



The Widow's Bell

By Mia Bowtell

No one in Greystone Hollow had heard the chapel bell ring in decades – until the night Thomas Ellery returned.

He climbed the hill through the fog, lantern trembling in his hand. His wife, Eliza, had died on their wedding night at that very chapel.

Yet now, the bell rang three slow, hollow notes.

Inside the pews were rotted, the air thick with dust. A single candle burned at the altar. There stood Eliza. Pale in her decayed wedding gown, eyes wide and glassy.

“Thomas,” she whispered, “You came back. You promised we would ring the bell together.”

He reached for her cold hand. She guided him to the rope. As they pulled, the bell tolled once more – deep and mournful.

“Now,” she said softly, “We can rest.”

In the morning, the villagers found the chapel sealed and silent. Two sets of footprints led to a grave marked “Thomas and Eliza Ellery.”



Chloe Davies - Year 11

The day turned to evening, the sun retracted its golden tendrils from the trees, the sky was glowing with hues of orange and pink. Dark, stormy clouds rolled in, bringing aggressive rain that attacked every surface. Distant thunder rumbled groggily, upset about being awakened after years of slumber. In a modest house, built from oak and white bricks, on the outskirts of the woods, Maria lay in her bed, she attempted to sleep away feelings of emptiness and grief. But the other side of the bed remained empty, a body sized dent rested in her boyfriend's place.

After having thought it through, considering her emotional and physical state, Maria decided to join the search party for her boyfriend who went missing 3 days ago. As she was pulling on her trainers, the image of her boyfriend sat pulling on his shoes while saying "I am going for a run, in the woods, I've been advised by my Personal Trainer to work on my speed by running on the uneven floor. It's science. Trust me." Flooded her mind. Maria remembered how she told him to keep his phone on him at all times. She remembered how he rolled his eyes and left... He never returned. She blinked away the tears that almost fell. Her eyes already stinging from wiping them so many times. She took some deep breaths to calm her heart that was beating as if she just ran a marathon.

After getting dressed in her warmest clothes, she raided her drawers for a flashlight and some extra batteries in case the ones in the flashlight were dead. A smart move. She pulled the hood of her coat over her head, ready to brave the cold that already sunk into her bones. She felt every drop that pelted her, like a barrage of bullets. She found the search party and followed the winding trail in the woods. She stumbled over a rock and when she adjusted her coat, she looked up at the tree to her right. Scratch marks. From a human. As if someone was being dragged... Then someone yelled "I found a phone! Come quick!"

The next minute was a blur. She ran to the person's voice, her arm getting caught by a branch. Her breath was ragged when she came to a stop. When the phone was placed in her hand. Her sharp brown eyes scanned over the cracked screen. It was definitely his. The keychain she had made him still dangled although damaged. She looked around after she bandaged her arm. She saw a house. She half-walked, half-ran towards the house, along with some close friends.

10 minutes later, the house towered over her. The sight was...shocking...to say the least. Bricks hung loosely, wooden planks rotted with water and the sides of the house were claimed by nature. Maria looked around to find her friends, they were gone. Probably too scared. She thought that she should wait for others but the thought of being so close to possibly finding her boyfriend won. She stepped closer. And closer. And closer. Until her hand found the door handle. She twisted the handle.

The door clicked open. She stepped inside and was immediately hit with the stench of death. She walked around after shutting the door gently. Floorboards creaked under her weight. Using her flashlight, she looked at the walls and the mantelpiece. Skulls. Lots of them. They lined the walls like some sick, twisted version of trophies. Then she looked at the corner of the room. A body. Her boyfriend's body. She collapsed to her knees and tried to find a pulse, but there was nothing. The door swung open, the hinges giving one final protest before dying. Maria went pale, was this how she died? The figure in the doorway locked eyes with her, a wolfish grin formed on his face. He stepped forward...



Eel Marsh House

Ominously and mysteriously, Eel Marsh House loomed. Its weathered timbers, warped, seemed to struggle against the constant dampness, as if the building longed to sink into the marsh surrounding it. Dark, empty, murky windows provided no hint of warmth and welcome; the swirling thick fog enveloped the marsh like a shroud. The marsh itself, a colossal expanse, spread out from the house's base, a maze of reeds and stagnant pools.

A constant stillness filled the air, interrupted only by the occasional unsettling croak of hidden creatures or the whisper of the wind through the skeletal reeds. The atmosphere was heavy and thick with a strange, cloying scent of damp earth and something disturbingly aquatic. Within the marsh laid many creatures.

The house stood alone, a prey to decay, its outline a dark contrast against the ghostly mist. It was a place where shadow seemed to deepen, the silence seemed serene, a tense silence. One couldn't shake the feeling of unease, a prickling awareness that something unseen was watching from the depths of the marsh or something from the darkened windows of the house itself.

By Maya Ali

A Field of Faces

Alicja Brykalska

I didn't mean to walk this far. The fog followed my steps and swallowed the world whole; the fence posts, the roads, and then me. Only this field remains. A whirlpool of bent figures, their arms nailed open to the wind. The mud clinging to my school shoes cracked as I crept further into the mist that engulfed the eerie field, drawn to one of the scarecrows.

Unwillingly, their mangled forms piqued my interest. The wind carried a sorrowful sigh against my ears, and the smell of damp straw burned my nostrils. I wanted to turn back, but my feet betrayed me, and I continued to trudge through. It felt as if dozens of eyes were watching me, judging me, laughing at my presence. Yet when I craned my head to stare right back, there was no one there to look at.

Every step made the mud squelch beneath my shoes, as if the earth itself denied my intrusion. One figure leaned slightly, the head tilted just like the way my old teacher used to. Another, with a woven smile, reminded me of someone I hadn't thought of in months. I shook my head, trying to forget, but the straw people whispered of familiarity. When I blinked, one of the forms shifted, its fingers curled out towards my direction, beckoning me closer.

My heart raced against my chest, and the mist thickened, absorbing everything only just a few paces away. However, the fog didn't blur my vision, instead it cleared my point of view. Shapes that hadn't been there before stood closer now, limbs twisted, with human-like grins that seemed all too familiar.

My stomach churned, my body sank with sudden weight, and the sweet smell of rot hit me like a freight train, and with it, the rush of realization. I knew these smiles; I had witnessed them before. They were all pieces of faces I had turned away from, left behind. Each face came alive in my mind: the crooked smile of my childhood friend, the solemn eyes of my teacher, my mother's stern brow.

I wanted to look back, but my eyes stuck like glue, denying my urge to wrench my gaze away. Heat rose in my chest, my throat closed, my knees trembled. I could almost make out their voices, soft accusations carried around me by the scornful wind. One puppet stood out, its head turned away from me, almost shameful of my appearance, yet something about it felt... off, as if it was pulling away from the crowd.

I stepped closer, the mud sucking at my shoes, my gaze locked on the lone puppet that refused to blend with the rest. Its burlap head inched to the side, revealing the rough curve of a cheek. One that resembled mine. My sweaty palm shot out, trembling, to reach out to grip its shoulder, but my hand landed on its head instead. I froze, my breath caught in my throat, staring at the puppet that was me. Taunting laughter haunted my thought, the surrounding strawbodies mocked my failure, the wind died down as it listened to the venom I bared.

All I could see, all I could feel, was that burlap cheek. My knees gave way, and the mud clung onto me like the memories I tried to dig deep into forgetfulness. Roots gripped my feet; straw formed in my throat; my legs sank into the earth. I blinked, and suddenly I was what I feared. And now... I am the only one left in this field.



The Chamber of Secrets

Alice-Mae Douglas

Shadows stretch across the imposing tower,
Spider webs hang every hour.
Candles flicker high and low
As the tales of darkness softly flow.
Raven Wings create shadows within the night,
The beast grins with eerie might
Cobwebs hang to dusty shelves,
Whispers echo of themselves.

A dragon lives deep in the cave
Guarding secrets as we sleep.
Scales like a reptile, eyes like gold,
Behold the stories that are untold.
It breathes a wave of chilling sighs,
As gothic dreams pass by.

The castle sighs a heavy sound,
Where the dragon's magic may be found.
We walk in darkness – embrace the gloom,
Beneath us is the dragon's secret room.
A world of mystery, sharp and bold.
A gothic heart.
One story told.

Deep in the Wood

by Thomas Cowhig

Once upon a time, there was a strange family who lived deep inside the woods. Nobody ever dared to go there. That is until today. A twelve year old, called Logan, and his best friend, Mary, decided to try and find out if the story of the strange family was really true.

Logan and Mary started their quest by meeting at the local park one dark and lonely midnight. Suddenly, a loud voice stopped them.

“Mary Healy!” Mary’s mother said.

“Ugh! What do you want Mum?” Mary responded.

“Where do you think you’re going without your phone? What if you get into trouble?!”

Mary took the phone from her mum and said, “Oh, thank you.”

Her mother walked away and left her with Logan.

Logan took a deep breath and said, “Alright, let’s go!” With that, they walked carefully into the forest.

It was 1 o’clock in the morning when a noise made Mary and Logan stop cold. A deep, low noise was coming from within the eerie forest around them. It sounded like it was coming from everywhere all at once. Logan stopped suddenly and tapped Mary’s shoulder.

“Look...” he whispered. “This place used to be a camp site. We could shelter here for a little while.” He pointed to what seemed like an old ranger’s hut. It was old and decaying, but looked good enough to stay in.

When they were inside they froze as they heard a pack of wolves run past. These weren’t normal wolves however! Their fur was gone, and their bones poked out through their grey flesh which was stained with a metallic red. One wolf had two eyes – but one was hanging from its socket!

“Bloodhounds!” Logan screamed.

Mary had a puzzled expression on her face, but before Logan could explain, another noise silenced him. Bang! Bang! Someone or something was pounding on the window. Logan slowly edged forward to look ... then he wished he hadn’t!

A tall pale white figure obscured the view outside appeared. It had fangs coming from its carved mouth shaped into a maniacal smile. The creature had blood red tears coming from its blood-shot eyes. It slowly turned its head to look at Logan. But, instead of attacking, it started to wave. Logan was paralysed with fear.

Mary was still waiting for Logan to return, but after five minutes she walked towards where he had gone. He was lying on the floor, paralysed to death.

“No!” she screamed in agony, starting to cry at the sight of her best friend.

Four pale figures shouted “Intruders!” Mary tried to stand and run, but she too fell paralysed to the floor. Her phone rang out loudly, but there was no one left to answer it...