

PEGGITT'S GHOST STORY

From The Grove: A Gothic Mystery

PEGGITT: I have heard the stories of spirits of the past, that roam these rooms at night. At the very start of my teaching career, many, many years ago. I had just finished my studies, and I was called in to replace a teacher... Very much like tonight. Except this particular teacher had gone missing. His name was Mr Windsor. One day he was there, the next, he was not. He became what you call, a missing person. No one ever heard from him again.... Until one day, about twenty years later, one of the cleaners found a letter stuffed in the back of an old filing cabinet in the cellar.

Harold Windsor had hidden it, to one day be found.

It explained why he had left without a word. I've only read once, but I'll never forget it. In this letter Windsor told the story of how was doing a history assignment on the school.

SFX. Soft, spooky music undertones.

Windsor had stayed back late in his office, on one particular night, marking. It was the middle of winter, so it got dark early. He only realised the time when the cleaners fared him well and asked him to lock the main door after himself. He finished up and was walking through the yard towards the street and his bus stop, when he heard loud stomping footsteps, men arguing. He was scared; there shouldn't have been anyone else on the school grounds. So, he stepped behind a hedge and waited until they passed... But what he saw next, chilled him to the bone. Two men in dirty long white coats carrying an oblong shaped wooden box upon their shoulders. They walked towards the front door of the house and entered.

After they had gone inside, Windsor stepped out from his hiding spot. But the night seemed darker than it had before, and the yard around him somewhat changed. Familiar yet different. The garden seemed more manicured; more like what it looked like in the old pictures he had plastered upon his history classroom wall, than the yard he walked through every day. In a panic he made his way to the direction in which he knew the street should lie upon, and soon enough familiarity returned, and he made a hasty retreat. Windsor was haunted by what he'd seen. He tried not to think about it. But it had captured his imagination. What were those men carrying in the box? Where were they taking it? Why was this happening at The Grove? He could think of nothing else. He became a man obsessed.

So, about a week later, Windsor returned to the school in the dead of night. Sure enough, by the time he reached the front door, his surroundings had changed. Trying to keep calm, he carefully pushed open the large brass knob

and entered the darkened hallway. But what should have been lit by fluorescent globes, now was lit by candle sconces on the wall. What was the student reception area, was now adorned with heavy carpets and wooden features, the furnishing and drapery of an elegant country home. He heard voices coming from upstairs, so he took a lamp from a table followed them.

He climbed those mighty stairs, and at the top he saw light flickering from a door that he knew as the Home Economics Sewing Room, but instead when he peered through the gap of the door into the room, he was horrified to see three long tables with cadavers stretched upon them.

Men in white coats stood around these tables, carrying out autopsies on the bodies. Experimental medicine, you may call it. Shocked and terrified, Windsor turned and ran from the horrors he was seeing. What was this place?! Then heard his name being whispered from down the stairs.

So, Windsor followed those voices against his logic and reasoning. They called him into the cellar. As he was descending the stairs, he held his candle aloft, and to his surprise saw the numbers 845 scrawled upon the wall; then he heard what he could only describe as a deafening screeching sound.

Suddenly, his candle was snuffed out by an invisible force, and the cellar was plunged into darkness. He slipped, knocking his head. He said he could feel ghostly presences pressing in around him, and could hear their furious whispers, but he could not understand what they said to him. He only knew one thing; he needed to leave The Grove, at once, and never speak of it again to another soul, lest he would go mad. He scribbled a hasty note and left the school, his home, and maybe the country forever. That's all we know.

There is a part of me that wished that I knew more. That in my life, while I was young enough, I was brave enough to have gone down there. But there's another part of me that knows that I was never supposed to. It would take more than one adventurous soul to uncover whether those crimes really occurred in this place. Well, children it's time to start thinking about turning in. I trust you will sleep well tonight.