

PAGE 1: 7 Panels

PANEL 1: *Establishing shot.* It's a sunny afternoon in autumn, and we're in a kitchen. It's dinky, a little run down. A very Grandparent-like kitchen, the kind of place full of phone books and crosswords and souvenir magnets on the fridge from places visited in days long past, photos of fresh young relatives pinned under them.

CADET is wearing GRANDPA's Commissionaire's cap and sitting at the kitchen table, with GRANDPA and GRANDMA.

CAPTION 1: My grandparents tell me ghost stories.

CAPTION 2: Grandpa works at the local theatre. He's a Commissionaire and his job is to keep the theatre and everyone in it safe.

PANEL 2: view from under the kitchen table. We see CADET's feet dangling in the air, she's much too short for her chair. Her fists are balled in her lap.

CAPTION: He comes home with new stories about the ghosts who live in the theatre almost every night.

PANEL 3: GRANDPA is dressed for work, sans cap. He's smiling and has his hand on his chest. He has a ticket in his breast pocket, it might be a little visible.

CAPTION 1: The ghosts in the stories are never really scary at all.

GRANDPA: ...and there was an entire troupe worth of ghosts--even a horse! Can you believe it!

PANEL 4: GRANDMA is doing needlework at the kitchen table with a small smile on her face.

GRANDMA: A horse in a theatre? Now that really is something else, isn't it.

PANEL 5: GRANDPA takes the hat off of CADET's head. CADET looks sad--she doesn't want her grandpa to leave.

GRANDPA: 'Ta! I'm off to work, then. I'll see you later, my dears!

PANEL 6: GRANDPA is at the kitchen door, holding it half open with a funny smile on his face.

GRANDPA: Unless.... did you want to come to work with me today, Cadet?

PANEL 7: close up of GRANDPA pulling a ticket out of his breast pocket.

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PANEL 1: *aerial shot* of CADET and GRANDPA are getting into GRANDPA's old but well-cared for car.

CAPTION: There's nothing I love more than visiting Grandpa's theatre.

GRANDPA: The play tonight is *Le Fantôme de l'Opéra*.

PANEL 2: *longer shot* of the car, driving along to the theatre.

CAPTION: I love seeing the plays, but the best part is getting to explore the theatre after everyone else has gone home.

PANEL 3: CADET is sitting in the front passenger side, even though she's much too small to safely ride in it. She's BEAMING and looking out the window, she's so happy. She has a backpack in her lap and the ticket her grandfather gave her clutched tight in her little hands.

GRANDPA: I think it'll be right up your alley. Are you looking forward to it, Cadet?

CAPTION: I wonder if I'll meet any of Grandpa's ghosts, tonight.

PANEL 4: *BIG OL' establishing shot.* View of the theatre from the outside, it looks like it was a beautiful theatre back in the day, but it's a little rough around the edges, these days. The sun is starting to set.

TITLE: GHOSTS' STORIES

CREDITS: Allison Paige - writer / Beth Sparks - pencils / Paul Coy - inks

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PANEL 1: Inside the door to the theatre, GRANDPA tips his hat to CADET. We see the scene from slightly above, CADET looks very small.

GRANDPA: I'm off to do my rounds. Mind your manners and keep your hands to yourself!

PANEL 2: A shot of the lobby. Cadet is standing alone with her backpack on, still clutching her ticket.

CAPTION: I've been to the theatre enough times that Grandpa doesn't need to show me how it works.

PANEL 3: *A long panel that shows the lobby and door to the auditorium.* We see Cadet pushing through a crowd of older, affluent looking people dressed in their theatre best. Cadet stops at the drink bar and is handed an orange juice.

CAPTION 1: The theatre is full of fancy adults tonight. I'm not like them, so they act like I'm invisible. That's okay with me.

An old lady in a uniform (white shirt, black vest black pants) working at the door to the auditorium tears CADET's ticket for her.

LADY: Please enjoy the show!

CADET: Thank you, ma'am.

PANEL 4: CADET is seated between two old and well dressed people, with her hands in her lap. Her backpack is stashed under her chair (we probably can't see it).

PANEL 5: We see the actors on stage. The auditorium is dark and the spotlight highlights CHRISTINE on stage. Dark hair, pale dress. She's in a very dramatic pose, singing her heart out.

PANEL 6: CADET looks enraptured, leaning forward in her seat. her eyes are wide open, she's absorbing the entire experience.

CAPTION: The story is coming to life on the stage, just for me.

PANEL 7: on stage, the PHANTOM is on one knee, imploring CHRISTINE.

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PANEL 1: the crowd is giving a standing ovation, but CADET is still sitting in her seat, clapping enthusiastically.

CAPTION: The show is over far too soon.

PANEL 2: the crowd is filing out of the auditorium, up the ramps between the seats. CADET remains in her seat, watching everyone head out with a smile on her face. She's pulled out her backpack and has it in her lap.

CAPTION: Grandpa is still working, so I don't have to leave yet.

PANEL 3: CADET slips out of her seat and into her backpack.

CAPTION: The adults all leave and I'm *finally* free to explore the theatre.

PANEL 4: CADET observes an abstract painting in a foyer.

PANEL 5: CADET runs a slinky down a stately set of stairs.

PANEL 6: CADET is playing in the Lost and Found box in the ticket booth.

PANEL 7: We're looking over CADET's shoulder, a light is shining at the other end of the hallway.

CADET: Grandpa? Is that you?

PAGE 5: ONE BIG PANEL, showing the lobby of the theatre

CADET is in the foreground, having just exited the ticket booth, she's crouching behind a wall in a way that makes it obvious she's trying to be quiet. WE SEE A TROUPE OF GHOSTS FLOATING TOWARDS THE AUDITORIUM. The ghosts are quite varied, some of them have obvious injuries, ALL are in costumes. One of the ghosts happens to be a horse.

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PANEL 1: *A long panel that shows the lobby and door to the auditorium, kind of mirroring the panel we saw on PAGE 3. We see Cadet pushing through the ghosts who are crowded around.*

CAPTION: I wonder if they know I'm not one of them.

A ghost vendor tries to offer CADET cider, but she walks past

CADET shows her already torn ticket to a ghost lady at the auditorium door.

LADY: Please enjoy the show!

CADET: Thank you, ma'am.

PANEL 2: CADET is seated between two ECCENTRIC and ROWDY GHOSTS. She looks like she is trying to be smaller than usual. Her backpack is held tightly in her lap. The ghost horse is chillin' behind CADET. All of these ghosts are pretty jovial, they're having a good time.

CAPTION: I can't help my curiosity--what kind of stories do ghosts tell each other?

PANEL 3: the curtains part and reveal the stage. It's misty and unclear, like an image out of focus.

PANEL 4: CADET looks cautiously interested in the stage; she is definitely more reserved than she was earlier.

ECCENTRIC GHOST [OFFPANEL]: HEY, KID.

PANEL 5: ECCENTRIC GHOST offers CADET their bottle of cider. They gesture to the cider like showgirl on the Price is Right.

ECCENTRIC GHOST: You haven't got anything to drink! Try some of my cider.

PANEL 6: CADET tastes the cider very cautiously while ROWDY GHOST is watching her, enviously.

CAPTION: I don't know how to refuse without being rude...

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PANEL 1: CADET makes an awful face.

CADET: It's... good? Thank you.

PANEL 2: CADET hands the bottle off to ROWDY GHOST, who takes it enthusiastically.

CADET: Would you like to try it, too?

PANEL 3: CADET is sitting in her seat, looking a little nervous with a tight smile on her face.

CAPTION: That was a close call.

PANEL 4: We see the GHOST ACTORS on stage. The auditorium is dark and the spotlight highlights A WEIRD GHOST ACTOR on stage. The WEIRD GHOST ACTOR is very dramatic and looks very tragic, but the audience is laughing.

TEXT OVER THE IMAGE: HA HA HA HA

PANEL 5: Cadet turns to the ECCENTRIC GHOST at her side.

CADET: Um, excuse me. Is this a comedy?

PANEL 6: ROWDY GHOST leans in towards CADET, totally invading her personal space and jumping into the conversation uninvited.

ROWDY GHOST: NO, It's a tragedy! That's why it's *so funny*.

PANEL 7: CADET looks confused, touches her mouth in a concerned way.

CADET: Oh...? It doesn't seem very funny to me.

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PANEL 1: The theatre falls silent, all eyes turn to look at CADET. She looks small and afraid in the crowd. Even the ghost horse behind CADET looks peeved.

PANEL 2: the WEIRD GHOST ACTOR on stage is shielding their eyes from the spotlight, looking out into the crowd. The entire production has stopped and the actors have their eyes on CADET in the audience.

CAPTION: I really *really* shouldn't have said that.

WEIRD GHOST ACTOR: WHO SAID THAT.

PANEL 3: *A closer shot* of the WEIRD GHOST ACTOR, but not too close yet.

WEIRD GHOST ACTOR: IS THAT A CRITIC? Why don't you come join us on stage?

PANEL 4: Close up of the weird ghost actor. They look very sinister; all teeth and no eyes.

WEIRD GHOST ACTOR: You can show us how a *real* tragedy is meant to be performed.

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PANEL 1: ROWDY GHOST pulls at CADET's oversized sweater/jacket/whatever it is you drew her in, and starts hauling her into the aisle. CADET doesn't want to go, she's grabbing onto the seats to stop ROWDY GHOST from pulling her up to the stage.

CADET: No!

PANEL 2: ECCENTRIC GHOST has snatched CADET's backpack and is lifting it over their head enthusiastically.

CADET, OFFPANEL: HEY, that's mine!

PANEL 3: the ghosts push CADET towards stage, the actors on stage are trying to pull her up.

CADET: I'm serious! This isn't fun anymore!

PANEL 4: *a borderless shot* of CADET is on stage with all of the scary ghost actors. WEIRD GHOST ACTOR bows to her with a dramatic flair.

WEIRD GHOST ACTOR: Here you are, little critic! This is your chance to show us all how it's done.

PANEL 5: WEIRD GHOST ACTOR takes CADET's hand earnestly, with a grin that splits their face right in half.

WEIRD GHOST ACTOR: But first, we need to get you out of that skin suit you're *hiding* inside of.

PANEL 6: CADET is *really scared* now. The GHOST ACTORS all have their hands on her, tugging at her hair and her clothes.

CADET: I... I just wanted to see what kind of stories ghosts tell each other!

PANEL 7: Close up of CADET, with the GHOST ACTOR's hands still on her. She's closing her eyes and shouting:

CADET: I wanted to watch, I didn't want to be a part of it!

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PANEL 1: THE LIGHTS SWITCH ON and grandpa is at the back of the auditorium.

GRANDPA: CADET, what are you doing on stage! I told you to mind your manners and keep your hands to yourself!

PANEL 2: CADET is standing on stage, the ghosts are gone. Her sweater/jacket/whatever is still all askew and her backpack is on stage with her, the contents spilled out across the stage.

CADET: Sorry Grandpa! I--there were ghosts, and--

PANEL 3: Close up of CADET, she's starting to cry.

CADET: I was so scared!

PANEL 4: GRANDPA stands at the edge of the stage with his arms outstretched to help CADET off the stage.

GRANDPA: *Shhh*, it's alright now, dear. I'll take you home.

PANEL 5: GRANDPA picks up CADET and she hugs him around the neck as he carries her

PANEL 6: GRANDPA and CADET make their way through the auditorium.

GRANDPA: Why do you smell like cider, Cadet?

PANEL 7: CADET is looking over Grandpa's shoulder with a serious, concerned look on her face.

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One big panel of the empty stage with the curtains still drawn apart. WEIRD GHOST ACTOR is peeking out around the curtain.

END