

SERIES BIBLE

SOLUTIONS, INC.

By Mike Murphy

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THE STORY

Solutions, Inc. is a half-hour “horror sitcom” which tells the story of Professor Jeffrey Walton – recently separated from the University of Massachusetts following a laboratory-destroying incident involving a genetically engineered mouse – and Sgt. Benjamin Longstreet of the NYPD (retired), who form *Solutions, Inc.*, a Boston, Massachusetts-based agency that investigates weird and supernatural occurrences for its clients. In each self-contained episode, Walton and Longstreet (with the occasional, begrudging help of their *very* elderly, dour British valet, Mansfield) delve into cases involving clones, vampires, time machines, huge balls of hair, walking corpses, a rogue satellite, a wolfman, and a vengeful genie – to name just some.

WHERE THE SHOW IS GOING

The show has been produced as an *audio* series by The Colonial Radio Theatre on the Air. I have written 25 scripts.

As the series progresses, we will learn more about the characters through their interactions with each other and their clients. For example: Walton was once a ladies’ man. Unfortunately, one of his old girlfriends is now seeking world domination through a plot involving GPS units. During a visit to Heaven in another episode, we learn what woman drove Longstreet from the NYPD and why Mansfield has been alive for so *very* long. As the main characters work together and get to know each other better, they will develop a begrudging sense of loyalty to one another.

MAIN CHARACTERS

- *Jeffrey Walton*: Professor Jeffrey Walton is an unmarried man in his late 30s. He is rather effeminate, always wearing (as a tribute, he insists) a multi-colored cloak that was given to him by the widow of his mentor (after said mentor was regrettably eaten by crocodiles) and yearning for Zamfir (the master of the pan flute) to give a concert near Boston. Walton believes himself highly intelligent, and he *does* show a great deal of scientific ability in his basement laboratory but not with his constantly malfunctioning teleporter. The Professor considers himself the brains of *Solutions, Inc.* He always refers to his partner in the agency as “Benjamin.”
- *Benjamin Longstreet*: Benjamin Longstreet is an unmarried, retired NYPD sergeant, also in his late 30s. Longstreet is a man’s man, tough and outspoken. He is not above busting some heads or firing some bullets to solve a case. Ben, if he is to be believed, has a long history with the ladies. He always refers to his colleague, Walton, as “Professor.” He usually respects him, but considers Mansfield, their valet, to be weird – even though he

does make *really* good vodka martinis. Longstreet is the brawn of the agency, though he is sometimes creeped out by the supernatural nature of most of their investigations.

- *Mansfield*: Mansfield – that is his *only* name – is Walton and Longstreet’s *very* elderly, dour British valet who always wears a tuxedo. He gets upset if anyone calls him a “butler,” and we learn why in one episode. Mansfield’s age is open to conjecture and is the subject of many jokes – usually from Sgt. Longstreet. While devoted to, and very efficient at, his position, Mansfield considers it beneath him. He usually refuses to join his employers on their cases unless some type of incentive (a hefty raise or a two-week paid vacation in England) is offered. Poor Mansfield sometimes finds himself *very* reluctantly involved in Solutions, Inc.’s adventures, such as when he is possessed by the spirit of Don Juan and when he is kidnapped by aliens who want him to be their king.

RECURRING CHARACTERS

- *CLAIRE*: CLAIRE (*Computer Learning and Instructional Resource Entity*) is Professor Walton’s large, female-voiced super-computer that resides in his basement laboratory. “She” is introduced in the later episodes. CLAIRE provides yet another annoyance for Mansfield by often professing her love for him and calling him “Manny,” which he detests. In one episode, she holds the main characters hostage until Mansfield agrees to marry her.
- *Mr. Lehman*: Mr. Lehman is Longstreet and Walton’s next-door neighbor. An older, perpetually cranky man, he is the kind of guy who yells at kids to get off his lawn or he’ll call the police and keeps their ball if it ends up in his yard. He is often angered by the noisy goings-on next door.

SOME EPISODES

These scripts, and twenty others, have already been written for the *audio* series:

1. “The Ladies’ Man”: Usually quiet Mansfield has become quite the lothario of late. Could it have something to do with a séance Professor Walton recently held after too many beers?
2. “Hairball”: Walton and Longstreet investigate the destruction of a local hair salon. According to surveillance video, the criminal is a giant. . . *hairball*.
3. “For Want of a King”: Aliens who won’t take no for an answer kidnap Mansfield so he can become the king of their planet. One problem: To show his merit before ascending the throne,

Mansfield must kill the dreaded huklop monster – which no one knows how to do – or be devoured trying.

4. “Baby, It’s Cold Outside”: A police buddy of Ben’s wants the men of Solutions, Inc. to come with him to Tibet on his hunt for The Abominable Snowman.

5. “Light My Fire”: A dragon named Daryl (“Daryl Dragon” – Captain & Tennille reference alert!) hires our heroes to travel to an “alternate” England and help him regain his stolen fire breath from Sir Michael (who wants to rid the land of *all* dragons) and Hagatha, the Horrible (a local witch).

POTENTIAL SPONSORS/PRODUCT PLACEMENTS

In this first episode, lemonade, cars, and tuxedos (as worn by Mansfield) figure prominently. Companies that produce these items (Country Time, for example) should be approached about sponsorship. Product placement opportunities will be possible, slyly making sure the audience knows – for instance – the brand of lemonade Walton and Morgan are drinking, and the type of automobile the Professor drives to and from the haunted estate. The different plots of subsequent episodes will afford unique advertising and product placement opportunities.

DEMOGRAPHICS

I believe the series will appeal to all ages because of its humor, odd characters, and novel, imaginative plots. Social media could be used to appeal firstly to its main users – the younger generation. Word of mouth, postings, and texts would spread interest in the show to other young people, and, eventually, to their older family members. A robust Web presence should be maintained across all platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) for publicity, saturation, and teasers of upcoming episodes.

SOLUTIONS, INC.

"Pilot (The Lady is a Ghost)"

Written by

Mike Murphy

Episode #1

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SOLUTIONS, INC.

"Pilot (The Lady is a Ghost)"

Episode #1

REGULAR CAST

JEFFREY WALTON.....

BENJAMIN LONGSTREET.....

MANSFIELD.....

GUEST CAST

JASON MORGAN.....

LORETTA INNES.....

CAPTAIN ROBERT INNES.....

SOLUTIONS, INC.

"Pilot (The Lady is a Ghost)"

SETS

EXT. SOLUTIONS, INC. OFFICE (SIDEWALK)

INT. SOLUTIONS, INC. OFFICE

INT. SOLUTIONS, INC. PARLOR

EXT. CITY PARK

EXT. MORGAN SEASIDE HOME

INT. MORGAN SEASIDE HOME

INT. WALTON'S CAR

COLD OPEN

1 EXT. SOLUTIONS, INC. OFFICE - DAY

1

JASON MORGAN, a tall, 50-ish, thin man with salt-and-pepper hair and dressed in his shirtsleeves, pauses at a small flight of stone stairs leading to a large wooden door. With a quizzical look on his face, he reaches into his shirt pocket and removes a newspaper clipping. We read it over his shoulder as he holds it in his hand:

Got a problem you can't solve? In trouble? We can help. We specialize in the odd and paranormal. Call SOLUTIONS, INC. at 617-555-7831. Prof. Walton and Sgt. Longstreet are waiting to help you. Serious inquiries only please.

Putting the clipping back in his pocket, he sighs, ascends the stairs, and rings the doorbell. After a moment, the door slowly opens with an ominous creak.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

2

EXT. SOLUTIONS, INC. OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

2

The creaky door opens to reveal MANSFIELD, the elderly, tuxedoed, gray-haired valet.

MANSFIELD
(always deadpan)
Yes?

MORGAN
Is this Solutions, Inc.?

MANSFIELD
Tis.

MORGAN
Oh good. I didn't see a sign.

MANSFIELD
We had one, but we had to take it down.

MORGAN
Why?

MANSFIELD
The crayon colors ran together when it rained.

MORGAN
My name is Jason Morgan. I have an appointment to see Professor Walton.

MANSFIELD
Are you *certain* about that?

MORGAN
Oh, yes. I spoke with him earlier. We have an appointment at 2:00.

MANSFIELD
Are you sure you won't change your mind?

MORGAN
Pardon me?

MANSFIELD
No, I suppose not.
(beat)
You may as well come in.

Mansfield opens the creaky door wide and ushers Morgan inside. He closes the door with a thud, and the sound echoes throughout the house.

MANSFIELD

(approaching)

May I take your hat and coat, sir?

MORGAN

(confused)

I'm not wearing either. It must be 90 degrees outside!

MANSFIELD

I'm sorry. It's a standard valet question: One of my staples. I'm afraid I keep forgetting when to use it and when not to.

MORGAN

Could you summon the Professor for me?

WALTON speaks as he approaches Morgan and Mansfield. Dressed casually in worn jeans and a T-shirt, he wears a multi-colored, waist-long cloak about his shoulders.

JEFF

(approaching)

There's no need for that. I have arrived.

MANSFIELD

(sarcastically; sotto voce)

Delighted.

JEFF

You may go now, Mansfield. Mr. Morgan and I have important matters to discuss in the parlor.

MANSFIELD

Will you and the gentleman require refreshments?

JEFF

A lemonade for me, please.

(beat)

May I interest you in a glass, sir?

MORGAN

That sounds delightful, thank you.

Mansfield shuffles away to the kitchen. Jeff guides Morgan to the parlor. They talk as they walk.

MORGAN

What an unusual butler you have.

JEFF

Mansfield prefers the term "valet."

MORGAN

Why is that?

JEFF

I'm not sure. I've never asked him.

They arrive in the bookcase-lined parlor. Jeff proffers Morgan a seat. They sit in large wing-back chairs, a small table between them. Morgan looks about approvingly.

MORGAN

You and the Sergeant live *and* work here?

JEFF

We do. It is an arrangement which has served us well. . . and saved us rent money for an office to boot.

MORGAN

A sound decision. As a businessman, I admire such thinking.

JEFF

What line of business are you in?

MORGAN

Rhubarb.

JEFF

I beg your pardon?

MORGAN

Rhubarb - the vegetable. The Morgan family owns some of the largest rhubarb farms on the globe.

JEFF

How good for you and your kin.

MORGAN

Do you enjoy rhubarb, Professor?

JEFF

I cannot recall the last time I indulged.

MORGAN

You should have it as often as possible!

JEFF

Why's that?

MORGAN

Well, aside from my financial interest, it's chock full of vitamins, minerals, and all good things.

JEFF

I'll have Mansfield put it on our grocery list.

MORGAN

Be sure he looks for the Morgan sticker on the product. That way, you're assured of nothing but the best. You *don't* want second-rate rhubarb.

JEFF

Perish the thought!

(beat)

Well, as you know from our telephone conversation, I am Professor Jeffrey Walton, recently separated from the University of Massachusetts.

MORGAN

Separated?

JEFF

It was a messy affair. I prefer not to go into it.

MORGAN

I. . . I don't wish to pry.

JEFF

I'm sure they've repaired the damage to the laboratory by now. It wasn't really my fault. Those genetically altered lab mice certainly are *strong*!

(beat)

But I digress. My associate, Sgt. Longstreet of the NYPD, retired, is out on another matter of great importance. He sends his regrets for not being here to greet you.

MORGAN

Most kind.

JEFF

Rest assured the two of us will be working in tandem to solve your problem.

Mansfield slowly approaches with a tray of drinks.

MORGAN

When I saw your advertisement in the *Globe* -

MANSFIELD

Your drinks, gentlemen.

Mansfield puts the tray down on the small table.

JEFF

Thank you, but how many times have I told you *never* to interrupt a client?

MANSFIELD

Did I do that again?

JEFF

You *did*.

MANSFIELD

I'm so sorry. My hearing is not what it once was.

(turns to Morgan)

I could hear a pin drop when I was a lad. A *pin*.

JEFF

Perhaps you need new batteries in your hearing aides? When was the last time you replaced them?

MANSFIELD

They. . . need replacing?

MORGAN

My father wears a hearing aid. When the battery begins to die, the device emits a shrill beep.

MANSFIELD

I never heard a thing.

MORGAN

I suppose you wouldn't have.

JEFF

I did, but I thought it was a truck
constantly backing up.

(beat)

We'll look into that problem later.
Thank you for the drinks.

Mansfield slowly shuffles away.

JEFF

I hope you can forgive the
interruption.

MORGAN

Certainly. One must respect the
elderly.

(beat)

How old is he?

JEFF

No one really knows, and Mansfield
isn't saying.

(beat)

And now, to business: You mentioned
you have a ghost problem.

Morgan takes a glass from the tray and appreciatively sips
the lemonade.

MORGAN

Is that unusual?

JEFF

Not at all. New England is fraught
with spirits.

MORGAN

Many nights, she's up at all hours,
moaning and dragging chains around the
house.

JEFF

She?

MORGAN

It's the ghost of a woman.

JEFF

Her behavior sounds. . . *bothersome*.

MORGAN

It can be. The dragging of chains is
not conducive to slumber.

JEFF

Fear not. I'm sure I can convince this spirit to vacate your home in two shakes of a lamb's tail - if not sooner.

Alarmed, Morgan puts his drink down on the tray.

MORGAN

Oh, no! That's not what I want you to do at all!

JEFF

No?

MORGAN

She's threatening to leave. I want you to convince her to *stay*.

3

INT. SOLUTIONS, INC. PARLOR - MOMENTS LATER

3

JEFF

You want the ghost to remain?

MORGAN

Exactly.

JEFF

Why would that be?

MORGAN

(looks around; beat; shyly)
May I speak freely?

JEFF

Of course.

MORGAN

There is no one else here?

JEFF

Only Mansfield, and he's in the kitchen probably listening to the horse races on the radio.

MORGAN

I may rely on your discretion?

JEFF

Always.

MORGAN

And Sgt. Longstreet?

JEFF

Guaranteed. Consider this parlor your confessional.

MORGAN

(beat)

The spirit is the ghost of an *incredibly* beautiful woman: A face that shines like a thousand suns; long, golden tresses; eyes that sparkle like the rarest of jewels; a voice as sweet as pure honey; and lips as red as the most vibrant of roses.

JEFF

(chuckles)

If you'll forgive me, it sounds like you're in love with her.

MORGAN

I *am*.

JEFF

(surprised, at first)

May I point out one problem with any possible relationship: Being a ghost, she's *dead*. It's part of the job description.

MORGAN

I'm aware of that.

JEFF

That is more of a problem than both of you, say, not sharing a common religion or rooting for different sports teams.

MORGAN

If you were to see her, you'd understand why I'm drawn to her.

(beat)

I have been a bachelor all my life, but I've always held out hope that the perfect woman was somewhere waiting for me.

JEFF

But she's *dead*.

MORGAN

Not the ideal arrangement, I know.
Everything within me screams that a
relationship is preposterous -
everything but my heart. I long to be
with her.

JEFF

You're not considering suicide?

MORGAN

Good heavens, no!

JEFF

Then how can you possibly be together?

MORGAN

That is my problem.

JEFF

Do you know who she is. . . was?

MORGAN

According to my research, my home once
belonged to Captain Robert Innes of
the good ship *Starshine* and his wife,
Loretta. From the descriptions I've
read of Mrs. Innes, I assume this is
her ghost.

JEFF

It does make me wonder why she haunts
your home. This often indicates
unfinished business of some sort.
Something must be troubling Loretta's
spirit or she would have moved on to
her eternal rest.

(beat)

Had you ever heard of Loretta Innes
before your research?

MORGAN

Never.

JEFF

Then she is likely not haunting you.
Whatever is keeping her tied to this
Earth must revolve around your common
home.

MORGAN

I have no idea what that might be.

JEFF

You mentioned that she wants to stop haunting the place.

MORGAN

She told me she is attempting to do that.

JEFF

She's having some problems?

MORGAN

Yes. She won't say why.

JEFF

Mr. Morgan, I believe that Sgt. Longstreet and I can help you.

MORGAN

Wonderful!

JEFF

Do know, however, that our investigation will reveal why Loretta's spirit still roams this Earth. If the anchor that holds her here becomes apparent and can be eradicated, it may enable her to go to her final reward.

(beat)

We will try our best to achieve the results you wish, but it's possible that may not happen.

MORGAN

So I have to risk losing her to try to keep her?

JEFF

Precisely.

MORGAN

(longish beat)

I understand. It's the chance I have to take or I *will* lose her.

(beat)

Do you accept personal checks?

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

4

EXT. PARK - LATER

4

A typical park. We see children at play on some climbing structures and swings, and people jogging by and walking their dogs. Walton walks toward a bench beside a statue where LONGSTREET, a bear of a man in casual dress, is sitting.

JEFF

(approaching; winded)

I've been looking all over for you,
Benjamin.

BEN

I said I'd be on the bench next to the
statue.

JEFF

Do you know how many statues there are
in this park?

BEN

More than one?

JEFF

Several more.

BEN

Sorry about that.

JEFF

(sighs)

No matter. I needed the exercise.

He sits down beside Longstreet.

JEFF

Did you find the body in the Shelly
case?

BEN

Yes: The old lady was feeding it, bit
by bit, to her guard dogs.

JEFF

Ick! Will dogs eat people?

BEN

If they're very hungry. She mixed the
remains in with their regular kibble.
The police say enough evidence exists
to prove her guilt and send her up the
river for some time.

JEFF

Ghastly!

(quickly, then dismissively)
Another case closed.

BEN

I hope her son's check clears.
(beat)
Did you meet our new client?

JEFF

I did. I gave him your regrets.

BEN

What's his problem?

JEFF

He's in love with a dead woman.

BEN

That's illegal.

JEFF

His dead woman is a ghost.

BEN

That *ought* to be illegal.

JEFF

There's more to it than that.

BEN

This sounds like a case that's more up
your alley.

JEFF

Where the Shelly case was more suited
to *your* talents.

(beat)

I've made arrangements with Mr. Morgan
to visit his home tomorrow. I can fill
you in on the details of his case on
the way. He says the lady's ghost
usually comes out at night.

BEN

Don't they *always*? I've never heard of
a 9-to-5 ghost.

5

EXT. MORGAN SEASIDE HOME - THE NEXT MORNING

5

Walton and Longstreet drive up, park, and get out of their
car. The Morgan estate sprawls before them.

The waves of the Atlantic crash not far away. Longstreet is wearing an ugly checked suit coat.

JEFF
(looking appreciatively)
What an impressive home!

BEN
It just looks old to me.

JEFF
Imagine the history this house has seen.

BEN
What's the fascination with *old* in this country? Houses, furniture, cars. We're not fascinated with the one old thing we *should* be.

JEFF
And that would be?

BEN
People. My mom will be 97 at the end of the month. No one's fascinated with her, least of all my dad. I guess she lost out since she's made of skin and bones and not wood. *She's* seen a lot of history too.

Walton looks disapprovingly at Longstreet's suit coat.

JEFF
I cannot believe you wore *that* to meet our new client.

BEN
I thought you'd like it. I've had it for years. It's *old*.

JEFF
The pattern is *garish*.

BEN
As opposed to your cloak?

JEFF
You know very well that I wear this as a tribute to my mentor, the late, great Declan O'Leary, professor emeritus at the University of Massachusetts. Now *there* was a man who was taken from us before his time!

BEN

He *did* die young.

JEFF

Looking back, he should have guessed the pit might have crocodiles in it, but then hindsight is always 20/20.

BEN

At least the authorities were able to rescue the cloak. The crocs wouldn't eat it! Probably would have given them indigestion.

(beat)

How'd you get it from his widow anyway?

JEFF

Truce! Like gentlemen, we will have to agree to disagree on the matter of our apparel choices.

(beat)

To the house.

They climb the stone steps to the door and ring the bell. Morgan opens the door.

MORGAN

Gentlemen, thank you so much for coming so promptly.

They walk inside. Morgan closes the door behind them.

JEFF

May I present my associate, Sgt. Benjamin Longstreet of the NYPD, retired.

MORGAN

Retired, eh? I bet there's a swell tale behind that.

BEN

No. Not really.

MORGAN

(odd beat)

A pleasure to meet you.

BEN

Likewise.

(beat)

Nice house you've got here. *Old.*

MORGAN

Uhm. . . yes.

(beat)

I've taken the liberty of setting you both up with rooms.

(looks about)

Where are your bags?

JEFF

Not necessary. If, as you suspect, your ghost shows up this evening, we will solve your problem quickly and then head back to Boston. There will be no need for an overnight stay.

MORGAN

I can't *guarantee* she'll appear tonight.

Longstreet taps on Morgan's leather sofa.

BEN

I'll crash here.

JEFF

Benjamin, we will *not* need to stay.

MORGAN

Let's cross that bridge if we come to it.

(beat)

Dinner will be at 7:00. I hope you both like lobster.

JEFF

Love it.

BEN

Can you scare up a hamburger?

JEFF

Benjamin!

MORGAN

It's alright. If the Sergeant is allergic to shellfish -

BEN

It's not that. I simply can't eat anything that's sitting dead on my plate looking like it did while it was alive.

MORGAN

But you *can* eat a hamburger?

BEN

It doesn't look like a cow between two buns, though there *was* that diner in Phoenix -

MORGAN

I'm sure I can find you a hamburger.

BEN

Could you make it a *cheeseburger*?

6

INT. MORGAN SEASIDE HOME - EVENING

6

Most of the house's lights are off. Some flickering moonlight shines through the bay windows. Morgan, Longstreet, and Walton stand by the unlit fireplace as a mantle clock chimes the last strokes of twelve.

MORGAN

Midnight.

(beat)

If she shows up, it'll be soon.

In the distance, we hear the sound of heavy chains being dragged across the floor, followed by a woman's ghostly moaning and wailing.

JEFF

Ah, we're in luck!

BEN

Define "luck."

The woman's ghostly figure materializes by a bookcase. This is LORETTA. She appears as Morgan described her. She is wearing a flowing robe of shimmering white.

BEN

What a *looker*!

JEFF

She *is* lovely.

The figure sees them and starts to leave.

MORGAN

Professor, do something!

JEFF

(calling)

Mrs. Innes! Please stay. I *beg* of you.

Loretta turns and approaches them. She seems to glide across the floor.

LORETTA

I don't know you two men.

JEFF

My name is Jeffrey Walton - *Professor*
Jeffrey Walton - and this is my
associate, Sgt. Benjamin Longstreet.

LORETTA

What are you doing in my home?

JEFF

We're here to help you.

LORETTA

How can you, the living, possibly help
me?

JEFF

Mr. Morgan's worried about you.

LORETTA

(sarcastically)

I find that hard to believe. I've seen
the lust in his eyes whenever he
glances at me.

JEFF

Mr. Morgan!

BEN

Good man!

MORGAN

I *never*!

LORETTA

You deny feelings for me?

MORGAN

(beat)

Well, I. . .

BEN

Own it.

JEFF

Now *is* the time for truth.

MORGAN

(shyly, at first)

Yes, I have feelings for you. But we are of different worlds. A relationship would be impossible without me joining you in the hereafter.

LORETTA

Even *then*. I cannot repeat the event that has bound me to this house. Oh woe that it ever happened! Curse my very womanhood.

BEN

So *that's* why you're still here:
Cheated on your old man?

MORGAN

Sergeant!

LORETTA

In his own crude way, the Sergeant is right. I did just that, and I have regretted it for scores of years.

MORGAN

You? Surely *not*!

JEFF

What happened? *Please* tell us. We want to help.

LORETTA

(longish beat)

My Robert was captain of the *Starshine*. One night, during a dreadful storm, he was lost at sea. Wreckage from the ship washed up on the shore days later.

(beat)

Some months passed. In a moment of grief-induced weakness, I. . . I succumbed to the lecherous advances of a local merchant. I regret it to this day, and I have not been able to face Robert since my death so long ago.

MORGAN

What do you mean "face him?"

LORETTA

He is present in the hereafter with me.

I have been avoiding him because of my guilt. It has not been an easy task.

BEN

Talk about a full-time job!

LORETTA

And so you see, gentlemen, I have been condemned to haunt this house as punishment for my tryst.

(beat)

I admit I have feelings for you, sir, but, as you said, we are of different worlds. Such a relationship could never be. My yearnings only remind me of the guilt I feel.

BEN

But if your old man died in the storm, weren't you a widow when you had your fling? You weren't breaking any marriage vows. Till death do you part, right?

LORETTA

Correct. Some of the guilt I feel is of my own making. Those in charge of my punishment do not believe that a suitable mourning period had passed before I kept company with another man.

JEFF

So you've been haunting this house to drive Mr. Morgan away. With him gone, your feelings would fade, and you would no longer be reminded of your encounter with the merchant.

LORETTA

Exactly.

BEN

Good goin', Professor.

JEFF

Elementary, my dear Benjamin.

LORETTA

I've been trying to break free of this house, but those who decided my punishment will not allow it. I must pay my penance here - the place where my indiscretion occurred.

BEN

You should have gone to a hotel.

JEFF

Well, Mr. Morgan? Do you still want her to stay now that you know her story?

MORGAN

Loretta, I never wished to cause you any harm. Why did you not tell me these things so I could help you end your torment?

LORETTA

My feelings for you overcame my tongue. I could not speak of my shame to someone who held me in such high regard. The arrival of your friends gave me my sounding board.

BEN

Don't mention it.

MORGAN

I cannot ask you to make her stay here, Professor. That would be the height of egotism.

(beat)

But how can we solve your problem?

LORETTA

Receiving forgiveness from my husband would allow me to break free of this home and achieve blessed, eternal peace.

JEFF

I can do that.

MORGAN

How?

JEFF

(proudly)

I am a medium.

BEN

I'm an extra large.

JEFF

I can contact the spirit world.

BEN

I never knew that.

JEFF

There is much you don't know about me.

LORETTA

Can you help me?

JEFF

I can call forth the spirit of your husband so the two of you can talk this over and settle it once and for all.

LORETTA

(shocked)

Oh, no, no. Certainly *not*! I cannot face him. My shame -

MORGAN

Loretta, please try. I'm sure Robert loves you very much. It's been hundreds of years. If he ever held a grudge against you, he can't *still* be holding one.

BEN

It's worth a try, lady.

LORETTA

(longish beat)

You're right. My Robert was a fine, forgiving, *decent* man. Perhaps I am not giving him enough credit.

(beat)

How do we proceed?

JEFF

If you will all please be silent. I must have quiet so I can summon him.

Jeff puts his hands to his temples, and opens and closes his eyes a few times.

JEFF

(calling)

I am trying to locate Captain Robert Innes. Captain, I ask you to come forward to this place you know so well.

A wind picks up. It rustles some mail on a nearby table.

BEN

(sniffs)

Did the wind just change direction? I
can really smell the ocean now.

The shimmering form of CAPTAIN ROBERT INNES slowly materializes. He is an older man, with a white beard, white hair, a skull cap, a pea coat, and a smoldering pipe. He removes his pipe from his mouth when he speaks and gestures with it.

BEN

Look at that guy. He's right out of
Central Casting.

ROBERT

My dear, how I have *longed* for you.
Where have you been?

LORETTA

Do not concern yourself with that. We
are together now.

(beat; grows teary)

I have something to confess, something
I hope with all my heart -

ROBERT

Be still, my wife. I know.

LORETTA

You *do*?

ROBERT

Were you ever able to hide anything
from me in life?

LORETTA

(beat; meekly)

Am I. . . forgiven?

ROBERT

Of course. It was a moment of weakness
brought on by grief. How could I hold
that against you after all the
blissful years of marriage we shared?

LORETTA

(teary eyed)

You have made me so happy! I shall now
be able to stop haunting this place.
We will be together in paradise
forever. Thank you, thank you, my
dearest one!

ROBERT

No thanks are necessary. After all,
you've always forgiven me *my*
indiscretions.

LORETTA

Your indiscretions?

ROBERT

(beat; awkwardly)
Surely I told you.

LORETTA

Never.

BEN

Uh oh.

ROBERT

Being an intelligent woman, I'm sure
you can understand that. . . a sailor
with ports of call. . well. . . you
know. . .

LORETTA

(angrily)
This is while you were away from me -
and while we were still *wed*?

ROBERT

But, darling -

LORETTA

Don't you "darling" me, you two-timing
son of a sea dog.

ROBERT

(sarcastically)
Thanks a lot, Professor.

JEFF

(sotto voce)
Sorry.

ROBERT

I must be shipping off now.

He starts to dissolve.

LORETTA

Don't you *dare*! Robert Innes, you come
back this instant!

He disappears completely.

LORETTA

He's not getting away from me that easily. Fooling around on some tropical island, was he - and while we were still *married*? He's not going to play *me* for a fool.

MORGAN

Are you free now, Loretta?

LORETTA

Yes, because of that two-timing man's forgiveness. Thank you all.

(beat)

Robert is going to feel my wrath, so help me. He will not soon forget the name Loretta Innes!

BEN

What are you gonna do?

LORETTA

I am going to go after him. I will find him and make him pay for what he has done. For hundreds of years, I was a prisoner in this house for a lesser indiscretion than he committed. How he ever got to his reward without paying a penance, I'll never know.

(beat)

Men! Present company excluded, of course.

BEN

Of course.

JEFF

Won't he simply evade you, as you evaded him?

LORETTA

He will *try*, but he has never known the tenacity of a woman scorned.

(beat)

I must be going. I'll show him!

She slowly vanishes. Ben turns to Morgan.

BEN

How are you feeling?

MORGAN

Sad. . . but happy for her.

JEFF

I'm sorry things didn't work out as you wanted.

BEN

So is Captain Innes.

MORGAN

It's for the best. I knew how tentative things were.

(beat)

I will recommend the two of you to my friends and business associates.

BEN

Do they have ghosts too?

MORGAN

(chuckles slightly)

They *certainly* have skeletons in their closets.

JEFF

What will you do now?

MORGAN

I'll stay on here. It's a lovely house, though it will seem a bit. . . *empty*.

BEN

Maybe you should get a dog?

MORGAN

Maybe I will, and I haven't given up the hunt for Ms. Right yet.

BEN

When you find her, do us one favor?

MORGAN

What's that?

BEN

Make sure she's *alive*. I'd hate to go through this again.

END OF ACT TWO

TAG

7

INT. JEFF'S CAR - EARLY MORNING

7

Walton is driving while Longstreet lounges beside him. The sun is coming up. Faint music can be heard on the car radio.

JEFF

It's good to be heading home. I find solving a case so *invigorating*! Don't you, Benjamin?

BEN

(stifles a yawn)

JEFF

I'm sure Mr. Morgan's check will clear the bank.

BEN

Good. Some of our creditors are getting a little unhappy with us.

JEFF

They'll have their money soon. The investigation of the paranormal cannot be rushed. The afterlife does not punch a time clock.

BEN

Tell that to Citibank.

(beat)

If you don't mind, I'm gonna catch some Zs.

JEFF

(astonished)

Sleep? How can you *possibly* sleep after what we've been through? Aren't your senses heightened, your emotions on edge?

BEN

Nah.

JEFF

You've just been in the presence of not one, but *two* representatives of the spirit world. How many people can boast of such a thing?

BEN

Not many, I guess. Give me a good, old-fashioned murder any day. Now *that's* something I can sink my teeth into.

JEFF

But, Benjamin -

BEN

Look, if you let me take a snooze, you can tell Mansfield all about what happened when we get home.

JEFF

Do you think he'll care?

BEN

With Mansfield, you never know.

END OF SHOW