Ready When You Are

**SEQ A:**

**FX:        Howling wind.**

NARRATOR: You're in a forest.

GHOST: You're at your computer.

NARRATOR: And the sun is going down.

GHOST: You're here… Why are you here?

NARRATOR: It's getting colder.

**FX:        Crickets.**

GHOST: I can see you.

NARRATOR: Lost, you decide to follow the first path you see, and hope it'll bring you home.

GHOST: I know you, don't I?

**Name prompt:**

NARRATOR: What is your name?

**[Player enters NAME.]**

**SEQ B:**

GHOST: It's nice to see you again, [NAME]. A common misconception about ghosts: You only find them in haunted houses. Ghosts can be anywhere.

**FX:        Crickets and crows; nighttime ambience.**

NARRATOR: You reach the end of the path. It is dark. You try to look out past the trees but all you can see is a pair of eyes, gleaming.

GHOST: Another misconception about ghosts: They're human.

**FX:        Bush rustling.**

NARRATOR: An animal leaps out of the bush! You jump back before realizing it is a—

**[INPUT 1]: cat**

**[INPUT 2]: dog**

**[Player chooses "cat" or "dog" as ANIMAL.]**

**FX:          Crickets and crows; nighttime ambience.**

GHOST: You don't recognize me, [NAME]? I'm your old [ANIMAL]. It's been some time. For me, I mean. Waiting here, alone. Why don't you stay awhile?

**[INPUT 1]: "Yes, I'll stay for a bit."**

GHOST (if "cat"): I may just start purring. Let's take a walk. I know you can't see so well in the dark, so keep close.

GHOST (if "dog"): I could howl out of joy. Let's go for a walk! Follow me, I know the way through here. I know it very well.

**[INPUT 2:] "No, I want to go home."**

GHOST (if "cat"): But you *are* home. Home is where the body is, don't you think? Let's take a walk. I know you can't see so well in the dark, so keep close.

GHOST (if "dog"): Ah, you're cold, aren't you? Let's go for a walk, then. That'll warm you up. And it'll keep my tail wagging. Stay close, it's dark.

**SEQ C:**

**FX:          Muffled voices, nighttime ambience.**

NARRATOR: You follow the [ANIMAL] along a dark path that you couldn't see before. You hear voices up ahead. Through the trees, you spot patches of light flickering behind frosted windows.

GHOST: Do you recognize any of them, at least? No? I suppose you can't be blamed. It's a bit early for you to be here, anyway.

**[INPUT 1]: "Where am I?"**

GHOST: *You* are at your computer. *I* am between spaces, so to speak. I don't spend too much time here, usually. I'm the spirit of many [ANIMAL]s, not just yours. Although you were one of my favourites.

**[INPUT 2]: "Am I dead?"**

GHOST: Don't be ridiculous. *I* may be in the afterlife, but *you* are sitting at your computer. Lucky for me, too, or else we wouldn't be chatting.

NARRATOR: You approach the voices up ahead and come upon a cabin. The light is warm and inviting; you can hear laughter inside.

GHOST [if "cat"]: I've always been jealous. But no matter how many times I scratch on the door, they won't let me in.

GHOST [if "dog"]: I've always wanted to go inside! But no matter how much I paw at the door, they ignore me.

**[INPUT 1]: You knock on the door.**

**FX:          Knocking, voices shush and fade.**

NARRATOR: The voices fall silent and the lights go out.

GHOST: People. They never listen, even in death.

**[INPUT 2]: You pet the [ANIMAL].**

**FX:          Voices fade out slowly.**

GHOST: Oh, don't worry about me. Pretty soon I'll be back at it again, another [ANIMAL] in another body. Hopefully another family, too.

NARRATOR: You continue on the path, leaving the cabin behind.

**SEQ D:**

**MUSIC:            Glockenspiel hits, faint. Quick fade out.**

NARRATOR: The temperature falls. The dead leaves on the ground are coated in frost, snapping under your footsteps like brittle twigs. Your [ANIMAL] looks back at you, eyes gleaming, before leading the way again.

GHOST: We're running out of time together. We both have jobs to do once we get back, don't we?

**[INPUT 1]: "Why did you bring me here?"**

**FX:          Owl hooting, distant.**

NARRATOR: The [ANIMAL] licks their lips, hot breath clouding in front of their nose.

GHOST: I have a message for you. Something to bring back. Something you need to know.

**[INPUT 2]: "I want to talk some more."**

**FX:          Owl hooting, distant.**

NARRATOR: The [ANIMAL]'s head droops slightly.

GHOST: I'm sorry. I wish I could keep you all to myself. But there's something I need to tell you, something you need to bring back.

**SEQ E:**

**MUSIC:**          **"Last Moments"**

NARRATOR: They remember everything.

GHOST: Tell them we remember everything.

NARRATOR: Good things.

GHOST: I remember soft spots in the sun.

NARRATOR: Bad things.

GHOST: I remember getting hurt.

NARRATOR: They remember life in all its fullness.

GHOST: Being with you, feeling safe.

NARRATOR: And death, all of it.

GHOST: *It* eventually found me.

NARRATOR: Their last thoughts…

GHOST: But the last thing I remember…

NARRATOR: …centered on those who loved them.

GHOST: …is you.

**MUSIC:**          **Quick fade.**

NARRATOR: All [ANIMAL]s remember. Do you?

GHOST: Goodbye, [NAME].

**FX:**        **Owl hooting. The wind picks up, howls, then fades.**

END