

ALLEN

Allen worked at Benny's Service Station and Garage. During his lunch hour he took nothing more than peaceful walks through the trees, until one day when he came across an old fieldstone foundation. And there he sat, wondering who lived in the house that once sat atop those stones?

He asked Benny if he knew anything about the foundation? And Benny said, "According to Joe Mullins, it is the old Bower's place. So sad, they all burned. The dad and mother, and their five children. The dad was a drunk, and meaner than the devil. And it's believed to be haunted."

Although the thought of running into a ghost scared him, Allen, with Benny's powerful flashlight, went to the ruins—after dark. The sounds of the night, so different than in broad daylight, made his walk especially frightening. Even the low hanging limbs of the black oak trees seemed to turn into monsters, ready to reach out and grab him.

In spite of being terrified, he kept walking. The nearer he got, the more he could hear children's laughter. As he rounded the last of the trees, he was shocked to see the house—not the burned ruins. And there they were, nearly opaque images of small children out in the yard, running around, having a good time.

Everyone appeared to be happy, then the father came home. He staggered, almost falling, and like Mr. Mullins said, he was meaner than a snake. He started cussing and carrying on. The children cowered before him, like mistreated dogs do with their cruel masters.

Rather than stay and witness anymore, Allen ran down the path he was so familiar with. He didn't return, especially at night, for several days.

With Benny's flashlight lighting the way, Allen headed through the trees. Again, he could hear the children laughing and playing, that is until their father got home.

Unlike his previous visits, he noticed the oldest girl looking directly at him. Could she see him? She could, he believed, and then she approached him. "Help us, please." Again and again, she pleaded, "Can you please help us?"

How? It's too late, he muttered under his breath. Your father murdered all of you.

Each night when Allen returned, the girl begged, "Help us, please." It was too upsetting, making him decide he would stay away. But the pleading in her voice, and the terror in her eyes haunted him. He had to do something.

Therefore, on that last night, he took Benny's pistol, and laid in wait for the father to drive up in his old pickup. After the father got out, Allen aimed and fired. To his surprise, the

man fell dead. While he stood looking at the fellow's lifeless body, the girl came to where he was, and said, "Thanks!"

"You're welcome." From that point forward, the entire family of ghosts vanished. No matter how many times he went back, he did not see the house or the children playing in the yard.

Then last Friday, a young girl drove her Chevy Malibu to the side of the front entrance of the garage. She got out and came inside. "Benny said you could fix my car. It is making a screeching noise when I apply the brakes."

"Hop in, let's take a test drive." He could barely see to drive for staring at her. She looked so much like the ghost of the young girl. "Yes, your brakes are bad. I can't get to it until tomorrow, so you need to call someone to take you home. Or I can take you."

"That would be great."

On their drive, he talked about his walks, and how he happened upon the fieldstone foundation. "Some people think it's haunted. Have you ever gone to the haunted house?"

She hesitated, then told him her great grandparents raised her grandma and siblings in that house. Her great grandfather got shot, and her great grandmother and the children moved into town. "They say I look like my great aunt Adeline, when she was my age."

A couple of days later when she picked up her car, she asked if he could show her the foundation? So that evening, he led the way through the trees. In addition to that outing, they continued to see each other. And over time they fell in love, but it wasn't until years later, after the two of them were married, that he told her the whole story.