

THE GHOST WHO WALKS

Written by

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EXT. ADLER HOTEL. (1977) SHARON SPRINGS, NY. EARLY MORNING.

A looming white hotel stands atop a hill. Surrounded by well-manicured trees. Windows line the five stories. A wall separating two entrance staircases reads, 'Hotel Adler & Spa'.

Silence. The sun, mid-rise. Leaves Rustle.

Suddenly, A WOMAN'S **SCREAM!**

INT. HOTEL HALLWAYS. CONTINUOUS.

We weave through the mixed floral and patterned hallways. Lined with numbered wood doors. Intricate, tin ceilings. Traveling to the source of the scream.

We enter the doorway. Blocked by a maid's cart. *Room 213.*

INT. HOTEL ROOM. CONTINUOUS.

A young, Hispanic MAID stands terrified. Hand over mouth. She backs away, holding in another scream.

A **creaking** sound can be heard.

Toes of hanging feet lightly brush the carpet. Moving like a pendulum.

REVEAL : A GIRL, 17, in a floral 70's dress, hangs from a ceiling beam. Dead.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM CRIME SCENE. HOURS LATER.

POLICE OFFICERS and FORENSIC INVESTIGATORS swarm around the crime scene. They rope off the door with caution tape. Some OFFICERS go through suitcases and drawers.

Outside the door, the frantic, indistinguishable Spanish of the MAID as she answers questions. Report of the crime.

The hanging body in the middle of the room seems to go unnoticed by cops. Routine.

Between overwhelming FLASHES from cameras:

Open suitcase with clothing, a book, old PHOTOGRAPHS : The dead girl with her arm around the waist of a young man, early 1970's. Shoulder length brown hair and beginnings of a beard.

Another, of her with her parents, two farmers, 50's, with tired, plain faces. The edge is burned, bubbling the left of the frame and father's face.

Cops open up a makeup bag filled with CASH.

A lens lowers revealing BEN, a Forensic Photographer, 37. He is definitely not a morning person.

He takes a closer look at the body. Brown, mousy hair, thin and petite. Her dress seems to blend with the similar floral pattern of the walls.

He grabs a second, POLAROID CAMERA, from around his neck. Takes a closer shot. Shakes fresh photo. A close-up of choked expression. Glazed over blue eyes. All glowing through as the photo develops.

DETECTIVE VIDEL, a Forensic Investigator, 60, intimidatingly charming, comes to his side. Offering coffee. Jumps out of trance.

Looks down at developed photo. Puts a hand on shoulder. Shivers.

BEN

You'd think after years of picking apart crime scenes, that you'd get used to all of this.

Waves to room. Moves body to follow her sway. Eyes following like an old painting.

BEN (CONT'D)

It's like she's looking right through me.

DETECTIVE VIDEL

Doesn't matter the number. Some cases just get the best of you.

Still haunted by a memory.

Ben nods. Framing a shot. Detective stirs coffee. Watches.

OFFICER # 1 calls over.

OFFICER #1

(to Detective Videll)

Any ID yet?

Shakes his head 'no'.

Still watching her. Sighs.

BEN

Shame. It's always the pretty ones.

Takes a good look. Notices something strange. A BLOOD STAIN on her dress near the hip.

DETECTIVE VIDEL

What's this?

Shrugs.

Moves in. Gear ready. Magnifier out. Lifts dress with tongs.

REVEAL : Small hole through her stomach.

BEN

Must've tried to stab herself or something.

Winces.

BEN (CONT'D)

Poor thing.

Looks at back. Exit wound.

DETECTIVE VIDEL

This is a bullet hole. Look. Exit wound.

Points. Moves to look.

Motions to nearby OFFICER #2. Clipboard in hand.

DETECTIVE VIDEL (CONT'D)

(to Officer #2)

Come here for a second.

Walks over.

DETECTIVE VIDEL (CONT'D)

Has a gun been found on the premise?

The Officer flips through the documents on clipboard. Reads aloud. Mumbling.

OFFICER #2

(mumbled speed reading)

One pack of Marlboro Golds, one bag of Charleston Chews, no. no. No gun has been found.

DETECTIVE VIDEL

(announcing)

Well, tear this room apart and find it. It holds the key to our murderer.

Everyone looks confused.

OFFICER #2

But. Without a doubt, this is a suicide.

Videl grimly smiles.

DETECTIVE VIDEL

No doubts?

He lifts the dress. They lean in to look. He stands beside his discovery, like a magician whipping the curtain off the top hat. Beams, soaking it in. Ben watches confused at Videl's sudden change in disposition.

The CORONER arrives with his TEAM to take away the body.

Videl picks up briefcase. Snaps locks open. Takes out a pack of cigarettes hidden in the stacks of folders and papers. Removes one. Taps tip of cigarette to pack it.

Turns to leave. Spinning hand behind him.

DETECTIVE VIDEL (CONT'D)

Cut her down.

They reach to start sawing the rope as he exits. Placing a black hat on his head.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY. MOMENTS LATER.

DETECTIVE VIDEL leads a funeral procession of crew. Zipped body bag on gurney wheeled through lobby.

A flock of wide-eyed HOTEL GUESTS and HOTEL STAFF press their faces against the windows. They whisper and gossip to one another. What a exciting tragedy.

The HOTEL MANAGER stands nervously against the front desk, moving out of the way of gurney. Behind is a gawking RECEPTIONIST.

Behind slick wooden desk is a wall of keys each with a corresponding room number.

The group moves out the front door.

EXT. HOTEL ENTRY. CONTINUOUS.

A stack of NEWSPAPERS, have come undone. The wind whips a few off the top. The pages separate as they swirl around. The procession moves through tornado of papers.

Through multiple posters passing by we can make out the headlines:

WANTED : LORRAINE WILSON & GEORGE RYDER

Another:

ROMEO and JULIET MURDERERS STILL ON THE RUN !

Another:

MURDER TOLL STRIKES SIX!

The faces blown up on the covers match the dead girl and her photographed boyfriend.

Trees creak and sway. The skies are dark. In mourning.

A group of HOTEL EMPLOYEES have gathered at the door.

MARCUS, 20, hotel staff, comic book tee-shirt under a blazer and a patchy beard, stands with group. Munches on cheese platter. Beside him, a BELL BOY, 17. Leans toward him.

MARCUS

And my parents said working in the
hotel business wouldn't be
exciting.

Pops a cheese cube in his mouth.

CUT TO BLACK.

-CUE TITLES-