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A Noise Downstairs

by Sho Botham

Marin Oakes and his girlfriend Totty Smythe-Brown had recently spent a night in two different spooky buildings only to be disappointed when nothing happened. Both events were judged a waste of time, as they didn't even offer them one spine-chilling moment.

When a friend asked them if they wanted to join a group spending a night in Pluckley, one of the most haunted villages in England, they were unenthusiastic.

'Shall we go?'

'Do you want to go?' said Marin to Totty.

'I don't mind but I don't think we'll see or hear anything, do you?'

'We have a few weeks to decide. It's not until the 25th of May.'

'Come on Totty, we'll be late for dinner with your parents if we don't get a move on.'

After eating they all sat in the comfy chairs chatting about ghosts and haunted houses but when Totty suggested having a séance her father got up saying, 'this is not my kind of thing. I'll take Roger for a walk and leave you all to it.'

He patted Marin on the back and said, 'I'll say my goodbyes now as you might have gone by the time I get back. Roger, walkies, walkies.'

Roger jumped up at the sound of his name and headed for the back door.

Dim the lights darling, said Totty to Marin and come and sit next to mum. The three of them sat holding hands, more in a triangle than a circle and began to breathe deeply filling their lungs with air before closing their eyes.

'Is anyone there?' said Totty quietly.

'You'll have to speak louder than that,' said her mum, 'you want the spirits to hear you, don't you?'

'Is anyone there?' she repeated, in a much stronger voice.

They listened but there was no response.

Taking it in turns to ask the spirits to join them didn't make any difference. The spirits were silent. Despite this it was becoming quite atmospheric in the room and Marin grabbed a bible from the book shelf for comfort. Totty looked at him with a raised eyebrow as he held it tightly squeezing his fingers against the leather cover.

Seeing Totty's expression he distracted her with 'let's try again.'

'Is anyone there, his voice boomed out?' Silence.

'Is anyone there?' shouted Totty to the space around her.

Thud, thud. thud.

Marin threw the bible in the air running across the floor towards the door. Totty was on her feet screaming and her mother sat frozen in her chair looking as if she had heard a ghost. Totty stopped screaming when she heard a noise downstairs coming from the cellar below. They all listened. She realised it was her father laughing.

They heard the back door opening. Totty's father walked in carrying a broom with a long wooden handle. Roger trailed behind looking every bit the partner in crime.

Smiling, her father said, 'what are the three of you like? It doesn't take much to scare you, does it? Do you think it is a good idea to go to Pluckley?'