

The Music Box

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Four lived, one died. Four died, one lived.

I remember it like it was yesterday, the day we moved in... our car bounced and vibrated as we drove up the driveway. I was humming to myself as my mother pulled the car to a stop. Still humming, I stepped out of the car onto the grass and looked up at our new house, as small as it was, the house was beautiful. It had old stained glass windows, a big dark, red door, and a pointed roof covered with black shingles. But the thing that really made me love this house was the rose garden that wrapped itself around the side of the big chalk-white house.

We brought our suitcases in and looked around. The inside of the first room was empty. The shiny floors and walls were made of a sort of dark brown wood that glistened as the light from the small square window hit it. There was lots of room to fill. I could imagine this room as a dining room with chairs and a table. I turned to my mom.

"I'm going to go look around," I said.

"Ok Ash, just don't get lost" my mom replied as she walked toward the kitchen. I walked around the corner. There was a slim opening with some gray carpeted stairs that led to a second level. The stairs looked steep. I carefully stepped up the stairs hanging onto the railing with both hands. When I reached the top I looked around. There wasn't much to see other than three empty rooms with walls covered with some sort of thin plastic sheet.

Something caught my eye. On the ceiling at the left end of the hall was one of those white attic doors with a ladder inside. I wanted to go up there and see what kind of old stuff people had left there. It was closed but I told myself that tomorrow I would go up there and explore the attic.

That night I had set up a sleeping bag on the floor of the third room to the left on the second floor, the room next to the attic door. I couldn't wait to go take a look...

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She stepped through the front door, long blonde hair streaming down her face. The walls were cracked, and the floor creaked with each step she took. There was ash scattered across the once shiny floor. She walked barefoot toward the stairs, and she laughed a cold shrill laugh that shook the house. I woke up...

Breathing heavily I looked around, no ash, no cracks, just me and my empty room. I pulled the blanket tighter around me. The dream hadn't actually been scary, but that wasn't me walking through our front door. I wasn't a blonde. The ash, the cracks, the laugh, that horrible laugh. Everything about that dream just creeped me out. Why wouldn't it?

I looked around one more time to make sure there were no creepy, blonde demon-girls hiding in the shadows. Once I was sure I was safe I pulled my blankets over my head. I fell back into my pillow, and after twenty minutes or so I got five more hours of uninterrupted sleep.

When I woke up it was sunny outside and I could hear birds chirping outside my window, and something sizzling downstairs, so I got out of bed, got dressed and walked downstairs.

As I ate breakfast I ruminated about the dream I had last night. I couldn't recall too many details. I remembered the ash that covered the floor, freaky.

"Ashley?" I looked up at my mom. "You all right?" she asked.

"Mmuh huh." I replied through a mouth full of bacon. I looked behind me at the stairs and thought to myself: *I wonder whose idea it was to put in that death trap.*

After breakfast I went upstairs to the attic door. I looked up, there was a chain hanging from it just out of reach. I stood up on my tip toes and managed to grasp the first metal loop. I pulled down. There was an ear splitting screech as the ladder came tumbling down.

I looked up. The attic was too dark to see and I realized I was going to need a flashlight. I looked back at the stairs. *Uhh I have to walk down those things again?* I thought to myself as I walked down the hallway. When I reached the stairs, I put one foot down on the first step, careful not to fall until I reached the kitchen.

When I came back with my flashlight I walked to the end of the hall and looked up. The door was closed.

I had opened the door, I know I did. Normally I would have thought it closed on its own, but this house was so old, there was no way it had one of those bounce-back doors I had in my old house.

I was never the kind of person who let little things worry me. I just assumed my mom had closed it since she was up here unpacking in the master bedroom, so it had to be her. I grabbed the chain and pulled down.

A little uneasy, I slowly climbed up the wooden ladder. When I reached the top I turned my flashlight on. The attic was dusty; it looked like no one had been there in years. I scanned the room with my flashlight. The room was mostly filled with pieces of wood, boxes, and old newspapers. My eyes fell upon a small wooden box hidden in the corner.

The box was different from the rest, it wasn't covered in masking tape and black marker, it had beautiful flowers drawn on the sides in purple ink, and instead of being closed by tape the lid of the box was wide open and there appeared to be light streaming out of it.

I walked over to the open box and peered inside. In the box were more newspapers and the source of the light, a music box. It was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen in my life. The music box was white with gold patterns covering the lid. I reached for the music box, but then out of the corner of my eye I saw something familiar. A name.

In one of the newspapers the first heading was: Robert Williams creates musical Masterpiece. I know I'd heard that name before. I picked up the article and read it.

Robert Williams Creates Musical Masterpiece

Mr Robert Williams has recently released his new song "Little White House," And it has become a favorite for classical music lovers all over the world. in this interview we are going to ask Mr Williams about what inspired his new song and what makes it so special. When I asked Robert what his song was about he told me:

"When I was 23 I had moved out of my parents' home and set off to live on my own. I had always wanted to build my own home so that was exactly what I did. I built a little white house."

Robert continued to tell me about his home: "The song was inspired by my house's beauty and quaintness. I loved my new song so much I even had a custom music box made."

**He proceeded to take a small music box out of his bag
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I folded the newspaper and tossed it onto the ground. I remembered mom telling me about the original owner of the house. I took the second newspaper and read the first two paragraphs;

Robert Williams Denies Playing Part in the Tragic Death of Esther Davis

Mr Robert Williams invited six good friends to his house yesterday for a small gathering. A group of five teens decided to sneak in and crash his little dinner party. We asked one of the teenagers (Katherine) to tell us what exactly happened She said:

“We dared Esther to climb up onto the windowsill and go into the house, but when she got up there one of the guys in the house came over, think it was the owner, he leaned on the windowsill, he didn't even see her because he had his back to the window, and she fell.”

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I threw the paper onto the floor beside the other and picked up the next one;

Robert Williams Dies Mysteriously at 55. No Apparent Reason.

I picked up the next paper;

Lori Miller Dies at 44 with no Found Cause.

I read the next;

Another Williams Place Resident Dies at 33. Once Again no Apparent Cause.

Another Williams place resident? I looked closer at the papers, all of these people lived here in my house. I picked up the last paper;

Jack Lawton Dies at 22 at Williams Place.

At that point I felt faint. So many people had died in this house. Well, I mean everybody is bound to pass someday but the pattern! 55, 44, 33, 22. I was never superstitious but I couldn't help being a little scared. I mean what came next? The answer jabbed at my brain as if trying to scare me. I crept down the ladder and into bed. Before falling asleep I turned on the lamp. I hadn't forgotten the nightmare.

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She walked up the stairs tracing the cracks with her pale fingers. She glided to the door, beyond that door was the girl. Her fingers grasped the knob and she opened the door, she advanced on the sleeping girl...

I woke up to a cold hand gripping my shoulder. My eyes opened and I looked up into the face of the girl from my dreams. She had long blonde hair that shined in the lamp light. Her skin was just as pale as her hair. As pretty as she was, a dark evil hid behind her delicate features.

I screamed but no sound escaped, I tried to move but I was tied to my bed as if invisible ropes bound me to it. Suddenly I was being pulled from my bed as if someone was steering me out of the door towards the attic. A soft sound, a music box and then, nothing.

Everything went dark. I couldn't see but I knew I was being pulled to the attic...

I hit the floor face- first and looked up. The girl had her back to me and she was talking - not to me, just muttering.

She turned. "YOU!" She spat the word out as if it was a bad taste she was just dying to get out of her mouth. She turned, bowed her head and continued rambling. I tried to

hear what she was saying but it was so quiet. "Him...he killed... you... should...eleven...killed me." I was paralyzed, unable to move. This couldn't be real.

But yet, there I was, sitting on my attic floor with a...ghost? My eyes scanned the room looking for some kind of escape but it was too dark. I realised I was sitting on paper, a newspaper to be exact. I lifted it up and with the light the crazy ghost girl was emitting I could just make out a picture of a blonde teen, the ghost, Esther.

"Esther!" The name slipped out of my mouth before I even had time to stop myself. Esther turned to face me with a crazed look in her eyes. She no longer looked pretty, she looked insane and she probably was.

"So you know my name," said Esther.

"Yes."

"Why am I here?" I asked.

"To die." She said it so simply with no hint of emotion as if it was something she said everyday. My jaw dropped. Seeing my astonished face she once again spoke.

"Out of all the people I've killed, you're the first one to have seen the papers, you're the only one who knows why."

"I don't know anything." I said , taken aback.

"Really? You don't know anything?"

"No, why do you want to kill me?!" I asked exasperated.

Suddenly the floor disintegrated below me and the whole world turned into golden dust. When I looked around I was no longer in my small, dark attic, I was standing outside. It was my house but something was off. I turned my head to face Esther. She was

standing to my right looking at the roof. Climbing up the windowsill was a healthier, cleaner, and very much alive Esther Davis.

Surrounding her were four other people around the same age, all quietly chanting “Esther! Esther! Esther!” But then a man walked toward the window. He was tall in his mid fifties, with short brown hair, square glasses and his back turned to the window. Robert Williams leaned against the window causing Esther to fall. Once again, before she even hit the ground, the world turned to dust and I was sitting on the attic floor.

“Now do you understand?” Esther asked, an evil and slightly demented gleam in her eyes.

“But why did you kill him and all those other people?”

“After I was killed I couldn’t rest, couldn’t move on. So I swore revenge on Robert.”

“ I placed a curse on his most prized possession, a music box playing one of his own songs.”

“Any one who touched entered this house would awaken me, and anyone who touched the box, well I’d kill them.” she laughed that cold shrill laugh just like in my dreams.

“ If I killed five people I'd have a second chance.”

“What did you need a second chance for?” I asked.

“To kill the people I once thought of as friends. The people who dared me to go up there.”

“YOU’RE CRAZY!” I shouted, as Esther laughed.

I turned away from her and scurried to the other side of the attic like a rabid animal.

“You can run but you can't hide, Ashley!” Her voice rang in my ears like a bell, loud and clear. From the corner of my eye I saw a faint golden glow, I gasped and ran to the music box. I picked it up with both hands and thrust it through the small, round attic window.

It was sheer instinct but it worked. Glass shattered, and I heard a shriek from behind me. I turned to see Esther fading. She was starting to look less and less human and more like dust. After one final scream of rage, she disappeared completely.

And that was how it all ended. The nightmares, the cracks and ash were all gone for good. I took the only thing that kept her in this world and destroyed it. The music box was keeping her alive. Well, not alive exactly but alive enough to kill. I stepped out of that attic as a survivor. I was the one that lived, but I would never forget the night I almost died.