

# A Portrait of the Damned Old Lady

By Jamal Red House School



Dring-dring, dring-dring, dring-dring. At last, the bell rang incessantly for the last time on the very last day of school. I looked forward to the summer holidays.

It was our very last assembly in the late afternoon before we broke up. Eagerly, the whole school made their way towards the hall where the head master addressed all the children. He droned on about how good the school year had been, and wished us all an enjoyable and safe summer holiday. Finally, he made a big announcement to us all, saying that he'd purchased some land behind the school to build a brand new I.C.T suite. This was excellent news, because the school didn't have one. Our head master told us that work would begin in September, when the school would start back up and it would be completed the following year at Easter. We were over the moon with the news!

My best friends Matty, Liam, Josh and I walked the long way home to see what was behind the school. We'd never taken any notice over what was there before and we wanted to see how big the I.C.T suite was going to be. We approached the end of the school field and peered eagerly over the tall, wooden fence. Laid before us, we saw a huge plot of land with overgrown grass and, in the centre of the land, there laid a humongous, archaic looking house. It looked extremely creepy, just like something you'd read about in a book. Feeling frightened, we cautiously made our way home and began to look forward to beginning our summer holidays.

The summer holiday wasn't as exciting as we'd all anticipated. No sooner had they begun, we were counting the days off to when we would start back at school again. Most days were pretty repetitive, sleeping in late, having lunch, playing football on the school field with my best friends, watching TV and then going to bed. However, in the last week before school started, my friends and I decided to investigate the

new piece of land our head master had bought.

It started off as just a normal afternoon. We played football, as usual, on the school field, taking turns to see who could kick my new ball highest in the air. When it came to Matty's turn, he kicked it the highest, but it ended up flying over the fence on the new plot of land which the school had just purchased. No one would go to get the ball, so I had to find the ball myself. Apprehensively, I climbed over the dilapidated old fence and saw how derelict and abandoned the land really was. I spent a long time searching for the ball, but I had no luck. My friends shouted "let's go home, it's dark and it's started to rain!" They also promised to help me find the ball the following day. At that point I was too tired and too scared to carry on searching.

The next afternoon we met together back at school. We were going to find my football. Together we climbed over the worn out, old fence. My friends couldn't believe how over grown the grass was, it seemed to have grown several inches since the day before. They didn't want to do it, but they had to, we started to search for the ball. The grass was so high it was nearly impossible to see each other. It was a scorching hot day and we couldn't really be bothered. We looked for a stick to help us prod our way through the grass. Eventually, we found a couple of sticks near the house, and then prodded our way through the grass. We went through nearly the whole plot of land to find the ball. After what seemed to be a long search, Liam found the ball and we had a quick breather.

Josh was looking up at the neglected house, it had cracked windows, ripped curtains and the bricks were crumbling away from each other. The house was gigantic and looked really menacing. Stupidly, Josh wanted to go inside to investigate. The rest of us wanted to go and play more football, but Josh decided that he wanted to go into the house, whether we wanted to or not! We tried to persuade him to come away, but he persuaded us to follow him instead. Tentatively, we opened the door. It made a loud creaking sound like old bones on a skeleton cracking. We first saw cobwebs; beyond the cobwebs we saw some dark brown antique furniture. There was a side table against the wall, a grand piano and a grandfather clock. At the other end of the room there was a massive fireplace which dominated the room and above it hung a huge painting of an old lady that seemed to stare down at us. We all knew that the best thing to do was to leave the house and go home, but we were curiously drawn to the painting. We still had the sticks in our hands, which gave us confidence and we brushed our way through the cobwebs to get closer to the painting. We shivered with fear. It was

quickly getting darker as we went further into the room. Next to the fire place there was a rocking chair that we presumed the old lady in picture would have sat on once upon a time. The old lady in the picture had a coal black dress on, with a lace shawl covering her; her eyes looked as if they were staring down at us, they were purely evil .Her mouth had a wickedness about it and her face was lined with deep wrinkles. She looked deviant. The picture frame was also black and carved out of wood. It had skulls carved out on each corner and carved writing which looked to be like some ancient script. It also had, what appeared to be, red specks of dried blood upon it. At this point, we all froze with fear. We wanted to run out of the house, but we couldn't, so we crept out. We ran home once we felt that we weren't being watched by the wicked lady in the portrait.

The next day was our first day back at school. Matty, Liam, Josh and I were discussing the chilling events of the previous night .As we did so, we didn't realize that two of our class mates, Robbie and Clarky, were listening. They started laughing and said "you're lying" and we replied "we're not lying, we will show you if you want". Jeering, they replied "fine, let's meet at six o'clock on the school field and you can show us – if you dare ".

We all met at exactly 6 o'clock on the school field. One by one we climbed cautiously over the fence. We approached the front door of the old house apprehensively. Matty, Liam, Josh and I didn't want to open the door, so Clarky opened it. The room was still full of cobwebs, just like the grass, we couldn't believe how fast the cobwebs had reappeared. We used our hands to brush our way through them. We then noticed that the furniture had disappeared and the room was strangely empty, except for the painting of the old lady that still looked down at us. Clarky and Robbie kept accusing us of lying about everything. To prove ourselves we went to have a closer look at the old lady because she seemed to have changed. The frame had changed into what appeared to be a normal wooden frame; it had no colour to it, it looked, well, normal. The old lady now had a loving smile upon her face, caring eyes and her wrinkles had disappeared. She wore a pure white dress with a delicate cotton shawl covering her. We were shocked and amazed about how this could have happened. Did we imagine what had happened the previous night?" We're going home now liars, there's nothing scary about this place, "said Clarky, and they both left the house and ran home.

We all looked at each other in disbelief."How did this happen,

“whispered Liam looking more than a little puzzled? We then heard the echoing sound of loud, laughter, we looked back at the old lady and she'd changed back into the wicked, frightening, old hag of the day before. The frame of the portrait was black again and this time it dripped blood. Her face was one of pure evil. Her smile had changed back into a laughing grin, her wrinkles reappeared, her eyes were sinister pools of black and she seemed to be focused just upon on us. We screamed in utter terror. Her blood curdling laughter grew louder. We then heard footsteps in the room as though someone was dancing. We were frozen with fear. We tried to make our way to the front door but it slammed shut in our faces.

To our horror we looked back up at the picture of the old lady. However, she no longer looked down upon us.

We just saw mirror reflections.

We were inside the framed portrait.

We were trapped.