

The Ghost Of Newbury House

The carriage drives through a small gate and comes to a stop. They escort me out and I step onto the ground. It is a mildly chilly day but my dragging dress covers my cold body, insulating the heat. I never wanted to come to one of these places, but when my parents left me, I knew I had no choice. We walk down for a couple of minutes and then there it is. Right in front of me, the girls home that I am to stay in for the next few or so. Newbury House.

The man with me walks up the steps and knocked on the door.

“She’ll be out in a bit,” he says. I wonder what she would be like, the woman in charge. After a few moments, the door swings open and standing there is a tall woman dressed in black. She has a scowl across her face and looks down at me with a pinch of disgust.

“All right, I’ll get her inside.” She says as she waves off the man. He leaves and now I am alone with her staring at me.

We walk inside and immediately I feel colder than I was outside. My lace dress doing nothing to protect me from the cold. The woman escorts me through the house. Though it is beautiful, it has a sense of emptiness. The walls have doors all along them and a beautiful, tall staircase stands in front of me. We walk down the carpet that leads to the staircase and began to climb. Once at the top, I notice even more doors along the walls. One of those doors is the room I am staying in. My room. The top floor has an unsettling symmetry that was different from the first.

The woman has a blank expression across her face as we walk toward a specific room. I can tell that I will not love her all too much in the years to come.

“This is yours. You will be woken at eight a.m. sharp for breakfast. You are allowed to walk around the house from nine am to seven p.m. but after that, you are confined to your rooms. Got it? Good.” She says all this with such intensity and quickness that I almost don’t understand her. “If you leave your room before breakfast there will be consequences and you may be forced to live on the streets of Tasmania.” I try to say something but nothing will come out and before I know it, the door had already closed. This is going to be hell.

I can’t sleep at all. I know I don’t belong here even though I know my parents aren't coming back. If I had never suggested a weekend getaway for them, they may have never left. I sit up in my bed with my nightgown on and stay in my room for what feels like hours. It is only two a.m but I decide that even though she made it extremely clear that there would be consequences for leaving the room at the wrong time, I just can’t stand sitting in here with nothing to do for any longer. I have to explore. I quietly get out of bed and open the bedroom door.

With every step, the floorboards creak slightly, making me fear getting caught, but I kept going. I walk past the staircase bannister and past the many doors that the hall is abundant with. There is complete silence excluding the sounds of the house groaning like an elderly woman. The feel of the room is so empty and lifeless. I begin to hear muttering voice coming from a room further

down the hallway. I slowly creep closer to the voice as I notice it was not one, but two voices which grow louder and louder the closer I get. The voices are deafening in the silence of the house. I keep walking toward the voices and suddenly I feel a sharp pain on the bottom of my foot. I lift up my foot and there is a small cut. I stepped on a nail sticking out from the floorboards. I decide to keep going, despite the pain. I approach the door which is very slightly ajar and look through the tiny crack. Fear is coursing through my body and I am so afraid. The room is difficult to see in but it is lit by candlelight as well as a faint red light. A person in a dark robe passes holding something shiny. A silver dagger clutched in a pale hand.

I need to know more, so I push the door open just a tad more than it already was, and there I can see it. A body of a girl with long, flowing, curly hair lying on the ground unconscious. Looking closer I notice the blood dripping down from her mouth. I can't look away. My curiosity overtakes my willingness to run and hide. I have to know more. The two hooded figures begin to chant in unison and walk around the girl. Only now am I so afraid that I force myself to escape because I know if they see me, maybe next time I will be that girl. I run, trying to make the least amount of noise that I could, open my bedroom door and rush inside, closing it behind me. Blood drips from my foot so I tear off a piece of my bed sheet and tie it around it. I lie awake for the rest of the night.

I am startled when there is a loud knock at my door. My foot still hurts but I think the bleeding has stopped. I look at the window and the sunlight is shining through. I had not even noticed that it was day. I was too busy thinking of what I saw last night. What it all meant and what was going on. Another few knocks and a voice calls out to me. "It's breakfast time dear. We are gathered in the dining hall." I get dressed and leave my room, which even though it felt like an area that could never be mine, I now considered it a safe space. And now I was leaving it. Along with my safety.

As I walk through the house I have flashbacks on what I saw last night. I look toward the room where it happened. Even though I know I shouldn't, I start walking toward it. Every step I take makes my stomach turn ever so slightly more. I get to the door which is fully closed now. My hand is shaking as I slowly reach for the handle. Could there still be evidence for what happened last night? I clutch the handle and turn. The door swings open and inside there is...nothing. A great sense of relief comes over me because maybe I dreamt it all. But that relief is quickly taken over by panic. If it all was only a dream that my crazy mind created, then why, when I look back, is there small amounts of blood on the floorboards along the hallway. I rush to where the nail is supposed to be and there it is. A loose nail covered in blood.

It happened. Whatever I saw last night, actually happened. I need to tell someone, but who? I can't trust anyone because for all I know it could have been them wearing those cloaks. I walk through the house, down the stairs, and toward the dining hall, not knowing what will happen next. I enter the hall, silent. The woman in charge of Newbury house stands. "Everyone, this is Eleanor." The girls at the table look at me as if I'm some piece of meat. They stare and glare at me and it makes me feel kind of uncomfortable. I try and forget about that

and sit down. In front of me is a bowl of plain oatmeal. I eat. No one talks to me all breakfast. I'm alone.

I walk back up the stairs before the other girls but I get a tap on the shoulder. A girl comes up to me. She whispers in my ear.

"We are coming for you." I stop walking. The girl does not. She must know what I've seen. But how? What am I going to do? My heart is racing, blood pumping. I have never been more afraid than right now. Not even last night when I literally saw a murdered corpse, because this time I know what they are planning. I know they are coming for me. I know I will probably be in the same place as the girl was. I know my blood will probably run across the floor as red as my nails. I know they plan to kill me. But that was their mistake. Because I know that I can try and stop them.

I walk outside toward a nearby fallen tree. I break off a branch and head back inside to go to the kitchen. I grab a butter knife from the drawer. I head to each room and take everything I need when I escape. I just need to get out of here before they can get me. I sit in my room and create a shiv using the butter knife and the stick, just in case I need something to fight them with. I wait till nine p.m. just in case the woman of the house is still wandering the corridors. I take all my things and quietly step out of my room. I creep down the stairs making no noise, while I dread that someone will see me. If I am seen I may be killed. The house is not groaning tonight like it was the night before. Everything is silent but there is something wrong. There is not even any creaking coming from the floorboards. I shrug it off as I step closer and closer to the door. I grab the handle, swing it open, but standing there are two girls standing right in front of me, wearing those same cloaks as the ones I saw last night.

I struggle and kick and scream as they drag me back up the stairs and toward the room from last night. I try and pull out my newly made shiv from underneath my lace dress but I cannot reach it. All that is in my mind right now is how my beating heart only has a few beats left. We enter the room and it's clear that this is a sacrifice. I see things that I did not before, like a pentagram drawn on the floor with chalk, and an upside-down cross hanging on the wall, as well as many, many more cloaked and hooded figures. The candles are lighting the room in the most haunting way. I can't find a way out. But before I die, I need to know what this is for.

"What are you doing? What is it for? Why me?" I scream at them.

"The house will take you, and she will finally be free." The girl closest to me explains if you can call it that.

"Take her!" She yells to the sky, and before I know it, I'm gone.

And then I'm back. I'm here and not dead. But how? I felt the pain of death. But I am standing in the room. No-one is here. No candles dripping wax on the ground. No cloaked girls. Nothing except the stains of blood on the floorboards. I am filled with emotions I have never felt before. Anger and rage are coursing through my body. I was only one before, but now I am two. The house and I together. I must protect the house, and in return, the house will protect me. I am the

ghost of Newbury house. Suddenly a couple of boys rush through the door and close it firmly behind them. I must protect the house. I must feed the house. This is going to be fun.