

The Ghost at Old McMaster's Place

Justin, Tyler, Richard, and Ashley had all been hanging out at the Circle K on a hot dusty Saturday afternoon. The day had been long and fun and the cold drinks they were guzzling were quenching a very dry thirst.

"You going, Justin." Asked Ashley

"Where?" Replied Justin.

"To the old MacMasters, place, tonight."

"Why tonight?"

"Because this is the night of the murder. Twenty -six years ago tonight. You know somebody goes from our class each year. It's tradition."

"Well, somebody can go without me." Grinned Justin

"You afraid?" Asked Tyler.

"No." Said Justin. "It's just dangerous in there. No lights. It hasn't been fixed up in years and is falling apart."

"Well, we got a new invention called flashlights. Duh." Replied Tyler.

"Oh then you're going to go, huh?" Grinned Justin.

"I didn't say that!" Protested Tyler.

"Sounded to me like he did." Said Richard.

"Me, too." Laughed Ashley.

"Well, if I'm going, I'm taking Richard with me. Unless he's too scared." Challenged Tyler.

"Am not. I'll go. But I know you won't be there." Richard shot back.

"We'll all go." Laughed Ashley. "I've always wanted to go and I'll go if you all go."

The boys looked at Ashley then started whooping real loud.

"Alright a girl! She won't last a minute." Shouted Richard.

"Well, you'll never know unless you go." Huffed Ashley.

"I'll be there. Just to see you don't chicken out." Laughed Richard.

"I'll go. If you're all going." Said Justin. "I always wanted to see a haunted house at night."

"Well, I'll go just to protect you losers." Said Tyler.

"We'll meet at 11:30 then right here." Said Ashley.

The others agreed.

Richard arrived last.

"Man. It gets harder and harder to sneak out these days. I mean the old folk don't go to bed until late during the summer." Richard grumbled.

The streetlights cast an eerie glow on the foursome in the parking lot. The neon lights in the sign by the highway hummed an incessant rhythm that seemed to attract all of the bugs for miles around. Ashley was dressed in jeans, sneakers and T-shirt, same as the boys and they all carried a handy flashlight.

"Remember, don't look at the ghosts eyes or he can kill you." Said Ashley.

"Oh that's just bunk." Said Tyler

"Yeah, no ghost can kill you." Said Richard.

"Besides, there isn't a ghost in there. It is just an old house." Said Justin

"Well, lets go find out." Replied Ashley and they all walked down the road to the old house.

The house was set back form the main road. You had to walk along a hedge-lined driveway to get to the front porch. You couldn't see the house from the main road. There were too many trees. A rickety old gate had been erected at the front of the drive to keep out nosy busybodies and a "NO TRESSPASSING" sign had been attached to it. Justin and the rest climbed over and around the barrier and started up the driveway. Ashley was especially looking out for bats that might get caught in her long blond tresses. The boys teased her constantly.

When they reached the front porch all commotion stopped. The four just stood and ran their lights along the wide entryway as if to judge a better way in. It was creepy in the dark. Big wooden doors guarded the entrance. A partially shattered glass window perched atop the doors. There was litter everywhere and the porch floor sagged from the weight of many years of neglect. One of the front doors was ajar as if to invite the unwary to enter. The group accepted the invitation with three of them pushing Justin ahead.

Justin held on to the door and pushed it open slightly. Enough to peer around the corner and shine his light into the room. The first room was like a movie set from the many horror movies he had seen. A chandelier, covered in cobwebs hovered over the, main floor. A long stairway circled up to a landing that led to many rooms. There were sheets over all the furniture and many stray leaves had stolen in from the trees outside. It was creepy and he had to see more. He pushed open the creaking door and the four of them fell in a heap upon the floor.

"Get off, me." Yelled Justin from the bottom of the pile.

Ashley screamed and the others jumped from the pile.

"What did you do that for?" Asked Tyler in hushed tones.

"Something or somebody touched me!" She hissed accusingly at the three boys.

"Well no, duh." Said Richard "We were all laying in a pile on top of Justin."

"Yeah, And thanks for hurrying to get off me." Said Justin.

Ashley put her hands on her hips and was about give Tyler a piece of her mind when they all heard the footsteps.

"Quiet!" Justin said and waved them all into silence. They took their flashlights and aimed them to the top of the stairs where they had heard the noise, but nothing was there.

"Remind, me Ashley. What is the story on this house." Asked Justin.

"Well," Ashley began. "It all started twenty six years ago tonight. Mr. MacMasters was a very wealthy businessman. He owned the old mill in town and a lot of other property, and he married the prettiest woman in town, Mary Darling. Now Mary loved MacMasters and never looked at another man but MacMasters was very jealous and possessive. He constantly had her followed and was always afraid someone would steal her or his possessions away from him. The constant accusations and surveillance finally drove Mary insane and on this night twenty-six years ago she hired a man to come to the house and kill her tormenting husband. But, he had been watching her from a hidden room and when a strange man entered his house and talked to his wife Macmasters believed he had found his wife's lover and stormed out of his room to

confront him with an axe. The man pulled a pistol and started to fire when the axe hit his hand. The blow caused the gun to go off and the bullet hit Mary in the chest. As she fell and died Mary cursed her husband. She cursed him to spend eternity protecting his possessions and keeping them from others. The man bleeding from the axe blow grabbed the pistol that fell and started to run for the door. MacMasters in his raging grief ran to the door and started hacking the poor man to death. The man had time to turn and fire one shot before he died. The shot hit MacMasters square in the heart and he died instantly. They say that on the anniversary on the murders you can see the whole scene all over again, but if you look into MacMasters eyes he will take you also."

"So what you're saying is were here to see three people get murdered again. Oh, that's just great." Said Justin.

"Yeah, but real cool if it happens." Said Tyler.

"Has anyone seen this happen before?" Asked Justin.

"No one knows. Anybody that might have seen it won't talk or can't." Said Ashley.

"Why?" Asked Richard.

"Cause they'd be dead, Stupid." Said Tyler.

The front door closed with a large crash. The foursome jumped and Ashley shrieked.

"Geez, Ashley. Do they train you down in girl school to yell like that?" Said Justin covering his ears.

"No." Said Ashley, hitting Justin with the back of her hand.

"What's a girl school?" Asked Richard.

"Oh, he is just being funny." Huffed Ashley.

They all heard the footsteps climb the outside porch. Then a soft glow started to emanate from the center of the room. Justin grabbed Ashley, who grabbed Richard, who hit Tyler and they all went to hide behind a big couch on the side of the room.

"What time is it?" Asked Ashley

"Midnight." Hissed Tyler.

Then the hall clock struck twelve times. On the final stroke the room became bright and the furniture was new. The dust and leaves were gone as if a maid had just cleaned the room. The four teen's eyes were wide and their jaws dropped to the floor at the transformation. Suddenly there was a knock at the door. Three raps. Tentative and in a hurry. A beautiful woman entered from the opposite room and furtively opened the door. A man hurried in.

The woman was dressed well in a short skirt, sandals and a blue blouse. It reminded Justin of the way his mom looked in pictures she showed him taken of her in the early seventies. The man was in jeans and jeans jacket. He seemed nervous and anxious. The woman pulled him into the room and sat next to him on a small sofa across from the teens. She placed her hand on his, when suddenly a large agonizing shout came from the wall behind the teens.

The man was wild and looked huge to the group hidden behind the sofa. Inaudible shouts were exchanged then suddenly one man had an axe and raised it to strike the other man. A gun was pulled and the axe fell upon the arm holding the weapon. A shot rang out and the woman fell. The woman muttered something as she hit the ground, but the teens were too terrified to move and missed what she said. Then suddenly the

men rushed to the door another shot rang out and the axe kept falling and falling on the man on the ground. Someone screamed a loud terrified scream and the man with the axe turned.

Justin awoke from the terror before his eyes to realize the screaming he heard was Ashley's. She was standing, pointing at the man with the axe and just screaming. Justin grabbed Ashley put a hand over her mouth and started to drag her to the back of the house. But, it was too late. The man, the ghost, had seen her and was heading for her with an upraised axe, ready to strike. The others let out a scream and started running for the other room, the ghost hot on their trail.

The back door was locked. The windows were sealed. They tried every exit and slammed the door shut between them and the ghost. It didn't work. The ghost just materialized on their side of the door, axe raised ready to strike.

Justin thought, "Well, duh. That was a waste of time."

He grabbed Ashley who was still screaming and ran through the other door back to the front room. As they were leaving the axe fell and Justin reached up to deflect it. It grazed his hand and he felt the icy cold steel slice his palm and blood begin to pool in his hand.

"Geez, guys he can hurt us. Run!" He yelled.

Richard and Tyler beat Justin and Ashley to the front room. Tyler grabbed an iron tree stand and threw it at the front window. It crashed the window open. Richard beat aside the pieces of the glass and hauled his way through the window frame right on Tyler's butt. Justin threw a still screaming Ashley through the window frame and ducked through himself just as another fall from the axe narrowly missed his back.

They ran down the steps and to the main street, yelling and waving their arms, trying to get somebody's attention. A police car pulled up and stopped, both officers inside jumped out to help.

"What's wrong?" The first officer yelled over Ashley's constant screaming.

Tyler clamped a hand over Ashley's mouth as Justin told the officers what they had just seen. The officers put the kids in the car and drove through the barriers up to the house in a hurry. But it was dark. It was quiet. It was totally vacant.

Ashley stunned, finally shut up. Justin and Tyler jumped out of the car and looked at the house.

"What happened? Where did he go?" Said Richard.

Justin followed the police to the front of the house and up the steps to the door. It was like it was before. Door ajar, old broken window above, and leaves and dirt scattered about. There were no lights, no people, and the furniture was still covered in sheets. Tyler and Justin stared open mouthed at each other.

"There isn't anybody here now son." Said the officer as he grinned to his companion.

"Maybe you just saw a ghost." Said the other officer.

"Yeah, let's take you kids home. Some kids are always coming up here about this time of year. You probably let your imagination run wild. Just don't do it again." Said the first officer. Both officers grinned as they turned to head back to the car.

"Yeah you had us going there, kids, especially with his blood dripping out of his hands. We'll take you down to the hospital to have it looked at before we take you home, son." Said the second officer.

It was only then that Justin saw the cut he still had from his encounter with the man with the axe. Ashley, Justin, Tyler, and Richard took one look at Justin's blood and streaked for the car. The officers turned the car around and headed out the drive. It was then, while all of them were looking out the back window that lights from the house shown again. The gang never went back to the house, even in daylight.