

Ouija And The Water Tower

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These days I'm a practicing kitchen witch. Trust me, that sounds more exciting than it is since Hollywood has been kind enough to make us look like superheroes. The craft is honestly usually just lots of reading and practicing and researching. A lot of us are scientists. We're realistic. We don't make something from nothing, and oftentimes are trying to prove something occurs naturally versus supernaturally. There aren't epic battles with demons or explosive molecular manipulation abilities. There is, however, always the occasional encounter that is a bit extraordinary. For me, one of those times was when I was around 14 in my tiny little Louisiana hometown.

Back then I was less informed and still held out hope that one day I would get to blow up a watermelon with the wave of a hand, I wanted to be strong enough to help people. I had a friend, we'll call her Sarah, who had a serious bout of bad luck. Car wrecks, feelings of being watched, the sight of something in the corner of her eye that was always close enough to be known but never close enough to be seen. Her family believed that she had a shadow, a dark entity attached to her that followed her around and wanted her to itself. The worst of her misfortunes seemed to always come when she got too close to men.

I found out about this entity one day as we walked through the woods behind her house with two or 3 other friends. As we explored, we came upon a small pond that had beautiful red berry-like fruit growing sporadically around it. The pond was dark and murky much like all the death of winter that surrounded it. The only thing in bloom was those berries. It all just gave me the heebies. The sense that something awful had happened there was inescapable. I insisted we leave. It was making me physically ill. They agreed, but not before they got to eat the berries. I told them to leave them, "we don't know what they are." Of course, they ate them. Because they're idiots. As soon as they did the sensation of dread changed to one of being watched. No thank you.

I'm not sure if it was the placebo effect or if they legit were mildly poisoned, but they were all extraordinarily annoying and kind of drunk for about 30 minutes. Once they came down off of their haunted berry high, we proceeded with the next event: the Ouija board. As we played it was relatively uneventful until we decided to ask to speak to the thing attached to Sarah. It

answered. Told us a name, told us to leave her be, etc. etc. Everyone freaked out, especially when one of our friends decided to insult the thing. I wasn't convinced though. Demons don't do that. They're subtle, personal, and venomous. Whatever this was, was human. It was sporadic, confused, and insulting in a petty, general way. Human spirits don't scare me. At least...not until that night.

That night I had a dream. A vivid one. There was a family of four: Mama, Dad, son, and daughter both around the age of 7. I experienced this from the perspective of the daughter. In the dream, the dad came home to a house that stood in the same spot my friends now stood. He began to violently attack the mother beating her, dragging her by the hair, and eventually dragged her outside. The mother screamed at the children to run, but the son was paralyzed with fear. The girl, me, however, ran. Fast. I climbed high up onto a small tower. Possibly a grain bin or water tower I'm not sure, but as I ran, I heard screams, then gunshots, then nothing. Another shot rang out, whizzed by me, and made me lose my footing. I crashed hard to the ground and blacked out. I could tell that the girl was unconscious, but me, the part of me that was dreaming, felt my body being dragged. There was labored breathing followed by a loud splash. Then another. And another. And finally. SPLASH! I felt a numbing cold overtake my body, and as I gasped for air, I got water in return. I was drowning and it felt more real than anything I'd ever felt in my life. I tried to force myself awake, but I just couldn't seem to wake until finally I took one big gasp and woke up in my bed pouring sweat. I understood. That breath was my first, but her last and, there, sitting on either side of me, were the children. When they saw that I could see them, they quickly ran out of my bedroom and into the hallway.

A few days later my mom mentioned seeing a woman and two dirty wet kids standing in her door just watching her. My blood ran cold. I'd never told my mom about the dream or the Ouija board or any of that, but she described them to the tee. She said she didn't feel afraid. They weren't bothersome, but I on the other hand felt that familiar sense of being watched growing more steadily. So, I decided to bless my house, send them off, and bind the spirit of the father. We never heard from those ghosts again, and a feeling of comfort filled me for about a week. Then, that feeling of being watched again. Strong. Loud. Persistent. Terrifying. I'd had enough. I wanted an explanation, so I did a ritual and made tea to help me sleep and dream. Essentially chai with red and black peppers (told you being a witch was boring).

That night I had nightmare after nightmare. There were too many to keep track of. Waking up only to go back to sleep and be returned to another nightmare. At least until the final one. When I awoke, I didn't wake fully. I just hovered in that weird limbo of sleep and wakefulness. Swimming in the darkness of my mind and that uncomfortable feeling of being watched. I chanted in my head to try to focus my will and get my eyes to open. Finally, I was able to open my eyes. Finally, I saw what was watching me:

It was a man taller than six feet cast in shadow. He wore a long coat like a tailcoat or a trench coat and large hat similar to a boater's hat or a fedora. Despite standing in the moonlight, I could make out little to nothing about his features, all I knew was that those eyes, deep pits of sorrow were looking right at me. There was also this bizarre feeling of familiarity like I could have been staring at myself there. I don't know how long we stared at each other, but it felt like an eternity. I was frozen but not necessarily with fear, and eventually overcome with exhaustion as I more fainted than drifted off into sleep. To this day I have no clue what it was, but I've encountered a few theories. It's possible I had an encounter with The Hatman, but I also feel like it's possible that who I saw that night was Papa Legba coming to ensure the safety of those departed children and the child who just tore them from a vengeful father that tormented them even in death. Regardless of who it was, if they ever come back, I'd appreciate it if they left the nightmares at home.