



The Inkwell Quarterly

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A Night in Kirby Hall

By Holly Evans

"A face is like the outside of a house, and most faces, like most houses, give us an idea of what we can expect to find inside."

-Loretta Young

The usual handful of students sat around the large office that topped a brick fortress, discussing articles and ideas for the next issue of *Inkwell Quarterly*. The same questions were repeated over and over again; "Who wants it?" and "When is the deadline?" This day would be like many others for the Inkwell staff, but their night, however, would change not only them, but the monstrous mansion that sits on River Street, known only as Kirby Hall, forever.

"Someone has to cover 'Scholarships of English Majors'." "Who wants it?" Kristina asked.

"I'll take it", Sara replied.

"What about Kuhar's Corner and Hammil's Hunches?" Kristina asked again.

No one raised their hand or yelled out.

"Common' guys, someone has to do it".

Everyone looked around the room as in normal fashion whenever an article lay unclaimed.

"I guess I'll do it", Matt finally said.

"Alright and the rest of the stories are covered, so I guess we are done", she said looking at Dr. Farrell and Dave for approval.

"Well, not exactly", Dr. Farrell's voice chimed in. "We need to have a good story for Halloween".

Holly's hand immediately shot up.

"I mean a good story that will be in on time", Dr. Farrell said, smiling at Holly.

The students thought for a few minutes and Annie shouted out, "Maybe we can investigate some of the local myths and legends".

All of the staff seemed to like that idea. They knew that the locals loved to make up stories about numerous sea monsters in the Susquehanna River, and of course the legend of Suscon Road.

Just when they seemed to all come to an agreement, Dave interjected and said, "Why don't we just bust the ghost myths about our very own—

"I'm here guys", a flustered and out of breath Tony declared. "I sent Dave a text, saying that I would be late".

"Anyways, as I was saying, before Tony busted in. We should debunk Kirby Hall's myths. Everyone believes this place is haunted so why don't we give them proof as to whether it is or is not".

Liz asked skeptically, "How exactly would we do this? Everyone states that they only see these phenomena late at night".

"Simple", Dave said, "We spend a night in this lovely old building".

"Sure", Kristina said. "Like they would let a bunch of college kids play Scooby Doo in a building that's well over one hundred years old".

"Dave and I have already discussed the idea and I have spoken to public safety. The Inkwell

staff may spend one night in Kirby Hall for the purpose of scholarly research. At least that's how I phrased it to them", Dr. Farrell responded.

The students sat around that same office that, as of ten minutes ago, was rambunctious and talkative. Now only deep breaths escaped their mouths. Each of them had seen some type of unexplainable occurrence or presence. Carly immediately recalled an instance of terror while alone in Kirby. She needed to drop some material off to Dr. Farrell after she had already left her office for the day. Carly ran to the top floor to slide a few papers underneath the office door. All of the professors had gone home and there she stood, at the top, alone. She remembered feeling a cold breath beating on her cheek. It was as if there was something right next to her snarling in her face. She could



not bare the thought of being alone in that hall again.

"I'll do it", Jeff replied swiftly, shaking everyone from their fears. This was unusual for Jeff, he was always the most indecisive and indifferent out of the group. Soon everyone replied to the offer.

"I'm down", answered Holly.

"I suppose that I can come too", said Tony.

Finally, after most of the staff accepted the challenge Kristina and Matt were the only ones undecided.

"If Kristina does it then I'm in", said Matt, after looking around the room.

"Why am I the decider on this?" Kristina replied. This place is creepy enough in the daylight, there is no way I'm spending the

night".

Dave looked at her with skepticism. "I would expect that the editors would be the first ones to accept this offer, but of course if you have the mentality of a five year old, and actually believe in ghosts-

"I'll do it!", Kristina shouted, never being one to have her integrity shaken.

"Well that's just wonderful", Dave said in a sarcastic tone. "We will meet here tonight at 9:30. All of the faculty will be gone, so it will be just us and the ghosts, of course. I'll see everyone later".

All of the staff left the office. Some went to class while others went home to get ready for the long night ahead. They had all been in that building more times than they cared to think about, but they knew that tonight would be much different. Tonight they would be left alone to their own devices in a house that was not only an academic building, but also once a home. All homes hold memories, memories that can't be found in photo albums. The windows reflect the flaws of a family, while the staircase echoed unsavory conversations. The group would soon find out exactly how loud walls can talk.

Night came rather fast. Most of the staff came early and waited for everyone to arrive. The only members missing were Dave and Tony, but the others suspected that they were together and were just running late.

"I guess we should split up and cover all of the floors", Liz suggested.

"I call first floor", Holly said. "If something bad happens I want to be as close to the exit as possible".

"How is that fair?" Kristina asked. "I'm sure everyone wants to be close to the doors. We should all have an equal opportunity".

If you are interested in joining *The Inkwell*. Quarterly staff and/or enrolling in English 190:Projects in Writing: Inkwell, please contact Dr. Marcia Farrell (marcia.farell@wilkes.edu) or Dave Cook (david.cook@wilkes.edu) for more information.

"Get real. This isn't The People's Court; life isn't fair. Besides, in high school I ran a twenty-five minute mile. I won't get out fast enough if there is an emergency".

"I'll stay down here with Holly", Sara said.

"Yeah, me too," Carly added. "I've had a bad experience on the higher floors."

"Well that's just great," Kristina said, sarcastically. "Anybody want the second floor, so I can be all the way at the top? Liz, Annie, and Jeff proceeded to raise their hands. "I wasn't being serious, but I guess I have to be the one to go all the way up there. Lets go, Matt!" He followed Kristina to the stairs, and then up them. "I didn't even want to do this, but somehow I always have to do it! I hate this..." her voice trailed off.

"She'll get over it," Sara said, once she was sure Kristina could no longer hear her. "David and Tony will show up soon and they can go up there with her and Matt."

"So what exactly are we suppose to be doing?" Annie asked.

"Oh, well I guess that was never really explained," Liz said, trying to figure out an answer. "I suppose we just hang out and document anything strange that goes on, that is, if anything strange goes on at all."

"Well I guess we should head up, before we miss all the action," Jeff said. The three students headed up the stairs to the second floor. All of the lights were off and the office doors were locked. Liz flicked the light on and illuminated the closed in corridor.

"So, what now?" Annie asked. "I mean, it's not like we have a whole lot of room to move around."

The three looked around room and noticed that without the hustle and traffic throughout the seemingly large space the room was so much smaller. In fact, they wondered how so many people could fit in here during the day.

"This place is so creepy at night," Liz said, scared by the silence.

Downstairs, the three girls sat around the lobby discussing how they were going to spend their night.

"Well, I guess this is the best time to catch-up on all of my reading," said Holly.

"Holly, if we were here for a week straight you still wouldn't be caught up," Sara said, jokingly.

Carly appeared from the restroom, "I don't understand why there isn't a mirror in there. It's the only bathroom that I've ever been in without one." Sara and Holly looked at each other and raised their eyebrows. "What?" she said.

"You really don't know why there is no mirror?" Holly asked.

"No," Carly answered. "Should I know?"

"You can tell her," Sara said to Holly.

"Well, there's this type of legend associated with that bathroom," Holly began. "The story, at least how it was told to me, states that a woman cut herself and bled to death in that room. She was

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very beautiful and flaunted her looks constantly. She would even sleep with a hand mirror. This woman was never married. Anyway, one day she encountered a man who was rumored to hold dark powers while walking to the market. He had expressed his love for her, simply due to her beauty. He touched her face and she ran back to her this very building and locked herself in that room.

"She noticed that right where the man had touched her she had an ash mark," Holly continued. "She tried to wash it off but the mark remained. She scrubbed her face until she drew blood, but it only made the stain darker. The only thing left to do was cut it out. The woman broke the mirror with her fist and cut the tainted chunk of flesh from her face. She was joyful only for one moment, because she soon realized her beautiful face was no longer whole. She continued to scrape her face off until it sat all perfectly pieced together in the sink. The woman then took the blood that covered her hands and wrote the word perfect on the white porcelain sink, right before she died.

"Oh my God," said Carly. "Did that really happen?"

"No one really knows for sure," Sara answered. "But, a few years ago a female student gashed her face open with a broken piece of mirror. She said that something came over her, and forced her to cause harm to herself. That's the real reason as to why they won't put a new mirror in that room."



Carly stood there staring at the two girls and then she closed the door to the restroom. She had a feeling of disgust and nausea. Holly and Sara's eyes strayed from Carly and they looked in panic to the door behind her. They could see a figure dressed in all black trying to enter the locked building.

"Carly," Sara said as she pointed her finger to warn her of the figure. She slowly turned around and saw the individual. She couldn't see the face due to the darkness of both the outside and inside of the building. She ran from the door.

"We are scaring ourselves," said Holly. "It's probably just public safety, coming to check on us." She got up assuring herself that it was safety to open the door. Holly reached for the handle and pushed with enough pressure to open the door just a crack.

"Boo," shouted the man. Holly screamed for a quick second but as soon as she realized who it was anger filled her.

"Dave, you are complete jerk," Holly said, annoyed.

"What's a night of ghost hunting, without a little shock and awe?" David asked with a smile.

"You were suppose to be here at 9:30 it is now 11:00." Sara said.

"So sue me," he replied. "Where is everyone else?"

"They are all upstairs. Is Tony with you?" Carly asked.

"No, I haven't seen him since the meeting," Dave answered. "So, what exactly are they doing

up-

"Kristina!" shouted Matt from the top floor.

"I guess I'll find out in a minute," Dave said smugly while heading up the stairs.

Liz and the second floor gang were to first to run up and find Kristina locked in Dr. Starner's office.

"The door swung opened and she went in to see who opened it," Matt said, shaken. "Now I can't get it open."

Kristina was pounding on the door ferociously. "Some one please open the door," she began to cry. Everyone began to shove door, adding as much pressure as possible. The more the group pushed the door, the harder Kristina would pound. They heard chairs moving and windows breaking.

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There was someone or something in there with her. She stopped pounding but the noises grew louder. It sounded as if Dr. Starner's desk was thrown against the wall. This madness continued for an eternity, until the students got the door opened.

They ran in the room to find not one book out of place. There was still a pen resting neatly on top of the desk that everyone was sure had been destroyed. "Kristina?" Annie asked. She sat on chair that faced the windows. The students couldn't see her face, which was almost like a blessing. They feared the type of damage that she had sustained from all of the noise and scream they heard.

Matt went over to her, cautiously. "Are you ok?" he asked. She didn't answer. He viewed her face in relief; there wasn't a scratch on her. The only thing that was different about her was that her glasses were missing. She continued to sit there and stare out the window. "Will you please answer me?" Matt pleaded with her.

She rose from the sit and proceeded to leave the third floor, avoiding eye contact with the rest of the staff. Her body seemed to float down the stairs; her feet didn't make a noise. She stopped at the large window that allowed an individual to view the whole campus. It was the window that greeted students and faculty alike while walking up the stairs. The glass was clear, all except the stained pane which pictured an open book.

She stared out of this window devoid of any human characteristics. "Kristina cut the act, you are being entirely too creepy right now," Dave said to her. She continued to stare.

"Maybe she is trying to teach us a lesson for making her stay up on the third floor," Jeff said, trying to reason with what was happening. "Let's just leave her alone."

"Well, this is beginning to be a little much for me for one night, I'm out," said Carly. She proceeded to head to the exit.

"Common', just when things were starting to get interesting, you're going to leave?" Dave asked.

"Absolutely," Carly said as she reached for the door. "It's locked."

As everyone came down the stairs they saw two things; Kristina still standing in front of the window and Dave and Carly, trying vivaciously to open the doors to get out.

"Now what?" Liz asked

"We can't get the doors open," Dave said, pushing with all of his energy.

"We need to take Kristina to the hospital, there is something very wrong with her," Holly said, trying to hide that tears had fallen.

Dave looked at her in disgust. "Are you crying?" he asked Holly. "What's wrong with you? Kristina is fine, she's just a little shaken up. Watch." He ran up to the first landing where the dormant young woman had stood for almost an hour now. He began to shake her. "Wake up! You're creeping everyone here out." He continued to shake her. Then, with aggression, he turned her towards him. He looked upon her face, it changed. He couldn't decipher exactly who she looked like, but he knew that it wasn't human.

She grabbed him and lifted his body from the ground. "Oh my God, please put me down!" Dave pleaded with her. "I'm sorry, I'll leave you alone, I just want to go home!"

She then spoke, "What's the matter Dave? Things were just starting to get interesting," she said, laughing. The voice did not belong to Kristina. It was deep and demonic and her laugh was that of a child's.

She threw him from the landing, down the stairs, and on to the solid wood table that rested

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against the wall on the first floor. Everyone heard a loud crack, but it wasn't the cracking of wood, no, this was the cracking of bone.

His skull was cracked and he bled all over the dark wood. Against the table his blood looked black. "DAVID!" Sara cried, running over to him. She held his head up, revealing the wound. She felt his neck, searching of a pulse point; nothing. His skin began to change from all of his blood loss. She began to cry uncontrollably. "HE'S DEAD!" Sara screamed.

"He isn't dead we can take him to the hospital with Kristina and everything will be fine," Annie said, trying to convince herself that none of tonight's events happened. She too began to cry.

"We can't get out, we are locked in. What don't you get?" Jeff asked Annie. "We have to get away from her," he said pointing at the stairs. Everyone's eyes lifted to that window; she was gone. They all looked around the room to make sure she wasn't within arms length of them.

"Are you looking for me?" a ghastly voice echoed throughout the hall.

"We have to find a way out of here before comes back," Holly said, looking for a possible way out.

"I know a way," Jeff said, picking up a chair. He began to beat on the glass in the door. He was screaming like a wild animal, trying to break out. "Why won't this damn glass break?" he yelled.

"That isn't going to work, that's obvious," Matt told him. We need to think of something else, fast."

The chandelier above their heads started shaking. They students looked up and there she was staring down at them from the third floor. "Here I come!" she leaped from the banister. The terrified group raced into the old kitchen that was now a classroom.

They all gasped for air terrified that she was on their heels. She, in fact had a more gruesome plan. She floated over to Dave's corpse and began to chant in tongues. The students heard her and panicked.

"What are we going to do?" Sara cried. She sat on the floor and began to rock, holding her head closely to her knees.

"That door!" Holly shouted. "It has to lead to the basement. If we can get down there we can get out."

That door hadn't been accessible in many years. Everyone had always been curious of what hid behind it. The group started beating on it, throwing chairs at it, doing everything in their might to find a route of survival. They finally formed a hole in the wood. Jeff started to beat around the hole with a fire extinguisher. The opening in the door was now wide enough of the students to walk through.

The smell the seeped up was awful. It was an unholy combination of raw sewage and sulfur. They felt the walls for a light switch and soon found one. Annie turned the switch on and the lights slowly flickered on, like a flame on a candle. They feared every step they took.

When they finally made it down the stairs they viewed a long hallway with doors on each side. The group was too afraid to look in the doors, they just wanted to find another set of stairs, which would signify their exit out.

Upstairs a familiar guest entered the hall; it was Tony. He walked around the lobby, unsure where everyone was. "Hello? Where are you guys?" he asked, hoping someone would hear. Unfortunately, someone did, Dave. The reanimated corpse walked down the stairs. "Where is everyone?" Tony asked Dave.

"You're late," David said, with a glassed over look in his eyes.



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"Are you ok?" Tony asked trying to get away from Dave, who was moving rather close to him.

"You're late," Dave replied again.

"Alright, well this is weird, I didn't come here to have a romantic date with you." Tony turned around reaching for the door and Dave pounced on him like a lion feasting on an antelope. Dave sunk his teeth into Tony's skull. The student wrestled to break free, but it is impossible to escape the grip of a zombie. The two, once friends, now had a predator and prey relationship. Dave continued to eat Tony's brain when Kristina descended the stairs.

"I see we have another guest," she said. Her hands moved over Tony's limp body as she began to recite the same poem of death she had just told Dave. Tony's eyes started moving around and his back arched.

He punched Dave in his jaw, because at this point Tony's head was hollowed out and the other corpse was licking the edges. The two started fighting. They mangled each others faces and bludgeoned each other.

"You imbeciles!" Kristina shouted. "Go find the others, before they escape!" The walking dead made their way into the kitchen and started down the stairs.

In the basement the still living students found little hope of escaping. They had found the door to the outside, but it was locked and impenetrable.

"We have to start searching those rooms, maybe there is a way out," Matt advised.

"What if we don't find a way out in them? What if we just disturb another spirit and dig our graves deeper. I think that we should just stay here and wait for help," Liz said.

"Do you think she doesn't realize we are down here? The question isn't *if* she is going to harm us, its when," Holly said, annoyed by Liz's suggestion. "You can stay here, but I'm going to find a way out. The group followed Holly and soon so did Liz.

They continued to walk down the hallway calmly. In their view they could see two individuals walking towards them. "I told you we should have waited for help," Liz said running towards the two figures.

"Liz don't!" Sara warned, but it was too late.

"Thank god you guys showed up," Liz shouted in joy. "Really weird stuff-," It was then that she noticed that these two individuals weren't going to save her, they were going to devour her brain.

"Now that's what I call fast food," Tony said to Dave. They grabbed her and began to munch on her skull. The rest of the group opened the ominous doors. Sara, Matt, and Holly ran into one room, while Annie, Carly, and Jeff ran into another.

The two corpses limped to the room that Sara, Matt, and Holly were in first. The three students stood in front of the door, hoping that they would block the entrance from the two creeps. Nothing could stop their appetites. They pushed open the door and stared walking towards their former staff and future meal. The three living beings started throwing everything at them they could find. Their attempt was futile, the zombies captured the students and began feasting on them.

The other small group of students could hear their classmate's screams, but helping them would be useless.

"This is unbearable, we are going to die just like them," Annie began to cry.

Carly looked around the room, trying to find a weapon to use against Dave and Tony. She found heavy books, long rods, and a strange jar. She picked it up and examined the specimen inside. It was a human face, she dropped the jar in fear and covered her mouth to prevent a loud scream from escaping. "They weren't lying," said Carly. She repeated this phrase over and over again.

"What is that?" Annie asked, afraid to know the answer.

"It's her face," replied Carly

The mass of skin was preserved in a chemical that was unknown to the students. It was stitched perfectly together. "The woman," Carly said. "This belongs to the woman who killed herself in this house. Sara and Holly told me the story. They weren't lying."

"No, no they weren't," that voice was back. There was Kristina standing right behind Carly. She had no face, it laid on the floor amongst broken glass and chemicals. "So you've figured out that it's me. I was once the most beautiful girl around, until the devil touched me. Beauty fades but he made my life everlasting."

The spirit put Carly into a trance. "You will be my new flesh seamstress." Carly's pupils became large. Her eyes turned into black marbles. "This is the new generation of Kirby Hall!"

The spirits of students past began to circle around the room. This specter had been cursing them since the mansion was transformed into a learning institution. Carly would now be the one to sew new flesh onto the mask of a face that lay on the damp floor.

The ghosts began surround Carly, inviting her to join them on their quest to peel the skin off of the already deceased staff that were scattered in the room across the hall. The old flesh on the face was decayed; it was rotted and began to tear. The only way that Kristina and the spirit that lived inside of her could survive was through the rejuvenation of the face.

Annie thought quick and screamed, "Jeff, grab the face, quick!" Jeff grabbed the piece of flesh, but Kristina tossed him across the room. In doing this the skin flew by the door.

Kristina continued hypnotizing Carly, instructing her to carry out evil deeds. Just then the door slammed open, it was Kristina's two zombified henchmen. They saw the skin laying on the floor and began to munch vigorously. The spirit shrieked in pain.

"You fools! What have you done?" she screamed. Before she had a chance to save her face they had already digested it.

A black slime oozed from Kristina's mouth, which Dave and Tony tried to drink. The spirit exited Kristina's body and left only a corpse. The spell on Tony and Dave lifted and they fell back into death.

Carly woke from her trance. "What happened?", she said rubbing her eyes.

"Well, two zombies just saved your life," Jeff said.

The three students could hear movement upstairs. It was morning and the faculty was arriving. Six bodies total lay on the bottom floor of Kirby Hall. The three survivors headed for the stairs, too fearful to linger down in that basement of death for too long.

"You know that no one is going to believe us," Annie stated, with tears in her eyes.

Carly replied, "You can't always believe things at face value."

The three left the building, passing Dr. Farrell on the way out. "Hey guys. How was your night?" she asked. They kept blank faces and ignored her. She followed the path of mud that they left from the cellar grime. She entered the room that all of the hellish activities of the night had ended. She saw the rest of the staff huddled in a circle, none facing her.

"What are you guys doing down here? You are going to be in a ridiculous amount of trouble for breaking that door."

"Hello, Dr. Farrell," replied Kristina

All of the students turned around and Dr. Farrell let out a murderous scream.

The End?

