



HAUNTED HOUSE

- 1 Captain Arthur Eggels Huntley, a very wealthy naval officer, built Huntley Manor in the 19th century. Huntley married his childhood sweetheart, Elizabeth Virginia, and at their engagement he proclaimed that his wife would be mistress of the loveliest house in all of England.
- 2 Huntley Manor took three years to build, with the Captain demanding the use of only the finest materials, no matter where they had to be imported from. The manor was commissioned in

the Second Empire style, which was very popular at the time. There were two storeys, each filled with bedrooms, dining rooms, reading rooms, drawing rooms and even a conservatory to grow plants indoors. Perched high on a cliff looking out to sea, the manor was built in an L-shape, with the two wings of the house joined together by a tall, rectangular tower. Captain Huntley comforted his wife, telling Elizabeth that she could sit on the viewing balcony of this tower and watch for his return whenever he was out on the oceans.

3 Everyone in the area whispered about how beautiful Huntley Manor was, with its intricately carved awnings and pillars. Elizabeth had the house painted in a warm, light mustard colour, with a brilliant white highlighting the decorative carvings. It seemed that Captain Huntley's promise was true.

4 The 19th century was a time filled with war, and Captain Huntley was called out continuously to serve his country for long spells at sea. Elizabeth, afraid of becoming too lonely, found herself a young cocker spaniel by the name of King, who never left her side. In the dark days of her husband's absence, she sat on the balcony of the tower, looking out over the waters as far as the grim horizon. At night she stayed in her favourite drawing room, rocking back and forth in a chair by the sandstone fireplace.

5 One year Captain Huntley didn't return from his voyage. Elizabeth spent months sitting on her balcony, staring out to the ocean, her eyes dulled by the strain of hoping. It was two years before word arrived at Huntley Manor. Captain Huntley's ship had been found in the Caribbean, sailing under the Jolly Roger of a notorious pirate crew. Her husband's fate was gruesome, though Elizabeth was only told that in the end he drowned; it was better to spare her from the bloodier details of pirates' cruelty. With no corpse to prove the news, she refused to believe her husband was dead. Instead, she spent her days sitting on the balcony waiting for her beloved.

6 Over the years Mrs Huntley became a recluse, with King as her only companion. She had neither the money nor the desire to look after her once beautiful home. Windows were patched with boards and the manor started to creak and groan. Elizabeth's blond hair grew dusty and grey, her skin paled and cracked, and her eyes squinted into dark, bitter scratches. The children of the nearby town whispered about her, calling her the Old Witch Huntley.

7 Twenty years after her husband's disappearance, Mrs Huntley was found dead on her balcony, sitting in her chair with her lifeless eyes looking out to sea. The bones of her faithful hound King were found in the drawing room — simply left where he had collapsed years earlier.

Mrs Huntley had no relatives, so Huntley Manor was abandoned while the authorities decided what to do with it. The mansion fell into a state of even further dilapidation. The mustard soured to a grey-green colour, while the decorative carvings buckled and sagged from years of neglect. It was dangerous to even walk in the house because the roof was leaking so badly, filling the floorboards with rot. Wind blew freely through the house and the beautiful furniture was now only good for firewood.

8 Four years after Elizabeth's death, some brave local children decided to use the manor as their cubbyhouse, breaking in through one of the boarded-up windows. Ten minutes later the children ran screaming from the house. For the rest of their lives, none of them would reveal what they had seen that night.

From that time onwards, locals told visitors the tale of the old witch who lived in Huntley Manor, and how her spirit raged through its rotting halls in search of her lost husband. Eyewitness accounts spoke of awful screams coming from the house all night long, as well as a foul-smelling fog that draped itself around the property for many days at a time. People walked faster as they passed the house in fear that the ghost of Elizabeth Huntley might attack them.

9 In the century since Mrs Huntley's death, the small town quadrupled in size, spreading out around the surrounding area. No one, however, had wanted to build up on the cliffs near the haunted manor. The council still owned the land, but they could not demolish the house because it was heritage

listed. Besides, the stories of Huntley's screaming ghost brought a lot of tourists in.

- 10 That all changed when, one night, a terrifying storm hit the town. Billowing storm clouds, thick and black, advanced inland from across the seas, blanketing the skies in darkness. Lightning forks shimmered, turning the overcast sky into a deep purple whilst blasting the land into electric white brilliance.

At the centre of this chaos was Huntley Manor. With an almighty crack a huge bolt of lightning struck the house, blasting a hole in the roof and setting it on fire. Crackling flames jumped from the manor, licking the sky in a spectacular display that drew all the townsfolk to stare in awe.

- 11 None of the townsfolk believed their eyes when they saw what happened next. As the fires demolished Huntley Manor, a loud bell tolled out from beyond the horizon. A glowing ship sailed

up from the storm-ravaged waves and floated towards the land. Bolts of green lightning lanced off the ship's mast, illuminating the sad face of Captain Arthur Eggels Huntley. The ship pulled up right above the inferno of the manor. Having come to claim his wife from the fire, Captain Huntley swooped down into the flames, before emerging again, the love of his life clutched tightly in his arms. Together they ascended towards the ship, moving through its ghostly hull. A final bolt of lightning, white and hot, stabbed into the ground in front of the manor, blinding the townsfolk with its brightness. In that instant the manor, the ship and the reunited couple vanished, never to be seen again.

Questions

- 1 The Second Empire
a was Captain Huntley's name for England.
b was a style of house.
c was the name of Captain Huntley's manor.
- 2 What was the main colour of the house?
a warm, light mustard
b brilliant white
c ocean and sandstone
- 3 After many years the decorative carvings had
a soured to grey-green.
b squinted into dark, bitter scratches.
c buckled and sagged.
- 4 Why couldn't the local council demolish Huntley Manor?
a They didn't own the land.
b They were afraid of the ghosts that haunted it.
c The house was heritage listed.
- 5 What colour was the lightning on Captain Huntley's ship?
a red
b green
c blue
- 6 How do we know that Captain Huntley loved Mrs Huntley dearly?
a He sailed away from her many times.
b He returned as a ghost to rejoin her.
c He bought her a beautiful dog.

Vocabulary

Find words in the text that match the meanings below. The word is in the section shown in brackets.

- 7 Announced or made known (1)
8 Full of fine detail or elaborately made (3)
9 To be well known for something bad (5)
10 Multiplied by four (9)
11 Lighting up (11)

Grammar

A **preposition** is a word situated before a noun to show when or where something happened.

E.g. **on** the mat, **in** the bin, **over** the fence, **before** the party, **under** the tree. Find a **preposition** in these sentences.

- 12 Mrs Huntley was found dead on her balcony.
13 She stayed in her favourite dining room.
14 He came to claim his wife from the fire.
15 This was very popular at the time.

Back To The Text...

- 16 The word *rotting* in section 8 is used as
a a verb. b an adjective.
- 17 How did the council come to own the manor?
a It was repossessed to cover unpaid land tax.
b There was no relative alive left to claim it.
- 18 Another good name for this text would be:

- a Never Ending Love
b The Old Woman and Her Dog

Sequencing

Chronologically, what occurred first? Choose **a** or **b**.

- 19 a Elizabeth bought a cocker spaniel.
b Elizabeth had the decorative carvings painted white.
- 20 a People whispered about the beauty of the manor.
b Children whispered about the witch.
- 21 a Children tried to build a cubby house inside.
b The leaking roof caused the floor to rot.

Think About This

- 22 The word *dilapidation* in section 7 is best replaced with
a mess. b decay.
c filth. d despair.
- 23 Which of the following best describe Elizabeth after her husband's death?
a fixated and reclusive
b neglectful and spirited
c passionate and disillusioned

Challenge Option

Drawing: Sketch what you think the children might have seen in the haunted house.

