

The Halloween of 1936

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A crack of thunder ripped through the silence of 1936s Halloween night. A horse drawn carriage rolled over the cobbled streets of Pluckley in Kent. Dark clouds roared with thunder, flashed with lightning and down poured with melancholy rain. There was a little chill in the air like so many of the previous Halloween nights in Pluckley.

Gracefully, the carriage passed many eerily decorated houses: pumpkins, ghosts and ghouls outside... ready to scare any little, innocent child going out for trick or treating that very evening.

The carriage was making the long journey up the tallest hill in Pluckley to the grand mansion sitting at the top; waiting for the gracious guests to arrive.,

A gargantuan humpbacked creature, dressed in a charcoal tuxedo with a silk hat swung open the carriage door to frightfully welcome his guest. A deep dark voice boomed "Welcome to the party! Please step this way."

Inside the grand entrance hall, music could be heard from the ballroom, a mystery guest entered the dimly lit ballroom dressed in a robe as dark as midnight, a black waistcoat and matching black trousers, accompanying the outfit; a blood red bow tie sat proudly on the withered neck. The other guests all dressed in their multitude of the day of the dead colours - black, red, white and orange were accompanied by jeweled masks covering their faces, so they were all disguised. Unknown. Little did all the guests know that the evening ahead of them was not going to be what they had expected. A light mist began to develop in the ballroom, the perfect opportunity for mysteries to strike!

Outside, the deep dark voice boomed again "Welcome to the party! Please step this way." the final guests had arrived. A young man wearing a mulberry suit had jumped out of the coach to take the hand of his female friend. The girl took the man's hand whilst saying "Thank you, Fredric, my dearest friend. "

"You are very welcome, Clara." Replied Fredric.

Fredric and Clara entered the ballroom hand-in-hand looking astonishingly around at all the fantastic decorations. They were the only ones not wearing 'Death' colours as Clara put it. Fredric wore a mulberry suit with shinning black shoes and sitting on his neck was a bright blue tie. Clara dressed in a neon pink dress, glittery purple shoes, an orange hand-bag and sitting neatly on her head, a pumpkin clip. They both wore matching masks: orange jewels with scarlet splotches to look like blood.

"I am so very excited, indeed for this party!" Clara exclaimed.

"OH, me too. It should be a marvelous evening. Hopefully without any crime. I've had such a long day at work today. Did you know someone attempted murder on one of their friends...I know it is Halloween but still." Fredric muttered.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the room, the mystery man was strolling among the dancing guests, his destination ~ the snack table, where there was an assortment of different food and drinks: wine,

punch, bread, sausage rolls, pumpkin flavoured cookies. Cautiously, he looked around and kept his eyes on the punch...then when nobody was watching, he hovered his hand over the bowl and entered a half a bottle of a mystery liquid. A woman wearing a skeleton dress glided over to the table carrying a spectacular twelve-layer cake. The man swooped over to her and said, " May I be any of assistance? "

"Oh, that would be wonderful, Thank you..." She replied.

" Howard...Howard Jones. " he spoke confidently.

"Well thank you Mr Jones..." in a near whisper.

" Please call me Howard!" he commanded.

"Thank you, Howard. I have been baking this cake all day and I am exhausted from carrying it around. " The woman said, " I am Stacy, Stacy Goodmen the owner of this fine house. My husband Harris Goodmen is somewhere around here. " She said, glancing around.

Howard smiled and laid the cake on the table. Once Stacy had gone to find Harris, Howard took a quick look around and emptied the rest of the contents of the bottle onto the cake.

Howard, silently thought, now once Stacy and Harris Goodmen make a speech and invite people to eat, my plans will be nearly complete! A sinister laugh exhaled from his mouth.

Meanwhile, Clara and Fredric were having the time of their lives, dancing and making spooky jokes.

'Ding ding ding'

A ringing echoed through the ballroom. Stacy and Harris were about to make their signature Halloween speech. The guests gathered around in silence waiting in anticipation for the couple to start talking.

"Welcome, welcome to our Halloween party this is our 36th party held here. As you know, this was Stacy's father's house, she grew up here and I was a frequent guest." Harris's voice boomed out into the ballroom. " Stacy's father hosted a halloween party every year until last year, when he sadly passed away. We are going to carry out his beloved tradition. So, Stacy and I invite you to dance, talk and eat, the wonderful cake that is at the table; my wonderful wife has created today. Thank you for coming! Enjoy yourselves, you will not have another spectacular party until our Christmas get-together. Now enjoy and many thanks! "

The ballroom immediately filled with applause and cheers.

One by one, people helped themselves to the food and drink... Everyone but Fredric and Clara (who were too busy dancing). Suddenly, Clara noticed something strange in the distance, something or someone appeared to be slumped against the wall... Mask missing. She twirled back around to Fredric and was startled by someone lying on the floor by the music box. Again, mask off.

"Something weird is happening Fredric" whispered Clara.

"hmm" replied Fredric.

A loud crash came from the entrance hall, they both darted out to notice the door slightly ajar...

"What is going on! Why are my guests on the floor?" Screamed Stacy.

" I do not know. "Fredric replied.

" I am going to have a look. " Clara said strolling back into the ballroom.

Clara wondered round and chose a random guest (on the floor) to examine. She ran her hand down their arm to the wrist. Clara put two fingers where the pulse usually is...

"He's dead! He's dead! Fredric come here! This man is dead!" Clara exclaimed.

"What! No! He cannot be" Fredric said startled.

Fredric breathed a sigh of relief, luckily, Clara was wrong, the guest was not dead, but his pulse was hard to find as it had slowed to 70 beats per minute.

"He's not dead, they are just sleeping. From the evidence here, whoever did this planned it extremely carefully and paid attention to detail. Mrs Goodmen, you were standing by the snack table weren't you?"

" Yes, yes I was. This man ate my cake, that person had some punch...oh that one over there had both cake and punch. "Stacy Goodmen said tearfully.

" So, they poisoned the punch and whoever did it came with sleeping potion then. This was a planned attack! Nobody drink or eat the cake. "Clara's voice echoed throughout the room.

" Mr Goodmen, can we have the list of people here tonight please. " Fredric asked politely.

"Yes of course!" Harris Goodmen said.

Harris passed Fredric the list.

Everyone from what he could see was there except for one person... Howard Jones.