

National Novel Month Write-In

 LIBRARIES

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[Untitled]

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PROMPT: It's your first night at the haunted house and your door shuts and locks itself. There's a ghost in the room with you, and it's trying to keep something else out.

The home came into my possession as the result of my grandparents' deaths. I had never met them, but I had heard rumors that they were quite peculiar. Not from my parents of course, on account of them not making it past my second birthday. That probably sounds really dark, but I came to terms with the past long ago. My godfather raised me, insistent on taking me far away from the place where I spent my first two years. He actually insisted on me not taking the house, but money has been tight and with some renovation, it could make a decent profit.

The house did seem very odd. There were large portraits of my grandparents hanging above a mantel and fireplace. Candles lit up long stretches of hallway with up to five rooms that seemed to have no one stepped foot in them in years. The house came with detailed instructions not to mess with the arrangements of these rooms. While I wanted to respect these wishes, there was no way I was going to sell this house with the furniture and decor from the '50s. I took what seemed to be one of the cleanest and newly renovated rooms as my own. Even the adjacent bathroom seemed up-to-date with new flowers and two sets of soap and toothbrushes.

In the library of the house was a family tree with names and photos. Somehow there was a photo of me, but I did not think much of it. Old people were into this kind of thing, with *ancestry.com* and stuff. The rest of the house was pretty bland. You know, normal kitchen, normal dining room, etc. After some cleaning and moving my few belongings into my new room, I settled in for the first night.

I drifted off to sleep around 10 o'clock, but was awoken at 10:30 to flickering lights. I got up to try to mess with the switch, and a sudden coldness crept down my back. I slowly turned around and saw what I thought was a man for a fraction of a second. I rejected any supernatural thoughts and continued heading to the light switch. Just then, as clear as day, a woman appeared right before my eyes. I immediately noticed that this woman resembled me.

“Mom?” I gasped.

“No time to talk. There is a box under the bed. In it, there are packs of salt, a shotgun, and bean-bag rounds. Grab it now!”

“What? What is happening? Mom this is such a weird dream.”

“Now!” the woman screamed.

I headed for the bed and observed a chest underneath. Upon opening it, I found the said items.

“There are salt rounds in the shotgun. Use the salt packets and surround the room on all borders. When you complete the border, I will leave you. If anything gets past the border, shoot it.” I couldn’t believe what I was hearing.

“Who was the man?” I questioned. “Was he real?”

She replied, “Yes. That was your father. Your grandparents gifted this house to you to complete the final piece of their game.”

“What? What game?” I said as I began spreading the salt around the room.

“The game to keep the family together forever, trapped in these walls. I’m sure you noticed the family tree. Five other rooms are the five other individuals and spouses. Your grandparents may have died, but they have not fulfilled their mission. You are the last piece. Stay in this room until sunrise with the salt barrier, and then run. Never look back.”

I gasped. “But what about you? You will be trapped here forever. What keeps you here?”

She replied, “The portraits, above the mantel, dark magic lies within them. We are bound by a curse.”

My thoughts went to the portraits and the fireplace underneath. I knew what I had to do. I went to leave the room. The door locked itself.

“No!” My mother yelled. “Not for me! Not for your dad! Stay in this room as told.”

Something felt very wrong. If there was a ghostly grandparent after me, why hadn’t they shown up yet. The salt barrier was slow going. They had ample chances to complete their quest. I turned around to question my mother, and the world went dark.