

The House

A dark, atmospheric photograph of a large, multi-story stone house. The house features a prominent turret on the left side, a balcony with ornate ironwork, and several windows with shutters. The sky is dramatic, with dark clouds and a hint of light on the horizon. The overall mood is mysterious and gothic.

a short story for English reading and speaking

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
The House.....	4
Reading Comprehension Questions.....	11
Essential Vocabulary.....	13
Discussion Questions.....	15
Creepy Yarns.....	17
Writing.....	18
Credits.....	19

Introduction

Can a house be haunted by a ghost?

Do you know of any haunted houses?

Would you live in a haunted house?

The House

We all laughed when the landlady told us the story of the ghost.

“I expect you’ve all heard about this house,” she said. “And the ghost that occupies it.”

And we had heard the story. But we all put it down to this batty old woman and her son that lived with her.

The son who never spoke a single word to anyone and the big house the two of them lived in on the outskirts of town.

That house is haunted, other students at college said.

And the house was ancient. A crumbling old wreck of a place with large turrets and a big garden filled with high trees. It had all the appearances of a haunted house.

But the four of us moved in.

Me, Cathy, Luke and Martine.

We paid the first month’s rent, closed the door and cracked up laughing.

We thought nothing of this house being haunted. Or the stories that went around.

We just liked the fact that we had a huge place to live in, with a

garden as big as the local park.

There was even a tennis court at the back.

“Maybe we should have the place checked out,” said Luke, as he took a box of books into his room.

“Who should we call?” I asked him. “Ghostbusters?”

And again we laughed.

That evening, we went to the pub. It was the first week back at college and everyone was in that first-semester feeling.

Happy to see college friends again. Happy to be back at college.

We all walked down the big hill to the main town and met a large group of other students in The Castle.

It was a fun evening. We had some drinks and some laughs.

Then around 11pm, we all decided to leave together.

On the way back, we talked about things people said in The Castle. Laughed at some of the comments the others had made.

We got to the house and Cathy pulled out her key to open the door.

We walked in and immediately heard a sound in the living room. A loud voice urgently talking about something.

Luke opened the living room door, and a bright light filled the room from the TV screen.

“Someone left the TV on,” said Luke.

Some middle-aged man with a serious expression. A late-night chat show with four people spouting their opinions about something.

Luke looked round at us, waiting for one of us to confess.

“Wasn’t me,” I said.

The two girls shook their heads.

“Well, someone left it on,” said Luke.

He picked the remote up and turned it off.

We thought nothing of it and went to bed.

Everything was fine in the house. No weird sightings of ghosts flying around or any other paranormal activity.

But sometimes the lights were turned on. Or off.

One time, all the heating was turned off.

We didn’t think there was a ghost, though. We put all these little events down to one of us doing it by mistake.

Or forgetting to turn lights off or whatever.

Then one morning, I got up a little earlier than usual. The others were all still sound asleep, and I went down to the kitchen to make some coffee.

I walked into the kitchen and every single cup, bowl, and plate

that we owned was on the kitchen table.

Every last piece of crockery was taken out of the cupboards.

And not just put there. But piled on top of each other in precarious towers.

I stared at the cups and bowls in these weird arrangements in disbelief.

Now things were starting to get a bit weird.

There was a door at the back of the kitchen that led out to the garden. Not one of us had ever opened this door before, but when I reached for the doorknob, it opened.

It was unlocked.

I immediately assumed that it was the oddball son in the main house.

Him and his cranky old mother trying to freak us out by turning lights on and off or moving things around.

One by one, the others woke up and came downstairs. I told them what I had seen in the kitchen and we decided to have a word with the landlady.

Just to make sure she knew what was going on. And we were not going to accept it.

Me and Luke went to her house at the end of the drive. She

answered the door, and we told her what I had seen in the kitchen.

We didn't say that we thought her son was doing it, but we did imply that maybe someone was playing a trick on us.

“Have you seen anyone lurking around?” asked Luke.

The woman shook her head.

“It’s the ghost,” she said, staring us straight back in the eye. “I told you, the house is haunted.”

We went back to the house and told the girls what the landlady had said.

Now it was no longer funny.

Now we were starting to think that she was kind of deranged.

That weekend, we went into town again. We wanted to put whatever was going on in the house out of our minds.

We didn’t want to think about the landlady and her son.

I was absolutely convinced it was the two of them playing games with us.

We went to The Castle and had some drinks with friends.

I saw Martine talking to one of her classmates. She looked upset about what had been going on at our house.

Luke spoke to me alone.

“I think we need to leave that place,” he said. “That woman has lost her mind.”

I had to agree with him.

“Let’s tell the girls,” I said. “Tomorrow we can start looking for a new place.”

I felt relieved to have made a decision about the house. It was time to leave.

We could easily find another house to rent. One without an insane landlady and her weird son.

Later that evening, we walked back to the house.

Martine opened the front door and then froze.

“What’s the matter?” I asked her.

She didn’t speak. Just stood in the doorway, her eyes transfixed on the living room in front of her.

I stared into the semi-darkness and I could not believe what I saw.

The sofa, the two armchairs, and the coffee table hovered above the floor. Like they were suspended by invisible wires from the ceiling.

And the lamp spun around between them like some kind of toy plane.

And in the background, laughter. A cackling, gleeful laughter.

Reading Comprehension Questions

How many people moved into the house?

What do these people do? Why do they live in this town?

What did the landlady tell them before they moved into the house?

Who does the landlady live with?

Is the house modern?

Describe some details of the house.

What are the names of the friends of the narrator?

Were the people who moved into the house concerned about anything?

Were they happy to live in this house? Why/why not?

What did they do in the evening they all moved into the house?

Where did they go?

Who did they meet?

What time did they go back home?

When they got home, who opened the door?

What did they hear?

Who opened the living room door?

What was on in the living room?

What kind of show was it?

What did Luke ask the others?

Had anyone left the TV on?

What other strange things happened in the house?

Were the four friends worried about the house at all?

What did the narrator see early one morning?

Which room was it?

Describe what he saw.

Was there a door in the kitchen?

Was it locked or unlocked?

Who did the narrator assume had put all the crockery on the table?

Who went to talk to the landlady?

What did she say?

At the weekend, where did the four friends go?

What did the narrator decide with Luke?

When they all went home, who opened the door this time?

What did the narrator see inside the house?

What did he hear?

Essential Vocabulary

Laughed	Pub	Plate
Landlady	Semester	Kitchen
Ghost	Friends	Door
Story	Drinks	Garden
House	Laughs	Drive
Batty	TV	Trick
Son	Bright	Deranged
College	Remote	Weekend
Town	Sights	Decision
Haunted	Lights	Classmate
Ancient	Heating	Frozen
Turrets	Weird	Living room
Garden	Coffee	Sofa
Tennis	Crockery	Armchairs
Checked	Cup	Coffee table
Ghostbusters	Bowl	Ceiling

Exercise

There may be a lot of new or unfamiliar vocabulary to you in the story. This is the perfect time to get to know these new and strange words and phrases.

Write down all the new words and phrases in your vocabulary notebook. Look up the meaning of the new vocabulary in a dictionary or online and write down the meaning next to the word or phrase.

It should look something like this:

Landlady – *a woman who rents a house, room or apartment to tenants.*

To Expect – *to assume one has knowledge of something.*

Then write a sentence of your own that uses the new word or phrase correctly.

My landlady was very angry with me as I had been playing loud music all night.

I expect he had already seen the damage to his car. I wonder what he would do about it.

If you do this correctly, it will help you learn many new words and phrases. This will build your English vocabulary and writing down all the words and phrases, making sentences of your own, will all help you to remember all of this new vocabulary.

Discussion Questions

What do you think of this story?

Why do you think the four friends moved into this house when they knew it was haunted?

Do you think they thought the story was real? Or just nonsense?

If you were one of the four friends, would you have moved into the house? Why/why not?

What do you think of the landlady?

The narrator describes the landlady as being 'batty' and 'deranged'. Do you think she is? Do you think she is a little crazy?

What about her son?

In the story, the narrator talks about lights going on and off. And the heating being turned off.

What would you think if you were living in this house and experienced these things?

The narrator tells an event about all the crockery being put on the kitchen table.

What would you have done if you had seen this?

At the end of the story, what do you think the four friends did

next?

What would you have done?

Do you believe in ghosts?

Do you think houses can be haunted?

How do haunted house stories begin? How do they become such stories?

Do you know of any haunted houses in your neighbourhood?

Why do people say it is a haunted house?

Have you seen this house?

Do people just assume that old houses are always haunted?

Why?

Creepy Yarns

This is a whole class group activity.

You are all going to tell a ghost story about a haunted house. The story takes place in a big old house. It is supposed to be haunted.

In the class, sit in a large circle.

Turn the lights off in the class to create the right ghostly atmosphere.

Then one student sits at the front of the class.

One by one, try to tell a ghostly tale.

Each person should speak for about one minute or so.

They should build the tension of the story and then let another student continue the story.

Continue going around the class, building the tension until everyone feels a little excited or nervous!

Then have a dramatic ending to your story.

***You can include people from your class in the story.
This will make it more interesting!***

Writing

This is a creative writing exercise.

You are going to write a short story about a haunted house.

The title of the story is

The House At The End Of The Street

You need to create the right atmosphere in your story.

Try to build some tension in the story and make the reader feel excited or nervous.

When you have finished your story, you can read it out loud in front of your classmates and teacher.

Ask everyone for feedback.

Credits

This lesson plan is courtesy of ManWrites.

This content is copyright ManWrites 2023 — ManWrites©2023

For more information, go to www.manwrites.com

Or join my mailing list below and I will send you more ESL teaching ideas.

[ManWrites Mailing List](#)