

I AIN'T AFRAID OF NO GHOST

by pwatson1974

Anne smiles, taking a deep breath, "Aaaaaah. That feels good. Man, I would kill for a cigarette right now."

"Hey! Don't you dare! This isn't your body! It's mine! Give it back."

"Not yet. I need to find your boss first. When I get my body back, you'll get yours back." she runs her tongue along her lips. "Maybe. A spare wouldn't go..."

"Don't you dare!!!!"

"Ow! No need to shout."

"Give me my body back!!!!"

"When I'm done with it. Don't worry, I won't abuse it." a slight smile tugs at her lips, "Much."

"Much?? Much?? Don't you dare! Give me my body back!"

"Broken record much? I think you need a time out, and I need some peace and quiet." she murmurs something under her breath, meaningless words that thrum with power. Pale orange mist gasps out of her, clouding around her breath, spiralling down into the doll at her feet. "There, that's better. Don't you think?" she lifts up the doll in her pretty orange dress, pulling on the ring in its back.

"Hey! What's the big i...dea, you body stealing..."

"That's enough out of you, I think." she tucks the doll under her arm, "Come on, Doll," she smiles her wicked smile, "I mean, Dell, let's go visit your boss." she opens the door singing off-key, "♪We're off to see the Wizard...♪"

"Have I mentioned that I love you?"

"An' here I was thinkin' ye were just lustin' after me body." Jackie smiles, wriggling further into Paul's lap, her arm around his shoulders.

"Well, that too..." the door to the office bangs open.

"Finally! How on earth do you people not get lost? It's like the bloody Labyrinth back there!"

"Dell? What do ye think ye're..."

"Not Dell, Anne."

Jackie rolls her eyes, "Not this again. Honestly, what are ye tryin' t' prove?"

"Still don't believe me, do you?"

"Well, o' course. Ye're invisible ghost friend was the one who embarrassed me. Nothin' t' do with ye at all."

“Well, nothing to do with Dell. I had a lot to do with it.”

“Ok. Either ye’ve gone nuts or ye’re really tryin’ me patience now.”

“Still don’t think I exist, do you? Maybe this will convince you.” She starts to murmur under her breath.

“Oh, aye. Convince me.”

Anne points a slightly pudgy finger at her and finishes her incantation. Jackie vanishes, a small plush dolly in a green dress falling to the floor with a soft thump. “Wow! It wasn't supposed to do that.”

“Well, I'm sure she feels better about that...Anne, right? Any chance of getting her back ?”

“Uhm, I'll try. But, it wasn't supposed to...” she starts murmuring, but the doll fails to change in any appreciable way. “Uhm, I...”

“Didn't work?”

“I, I didn't...”

“Stay there. I'll sort it. And then we'll have a nice little chat. And if I don't like the answers, maybe we'll see if little girls are made of sugar and spice after all.”

He rises from behind the desk, crossing the room quickly and picking up the small plush figure, all the while keeping an eye on her. “Well, Jaks, convinced?” he asks, gently pushing the doll's limbs under her dress, until all that is left is the emerald dress itself, folded in his hands. “Now, observe.” he shakes the dress out, holding a full-sized, if empty, dress in his hands. “Nothing up my sleeves.” he turns the dress back and forth,

before he reaches under the dress and pulls out Jackie's legs, followed by her arms and finally her head. She blinks a few times and turns towards the young girl in the doorway, her eyes blazing. She takes a step towards her.

“When I get my hands on ye...” a hand comes to rest lightly on her arm.

“Explanation first, righteous wrath and destruction second, if necessary. Ok?”

“But she...”

“You're not going to make me bring out the handcuffs, are you? Not when we've got a guest.”

Jackie reluctantly stops, still glowering at Anne. Paul turns to Anne.

“So, explain.”

“Uhm,” she glances at Jackie, “well, it all started this one time at band camp...”

One explanation later, “...and I'm really sorry. I didn't mean to turn you into a dolly, it just, it wasn't supposed to do that!”

“So that's Dell's body?”

“Yes.” she replies, a little sheepishly.

“And Dell's in that doll?”

“Yes.” she looks down at the floor, shifting her weight between her feet.

“And you need my help to get your real body back?”

“Yes. Can you help me?”

“Maybe.”

“Oh, please, please, I need my body back. You have no ideas what it's like being a ghost! Please! I'll, I'll do anything!”

Paul smirks, “Anything? Just the kind of customer I like.” he reaches into the drawer, rummaging around. “Where is it? I know I left it in here somewhere, aha!” he pulls out a foot long grey box, a split lid covered in black and yellow hazard stripes with a plastic handle stretching out of one end, the black plastic heavily scuffed, some of the stripes worn through.

“What is that?”

“Bah. Some people have no culture. This is an ecto-containment unit. Made of only the finest plastics, and available for a low, low price so you too can pretend to be Ghostbusters.” He pulls out a small pedal with a thick cable, and plugs the cable into the back of unit.

“Ghostbusters?”

“As I said, no culture.” He presses the pedal and the lids flick open, a pale flickering light emerging. “Great, it still works. Thought for sure the batteries would be dead by now.”

“What is that supposed to do? It's just a toy.”

He looks towards Jackie, “She don't know me vewy well, do she?”

He slides the unit across the floor, stopping against Anne's feet. “W-what's it going to do to me?”

“It's just something for trapping and storing ghosts.” He presses the pedal. The lids flick open and blazing white light flares out.

Anne just has time to gasp out “Trap?” before the light sucks her down into the box, the lids closing with a click. Smoke curls from the edges of the lid.

“Well, now that ye've caught ye're ghost what're ye goin' to do with her? I know ye're not plannin' on just keepin' her in there, however much she deserves it.”

“I plan on letting her out, of course. Mixing her and Dell up just makes it easier. Observe.” he presses the pedal and the lid flicks open, light flaring out, tinged with orange, as Dell appears above the trap. The trap flicks closed. Dell pats her body down, clad in a slinky orange dress, clinging to her curves.

“I'm not a kid? Yes, I'm not a kid anymore. Thank you.” she looks down at the trap, “Is, is Anne still in there? What are you going to do with her?”

“What should I do with her? I can hardly condone bodynapping, now, can I?”

“You're not going to help her?”

Paul smiles, “Of course I'm going to help her. I just intend to have some fun along the way.”

“Oh? Fun, such as?” Jackie asks, arching her eyebrow.

“Just a little fun before we show her to her room.”

“Her room?? Ye're for lettin' her stay here?”

“Someone needs to make sure she doesn't accidentally turn the punters into dollies.”

“But she's, she, I...”

Paul holds up a mirror to Jackie, showing Sam's face in it's silvered back.

“Oh, verra funny. This is not the same thin' as with Sam an' Dell.”

Paul raises his eyebrow.

“An' ye can get that look off yer face, it's not. She's, ah, ferget it. Just don't expect me t' like her.”

“I won't. Not right away.”

“I heard tha'. Well, ye goin' t' be lettin' her out anytime soon?”

“Dell, you might want to move a bit.”

Dell looks down at the unit and takes several steps to the side. Paul presses the pedal and the lids flick open, bathing the room in reddish light. Anne appears in the light, her hair cascading over her bare shoulders, her body wrapped in a her crimson bathing-suit with its long gloves and thigh high boots. The lid flicks closed, the light vanishing. Anne takes a deep breath, her hands feeling up her arms. She opens her mouth and nothing happens. She tries again, with the same results. He puts her hands to her throat, staring at Paul. Dell bursts out laughing.

“Oh, Boss, you are sooooo bad.” She walks up to Anne, and pulls the ring in the middle of her back.

“What are, you didn't...this isn't fair, you...bastard! I'm still not...”

“I did. And it's just a bit of a joke. Dell, give it a yank.”

Dell pulls the ring out and yanks. Anne gasps and a small plush dolly lands in Dell's hand. “Ma-ma, ma-ma.”

“What did you do that for?” she demands, rubbing her back.

“Awww, whassamata, Annie-May?” Anne bristles, “Don't like it when you're on the receiving end? Better get used to that. There's a lot of playtimes around here. And you owe me. Right, Boss?”

“Seems fair to me.”

“Great. Let's...”

“Of course, we do need to discuss her long-term future before you go and avenge yourself.”

“Long-term future? What long-term future?”

“The one where you live here, I give you coaching on how to use your undoubted ability, and you work for me.”

“Sounds great.”

“Well, I didn't want to do this, but, you did say you'd do anything if I restored you, correct?”

“But...”

“And that was the agreement we made between us, correct?”

“I...”

“Of course, if you'd rather cancel our agreement, I could always return you to...”

“No! You wouldn't, you couldn't, please...”

“So, do we understand each other? You become a student, and when you graduate, you're free to go.”

Anne's head drops, “Yeah, I understand.”

“Good. Then Dell will take you to your room and we can discuss details tomorrow. No playtime either, Dell.”

“But, she...”

“She can settle in first. Then we'll see.”

“You didn't let me settle in.” she grumbles.

“This is true. Life is unfair. When Anne's settled, could you come back here? We've got other matters to discuss.”

“Yeah, yeah.” she waves her hand dismissively. “Come on, Anne. We'll have to save the fun until tomorrow.” The door closes.

“Well, tha' was another side o' ye t' see.”

“What?”

“Ye threatened that ye'd make her a ghost again if she didn't agree t' what ye wanted. I jus' didn't think ye could be so, nasty.”

“Oh, I couldn't. But there's no reason for her to know that until she gets settled and comfortable, is there? This way she's not a charity case we're taking in.”

“Ye what?”

“Jaks, she's been gone for a year, remember? How much chance do you think she has of getting anything back from her old life? Starting over with us is probably better than starting over with nothing, even with you and Dell playing with her.”

“I suppose.”

“You won't be too cruel and vindictive, either, will you? Make it something gentle.”

“Ye're askin' a fair bit.”

“I am. But if you do, I won't remind Dell that you owe her for turning her into a little girl.”

“Ye wouldn't, ye would, ye cruel, heartless man. Ye'd better be makin' it up t' me if ye're not gonna let me have me fun, then.”

“Just what I was thinking.” Paul smiles, kissing her.



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