

SEANCE AT THE SHADY YEW

Written by

Cassandra Moselle

Inside the Shady Yew. Niamh, Aoife, and Liam watch The Dullahan with the talking board.

NIAMH

Why does he try to contact spirits
not here?

AOIFE

Maybe he doesn't wish to speak to
us?

LIAM

Can anyone speak through it?

NIAMH

It's for mortals to speak to the
dead.

LIAM

Then it should let the dead speak
to mortals.

AOIFE

I don't think the Dullahan will let
us play with it.

LIAM

I'm not asking to play with it.

AOIFE

(pointing to the banshee) Maybe she
will help us.

NIAMH

Why would she do that?

AOIFE

I think she's nice.

NIAMH

Then you ask her.

Aoife approaches Aibell.

AOIFE

We wanted to know if we could speak
with that (indicating the talking
board).

AIBELL

It is not mine.

AOIFE

But you aren't afraid of the
Dullahan.

AIBELL

No, I have no fear of him.

AOIFE

Will you ask?

AIBELL

What words do you wish to speak?

AOIFE

They (indicating the humans) have
been helping people. Maybe they can
help us?

AIBELL

I make no promises, but I will ask.
(to The Dullahan) The spirits
gather.

THE DULLAHAN

Many haunt here.

AIBELL

Many now and many more there'll be.
They wish to speak.

THE DULLAHAN

Then let them speak.

AIBELL

You have the power to amplify their
voice.

THE DULLAHAN

And why would I do that?

AIBELL

They speak of death.

THE DULLAHAN

I know death well.

AIBELL

Their words are not for you.

THE DULLAHAN

Then why do I care if they speak or
not?

AIBELL

You came for them, yet here they are.

THE DULLAHAN

Whether they stay or go is not my concern, for my work was done as they are no more.

AIBELL

But you could finish your task and help them move on.

THE DULLAHAN

You mistake me for someone benevolent.

AIBELL

I mistake you as someone who wants to finish what they started.

THE DULLAHAN

Provoking me will not get you your way.

AIBELL

Nor will dancing in riddles.

THE DULLAHAN

I will not.

AIBELL

Tis not what you already do, Dullahan?

THE DULLAHAN

This is different. This let's someone speak with the other side.

AIBELL

And you can't use it to let the other side speak?

THE DULLAHAN

Such gifts do not come without a price.

AIBELL

You are the master of death. You speak a name and that name is marked for the grave. What does death wish?

THE DULLAHAN

Souls.

The banshee goes quiet, her eyes roll into the back of her head.

AIBELL

The daughter of nightfall arrives.
She is your right hand bringing
destruction and sorrow. She
prepares souls for your harvest.
Her time is now, these souls are
here, let them speak their words to
finish the tasks that bind them to
this mortal coil.

THE DULLAHAN

I am satisfied.

AIBELL

(to Maebh) Ready the pub for a
séance.

AOIFE

Do we need anything to ward off
evil spirits?

THE DULLAHAN

I am the evil spirit. And I am
already here.

The door is placed on top of the two wine kegs. The Dullahan will place the talking board in the middle of the makeshift table. His back will be toward the wall and he'll face out.

THE DULLAHAN

The time of Samhain is approaching
and the veil between worlds grows
thin. The souls of spirits who were
brought here when they died still
walk this mortal coil. Tonight, we
will let them speak of their fate.
I have this talking board. Mortals
use it to speak to the dead but I
will use it to let the dead speak
to the mortals. My price has been
paid, this service I render, no
uninvited spirit may enter this
space nor interfere. Banshee of
Munster, she who overlooks the
river Shannon, bring forth the
first spirit to speak.

AIBELL

Dullahan, I bring you Niamh
McCarthy.

THE DULLAHAN

The name has been spoken, and by my
will, let her speak.

Niamh McCarthy should be standing on a black box, with a
footlight a blue gel pointed up to create a ghostly
appearance and begins to relive the night she died.

NIAMH

It's cold. Why am I so cold? (Niamh
feels the back of her head. She
brings her fingers in front of her
face). Blood (she returns her
fingers to the back of her head),
there's so much blood. Why? Molly.
Help me. Please. My mother. I have
to get back to my mother. You must
help me. You ... You!
Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!!!!!!!
!!!!

Aibell shoots out her hand to freeze Niamh in place. To the
Dullahan.

AIBELL

Twass not our bargain.

THE DULLAHAN

Does she not speak?

AIBELL

Do you dare to deceive the queen of
banshees?

THE DULLAHAN

There's no deception herald of
death.

AIBELL

Hear me, Dullahan, for if you do
not let this woman speak of her own
free will I will call my banshees
to the midnight court and I will
pass your judgment. We will shepard
the souls so you may not come near
them. Twill not be a house nor road
nor field where the Dullahan will
be called. For so I have spoken, so
will it be.

THE DULLAHAN
You think I am afraid of you?

AIBELL
For so I have spoken, so will it
be.

THE DULLAHAN
You hold no power over me.

AIBELL
For so I have spoken, so will it
be. I have spoken it thrice and
bound it this night.

THE DULLAHAN
I have no wish to play your games
banshee so in the name of peace, I
let her speak.

Niamh immediately unfreezes. She is back to her "normal"
spirit self.

AIBELL
Niamh.

NIAMH
Yes?

AIBELL
You may speak.

NIAMH
I do not know how I died. Can you
tell me?

THE DULLAHAN
Those secrets are not ours to
reveal.

AIBELL
Why do you haunt here?

NIAMH
Regret. I died never knowing love.

AIBELL
Tell your story so that we may help
you find peace.

NIAMH
The night before I died I attended
a dance at the Dargan residence.

(MORE)

NIAMH (CONT'D)

It is a grand estate and we were marking the harvest celebration. It was not my first dance, but the first dance where I found myself with suitors. Very eligible suitors. It seemed as when one dance ended there was someone there ready to partner with me for the next one. This went on well into the night. When finally the merriment was at its close I gathered my belongings and they all tried to walk me home. I declined and went home in a carriage with my dear friend Molly. We fell asleep giggling over the turn of events and the next morning I awoke to a beautiful bouquet of flowers with a card that simply read, "Yours Truly." Yours Truly. I wish I knew who Yours Truly was. I tried to find out, I strolled down the river Liffey to speak to the florists, but no one would confess that they dropped off the flowers. I asked carters, carriage drivers, and even a few well informed gossips. But twas for naught. That was when I decided to return home to see if there were any more clues waiting for me. It was a chill evening and the rain had begun to pick up. I was turning down Brodir Row when I suddenly found myself on the ground, as if I'd been hit from behind and had fallen forward. My head was swimming and when I felt the back of my head there was blood. I looked up and down the road I saw Molly. I think I saw Molly. I reached out to her. For help. And then it went dark and I woke up here. Or I guess I died here.

AIBELL

Diviner.

MAEBH

I am here.

AIBELL

Will you divine for this woman?

MAEBH

I have. I've already given her the first letter of the name of the suitor.

AIBELL

Yet she is still here.

NIAMH

As I am not certain still.

AIBELL

Diviner, have you no charm or potion to help this spirit?

MAEBH

My potions and charms are all for mortal beings. I cannot give them to a spirit.

AIBELL

I walk in both the mortal world and the spirit realm.

MAEBH

Then I present this potion. Drink it under the new moon and the face of your suitor will be revealed.

Maebh hands the vial to Aibell. Aibell in turn hands it to Niamh

NIAMH

Thank you diviner.

Niamh fades away, staying toward the back or shadows in the pub.

THE DULLAHAN

The time of Samhain is approaching and the veil between worlds grows thin. The souls of spirits who were brought here when they died still walk this mortal coil. Tonight, we will let them speak of their fate. I have this talking board. Mortals use it to speak to the dead but I will use it to let the dead speak to the mortals. My price has been paid, this service I render, no uninvited spirit may enter this space nor interfere.

(MORE)

THE DULLAHAN (CONT'D)
Banshee of Munster, she who
overlooks the river Shannon, bring
forth the next spirit to speak.

AIBELL
Dullahan, I bring you Liam Kennedy.

THE DULLAHAN
The name has been spoken, and by my
will, let him speak.

Liam Kennedy should be standing on a black box, with a
footlight a blue gel pointed up to create a ghostly
appearance.

LIAM
He'll play no pranks on me, will
he?

AIBELL
Dullahan?

THE DULLAHAN
I'll play no pranks on thee, Liam
Kennedy. The price has been paid
and the rules are clear.

AIBELL
Speak, Liam Kennedy, tell us why
you are here.

LIAM
I don't want to go.

AIBELL
That is why you stay here?

LIAM
I didn't get to live.

AIBELL
Tell us how you died.

LIAM
It wasn't quick. At least, I don't
think it was quick. I started
having dreams. At first, I thought
nothing of it, but soon it began to
feel as though I did not rest even
if I had just woken up. I dreamt of
a large black cat. I dreamt it was
in my room. In my dreams I could
hear the cat yowl and scratch the
walls.

(MORE)

LIAM (CONT'D)

I swear, I would awaken the next morning and find scratches exactly where I had dreamed they'd be. I became so tired that I started sleeping during the day. Day and night the cat was there, tormenting me in my dreams. My parents called for a priest who tried to banish the evil spirit they said was haunting me but the cat was there. I no longer had the energy to leave my bed nor eat or drink. Without sleep I began to see things during the day. I saw the cat. It wasn't a dream, it was real and it was there. I gathered what little strength I had left and I lunged at the beast. But it was too quick. Or it wasn't there. My head hit the ground hard. Maybe if I was better I could have healed but in the state I was in. It accelerated my illness and I died in my bed three nights later. I don't know if I was mad or sick or if there was a cat. And I don't know if I'll ever know the truth.

AIBELL

Is that what you search for?

LIAM

I don't want to leave!

AIBELL

And no one here will force you to go.

LIAM

(Pointing to Maebh) Does she know what happened to me?

MAEBH

No child. I do not know how you died.

LIAM

But you fixed Niamh.

MAEBH

With a potion.

LIAM

Do you have anything for me?

MAEBH

No child.

LIAM

Well, I don't want to leave.

Aibell draws a single card. She looks at it and then looks up at Liam.

AIBELL

Your answers will not be quick, but they will come Liam Kennedy. Your answers will be found in this pub before the year is done.

LIAM

When will I know?

AIBELL

You will know once you see it.

LIAM

I must wait?

AIBELL

It seems so.

Liam fades away, staying toward the back or shadows in the pub.

THE DULLAHAN

The time of Samhain is approaching and the veil between worlds grows thin. The souls of spirits who were brought here when they died still walk this mortal coil. Tonight, we will let them speak of their fate. I have this talking board. Mortals use it to speak to the dead but I will use it to let the dead speak to the mortals. My price has been paid, this service I render, no uninvited spirit may enter this space nor interfere. Banshee of Munster, she who overlooks the river Shannon, bring forth the last spirit to speak.

AIBELL

Dullahan, I bring you Aoife Ó Ciaráin.

THE DULLAHAN

The name has been spoken, and by my will, let her speak.

Aoife Ó Ciaráin should be standing on a black box, with a footlight a blue gel pointed up to create a ghostly appearance.

AOIFE

(to Aibell) I am afraid.

AIBELL

Have no fear little one. You'll come to no harm this night.

AOIFE

I was outside with my sister, she is older than I am, and we were playing. All of a sudden I started getting cramps in my legs. My sister she called for me ma and da. Da carried me home and they gave me some ginger tea. And that's when I started throwing up. I'd never thrown up so much in my life. It hurt. I kept tryin' to throw up even after I had nothing left in my stomach. I don't remember much after that. I think there was a priest. Father Joseph. And a man I'd never seen before in a uniform. Then I was outside and the rain was sliding down my face. I don't know where we were goin'. I don't think we made it because the next thing I knew I woke up here. I know now that I had cholera and didn't make it.

AIBELL

Why do you remain here?

AOIFE

I'm afraid.

AIBELL

What are you afraid of?

AOIFE

I don't know what's out there.

AIBELL

Diviner. Have you not some charm to protect this girl?

MAEBH

Aye, I have such a charm. It will
require the light of a full moon to
charge but once done it will
protect this girl.

Mae bh hands the charm to Aibell. Who hands it to Aoife.

AIBELL

This will protect you on your
journey.

AOIFE

Do you promise?

MAEBH

I promise.

Aoife takes the charm and fades away, staying toward the back
or shadows in the pub.

THE DULLAHAN

The time of Samhain is approaching
and the veil between worlds grows
thin. The souls of spirits who were
brought here when they died still
walk this mortal coil. Tonight, we
heard three spirits speak of their
fate. My price was been paid, this
service I rendered, no uninvited
spirit entered this space nor
interfered. Banshee of Munster, she
who overlooks the river Shannon,
are you satisfied?

AIBELL

I am satisfied with thee, Dullahan.

THE DULLAHAN

Than my work is complete.

Upon the word completion, any candles that are lit should be
extinguished.