

A lost family

Olivia was scared. She had lived in her grandmother's house for less than a month this summer, but she trembled whenever she thought of going anywhere in the house alone, in the dark. Her grandmother was aware of the wails heard at night, but she said " If they cause you no harm, then there is no need to worry" But Olivia couldn't help but worry. Every night wails sounded throughout the house. A woman wailing in sorrow, a child crying out in fear, and a man calling out in desperation for both of them, searching endlessly. This happened every night without fail.

She had asked her grandmother who they were, and the old woman had told the twelve-year-old girl that she didn't know. The ghostly event had happened every night since she had bought the house, but that she didn't mind, because the old lady was nearly completely deaf, and just turned down her hearing aids every night. "But," She said "if you really are eager to learn who they are, then you can search the town records at the town hall, maybe you can find something there"

Olivia did as she suggested walking the half mile to town. The receptionist at the desk seemed happy to show her the records of her grandmother's house saying as she lead her to them "Not nearly enough young people are interested in the history of their own town,"

Olivia sat at the desk she was shown, and looked at the computer in front of her. It was mostly records of purchase and little tidbits about the people that lived there, and an extra interesting article about the house being a rumored part of the underground railroad. But what really caught her eye, was one headline in the town's local paper. **House on Parker Road fire kills entire family, no bodies recovered.** She looked closer at the article from almost two hundred years ago, dated 1823. "But that doesn't make sense," she murmured quietly to herself " Grandmamas house was only built fifty years ago. I remember seeing the year of construction earlier, and anyway, the house is still standing." She paused, frowning and looked at the newspaper report about her grandmother's house being built . **The former house still has a solid basement except for the north wall which has been replaced, The tragedy of the Papple family still remains a wound that will never heal, but the new house will be a complete replica of the Papple house, giving us a memory that will last for many years.** "The Papples must have been the family that died in the fire. I wonder if they are the ones who haunt grandmama's house?" She turned back to the headline story from 1823 again, looking closer.

An interview was given to the family servant Martha Grey, and we have learned much of the tragic story from her account. The mother, Mary H Papple 32 was in the underground kitchen, with her daughter Genevive R Papple 6. The source of the fire is unknown, but it overwhelmed the first floor in less than fifteen minutes, trapping the

mother and child in the cellar. Against warnings given to him, the father, Matthew J Palpe 35, tried to rescue them, but never came out, and he died, trapped in the basement with his wife and child. The funerals shall be held on the....

Olivia stopped reading, her heart beating faster than before, she ran back to her grandmother's house, and grabbed a shovel and flashlight from the garage before making her way down the ladder to the basement. Her grandmother had never gone down here in the thirty years she had lived there, fearing that the ladder would break and she, in turn, would break her neck. Olivia had always wondered why there was a ladder instead of stairs, but she now theorised, that the workers who had built the house, had spent as little time as possible in the cellar, perhaps out of respect for the dead. Olivia wandered around, searching for a sign of where the bodies could be. A giant stone fireplace was clearly the underground kitchen, and nearby was the root cellar. A large pit in the ground to keep potatoes and the like. She shined her light inside, looking closely, but nothing appeared to be there. She wandered around the edges of the basement, and under a layer of dirt, she saw a trap door made of metal. After fetching a crowbar, she pried it open revealing a half collapsed tunnel. she peered inside and gasped in shock, jumping back. She had seen what looked like a bone poking out of the wall of dirt. She scrambled up the ladder, shaking, to tell her Grandmother what she had seen.

A few days later, all the skeletons had been recovered by the town. Mary and Genevive had been trying to escape through the tunnel, but the north wall had collapsed, crushing them. Mathew had not been with them. His body was found three feet away, his arm stretched out to them. He had died after inhaling too much smoke. He had never reached his family.

The next day, the Pape family was buried under the gravestone made for them so long ago. They were with each other at last. Side by side in their coffins. Olivia attended the burial. She couldn't help crying a little at the tragic story of the Pape family "Be at peace " She whispered, as the coffins were lowered into the ground a tear streaking down her face, " Be at peace" .

That night she went to bed, expecting to hear the wailing again, but there was nothing but peaceful silence as she lay down to sleep. She had a dream as she drifted off, of a beautiful young woman, and a pretty child in a green meadow both dressed in a style from hundreds of years ago, with their arms outstretched to a handsome man seemingly trapped by a delicate film that kept him on the other side, reaching out to them calling them by name. For what seemed like years, they called to each other, the child beating her fists at the film, tears streaming down her cheeks, screaming along with the woman, her mother. At last, a voice, her own, Olivia realized, quietly crying, " Be at peace! Be at peace!"

The film shattered, and in moments he ran to them, and wrapped the girls, crying in his arms, as they hugged and kissed him. The reunited family was smiling and laughing, The child turned to Olivia, and took a rose that was in her hair and reached out her small arm to give her the blood red flower. "Thank you" She whispered in a sweet voice filled with innocence, "for

helping my father be with us at last.” Olivia smiled, and hugged the little girl, who laughed and embraced her, before running back to her parents.

“You’re welcome Genevive, I just wish it could have happened sooner.”

Genevive faded away as Olivia woke up. She smiled and turned to her nightstand, starting as she saw the red rose given to her in the dream. Years later the rose was still alive, fresh and beautifully red as ever,, When she had children, and then grandchildren, Olivia would show them the rose “ Genevie’s rose” and tell them the story of the lost family, Their reunion, and a gift of thanks that would last forever.