

A Short Analysis of Ghost Stories

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Picture source:

<https://www.today.com/money/ghosts-film-top-10-haunted-spots-us-try-photographing-spirits-t51511>

Happy Halloween!

It is always the craziest time of the year when Halloween comes. We make up ourselves into something scary, sit around a fireplace, and hear others sharing ghost stories. But before we get into that, think for a little bit. Why do we love ghost stories? Why would we like to be scared?

Neil Gaiman, the world-renowned novelist, once said, "Fear is a wonderful thing, in small doses. You ride the ghost train into the darkness, knowing that eventually the doors will open and you will step out into the daylight once again. It's always reassuring to know that you're still here, still safe. Nothing strange has happened, not really. It's good to be a child again, for a little while, and to fear — not governments, not regulations, not infidelities or accountants or distant wars, but ghosts and such things that don't exist, and even if they do, can do nothing to hurt us."

Originally, ghost stories are based on rumors. The ghost were all real people, for example, Anne Boleyn, the second wife of King Henry VIII of England, and the mother to Queen Elizabeth I. She was executed for witchcraft and treason in 1536. After that, most people reported they spotted the ghost of Anne Boleyn in different places, even including Hever Castle in Kent. After that, the ghost is always normal people who got unfair treatment, such as Harriet Rionda, wife of a sugar baron Manuel Rionda who lived in New Jersey. Harriet Rionda jumped off from a tower Manuel built after she spotted Manuel cheating on her. After that, Manuel recorded that he could always hear footsteps or sobs inside the tower. When the construction crew came to tear the tower down, they stopped because several people fell to their deaths. Although the identity of the ghost was not royal anymore, their stories could still send shivers down your body.

Probability started from Charles Dickens published the novel "A Christmas Carol", people started to create all kinds of ghost stories. The ghosts are not fully based on real people, also, the ghosts started to become harmful. In Asia, this new form of the scary story is referred to as "urban legend". The antagonists - the ghosts - always hide in a dark corner and attack lonely people or children at night. Take an example of a Japanese urban legend, Aka Manto. Aka Manto is a ghost who hides in the school's bathroom. He attacks people by showing two rolls of toilet paper, one red and one blue, and lets the victim choose. The victim will die in different ways based on what color he or she chose. Urban Legend is a popular subculture on the Internet around the world. Teenagers are thrilled about urban legends.

Ghost stories and urban legends are both supernatural. Recently, new kinds of scary stories are popular online. People called it "creepypasta", where the horror atmosphere is fully constructed by disordered humans, psychologically or emotionally. You may be wondering whether they could still scare people anymore because there is no ghost in creepypasta anymore. They do, even scarier than the other two. The story is not the scary part, but the imaginary. One of my favorite creepypastas named "Candle Cove", written by Kris Straub, can be read here: ichorfalls.chainsawsuit.com. It is an extraordinary example that shows you the story itself does not contain horror elements, but if you think or imagine why the story goes like that, you may be scared by your thoughts.

So what are you going to share with people this Halloween? Ghost stories? Urban legend? or Creepypasta? Why do not create a new one yourself? Small doses of fear are always a wonderful thing!