**The Forbidden House**

It was while I on a business trip and thought I would explore the country landscape that this strange incident happened.

Leaving the house. It was a cold winter morning. I walked down the road for about a mile before noticing a large path between huge steel gates. I was drawn to the sight. I knew I just had to look up this abandoned path. I tried to push open the gates but they were stiff as if frozen. A high wind was beginning to pick up but I convinced myself it would ease down. The gates were covered with overgrown plants and the ground was covered with leaves. All I could hear was the rustling of nature. With one more push on the gates, they began to slowly open.

I began walking up the forgotten path. Huge trees shadowed over me, making it hard to see. One magpie leaped out in front of me I jumped out of my skin. I was anxious about what was at the end of this path as the atmosphere felt eerie. There was a pungent smell, something I had never come across before.

As I walked on a grave stone lay before me with the name ‘Marie-rose’. Behind the grave stood an enormous red brick, manner house. It looked a deathly place all old and haunted. The house was stood in the heart of the forest, the walls were tall and the windows were old and shattered. Taking slow steps closer to the building, I peered through the windows – it was as empty as a soul. No chair lay beneath the roof of the house. I took a stroll around the house peeping through windows and then noticed a figure standing in a dark room. I jumped at the sight.

The figure seemed to be a middle-aged woman. She was tall and slender. I couldn’t quite make out her face as she was far away from where I was standing. I moved closer to get a better view of her. As I slowly walked forward, she drifted closer to the window. Her face was narrow and pointed, it was almost colourless. Her enormous eyes were round with what looked like terror. They were black as coal, huge rings around them. Her mouth was as small as a rosebud and her nose was perfectly straight. The murderous gaze she gave me would’ve frightened you to death. She was wearing fully black, ragged clothes. She had shiny black hair that fell down her back and fanned across her shoulders, and a shawl draped over her shoulders. Her posture was straight just like a solider. Altogether she looked unfriendly or even evil.

I pulled on the back door. Surprisingly it opened simply. A ghostly night breeze came over me, my hands trembled with fear. I began to think should I leave, was this trespassing? I continued stepping into the house. It felt empty. Before me was a narrow corridor with a number of heavy oak doors that had been locked. They each lead into different pathways. The door at the end of the corridor was open. I moved closer to the opened door, lights began to flicker. I felt my heart thumping with fear. The anonymous figure appeared. She looked straight into my eyes… but it felt like into my soul. I gasped and hit my head hoping this was a dream. It wasn’t. Her feet did not touch the ground, she was hovering.
I called out ‘Who are you?’ but all I got was silence.

I moved closer to the figure. By now I could feel her freezing breath upon my face. I put my hand out to touch her and it was at the moment I realised she was a ghost and before I could do or say anything the door slammed in my face. My instant reaction was to freeze in shock. I waited hoping this figure would return but nothing appeared…

After waiting for some time I began to lose interest and decided to return to the cottage I had been staying in. As I was walking down the ancient track the whole atmosphere felt different, happier. It felt as something was set free. After a long distance I made it back to the cottage and slumped on the sofa. I felt light headed with exhaustion. I was curious about who the figure was. It was at that minute I heard a knock on the door I went to the hall to see an elderly lady. As I opened the door I got a huge warming hug. Introducing herself the lady said “Hello my name is Sui, I live next door if you need anything or want to know anything about the country you know you can ask me”.
I replied with “Thank you”.
She began walking down the path, when I remembered her saying she knew everything so I thought I should ask her about the figure I had seen. I shouted out “Would you know anything about the abandoned house down the road?”
“I know a lot about that actually, why?” she said.
“Well I took a look up the path and happened to see a figure I was just wondering would you know who it could be?”

“Could I invite myself in and I shall tell you?” she said quietly.

“Yes come on in,” I said trying to sound enthusiastic.

She sat down and began telling me the story, “A girl used to live with her mother and father - her name was Mary-rose. Her parents were very wealthy, so wealthy they didn’t care about their daughter. One day the Mary got fed up with being ignored and called her mother into her room and as her mother walked through the door, Mary took her own life and jumped out the window. From the day of her funeral her parents were never seen again.”

I was shocked but before I could say anything she was off her seat and at the door.

She shouted behind her, “Goodbye”.

Finally, I had got the answer I had been looking for. I still had no idea why the figure appeared to me but then I realised - she thought her parents had come back when really it wasn’t - it had only been me.

By Caoimhe Scannell