

Ghost Stories

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The Lady with the Emerald Ring

A man's wife became deathly ill the night before Christmas in 1798, he called for the doctor but by the time the doctor had arrived his wife had died, or so it seemed. Her husband was so grief stricken that he shut himself up on his own and didn't attend the funeral the following day. The servants of the house carried the rich woman's body to the Vicar who in a drunken stupor held the ceremony quickly. The veil was drawn across her face, the stone lid lowered and the iron grille locked.

When later that night the Clergy man fell to sleep he remembered the beautiful emerald ring the woman had been laid with on her finger. Wanting riches for himself and figuring no one would find out he went downstairs unlocked the lid open it and tried to pry off the ring, it wouldn't budge. He ran to his lab and brought back a file to cut off her finger with. He severed her finger and pulled the ring off, as he left he turned around to pick up the iron lid, and screamed at the top of his lungs, dropped the ring and ran, the woman had awakened and was moaning and holding her severed finger towards him with a smile displayed evenly across her face.

He ran with all his might upstairs where he hung himself from the rafters of his home. If only he knew that the woman had only to thank him for she had not died after all but had gone into a coma and the cutting of her finger restored her circulation waking her from it.

Wearing nothing but her fine silk dress she walked back to the home and knocked on the door and rang the bell to no avail. The servants had all gone to sleep for it was late Christmas Eve. She felt an urge and lifted a heavy stone, threw it at her husband's window, and waited. He came to the window with a sorrowful look on his face, and suddenly to her surprise he yelled, "Go away. Why must you torture me so? Don't you know my wife has just died? Let me mourn and do not bother me again."

With this he shut the window. He must not have realised it was his wife who had thrown the rock at him. She repeated this and he opened the window again, and she yelled to him, "I am no one but your so called dead wife. Now come down here and open this door, Henry Page, unless you'd like me to die a second time on our doorstep."

"You are a ghost then," he said to her.

She said, "No, for ghosts don't bleed. Now come down here before I catch my own death of cold."

The man with a joyous look on his face came down to meet his wife and took her inside where he called the doctor once more and told him the news. They both lived long lives and there first son was born the next year.

Step Drag

Here is another favourite story. Use names of DE's, Staff or Leaders to improve the story. Hope you like it.

IT WAS the hottest summer anyone could remember at Camp. It was between sessions: Three vans of older boy scouts had just left and the Cub Scouts were due in just two days. That left the Staff of five young camp staffers for a peaceful weekend.

Unknown to them, another bus - a grey prison bus - was winding along the road outside of the camp, transporting a single prisoner. The man was criminally insane, according to the tag on his prison uniform, and the two guards assigned to him believed it. He was very tall and strong, so his hands were manacled in huge handcuffs and his legs were hobbled close to each other with a chain. To keep him from running or kicking out at anyone, the Warden had added an old-fashioned ball and chain, which he'd found in a prison storeroom. That kind of thing hadn't been used since the 1920's. The chain was clamped to the maniac's right ankle, and the heavy iron ball was on the end of the four-foot chain.

The maniac was sitting quietly with his eyes closed, smiling that same simple smile he always smiled just to keep the guards wondering. Thinking that the maniac was asleep, the guards weren't being watchful enough. As the bus swerved on a tight mountain curve, one guard slid off the wooden bench and fell against the prisoner, who wasn't asleep at all. He quickly grabbed the guard by the neck with the short chain on his handcuffs.

While they struggled, the other guard got up and went after the maniac. The prisoner dropped the strangled guard and lunged at the other one. The guard tried to draw his pistol, but the maniac had picked up the iron ball and thrown it before the guard had so much as a chance.

The maniac found keys on the guard to remove the cuffs and the leg irons, but he could not find a key for the ball and chain. He picked up the iron ball again, smashed the wire glass window to the cab of the prison bus, and grabbed the driver by the throat. The bus swerved all over the road and finally crashed into the deep ditch beside the road, coming to rest against a large tree. The maniac was out!

Back at the Camp, the Staff had swum all afternoon and were now back in their tents on staff row, reading or listening to the radio. There wasn't a TV anywhere in the camp. The sun went down and the owls began to hoot scarily off in the distance. Suddenly someone screamed! Everyone came running out of their tents and met at the assembly ground.

Missy the swimming instructor was missing! The other four ran to her tent. The zipper was open and there was a pool of blood on the floor. The Staff gasped, then suddenly became very quiet.

"Ssshhh! whispered David. They all strained to listen. In the trees, somewhere nearby they could hear:

Step... Drag... step ... drag... step ... drag...

"Let split up and look for her!" said Tim. They all ran off in different directions into the dark woods. After a few minutes David yelled for everyone to come to him. It was hard to follow his voice in the underbrush; it was hard to believe that the woods in camp were so thick and impenetrable. Soon Tim and Chris found David staring up into a tree. There in the moonlight was Colin. He was hanging by his head in a fork of the tree branches; his neck must have broken.

Off to the south they could hear noises in the under-growth:

Step... Drag... step ... drag... step ... drag...

Tim climbed the tree and lowered the body to the others. The three of them carried the limp corpse back to the mess hall. Once inside, Tim hurried to lock all the doors with big wooden boards.

"You all stay here", he said, "and lock this door behind me. I've got to get to the office where the phone is."

The others objected, but Tim went out the front door and slipped off in the darkness. The others dropped the wooden bar back into its metal brackets, to prevent anyone from entering. After a few minutes the lights suddenly went out. The staff started to scream, but then they realized that whoever had cut the wires might not know where they were. They held their hands over their mouths and hid under the serving counter.

Suddenly, something rattled the front door. It must be the maniac! The Staff huddled together. Next they heard something outside the window just above them, something dragging along the ground, going:

Step... Drag... step ... drag... step ... drag...

The double doors rattled again. Tim whispered, "hey dudes, let me in!" The dragging sound was moving around the building going toward the back door. Tim gasped louder, "Let me in!"

David ran from the Counter to the door and lifted the bar. Tim darted into the mess hall like a scared cat.

Just as they got the double doors shut, the dragging sound came around to the front. Just as they dropped the wooden bar into its brackets, something huge and heavy hit the door, cracking the wood.

Tim and Chris ran across the room, tripping and stumbling over chairs in the dark.. The object hit the door again, and the wooden bar cracked with a loud noise. The two staffers looked under the serving counter. David wasn't there! They ran to the back door.

"The phone lines must have been cut" whispered Tim. "The phone was dead". The heavy weight hit the front door again, breaking part of the door's upper half. Tim and Chris lifted the bar from the back door and swung it open. Another crash at

the front door told then the doors were about to give. The two slipped into the tall pantry and closed the door.

Back in the mess hall, the double front doors gave way in a burst of splinters and broken boards. A deathly silence followed. The two staffers hardly dared to take a breath. Suddenly, they heard that sound out on the wooded floor: Step... Drag... step ... drag... step ... drag...

The sound stopped right outside the pantry door. Chris gasped. Tim cupped his hand over his mouth and the two held their breath. Tim was afraid the thing outside could hear his heart beating.

Suddenly there was a terrible scream outside the pantry.

It was David! He had moved to another hiding place, leaving Tim and Chris on their own. Now the thing, whatever it was had found him. There was another scream and the sound of something going out the back door.

Then everything was quiet as a graveyard.

The two waited all night, hardly breathing. The sun began to come up; they could see light coming in through the cracks of the wooden pantry. A morning dove was calling softly in the woods.

Then they heard a sound. Someone was coming in the front door. Slow footsteps crossed the floor, along with the sound of something dragging along the boards.

The sound came closer to the pantry.

CLOSER.

Suddenly it stopped, right in front of the pantry door as if someone was waiting.

Chris could not stand it anymore. He screamed.

The Pantry door swung open, and there standing over them was a tall, muscular form, lit from behind. The man bent over.

He took off his wide-brimmed hat and show them his badge.
"I'm the Sheriff", he said, dropping the heavy bag of weapons
and bulletproof vest he had been dragging.

"THANK GOD YOU TWO ARE ALL RIGHT!"

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The Mystery of the Mice Tower

B.-P. Tells a Story

Lord Baden-Powell

The Leader, December 1978

In the December 1932 issue of "The Scouter" (U.K.), the Chief Scout, Lord Baden-Powell, varied from his usual Scouting message to write the following ghost story. In the United Kingdom, ghost stories are very much a tradition at Christmas, hence such well-known ghostly tales as Dickens "A Christmas Carol". Meant to be read aloud, by flickering firelight, to the accompaniment of roasting chestnuts and steaming mugs of cocoa, you might like to incorporate this tradition into your own Christmas meeting with, perhaps, your boys bringing along their own favourite ghostly yarns to read aloud in the shadowy semi-darkness.

Regarding our Scouts Camping Ground at Kandersteg in Switzerland, many Scouts have been there, and many more will go there, to all of whom the Mice Tower in the Camp Ground will be known. Since this is our Christmas Number, I venture to give a story of the Mice Tower in place of my usual homily on Scouting.

I was trying to make out the meaning of the words 'Gott behuete dieses Hus und all da Gehen in und us', which were carved upon the beam above me, in the living-room in the timber-built house of the cure in Kippel. I had, in the course of a hike through Switzerland, wandered into the Loetschen Valley, a quaint backwater of civilisation which, until the railway tunnel pierced the surrounding mountains, had been cut off from the rest of the world except for a pass of 10,000 feet which was impassable for five months of the year. So the inhabitants were themselves quaint and original in their ways and customs.

When I came into the agglomeration of ancient brown wooden houses which, with wonderful picturesqueness and awful

smells, constituted the village, I was surprised to find no one about; the whole place seemed deserted. At last I hit on an aged priest coming out of the church, and in reply to my question where were the inhabitants, he pointed to a notice pinned on what proved to be the mayor's house. This directed the families named in the margin, one and all, to go this week haymaking on the high meadows on the mountain. The various people concerned were not mentioned by name but, as the custom was, were indicated by their family totem signs. The old priest proved himself an interesting informant on this and many other points connected with the life and history of the valley. Finally he kindly asked me into his house to have a cup of coffee.

When, in the course of our talk, I told him I had just come from the neighbouring valley of Kandersteg, he grew quite excited and told me he had only recently unearthed among the old church records a very interesting document relating to Kandersteg. It purported to be the statement of a dying man as taken down by a priest of that time, in the year 1638.

The place had derived its name from an unwelcome swarm of mice which infested it. So much was this the case that a haunch of beef which had been left in the tower one night was found next morning to have been entirely consumed by the mice. This suggested to the blood-thirsty tyrant the fiendish idea of hanging a victim in an extreme case in such a way that, when spread-eagled, one foot should remain on the ground. He argued that the mice would then attack the victim and gradually devour him from the foot upwards until death released him from his sufferings.

Another painful form of execution devised by Count Rollo was that of hanging his victim head downwards from a window in the tower until he died, and this punishment he had meted out on May 14th, 1631, to Johann Kostler. Young Albert Kostler, driven to fury by the death of his father, gathered together a number of young men of the valley, and they planned together to rid the community of this monster.

Unfortunately for them their plot was discovered before it was ripe, and Albert was waylaid by Rollo's myrmidons and carried off to the Mice Tower. It was after nightfall when he was brought in and Count Rollo was at supper with his companions. He joyously gave the word for the young man to be hanged forthwith head downwards from the window. Quickly the victim's feet were tied together with the end of a rope, which ran up over the end of a beam projecting out from the window, and he was slung out into the darkness to die a lingering death, while Rollo and his friends kept up a noisy carousal immediately above him.

For a few moments he hung like this while his executioners returned to their feast, and then with a sudden plunge he fell heavily to the ground. The rope had been partially gnawed through by the mice. Fortunately at that point the ground was covered by a thick growth of heath. For a few moments he lay practically stunned, but he was not materially hurt and, on coming to, he realised this, and having unfastened his bonds he made his way cautiously in the darkness out of the camp and into the rocky cliffs close by.

By good fortune he came across a small cave, into which he crept. He found that it receded a good way into the mountain-side, and he followed it up, crawling on his hands and knees, until he felt himself secure from pursuit. Here he lay down to rest by a small runnel of fresh water. Some time later--it may have been several hours--he was alarmed to hear voices of men evidently searching for him. This caused him to explore even deeper into the recesses of the mountain, till he found himself out of reach of any sounds. Haunted, however, by the fear of re-capture, he continued to creep on and explore farther into the tunnel-like cave, in the hope that he might find another exit.

How long he struggled on he never knew; in the total darkness it might have been hours, it might and probably was days and

nights. In the end, starving, weak and utterly worn out, when he had given up all hope, and had resigned himself to dying in peace rather than at the hands of torturers, he suddenly saw a faint gleam of light. Dragging himself onwards, he eventually emerged into what he afterwards discovered was the Loetschen Valley. Here he was found, and succoured by friendly hands, and he finally made it his home.

Probably from fear that any report of his being still alive might leak out to the Kander Valley, he never confided to a soul his identity nor his story, until eventually, on his death-bed, he confessed it to the priest. He now lies in the third grave on the left as you enter the narrow churchyard overhanging the river valley at Kippel.

He asked me whether I had during my stay in the Kander Valley noticed, near the entrance to the tunnel, a small square tower. This, he said, was referred to in the document as "The Mice Tower". Certainly I had seen it, but had not paid it much attention on account of its insignificant appearance. But, muttering the old Swiss proverb "Little pigs nevertheless make good pork," he tottered off to the church to search the muniment chest for the paper. Meanwhile I waited, sipping my coffee and pondering on the inscription on the beam--"God protect this house and all who go in and out."

Presently he returned with the document and, deciphering with some difficulty the crabbed characters on the time-worn paper, he read to me the following grim story. I give merely the substance of it, omitting the lengthy if picturesque detail.

A note by the father-confessor explained it was the dying confession of a man who had come mysteriously to Kippel some years previously, and had established himself there as a recluse, living in a small hut high up on the mountain side. Being now about to meet his Maker, and no longer fearing the vengeance of man, he confessed that he was the only surviving son of Johann Kostler, a former well-to-do farmer in the valley of the Kander. (His chalet is still to be seen in Kandersteg today.)

While this man, Albert Kostler, was yet a young man, the notorious Count Rollo, known as "Rollo the Roisterer," was tyrant of the valley. The Count lived in the old castle of Tellesberg perched high upon a solitary crag commanding the valley. From this fastness with his band of armed retainers he exacted from the inhabitants all that he wanted from time to time in the shape of food or money or cattle, etc. When his demands were not met with the promptitude desired, he inflicted imprisonment or torture or even death on the wretched peasant; so that the whole valley was terrorised.

The scene of these cruelties was usually the Mice Tower at the head of the valley, where his victims went through a form of mock trial before being condemned to the punishment which he amused himself in devising. The upper room of this tower was also the scene of wild orgies and carousals on the part of himself and his boon companions.

Count Rollo had some iron staples let into the outer wall of the Mice Tower, to which his victim was triced up by the wrist and ankles in a spread-eagle position, and exposed naked for hours to the blazing sun in the summer and to the freezing wind in the winter. (These staples can still be seen on the walls of this harmless-looking building.)

My host, having read the confession to me, went on to say that tradition maintains that Count Rollo the Roisterer, after a life of cruelty and debaucheries, came to a bad end--as bad men do.

The story went that he was investigating the Blausee, or Blue Lake, which lies below his castle, when a sudden rise of the water from melting snow in the mountains forced him to try to cross the lake on a fallen tree. In doing so he slipped and his foot became entangled and held, as by a vice, among the branches. The water, rising gradually higher and higher, submerged him inch by inch; and though his screams attracted his followers they were unable to do anything to save him before he was finally submerged and drowned. My friend had

not himself been to the Blausee, but he maintained that on particularly clear days Rollo's skeleton can still be seen among the trees at the bottom of that wonderful blue lake.

He also added that it is widely believed that between the hours of twelve and one in the morning, on September 13th every year, his ghost may be seen gliding round the Mice Tower, wringing his hands in an agony of remorse--or it may not.

Note. - The probability is that Count Rollo's Ghost will NOT be seen because there never was a Swiss proverb that "Little pigs nevertheless make good pork," nor was there an Albert Kostler, nor even a Count Rollow the Roisterer, though there IS the Mice Tower and the Blausee! So, I'm sorry, but the whole yarn is a fake. B.-P.

Skeleton Lady

This story begins not too long ago and not far away. Just to the north of here there is a country where it is winter for 7 long months of the year. Now this particular winter had gone on much longer than usual and the people were beginning to run out of food and firewood. Inside one small house right out in the barren snowlands an old lady was beginning to get anxious. (Now you have to put on old lady and old man voices, get anxious and rub your hands a lot as if cold). "oh, my husband I am so cold and hungry. Look at me my hands are blue! I am going to die I am sure of it."

"Don't worry my darling, Winter will be over soon, we will have food again" But the old lady looked very ill and continued to get anxious. Eventually the old man agreed, "Very well my darling I will go and search for food. But before I go you must promise me one thing. You must not use the last two logs we have for the fire, we will need them to cook the food on when I return"

"Okay, okay I agree just go, please find food"

With that the old man went out in search of food.

Time passed and the old man did not return, the fire was beginning to get lower and lower.

"Where is he. I'm hungry! I'm freezing! I am sure I will die" (rub hands a lot) Then the old lady had an idea. "If I put just one of the logs on the fire he will be back soon and then we will still have one to cook the food with. Yes, yes that's what I'll do."

The old lady picked up one log and placed it on the fire. (act this out, as you place log on fire make whooshing sound). "Oh that's much better, I'm so warm, he'll be back with food soon". (smile a lot).

The old lady forgot how hungry she was as she sat close to the warm fire. But more time passed and still her husband did not

return. It was beginning to get dusk outside and again the fire was getting lower and lower.

"Where is he? He must have found food and eaten it. I am going to be left here to freeze!" (lots of rubbing and groaning)

Then the old lady had another idea.

"He must be back soon. If I put the last log on the fire it will be hot and ready to cook on when he returns". With that the old lady put the last log on the fire. (make whooshing sound and cries of happiness)

But more time passed and the old man was not back. The last log began to burn lower and lower until all that was left was a tiny flicker. (complain a lot and move in close to imaginary fire).

The old lady got closer and closer to the fire. Then suddenly "Ouch" she burnt herself on it and began to bleed. She placed the finger in her mouth to lick it (make this action)

"MMMMh this tastes good." Then the old lady began to chew (make chewing action up hand). "Mmmm so good." And chew, up her arm, and around her body (act all this out - lots of chewing and mmhging noises) until all that was left was a skeleton.

"Mmhh that was so good, I feel much better but I'm still hungry." Just at that moment she heard a rustling outside and the door opened. In came her husband with 2 rabbits in his hand (mime this).

"Look my wife I found foووو-----"

The old lady ran towards him and grabbed the rabbits (mime this). Mmmh these are good. MMhh MMhh (mime chewing rabbits) My husband I've just realized how meaty you are. Come here I want to eat you. I want Meat!"

With that the old man burst out the door and ran into the frozen wastelands as fast as he could. Behind him the old lady was running. "I want meat, I'm going to eat you." Luckily the old man could run fast and began to escape his wife. he ran

further and further into the snow. In the distance was the sound of the old lady.

"I want meat. I'm going to eat you!" (each time you do this grab the arm of a member of the audience and fake chew it - you should be on your feet all the time now and miming the running actions.)

Suddenly the old man came to the edge of a huge gorge that went as far as he could see that way (look) and as far as he could see that way (look). There was no way across and coming closer was the sound of the old lady.

"I want meat. I'm going to eat you" (attack audience again)

Then the old man noticed a small wooden cottage. he ran to it and banged on the door. The door opened on a chain and a woman could be seen inside. "Yes. How can I help you."

"It's my wife. she's gone crazy she's going to eat me" (act very panicked) "Very well I will help you but first you must bring me a bucket of water." "What, she's going to eat me and you want water?"

"Yes"

"Okay, okay"

The old man searched around and found a bucket to get some water from the well. he took it to the woman who pulled out a ladle from her pocket and dipped it into the water. (mime all this out).

"AAhh yes. Very good. Now I will help you"

In the distance the sound of the skeleton lady was very close "I want meat. I'm going to eat you!" (attack audience)

The woman stood on the edge of the gorge and stamped her feet into the ground. Then she reached out and stretched (say this word long and slowly as you stretch out) to the other side and grabbed onto a tree. "Now you may cross."

The old man walked carefully across the lady's back (mime this) and reached the other side. Then the woman let go and PING went right back to the other side. She returned to her house.

Just then the skeleton lady arrived at the gorge. "I will get you my husband. I will eat you. I want Meat!"

She banged on the door of the house. "Yes. Can I help you?"

"You are too skinny to eat. You will help me cross the gorge."

"Very well I will help you but first you must bring me a drink of water."

"Help me now or I'll eat you anyway."

"Okay, Okay."

With that the woman stood on the side of the gorge and stamped her feet into the ground. She stretched across and grabbed onto the tree. The old woman began to run across.

"I want meat. I will eat you."

When she was halfway across the woman let go and PING went back to the start.

" I want meaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa....." (fade off and then crash to ground) CRASH

The skeleton lady fell to ground and shattered to a million pieces.

(Say next part of story very slowly and quietly)

Now I said that I said that this happened not too long ago and not too far away. It is said that there is a little bit of magic in each piece of the skeleton lady's bone and that one day they will join together and come in search of "MEAT" (jump and attack audience then end"

The Church On The Moor

This ghost story is easily adapted to any situation familiar to the audience.

Once upon a time, there were two young Scouts, Peter and Geoff, who were hiking across a moor. It was a splendid day for a hike, and they thoroughly enjoyed being in the open air, far away from the rush and noise of the town, on their own on the moor.

By about 5 p.m. they decided they should find somewhere to camp for the night. The light was beginning to fade, and they were getting a little weary. Suddenly, in the distance, Peter thought he saw the shape of some buildings.

As they neared the village they sensed something unusual. It was very quiet, and although the light was now very poor, they could see no lights on anywhere.

They entered the village, and walked uncertainly down the main street. Their footsteps echoed eerily between the dark buildings. It quickly became apparent that the place was deserted.

"I know" said Geoff, "this must have been one of those old mining towns. Now the mine is disused and the place is deserted."

The boys walked on, and soon came to a small church. The door swung, creaking gently in the breeze, and for some reason the boys could not resist going in. Geoff sat on one of the large, oak pews.

"I know this seems creepy, but it would be a jolly good place to sleep. The walls keep out the breeze and these pews are jolly comfortable. It will save us putting up the tent."

Geoff fell asleep quickly, but Peter found it hard to completely relax. He dozed fitfully, until suddenly he sat bolt upright. He was sure he had heard a noise.

He looked all round, but could see nothing unusual. Eventually he decided that he was just being extra nervous because of the surroundings, and that he really ought to lie down and go to sleep.

Suddenly he was wide awake. This time he was certain. He had heard something, he was unsure what, from the direction of the altar. By now he was quite frightened, and although he was reluctant to admit this to Geoff, he could not help shaking him by the shoulder until he awoke.

"Wassup? Warrisit?" asked Geoff gruffly.

"I keep hearing noises - over there - by the altar." Reluctantly, Geoff sat up and listened. There was silence, apart from the occasional whisper of the breeze outside, and the creak of the church door.

He was about to lie down again when both boys heard the noise. Peter grabbed Geoff's arm.

"There. What did I tell you. What is it?"

"I don't know. But if I am going to get any more sleep, I suppose we had better go and find out."

The boys pulled pullovers and trousers over their pyjamas, and made their way nervously down the aisle towards the altar. As they neared it, they noticed that a shaft of light was coming from behind it. They stopped and looked at each other uncertainly.

They crept forwards, almost on tiptoe, and climbed the steps. The light oozed from behind the altar casting great shadows across the walls. They moved closer, hardly daring to look behind. Peter put a hand on the altar, and as he did so, it swung violently backwards and

AARGH!

The last part of the story is told in a hushed voice by the narrator, drawing the audience to him. The final scream breaks dramatically across this, and should be enough to shake up the most ardent ghoulish freak!

A House of Terror

The car finally gave out. Jeff hit the dashboard in frustration. It was bad enough that the car had to break down, but at night, in the rain, in the middle of God knows wherever he was, it was a fitting end to his bad week.

The week had seen his wife leave him, taking the kids with her. He had been demoted at his job, and was now forced to go back on the road as a salesman.

Now this had happened, and things weren't going to get any better anytime soon. Jeff decided that he might as well try to find a way out of this mess.

He considered waiting in his car for another car to come by and help him. The road wasn't often used though, and that might take hours, so Jeff decided to first walk down the road to see if there were any other choices.

After walking for a half hour in the pounding rain, Jeff finally came across an old house in the woods. Now Jeff had seen enough horror movies to make him turn back, but the rain alone was enough to over-ride his sense of fear and trepidation.

He walked up the winding road up to the door. It looked to be very old, and not kept up well. Jeff wondered if anyone even lived there anymore...

He knocked on the door, and to his surprise, it was answered rather quickly. An older man, looking to be in his late 70's, asked him what he wanted. Jeff explained his situation and asked if the man had a phone or someway to help.

The old man said he was wary of travellers, but decided that Jeff looked honest enough, and let him use his phone. Jeff thanked him, and asked his name. He said his name was Joseph Palmer, and told Jeff the number of the nearest garage. Jeff made his way through to the phone, noticing that the house looked about as old inside as it did outside. He was surprised that there was even a phone at the place.

He called the garage, but they said there was nothing they could do until the morning, and they would meet him at noon at his car.

Mr. Palmer offered Jeff the guestroom to sleep in for the night. Jeff was a bit wary at spending the night in such a spooky old house, but decided that the walk back in the rain and sleeping in the car couldn't be much safer than staying at the house. He accepted, and was shown to the room.

The house was adorned with antique everything, not a piece of furniture seemed to have been purchased in at least the last 60 years or more.

Mr. Palmer showed him the room, and bade him good night.

The man was nice, but the whole situation still left Jeff unnerved. He just tried to tell himself that he had watched far too many horror movies as a child.

The bedroom had a canopy bed, one old lamp, a single window, and a red carpet.

The house was eerily quiet as Jeff laid himself down on the bed. Quiet...except for a creek here, and a thump there.

By now, Jeff's imagination had him too paranoid to sleep.

He heard Mr. Palmer outside the room, walking up and down the hallway outside. Up he went, and down he went. Then, the footsteps stopped, right outside his room.

Jeff waited, yet nothing happened.

A half hour passed, and yet he heard nothing except the rain beating outside, and the wind howling as the storm blew on.

Finally sleep slowly overcame Jeff, even with his nervousness heightened. Slowly, his eyes closed, though he thought he could almost hear something scratching at his door...

Jeff awoke, the storm had passed, and daylight was shining through the window curtains. Happy that all his nervousness was for nothing, Jeff got out of bed and checked his watch. He had slept in until 11:20, and had to leave quickly before the garage people got to his car.

Leaving the room, he was greeted by Mr. Palmer who asked him if he had slept well. Jeff replied that he had, though he had had trouble falling asleep. Palmer laughed and asked if he was afraid of the old house at night in the middle of nowhere. Jeff

admitted that maybe, he was a bit afraid, but he felt silly for it now.

He thanked Palmer, and said he had to leave quickly to get to his car. He turned to leave, when suddenly, something banged his head and everything went quite dark. ..

When Jeff came to, he was tied to a chair in the basement. The place reeked of horrible smells.

Mr Palmer walked up to him, with a large knife in his hand. Jeff screamed and tried to free himself, but only tired himself out.

He looked up in horror at Mr. Palmer, and asked him why he was doing this, and why now. Palmer answered that last night he would have been nervous, full of fear, and ready for any attack Palmer would do. No, that wasn't the right time, everyone expects attacks at night. But during the morning...people are more relaxed and the fear is low, making them blind to any chance of harm.

Jeff asked him again, why was he doing this, what was he going to do with him and said someone, like the garage people, would find out what happened.

Mr. Palmer said that mishaps happen on motorways at night, mainly during storms, so no one would even think twice as to why he was gone. If anyone actually did start asking questions Palmer said he had ways to discourage that kind of activity. As for why he was doing this, Palmer simply said that Jeff need not worry about that, in fact, he need not worry about anything anymore.

Jeff looked into Palmer's eyes as he walked towards him, eyes that were completely black, and tried to scream...

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Army of the Dead

A laundress, newly moved to Huddersfield following the Civil War, found herself awakened at the stroke of twelve each night by the rumble of heavy wheels passing in the street. But she lived on a dead end street, and had no explanation for the noise. Her wife would not allow her to look out the window when she heard the sounds, telling her to leave well enough alone.

Finally, she asked the woman who washed at the tub next to hers. The woman said: "What you are hearing is the Army of the Dead. They are Cavalier soldiers who died in hospital without knowing that the war was over. Each night, they rise from their graves and go to reinforce King Charles in York to strengthen the weakened Royalist forces."

The next night, the laundress slipped out of bed to watch the Army of the Dead pass. She stood spell-bound by the window as a grey fog rolled passed.

Within the fog, she could see the shapes of horses, and could hear gruff human voices and the rumble of canons being dragged through the street, followed by the sound of marching feet. Foot soldiers, horsemen, ambulances, wagons and canons passed before her eyes, all shrouded in gray. After what seemed like hours, she heard a far off bugle blast, and then silence.

When the laundress came out of her daze, she found one of her arms was paralyzed. She has never done a full days washing since.

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Backseat Maniac

There's a girl driving along M62 on the way back to Leeds after visiting her relatives in Manchester. It's about 1:00 am and it starts raining when she realizes she's almost out of petrol.

She sees a sign for a Service Station about 3 miles ahead and breaths a sigh of relief.

But when she gets there she sees it's one of those just off the motorway and looked somewhat old and run-down.

She's scared to stop but she really has no other choice.

As she pulls in, an old man with a disfigured faces comes running through the rain. He puts the pump in the tank and asks for her credit card. She hands it to him over the top of the window and he runs back inside.

After a few seconds he comes back out and tells the girl she will have to come inside, her card has been denied.

Reluctantly, she walks inside. The old man grabs her and tries to tell her something but she hits him with a can of oil sitting on the counter. She runs back to her car and takes off with the old man screaming and flailing his arms at her.

After driving for a few miles she turns on the radio and starts to relax. As she looks in the rear-view mirror, she sees someone pop up in the back seat holding an axe above their head. It's the last thing she ever sees.

Apparently, the old man at the gas station was trying to warn her.

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Creak

"Creak", a sound, faint, distant, but still heard.

"Crack", something snapping, or being trampled on.

The man sits in his room, reading. The room is silent except for the quiet fire burning.

"Creak". Just the house settling, nothing more.

"Crack", Perhaps some small animals outdoors.

"Whoosh", Was that the wind?

The man stands up and peeks out the window. A clear night is all he sees, the full moon brilliant in the sky. Laughing at his nervousness, he returns to his book.

"Creak", the man now silently chuckles at the sound.

"Crack", how could he have been scared of some sounds.

"Whoosh", must be breezy out tonight.

"Thump"...did that come from within the house?

The man stares into the fire, trying to calm his jangled nerves.

"Creak"...

"Crack"...

"Whoosh"...will the sounds never cease?

"Thump"... "Thump"... "Thump"...

Closer, he thinks, the sounds are getting closer. He shuts the book and closes his eyes, and thinks of something besides his wild imagination.

"Creak"

"Thump"

"Crack"

"Thump"

"Whoosh"

"Thump"... "Thump"... "Thump"... a pause?

The man moves quietly, slowly, towards the door with a nervous gait.

"Thump"... a step back... "Thump"... yes, it's getting closer.

"Thump"... he stares at the door, trying to somehow see through it...

"Thump"... he reaches slowly for the doorknob, hand shaking, no longer able to take not knowing...

"Creak", a loose floorboard, near the door outside...

"Thump", he slowly opens the door...

"A scream"

...silence...

Blue Baby Bonnet

Once there was a young woman who had a child, but couldn't afford to take care of it by herself, so she put a blue baby bonnet on its head and carried it two miles from her house and left it in the woods.

As she began to walk home she heard "Blue Baby Bonnet One Mile Away"

As she reached her home she heard "Blue Baby Bonnet, One Mile Away"

As she sat in her living room to read a book she heard "Blue Baby Bonnet, Coming Up the Driveway"

She ran upstairs, sat on her bed and heard "Blue Baby Bonnet, Standing At Your Door"

She hid under the bed and heard . . . "Blue Baby . . .

.. .BOOO!"

The story is about suspense, the creepier the voice you use for all sentences in quotations, the more elaborate you make the story, the more you emphasize the woman's guilt and fear. The more carefully your campers are listening will make the story that much better and the result when you scream "BOOO" will most likely be a scream or make people jump. Lots of fun for the story-teller.

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Don't Turn on the Light

Once there were two girls who shared a college room together. Their names were Meg and Venida.

The girls were out partying one night. Meg noticed she forgot her purse and went back quickly to the room. Without turning on the lights, she walked in and grabbed the purse. She then returned to the party.

Later on in the night, Venida got tired. She left to go to the room to go to sleep.

The next morning, Meg went back to the room. Police officers were outside.

"Officer, what's the problem?" She asked.

"There has been a murderer."

"Oh my god. Please let me see."

"No. It's a bit to sloppy." Said the officer.

"Please."

Finally, the officer let Meg upstairs. When she walked in the room she saw her room-mate covered with a clean white sheet.

On the mirror in big, red-lettered words said: "AREN'T YOU GLAD YOU DIDN'T TURN ON THE LIGHT?"

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Girl at the Underpass

Not long ago, but before motorways ran around towns and cities, a young man left Huddersfield late one night to drive to his old home in Sheffield.

At that time, just east of Denby Dale, the old road dipped through a tunnel under the train tracks. The young man knew the road well, but this was a thick foggy night in early summer. He drove cautiously, especially when he neared the Denby Dale tunnel. Many wrecks had taken place at that spot.

He slowed down on the curve leading to the tunnel and was halfway through it when his eyes almost popped out of his head. Standing on the roadside just beyond the exit was an indistinct white figure with arm raised in a gesture of distress.

The young man quickly slammed on his brakes and came to a stop beside the figure.

It was a girl, young, beautiful, resplendent in a long white evening dress. Her troubled eyes were glaring straight toward him. Obviously she was in need of help.

He jumped from the car and ran around to where she stood motionless. "Can I help you?"

"Yes." Her voice was low, stranger. "I want to go home. I live in Flockton."

He opened the door, and she got in.

As they drove off, he said, "I'm glad I came by. I didn't expect to find anyone like you on the road so late at night."

"I was at a dance." She spoke in a monotone. "My date and I had a quarrel. It was very bad. I made him drop me back there."

He tried to continue the conversation, but she would say nothing more until they were into Flockton.

"Turn next left," she said. "I live three doors on the right."

He parked before a darkened house, got out of the car and went around to open the door for her.

There was no one there!

He looked into the back seat. No one! He thought she might have rushed up the sidewalk and out of sight.

Confused and undecided about what to do next, he thought it only reasonable to find out if she had entered the house.

He went up the steps and knocked on the door. No one came. He knocked again. There was no sound anywhere. After a third knock, through the side panes a dim light appeared from the pitch-black hallway. Finally the door was opened by a white-haired woman in a night robe.

"I brought a girl to this house," he explained, "but now I can't find her. Have you seen her? I picked her up out on the Sheffield road."

"Where?"

"At the Denby Dale tunnel. She told me she had been to a dance and was on her way home."

"Yes, I know," said the woman wearily. "that was my daughter. She was killed in a wreck at that tunnel five years ago tonight. And every year since, on this very night, she signals a young man like you to pick her up. She is still trying to get home."

The young man turned from the doorway, speechless. The dim light in the house went out. He drove on to Sheffield, but never has he forgotten, nor will he ever forget, the beautiful hitchhiker and how she vanished into the night.

La Mala Hora

My friend Mary called me one evening before dinner. She was sobbing as she told me that she and her wife George were getting divorced. He had moved out of the house earlier that day and Mary was distraught.

I called my wife, who was on a business trip in London, and he agreed that I should go stay with Mary for a few days to help her during this difficult time. I packed a small suitcase and got right into the car. It was late, and it would take me at least four hours to drive from my home to Huddersfield. Mary was expecting me to arrive around midnight.

As I travelled down the dark, wet motorway, I kept feeling chills, as if someone or something were watching me. I kept looking in the rear view mirror, and glancing into the back seat. No one was there. Don't be ridiculous, I told myself, wishing fervently that I was home in my bed instead of driving on a dark, rainy motorway. There was almost no traffic, and I heartily wished that I would soon reach Huddersfield.

I turned off the motorway just before I reached Barnsley, and started down the side roads that led to Mary's house. As I approached a small crossroads, I saw a woman step into the street directly in front of my car. I shrieked in fright and slammed on my brakes, praying I would miss her.

The car shuddered to a halt, and I looked frantically around for the woman. Then I saw her, right beside my window, looking in at me. She had the face of a demon, twisted, eyes glowing red, and short pointed teeth.

I screamed as she leapt at my window, her clawed hands striking the glass. I put my foot down on the accelerator and the car leapt forward.

For a few terrible moments, she ran along side the car, keeping up easily and striking at me again and again. Then she fell behind and in the rear view mirror I saw her growing taller and taller, until she was as large as a tree.

Red light swirled around her like mist, and she pointed after me, her mouth moving though I could not make out the words. I jerked my attention back to the road, afraid what might happen to me if my car ran off the street.

I made it to Mary's house in record time and flung myself out of the car, pounding on her door frantically and looking behind me to see if the demon-faced woman had followed me. Mary came running to the door and let me in.

"Shut the door! Shut it!" I cried frantically, brushing past her into the safety of the house.

"Dave, what is wrong?" she asked, slamming the door shut. She grabbed my hand and led me into the living room. I sank onto the couch and started sobbing in fear and reaction. After several minutes, I managed to gasp out my story. Mary gasped and said: "Are you sure you were at a crossroads when you saw her?"

I nodded, puzzled by her question

"It must have been La Malhora," Mary said, wringing her hands.

"The bad hour?" I asked.

"This is bad, Dave. Very bad," Mary cried. "La Malhora only appears at a crossroads when someone is going to die."

Ordinarily, I would have laughed at such a superstition, but the appearance of the demon-woman had shaken me. Mary got me a cup of hot cocoa, brought my luggage in from the car, and sent me to bed. She was so concerned for me that she didn't once mention the divorce or George.

I felt much better the next morning, but I could not shake the feeling of dread that grew within me all day. Neither of us mentioned La Malhora, but we were both thinking of her when I told Mary that I wanted to go home. Mary insisted on accompanying me. I flatly refused to drive after dark. I was afraid I would see the demon-woman again when I passed the crossroads.

We left the next morning, and we hadn't been home more than twenty minutes when a police car pulled into my driveway. I knew at once what it meant, and so did Mary.

The officers spoke very gently to me, but nothing could soften the news. My wife had been mugged on the way back to his hotel after dinner last night. Her body had not been found until this morning. She had been shot in the head and was killed instantly.

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Ghost on the Track

The number 12B Train was on its usual journey from Meltham to Lockwood taking workers to and from the David Brown's factory. The day was supposed to be wet and gloomy and a mist is said to have swept in from the east that cold autumn night. The moon was full looking over Lockwood that night, but still wives and children waited patiently for the men to return homeSAFELY.

The train hurried along that night leaving behind the company of the factory and entered the bleak and lonely night. The train was nearing the tunnel near Beaumont Park that night. The driver saw an old man crossing the tracks so he ordered the train to stop.

It was too late the man was hit. The driver wandered where the man's body was, until the old man appeared before him and stated these words "Sleep safely this night as it will be your last" .

Everyone who was on the train that night died mysteriously. The track was closed and no train has ever passed that way since.

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Nightmare House

It was a dark and stormy night. Steve had just come in from having tied down anything that could possibly blow away in the wind outside.

Cold seeping into his bones, he decided to go sit by the fireplace to warm up.

He closed the door to the large living room of the large house he had just purchased. His wife and daughter were back at the old home, gathering up some of the last items to be moved to their new home.

Steve decided to stay the night by himself to get a feel for the house. The house was probably too large for such a small family, but Steve couldn't pass up the good buy he got on it. An old antique house, incredibly large, in a quiet, secluded area, for such a small price. Steve still couldn't believe how lucky he was.

The television was one of the items his wife was bringing the next day, so he decided to read a book to pass the time. He sipped at his hot coffee, while being warmed by the crackling fireplace. Steve couldn't help but to look forward to many more nights like this, all snug in front of the grand fireplace, on the cold winter nights that would eventually come.

He had just started to get into his book when he heard a tapping sound from the upper floor.

Steve brushed it off quickly, old houses like this always make sounds like that in the movies, even though I'm sure it's had enough time to settle.

He had to chuckle over his corny joke.

He went back to his book, but the sound started again, it seemed to be moving across the room upstairs. Perhaps mice,

thought Steve, I should really look into that tomorrow morning, the wife would not be pleased to find mice in their new home. Tomorrow though, no use chasing mice in the dark.

Then Steve heard what sounded like a door opening upstairs.

The big room was starting to feel a bit less cosy. He tried to pass it off as his imagination running wild, and attempted to immerse himself in his book.

It did no good, because this time the sounds didn't go away.

The tapping, footsteps started to sound like they were coming down the stairs, down the stairs that led to the living room's door.

Thump, thump, thump, louder and louder, as they went down.

Steve had put the book down now, and was staring at the door with great intensity.

What if it's a robber, he thought, or worse...no, he mustn't let his imagination go wild.

He stared at the great door, and heard the footsteps keep thumping, finally coming off the stairs, and towards the door.

Thump, thump, thump...He stared at the door, his fear increasing.

Thump, thump, thump...the fireplace suddenly went out.

The door handle started to turn.

Steve was too frightened to get up to stop it, stuck in his place by fear.

Slowly, it creaked open, until it was finally completely open to Steve. A great blinding light filled the room from the door, a blood curdling scream arose from Steve...

Linda pulled into the driveway in her truck. She was sure she finally had got every last thing and was ready to move into the

new house. Her daughter bounced out of the car and ran towards the house.

Linda thought, not for the first time, that the house was much too big for the three of them, but Steve was too much in love with it for her to change his mind.

Steve, she had told him not to spend the night in the house alone, but he had insisted. She smiled to herself, the big goof was probably going to tell their daughter all kinds of ghost stories he made up last night, and she'll end up trying to soothe her to bed tonight.

Her daughter bounded into the house, she followed closely behind.

She called for Steve, no answer. Probably still asleep in that huge living room, or can't hear us through the door. He loved the room most about this house.

She told her daughter to check the living room for her father. Her daughter went off to do that.

Linda started unpacking some of the food they had brought in the kitchen, when she heard a scream from her daughter.

She ran to the living room to see what the matter was.

She looked in, and screamed herself.

Steve was sitting, in his chair, book on the floor. His hair...his hair had turned stark white, his clothes were ripped, and it looked like he had tried to claw his eyes out with all the claw marks on his face.

He was dead, with a look of stark terror etched forever on his face.

Linda retched, and cried, what, what could possibly have done this to her husband, what???

Then, through her sobs, and her daughter's screaming, she thought she heard a thumping sound upstairs...

Up Around Castle Hill

The dream was so vivid, she didn't realize at first that it was a dream. The party was crowded, the guests cheerful, the food delicious. Then a rumour began to circulate among the guests. The Devil was coming to the party. The Devil was on the way.

She didn't pay much attention at first. Until a hush came over the crowd. Turning to see what it was, she saw a tall, handsome blond man standing in the doorway greeting his hostess. Around her, the murmurs began. It was the Devil. He had come.

She watched out of the corner of her eye as the Devil made the rounds of the room. He looked so ordinary, it was hard to believe he was the Devil.

Then he came to her group. As soon as he joined them, she knew the rumour was true. This was not someone to be trifled with. Frightened, she grabbed for a Bible her hostess had left lying on a nearby end-table and threw it at the Devil.

For a moment, their eyes locked. The Devil's eyes were full of ferocious anger, terrible evil, and malevolent malice directed right at her. She thought she was dead.

Then she woke, and lay trembling in her bed with the light on until dawn.

The next morning was the end of term. Her parents and younger sister helped her clear out her dorm room and packed the car. It was dusk before they settled into their seats for the two-hour drive home. They talked excitedly as they drove towards their home in Huddersfield, interrupting each other often, contradicting themselves and laughing. It was good to be together again.

They were fifteen minutes from home when they left the motorway. Her father turned onto Farnley Tyas Road that led up the hill, through the double-bend around the Castle Hill landmark and then down the other side of the hill. As they drove up the steep hill, a noisy motorcycle tail-gated them, trying to pass even though the road was windy and narrow. Finally the hill grew so steep that the driver was forced to slow down and eventually, they pulled away from him entirely.

The car reached the top of the hill and started around the long curve that took them through one end of the hill. The night was dark and still. The whole family automatically looked to their right, out over the gorgeous view of the Huddersfield skyline. They all saw the small park cart, sitting next to the road just inside a wall boundary. It was parked directly underneath the only streetlight, where you couldn't fail to see it. And inside the vehicle....

She started trembling fiercely. Inside the vehicle was a tall, handsome blond man with eyes full of ferocious anger, terrible evil, and malevolent malice. It was the man from her dream. The man everyone said was the Devil!

The tension in the car was palpable. She had mentioned her dream to no one. But her parents and her sister all felt the evil pulsing from the still figure in the cart. No one spoke as they drove past the man.

Suddenly, the engine gave a strange cough. Her father turned the motor, once, twice in a silent, desperate battle to keep moving. She gripped her hands together, praying silently as she stared at the figure opposite their car. The engine caught again and her father pressed down hard on the accelerator. Then they were past the man and roaring away from the park and towards the downward slope of the mountain.

She was sweating profusely, unable to stop shaking. She looked back out the window at the man in the park, and saw the motorcycle come roaring at last to the top of the hill. It drove half-way around the double-bend and as it drew opposite

the figure in the cart, she heard the engine of the motorcycle cough. And then stall.

And then the park was out of view and they were riding silently towards home, not daring to speak until they were safely indoors.

She often wondered what happened to the man on the motorcycle.

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Rose Marie

Once there was a little girl whose name was Rose Marie.

One night she woke up about midnight because she heard someone walking across the floor downstairs.

step...step...step...step...step

She quickly pulled the covers up over her head and shivered, holding her breath.

Soon, she heard a wavery voice (*say slowly in a scary voice*):
"Rose Marie - I'm on the first step and I'm coming to get you!"

Then, Rose Marie heard another step and then the voice said "
Rose Marie I am on the second step and I am coming to get
you!"

Well every step the voice called to her until the voice was right
beside her bed.

"Rose Marie I am right beside your bed!"

(crouch down in front of your audience)

"Rose Marie! (pause)

I GOTCHYA!

(Jump at the audience as you shout "I GOTCHYA)

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Cottage of Mystery

This story is all about 3 Scouts who are going on an expedition for their Chief Scout Award. They were walking over the moors when suddenly the mist came down. All they could see was a light far off, so they made their way towards it. When they got there, they saw that it was a cottage. They knocked on the door. No answer. They knocked again. No answer. They tried the door handle. It was unlocked, so they went in. To their surprise, there before them was a table set for 3 people and a big pot of stew was cooking on the stove. Being Scouts they thought - "Seems a shame to waste it", so they sat down and ate it up. As it got late, they settled down on the floor and went to sleep. Halfway through the night, one of the Scouts woke up. He saw a light coming from under the bedroom door at the top of the stairs. "The owner must be back" he thought, "I had better go up and tell him who we are and what we are doing". So he got up and went quietly upstairs.

Next morning, the other 2 Scouts woke up and saw that they were on their own. "The other Scout must have gone for help" they thought, "We'd better press on with the expedition and meet the other Scout along the way".

They were walking over the moors when suddenly the mist came down. All they could see was a light far off, so they made their way towards it. When they got there, they saw that it was a cottage. They knocked on the door. No answer. They knocked again. No answer. They tried the door handle. It was unlocked, so they went in. To their surprise, there before them was a table set for 2 people and a big pot of stew was cooking on the stove. Being Scouts they thought - "Seems a shame to waste it", so they sat down and ate it up. As it got late, they settled down on the floor and went to sleep. Halfway through the night, one of the Scouts woke up. He saw a light coming from under the bedroom door at the top of the stairs. "The owner must be back" he thought, "I had better go up and tell him who

we are and what we are doing". So he got up and went quietly upstairs.

Next morning, the other Scout woke up and saw that he was on his own. "The other Scout must have gone for help" he thought, "I'd better press on with the expedition and meet the other Scouts along the way".

He was walking over the moors when suddenly the mist came down. All he could see was a light far off, so he made his way towards it. When he got there, he saw that it was a cottage. He knocked on the door. No answer. He knocked again. No answer. He tried the door handle. It was unlocked, so he went in. To his surprise, there before him was a table set for 1 person and a big pot of stew was cooking on the stove. Being a Scout he thought - "Seems a shame to waste it", so he sat down and ate it up. As it got late, he settled down on the floor and went to sleep. Halfway through the night, he woke up. He saw a light coming from under the bedroom door at the top of the stairs. "The owner must be back" he thought, "I had better go up and tell him who I am and what I'm doing". So he got up and went quietly up the stairs. At the top, he put his hand on the bedroom door handle, and slowly turned the handle....

BOO!!!

Digging Harry

This one will generate groans:

Leaders Notes: During the day wander around with a shovel, then hide it. About an hour before the camp fire ask them if they have seen where you left it and offer a free mars bar to whoever finds it. then tell them this story.

Wherever anything is enclosed in [square brackets] then substitute the nearest equivalent to where you are telling the story

There was an old farmer, Harry Southgate, who owned at a farm in [the village down the road]. But he had an absolute horror of a wife and she was always nagging at him to get a bigger farm and have more money just like her brothers.

He got fed up with this and one night after she had been moaning at him all day he completely lost his temper and cut off her head with an axe.

Apparently he buried her in the woods, around here somewhere, under an old [Oak] tree, just like that one over there. But when he went to bed that night he could hear her calling out to him from the woods , threatening revenge "Harry, you killed me and I cannot rest in peace. I will have my revenge but until I do you will get no rest either". It kept him awake all night.

Each night he could hear her threats, each night louder and more horrible than the last, and every night he got no sleep.

"Harry I will have my revenge and when I do you will die a hideous death and suffer just like me. You let me down in life and did me evil in death, there will be no rest for you Harry Southgate"

After a week of this he had no sleep and was getting frantic so he went back to the woods to dig her up and take the body far, far away. He found the body but her head was missing. He took the body down to the sea and threw it in, but when he got to bed rather than the silence he had hoped for the threats were worse.

"Harry, you can't get rid of me that easily, until you confess to the police you will get no rest"

Eventually he started going crazy and went to the police, but they didn't believe him because he had no proof. Remember he had thrown the body in the sea and he couldn't find the head.

He went straight back to the woods to try and find the head, and started digging holes to look for it. This continued for a year and a day, during which time he had no rest and no sleep, and then one day finally he collapsed and died.

They had a service for him but during the quite bit there was a ghostly voice "You are dead Harry Southgate but you will not rest in peace", and even to this day people tell of a woman's voice echoing through [these woods].

That was nearly 50 years ago, but local people still remember and when ever they see a hole they say "the Ghost of Harry Southgate dug that"

At about 3.00 AM start digging outside their tents!

Chief Scout's Award

This story is all about 3 Scouts who are going on an expedition for their Chief Scout Award. They were walking over the moors when suddenly the mist came down. All they could see was a light far off, so they made their way towards it. When they got there, they saw that it was a cottage. They knocked on the door. No answer. They knocked again. No answer. They tried the door handle. It was unlocked, so they went in. To their surprise, there before them was a table set for 3 people and a big pot of stew was cooking on the stove. Being Scouts they thought - "Seems a shame to waste it", so they sat down and ate it up. As it got late, they settled down on the floor

and went to sleep. Halfway through the night, one of the Scouts woke up. He saw a light coming from under the bedroom door at the top of the stairs. "The owner must be back" he thought, "I had better go up and tell him who we are and what we are doing". So he got up and went quietly upstairs.

Next morning, the other 2 Scouts woke up and saw that they were on their own. "The other Scout must have gone for help" they thought, "We'd better press on with the expedition and meet the other Scout along the way".

They were walking over the moors when suddenly the mist came down. All they could see was a light far off, so they made their way towards it. When they got there, they saw that it was a cottage. They knocked on the door. No answer. They knocked again. No answer. They tried the door handle. It was unlocked, so they went in. To their surprise, there before them was a table set for 2 people and a big pot of stew was cooking on the stove. Being Scouts they thought - "Seems a shame to waste it", so they sat down and ate it up. As it got late, they settled down on the floor and went to sleep. Halfway through the night, one of the Scouts woke up. He saw a light coming from under the bedroom door at the top of the stairs. "The owner must be back" he thought, "I had better go up and tell him who we are and what we are doing". So he got up and went quietly upstairs.

Next morning, the other Scout woke up and saw that he was on his own. "The other Scout must have gone for help" he thought, "I'd better press on with the expedition and meet the other Scouts along the way".

He was walking over the moors when suddenly the mist came down. All he could see was a light far off, so he made his way towards it. When he got there, he saw that it was a cottage. He knocked on the door. No answer. He knocked again. No answer. He tried the door handle. It was unlocked, so he went in. To his surprise, there before him was a table set for 1 person and a big pot of stew was cooking on the stove. Being a Scout he thought - "Seems a shame to waste it", so he sat down and ate it up. As it got late, he settled down on the floor and went to sleep. Halfway through the night, he woke up. He saw a light coming from under the bedroom door at the top of the stairs. "The owner must be back" he thought, "I had better go up and tell him who I am and what I'm doing". So he got up and went quietly up the stairs. At the top, he put his hand on the bedroom door handle, and slowly turned the handle...

...BOO!!!

Guilty Secret

This one will generate groans:

As you probably know, some monasteries allow outsiders to use them as occasional retreats. In the north of England was such an establishment. One day the abbot was approached by a wealthy and well-known businessman.

The businessman asked if he might spend a couple of weeks in the monastery to escape from the cares of the world in general and his lifestyle in particular.

The abbot explained that the monks lived a very simple life but were happy to welcome the man.

A few days later he arrived, carrying a small suitcase. He was shown to his cell, which was small and sparsely furnished (and just happened to be next to the abbot's). He quickly unpacked his case and joined the monks at their simple evening meal of bread, fruit and cheese.

After an evening of quiet conversation, it came to the time to turn in and the abbot accompanied the man to the door of his cell. As they parted, the abbot asked if the man wanted anything before going to bed. The man then surprised the abbot by asking for an apple, an orange and a piece of string.

These were duly fetched, and the man wished the abbot goodnight.

The abbot retired to his bed but got little sleep. All night long, the most hideous bangs, crashes and screams emanated from the man's cell.

Next morning the abbot, bleary-eyed and sporting a pounding headache, made his way to the refectory for breakfast, to find the businessman sitting at the table, bright as a button!

That night, the abbot, now feeling like death warmed over, again accompanied the man to his cell. Again, he asked the man if he wanted anything before he turned in and, again, the man asked for an apple, an orange and a piece of string... and again, the abbot got no sleep because of the noises from the cell.

Next morning... the abbot missed breakfast!

That evening, again the apple, the orange and piece of string... and the screams, crashes, bangs, etc!

Next morning, the abbot decides to ask the man what he does with the apple, orange and string which makes such an unholy racket. However, when the man emerges from his cell, looking as fresh as a daisy, the abbot can't bring himself to invade the man's privacy.

The routine continues for a fortnight, at the end of which the man declares himself refreshed and leaves.

About a year later, the businessman contacts the abbot and asks again if he can enter the monastery on retreat. The abbot, who remembers the man, shudders inwardly but agrees.

The man duly arrives, spends the day, gets ready to turn in (in the same cell as last year) and asks for an apple, an orange and a piece of string!

For the next fortnight, the pattern is unchanging... fresh in morning, apple orange and piece of string at bedtime and noises all night long!

At the end of the fortnight the abbot can bear it no longer. He calls the businessman to his study and says, "Ok, you've stayed here for two retreats now and every night you've asked for an apple an orange and a piece of string. Every night I've had virtually no sleep because of the noises from your room! In the name of God, what the hell's going on?"

The man replied, "I really don't want to tell you Father. It's my guilty secret and I've never told a living soul. I'm so ashamed of what I do. I can't tell you Father."

With that, the businessman left. However, a year later he was back... with the same effect.

At the end of this fortnight, the abbot couldn't bear it. With bloodshot eyes and pale and clammy skin he called the businessman into his study.

"It's no good!" he screamed, "I HAVE TO KNOW!" The man shrank into his chair. "What do you do with the apple, the orange and the piece of string?!"

The man blanched and then thought for a while. At last he spoke. "I'll tell you", he said, "But you're the only person I've ever told and you must give me your word as a man of God that you'll never tell another living soul."

The abbot gave his word and the man told him his guilty secret. And the abbot, being a man of his word and a man of God, never did tell anyone what the man did with the apple, the orange and the piece of string.

Groan...

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He Who Follows Me

This is a ghost story I taped from an old-time radio program. I didn't tape the credits, but I know the name of it is He Who Follows Me, adapted for radio by Richard Thorn. I find an old diary at a flea market for about fifty cents, and copied the story down into it. I then take it to camp with my Troop and tell them it is the diary of my late great Uncle Bill. Then, I simply start reading it to them. Granted, much of this is too detailed to be part of someone's REAL diary, but the Scouts are wrapped up in the story too much to notice.

March 3, 1938

Today, Helen and I came across one of the delightful old southern mansions. We decided to stop and make a study of the place. Helen was especially interested in taking some colour pictures to illustrate our lecture series in the fall.

Although no one was home, we felt that no one would mind us taking a look around the place. We both felt it a shame that the owners let the place rundown. It was probably beautiful in its day. It could still be renovated, but not without a lot of money being spent.

After some shots of the house from the front and side, I noticed a building in back of the house. No one was to stop us, so we moved back there to take a look. The grounds of the back was more shabby than the front, but seeing how much needed done, it would be impossible without major construction work. Part of the mansion was still livable, though not very secure.

The building we were nearing didn't seem so worn down. It was in remarkably fine condition. It was built a lot later than the house was, I estimated it as no more than twenty years old. It was made of stone, gray stone. Somebody probably had lived in the old house not too long ago, and during that time

constructed this building. But we both still felt it a shame that they let what must have been a wonderful place rundown like this.

We both stopped in front of the stone building. Helen made the observation that it didn't have any windows, something I had noticed too. I told her it was probably used for storage. It was then that Helen pointed to the broken padlock on the door. Our curiosity getting the best of us, we decided to check inside, to make sure everything was all right.

The massive heavy iron door swung open reluctantly. We stepped inside. Although there were no windows, light entered the structure through a skylight in the ceiling. The cold, damp, musty air chilled our bones. Helen looked around the room, and laid her eyes on a large stone block in the middle of the floor, right where the light was coming down from the skylight. This was not a storehouse by any stretch of the imagination. This was a mausoleum, and the stone case on the floor was a sarcophagus, a stone coffin. There was nothing else in there, but Helen, and I to an extent, felt crowded.

Helen wanted to get a picture of the sarcophagus, with the light laying over. We didn't think there was enough light for our camera, but we decided to try.

After the first shot, we heard movement outside and a man yell to us. I explained that we saw that the lock was broken and decided to explore. He told us that he wasn't mad, but that we still shouldn't of came in here, because "he" wouldn't like it. When I pressed the man to tell me who "he" was, he answered "the thing that sleeps in that stone coffin."

"This man must be crazy," I thought. He asked us why we didn't pay attention to the warning. Not knowing what he meant, he took us outside and showed us the writing above the door. "IF YOU ENTER HERE, INTO THE REALM OF DEATH, I SHALL FOLLOW YOU, AND BRING HIM WITH ME." He said it was a shame that we didn't see it, because we didn't know what we were getting ourselves into.

I once again apologized and told him we didn't want any legal trouble. He said we were already in enough trouble, none of it being legal, because it didn't matter to "him." This time, Helen asked about "him," and the man went into his story. "They called him Mr. Thomas when he was livin'. They call him The Dead that Walks now that he's dead. He cam to get that name because people around he 'as seen 'em, at night. He is dead, but they did see him walkin'. I know, cause I seen him myself." "I know you ain't believin' what I'm tellin' ya. I don't care what you believe. But you listen to what I'm sayin' now. If I was you I'd get as far away from this place as I could. Not just this place, but this town, this part of the country."

I didn't understand the urgency, so the man continued with the story, hoping to convince us.

"Old Thomas came from some place in Europe. I say "Old," but he really wasn't old. Just seemed that way. He bought the house and grounds here and had them cleaned up, till the place looked like it was brand new. Then he started buildin' this here buildin'."

"There was something funny 'bout Thomas; somethin' in his eyes. Made ya frightened of him. His eyes, they looked like the eyes of a dead man."

"He never acted like anyone I ever knew. He was always talking about death, always tellin' me how he could come back after death. I was the caretaker then, just like I am now."

"After this building was completed, I use to watch him at night. He'd come out here. It seemed as though he was in some sort of trance. He'd stay out here for hours. And when he'd come back to the house his eyes would glisten and shine, so you couldn't hardly look at him."

"A week before he died, he told me that as long as I live, I was to take care of this place. 'Cause if I didn't he'd come back an

kill me. Then he died. Just like that. He was put in here, in that coffin."

"One night, about two months later when the moon was full, I heard a noise. And when I had come out to look I saw the door to this place open, and him come out. I could hear his footsteps, something queer and draggin'-like. Then he turned around, and I could see his face in the moonlight: pale and pasty. Sick lookin'. Those eyes of his seemed like to burning coals of fire."

"He seemed to be lookin' at me. I heard him say, 'They have disturbed me, and the moon has awakened me. I shall follow them.' That's what he said. I heard him just as straight as your hearin' me. And then, he vanished into the night."

"Towards morning, I heard his footsteps again. I heard that big iron door closin'. And I knew he was back."

"The next day I heard Ralph Cummins died the night before, screaming something about not meanin' to go into the mausoleum. I knew who killed him."

"This has happened again and again for the last ten years since he's been dead. Folks around hear say he'll follow you around wherever you go if you come inside here."

"Why haven't you been killed?" I asked, thinking I have caught him in his lie.

"Cause he needs me, Hee hee. He ain't gonna kill me. But if I was you, I get out of this part of the country."

March 3, Later.

I sit here and write these words. It is late and the moon has risen full in the sky. Helen is standing by the window looking out.

For some reason, I am frightened. Yet I know that a few months from now I will laugh at the memory of my fright. However, in the morning, I do believe that we will leave this

place. Helen is glad. She doesn't not believe the caretaker's story, but she is concerned, just as I.

March 3, Still Later.

When I joined Helen at the window, a husky man appeared on the street below. He looked up at us.

The thing I noticed first was his face. Pale and pasty looking. Helen was startled by his eyes -- two bright coals of fire, just as the caretaker had described.

The man down in the street, whomever he was, left after about ten minutes. He has given us quite a fright. If I had felt any doubts as to whether we should leave this place they have all been dispelled now. I don't know what to believe.

Helen has just gone to bed. I think I shall do the same.

March 4, 1938.

Upon settling down to sleep last night, we heard footsteps coming from the room above us. I called down to the desk clerk, who only told us that the room above ours was unoccupied.

We left the hotel a short time after hearing the steps. We went immediately to our car and drove all night and all day.

We are stopping now in a motel almost one-thousand miles away. It is reassuring to know that he cannot possibly follow us.

I am very tired. I will go to bed and get an early start in the morning.

March 5, 1938.

Last night was not very comforting either. We heard the same footsteps outside our room, and Helen saw the man's face at the window.

This morning when I went into pay the bill, the man who owns the motel said that a strange pasty-faced man had been in earlier and told him to tell me that he would follow me.

March 11, 1938.

It is impossible to get any material together that will help me in my work. Everywhere we go, he's there also.

March 16, 1938.

The clerk told us this guy had said it was Ok for us to go ahead because he was going to follow us.

March 22, 1938.

He left a message with the lady at the desk lady telling us that he would be in touch.

April 7, 1938.

He left another message at the desk. The manager had the nerve to ask me if he was a friend of ours.

April 18, 1938.

Another disturbing night without sleep. More footsteps from the hall outside.

April 29, 1938.

Expecting it when we went to check out this morning, I asked the clerk if there were any messages. The clerk said a husky man in a white suit came by and said he'd follow us.

May 15, 1938.

I don't know what to do anymore. We cannot stop for the night without him showing up. The only sleep we get anymore is in the car while on the road.

May 30, 1938.

Helen and I argued again today. Since we've been on the run, that seems to be all that we can do. She suggested we go home. I fear that he will stalk us there, too. She felt it was the only place left to turn. I didn't know what to do or say, so we left for home.

June 23, 1938.

We arrived home this evening. I called Gary as soon as we got home. He said he'd be out within the hour to see us.

June 24, 1938.

Gary wasn't able to help us in any way. I did not really expecting any help. I was hoping he would be able to offer some concrete suggestion as to what to do. However, last night was the first night in months that we haven't been aware of his presence.

Maybe Helen is right. Perhaps he won't follow us here.

July 3, 1938.

We have not seen, nor heard, anything unusual since we first came home. I feel as a man might feel who has been given a new lease on life.

July 10, 1938.

Still nothing.

August 19, 1938.

For the past two months, a feeling of peace and security has enveloped the house. Helen and I have been able to go around with no sense of danger or dread. But last night that feeling was shattered...

[At this point I tell them a clipping from the newspaper was inserted into the diary. It was a clipping of a funeral notice for my Great Aunt Helen. It was, of course, too old and fragile to bring on the camp out. (WINK WINK.)]

According to one of their family friends (Gary?) my Great Uncle Bill went upstairs to investigate some footsteps, leaving my Great Aunt Helen downstairs alone.

When he got to the room that the noise came from, he found it empty. Going back downstairs, he found Helen, dead, with her eyes wide open.]

August 23, 1938.

I sit here in the empty house, writing this. I know that Thomas will come for me too. I write this in the hope that someone will find it. Read it. And maybe understand my death.

It is lonely here. Yet, suddenly I feel as if I am not alone. Someone is hear with me.

He is here, in this room with me. I am afraid to turn to meet him. Those eyes of his burning in to me. Yet, I must. I pray that someone reads this. Perhaps he will

[The August 23 entry was the last he ever made. I simply close the diary and let the Scouts wonder. I simply tell them that my Uncle Bill was found just like my aunt. The coroner could not determine a cause of death, but our family knows what killed him -- The Dead that Walks. --

The Cremation Of Sam McGee

There are strange things done in the midnight sun
By the men who toil for gold,
And the Arctic trails have their secret tales
That would make your blood run cold.
The northern lights have seen queer sights,
But the queerest they ever did see
Was the night on the marge of Lake LaBarge
I cremated Sam McGee.

Now, Sam McGee was from Tennessee
Where the cotton blooms and blows.
Why he left his home in the south to roam
'Round the pole, God only knows.
He was always cold, but the land of gold
Seemed to hold him like a spell,
Though he'd often say, in his homely way,
He'd sooner live in hell.

On a Christmas day we were mushing our way
Over the Dawson Trail.
Talk of your cold--through the parka's fold
It stabbed like a driven nail.
If our eyes we'd close, then the lashes froze
'Till sometimes we couldn't see.
It wasn't much fun, but the only one
To whimper was Sam McGee.

And that very night as we lay packed tight
In our robes beneath the snow,
And the dogs were fed, and the stars o'erhead
Were dancing heel and toe,
He turned to me, and "Cap", says he,
"I'll cash in this trip, I guess,
And if I do, I'm asking that you
Won't refuse my last request."

Well, he seemed so low I couldn't say no,
And he says with a sort of moan,
"It's the cursed cold, and it's got right hold
'Till I'm chilled clean through to the bone.
Yet 'ta'int being dead, it's my awful dread
Of the icy grave that pains,
So I want you to swear that, foul or fair,
You'll cremate my last remains."

A pal's last need is a thing to heed,
And I swore that I would not fail.
We started on at the streak of dawn,
But, God, he looked ghastly pale.
He crouched on the sleigh, and he raved all day
Of his home in Tennessee,
And before nightfall, a corpse was all
That was left of Sam McGee.

There wasn't a breath in that land of death
As I hurried, horror driven,
With a corpse half hid that I couldn't get rid
Because of a promise given.
It was lashed to the sleigh, and it seemed to say,
"You may tax your brawn and brains,
But you promised true, and it's up to you
To cremate those last remains."

Now, a promise made is a debt unpaid,
And the trail has its own stern code.
In the days to come, 'though my lips were dumb,
In my heart, how I cursed the load.
In the long, long night by the lone firelight
While the huskies 'round in a ring
Howled out their woes to the homeless snows
Oh, God, how I loathed the thing.

And every day that quiet clay
Seemed to heavy and heavier grow.
And on I went, though the dogs were spent

And the grub was getting low.
The trail was bad, and I felt half mad,
But I swore I would not give in,
And often I'd sing to the hateful thing,
And it hearkened with a grin.

'Till I came to the marge of Lake LaBarge,
And a derelict there lay.
It was jammed in the ice, and I saw in a trice
It was called the "Alice May".
I looked at it, and I thought a bit,
And I looked at my frozen chum,
Then, "Here", said I, with a sudden cry,
"Is my crematorium."

Some planks I tore from the cabin floor
And lit the boiler fire.

Some coal I found that was lying around
And heaped the fuel higher.
The flames just soared, and the furnace roared,
Such a blaze you seldom see.
Then I burrowed a hole in the glowing coal
And I stuffed in Sam McGee.

Then I made a hike, for I didn't like
To hear him sizzle so.

And the heavens scowled, and the huskies howled,
And the wind began to blow.
It was icy cold, but the hot sweat rolled
Down my cheek, and I don't know why,
And the greasy smoke in an inky cloak
Went streaking down the sky.

I do not know how long in the snow
I wrestled with gristly fear.

But the stars came out, and they danced about
'Ere again I ventured near.
I was sick with dread, but I bravely said,
"I'll just take a peek inside.
I guess he's cooked, and it's time I looked",
And the door I opened wide.

And there sat Sam, looking calm and cool
In the heart of the furnace roar.

He wore a smile you could see a mile,
And he said, "Please close that door.
It's fine in here, but I greatly fear
You'll let in the cold and storm.
Since I left Plumbtree down in Tennessee
It's the first time I've been warm."

There are strange things done in the midnight sun
By the men who toil for gold,
And the Arctic trails have their secret tales
That would make your blood run cold.
The northern lights have seen queer sights,
But the queerest they ever did see
Was the night on the marge of Lake LaBarge
I cremated Sam McGee.

"Pierre D'un Oeil"

Up in the Boundary Waters on the northeast end of Ensign Lake there is a campsite on a point and it is real easy to find because there's two dead trees with a bar that people use to hang their food bag to keep it from the bears. We usually put a poncho over the bag. As you sit at the campfire and look east across the lake that poncho between those two trees looks like a hanged man. And sometimes we hang the collapsible-plastic 5 gallon water bag off one of the trees. If you are there on June 14 this year start the story about 8:50 CDT because the full moon will rise at 8:53.

This afternoon while you kids were still coming over the portage an old guy came out of the woods and he told me this story. About a hundred years ago there was a trapper lived up here named Pierre d'un Oeil; they called him that 'cause he only had one good eye. He did have a glass eye but it was just an old glass marble he'd found somewhere and it was a weird yellow-green kind of colour and it seemed to glow. Nobody talked to old Pierre much and he didn't talk much to nobody. He went to town in the spring to sell his furs and maybe again in the fall to stock up. The folks in town were surprised one spring when he showed up with a wife, an Indian woman. Pierre said he'd traded with her folks up in Canada. A good deal he said she only cost him one gallon of whiskey and a good canoe. After a couple years the shopkeeper's wife had befriended Pierre's wife and was pleased to see one fall that she was pregnant. Well it was a long hard winter and it wasn't till late May that the ice went out and Pierre showed up in town. Mrs. Shopkeeper asked after his wife and Pierre got real dark and quiet and said, "She dead". "Oh no -- how". "She die havin' the baby". "And the baby" "The baby? I took it up to her folks in Canada". "Oh that's so sad". Well Mrs. Shopkeeper was worried and so she began some inquiries and became suspicious until finally an investigation was launched. They

found the parents up in Canada and they hadn't seen Pierre or a baby. So the sheriff went out and found Pierre and confronted him and Pierre broke down and told how about in Feb. or March after being snowed in for 3 months the cabin fever got to them and they had a big fight and he went crazy and killed her -- with an ax And buried her out in the woods after the thaw. Well they tried Pierre in court and found him guilty and sentenced him to die since that was the law but they all knew about cabin fever and that Pierre although he was spooky was not a bad man so the judge said, "Pierre do you have a last wish?". Pierre said, "If you are going to hang me that's that, but let's do it someplace pretty -- there's a place at the east end of Ensign Lake where the walleyes bite real good in the middle of June -- let's do it there." So they did -- right over there between those two trees! And then the old man told me that as they were rigging him up he reached up and popped out that nasty yellow-green glass eye and handed it to the hangman who shuddered and set it in the notch of a tree and forgot about it. The old man said he put it in that tree right over there!

If you timed this right the moon has just cleared the horizon and is shining through that water bag and is glows like a big eerie yellow-green glass marble.

Rescue At Sea

This is a tale of ships and rescue with a strange twist. Is it true? Did it really happen? Can a person be in two places at the same time? We do not know for certain, but it is an intriguing tale that will make you think.

The story takes place in the fall of 1823, when a young man named Robert Brace from Torbay, Newfoundland, was mate of a vessel trading between Liverpool, England, and Saint John, New Brunswick. On one particularly difficult westward passage, the vessel came close to the iceberg infested waters on the east coast of Newfoundland.

Near noon, Brace and his captain were on deck making routine navigation observations. After, they went below to work out the ship's position. Brace's cabin adjoined the main cabin, which made it possible for him to see into the main cabin, when he was at his desk, simply by looking over his shoulder.

Brace was intently working on his calculations and he noticed nothing unusual. He thought that his captain was working, with the same figures, in the main cabin. When Brace ran into a little difficulty with his work, he, without turning around, asked the captain to confirm their position.

There was no reply. He repeated the question. When there was still no answer, Brace looked over his shoulder. He saw, what he thought was, the captain busily writing on his slate. (Remember that this was well before paper was in ready supply and most things, that did not have to be saved, were written on slate). Brace thought it unusual that the captain did not answer, so he got up and went to the door of the main cabin. As he did, the man, who had been writing on the slate, raised his head. Brace was frozen with shock. The man at the desk was a complete stranger!

Brace broke out in a cold sweat. He had faced death many times without fear, but as he met the stranger's gaze, in the silence of the lower deck, knowing that he has never seen the man before, an eerie sensation began to spread over his body. He had never seen this person before. Not on any ship or on shore. He bolted to the deck and hurriedly searched for the captain. When he found him Brace asked the captain, "Who's in your cabin writing on your slate?"

The captain was startled. "There's no one there as far as I know."

"Well, there's a man sitting at your desk," Brace exclaimed.

"You must be dreaming," the captain said, "but could be the second mate or the steward - nobody else would be in there without my permission."

Brace, however, assured the skipper that the man in the cabin was neither the second mate nor the steward, nor in fact any of the crew - he was a complete stranger.

"Where could he have come from?" the captain asked. "We're been at sea for nearly six weeks. Let's go below and find out."

The two men went to the cabin, but found no one. A search do not reveal any trace that a stranger having been there - until they looked at the slate. There they saw, in a strange handwriting, the statement: "Sail for the northwest!"

The captain, amazed, immediately sat down before the writing table. He stared at the slate. Then he ordered Brace to write the same message underneath the words on the slate. There was no resemblance in the handwriting. The captain sent for the second mate and every man of the crew in turn who was able to write. Each was told to write the same message on the slate. None of the handwriting matched the original message.

Dumbfounded, the captain insisted that there must be a stowaway aboard even though the ship had been at sea for six

weeks. He ordered a thorough search of the vessel. The crew searched the ship from stem to stern and found no one.

The captain was puzzled. The mate insisted he had seen a strange man writing the message on the slate. And, in his opinion, if on one on the ship had done it, then it was a message they could not ignore. After some discussion, the captain ordered the helmsman to steer to the northwest.

All hands were on deck as the ship began to sail on the new course. A sense of great eagerness, mixed with some uneasiness, in the air. The lookouts were doubled in the rigging. Everyone peered at the horizon for the first sight of ... they knew not what!

For more than three hours the ship sailed on her course, ninety degrees off the old one. Suddenly, an iceberg was sighted. A few minutes later, the masthead lookout shouted that there appeared to be a ship near the berg, so close that it might be a wreck. The captain looked through his telescope, and saw that the ship was stuck fast in a field of ice around the berg. The masts were gone and the ship was sinking. He could also see people on board.

The rescue vessel approached as near as it could with safety. A lifeboat was lowered to pick up the passengers and crew of the ship in distress. It was later learned that the ship was bound for Quebec from Liverpool, and carrying many passengers. It had become stuck in the ice for some time and was in trouble. The passengers and crew had given up hope of rescue when the vessel appeared.

As the people left the sinking vessel, they were taken aboard the lifeboats and carried to the rescue ship. Brace was on the rescue ship watching the survivors come aboard. He almost fell off the deck with fright. One of the men coming aboard his ship was the same fellow he had seen writing on the slate at the

captain's table some hours before. The same figure, features and clothing, exactly.

Brace called the captain aside and told him about the man. The captain was skeptical, to say the least, but he was determined to get to the bottom of the extraordinary affair. The mysterious stranger was standing with the captain of the abandoned ship. As soon as the shipwrecked people were safely stowed away, the captain and mate of the rescue vessel approached the stranger, a little apprehensive as to what to expect. Both men thanked their rescuers for saving their lives.

The stranger appeared to be a normal human being, dispelling any fears of ghosts or spirits. The mystery deepened. Brace's captain asked the stranger if he would come to his cabin. When they reached there, the captain said to the man, "Forgive this odd request, but please write something on this slate."

"Willingly," the stranger replied. "What would you like me to write?"

Without hesitation the captain said, "Write - sail by the northwest."

The puzzled stranger did as he was requested. On the blank side of the captain's slate he wrote sail by the northwest. The captain put the slate behind his back, turned it over and handed it back to the writer.

"Is this your writing?" he asked.

"Of course it is," said the stranger, "you saw me write it."

"Well, then," said the captain, turning over the slate, "who wrote this?"

"Why I did, of course, just now," the stranger replied. Then he realized that the same message, in his own handwriting, on both sides of the slate.

His first reaction was to become angry. He thought they were trying to make a fool of him. But he soon realized it was no

laughing matter, especially after he had heard Brace's story. Then the stranger remembered that he had fainted with exhaustion earlier in the day. On waking, he declared to the captain that they would be rescued soon.

When the captain questioned his statement, the stranger said that he had seen himself on board another ship that was coming to save them. He described the rescue vessel and the description fit the rescue ship exactly. Thus, the survivors could hardly believe their eyes when they saw the rescue ship approaching, and all believed that divine providence had a hand in snatching them from a watery grave.

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The Witch Of Coos

I stayed the night for shelter at a farm behind the mountain, with a mother and son, two old-believers. They did all the talking.

MOTHER. Folks think a witch who has familiar spirits she could call up to pass a winter evening, but won't, should be burned at the stake or something. Summoning spirits isn't "Button, button, Who's got the button," I would have them know.

SON. Mother can make a common table rear and kick with two legs like an army mule.

MOTHER. And when I've done it, what good have I done? Rather than tip a table for you, let me tell you what Ralle the Sioux Control once told me. He said the dead had souls, but when I asked him How could that be--I thought the dead were souls, He broke my trance. Don't that make you suspicious That there's something the dead are keeping back? Yes, there's something the dead are keeping back.

SON. You wouldn't want to tell him what we have UP attic, mother?

MOTHER. Bones--a skeleton.

SON. But the headboard of mother's bed is pushed Against the attic door: the door is nailed. It's harmless. Mother hears it in the night Halting perplexed behind the barrier Of door and headboard. Where it wants to get is back into the cellar where it came from.

MOTHER. We'll never let them, will we, son! We'll never!

SON. It left the cellar forty years ago And carried itself like a pile of dishes Up one flight from the cellar to the kitchen, Another from the kitchen to the bedroom, Another from the bedroom to the attic, Right past both father and mother, and

neither stopped it. Father had gone upstairs; mother was downstairs. I was a baby: I don't know where I was.

MOTHER. The only fault my husband found with me-- I went to sleep before I went to bed, Especially in winter when the bed Might just as well be ice and the clothes snow. The night the bones came up the cellar-stairs Toffile had gone to bed alone and left me, But left an open door to cool the room off So as to sort of turn me out of it. I was just coming to myself enough To wonder where the cold was coming from, When I heard Toffile upstairs in the bedroom And thought I heard him downstairs in the cellar. The board we had laid down to walk dry-shod on When there was water in the cellar in spring Struck the hard cellar bottom. And then someone Began the stairs, tow footsteps for each step, The way a man with one leg and a crutch, Or a little child, comes up. It wasn't Toffile: It wasn't anyone who could be there. The bulkhead double-doors were double-locked And swollen tight and buried under snow. The cellar windows were banked up with sawdust And swollen tight and buried under snow. It was the bones. I knew them-- and good reason. My first impulse was to get to the knob And hold the door. But the bones didn't try The door; they halted helpless on the landing, Waiting for things to happen in their favor. The faintest restless rustling ran all through them. I never could have done the thing I did If the wish hadn't been too strong in me To see how they were mounted for this walk. I had a vision of them put together Not like a man, but like a chandelier. So suddenly I flung the door wide on him. A moment he stood balancing with emotion, And all but lost himself. (A tongue of fire Flashed out and licked along his upper teeth. Smoke rolled inside the sockets of his eyes.) Then he came at me with one hand outstretched, The way he did in life once; but this time I struck the hand off brittle on the floor, And fell back from him on the floor myself. The finger-pieces slid in all directions. (Where did I see one of those pieces lately? Hand me my button-box-it must be there.) I sat up on the floor and shouted, "Toffile, It's coming up to you." It had its choice Of the door to the cellar or the hall. It took the hall door

for the novelty, And set off briskly for so slow a thing, Still going every which way in the joints, though, So that it looked like lightning or a scribble, From the slap I had just now given its hand. I listened till it almost climbed the stairs From the hall to the only finished bedroom, Before I got up to do anything; Then ran and shouted, "Shut the bedroom door, Toffile, for my sake!" "Company?" he said, "Don't make me get up; I'm too warm in bed." So lying forward weakly on the handrail I pushed myself upstairs, and in the light (The kitchen had been dark) I had to own I could see nothing. "Toffile, I don't see it. It's with us in the room though. It's the bones." "What bones?" "The cellar bones--out of the grave." That made him throw his bare legs out of bed And sit up by me and take hold of me. I wanted to put out the light and see If I could see it, or else mow the room, With our arms at the level of our knees, And bring the chalk-pile down. "I'll tell you what-- It's looking for another door to try. The uncommonly deep snow has made him think Of his old song, The Wild Colonial Boy, He always used to sing along the tote-road. He's after an open door to get out-doors. Let's trap him with an open door up attic." Toffile agreed to that, and sure enough, Almost the moment he was given an opening, The steps began to climb the attic stairs. I heard them. Toffile didn't seem to hear them. "Quick!" I slammed to the door and held the knob. "Toffile, get nails." I made him nail the door shut, And push the headboard of the bed against it. Then we asked was there anything Up attic that we'd ever want again. The attic was less to us than the cellar. If the bones liked the attic, let them have it. Let them stay in the attic. When they sometimes Come down the stairs at night and stand perplexed Behind the door and headboard of the bed, Brushing their chalky skull with chalky fingers, With sounds like the dry rattling of a shutter, That's what I sit up in the dark to say-- To no one any more since Toffile died. Let them stay in the attic since they went there. I promised Toffile to be cruel to them For helping them to be cruel once to him.

SON. We think they had a grave down in the cellar.

MOTHER. We know they had a grave down in the cellar.

SON. We never could find out whose bones they were.

MOTHER. Yes, we could too, son. Tell the truth for once. They were a man's his father killed for me. I mean a man he killed instead of me. The least I could do was to help dig their grave. We were about it one night in the cellar. Son knows the story: but 'twas not for him To tell the truth, suppose the time had come. Son looks surprised to see me end a lie We'd kept all these years between ourselves So as to have it ready for outsiders. But tonight I don't care enough to lie-- I don't remember why I ever cared. Toffile, if he were here, I don't believe Could tell you why he ever cared himself. . .

She hadn't found the finger-bone she wanted Among the buttons poured out in her lap. I verified the name next morning: Toffile. The rural letter-box said Toffile Lajway.

White Eyes

In fact, there's a Scout camp not far from where this occurred.

The Pennine hills contain a lot of wilderness regions which saw substantial activity about 100 years ago. Here, miners and loggers worked to bring materials down to the local railway in Brighouse. But, like most industries of that time, there was a high profit motive, and workers lives were not as important as they were now.

One day, a mine tunnel collapsed, trapping a number of men within. They were able to survive, after a fashion, by drinking water which seeped into the tunnels, eating rats, mushrooms, and their dead co-workers. They worked from within to dig themselves out, confident that on the other side, others were digging from the outside in. Well, maybe not that confident, since the mining company was not known for its compassion.

Well, it took them a while, but they finally managed to dig themselves out. Then, the formerly trapped miners found two surprises. First, since they had lived in darkness for a long period of time, they could no longer stand the sunlight, and their eyes were pure white---no colour except for their pupils, which were dilated. Second, not one man had lifted a shovel to dig them out.

They then made a pact, these men, to take revenge on those who had abandoned them. Soon after, mysterious instances of men being killed in the hills occurred. These men were usually found mauled, bloody and torn. Close examination showed the teeth marks on them were from human teeth. One man was even beaten by his arm which had been torn off at the shoulder.

Soon thereafter, the mining company went out of business. No one was willing to work in these hills, and even groups of men

at night were at risk. Rumour had it that the White-Eyes were out for blood.

Now, since this happened about 100 years ago, and since only men were working in the mines, there should be no more White-Eyes around. So, we're safe---or are we? Several years ago, a camper was found mauled near the motorway, with human teeth marks.

Embellish the story as you wish! You may even want to adapt it to your locale. But beware---when I told this story to a group of campers at summer camp once, some boys (in my Troop, first timers, and other Troops there) were scared out of their wits, especially since it occurred so close to where they were at.

Wrap Wrap Wrap

Like many of you, I was brought up with the ghost story by the campfire. We waited anxiously to hear another _good one_. (I must say that this was before such movies as Freddie came on -- Movies weren't that bold yet.)

Being on the other end of the campfire, I find myself mixed. When a SM must stay up all night with a new Scout because the story was _too real_ puts it in a different light. Now, don't get me wrong. Out of the two Troops that I've been associated with, both _love_ the ghost stories.

However, we have adopted a philosophy in telling the stories. When the audience is populated with young Scouts, we add parts to the story that break the mood somewhat, yet still give the thrill that the Scouts seek. Then as the Scouts mature, work them into the good wall hangers.

As an example, I've enclosed a story that I've had good results with in many groups. I'll just hit the highlights here, then expand a little at the end.

----- story -----

A Troop sets camp in a secluded area by a lake in the mountains. Just at the edge of the clearing stands an old trapper's cabin. As all SL's do at the campfire, this SL tells the following tale:

Many years ago this land was sacred hunting ground for the (pick your tribe) Indians in this area. The game in this field was always plentiful -- until the white man came and built that cabin. The tribe elders were enraged at this encroachment, and sent their best warriors to oust the intruder.

The leader of the raiding party had seen this intruder, and knew him to be an old man with little spirit, so instead of

harming him, they decided to scare him out. The Indian crept up to the house and gently _wrapped_ on the wall.

This attracted the attention of the home owner, but finding nothing there, he went back to his work. Again the Indian _wrapped_ on the wall. This cat and mouse game went on for the majority of the night. The white man was becoming afraid of this mystery noise, so he reached for the shotgun he kept over the mantle. The next time the Indian _wrapped_, the man was prepared and decapitated the Indian with a single shot. The tribe elders, on seeing how easily the white man conquered their best, banned all people from setting foot in their sacred hunting ground. To insure this, the medicine man called on the spirit of the be-headed warrior to guard the land. It is said that on dark rainy nights, the warrior can still be heard prowling around the old home.

Once the story was told, the SM bade the boys good night and all turned in.

As can happen on spring nights, a thunder cloud began to build and soon the campers found themselves in a wind that was taking the tents away, and drenching them with cold ice water. The leaders decided that the safest thing would be to seek shelter in the old house. The boys eagerly moved into the old house, except for the Troop cook -- he was thinking of that old Indian and really didn't want any part of the house. So, just in case he took two of his biggest pans with him for protection.

The storm raged on, but the boys had settled down inside the cabin. Suddenly, a faint noise could be heard, _wrap, wrap, wrap_. Most of the boys didn't hear it, but the cook heard it well. Soon all the Scouts were up listening to the _wrap, wrap, wrap_. The SM went over to the side where it appeared to be coming from and the noise stopped. (A number of cycles here to build up the suspense. However, the cook was given pans for a reason -- he's the skittish one of the group and is liable to swing at anything.) The noise has grown in volume and intensity, and the SM has realized that he must go outside and

fix whatever is loose on the house. He takes the senior Scouts with him, which unfortunately is the cook. (Suspenseful) they walk around the house and find that the _wrapping_ noise is coming from a hole in the stone fireplace. The SM carefully inserts his hand into the hole and removes a roll of wrapping paper going _wrap, wrap, wrap_.

-end of story-

Now to expand on the concept. 1. The corny ending will take the stress off of the story, helping reinforce the thought that it is not real. Besides a laugh is a good thing to create at a campfire. 2. The whole story can be spiced up to make it as thrilling as you want. It won't take too much imagination and a little acting to keep them on the edge of their seats. 3. The cook is a pressure release in the story. He is very high strung and can swing at anything from his own shadow to the Scout Leader. Use him in humorous ways to take the edge off of the story as you go. 4. Tailor the story to your group. If your group is young and gullible, use the cook a little more. If they are seasoned campers, pour on the suspense. We usually find a good mix works wonders. Keep in mind that young boys/girls can fix their minds on something like this very easily and they will not sleep in the wood, especially new Scouts.

You'll know you did well when you hear that catch phrase _wrap, wrap, wrap_ echo around the camp for the next few days.