

The Trees of Tallywood

The passing of the old truck spun the last of leaves into waterless swirling eddies along the blacktop outside of town. Spring had come to the town of Doryville and the last of the leaves would be replaced soon by grass clippings.

The thoughts of mowing had brought John and his grandson into town for fresh gas and a tune-up kit.

Lost in thought, John was startled when his grandson said, "Grandpa, did you see that?"

Moving his foot quickly over the brake, he scanned the blacktop ahead "What. See what!"

"On the trees Grandpa, paint on the trees."

John moved from the brake and pushed a little harder on the gas pedal. "Don't look! Just be quiet and don't look."

Both of them sat quietly. John trying to remember stories of his youth.

Nothing more was said until the truck pulled into the parking lot of the local Ace Hardware. "What's the matter, Grandpa?" John's grandson asked.

After a moment, John said "That's a bad place. Don't ever go near it."

"But why?"

John searched his memories and told the story he had heard when he was younger.

Once a rich man named Ned Tally settled in Doryville. He was a wealthy man and had everything he could want. He owned the bank, a real estate office, land, and a fine home. Everything was perfect until he saw Kathy Jean. Kathy Jean worked at the drugstore and was considered by most to be the most handsome woman in town. There was something Ned didn't have, and he wanted Kathy Jean badly.

As the story goes, Kathy Jean was betrothed to a young lumberman, Benjamin Owens. For years, Benjamin meant to marry Kathy, saving his money for their first house.

Ned didn't care, he wanted Kathy Jean for his own. He hatched a plan and called on Benjamin, enticing him with a land deal. Ned offered a 40-acre wood to the young lumberman. So, both men met in the woods, and while Benjamin was admiring the trees he could log and turn into fine lumber, Ned walked up behind him and struck him down with Benjamin's felling axe. Even as he ran from the deed, Ned could hear Benjamin's dying screams. With screams filling his ears, Ned ran for home.

Knowing he was supposed to meet Ned That night, Kathy Jean came looking for Benjamin. Still hearing the screams in his ears, Ned told Kathy that Benjamin was probably just lost in the woods, admiring the trees. Scared for him, Kathy sprinted away immediately towards the woods, to try and find her true love.

Ned shoved his fingers in his ears, he flopped on the couch, putting a pillow over his head, anything to make the screaming stop. Then he wondered who else could hear the screams coming from the woods. Could Kathy hear them? If she did, it would reveal his deed, she would know what he did. He jumped from the couch and ran after her.

The murder scene was messy and easy to find. Kathy came upon the gruesome scene and immediately cried. Cried for the man that lay dead, and the life they would never have together. Then she screamed out loud how unfair life was. Then she screamed again as revenge grew inside her. But, as rage dimmed her vision and fueled her resolve, she heard Ned Tally calling her name.

Ned approached the horrible scene. He had not even taken the time to bury the body, he had just ran screaming. From the fear of being caught, he dropped to his knees and began to rake leaves and sticks over Benjamin's lifeless, bloody body.

Seizing the moment, Kathy stepped out from behind a tree and brought the felling axe down across his head. Ned Tally was no more.

"No one knows the truth grandson, but people do know that they never came back to town from those woods. When they sold off all of Ned Tally's stuff, no land note was ever found for the 40 acres. To this day no one owns it. That's why they call it Tallywood."

"But, what about the writing on the trees?"

"It is said that during the ides of the month when the full moon shines brightest, the spirit world and our world are the closest, and spirits can move between them. Folks around here believe Kathy Jean comes to paint BEWARE on the trees to keep others out of those woods."