginary friends. Their inner lives were too descriptive, too detailed for my childhood brain to even begin to comprehend.

Lucy is pacing, almost rabid in her excitement to share her story.

Ever since then, I've thought I had a sixth sense. I feel when energies are off; I notice presences other people don't. So I've researched what I can. I've devoted my free time to this taboo part of life – to death, to the paranormal. I believe in ghosts, whole-heartedly. They are remnants of living, breathing people. They are memories, they are displaced energies. They are apparitions worn into a rut, holding onto something, everything, that was important to them in life. It's almost poetic. To have unfinished business. I want to remain on Earth long after death, floating around as a dying memory. I wouldn't be a rude ghost. I wouldn't haunt someone. I think I could be an imaginary friend. It'd be nice to come full-circle... But I digress, long story short – I'm just really fascinated by ghosts. I was inspired by BuzzFeed's *Unsolved*, and I thought, 'I'm interesting, I can talk on camera about ghosts for hours. Or to ghosts for hours, if the occasion arises. Why not?'