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WHO KNEW THERE'D BE GHOSTS?

There's more to this old house than meets the eye...

BILL BRITTAIN
Fancy Shoes and Black Boots

At first nobody believed in ghosts. But by the end of last summer, almost everyone had seen Horace & Essie.
Harry, Books and I liked playing at Parnell House. Three acres in the middle of town with no one to bother us.
When we went inside it felt like we were being watched. One time we found a stain on the floor in a perfect circle.
I overheard dad talking on the phone - someone was thinking about buying Parnell House. I ran out to tell Books & Harry the bad news.
While they were playing at Parnell House two men showed up. The kids hid under a tree and could only see the men's shoes. They were talking about finding something in the house.
The kids decided to take turns watching the house to see if the men came back. Tommy had the first nights watch.

He snuck out of his house, and with a candle went into the Parnell House.
The candle made spooky shadows, and Tommy heard strange noises.

He looked out the window at the town. When he turned back around, there was a head on the table. It said, "Get out of my house".
Horace and Essie

Thomas apologized and started to leave, but the head asked Thomas who he was. Thomas told it his name and why he was there. The head said it had heard the two men talking also.
The head told Thomas he was brave, and not to fear him. Thomas asked if there was more of him. The heads body appeared and placed it on its shoulders.
The ghost, Horace Parnell, told Thomas the story of how he came to be there. He was beheaded by a British Redcoat.
Thomas asked Horace if he got lonely. He heard a girl giggle and say "Not at all". Water began dripping in a circle on the floor and then a girl appeared.

Horace introduced him to Esmeralda Parnell.
Essie told Thomas how she had fallen overboard, off a steamboat. The two Parnells were not buried in the family cemetery, so their ghosts were stuck in the house forever.
Horace suggested Thomas and his friends join he and Essie to stop the two men from tearing down the house.
At sunrise, the ghosts disappeared and Thomas went home. In the morning, Thomas' dad had a client in his office. When Thomas walked by, he could see the man's shoes.

Fancy ones.
Return to Parnell House

Thomas listened outside the office door. Fancy shoes offered to pay $40,000 for Parnell House.
When the men came out of the office, his dad introduced Tommy to Mr. Avery Katkus. Mr. Katkus said his friend Shandy was waiting outside for him.
Tommy told Books and Harry about Mr. Katkus, and about his night at Parnell House. They laughed and said ghosts aren't real.
The kids met at Parnell House that night. Once upstairs, they heard a noise. It was black boots - Shandy. They hid in a closet.
While the kids were in the closet, Shandy started prying apart the floorboards with a crowbar.
Tommy felt a sneeze coming. He held it as long as he could, and then aaahh....chooo!
"Scaring young ones is easy" came Horaces' voice, "how about standing up to me?"
Shandy swung the crowbar at Horace, but it went right thru him. Horace raised his pistol and shot at Shandy. He passed out from fright.
Tommy introduced Books and Harry to Horace. They apologized for not believing him earlier.
Tommy called the police from a pay phone. He said he was a concerned citizen. They came and took Shandy away.
Tommy slept late the next day. His mom was worried that he was getting sick. He promised to get more rest.
Tommy met Books and Harry at the shed. They told him Shandy was out of jail.
The kids went to see Lester Dade. He wanted to make Parnell House into a museum. Maybe he would know what was valuable in the house.
Mr. Dade told them how Esmeralda's father burned torches twice a year for her. July and October. July was when she disappeared, He didn't know why in October.
Tommy, Books and Harry were in the shed trying to think of a way to keep Katkus from getting Parnell House.
The kids went to see the mayor and ask how the village council would vote on Parnell House.
Books asked the mayor questions, and made him so mad, he blurted out things he didn't mean to say.
Mr. Dade called Tommy to tell him that Horace's journals were sold at auction recently. The buyer was Avery Katkus.
The kids went to see Mr. Beecham. Mrs. Beecham let them in and offered them tea. She told them that her husband would have voted against selling Parnell House, but that he wouldn't be at the vote.
Mr. Beecham received a telegram saying his mother was ill and to go home immediately. Tommy recognized the type on the note - it wasn't from the telegraph company, it was from Katkus.
The kids went back to Parnell House to warn Horace about Katkus buying the place.
Tommy figured out that the torches were burned in October to remember Hoarce.
Tommy guessed that something belonging to both Essie and Horace was hidden in the house. This was what Katkus wanted.
Harry moves the mantel. They find a silver box inside. Inside the box they find Essie's emerald ring.
Next they found Horace's lock box, but they did not have enough time to get it out because it was almost morning.
A Most Irregular Meeting

Tommy has a plan to save Parnell House. Books, Harry

and Tommy are going to trick Mr. Katkus into going

into Parnell House.
Once he is in the house Essie and Horace will scare him. The children trap Mr. Katkus upstairs by knocking down the stairs.
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Tommy, Books and Harry go to the Council meeting. The vote comes out two to two. Tommy stands up and tells them they must save the Parnell House for the ghosts and everyone laughs.
Katkus confesses he wanted only Horace's box and would have torn down the house. They break the box out of the mantel to see what is inside.
Inside the box, they find a thank you letter written to Horace and signed by John Hancock, Thomas Jefferson, Ben Franklin and all the others who signed the Declaration of Independence.
They talked about selling the letter and using the money to fix the house. Horace and Esse will have a home.
Parnell House got restored. Avery Katkus disappeared. Tommy, Books, &

and Harry were Hero's!
We read about

They live in a

Their names were and