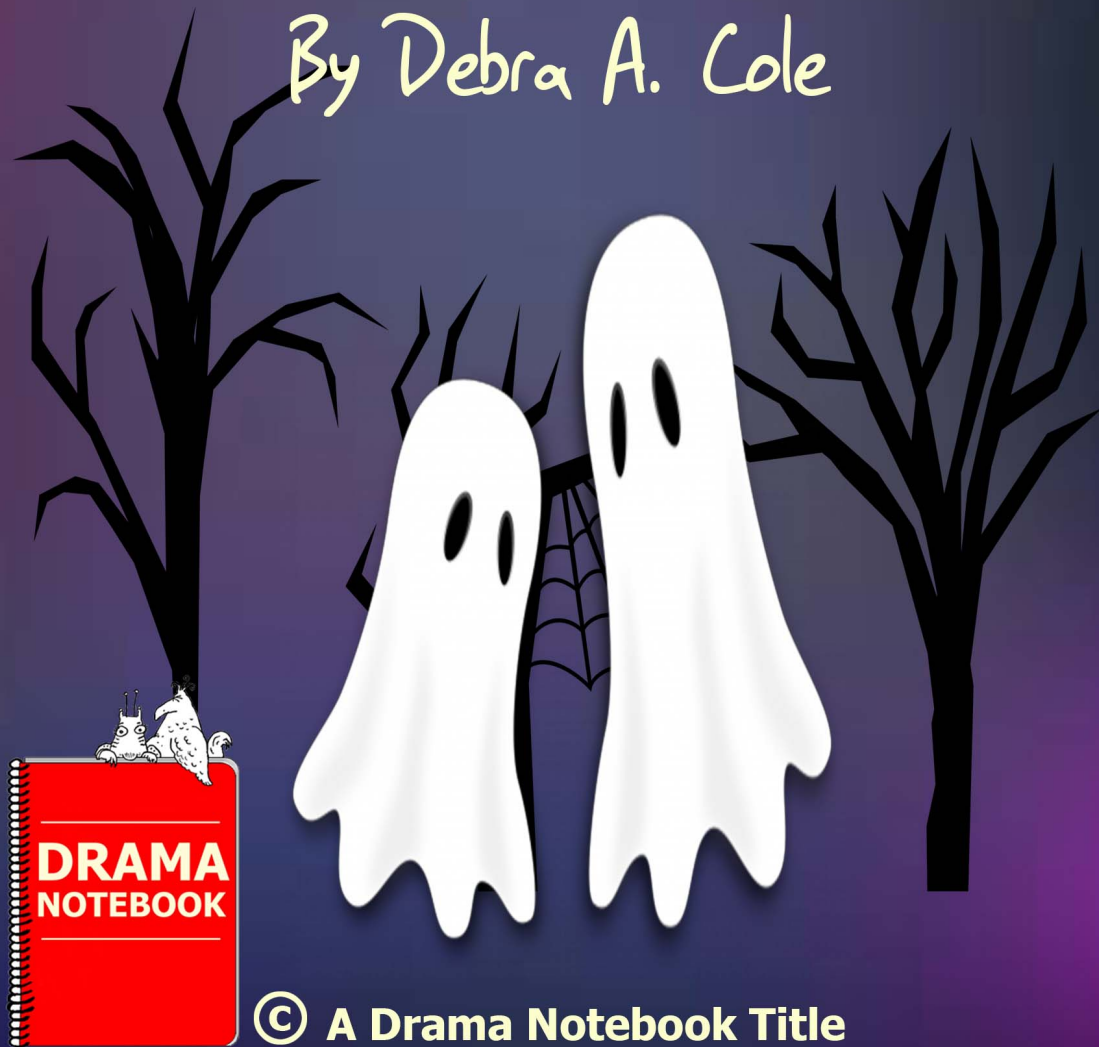


KINDRED SPIRITS

By Debra A. Cole



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About the Author...

Debra A. Cole is a celebrated humanities teacher, youth theatre director, and children's playwright with degrees in journalism, art history, and elementary education. She understands the needs of young performers and their directors and creates pieces that encourage engaging discussion, creative thought, and quirky playfulness. Her goal is that young performers discover the power and delight that theatre brings to actors and audiences alike.



Visit her website:

www.debraacole-playwright.com

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About the play...

Can ghosts and humans live together peacefully? The Riley & Harper Radical Haunts team is ready to help answer that question. That is, if they can make contact.



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CHARACTERS

LOGAN — (M/F) concerned kid worried about the strange noises and events in his/her house

RILEY — (M/F) co-owner of Riley and Harper Radical Haunts

HARPER — (M/F) co-owner of Riley and Harper Radical Haunts

KADEN MARSHALL— (M/F) ghost child of the Marshall family - playful and mischievous

MRS. MARSHALL— (F) ghost mothers of the Marshall family - the voice of reason

MR. MARSHALL — (M) ghost father of the Marshall family - loves to bake



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(The action takes place in modern times in an average family room.)

(Lights come up in a family room that has art on the walls, assorted lamps, a couch, side table, rocking chair, and coffee table complete with decorations. On the couch sits Logan with Harper and Riley on each side. Mrs. Marshall, in full ghost whiteness, sits on a rocking chair reading. She not rocking yet. She does not acknowledge Logan, Harper and Riley. They do not see her. Harper has a backpack next to the couch.)

LOGAN

(nervously) So, you two hunt ghosts?

RILEY

(clarifying) Hunt is strong word. Harper and I like to say we "facilitate" ghost interactions.

HARPER

(agreeing) Exactly. Riley and I think that most ghosts are just misunderstood. If more people would take the time to talk and listen to ghosts, then our two worlds could live peacefully together.

LOGAN

(unsure) I'm not sure I want to live peacefully with ghosts...Maybe I just want them gone.

RILEY

You made the right decision contacting (proudly) Riley & Harper Radical Haunts. We guarantee a happy result, or your money back.

LOGAN

(confused) But, your ad said your service is free?

HARPER

(quickly jumping in) Oh, we are really just in our early days of setting up the business. Soon, clients will be knocking our door down to have us help them with their ghost issues. THEN, look out - we are going to be very expensive I can assure you.

RILEY

(confidently) Right! So, Logan, tell us about your radical ghost; We are ready to help!

LOGAN

(pauses and nervously answers) I'm not sure it's just one radical ghost. Too many things are happening in my house to be just one.

HARPER

Well, be brought all of our ghost facilitating equipment! (pulls out the first apparatus out of the backpack)

LOGAN

What does THAT do?

RILEY

THIS is a ghost voice recorder. If any ghost wants to communicate with us, all it has to do is speak into this machine, and we will hear the results when we play it back.

LOGAN

You said your business is new, but I'm not your FIRST client, am I?

(Riley and Harper look at each other nervously.)

HARPER

I've always heard that being first is best!

RILEY

Exactly! Being first means we can give you all of our energy and passion!

(Mrs. Marshall begins to rock back and forth in the rocking chair as she continues to read.)

LOGAN

(scared) Look! It's happening! The chair is rocking with no one with it!!!

(Mrs. Marshall starts to pay attention to the three on the couch and immediately stops rocking in the chair.)

HARPER

THIS IS NOT A DRILL, RILEY! Start the ghost voice recorder!

RILEY

(fumbling) I'm trying... THIS IS SO EXCITING!

MRS. MARSHALL

(yells off stage) Kaden Marshall! (back to normal volume) Come in here right now!

RILEY

(asking a question into the machine) Who are you?

(Kaden comes running in. Kaden is playful and clearly a prankster. Kaden plops down by the foot of the rocking chair. Mrs. Marshall stops rocking.)

KADEN

What's up Mom?

MRS. MARSHALL

Did you do something to make Logan scared again?

KADEN

Me, Mom? NEVER!

MRS. MARSHALL

Look at Logan.

(They both look at the couch.)

Logan is so worried about us he/she called in outside help.

HARPER

(asking a question into the machine) Say something into this machine, and we will be able to hear you.

MRS. MARSHALL

Look at this! They want to HEAR us. We have spent hundreds of years just wanting peace and quiet, and now, these three want to hear us!

KADEN

Hear us? I've always wanted Logan to hear me! (Kaden jumps up and picks up a knick-knack from the coffee table and throws it) Check me out, Logan!

(Logan, Harper, and Riley freeze in shock.)

HARPER

(nervously) Did everyone see that or was that just me? I see things sometimes... it's a long story. It's probably why I do this job.

RILEY

(shocked) Oh, we all saw it. There really is a ghost here! I can't believe it!

LOGAN

I told you!

MRS. MARSHALL

Kaden! We must be careful. Logan and his/her family have allowed us to live without worry for generations. I would like to KEEP living here, thank you very much. If you keep scaring Logan, he/she may just ask us to leave.

RILEY

(asking a question into the machine) Do you live here with Logan? Do you mean him/her any harm?

MRS. MARSHALL

(outraged) Harm? Did you hear that question? Harm? Why would we harm the family we love?

KADEN

(yells) Mom! (back to normal volume) This is our chance! Don't you want Logan to know we are here? We share a kitchen! We share a family room! (looks around and whispers) We share a BATHROOM.

HARPER

Let's play it back and see if we can hear the ghost!

(Riley rewinds the tape and plays the recorded sound.)

RECORDING OF RILEY'S VOICE

Who are you?

RECORDING OF MRS. MARSHALL'S VOICE

Kaden Marshall!

(long pause and static)

RECORDING OF KADEN'S VOICE

Mom.

LOGAN

What? The ghost's name is Kaden Marshall.

RILEY

Maybe...but there were two voices on the recording. A female voice called out to Kaden Marshall... and another voice said mom.

HARPER

That means there are two ghosts!

LOGAN

Two ghosts! Maybe this was a bad idea. Maybe I don't really want to know who is here. I mean, I could deal with one ghost, but two? Two is too many is anyone's house!

KADEN

(to his mom) Boy, is Kaden going to be surprised when he finds out there is a third one...

(Mr. Marshall enters with a plate of hot chocolate chip cookies. He walks right to Kaden and Mrs. Marshall.)

MR. MARSHALL

Cookies are ready!

KADEN

(grabbing a cookie and taking a big bite) I LOVE your cookies, Dad!

MRS. MARSHALL

We have bigger issues than cookies, Kaden.

MR. MARSHALL

(looks around and see the three on the couch) What is going on? Who are these people with Logan?

MRS. MARSHALL

Ghost hunters... well, they call themselves ghost facilitators, but Kaden here has gone ahead and drawn attention to us.

KADEN

Mom, it wasn't only my voice they captured on the machine.

MR. MARSHALL

Machine? A ghost voice recorder? I've always wanted to try to communicate through one of those! This is exciting!

LOGAN

Does anyone else smell chocolate chip cookies?

(Riley and Harper sniff the air and smile with curiosity.)

MR. MARSHALL

Well, here's my chance. They smell my baking! I knew my recipes could wake the living!

(laughs at his own joke)

RILEY

(asking a question into the machine) Ma'am, we heard your voice on our machine. Did you like to bake when you were alive?

MR. MARSHALL

Ma'am? They think I am a woman!

MRS. MARSHALL

That's my fault, dear. Like Kaden said, they sadly caught our voices on tape. I guess they just assumed my voice was the baker.

MR. MARSHALL

Awww... that's sweet. But men bake in this household. We have for years. My grandfather's banana bread recipe won awards at every county fair. (whispering) His secret was lard. (takes a pause) Well,... THIS. IS. PERFECT! It's time to connect. Let's just tip our toes into the water and see what happens.

HARPER

(asking a question into the machine) Are you two alone here?

MR. MARSHALL

(yells) I'm here too!

RILEY

Play it back. I want to hear them say more.

(Riley rewinds the tape and plays the recorded sound.)

RECORDING OF HARPER'S VOICE

Are you two alone here?

RECORDING OF MR. MARSHALL'S VOICE

I'm here too.

LOGAN

(concerned) I'm here too? That is a new voice. There are more than two? Is having three ghosts in a house normal?

HARPER

How would we know normal? You're our first job!

RILEY

THIS. IS. THE. BEST. DAY. OF. MY. LIFE!

MR. MARSHALL

See, honey? They love finding out about us. THAT kid is thrilled!

MRS. MARSHALL

I don't know. Ghosts and people have lived together in peace because we don't communicate on a day-to-day basis. Humans live their lives, and we live ours - side by side.

MR. MARSHALL

Well, technically honey, we aren't living...

LOGAN

Maybe, we should just stop. I mean, they aren't hurting anyone. I was curious about the noises and things moving, but they aren't hurting me.

RILEY

Stop? NO! This is our big break. Think of it - Riley & Harper Radical Haunts as a TV show! We could be stars!

HARPER

I can see it now, two friends facing the dark, scary night, and the radical haunts that terrorize.

LOGAN

Uhm... there is nothing really THAT terrorizing here, and it's broad daylight. I really think this whole thing is getting out of hand.

(Kaden moves over to the art on the walls and moves them askew. Mr. Marshall pats Kaden on the back when finished. All three on the couch jump up!)

RILEY

You saw that, right! Someone just moved the art! This entity is playful. I dig it!

MRS. MARSHALL

(scolding) Kaden!

HARPER

Time for a new approach. (reaches into the backpack and pulls out a ball and asks a question into the machine) I have ball here. Do you want to play? You can just touch it, and it will move.

KADEN

(looks to mom) Oh, come on. Mom, you know I have to move that ball.

MOM:

(rolls her eyes) Do what you have to do...

(Kaden grabs the ball and rolls it across the floor with flair.)

LOGAN

(excited) One of them does want to play! That's kinda cool.

RILEY

(worried) Be careful, Logan. No matter how exciting this all is, we are dealing with a ghost. You know... ghost... dragging chains, white sheets, heavy footsteps! These guys can be creepy and dangerous.

(The family of ghosts looks offended.)

MRS. MARSHALL

(angrily) Let me at THAT one.

(Mr. Marshall and Kaden hold her back.)

I certainly am NOT dangerous!

LOGAN

(confident now) I don't think they are dangerous. You pulled a toy ball and asked if it wanted to play? We smelled chocolate chip cookies. How dangerous can these ghosts be?

MR. MARSHALL

(smiling at Logan) I've always liked this kid.

MRS. MARSHALL

(lovingly) Kaden understands us. I am so proud.

HARPER

Let's see what else it, or they, will do. It's time to try one last tool. (Harper walks over to the backpack and pulls out a camera)

LOGAN

Is that a camera?

RILEY

Not any normal camera. This camera detects a ghost and snaps a photo. This camera sees things that our human eyes cannot.

LOGAN

I thought ghosts don't like light. Isn't the flash going to harm them?

HARPER

That's vampires. Ghosts LOVE photos!

KADEN

A ghost camera? A PHOTO IS JUST WHAT WE NEED! This is our big moment! If we pose for just the right photo, Logan will see that we are a nice family who would never hurt him. I mean, I like to play pranks, but really, I just want to be Logan's friend.

MR. MARSHALL

(to Mrs. Marshall) He does have a pretty good point, sweetie.

MRS. MARSHALL

(nervously) I don't know. A photo is REAL proof. Are we ready for that?

KADEN

Please, mom. We can all live here, even if we do know about each other. Kaden respects us and we respect Kaden. We are the perfect extended family.

RILEY

(takes the camera and positions to take the photo) Let's do this. Maybe we will see something, maybe we won't, but I think we need to try.

(The Marshall family gathers together and smiles as wide as they can smile. Riley snaps a photo toward the family they can't see.)

LOGAN

What do you see?

HARPER

Pull up the photo!

(All three and the Marshall family huddle around the camera as Riley examines the photo.)

RILEY

(looking carefully) It looks like... yeah... there is something there... hold on... I see one, two, three, four figures!

(Kaden, Mr. Marshall, and Mrs. Marshall look confused.)

LOGAN

Let me see. (pulls the camera closer) You're right. I see a kid, a mom, a dad, and....what is that in the background?

HARPER

(grabs the camera and looks closely) It looks like an old man.

MR. MARSHALL

(looking around) Another ghost? But this is our house!

MRS. MARSHALL

Now hold on. If we are asking Kaden to respect us and share the space, how can we not be open to sharing the space with another ghost?

LOGAN

I think I found out what I needed to know. There are four ghosts here, and they mean me no harm. I think it's time for you both to leave. I can live with the results. It seems that they just want to live here peacefully, and that is what I want too. I am happy to share the space.

HARPER

But what about our tv show? Don't you want to be famous?

LOGAN

I'm okay. (to the ghosts) Okay, ghost family, I see you, and I want you to know that you are welcome to stay. My house is your house.

KADEN

He gets it, mom. We are going to be fine.

MR. MARSHALL

Again... I love this kid.

MRS. MARSHALL

Well, I can live with this if he can.

RILEY

It's over, Harper. Let's pack up and find another house in need. Maybe they will want to be scared and be on a tv show. This kid isn't scared enough to be the pilot episode. We need someone who is really freaked out. My sister thinks she has a goblin living in her hairdryer. It always eats her curls when it heats up. Maybe SHE is the perfect first episode.

HARPER

Yeah, this kid is too calm and accepting. But I have to say, after hearing, seeing, and smelling all of this, I kind of wish I had a nice ghost family living in my house. (to the Marshalls without seeing them) If you ever want to visit me, my house is four blocks away. You are welcome to come by and bake cookies.

(The Marshalls smile and hug one another.)

LOGAN

Thanks for your help. I think I have it from here.

DISEMBODIED VOICE

Adios! ¡Hasta luego, amigos!

(The entire room freezes and looks worried.)

LOGAN

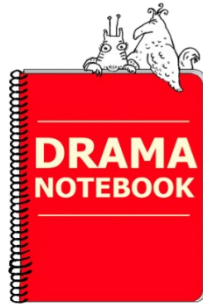
Uh....maybe the two of you should stay. I don't speak Spanish. Do either of you?

RILEY AND HARPER

(in unison and frozen) Nope.

(lights out)

CURTAIN



Discussion Questions

"Kindred Spirits" is an original story plays with the idea of current day ghost hunting television shows. Throughout the story, students will notice the themes of sharing, respect, and coexistence. Can people who are different live together peacefully? Is there room enough for everyone?

Ask!

Sharing personal items is one thing, sharing a persona space is quite another. What items have you had to share that were tough?

Many ghosts are portrayed on television as scary spirits. Describe this unique family of ghosts.

Riley and Harper seem pretty passionate about their new business. What is being passionate about what you do a good thing?

Some people are afraid of what they can't see. What scares you?

Have you ever had to share a room? What were some of the challenges you faced doing so?

Mr. Marshall is offended when they think he is female after smelling his delicious cookies. Do both males and female cook in your house?



Director/Production Notes

Casting

The play includes a small cast that is with flexible gender casting when possible. The casting of the Marshall family members is key for the humor and action.

Characterization

Here are some director's tips that you can share with your cast members.

Logan – Great kid who just wants some answers on what is going on in his/her house. Worried, cautious, but ultimately calm about the whole thing, Logan is just an all-around great kid.

Riley – Passionate about this new business, Riley is professional, dedicated, and full of good energy.

Harper - Passionate about this new business, Harper is professional, dedicated, and full of good energy.

Kaden Marshall – Kaden is playful and mischievous. Everything is an adventure for Kaden. Good hearted, he/she means no harm, but loves to have fun.

Mrs. Marshall – Calm and logical, her job is to keep the Marshall family together and on the right track.

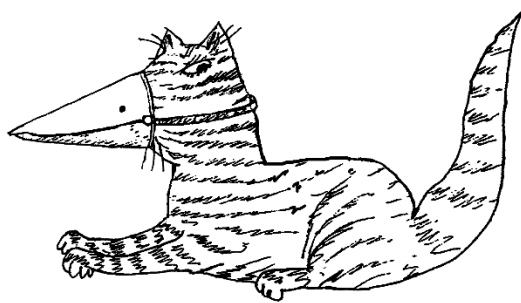
Mr. Marshall – A kid at heart, he is a fun-loving dad who love baking.

Costumes

No fancy costumes are required for this piece. Teachers/directors could choose to put both Riley and Harper in "Ghostbuster" type of outfits for effect if desired.

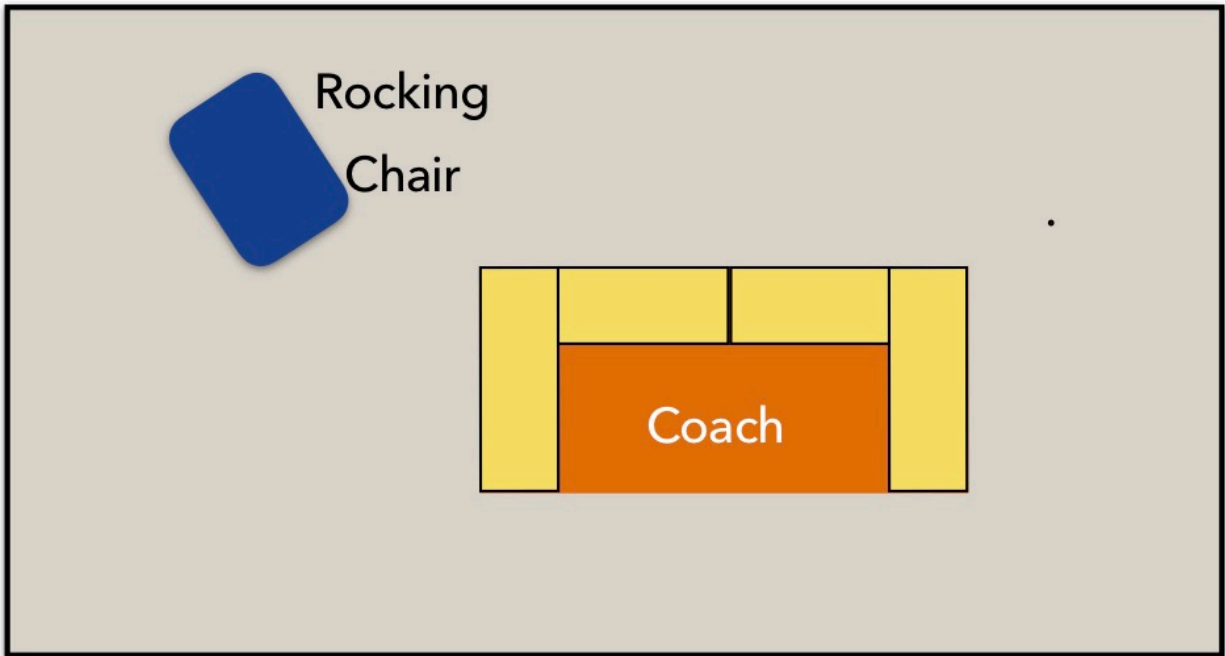
Set

The play requires no set - just set pieces and props.



Staging

Family Room



Audience

Curtain Call

With a small ensemble cast, curtain class is clean and easy with everyone gathering center stage and bowing as one. It takes the whole team to make this piece work, so the bows should celebrate that collaboration.

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