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THE HOUSE IN THE WOODS

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Chapter 1

by Ashleigh West

The year was 1953. It was a cool, crisp twenty-ninth of October. Usually, after their chores and homework were done, Kathy, 8, and her brother Jonathan, 15, along with their friend May, 11, and her cousin Adam, 13, all went to Joe's Arcade, the local hangout of Leaport, North Carolina. Instead, they all decided to meet at the end of their dead end street, Farrow Avenue, and go for a walk through the woods. They were all bored since the arcade was too crowded and supper wasn't ready yet. Their town was a small town, so there wasn't any other places to go besides the woods. Plus, the old, burned O'Leary house was out there.

Although everyone in Leaport knew it was there, they also knew to stay away. A raging fire, which started suspiciously back in the 1930's, burned the O'Leary house. The O'Leary's mysteriously disappeared that night, too. Nobody saw them leave and there wasn't any trace that they perished in the fire when the firefighters got there. Yet, the townsfolk still say that the O'Leary's were lost in the fire and that their spirits still haunt the house, seeking revenge on those who started the fire. The townspeople also say that you can hear their moans and piercing screams in the night. Although the dilapidated house was boarded up shortly after the fire, the townspeople wanted to knock it down completely because they claimed that it housed ghosts. But the mayor refused to do it because the house was considered a historical landmark, being as it was part of the Underground Railroad. Jonathan learned this in school, and just thought it made it all the more chilling.

The children were always told to stay away from the house and also the lake that was in front of it. But they were all so curious to at least see the house, especially Adam, who had a thing for ghosts. Kathy, being the youngest, wasn't so sure she wanted to go. But after much debate and a promise of a warm chocolate

chip cookie, Kathy decided to go. Although it was only a 15 minute walk from their street to the lake and the old O'Leary house, it felt like a lifetime with the maze of trees in the woods. Some of the trees had posters on them, and one read LOST DOG PLEASE FIND.

As they made their way through the woods, it started to grow dark. The sky turned from a bright blue to a deep orange and red, and May took this as a sign to head back. She didn't say anything to the others, though, for fear that she would be branded a scaredy-cat. Kathy, who was only 8, didn't seem scared, so why should she!

They were making good time and they were just coming to the clearing in the woods. The children could see the house, just over the lake, when they heard a terrifying sound. The kind of sound that could scare even the deepest sleeper out of slumber. It was the howl of some horrifying creature, or maybe it was a scream from some undead spirit! Could it be from one of the O'Leary's? All the children screamed and ran! They ran every which way, but didn't realize that they had got split-up. And then the creature howled again...

Chapter 2

by Dilana Lott

Adam froze as he heard a rustling in the leaves, then the creature howled again. He screamed and quickly decided to run as fast as he could, but within the first few metres he had tripped over a fallen tree and hurt his ankle. Adam started screaming for Kathy, Jonathan and May, then he heard it again, but this time it was a lot closer. He didn't dare make another sound he waited for 10 minutes then he heard a bark. Adam called "Doggy, Doggy". Suddenly the dog ran at him. It lay on him and rolled around while Adam patted it. He looked at its collar and noticed that it said 'Rusty call 098695 if lost'. Adam took out his phone and was calling the number when he heard the scream again. He was so shocked that he dropped the phone. Rusty growled and looked around and then there was another scream and Rusty ran off. Adam tried to catch him from where he was sitting, but couldn't, Rusty was gone off into the night. Adam sighed and mumbled to himself "Great, my only companion gone!" From the darkness he heard Rusty whine in pain. Adam jumped up and limped along to where Rusty was. The dog was on the ground, alive but in a pool of blood. Adam bandaged him up using his t-shirt and made Rusty comfortable. The dog limped back towards Adam picking up his phone and bringing it over to him. Adam he picked it up and patted Rusty on the head and said "Good boy". Adam called Rusty's owner again. This time they answered and were delighted to hear that someone had found their dog. Adam told them where he was and Rusty's owner asked if Adam wanted a ride. Adam wanted one but he said "I need to find the others first." The owners said " We'll help you because you found Rusty and helped him when he was injured this is how we can repay you."

Adam agreed and sat down to wait for them to arrive.

Fifteen minutes later they arrived and Adam climbed into their car, Rusty jumped in after him and licked his face. Adam shut the door and buckled up Rusty, put his head on Adam's lap and

fell into a light sleep. A few minutes into the search for the others Adam heard the rustling again and he asked for the window to be wound down, so the driver did. Adam shouted out the window "May, John, Kathy, are you there?" May replied from somewhere close by "Yes", Adam exclaimed "Stop!", the driver slammed on the brakes and May jumped in, then they drove off to find the other two. After they had found John, Kathy was the last one to be found. Kathy sat crying by the riverside. Adam called out to her and she ran and leaped into the car. Once they were dropped off home they all scampered into their room trying to make sense of the screams they had heard. Adam said that the O'Leary's still haunt the burnt remains of their house and that their bodies were burnt into ashes and they roam their house to find out who started the fire. Adam, May, John and Kathy all agreed and were soon all asleep.

That night they all had nightmares which terrified them. The frightening dreams continued for four weeks and their parent's warned them never to go near O'Leary's house again, but Adam was thinking that he would like to go back and see what was making those horrifying sounds.

Chapter 3

by Georgina Parke

In the morning at 5.30 Adam ran stealthily to the house again. As he was walking away from the gate his dog Tammy started to bark "Shh" said Adam to Tammy, then she started to whine "Fine you can come!" Adam whispered. He opened the gate and Tammy came running through.

They ran through the forest together right to the house. They got to the house and Tammy ran away. Adam started to call "Tammy, Tammy!", but there was just silence everywhere. Suddenly there was a rustle in the bush under the house, then Tammy's head popped out so Adam looked in to the undergrowth and he saw a handle on a wooden hatch. Just then he heard the deafening howl once more. Tammy started to bark in fear as Adam heard the howl again and again.

Adam opened the hatch. He discovered there were underground tunnels leading all over the town. Adam went down in to the tunnels with Tammy. They ran all the way through the tunnels. Together they ran and ran in every direction they could. Adam looked at his watch "Oh no, mum will be awake, it's 11.00 am, we better go fast!" he said to himself. Tammy barked excitedly and they were on their way through the tunnels when Adam saw something unexpected.

It was a medium sized shadow that was approaching them. Was it a dog, or was it a wolf? Was it a husky, or was it a bull mastiff? He didn't know what it was. He thought of Tammy, he thought of the dog-wolf creature. "They're both types of dogs!" Adam blurted out. Instinctively he shouted "SIT!" and the figure slowly sat. As it did Adam released a big sigh of relief. He walked closer and closer to the mysterious creature. He saw it actually was a wolf and wherever he went the wolf would follow. It followed him all the way home and the wolf and Tammy soon became the best of friends. This finally solved the mystery of

the O'Leary's haunted house. It had been the wolf crying in loneliness.