

In October 1978 Sarah Mathews moved into a small coastal house. Within a couple of days she realized she was not alone.

The Haunting Of House 49

Inspired by true events.

It has been said by many that what we term as a ghost is no more than an imprint on time, an echo from events long since past. They cannot think, they cannot feel and most importantly they cannot harm. The day Sarah Mathews moved into House 49 she shattered this belief.

Sarah inherited the small coastal house in September 1978 when the last member of her family, her Great Aunt, died. Having had very little contact with her estranged Aunt Sarah entered the house for the first time on the day of the funeral. At this point she was not alone, her husband Tony was with her but owing to Tony's infidelity their marriage was failing and after an argument Tony left leaving Sarah in the house alone. At first it seemed the perfect situation, devastated by her broken marriage the house offered the solitude she so desperately needed but within a week she would flee the house never to return.

A True Story.

It was a cold, dark, winters night as we pulled into the drive of house 49. We were about to step over the threshold of the house where it had all happened.

Once inside the house it was surprisingly tranquil given its chilling history. We were taken into the living room where the ghost had once attacked the very women we had come to meet.

We sat and listened for hours as she told us her story, how she had lived with the ghost, lived through the haunting, most of the time isolated and alone. We experienced what it was like to live in a house when you have no way of defending yourself against an unearthly foe.

In her own words this ghost was a "nasty piece of work". It was relentless, determined never to stop until it got what it wanted. It grew stronger and stronger. Its acts became more and more malicious until one day it fought her for possession of her own body. This ghost wanted revenge on God himself and was determined to use Sarah to do his bidding.

Something had lingered there for decades...

The Haunting Of House 49

After spending the first night alone in the house Sarah begins to make the house her home. She finds an old shawl, which has been caught by the wind and blown into her garden. Sarah knows it to be her neighbour's and ventures next door to return it. Trinkets, photos, news articles, all to the psychic world, the supernatural world, adorn the walls. Her neighbour Melvina was an old promenade fortune teller.

Sarah is fascinated by her curious neighbour and takes up an offer to have her fortune read. But when the old woman speaks of things Sarah is not ready to hear she ends the reading and leaves with the warning "bitterness is like a flame, the more you feed it the fiercer it will burn" echoing in her mind.

Sarah returns to the house and begins to clear her Aunts things from the master bedroom. She carries a packing box into the middle room. This room is unusually sombre. The curtains lay closed and only a few stark pieces of furniture sit in the quietness. Sarah opens the curtains. As the sunlight hits, the room screams as if rudely awoken from years of slumber. An old wooden chair sits facing the bed. Sarah moves to it and tucks it back under a small desk.

No sooner has Sarah left the room than the box, which Sarah has placed on the bed, smashes to the floor. Sarah moves back into the room. The box and all its contents are sprawled across the floor. Confused she bends down and begins to pick them up. She stops. Her attention caught by the chair. It's no longer under the desk; it is back where it was, back facing the bed. Sarah considers it, she's sure she moved it? Maybe she didn't, she slides it back under the desk.

It is late at night, rain spits against the window. A comfy fire burns in the living room hearth as Sarah thumbs through her Aunt's old photo album. On the mantle shelf an aged clock gently ticks, ticks, ticks its way towards eleven twenty nine. As the second hand reaches the twelve it stops, frozen. Wood scraps against wood as something is dragged across the floor above. Sarah looks up as the floorboards begin to creak and footsteps slowly creep across the ceiling.

Armed with the fireplace poker Sarah makes her way towards the middle bedroom door. She throws it open, poker ready. No one is there the room is quiet. Sarah's eyes turn to the chair, it is back facing the bed and this time she knows she moved it.

A creak on the stairs behind sends her spinning. She freezes, terrified, as the same footsteps she heard before begin to move down the stairs. They continue their ghostly walk through the house. A door is unlatched, its hinges creak, then silence. Sarah steps into the kitchen. The cellar door is wide open. The stairs below descend into darkness. She slams the door shut.

The next morning Sarah is sat at the kitchen table, eyes fixed on the cellar door. She has hardly slept and desperate to make sense of it all, decides to go down into the cellar. It's quiet down here, a little too quiet. Discarded belongings cast eerie shapes but nothing else is here. Uneasy Sarah decides to leave but is halted in her tracks. An old beam above begins to groan as if some great weight was hanging from it. Unnerved Sarah takes a step back. An old dressing mirror sits in the darkened corner... Wham! Caught in its reflection a shadow moves behind her. Sarah turns. An old vase teeters, then smashes to the floor. Sarah bolts out of the cellar and slams the door shut. She waits. The door remains closed.

Sarah's eyes bolt open; she's been asleep in bed. She looks to the bedside clock, it flips to 11.29. She waits motionless as her worst nightmare is confirmed; the footsteps start. They make their way from the middle bedroom towards her door... She holds her breath. Does it know she's there? Will it enter? They pass and move away down the stairs within seconds the cellar door creeps open.

Sarah splashes her face in water. God she's tired. She looks in the mirror she's looking rough. She rubs her temples her head hurts. Downstairs the cellar door is waiting open. She slams it shut. A row of china cups hang from hooks, one of them begins to swing. The others remain motionless. Boom, boom, boom! The front door goes. Somebody is knocking. Sarah opens the door, her best friend Jen is standing there.

Jen has heard Sarah is alone and has come to offer support. She says it'll be like old times, they can be roomies again. The two women drink wine and Sarah confesses how angry she is that Tony, her husband, cheated on her in her own bed. Jen voices concern that Sarah's allowing her anger and resentment to take over.

Jen starts to unpack in the middle bedroom. Something moves up behind her... It's Sarah. She doesn't want her friend sleeping in here and confesses she believes this room, in fact the house to be haunted. Jen doesn't believe her but agrees to wait in Sarah's bedroom tonight, at 11.29, for the footsteps. They arrive on cue.

Jen cannot believe what she is witnessing and despite Sarah's warnings follows them all they way down into the cellar. Nothing is there. Sarah hovers at the top of the cellar steps desperate for Jen to come back up but now Jen's attention is on the creaking beam. A deadly silence engulfs the house. The cellar light goes out. Jen is plunged into darkness. The cellar door slams shut. A frantic Sarah pulls at the handle but the door is stuck fast.

A breath, a long drawn breath cuts through the silent cellar. Jen slowly turns. Is something there? Wham! She is met face to face by the ghostly features of a hanging man. His form silhouetted against the moonlit window. His eyes fixed on Jen. She screams. Her scream cuts up into the kitchen, the silence is broken. All sound returns to normal. Jen bolts up the stairs and scrams for the door "Sarah, get me out! Get me out now". Sarah still struggles with the door. Jen turns. The hanging man remains motionless, staring at Jen. The latch pops free. Sarah opens the door. A terrified Jen is standing there. Nothing is behind her.

Still unnerved from the night before Jen leaves an increasingly weary Sarah in bed and heads into the kitchen to make coffee. As she rummages through the cupboards someone moves into the kitchen behind her. Jen thinks it's Sarah and begins to talk but Sarah is still in bed. Jen turns. The cellar door is wide open. Breath, the long drawn breath from the hanging man the night before moves close to her ear. Determined to show no fear Jen states she's not afraid. For a moment all goes quiet then, wham! Door after door is violently slammed throughout the house. Panic ensues. The presence is getting stronger and Jen insists Sarah should get in a priest to bless the house. Sarah's behaviour is changing; instead of listening to her friend she turns on her. Stating that it's all her fault, she angered the spirit and she should leave.

Alone in the house again Sarah's behaviour is becoming more and more irrational. In desperation she places everything back as it was. Even closing the curtains in the middle bedroom in the hope she can appease the spirit. It is already too late, the spirit is growing stronger and stronger and later that day, when Sarah sees the curtains are once again open, she enters the middle room to find... The ghost is there, sitting in the chair, waiting. She lets out a stifled gasp as its head slowly turns to meet her gaze.

Panicked, she bolts back onto the landing. The ghostly footsteps begin to follow. She rushes for the sanctuary of her bedroom. She waits as the ghostly steps pass by and down the stairs. All goes quiet. She peers out the door, all is clear. She makes her way along the landing, checking the middle room; there is no sign of the ghost. She reaches the top of the stairs. He's there! Waiting! His ghostly silhouette cast on the bottom steps. His stare fixed on Sarah.

Night draws in. The ghost hasn't moved. A defeated Sarah slides down the wall. Mind racing, will it never let her go? She moves to the middle bedroom and in one swift movement rushes for the chair by the bed. Lifting it up she hurls it against the wall. The ghost has taken the bait. The chair is back upright and facing the bed. With the stairs clear Sarah runs. She flings open the front door and Wham! Runs straight into a darkened figure. It's Tony.

Worried by her friend's behaviour Jen has phoned him but Tony has other ideas. He thinks the two have concocted an elaborate hoax. "There is no such thing as ghost". Annoyed by Tony's presence and enraged by his accusation that she would do all this, "just to get him back" Sarah sets out to prove the presence of the ghost. Placing marks at the foot of the chair, she moves it, stating it will be back on the marks by morning. That night nothing happens. The chair does not move and the footsteps do not come. In the morning the two have their final argument. Tony leaves, this time for good.

Heartbroken by her failing marriage Sarah contemplates removing her wedding ring but something in her is not ready to let go. She slides the ring back onto her finger, needing the reminder, needing the anger to cope.

Fast asleep Sarah is unaware as the bedside clock flips to 11.29. The ghostly presence is back. It creeps into the room and into the bed behind her. His breath moving ever closer to her ear, she wakes. Time seems to slow. She struggles to catch her breath. She's being choked. Desperately fighting back she begins to lose consciousness. Loud rapping cuts through the silence. Melvina is at the door. The ghost looses its

hold. Sarah throws herself from the bed. The form doesn't move, its shape holds for a moment before the covers drop back. Then nothing.

Sarah's eyes come to rest on an old news article displayed on Melvina's wall. *Psychic finds missing boy*. This is not the first time she has helped somebody. In fact this was what Melvina had tried to warn Sarah about on the day of the reading when she had not wanted to listen. Understanding the ethereal world Melvina explains that Spirits use energy to form themselves in our physical world and our emotions are pure energy. Not only is Sarah's anger destroying her but what is in the house is feeding on it. The more anger it can consume the stronger it will become. For all this to end Sarah must let go of her resentment towards Tony.

Sarah cannot believe this is possible and Melvina is forced to tell her own story. She knows only too well the power of emotions. She has been blind for over fifty years, with no medical reason found. She tells Sarah about the last days of her sight. How she had been in love with a devout man and could not speak of her gift. How she had seen in a vision that he would drown at sea and had not spoke of it. How she watched as his boat sailed over the horizon never to return. How that had been the last thing she had seen before grief took her sight. As the night draws to an end Sarah leaves. Melvina's warning racing through her mind.

Overwhelmed by the day's events she collapses on her couch and within minutes is asleep. The first of the morning light cuts into the house. Wood is dragged across wood. The ghost is dragging the chair back to the bed! Sarah startles awake. She lets her head fall into her hands. It feels like the worst hangover ever. She moves to the kitchen and grabs her pills. Turning back from the sink the cellar door is wide open. In desperation she hurls the glass and screams, "What do you want from me?" All remains quiet. She takes a step towards the open door, staring into the darkness. Flick. The cellar light is on.

Something is down here, something it wants and she knows it. Frantic, she searches the cellar. Nothing. Nothing is here. Her attention turns to an old cabinet sitting against the fireplace. In one swift movement she pulls it back. Old boards are battened to the chimney wall she pulls them loose. Hiding in the dust is an old book. She lifts it out and blows clear the dust from its cover. It's an old Bible. His Bible. She's found it.

A creak on the stairs above halts her in her tracks. He's there, slowly making his way down the steps towards her. Sarah's terrified, there's nowhere to run. All she can do is wait as his ghostly footsteps move down into the cellar. They stop. Sarah waits. Nothing! She races for the steps, her only way out. She stops. Her eyes drawn to the old dressing mirror. He's there! Waiting at the foot of the stairs. His reflection caught in the glass. Sarah slowly turns her head, away from the mirror to where he is standing. Nothing is there. She looks back into the mirror. Wham! She is met face to face by his ghostly features. The whole left side of her face begins to draw down. She struggles for breath. Her left leg gives way from beneath her and she buckles to her knees. Caught in the reflection of the mirror her face is changing. He's there inside her. She begins to lose consciousness. Her hand loosens its grip on the Bible and it slides to the ground. As it hits, all returns to normal. She heaves in a breath, as the cellar door is slammed shut. The attack has stopped.

Melvina is sat on her porch, eyes cast to sea. Sarah steps up behind her, the bible in her hand. Melvina senses that the spirit has travelled with her and Sarah asks if she will help her find out what it wants. This is an angry spirit that is seeking revenge on God himself. Melvina warns it would be better if Sarah left the house, left it be. But Sarah is not willing to give up. She is ready to fight and Melvina concedes to help.

First they must find out why the spirit still lingers. What happened? Why he has turned from God? Sarah leads Melvina to the middle bedroom and she sits in the chair. Soon the spirit comes. Melvina allows him to take possession of her body. We watch as his history unfolds. A young boy stricken by fever draws his last breath. The man, our spirit closes his dead son's eyes. Following the path of the spirit Melvina walks towards the stairs. Sarah watches on helpless as this blind woman is led in a trance down the stairs and to the cellar.

A noose hangs from the beam. Melvina rises on a stool towards it. The shadow cast against the wall is not her own, it's him about to hang. Melvina's foot moves forward from the chair. She is about to step off... Sarah stops her. Melvina has seen everything. She fears this is a battle they will not win. He blames God for taking away everyone he ever loved, despite him being a loyal and faithful servant. He hung himself in an act of defiance. He hung himself to deny God his very soul.

Sarah is determined to win this battle and prompts Melvina for more information. She finds out that he stays because he believes that suicide is a sin and sinners cannot enter heaven. Sarah decides that if the ghost has trapped himself here by his belief that she will use the words of his own bible against him. Armed with passages to destroy his conviction, Sarah and Melvina prepare for a battle of wills against their unearthly assailant. At 11.29 every night he relives his death. At 11.29 tonight they will be waiting for him.

The mantle clock hands reach eleven twenty nine. Sarah and Melvina wait in silence as the footsteps move down the stairs towards them. Sarah tenses as the living room door creaks open. No one is there but Melvina's eyes turn to meet someone's gaze. "Welcome. We have something we want you to hear". She nods to Sarah. Sarah stands and lifts up the bible. She begins to read.

The ghost is instantly angered by the words he hears and his presence becomes physically known in the room. Candles blow out, furniture is flung; the mantle clock smashes to the floor. Unyielding Sarah reads on. Melvina spasms and a guttural voice spews forth from her lips. Despite all that Sarah has read, the ghost will not concede. He still denies God and now he has possession of Melvina. Without warning her chair is dragged back. Her milky eyes turn pitted black. Now they are his eyes. They turn to the bible in Sarah hands. "Give it to me"

Sarah backs away clutching the bible, she means to keep it. Melvina pursues, relentless. Sarah holds the bible out to the open fire. She shouts for the ghost to stop or she'll burn his book. He keeps coming. Sarah thrust the bible close to the flame. At last he stops. She tries hard to understand why he wants to hold on to something that creates so much anger. In an instant Melvina's eyes, fall to Sarah hand, to her wedding ring.

Sarah rips the ring from her finger. “No, I will not do this anymore” She is ready to forgive Tony, stating that it is part of life. Sarah has come to this realization too late. The ghost is too powerful, he has no intention of forgiving now or ever. Melvina gasps. Her whole body tenses. Before Sarah can register she is flung backwards crashing to the floor. He is out of Melvina and fighting Sarah. It’s a violent struggle. With every move she makes she is pinned down. Every turn she takes she is met by his ghostly features. “Leave her! Or I shall destroy your book.” Melvina has the bible and is about to rip it apart. The attack stops. All goes quiet. Sarah clammers to her feet. Is it over?

A criss-cross of wood is battened to the cellar door to prevent him from entering. Crack! A slat is torn back. Crack. Then another, it’s not slowing him down. Within seconds the door is thrown open. Melvina screams “Stop him”. If he hangs himself tonight he will rise again and again. Sarah runs to the top of the cellar and turns on the light. The bulb explodes into pieces. She grabs the last lit candle and descends into the cellar.

The cellar is quiet. The stool is already in place. The beam creaks. Sarah raises the candle. Her hand trembles as she speaks. “You don’t have to do this” Crack! The glass on the dressing mirror splinters. Sarah jumps. She moves the candle to the glass. Caught in the reflection, in the fragments we see the shadow against the far wall. A noose hangs from the beam. Sarah looks back to the room, there is nothing there. She turns back to the mirror. This time he’s there! He reaches for the noose. “I don’t understand. Why are you doing this?” It’s hard to keep sight of the image. The light of the candle dances over the splintered glass. Sarah catches it again. He looks to her and begins to lower the noose around his neck. Sarah is close to despair. When she had moved into the house it had been her chance to move on, to heal but the ghost robbed her of that. She realizes that as long as she keeps his company she can not change, she can not move on. Sarah continues to watch the ghost. He is still unaffected by her plea and pulls close the rope around his neck, there is nothing more Sarah can do. He will never change but Sarah has!
Her eyes remain fixed on him.
“You know what. Go ahead, do it! Hang yourself. Rot in hell for all I care. But know this. When you wake tomorrow, you will be alone”

CUT TO BLACK:

ROLLING CREDITS

Sarah left the house the next morning. Never seeing the ghost again. To this day it is not known whether he moved on or if only his ties to Sarah were severed.

Sarah later gave the bible to a local spiritualist circle. Although many of its members reported feelings of being watched when in the bibles

presence, nobody ever witnessed the ghost.

The circle leader died only months after taking the bible into his home. He had not been ill previously and no obvious reason was found for his death.

Soon after, the Bible vanished. Nobody knows who took it or why.

Although Sarah forgave Tony, she never went back to him.