

A Short Story: A Solstice Warning [B2]

Il paranormale incombe pericolosamente in questo racconto per rivelarci il suo rapporto con la creatività.



Liam **tore out** the page he'd been writing **on** and **groaned**. "What's wrong with you?" his mother, Rita, asked. "Ugh! Our English teacher told us to write a story about something paranormal. I can't think of anything." He took his **phone** from his bag. "Maybe I can get some ideas **online**." "Oh no you **don't**!" Rita took the **phone** from him. "You know the rule. No internet while you're doing homework." "Yeah, well, I can't think of anything." "That's because you spend all your time **online**, watching ridiculous videos **on** TikTok. It's destroying your imagination**on**." "Oh, **whatever** importa")! I mean, something paranormal! What a stupid idea! Everybody knows there's no such thing as the paranormal." "**Don't** be so sure," said Rita. "I could tell you a story, but..." "But what?" asked Liam. Rita looked at him seriously. "But you'd have to promise me you'd never go to where it happened, especially **on** the anniversary of the night it happened." "What happened?" Liam said, curious **despite**ostante") his scepticism. "We're not sure exactly, but something terrible." Liam's family had lived in the town of Kells in County Meath for generation**ons** and knew all of its secrets. "It was at the Old

Cottage on the edge of the forest on the night of the winter solstice, the longest night of the year. People say on that night every year since, a malevolent spirit returns there and anyone who ventures inside risks being possessed by it." "Oh, as if!" said Liam. "You don't believe that, do you?" "I believe it, because I've seen it. What's more, I've heard it. My mother told me the story when I was a teenager and I didn't listen to her warning. Don't make the same mistake I did, Liam." Of course, Liam didn't listen to his mother. He didn't believe a word of the story, either, but he couldn't resist going to the Old Cottage to see for himself. His parents always went out on the winter solstice to celebrate the occasion with their friends, and this year was no exception. Even though he was thirteen, they insisted on getting a babysitter, an older girl who spent the evening watching films. Liam told her he was going to bed early. He then sneaked out, and met uptrarsi") with his best friends Robert and Caoimhe. "I can't believe we're doing this," said Caoimhe. Their parents were out celebrating too, and so they'd sneaked out as well. As they approached the abandoned house known as the Old Cottage, Liam shivered, partly from the cold December air and partly from nerves. "This place is creepy," said Caoimhe, sounding as jittery as Liam felt. "It's why it makes such a good story," said Liam. "But it's just that: a story." He was trying to reassure himself as much as he was Caoimhe. Gathering courage, he pushed open the door of the Old Cottage and entered, using his phone for light. "See, nothing here!" he said to his two friends, who were waiting outside. But then he heard it, a groaning sound. "What's that?" whispered Caoimhe, now sounding terrified. "Oh nothing," said Liam, trying to sound calm even though his heart was beating hard. "Just the house... settling." It was something he'd heard people say in films. There was another groan, and then a terrifying apparition appeared. Liam screamed and ran outside, and he and his two friends ran all the way back to their homes. Rita and her friends howled with laughter as the three teenagers disappeared into the darkness. "Oh, that was fantastic," she said. "Sean, your groan sounded particularly creepy this year." She and the other parents had been coming to the Old Cottage for years, since their eldest children had become old enough to be initiated into this long-held tradition – of parents telling that same story to their children and then coming here to scare them on the night of the winter solstice. Rita had known Liam would come here;

every teenager they told the story to did and they always brought their friends with them. They couldn't resist. "Are you sure it wasn't too much?" asked Sean, sounding a little anxious. "We don't want to traumatise them." "Nah, it was just enough to revive their imaginations. Don't worry." The tradition had begun as a way to teach children to listen to their parents, but now it was valued for its capacity to inspire their imaginations. One of the other parents, a man called Mikey, agreed. He'd credited his own scare here as a teenager with his career as an animator. "It certainly revived my imagination," he said. "And now kids are growing up too fast, losing themselves in their phones and tablets. This tradition is more important than ever!" Back home, Liam pulled the bedcovers over his head, trying not to cry. The parents didn't know it, but the entity they'd conceived of had become real. Conjured up by their imaginations, it had grown stronger each year. Now it was strong enough to appear to one of the impressionable teenagers who visited the Old Cottage; strong enough to follow him home, and perhaps even to possess him. Just like the story had warned.

Glossary

- **on** = en el límite
- **jittery** = agitato
- **pushed open** = aprire spingendo
- **tore out** = strappare
- **sneaked out** = sgattaiolare
- **settling** = stabilirsi
- **beating** = battere
- **eldest** = più grande
- **credited** = attribuire
- **ventures** = avventurarsi
- **warning** = avvertenza
- **long-held** = praticata da lungo tempo
- **groaned** = gemere
- **as if** = ma per favore!
- **met up** = incontrarsi
- **Conjured up** = evocare
- **whatever** = come vuoi, non importa
- **Cottage** = casetta, chalet
- **shivered** = tremare
- **to reassure** = rassicurare
- **whispered** = sussurrare
- **despite** = nonostante
- **the edge** = al limite
- **to scare** = spaventare
- **creepy** = inquietante
- **howled** = ululare
- **bedcovers** = coperte