The Canterville Ghost

By Oscar Wilde
Adapted by Tammy Madden

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DEDICATION

For Ray – My loving Scotsman

STORY OF THE PLAY

Based on the famous Oscar Wilde story, this adaptation is touching and funny. Sir Simon Canterville, the 500-year-old ghost of Canterville Manor, is suddenly faced with an English ghost's worst nightmare -- Americans! The Otis family moves in, and Sir Simon wants them out. When 16-year-old Virginia, who wants to be anywhere but England, and Sir Simon meet, they have an instant dislike for one another. Soon, though, they find they have a very special link. Insert two rambunctious twins, a stuffy English butler, and a handsome young English duke, and this becomes a wonderful adaptation of a classic!

PREMIERE PERFORMANCE

The premiere performance was at South Fort Myers High School, Fort Myers, FL on November 2nd, 2012.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(6 m, 8-9 w, 2 flexible)

AUNT ELIZABETH: 50+, the very snobby aunt of Duke Charles, neighbor to Canterville Manor.
DUKE CHARLES: 18, handsome, young duke who lives in the manor adjacent to Canterville Manor.
LORD CANTERVILLE: 50+, the current owner of Canterville Manor.
MR. UMNEY: 50+, the stuffy English butler with a biting wit.
MRS. UMNEY: 50+, the maid, Mr. Umney's wife, grandmotherly type but slightly melodramatic.
HARRY OTIS: 40+, the busy, workaholic American dad, not extremely patient, preoccupied.
LISA OTIS: 40+, the loving, long-suffering mother of the Otis family, perky and optimistic.
WILL OTIS: 19, the oldest of the Otis family children, patient, kind, quiet, artistic.
VIRGINIA OTIS: 16, the oldest daughter of the Otis family, kind, loves to paint, and does NOT want to be in England when the play starts.
SAM OTIS: *(Flexible gender)* 11, the "mean" twin. Always hatching a new plan, mischievous,.
CHRIS OTIS: *(Flexible gender)* The "nicer" twin. Follows Sam and does whatever he/she wants.
SIR SIMON CANTERVILLE: A 500-year-old duke cursed to haunt Canterville Manor for eternity, or until his curse is broken. Seemingly gruff, angry, and blustery, but on the inside he is actually a loving, broken man.
INDIA: 19, Will's new girlfriend. English. An art student at the local college, very Bohemian.
POPPY: Another.
BEATRICE: Another.
VIOLET: Another.
LADY ELEANOR CANTERVILLE: 25, Sir Simon's loving wife, young and beautiful. Role can be doubled by Aunt Elizabeth.

SCENE SYNOPSIS

Act I
Scene 1: Evening in summer.
Scene 2: Later that night.
Scene 3: The next morning.
Scene 4: Evening, several weeks later.
Scene 5: The next day, outside in the garden.
Scene 6: Months later, All Hallows Eve.

Act II
Scene 1: Later that night.
Scene 2: Months later, early spring.
Scene 3: A Few weeks later.
Scene 4: The next morning.

PROPS

For a complete list scene by scene please see end of script.

SETTINGS

Main Set - The "Great Hall" at Canterville Manor. There should be a fireplace upstage center as the main focal point of the room. Bookshelves should line the walls of the room. The room should look like an old, refurbished, English Manor House – rich colors, coats of arms, suits of armor, swords, portraits, etc. may be used to accomplish this effect. Stage Right there is a long dining table and "eating area"; Stage Left is a sitting area with couch/chairs/end tables – the fireplace separates these two areas and, again, is the focal point of the stage. The bookcase SL of the fireplace should be a secret door with a secret passage where the ghost enters and exits. The fireplace should be moveable – it can be pulled to the side or lifted on battens – for the scene when the Ghost and Virginia come and go to the "afterlife." If that is impossible for your theater, you can have the ghost and Virginia exit through the secret door for this scene.

SETTINGS – cont.

The Ghost's Dungeon – this scene can be off to the side of the main stage as a permanent part of the set, or it can be done as a set change. There should be gray stone walls, cobwebs, one simple medieval style bed and chair.

The Garden – Should be off to the side stage right, but can be a set change if necessary. It can be a simple backdrop of an English Garden with some silk flowers and a bench or patio sofa. There should be a barren tree that stands prominently in the scene – it can be small – and there needs to be either a "fully bloomed" replica of the tree, or the set crew should use Velcro or similar means to put blossoms on the tree for Act II, Scene 4.

In the beginning scene, Aunt Elizabeth and Charles can be watching the American family from the garden or from some other point in the auditorium.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: Outside Canterville Manor. LADY ELIZABETH and her nephew, DUKE CHARLES, are DSL hiding by bushes. Lady Elizabeth is dressed to the nines, and is currently looking through a pair of binoculars. Charles is standing awkwardly at her side, trying to get the binoculars from her occasionally. Each time he does, she smacks him. Near the manor, or coming down the theatre aisle, the OTIS FAMILY approaches the manor. They are very happy to be there, all except VIRGINIA, called "Ginny or Gin" by her family. She looks miserable and depressed and is constantly on her iPhone. Lady Elizabeth is still looking through binoculars at them.)

CHARLES: Can you see anything?

ELIZABETH: They're American all right. You can tell by the way they walk and the way they dress.

CHARLES: Really?

ELIZABETH: Yes… *(Angry. Binoculars down.)* Oooh, it's absolutely horrible that the Cantervilles have rented their manor house out, and to American's nonetheless. It's so appalling.

CHARLES: I think it's nice. Since the Cantervilles are going to be living in the city, why shouldn't someone live in the country manor?

ELIZABETH: Charles, all of the people who live in this area of Ascot are all British, and most of us have a direct blood lineage to royalty! We are all very wealthy…and I don't mean new money, I mean old money…very old money.

CHARLES: New money, old money, I don't really see the difference.

ELIZABETH: You had better learn the difference, young man, or you'll never be a true duke!! *(Looking again at the Otises.)* Oh, dear, they have so many children…and I see twins--preteen twins--who seem rather rambunctious. I think I'm going to be faint.

End of Freeview

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