

## Gothic Fiction

During the winter of 1815, Mary and John William, a young couple, were searching a cheap house because they couldn't afford an expensive one. Mary didn't work and John was a worker who won only a few pounds sterling a week. They had lived in the street for three weeks and nights began to become darker and darker and cold. Their owner didn't want them to stay and he preferred to rent the house to people paying a higher price. By chance, they found an old house which was certainly charming. But today, the house has been damaged, terrifying, gloomy and abandoned since a few decades; it was located in a bad and disreputable area. But the young couple loved it.

Inside that house, nothing seemed damaged; all the furniture had been protected. It was strange; it was as if the house had never been abandoned. There was a big dining room, a kitchen, two rooms... Weeks went by and the young couple was happy. But one evening, Mary, who was looking through the window, saw a shadow. Worried, she asked John to come and see what it was. He reassured her and told her that there was nothing and that it was moving trees. Mary, not convinced, decided to go out to show to her husband that she didn't dream. She took a candle. She saw almost nothing and her candle because of the wind began to extinguish. Suddenly, it began raining. It was dark; Mary was alone and frightened. She noticed several footprints near the door. She turned around but she saw nothing. Therefore, she went back home, panicked. John was asleep and Mary looked through the window again to see if she hadn't dreamed, and there was still nothing. The thunder rolled and she decided to join her husband.

The next evening, the thunderstorm and the rain had stopped. After working at the factory, John came back home. He found his wife worried. She told him what happened the day before but he didn't believe this story, despite what his wife said. As he worked hard, he was tired and he went to bed leaving his wife alone to finish the dinner. After the meal, she began to wash the dishes. Candles were almost consumed. Mary looked at the window, remembering to herself the day before. When suddenly, John's plate was thrown against the wall. Marie was afraid and not knowing what to do, shrieked trying to wake up John. But nothing could wake him up, he slept deeply. Marie was still terrified and as her husband didn't come, she decided to stop working and ran to the bedroom, in order to be protected by her husband. After the night, when she returned to the kitchen, she noticed that the broken plate had disappeared. She questioned John and he answered her that he didn't understand what she was talking about... The hours went by and Mary was waiting for John's return, when suddenly, a noise of slamming door and grating parquet, becoming stronger and stronger. She began to search where the noises came from but she didn't find anything. "I have surely dreamed" she said to herself. After a short time, John arrived.

When evening came, while Mary ate and John rested, she heard sounds of footsteps in the stairs. Outside, the weather was bad. All the candles extinguished. She tried to light them again, in vain. It seemed to her that somebody was watching her in this total darkness. Frightened, she woke up John and suddenly all the candles lighted again. Mary understood nothing. One more time, she asked her husband if he had seen what was happened, but John, who had seen nothing, began to lose patience and told her to stop inventing such nonsense: " All that you saw or heard has an answer and you know at the factory we were told that rats infested the area and it's the reason why you heard noises." said John.

The next day, John returns, once again, late and tired of his working day. He decided to go to bed directly without eating. Marie was alone and after dinner, she decided to join John. Therefore, she went up upstairs. It was gloomy and suddenly, she heard many voices. "It's only rats...rats!" repeated Marie. The first voice shrieked, the other one whispered something incomprehensible and the last one cried. Marie sat down on the floor, and began to put her fingers in her ears. She didn't want to hear these voices. "All this isn't real! » said Marie. After a few minutes, she removed her hands of her ears. There was a deathly silence in the whole house. She got up and hurried to join John. She thought about nothing and she tried to fall asleep but it was difficult.

During the next two days, Marie was alone and very pensive: " Since the beginning of the week strange things happened, I tried to listen to John but what he told me about rats ... I don't believe it! But how did the plate fly and crash on the wall? It wasn't a rat! And these voices..." thought Marie. She was waiting for new strange things but nothing occurred ...

The next night, John returned earlier at the request of his wife. Marie reminded him all that had happened ... Her husband, once again, explained her that all this wasn't strange and that there was an explanation. After all, it was maybe the fact that she was alone all day which pushed her into imagining such things... Later in the evening, Marie began reading a book, illuminated by a candle, while John slept upstairs. No noise was perceptible and the darkness of the night began to invade the house. Immediately, she decided to put her book. She felt somebody behind her. She could hear his breath. The candle was going to extinguish, she had to see quickly who was behind her. A hand touched her shoulder. She was terrified. Suddenly, the person behind her spoke: "Under the tree in the garden ..., there is a box". "What do you want from me?" said Marie with a trembling voice. The person repeated again insisting on every end of word: "You ... have to take ... this box ...». Suddenly, Marie turned back and saw John in front of her, he seemed distant. The candle extinguished. The room was dark. Then, she heard the door opening and closing, she tried to follow her husband with difficulties. She saw nothing. The moonlight enabled her only to see John digging near the tree. She tried to join him but a lightning did her turn back and she decided to go home. After a few minutes, John came back, embarrassed and panicked: "Why was I outside? Why this box in my hands?". Marie, who began to understand what happened, calmed him and explained him that a spectre was trying to speak to them ...

The day began to rise. Marie and John, always troubled, decided to open the box. It contained 15 000 pounds sterling belonging to the former owner. They understood nothing. Suddenly, a paper fell from the table. Something strange was written on it: " My rest must be everlasting ... Take it all ... And give it to the poor... Do what I didn't do in the past". Marie, who had thought she was crazy during the week, began to understand why this spirit wanted to offer so much money to the poor and why it had tried to catch their attention... Several orphans had been fed this day. Everything seemed okay for Marie and John; they had helped the ghost to join the afterlife by rectifying his mistake which caught him, here on earth.