

EXT FRONT YARD OF A WEATHERED OLD HOME - DAY

It is cloudy and windy out. Emily Porter, current head of the Porter Family Ghost Hunting Business, stands outside of an old and poorly maintained home alongside Charlie Lambert, a construction worker, owner of the haunted property, and the man who contracted her for her latest job.

CHARLIE LAMBERT

This is it. The Windshaw Estate.

EMILY PORTER

Doesn't look like much.

CHARLIE

That's why I want to have it renovated. The only problem is that ghost.

Emily rummages through her bag of equipment, making sure she has everything she'll need.

EMILY

What problems have you been having with the house?

CHARLIE

Every time I send the crew in to map out the home and work on the plans, freaky things start happening. Like doors slamming and utensils flying.

EMILY

Classic poltergeist. This'll be easy. Where in the house have you encountered the most paranormal activity?

CHARLIE

The kitchen.

EMILY

Right. Makes sense with the flying utensils.

CHARLIE

Are you sure you can get rid of the ghost?

EMILY

Of course.

CHARLIE

I hope you're worth the money. To be honest, I only spent the big bucks hiring you because my crew refuses to go back in unless you expel the ghost.

EMILY

Don't worry. I've been doing this for years and ghost hunting has been the family business for generations! We're the best in the tristate area for a reason.

CHARLIE

So I've heard.

EMILY

Well then, I'll figure out what's spooking your crew and drive away the paranormal from your house.

CHARLIE

Make it quick. I want the renovations done as soon as possible.

EMILY

I will take all of the time I need to get the job done right. But it shouldn't take me longer than a day.

Emily takes the overgrown path up to the old home and walks up the steps onto the porch. It groans under her weight as she steps through the front door.

INT INSIDE OLD WEATHERED HOME - DAY

Inside the air is stale, and it is quiet.

EMILY (YELLS)

Hello?

The house remains still and silent.

EMILY (SIGHS)

Nobody here...yet.

She turns to the room on her left and finds it empty. Looking at the walls, paint on the crown moldings is peeling off, and the wallpaper is shredded and falling apart.

Emily continues to make her way down the hall. The weathered

floorboards beneath her creak with each step she takes.

At the end of the hallway is another empty room that has cracked windows showing the overgrown backyard and a glass building.

To Emily's left is a closed door. She walks over and opens it, revealing a kitchen that hasn't seen an upgrade in at least 100 years.

Emily sets her bag down on the kitchen table, which groans from the weight of her equipment. Just as she's about to begin unpacking, the door to the kitchen slams shut, making her jump. She returns to her normal, confident composure quickly.

EMILY (SCOFFS)

Nice try.

The house is silent again, and while keeping an eye on the door, she unpacks her thermal camera and her recorder. As she sets up the camera on a tripod, aiming it at the door, the drawers and cabinet doors begin opening and shutting.

EMILY

Impressive. You could start a
percussion band with those skills.

The drawers and cabinet doors still. Emily finishes setting up her camera and turns on her recorder.

EMILY

All right, ghost...What is your name?

She waits a moment, then stops her recorder, quickly rewinds, and presses play. The recording plays but nothing is heard.

EMILY

Oh, come on now! You were so vocal
just moments ago. Don't tell me you're
shy now!

Emily presses the record button again.

EMILY

Let's try this again. What is your
name?

Again she waits, stops and rewinds her recorder, and presses play. The voice of a young, posh woman plays.

GHOST
...L...Lyra.

EMILY
What...

She rewinds and plays the recording again, putting it close to her ear.

GHOST
...L...Lyra.

EMILY
Lyra...is that your name? Lyra Windshaw?

She presses the record button, waits, then stops and rewinds again.

LYRA WINDSHAW
Yes...that's my name. Go away!

Emily is taken aback, unsure of how to react.

EMILY(GIDDY)
I've never heard a ghost speak so clearly before. This is amazing!

She records again and then replays it by her ear.

LYRA
Go away! And don't come back!

Hitting the record button again, Emily can barely contain her excitement.

EMILY
This is absolutely incredible! I can hear you perfectly!

She waits, then rewinds the recording and plays it.

LYRA
How can you hear me?

Emily begins recording again.

EMILY
This device in my hand can pick up sounds my ears can't. When I play it back, I can hear you talking to me.

She waits again, then stops and rewinds the newest recording.

LYRA
This is all so strange. I don't understand.

EMILY
Yeah, I don't get it either. Usually, I don't pick more than a mumble. Is there a way you could maybe reveal yourself so I don't have to use this recorder to talk to you?

A cold breeze blows past her, and Emily glances at the thermal camera, which now records a coldness in the shape of a human being.

LYRA (YELLS)
Can you hear me now?

Emily recoils from the loud voice echoing in her ears.

EMILY
Yes, I can hear you perfectly fine. No need to yell.

LYRA
So you're a ghost hunter. Are you here to kill me?

There is a pause, as Lyra's words shred through Emily's excitement.

EMILY
Not kill, no. I can't kill what's already dead. My job is just to make you stop haunting this place and rest in peace.

LYRA
But I'm already at peace. There's no need for you to do anything.

EMILY
There's still the whole 'haunting the house' thing though. It's spooking some people.

LYRA
Did those intruders send you here?

EMILY

Do you mean the construction workers?
Apparently, you're getting in the way
of their renovation project...or
something like that. They hired me to
make you leave.

LYRA

Why should I be the one to leave?

EMILY

Because you're stopping them from
doing their jobs.

LYRA

They're the ones trespassing! This has
been my home all my life, since 1818!

EMILY

This is your house?

LYRA

What's left of it. Mother would be so
angry if she saw the state of this
house, but she'd be even more upset if
she knew some bumbling idiots came in
here uninvited and tried to change
everything.

EMILY

But you don't actually live here
anymore. I mean you're dead.

LYRA

So that gives them the right to change
around my home? I heard the intruders
talking about tearing down my
greenhouse!

EMILY

Your greenhouse?

LYRA

Yes! I grow the loveliest petunias
there! But if they tear down my
greenhouse, I won't be able to grow
them anymore! All that so they can
have a pool! I don't even know what a
pool is!

EMILY

They're changing things up for the new family. They're allowed to do that.

LYRA

They can't just tear down my beloved greenhouse and change everything! This is my home!

EMILY

Actually, it isn't.

LYRA

What?

EMILY

It belongs to the new family. The ones that are trying to rebuild this place.

LYRA

N..no! That can't be right!

EMILY

What do you mean?

LYRA

This isn't just my home. It's been in my family for 10 generations! I promised my parents it would stay in the family!

EMILY

Maybe your kids decided they didn't want to keep the place. It happens.

LYRA (GROWING INCREASINGLY ANGRY)

I died before I could have children of my own. But that doesn't mean it isn't mine anymore! I won't let this place go!

The drawers in the kitchen burst open. Utensils fly. everywhere, creating chaos in Lyra's outburst. Emily ducks under the table.

LYRA (SOBBING)

It's not fair...it's not fair.

The utensils fall to the ground with a clatter. Emily comes out of her hiding spot and stands still, looking unsure as she listens to the ghost sob. She looks at the camera and

sees the cold humanoid shape shaking, hunched over as she cries.

EMILY

Look...I'm really sorry, but that's just how things are now.

LYRA

How can you say that? I've been living here peacefully for 200 years and now I'm being told I have to just "let" people ruin my home.

EMILY (SOFTLY)

I know it's hard but...

LYRA (SOBBING)

There has to be a way to keep my home.
There has to be another way.

Emily remains silent as she tries to think while Lyra continues to cry. Then an idea comes to her. One she isn't sure will work.

EMILY(SIGHS)

Why not. Let's give this a try.

Emily walks out of the kitchen and stands at the front door.

EMILY (YELLS)

Charlie! Come here!

CHARLIE (YELLS)

What? Are you done already?

Charlie walks into the house, standing away from the door to the kitchen.

EMILY

I'm not done yet. But I have a question.

CHARLIE

And what's that?

EMILY

The ghost, Lyra, is upset about leaving. Can you hear her crying?

Emily and Charlie stay quiet, and both can hear Lyra's light sobbing coming from the kitchen.

CHARLIE (WHISPERS)
That's coming from the ghost?

EMILY
Yeah.

CHARLIE
Why is it crying?

EMILY
Because it's her home and she doesn't want you to change it.

CHARLIE
Isn't it your job to get rid of the ghost? No questions asked?

EMILY
Yeah, but this is the first time I've seen a ghost communicate so clearly to living people.

CHARLIE
So?

EMILY
It can't hurt to at least listen to what she has to say.

Charlie looks at her skeptically, but he slowly makes his way into the kitchen with Emily at his heels. He stands in front of the thermal camera, and Emily can see his warm body standing next to the cold air that is Lyra's ghost.

CHARLIE
All right then ghost. I'm told you can talk, so talk.

LYRA (CALM)
Are you the new owner of my house?

Charlie jumps at the sound of her voice.

CHARLIE
Y-yeah? Yeah, I am.

LYRA (YELLS)
Why are you destroying it?

Charlie's face goes white, and he trembles where he stands. He looks at Emily, his eyes pleading for help.

EMILY

Lyra, wait-

LYRA

I wasn't talking to you! Now answer me!

CHARLIE

B-because I want to live here and make it my home.

LYRA

What's wrong with how it is now?

CHARLIE

It's falling apart! And everything is out of date!

LYRA

And the greenhouse? Why must you destroy my greenhouse?

CHARLIE

We don't need a greenhouse!

LYRA

You can't just take it away from me!

EMILY

All right, all right! Enough! Look, there's gotta be some kind of agreement we can come to.

CHARLIE

Why? I paid you to get rid of it!

EMILY

This ghost is clearly communicating why she doesn't want to leave. Don't you think a compromise could be made?

LYRA

I could...let you continue the renovations so long as nothing is torn down, including my greenhouse. I need a place for my petunias.

CHARLIE

And what about all of the nonsense with the slamming doors and flying utensils?

LYRA

It was just to scare you away! I won't do it anymore if you agree to my terms.

Charlie stands there with his arms crossed, contemplating what Lyra has said. He closes eyes and sighs.

CHARLIE

I can't believe I'm saying this. Maybe I can redesign the pool so we don't have to tear down the greenhouse.

LYRA (SQUEALS)

Excellent! You'll love the petunias when they're in full bloom. The smell is absolutely divine.

CHARLIE (EXASPERATED)

Yeah, can't wait. I might as well renovate the greenhouse too since it's going to stay up.

LYRA

That's wonderful to hear! Thank you so much! You can't believe how happy that makes me!

CHARLIE

Yeah, yeah.

A cold breeze blows past them. When Emily looks at the thermal camera, she sees that the cold spot has disappeared.

EMILY

She's left the kitchen.

CHARLIE

Well, this wasn't the outcome I was expecting, but at least I can work in peace. Thank you, Ms. Proctor.

EMILY

No problem! Though to be honest, I'm surprised you accepted a compromise. What made you reconsider?

CHARLIE (SHRUGS)

My wife likes petunias.