



## 1 🌸 The Real McCoy

'It isn't true!' said Gordon.

Gordon and his friends – Duncan, Fiona and Heather – were in a very old **castle** in the west of Scotland. The castle was now Fiona's **uncle's** hotel. Fiona and her friends were there for the weekend. After dinner, they sat in the **living room** and talked.

'It isn't true,' Gordon said again. 'There isn't a **real ghost** here.'

'There *is* a ghost, Gordon,' said Fiona. 'Look at that picture of Lord McCoy by the door. He died in the bedroom next to the **stairs** and his ghost walks there every night, they say. Nobody sleeps there now.'

They looked up at Lord McCoy. He was in a kilt, or Scottish skirt. His face was white, his eyes were a cold blue, and there was no smile on his thin red mouth. Under Lord McCoy's picture there was a big, old **sword**.

**castle** a big, old building; a rich person lives here

**uncle** your father's (or mother's) brother

**living room** a room where people can sit and talk

**real** true

**ghost** a dead person that a living person sees or hears

**stairs** you can go up or down these in a house

**sword** a long, sharp knife for fighting

*They looked up at Lord McCoy.*



'He doesn't look very nice,' said Heather.

'He had three wives and they all died young,' said Fiona.  
'Perhaps he killed them!'

'Look at his eyes,' said Duncan. 'They look angry.'

'He's an old man in a picture, that's all,' said Gordon.  
'The ghost is a **stupid** story for visitors. It makes the hotel more interesting.'

'OK, Gordon. So why don't you sleep in Lord McCoy's bedroom tonight?' Duncan laughed.

'That's a good **idea**! Do it, Gordon!' said Fiona.

'Are you **scared**, Gordon?' asked Heather.

'No, I'm not,' Gordon answered. 'I'm going to do it! I'm going to sleep in Lord McCoy's bedroom. It's nearly eleven o'clock. Let's go upstairs now!'

The four friends went up the stairs. Gordon opened the door of Lord McCoy's room and they all looked in. The only things in the dark room were a big, old bed and two chairs.

Gordon went into the room and sat down on the bed.

'It's a nice bed. I can sleep very well here. Goodnight, everybody! See you in the morning!' he said.

Duncan, Fiona and Heather said goodnight, closed the bedroom door, and went downstairs again.

'Gordon is going to see a ghost tonight!' said Duncan when they were back in the living room.

'What? But there isn't really a ghost,' said Heather. 'The Lord McCoy story isn't true, you know.'

'I know! Gordon's going to see *me*!' said Duncan. 'I'm going to be Lord McCoy. I'm going to wait for two hours. Then I'm going to go to McCoy's room and have a laugh!'

'Oh, yes! I want to see this!' laughed Fiona.

'Me too!' said Heather. '**Wake us up** at one o'clock,

Duncan. We want to go with you!'

Soon after that the three friends went to bed.

Gordon was on the bed in Lord McCoy's room. The room was cold and the big, old bed wasn't very nice. It was very dark. The rain hit the window. Gordon remembered the face of Lord McCoy in the picture. After half an hour, Gordon's eyes closed and he slept.

But in his sleep, Gordon saw Lord McCoy once more. He came **towards** Gordon and he laughed. He had a big sword in his hand. Gordon was scared. He wanted to run but he couldn't move. Gordon could see McCoy's white face. It came nearer and nearer. McCoy's sword was over his head now. Gordon wanted to **scream**. He opened his mouth but he couldn't speak.

Suddenly Gordon woke up. His mouth was open and he felt very thirsty. He felt scared, too. Then he laughed. It was only a **dream**. He must forget the stupid stories about old McCoy.

The room felt colder than before. Suddenly, he heard a noise. What was it? Gordon listened carefully. He sat up. It was dark and he could see nothing. But there was a noise. He waited and listened. The noise wasn't there now. He closed his eyes again and slept.

This time, his dream was different. There were three young women in it. One of the women looked at something behind Gordon, screamed and began to run away. Then someone behind him laughed. Was it Lord McCoy's laugh? Gordon woke up suddenly.

Just then, he heard a new noise. This time it came from the door. Gordon sat up and looked towards it. He could

**towards** nearer

**scream** to give a loud, high cry because you are afraid

**dream** pictures that you see in your head when you are sleeping

**stupid** not thinking well

**idea** something that you think

**scared** afraid

**wake up** (past **wake up**) to stop sleeping; to make someone stop sleeping





Gordon listened  
and didn't move.

see nothing, but he could hear the big old **key** in the door. Gordon listened and didn't move.

'Oh no! Someone's **locking** the door!' he thought.

Now something moved at Gordon's feet. There was something on the bed! Gordon was very, very scared by now. The thing on the bed began to move slowly towards him. First it was on his feet and then it moved onto his legs...

**key** you use  
close or open a  
door with this

**lock** to close  
with a key

**jump** to move  
fast on your legs  
from one thing to  
a different thing

Gordon **jumped** out of bed and ran towards the door. Behind him, someone laughed. Quickly, his hand found the key and he opened the door. He ran out of the room. There was someone behind him! He saw the sword over his head. He jumped down all the stairs to the door of the living room. Someone was behind him. He looked back

slowly. It was Duncan.

'Are you all right, Gordon?'

'Duncan! It was *you*! Yes, I'm OK now. How did you do that thing with the key? That was very good!'

Just then, Fiona and Heather arrived.

'What a noise!' said Heather. 'Gordon! What are you doing here? You didn't wake us up, Duncan! We didn't see you go into McCoy's room!'

Duncan looked at the girls. His face was white.

'It wasn't me. I didn't wake up at one o'clock. But later I heard a lot of noise downstairs, so I came down.'

'What?' said Gordon. 'But it was you, Duncan. You came into my bedroom.'

'No, I didn't,' said Duncan.

'You locked the door, and ran after me with a sword.'

'What sword?' asked Duncan. 'What are you talking about?'

'Lord McCoy's sword! Look up there, under the picture!'

They all looked under the picture of Lord McCoy. But there was no sword there now.

'There's nothing there,' said Fiona.

'Look at the picture,' said Heather. 'That sword wasn't there before!'

They looked at the picture. On the right, next to the old man there was a table, and on it there was a big sword.

'Yes, that's it,' said Gordon slowly.

The four friends looked at the picture without speaking. Lord McCoy looked back at them. There was a smile on his white face now – a very cold, dark smile.

'So the ghost in my room was "**the real McCoy**" after all!' said Gordon.

**the real McCoy**  
a phrase that  
means 'the real  
thing'

## 2 ❁ Strange Messages

Anna was at her best friend Julia's house. She often went there to do **homework** with her. It was their last year of **school**, and they always had a lot of homework.

'Anna, what are you going to do when you leave school?' asked Julia. 'Are you going to go to **college**?'

'Perhaps. I don't really know,' said Anna.

Anna didn't want to tell Julia, but she had a wonderful **ambition**: she wanted to go up into **space**.

'One day,' she thought. 'I'm going to be an **astronaut**.'

Anna wrote a letter to **NASA** in America. She wanted to work there. She said nothing to her mother and father about it. They didn't understand.

Anna's going to be a doctor, her mother said to all their friends. When she heard that, Anna smiled. She didn't want to be a doctor. She had different ideas.

One day, Anna's Uncle Bob came to her house. Anna liked Uncle Bob. He was different from her mother and father. He knew about Anna's ambition.

'Hello, Anna. Would you like this old computer? I have a new one now. You can do your homework on it.'

'Oh, yes. Thank you, Uncle Bob.'

Anna put the computer in her bedroom. That night, she went to bed and dreamt about going into space. At two o'clock in the morning she suddenly woke up. The computer was **on**.

'That's **strange**,' she thought, but she soon went back to sleep.

The next night Anna woke up suddenly. The computer was on again. This time there was a **message** on it.

'Hello, Anna. It's me. **Follow** your dream.'

'Perhaps it's Uncle Bob,' Anna thought.

The next day she phoned him.

'Thanks for the computer message, Uncle Bob!'

'What message?' asked Uncle Bob.

'So who sent the message?' thought Anna.

Anna told Julia about the message.

'Wow!' said Julia. 'What an interesting computer! But Anna . . . do you have a dream?'

'Well, yes . . . I do,' said Anna. And she told Julia all about the letter to NASA, and about her mother and father.

'I can't tell them about my ambition,' she said. '“Only boys want to be astronauts,” they think, and “Our daughter wants to be a doctor,” they say.'

'Oh dear! What are you going to do, Anna?'

A few days later, Anna got a letter from NASA. It told her all about a good college in America.

'After I go there I can work for NASA,' she told Julia.

'But that college is in America,' said Julia. 'What are you going to say to your mum and dad?'

'Oh, I don't know, Julia. They don't understand.'

That night there was a new message on the computer.

'Hello, Anna. It's me. Follow your dream.'

Anna sat at the computer. She wrote: 'Who are you?'

The message on the computer said: 'I had a dream like you. You can do it Anna. You can be an astronaut.'

For the next three nights, Anna sat at her computer and

**homework** when you learn at home, usually in the evening or at the weekend

**school** students learn here

**college** you study here after you leave school

**ambition** a big thing that you want to do (before you die)

**space** the sun and stars are in this

**astronaut** this person works in space

**NASA** National Aeronautics and Space Administration (USA); people learn to be astronauts here

**on** working

**strange** not usual

**message** you write this to someone

**follow** to go after something or somebody





She wrote: 'Who are you?'

'talked' to her new friend. Every time she sent a message, a new message came back. The messages were all about being an astronaut.

On the third night, the friend wrote: 'Do it Anna. Be happy. I was happy, and you can be happy too.'

With the message there was a picture. It was a photo of a young woman, with dark hair and a friendly smile.

'I know her!' Anna thought. But she couldn't remember her name. She phoned Julia and told her about the photo.

'What do you think, Julia?'

'Your computer friend is right. You must follow your dream. But when are you going to tell your mum and dad?'

The next evening, Anna was with her father in the living room.

'Dad. Can I talk to you about something?'

'Of course, Anna, but let's watch TV first. There's

something on it tonight about space. Are you interested?'

'Yes. Let's watch it,' said Anna.

The TV had a picture of some astronauts on it. One was a young woman with a big smile – the woman on Anna's computer! Anna suddenly felt very cold.

'Who's that woman, Dad?' she asked.

'An astronaut. She died in space ten years ago.'

'What? She died?' Anna looked at the TV. The happy young woman looked back at her.

'What did you want to talk about?' her father asked.

'It doesn't matter, Dad. Forget it.'

That night, Anna couldn't sleep. She wanted to read the next message on the computer, but nothing happened. For a week, Anna watched the computer and she only slept for two or three hours every night. But there were no more messages.

At first, Anna felt **sad**. Then she phoned Julia.

'I'm going to tell Mum and Dad about NASA.'

'Oh, good, Anna! You're doing the right thing,' said Julia.

The next day Anna told her mother and father, and Uncle Bob talked to them. At first, they didn't like the idea, but they talked to Anna's teachers and read the letter from NASA. In the end, they said to Anna: 'Of course you must follow your dream'.

So Anna went to college in America, and after five years she went to work for NASA. She took Uncle Bob's computer with her, and she never forgot the strange messages from space.

**sad** not happy

### 3 ❁ Footprints in the Snow

My name's Sally. When I was fourteen years old, my family and I lived in an old house near the hills in New Zealand. There was me, Mum, Dad, my brother Richard, and my **Gran**.

My Gran was old – nearly eighty-two years old – and sometimes she told us strange stories. She loved talking about our grandfather, George. He died before I was born.

'He's always here with us,' she told me. 'I sometimes hear him at night. He walks about in the garden.'

Of course, I didn't **believe** her stories.

'How do you know?' I asked her. 'Perhaps it's an animal.'

'Because I can see his **footprints**,' Gran told me. 'George had very big feet. We always laughed about his big feet.'

But we never saw the footprints. 'She's old and she can't see very well,' we all thought.

When winter came, there was **snow** everywhere, and it was very cold.

One morning I went to the **kitchen** to make breakfast. But when I opened the kitchen door and walked into the room, I screamed. There were things all over the **floor**, and the kitchen window and the **fridge** door were open.

Mum came into the kitchen after me.

'Oh, dear! What's this?' she said. She called Dad. 'Look at all this! Who did it?'

'Perhaps it was the children,' Dad said, and he looked at me.

'Don't look at me, Dad. I was in bed!' I said.

Just then, Gran walked into the kitchen.



'Good morning, everybody. I – Oh! What's all this?'

'What's all this?'

Everybody helped to put away the kitchen things. When we finished, Dad looked in the fridge for something to eat.

'Look at this!' he said.

Everything in the fridge was suddenly old and bad. The milk was yellow and the bread was green.

'I don't believe it!' said Mum. 'It was OK yesterday. What is happening?'

That night, we were all very tired and everybody went to bed early. It was not a good night. At three o'clock in the morning, my brother Richard ran into my room.

**Gran** (informal)  
grandmother

**believe** to think  
that something  
is true

**footprint** the  
hole that  
someone's foot  
makes in soft  
ground when  
they walk

**snow** something  
soft, cold and  
white

**kitchen** the room  
in a house where  
people make  
things to eat

**floor** the place in  
a room where you  
stand and walk

**fridge** a cold box  
for things to eat



'Come quickly!' he cried. 'There's somebody in my room!'

I ran after him, and Mum and Dad followed.

Richard's room looked bad. His computer was on the floor and his books were everywhere.

'I heard somebody in my room, Dad,' said Richard. 'They took all the things off my table and put them on the floor!'

'I'm going to phone the **police**,' said Dad. 'Perhaps there are some bad people in the hills near our house.' But, when the police came, they didn't know about any bad people in the hills.

Nothing strange happened for two days. But on the third day, the radio began to make unusual noises. Then the TV broke down. And when we all sat down for dinner, the lights suddenly went out.

Mum screamed, but Dad got angry.

'What is going on?' he asked.

'Perhaps it's George,' said Gran.

'Oh, Gran,' said Dad. 'We don't believe in ghosts.'

Later that night, I heard some very strange noises. They came from the living room.

'Somebody's moving the table and chairs,' I thought.

Quickly, I went into Richard's room.

'Listen,' I said. 'Someone's downstairs.'

We ran down to the living room and opened the door. Nobody was there. But the chairs were all up on the table, the pictures, the radio and the TV were all on the floor, and the door to the garden was open.

Mum, Dad and Gran soon came downstairs, too.

'Someone's in the garden,' said Dad. 'I'm going after him.'

'Be careful!' called Mum.

The lights went out again, and there were more strange noises. We were all very scared by now.

'Follow Dad!' Mum screamed. So we all ran out into the garden. Just then, the **ground** began to move under our feet. Then there was a very big noise.

'It's an **earthquake**!' screamed Dad.

The ground moved again and again. We stopped running and looked back at our house. It suddenly **fell** to the ground in front of our eyes.

After the earthquake finished, we all stood quietly for some minutes. Then Gran spoke.

'Well, we lost our house, but we're all alive! It was George. He helped us,' she said quietly. 'He took us out of the house. Look, there are his footprints in the snow.'

We all looked down at the ground. It was dark, but we could see some footprints in the snow. They were the footprints of very big feet.

'Thank you, Grandad,' I said quietly. 'Thank you for helping us.'

**ground** we walk on this

**earthquake** when the ground moves suddenly

**fall** (past **fell**) to go down quickly

We could see some footprints in the snow.



**police** men and women who stop people doing bad things

## 4 ❁ A Christmas Ghost

'It's nearly Christmas! Where's the snow?' asked Alex.

'Alex!' laughed Dan. 'We're in Australia. They don't have snow here at Christmas.'

Dan and Alex were from London. They worked in a big office, but at Christmas the office was closed for two weeks. This year they wanted to do something different for Christmas, so they were here in Australia.

When they arrived, they got a car at the airport and drove for **miles** across the country towards Alice Springs. In the evenings they stopped at small hotels. There were no cars on the roads, and they saw no houses or people in the country. It was very hot.

'This is going to be a strange Christmas for us,' said Alex. 'No snow, no Christmas tree...'

'Oh, be quiet, Alex! We're going to have a wonderful time. It's going to be different, that's all,' said Dan.

It was their third day. They left their hotel early that morning but the sun was soon hot. Suddenly Dan called out, 'Look, Alex! A **kangaroo**!'

The strange animal jumped across the road and disappeared. Then everything was quiet again. They drove for two hours. Then they stopped and ate some sandwiches and drank some water.

'OK, come on, Alex. Let's go,' said Dan. 'We're nearly there. We're going to be in Alice Springs tonight.'

But when Dan **turned** the key, nothing happened. The car didn't move.

'What's the matter, Dan? Is the car OK?'

'I don't know. Let's look at the **engine**.'

They got out and looked at the engine.

'Everything looks OK to me,' said Dan. 'I don't understand.'

'What are we going to do?' asked Alex. 'We're miles from the next town and there aren't any cars on this road. We need some help.'

They waited for nearly four hours. The sun was much hotter now. Alex and Dan sat on the road next to the car. They were scared. They didn't have much to eat and they didn't have much water. They needed help... soon!

Dan was asleep.

'Wake up, Dan. Somebody's coming!' called Alex.

It was true. A car **appeared** on the road and came towards them. Dan jumped up with Alex.

'Stop! Stop!' they cried.

The car stopped, and a young man got out. He was about nineteen years old, tall, and he had long brown hair.

'Hello,' he said. 'Do you need help with your car?'

**appear** to be suddenly in front of someone's eyes

The car stopped, and a young man got out.



**mile** 1.6 kilometres

**kangaroo** this Australian animal jumps with its strong back legs and long tail

**turn** to move round

**engine** the machine in a car that makes it move



'Yes, please! Do you know about engines?'

The young man looked at the engine.

'Ah, yes. You need a **garage**. There's one in the next town. I can take you there.'

Dan and Alex got into the back of the young man's car.

'Were you there for a long time?' he asked.

'About four hours. We were very happy to see you! We didn't have much water,' said Dan.

'Only four hours? I was by the road once and I waited for help for ten days . . . ' said the young man.

'For ten days? Is that true?' cried Dan. 'What happened?'

'Oh, it's a long story and I need to watch the road. There are lots of kangaroos around here, you know.'

The young man drove carefully, and Dan and Alex slept in the back. It was about fifty miles to the next town, and when they arrived it was dark. The young man stopped near the garage, but he didn't get out of the car.

'Here you are,' he said. 'Goodbye – Happy Christmas!'

'Thanks again,' said Dan and Alex. 'Goodbye!'

The car soon **disappeared**.

The man in the garage talked to Dan. 'It's late now, but I can go with you tomorrow to your car. Tonight, you can stay in the hotel.'

Dan and Alex went to the small hotel. They asked the woman there for a room. She gave them a key, but she didn't smile. She had a very sad face.

They went to their room.

'The people here aren't very happy,' said Alex. 'It's nearly

Christmas, but nobody's getting ready for it.'

'Yes, it's strange,' said Dan. 'But that young man with the car was nice. And the man at the garage is going to help us. Tomorrow we can go to Alice Springs.'

That night Dan and Alex woke up three times. Every time they heard a strange noise.

'Someone's crying, I think,' said Alex.

The next day, they got up early and went to the garage. The man drove them to their car and looked at the engine. He worked on it for about an hour, and soon Dan and Alex were on the road again. Late that night, they arrived in Alice Springs. This time, their hotel was much nicer.

'Let's go out for something to eat,' said Dan excitedly.

'Wait a minute,' said Alex. 'What's that on the TV?'

Dan turned and looked at the TV.

'Last night, somebody found the body of John Sharp. It was by the road, fifty miles from Little Creek. John disappeared a year ago. At that time, the police found his car, but they never found his body. John was nineteen and he lived in Little Creek. His parents have a hotel there . . .'

A picture of the hotel appeared on the TV.

'Dan,' said Alex quietly. 'that was our hotel in Little Creek. We stayed there last night.'

Just then, the photograph of a young man appeared on the TV. He had long brown hair.

'It's him!' cried Dan. 'It's the young man. He helped us!'

'But he's dead. How could he help us? I don't understand.'

Dan said nothing. Alex looked at him.

'What are you thinking, Dan?'

'We saw a ghost,' said Dan. 'A nice Christmas ghost.'

**garage** you buy things here for your car

**disappear** to go away suddenly

## 5 🌸 The Egyptian Cat

Jill was on holiday in Cairo with Alan, her husband. Alan was a teacher and he wanted to teach his students all about **Ancient** Egypt. So Alan and Jill visited the **Pyramids**, and the Egyptian **Museum**.

'Let's go to the **market** today,' said Alan at breakfast on their last day.

'Good idea,' said Jill. 'I love shopping!'

Later that morning, Alan and Jill walked through the market. There were lots of little shops there.

In one of the shops Alan bought some Egyptian pictures, and in the next shop Jill saw a little white **wooden** dog and a black wooden cat. Jill liked cats.

'Look at this interesting cat, Alan. I'm going to **buy** it.'

The man in the shop spoke to Jill.

'That's a very old cat,' he said. 'Be very careful with it.'

Jill bought the cat and she and Alan left the shop.

The man called after her. 'Be very careful with that cat! It's **magic**!'

Jill laughed. 'It isn't really magic. He says that to everybody when they leave his shop'.

When they got back to England, Jill put the black cat on the table in the living room. Now she had six cats from six different countries on that table.

But, a week later, Jill began to find the black Egyptian cat in different **places** in the house. One day it was on the chair in the living room. The next day it was on the floor. Then she found it in the kitchen.



She told Alan about it that weekend.

'What? Is that Egyptian cat moving?' Alan laughed. 'That man was right. Perhaps it is a magic cat after all! Cats were very important in Ancient Egypt, you know.'

'Don't laugh, Alan,' said Jill. 'I don't like it.'

One evening, Jill came home from work and found the wooden cat in the garden.

'Alan, did you put the Egyptian cat in the garden?' asked Jill when Alan came home.

'Of course not!' said Alan. 'Is it moving again? Perhaps you need to put it away in a box.'

Jill began to feel afraid of the Egyptian cat. So she did put it away in a box in the bedroom.

That night Jill slept badly. The Egyptian cat appeared in her dreams. Its eyes were yellow and angry.

'What do you want?' Jill asked. But the cat did not answer.

The next morning Jill woke up and saw the cat. It was on the floor next to her bed.

She felt scared. 'I can't tell Alan,' she thought. 'It's stupid to be afraid of a wooden cat.'

*'Be very careful with it.'*

**ancient** very old  
**Pyramids** very old and famous Egyptian buildings

**museum** a building where people go to look at old things

**market** where people go to buy things in the street

**wooden** made of wood

**buy** (past **bought**) to give someone money for something

**magic** unusual and making things happen in a way that you can't understand

**place** where something is



After breakfast, Jill walked to work. She took the Egyptian cat with her. In the street she saw a **litter bin**, and she put the cat in it.

'Don't come back!' she said, and she walked away quickly.

When Jill came home that evening, she couldn't see the cat in the house.

'No cat – good!' she thought.

Suddenly she heard the telephone. She answered it at once. Someone from the hospital spoke to her.

'Your husband had an accident,' they said. 'His car went off the road and into a river. He nearly died! He's alive, but he isn't very well.'

Jill went to the hospital at once. She saw Alan in his bed there, but he couldn't speak. She went home and began to cry.

'That cat! That cat did it. It was angry with me. I wasn't careful with it. I put it in the litter bin and Alan nearly died! What am I going to do?'

Quickly, Jill went out into the street to find the cat. But there were lots of litter bins in the street. Which was the right bin? Jill couldn't remember, so she looked in all of them. She was there for a long time. It was ten o'clock at night and very dark when Jill suddenly said: 'Here it is!'

She carefully put the little black Egyptian cat in her bag, and took it home. She put it back on the table in the living room with the five cats from five different countries.

**litter bin** a box in the street where you put things that you don't want or need

The next day, Alan came home from hospital. He began to feel better.

Jill didn't tell Alan about the Egyptian cat, but at the weekend she took it to a museum in London. The man there looked at it for a very long time.

'This cat is very, very old,' he said. 'It's an Ancient Egyptian cat. Cats were very important to the Ancient Egyptians. Where did you get it?'

Jill told the man in the museum about the market in Cairo and about the old man in the shop there. She told him about the times when she found the cat in different places in the house, about the time when she put it in the litter bin, and about Alan's car accident.

The man didn't smile or laugh at her.

'Perhaps someone took this cat from an ancient **tomb**,' he told Jill. 'In the past, bad men often took things from Ancient Egyptian tombs. And when you take something from a tomb, bad things happen to you, many Egyptians believe.'

'I see,' said Jill. 'Now I understand. But what can I do?'

'The cat must go back home to Egypt,' said the man. 'You can give it to the Egyptian museum in Cairo.'

So the next week, Jill put the wooden cat in a little box and **sent** it to the Egyptian museum in Cairo. Alan soon got well again after that, and Jill was happy once more with the five cats on her living room table – and she never bought a cat from a different country again!

**tomb** where people put a dead person

**send** (past **sent**) to leave something for a postman to take

## 6 🌻 The Last Bus

Steve, Nick, and Tom were in the Yorkshire hills. They liked **camping** and they liked going to different **campsites** at the weekend.

'I love camping,' said Steve.

The friends sat on the ground by their **fire** in the campsite and talked.

'I love camping, too, but it's very cold tonight,' said Nick. 'Let's find a warm **pub** and go and sit in it and have a drink or two.'

'A pub?' said Tom. 'A good idea! But did you see one near here?'

'Oh, we went past a pub when we came here,' said Nick. 'It's about two miles down the road. Let's go.'

There were no cars on the road, and after a long walk they arrived at the pub. They could see the **lights** in the pub through the windows.

'Not many people in there tonight,' said Tom. 'And it's Friday. Where is everybody?'

They went into the pub, got some drinks, and sat down near the fire. A young woman sat by the window. She had very long black hair, but they couldn't see her face. She looked out of the window.

'What's that woman looking at?' Steve asked. 'It's very dark out there.'

'Perhaps she's waiting for someone,' said Nick.

'She's waiting for the last **bus**,' said a man in the pub. He was a little old man and he sat down at the table next to them.

'The last bus? I see. Does it go to the campsite?' asked Tom.



'Oh, yes. It does,' the man laughed. 'It leaves when the pub closes.'

*'It leaves when the pub closes.'*

The friends drank and talked. When the pub closed, the woman with long black hair got up and walked out into the night.

'She's going to get the last bus,' said Tom. 'Let's follow her.'

Just then, an old bus appeared very suddenly on the road and stopped outside the pub. The bus door opened and the woman got on.

'Good evening, Rose,' said the bus driver.

'Good evening to you,' said the woman to the driver. 'These three young men behind me are going to the campsite.'

**camp** to stay and sleep somewhere in the open country

**campsite** you can camp here

**fire** this is red, and hot, and it burns

**pub** a building where people go to have a drink

**light** a thing that helps you to see in the dark

**bus** a big car that lots of people use to go from one place to another



'Are they now? The campsite? OK. Get on!' said the driver to the three friends.

'And remember, driver,' said Rose, 'You must drive carefully tonight!' And she laughed, but it was a very strange laugh, long and slow.

'Of course, Rose,' the driver said. 'I always drive carefully.'

The three friends felt scared, but they didn't want to walk back to the campsite, so they got on the bus.

It was very dark in the bus, and they couldn't see very well. They couldn't see the driver's face, but they could see his hands. They were very white. Then the bus door closed, and the driver began to drive his old bus along the country road back to the campsite – very fast!

Suddenly, the bus stopped. Some strange people appeared and got on. They were people from perhaps seventy years ago. They wore strange coats and hats. They didn't speak, but the driver talked to them. He also laughed a lot, and drove faster and faster. Then the bus stopped near a river, and all the strange people got off.

'Where are they going?' asked Steve. 'There aren't any houses here!'

The people disappeared quickly into the dark night. Now there was a lot of **fog** on the road. The three friends could see nothing at all through the window. They were truly scared.

'How can he drive in this fog?' asked Nick. 'He can't see a thing!'

The driver laughed and drove faster. They could hear nothing – only the noise of the engine.

**fog** had weather  
that makes it  
difficult to see

'He's going to kill us!' said Steve. Now they felt very scared. 'Please drive more slowly,' screamed Tom. The driver didn't answer.

Steve stood up, but the bus moved suddenly, and he fell on the floor.

'Ow!' he said. 'That stupid driver. What's the matter with him?'

Suddenly, the bus stopped again and the door opened. The three friends ran to the door and jumped off. Without saying anything, the driver closed the door and drove away. The bus disappeared in the fog.

*The driver laughed  
and drove faster.*



'Phew!' said Tom. 'What a bad driver! Where are we now?'

'Near the campsite,' said Nick. 'Look! It's up the hill over there.'

The friends walked back towards the campsite. Someone sat near their fire.

'Look!' said Steve. 'It's the woman from the pub. She's sitting by our fire.'

'How did she get there before us?' asked Nick. 'I don't understand. Let's go and talk to her. Perhaps she knows something about that strange bus!'

But when they got to the fire, the woman wasn't there any more. The three friends felt scared. That night they couldn't sleep.

'Who was she?' they all thought.

In the morning, they asked the man at the campsite about the strange woman and the old bus.

*'It's the woman from the pub.'*



'Oh, yes. That was Rose,' he said. 'She stayed here perhaps seventy years ago with her husband. One night, he went to the pub and took the last bus back to the campsite. But there was an accident, and all the people on the bus died. After this, Rose was very sad and she died young a year later. She comes here sometimes, people say, and waits for her husband . . .'

When the friends heard this, they left the campsite very quickly and ran to the nearest town. They found a different pub there, and sat down and had a drink.

'That man at the campsite – did you see his hands? They were very white . . .'

'And he had a strange laugh . . .'

'Yes,' said Nick. 'He was the bus driver!'

'The next time we go to a new place, let's stay in a hotel!' said Steve.





