

405: Ginny

[Click; rattle]

[It is night in the house. Sounds of the storm outside, but muted. Grandfather clock softly from the foyer]

Ash: So. I can absolutely confirm this place is creepy at night. I suppose the Junior Satan Club spend a lot of time here at night, so maybe they aren't as chickenshit as I thought. Even with the lights on here in the living room, I'm really aware of the house around me—stretching out and up, empty and dark.

I've created a little nest here in the living room. The overhead light is dim but works, and I've circled the space heaters in here. I'm sitting on a pile of old blankets in this little fairy ring of warmth. If I don't look at the "and the blood will fall like rain" graffiti over the mantel, it's almost cozy. I was hoping that having the lights on would bring somebody to check on me, but I think the house is too isolated. Plus I can't imagine there's anybody out in this storm.

I suppose I could keep working, at least make progress on the woodwork in the hallway or the foyer. But it feels...I don't know. This sounds weird, but it feels like I'd be bothering somebody? Like I should just keep my head down and be as quiet as I can.

I know that's crazy. That dream from the other night keeps rattling around in my head, that thing that looked like Grandpa Bob. And that crazy neighbor, if that's what he was. But I feel like I shouldn't disturb anything. I have no idea what time it is—I don't have a watch with me—but it's not super late, I don't think.

So I'm just sitting here flipping through this photo album. Trying to imagine the house back then. 1937. It was the Depression, I guess, but this place didn't look like it was suffering. Must have been money here.

[The wind picks up]

The storm has settled in. I'm definitely here until tomorrow at least. I have some granola bars and two bags of Doritos, and half a thermos of coffee. Living like a queen out here. **[sighs]** Morning's a long way off.

[Theme music; credits]

[the storm continues; Ash is humming, while flipping through the photo album. A beat]

It was so grand back in the day. I mean, you can see glimpses of that now—and hopefully once we're done in a few weeks it will be approaching something close to the original. But it's such a contrast sitting in this room, surrounded by space heaters, looking at the way it was in the 30s.

Grandpa Bob is in quite a few of these pics, actually. He never really talked much about the actual process of working on the house; like, he never told me about the people who lived here or what work he did. But I spent summers here with him and Grandma Jenny, and he'd always point it out if we drove past. "That house is where I learned to be a real carpenter," he'd say. Or "see that house, Ashley? That's where it all started." But based on these pictures, he was almost like one of the family. There's a few where he's in the background, holding a hammer or whatever, but there's also several of him standing with the family, smiling like they're all together. Not like a hired hand, I mean. I wonder what the deal was? Were they just friendly to the workers? Was Grandpa Bob friends with the family? I wonder who they were?

[Sounds of her flipping the pages]

There's no names anywhere. I wonder if there's something on the back of the photos?

[She shuffles some photos; there is the sound of movement from somewhere else in

the house]

Just dates on these. “1936.” So the year before the one I have back at the bed and breakfast. I wonder how long he worked on the place? It looks pretty done in these shots. Did he maybe come back and take the picture I have later? Like to commemorate it? Or just to bring Grandma Jenny to see it? I wish I had asked more about it before he died. I was such a self-absorbed little shit.

[Another sound, louder now]

What was that?

[Louder, to the house] Hello?

[To herself again] No one’s there, Ash. You’ve been here all day and the place is empty.

[A beat] Unless somebody else came in from the storm, through the back door?

[Louder] Hello? Is anybody there?

[A sound from the other direction, behind her]

That was the window. What’s going on?

[She goes to the window and looks out]

Nothing out there but snow. And if there was, I doubt I’d be able to see it. **[She cries out]**

Oh Jesus! **[Catches her breath]** Fuck. Okay, Hawthorne House, you have officially made me jumpy. I thought I saw...I thought I saw the man in the black suit, standing under the big oak tree outside. But there’s nothing there. The wind is so strong the snow is coming down sideways. I’ve reached the imagining stage of the evening. That bodes well.

Maybe I should try and get some sleep.

[Click; rattle]

[Click; rattle]

Okay, I know I'm freaking myself out. The storm and the quiet and the memory of that dream are all conspiring to make me crazy. I get that. But I keep hearing noises upstairs. Old houses settle and creak, I know that better than most people, but I'm starting to lose it just sitting here. So I'm taking a flashlight up to look for myself. Once I see there's nothing there I'll be able to sleep. And I'm taking this recorder with me because, I don't know, it's turned into a security blanket. And if I'm horribly murdered we'll have it on tape.

[She moves out of the living room, through the foyer, and up the stairs as she talks]

Hello? Is anybody up there? I'm coming up.

[To herself] Man it's cold. This was a very bad idea.

[A sound of movement from above]

There! I know I didn't imagine that. Hello! It sounded like it came from the bedroom with the attic stairs, the one with the dressmaker's dummy.

[She opens the door and screams]

Oh my god! Who are you? What are you doing here?

Ginny: I didn't mean to scare you.

Ash: Why are you here?

Ginny: It's cold.

Ash: Obviously. Did you break in here? Wait... are you one of the Junior Satan Club?

Ginny: What?

Ash: You're here a lot aren't you?

Ginny: So are you.

Ash: Fair enough. Look, you scared the shit out of me. You kids have got to stop breaking in here.

Ginny: I wasn't trying to scare you.

Ash: I know, but...look never mind. What are doing out in a thin little dress like that?

Come on, let's get you downstairs. I've got some heaters in the living room. Come on.

[Click; rattle]

[Click; rattle]

[They are in the living room]

Ash: There, are you feeling a little warmer?

Ginny: Still cold. But thank you.

Ash: I have some granola bars. And some Doritos. I'm afraid I drank all the coffee.

Ginny: I'm fine. Thank you.

Ash: So, I admit I figured you'd be in all black or something.

Ginny: All black? Why?

Ash: I just assumed you were all goths. Or metalheads. What with the graffiti.

Ginny: Oh, I didn't write that.

Ash: Well, whoever did. I expected you to be either in a Slayer t-shirt or dressed up like Robert Smith. Not in a white dress like you just left the prom. It's not prom night is it? Of course not, it's December.

Ginny: I like this dress. I don't know why I wear it.

Ash: Is it lace? You've torn the hem pretty badly.

Ginny: Yes. It doesn't matter.

Ash: What's your name?

Ginny: Ginny.

Ash: Huh. My grandmother's name was Jenny.

Ginny: My real name's Virginia, but I hate it.

Ash: Hers was Jennifer. I get that though. My name's Ash. Because I hate Ashley.

Ginny: Ashley's not bad.

Ash: You can have it then. Sorry I don't have anything to drink to offer you.

Ginny: It's okay.

Ash: I sound like I've invited you to a dinner party.

Ginny: If you're thirsty, we have this. [**She goes to the fireplace and comes back with...**]

Ash: Holy cats! Is that Jack Daniels?

Ginny: Do you have a cup?

Ash: I certainly do. But I've only got one.

Ginny: I can use the bottle.

[**Whiskey is poured. They drink throughout the next**]

Ash: I can't wait to rag Tony on Monday. He did the living room recon and completely missed a half-bottle of Jack stuffed in the chimney.

Ginny: The kids who come here put it there. Maybe after your friend looked.

Ash: Maybe so. Look, what are you doing here? I know you weren't here earlier. I've been here all day. Unless you were in the attic?

Ginny: Oh, I don't go in the attic. Bobby said it's dangerous.

Ash: See, that would make me want to go in the attic. As a rule, don't let boys tell you what to do. Especially boys that write "hail Satan" on the walls. Is this Bobby your boyfriend?

Ginny: Just a friend. Mama doesn't like him.

Ash: Ah, so I'm getting a clearer picture of why you like this guy.

Ginny: I didn't say I liked him. I used to. But things change, you know?

Ash: I do indeed. How old are you, Ginny?

Ginny: I'm seventeen. Eighteen in April.

Ash: Things change and change again, you will discover.

Ginny: You're fixing the house? Making it whole again?

Ash: Trying to. Redoing the wood, repairing the damage, filling in the holes. Digging out the stuff that's been covered over.

Ginny: Healing it.

Ash [considers this]: Yeah, I suppose so. I like that. "Healing." That makes me a doctor.
Ha!

Ginny: My daddy was a doctor.

Ash: Oh yeah? He must love you hanging out in this place. With Bobby, or whoever.

Ginny: He definitely did not like Bobby. But he's dead, so it doesn't matter.

Ash: Oh shit, I'm sorry.

Ginny: Don't be. He's been dead a long time.

Ash: I didn't know my dad. I did have a grandfather, but he died a few years ago.

Ginny: Did he?

Ash: Yeah. He was old. Look, why are you here alone?

Ginny: I'm always alone.

Ash: Okay, so you do have a goth's flair for the dramatic. Pour me another one.

[She does so]

Ginny: What is that?

Ash: This is an old picture album I found behind the wall in the hall over there. There

were long shelves behind the plaster.

Ginny: Yeah, I heard you knocking them out, with a hammer, right?

Ash: Yeah. You were here while we were working? How often are you here, anyway?

Ginny: Can I see it?

Ash: Sure. [**Hands it to her; a beat**] Hey. You're around here a lot. Is there a neighbor, an older man, who wears suits?

Ginny: There aren't any neighbors.

Ash: Well, there aren't any right next door, but there are some houses down the road a little bit. I thought he might have walked down here. You know how old men like to get up in things.

Ginny: A tall man, in a black suit? He walks with his hands behind his back?

Ash: Yeah, that's him! So you do know him.

Ginny: Yeah, he's not a neighbor.

Ash: What do you mean? Who is he?

Ginny: It's cold.

Ash: It's not so bad right here. Don't change the subject, though. Who is this guy? He keeps walking around my job site and I don't like him.

Ginny: No, you wouldn't like him. He doesn't care though, whether you like him.

Ash: What do you mean?

Ginny: It looked just like this.

Ash: What did? Are you drunk?

Ginny: In these pictures. The house looked just like this.

Ash: Ginny, what are you... [**a beat; something dawns**] You're...not one of the local

kids, are you?

Ginny: I live here. And I'm seventeen.

Ash: You live where? In town?

[Ginny continues flipping through the album]

Ash: Ginny put the book down. You mean you live in town?

Ginny [puts the book down]: Did you bring enough supplies? The storm could last a while.

Ash [confused]: What? I don't think I need more than...

Ginny: You should check your bag to be sure.

Ash: What are you talking about? Why are you smiling like that? Look you're getting pretty creepy, okay? Is this some Satan Club joke? I'm seriously not in the mood.

Ginny: Check your bag, Ashley. What do you think you'll find?

Ash [opening her bag]: This is silly. I have like two granola bars and a pack of Lucky Strikes. There's nothing else...**[quietly]** what the fuck?

Ginny: Looks like you have everything you need.

Ash [freaked out]: That's not mine!

Ginny: It's in your bag. Now who's being silly?

Ash: I think I would remember putting a Ziploc full of cocaine in my bag. What is this? Is this a joke? Hiding booze in the chimney, planting coke in my stuff?

Ginny: Maybe it's left over from last year.

Ash: Look, who the hell are you? What's going on here?

Ginny: That's nothing, Ashley. That's nothing compared to what you're going to find under the stairs.

Ash: Under the stairs? There's nothing under the stairs. Just a closet.

Ginny: You've already forgotten? It's okay, Ashley. We can remember for you. The house always remembers.

Ash: Okay. Good job. You're officially freaking me out. Let's play a different game, okay?

Ginny: He's still there. Under the stairs. He's not the first, of course. Bobby knows.

Ash: I think you should shut up now.

Ginny: When he comes, you should let him in. He's been waiting for you, Ashley. The sins of the fathers, you know. Debts have to be paid.

Ash: What are you—

Ginny [interrupting]: You can use it, if you want. What's in that bag. I know you want to. You might need it before you look under the stairs. When I lived here, it was all whiskey and cigarettes, but I know you like something stronger.

Ash: I'm not listening to this.

Ginny: You don't have to look yet. He'll wait til you come.

Ash [getting up]: You must be a real hoot at the Satan parties. Come in here and I'll show you. There's nothing under the goddamn stairs, you little creep.

[She walks into the foyer while saying this, and opens the closet door behind the staircase. It complains as it scrapes open]

Oh my god!! Jack!!

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