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# A HAUNTED HOUSE STORY

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There was no bigger curiosity to the young people of Canterbury Town than the old Abbey mansion that sat on the corner right outside of the woods. It wasn't really a mansion, but it was the biggest house in the town having over ten rooms with four floors, that was built over a hundred years before in the 1890s. It was really a piece of history that should have been preserved, one of those homes most people would turn into a museum of some sort, to remember something special of the time period, with refurbished fixtures and furniture. Instead, it sat all alone in the twilight, gathering dust and seemingly falling apart. The outside was once a beautiful finish of white with a navy shingled roof and matching white fence that went around all sides of the yard. But now, the paint was peeling off exposing old rotting wood, the navy shingles barely clinged on, leaving holes that let in all sorts of elements, and the white fence barely stood having been overtaken by tall weeds and briar bushes. The only thing that was still in great condition about the property was a large willow tree that had taken over much of the yard. Once filled with flowers of all kinds, the four-acre lawn was now nothing but a huge swampy puddle of regrets.

To most people it was nothing but some old house that needed to be torn down by city officials to make something else more valuable and modern in its place, but no one ever dared to touch it. Because, to the elder people of Canterbury, it was a lot more than just some old house. It was a murder house. This was the story the people of that town were told from the time they could walk from their grandparents, in a desperate attempt to keep them away from the old house, and they did. The story told of a husband who murdered his wife and children back in the early 1900s, just around 1910. Though, no one could ever say the exact way he murdered them. Some say with an ax, others say a gun, some say poison, and some even believe that he only

killed his wife and then ran off with his children. Or, that he only killed a few of his children and ran off the youngest ones. No one ever knew for sure no matter how much research was done, even the local library had no such police reports, but it was certain that something happened at the old place. Yet, no one ever messed around enough to find out.

Even speaking of the house was taboo, but everyone thought about it. When driving through town and passing it, no one could help but gaze up on its beauty like the odd wonder it was. And, children couldn't help but ask their mothers and fathers who lived there. All that was ever said was a simple no one, and nothing else would ever be mentioned about it. It was so taboo that even thieves and misfits stayed away from the house. It was the only place that went without vandalization, mostly because it would be seen more as a desecration of a grave than just destroying an old structure. But, as the years went by and times got more modern, the younger generations of the town began to believe the scary tales less and less, and instead grew more curious.

Four such young kids were seventeen-year-old Sara, Jake, and Levi, and sixteen-year-old Lily. Just like most of the teenagers that attended Canterbury High, they had an extreme curiosity about the old house. Especially Jake, who lived only a block away from it, and was able to see it outside his bedroom window. As a kid he often had nightmares about it, about a man in a black coat running through the house with a huge ax laughing. His nightmares thankfully never got any further, but he always knew the dreams took place in that house even though he'd never even been inside to see what it looked like. He'd always get up out of his bed in the middle of the night after having them, and gaze at the house outside his window in the dim glow of the street light. For years he was terrified of the house after his grandpa had told him what happened there - his grandpa never lied. But lately, since he'd grown older and was now raging with wild

teenage hormones and felt a little braver, he was wanting to find out a little more about it. He shared his desires of adventure with his friends, and they were more than obliged to join him, all except for Lily.

Lily was the youngest of the group, but also the most intellectual, having been passed up a year early in school for her grades, which was how she met her three friends. But, she was also superstitious to go with her book smarts, and was always afraid of the house, and anything else she didn't understand, or had been warned about. She always stayed away from anything her friends would do involving the supernatural. Like the time she nearly had a fit after Sara had brought a Ouija board to Jake's birthday party, and tried to make her use it. She had nothing to do with it and attempted to walk home in the middle of the night, until she was stopped by Levi who made them put the contraption away. And, the time she didn't sleep for at least two weeks after she was forced to go with them when they visited a supposed psychic at the state fair. The psychic gave them a tarot reading, where she had chosen the ten of swords card, which scared her silly for a long time. She definitely didn't want to go in that house and instead believed it should be left alone and not disturbed by anyone, much less a bunch of teenagers who would be snooping around.

Sara was much like Jake and thought it would be a great idea. She was one of those tomboy girls who loved to do anything that would give her a thrill, and that other girls didn't wanna do, like wrestling and trying out for the football team-- which she didn't make the team only because her mom called the school and threatened the principal to keep her out of it, thinking she'd get hurt. Sometimes Lily was extremely annoyed with her, especially because she was so smart but simply acted stupid. Lily often thought it was because her dad had wanted a boy but was unable to have one, so he latched onto Sara and treated her like a little boy anyways

as a kid, and now she basically thought she was one and acted worse than one; she based this on what Sara had said herself and how her dad acted when the group would hang out at her house.

Levi was the leader of the group, but sometimes his leadership position was overcome by Jake, who had a much more loud and obnoxious, but fun way about him. Levi was cool and calm and didn't really like nonsense, but he did like a little adventure. Though, he didn't believe much in ghost stories, or anything else, which was the only reason he gave into his friends most of the time. Because he was cool and calm, the group always followed him naturally; they knew he could get them out of rough situations, and there was something about his mellow demeanor that made him intimidating even to big mouth Jake. Lily had always had a crush on him secretly, but never said anything, and sometimes Jake and Sara would joke around and say the feelings were mutual with the way Levi always seemed to take her side. He always argued it was simply because he knew she had a smart head on her shoulders and wanted to support her ideas. But, even he wanted to venture inside the old mansion.

"So, when would be the best time ya think?" Jake asked the group as they sat at their usual table in the high school cafeteria at lunchtime.

"I was thinking around six or so, before it gets too dark but late enough to where no one will really be paying attention either," Sara said, "Unless you wanna go in the dark, it might be spookier." She elbowed Lily who was sipping her Sprite and caused her to spill a little on her shirt.

"Yeah, uh huh..." Lily mumbled and tried to wipe it up with a napkin.

"Nah, we better not go in the dark. The place is falling in, you never know when some floorboard might break, or we might step on something, we're going to need some light. How about around five?" Jake said.

"Why, are you scared?" Sara asked taunting him.

"No, I just don't wanna step on some big nail either, I haven't gotten my tetanus shot. Or, ya know, die? I don't wanna do that either."

"The only thing that would kill you is that ax man..." Sara said in an exaggerated raspy voice and then laughed as she watched his eyes get bigger at the thought of his childhood nightmare.

"Hey that was just a dream, I only had it because of what my grandpa told me."

"Sure..."

"Well, either way you can count me out..." Lily said sitting her Sprite on the table knowing Sara would probably do something else physical to her after saying it, and she was right.

"What the heck Lily?" she said with a tough smack on the arm.

"You know how I feel about stuff like that..."

"Yeah, yeah, you always ruin everything fun we do. Well, not this time. You're going with us, or I'll do something you're not going to like."

"Like what?" Lily asked in annoyance thinking she was probably just saying that to try and make her.

Sara got close to her and whispered "I'll tell a certain someone how you always drew hearts all over your notebooks with his name in them, and how you wrote in your diary that you wanted to-"

"No!" Lily yelled in a panic, her face getting bright red, "You-You wouldn't..."

"Oh, I would, I'm getting sick of this Lily. You need to live some. You're always cooped up with your books and stuff and too scared to do anything, do something fun."

"Fun? You think fun is going into a house and disturbing the dead?"

"'Disturbing the dead'...Yeah it probably didn't even happen. You know how old people are always making up dumb stories to keep us from going in places we don't know, or talking to people we don't know, or eating our vegetables."

"This is different," Lily said getting even more annoyed, "This really happened. I know it did because why else would no one go in that house? Why hasn't it been torn down or something? Because something bad happened there and people want to just leave the place be like we should."

"Well, rather something happened or not we're gonna find out, and you are coming. Or else..."

Lily looked over across the room at Levi who was walking towards the table carrying his packed lunch, the same cool and emotionless look on his face as usual. She cringed at the thought of him finding out, knowing he'd probably never talk to her again. And she knew that Sara would do it, Sara was just that spiteful to do something like that. She knew she had no

choice. "Okay, fine..." she said in a squeaky voice, "But it wasn't a diary, it was just a journal..." Sara rolled her eyes.

"You guys look weird, like you're up to something." Levi said taking a seat beside Lily.

"We've been deciding on a time," Jake said twisting his mouth up into a greasy smile.

"Like?" Levi asked.

"To go to the Abbey mansion." Sara said with extreme excitement.

His eyes got big. "Abbey mansion huh? When?"

"We've been thinking today at five, that way it won't be too dark, and no one will really be out to see us." Jake said.

"Sounds...cool." Levi said with a pause, "What about Lily, I'm sure she doesn't wanna go?"

"I don't..." Lily said then looked over at Sara who was slurping her cheap, county school spaghetti violently at her. "Uh...But I'm going anyways..."

"Wow..." Levi said in surprise, "That's unexpected."

"So, is it all agreed?" Jake asked with excitement, and held his hand out, his eyes lighting up and lips curling even more.

"Yep," Levi said, and reached across the table placing his hand on his.

"Heck yeah!" Sara exclaimed and slapped her hand on top of Levi's.

"Ye-Yeah..." Lily said shakingly putting her hand on top of Sara's. She thought to herself:  
*I just know this is a bad idea...*

Clasping their hands together was something the four did whenever they all actually agreed upon something, almost like a democracy signing a document. Basically, it was just a dramatic effect Jake came up with to make things seem fun and important, but they all did it. And that meant that something, whatever they agreed up on, was going to happen for sure. They'd only done it a few times before, like when agreeing they would all steer clear of alcohol after Jake's accident a few years before, where he was almost killed by a drunk driver. And, a few times when they decided on what movie to go to or what they were going to do as some weird project they came up with. But, it was always official, almost like a blood pact but not as messy. Lily knew there was no way out of it and was completely terrified.

She looked around expecting Jake and Sara to have the same look of excitement on their faces, and they did, but expected Levi to have the same chilled out nonchalant look, since it was nothing to him after all, he didn't believe in ghosts. But, he didn't look nonchalant, he was actually smiling, but not a normal smile, a very deceiving smile. Then he looked over at her and winked then nodded. At first, she didn't know why he would have done that, but then it suddenly hit her-- he was going to do something. It was very rare to see Levi actually smile in that playful of a way, so when he did Lily knew he was going to do something, every time he ever did he always did something, usually something hilarious and unexpected. But she always knew, because he always winked at her.

Later that day after school let out, the four got together and walked around the neighborhood to pass the time away, all talking about random different topics, mostly about their last classes. Jake talked about how much he hated math but about how the teacher was hot, so he didn't mind it as much. Levi had the same class but didn't really say anything about it other than math didn't really bother him. Sara went on a rant about how she got hit in the face by a ball in

gym class, then went over to cuss out the girl who threw it for not apologizing, and that she never liked her anyways. Then, how she got in trouble by the coach only because that girl was some snob on the softball team. Lily ranted a little herself about how her English teacher made her read her essay about trees and the environment out loud and how she hated it and didn't understand why she was given the topic of trees and then expected to read it out loud. It wasn't something to be read out loud, it was too boring, and everyone was talking or asleep, and the teacher yelled at everyone so much she could barely get a word out. They all agreed that Lily's situation was dumb and that maybe, just maybe the girl didn't mean to hit Sara in the face, but she disagreed.

The neighborhood was one of those close-knit ones where basically everyone knew everyone. There was at least a thousand people in Canterbury, but generally everyone got along. People lived in different parts of the town based on their wealth, the richer people lived in the north part of the town, right around the same corner where the Abbey mansion was, the middle-class people who took up most of the town resided in the east and west and in between, and the lower-class people lived mostly in the south part of town or in the outskirts in the woods. But, mostly everyone was friendly, so it was okay for a group of kids to be walking around. The only problem might have been a loose dog. But everyone stayed away from the Abbey mansion.

"Ah man this is awesome..." Sara said under her breath rubbing her hands together, "And, we'll be the first ones in our school to go in this house...Seniors rule!"

"I don't like this at all..." Lily said under her breath, but was ignored by the thrills of the other three.

"So how did the place get its name?" Sara asked.

"The place was owned by the Abbey family," Levi said after a few second pause to see if anyone else knew. Lily knew but didn't feel like saying it, knowing she'd probably be ignored at that point anyways. "The man's name was William Abbey and his wife's name was Emily Abbey, they had six kids. I don't know their names for sure. But urban legend has it that the man's family owned the house since it was built, ya know his grandfather owned it then passed it down to his father, then him. And, before that apparently there used to be a park there still by the name of Abbey, Abbey Park."

"Where did you hear that part?" Lily asked, she hadn't even heard of that.

"My old man used to work at the library remember? Anyway, he said there may not be any information about a murder or anything, but there were lots of letters addressed to 'The owner of Abbey Park' from the 1870s and so on."

"Wow..." Lily said.

"*Boring...*" Sara said with an exaggerated fake yawn. "Well, we got about thirty minutes before we go. Think we should be heading in that direction?"

"Yeah." Jake said cramming a hand full of chips he was eating in his mouth then shoving the bag in his backpack.

"Oh boy..." Lily said feeling even more anxious now that the time had come.

"I was gonna tell you guys that I forgot I have to go to Cambrian county today to see my mom." Levi said stopping mid step in the middle of the road, "Sorry."

"Ah come on man..." Jake wailed, Sara acted about the same.

"Yeah, I just remembered it in math but got caught up talking with you guys and forgot to say anything."

"Uh...That's okay man. Maybe we can go another day then?" Jake asked in disappointment.

"Nah, you guys go ahead, it aint nothing but some old house. If it's that exciting tell me and I'll go with you next time." He said with a wave as he started to walk off, "Later guys..."

Lily caught another grin out of him along with another wink as he turned around to head the other direction, and she knew he wasn't going home. All she did know was that when they showed up at the house if anything odd did happen, it probably wouldn't be because of a ghost. This was the only thing that gave her comfort about the situation, but she still didn't like the idea of going in some old house where people supposedly died. It just wasn't right. And, what if they did disturb something? What if people did die there like everyone thought and they woke the ghosts of the people up? And even worse, what if the ghosts followed them home? She felt as though she was going to sink into her shoes as they walked.

Jake kicked up gravel as they slowly made their way to the house. He and Sara kept talking about how they were disappointed in Levi for not going, and even come up with the accusation that he was just scared and didn't want to go. *Him* of all the people they knew. They acted very childish saying that they didn't need him, and the roundabout of petty insults until they remembered how scared Lily was and turned to her instead, picking on her. The walk ended up taking a lot longer than they thought it would, they were pretty far from Jake's house, which is how they officially knew they were getting close. But, it took them at least an hour to get there, and it was starting to get late. Traffic got heavier with people getting off work and coming home,

and they knew it was past five, but still continued on, forgetting just how big their neighborhood was. By the time they reached Jake's house, they were all three exhausted, especially Lily who'd been full of anxiety the entire walk. She had been hoping and nearly praying it would just get dark and they would decide not to go inside and that she'd just get her mom to pick her up, but that's not what happened.

They all sat on the steps of Jake's house for a few minutes before they took off to their final destination, and just looked off in the distance in the direction of it. The roof could barely be seen but seen enough to give the three of them chills. This only heightened Jake and Sara's excitement enough to make them determined to get up and go, so they did. Lily tried to lag behind and sneak off, but Sara caught her and grabbed her by her arm tightly-- practically dragging her. The house got closer and so did the view of it, all of it could be seen almost looming in the light of the evening. The street lights had turned on meaning it was now after six, this gave Lily some hope they wouldn't be in the place for too long at least, but as long as there was still light they would be.

They approached the yard, then looked around to make sure no one was looking. A *no trespassing* sign that was at least ten years old, and had been once nailed to what was left of the fence, now laid on the ground next to the road. They had never been so close to the place, or even dreamed they would be, and now here they were climbing over the small wooden pickets and into the tall mucky grass. The house was so big it pretty much swallowed them; with its huge Victorian tower like structures and gothic details, it looked like something out of a horror movie, like it was just waiting to consume them and make them part of some curse that had been brewing for over a century. But, there was still something beautiful and almost enchanting about it. The way the windows were still completely intact without a crack, the way that the porch

swing still hung tight to the roof of the porch, and even the way the paint peeled was somewhat lovely. But, most beautiful of all was the large willow tree that still grew even after all the years of abandonment-- so tall and flowing in the light breeze that blew. Once they got to the steps, they were no longer clearly visible to the public and were hidden behind the tall brush which they had to force their way through like a jungle.

They climbed up the steps which creaked with their every footstep sending shivers down their spines, and for a second Jake even began to wonder if they should be going inside. "You sure we should really do this?" he asked Sara who was ahead of him and already on the porch at the door.

"Uh, yeah..." Sara said with a smirk. "Don't tell me you're chickening out?"

"No..." he said in embarrassment, "I just...Well, what if Lily is right and people did die, and the ghosts get mad at us or something?"

"Oh my God Jake, do you hear yourself? You're almost 18. There is no such thing as ghosts, and if there is, oh well. They're dead, it's the living you gotta be afraid of. What can some dead person do? Nothing."

"Scare ya crapless is what they can do..." Jake mumbled.

"Guys...come on." Sara said getting frustrated.

"There are dead people here...I know it." Lily said looking around at her surroundings. She could tell someone had died there, she just knew it. There was something not right about the place, and it went beyond simple paranoia.

"Oh my God come on!" Sara yelled slamming her book bag down on the porch swing.  
"Put your sacks here and let's get in there before it gets dark, there is nothing bad in there!"

They both did as she said when really all they wanted to do was leave. Lily wanted to run and even thought about it before Sara turned and gave her another dirty look. Seeing the expression she gave her, she could almost read her mind saying *You know I'll tell him...* The door came open a lot easier than they expected, they thought for sure they were going to have to beat it down to get in, but it somehow just grazed open with a turn of the knob and a push. Immediately the smell of dust filled their noses and lungs and they all let out a big cough, it was everywhere. The evening light shined through two huge windows lighting up the room in a haze, and they were intrigued.

The room they entered was the living room and it was huge, bigger than all three of their living rooms put together, and then some. And the ceiling was so high it would have taken a ladder to reach it. A large chandelier hung down covered in cobwebs just like the rest of the room. There was no TV of course, but there was an old first age telephone hooked up in the corner of the room next to an old radio. There was a large couch and two chairs sitting all together neatly placed and covered in a thick layer of dust like they'd never been moved. Everything in the room was like that-- the phone, the radio, the small table sitting between the chairs and couch, and even a large piano that sat in the corner. It was all perfectly intact like it had just been left abandoned and untouched. But, aside from the immense amount of dust and cobwebs, it all looked perfectly normal, except for odd discolored patches on the walls, they were perfect square patches that looked like marks of where pictures were once hung. They wondered why they were no longer there if everything else was the same.

"Eh, just your typical haunted house crap," Sara said with a sigh, "even with a piano included. What a shame, I was hoping for some blood and gore. Just something scary."

"This is only the first room..." Lily said feeling shaken up. She couldn't dust the feeling that there was someone there with them.

They then went into a small corridor that branched off from the living room that contained three other rooms. One appeared to be a dining room, it had a large table that took up most of the room and a fire place with another even bigger matching chandelier. The other appeared to be a kitchen where food was cooked and was filled with cooking supplies like pots and pans and an old gas stove. The third room was what appeared to be a bathroom, or what would have been a bathroom in the early 20th century. It was all still covered in dust and grime, but nothing unusual, other than it appeared perfectly untouched, just abandoned. There were even plates and candles sitting on the dining room table as if they were going to eat. They then ventured back into the living room and up a stair case that squeaked even more than the porch steps with their every movement. The second floor contained four rooms, all of each were locked except for one at the end facing the woods, which was full of nothing, but books and papers strewn about, and a small desk with a chair that had been knocked over on its side.

"Okay...this is a little more interesting..." Sara said eyeing the room. "Why are all these papers everywhere?"

"They look like they were torn out..." Lily said, looking, "And don't you think it's just a little odd how all the doors are locked except this one? And how everything has been untouched basically, like the people who lived here just up and left it? Or maybe, they didn't leave..."

"Shut up Lily..." Jake said now shivering in his sneakers, eyes wide as saucers, "This place looks almost exactly like my nightmares I used to have man...This is scary."

"But you can't say it isn't cool and that you're not having fun." Sara said.

He shrugged his shoulders and looked all around him, "I guess so. I'm just wondering what's in those rooms?"

"We don't have the tools to get in them today, but the next time we come we'll bring something and get in them. I bet there's all kinds of cool stuff in them." Sara said, still completely fearless.

Just then, there was a creaking sound coming from the floor above them, the sounds of quick steps walking all over the third floor, it almost sounded like two sets of separate footsteps. They all froze and listened, and the walking stopped. Even Sara began to get a little scared.

"Someone's up there..." Jake said squeaking in his voice "I hope it isn't the man who killed his family, or his wife or whatever..."

"Th-The footsteps were t-too light to be a ma-man," Lily said stuttering in fear and listened, "M-More like a ki-kid's footsteps or young wo-women's."

"Okay guys stop..." Sara said trying to gain back some of her grits, "It isn't anything, no one is here. This place is old, so it was probably just some old house sounds or something. Or some mice in-between the floors...Why don't we go see?"

The three walked slowly to the second stair case and crept up the steps that again squeaked loudly. There was no way they could have snuck up on anyone or anything without being heard, but they still tried. They reached the top of the stairs and crept around the corner

into a large hallway that made up the third floor, and saw no one or no thing except a row of three small chandeliers hanging from the ceiling and three more doors that were all closed. Everything was still and silent, but strangely the chandeliers were all rocking slowly even though there were no windows open to let in a draft.

"The footsteps must have been coming from inside one of the rooms..." Sara said walking slowly out into the hallway. A long floral rug stretched from one side of the hall to the other and looked like it was covered in big brown shoeprints, but they looked old--definitely not recent--and seemed to have a crusty texture to them. "Those kinda look like bloody shoe prints...No joke..."

Lily shuttered as she looked at them and tried not to walk over them. They crept quietly looking all around them for any sign of anyone but there was still nothing but dust, spiderwebs, and silence. The two first doors were locked, but the one on the end looked like it was half open. Their hearts skyrocketed as they walked, and once they got to the end of the hall where the door was, they noticed a small desk with what looked like an old flower pot sitting on it, directly below a large window. There even looked like there was once flowers in it, and there was still old dirt inside. This meant that whoever was there, definitely left in a hurry to have left flowers sitting there still living. Then, they heard a noise coming from inside the room at the end.

They all stopped in their tracks and froze. Then, there was another noise followed by a loud scream. The door swung open and out came Levi who crashed right into them. He screamed again after not recognizing them at first and was shaking profusely, his face pale and eyes dilated. "You guys! We have to get out of here!" he screamed grabbing Lily and Sara and pulling them.

"What are you doing here?" Sara asked angered and tried to jerk loose from him.

"No time to explain, come on now!"

He kept pulling them and they all followed nearly falling down the steps. Once they got to the second floor, they quickly ran past the room where all the papers were and suddenly they went flying as if some huge wind had pushed them, but there were no windows in that room to have done it. They all screamed hurrying even faster until they finally made it to the living room and then out of the door slamming it shut so hard behind them they almost caused the old wall to shatter. They grabbed their book bags off the porch swing and took off into the yard tripping over the brush and weeds as they ran, it was just starting to get dark out and they had made it just in time.

It took them until they got into the street to fully realize that Levi was not only there but was wearing a dress, a very oddly made dress. They all stood around in the road taking turns from staring at each other, then staring at Levi, but no one would look back at the house. Finally, Sara stepped up, still angry but more frightened, and confronted him. "What the heck were doing in that house? I thought you said you had to go because you had to visit your mom? And why are you dressed like that?"

Just then Lily remembered how he'd smiled and winked at her earlier that day and knew exactly what he was doing. Before Levi got the chance to explain, she interrupted him and said it for him. "He was trying to scare us, well you guys mostly. I kinda knew about it." she said with a laugh and then was relieved to know that's all it was. "I think it's hilarious!" She burst into laughter as Jake and Sara both grew even angrier and started yelling at him.

"Why would you do something like that? What kind of friend are you?" Jake asked still shaking.

"Well yeah, but you guys don't understand..." Levi said, still also shaking.

Lily stopped laughing after looking at his face. He looked absolutely horrified and wasn't laughing at all, and his dark hair stuck to his head from sweat like he'd really just been petrified.

"You were trying to scare us...right?" she asked, "That's all that was...right?"

He pulled off the ugly misshaped dress he was wearing. "I was going to scare you guys, I got this last year for Halloween, but I didn't get to wear it because I was sick and couldn't go, if you remember. I was going to wear it and jump out and scare you all, then take it off and show you it was me..." He said and held up the dress, it was a costume of what appeared to be a headless woman. It was a red dress with the shoulder and neck attached that somehow was supposed to go over your head. "I was trying to put it on when I heard you guys coming and couldn't get it on right, I was staying on the third floor looking out that window. You guys came in and I went in the last room, it was the only one that was unlocked. You guys were coming up the stairs and then I thought I heard something in the room with me...I turned around and I saw...her..."

"Saw who?" the other three all asked at the same time.

"A woman... I heard gurgling noises, weird nasty sounds, and then she was just standing there...headless. She didn't have a head and was missing an arm...And she didn't have legs either...All covered in blood, I could smell it."

They were all silent and looked at each other. "Then how did she walk over to you?" Jake asked.

"She floated..." He said, his eyes growing, "I- I thought it was fake, or that I was seeing something, I don't know...But it was real. She was right there in front of me, and I couldn't move, I was paralyzed. She lifted up her hand and pointed towards the ceiling like she was trying to tell me something, but I was too freaked out, I just ran out the door, and then I bumped into you guys."

"Wait, you saw a real headless woman? You sure?" Jake asked and looked back at the house.

"Do I look sure to you?" Levi asked and shook his head "I can't get the sight out my head...I wish I had never went in there..."

"What about those footsteps we heard? And the shoeprints in the hall?" Sara asked, her voice quivering like the young girl she actually was, sounding nothing like the man she acted like.

"I saw the shoeprints and I don't know where they come from..." Levi said, "And I don't know what footsteps you're talking about, I went in the room and stayed still as soon as you guys went in the house. I wasn't walking."

"And those papers?" Jake asked.

"Yeah...I wasn't standing in the room obviously, so I didn't do that either..."

"He didn't do any of that, he was really scared. I can tell." Lily said.

They all looked at each other and cringed. If he was telling the truth, then who was that woman? Was she the wife of the man who lived there? And did he kill her? Questions they all

asked themselves and each other over and over, but still had no answers for. "The thing I'd like to know is what that woman meant when she pointed to the ceiling." Lily said to Levi.

"I have no idea..." he said, "I just wanna forget about it."

"Maybe it's where her body is?" Jake asked.

"Doubt it, there isn't an attic. There's only four floors, the three floors of the house, and the basement." Levi said.

"Maybe there's a crawl space," Lily said, "They were common in houses back in those days."

"I just wanna know what the heck you were doing there trying to scare us?" Sara asked still mad, her manly tone slowly returning, "Why would you do that?"

"Well, I wanted to get back at you guys, especially you Sara." he answered.

"Why?" she asked taking offense.

"For basically blackmailing Lily into doing it. That wasn't right." he said.

"You knew about that?" Lily asked feeling her face getting red.

"Yeah, they've done it before too. Just like at the state fair with that psychic or gypsy or whatever. I hear better than you guys think ya know..." he said with a chuckle after finally calming down, "But good for you guys cause it came back to bite me pretty hard..."

Jake and Sara laughed, but Lily kept walking in complete humiliation knowing that if he knew she was being blackmailed, he knew what it was over-- the huge crush she had on him. Then, Levi reached over and grabbed her hand nearly sending her to the ground.

"Yeah, there's definitely something there. You were right Lily." He said and smiled. A smile she'd never seen before.

"Yep." Sara said, "So...When we going back?"