

## **A Haunting in Havana**

Clarissa H.

When I was 7 or 8 years old I lived in Havana, Illinois. My family and I moved into a house which I will never forget (as much as I wish I could). My family consisted of my mom, dad, and brother who is 3 years younger than I. We soon discovered that the people who lived in the house had been devil worshippers, or had been messing with some form of dark arts. I remember vividly the room upstairs was very dark with black curtains over the windows. There were strange writings and drawings all over the walls in this particular room. There was even a hole in the center of the room about the size of an average TV. My parents used the room for storage and blocked off the door with boxes so we could not go in. The only other room upstairs was a small room we used for storage. We found a box full of items in the basement which included an Ouija board among other strange artifacts. The landlord said the previous occupants had just upped and left abruptly one day without a word to him. He knew nothing of what they had been doing. We suspect now that they may have been driven out. We all slept in one of the rooms downstairs, my mother and me sleeping together across the room from my brother and dad. Seldom did a night go by that I did not feel a presence standing next to me, leaning over the bed. My brother also felt the same thing and we would often wake up in the night screaming.

One night we were all in bed when I heard footsteps. I looked toward the bedroom door as the figure appeared. I will never forget the tall, dark, scary figure that walked through the door and stared at me. I yelled "Dad look at the door", and just like that it was gone.

Fortunately my father had also seen it so I knew I wasn't crazy. My dad got up to check and found nothing outside the door. My brother and mom did not awaken in time to see the apparition. He had to have come in through the dead bolted front the way the house is laid out, and according to the direction we saw him walking.

We had many other occurrences that were frightening. We had doors that flew open on many occasions. The house had some doors that would swing open by themselves. There were times we would stack 3-4 large, heavy toy boxes in front of the doors and the doors would still open, sending the toy boxes flying several feet across the room. The closet had a sliding door which would open by itself. We would hear a pounding on the floor which emanated from the basement. Our kitchen lights would often flicker on and off for no reason. I was touched on at least three occasions that I recall.

The scariest time was when I was riding my scooter in the house and was pushed off with great force, the scooter flying 5-6 feet across the room. I recall being terrified, screaming and crying for a long time. Sometimes I remember feeling ice cold spots particularly in the basement, and would always sense a presence in that location. One night while my dad was at work my mom was in a panic and made my brother and I wait outside with her until dad got home. We had to be outside at least an hour and my mom never told us what happened.

I used to sit by the window in the living room spending long periods of time just staring out the window. I don't know why. One evening, it must have been around 8 pm I saw a dark shadowy figure walk in front of the window. I told my mom but nothing was to seen. I am sure she believed me though. I swear to this day what I saw. I believe it to be the same figure I saw in my room that night.

There were many other incidences that took place while I lived there, too many to recall or perhaps I do not want to remember. My parents also witnessed many strange things but refuse to talk about them to this day.

I talked to my grandmother recently and she shared a chilling story with me. She had come to watch us one day as my dad was getting ready to go to work and my mother was gone. My brother and I were napping on the couch. Over one of the interior doorways hung a sheet since there was no door there. As my father walked through the doorway, the curtain wrapped itself around his neck, choking him for a good minute and a half before he could break free. My grandmother said she was so frozen in fear that she could not react; she was in shock. My grandmother also told me stories of the front door opening and slamming continuously for almost an hour and of wind chimes going off in the kitchen with no breeze to set them off. We moved out of the house as soon as we could but it was not for 5 long months. I do not know what happened to the people who moved in after us and think about stopping by to talk to the current occupants whenever I go back to Havana. The house looks like it has been remodeled and I wonder if that perhaps stirred things up even more. I just know I am forever grateful to be out of that house.