



The Red Room: A Short Gothic Novel (Gothic Novel's)

H. G. Wells

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A Short GOTHIC Novel

The Red Room

By H. G. Wells

The story begins with the narrator, who's standing by a fire in an unknown room, confidently announcing to a couple of rather creepy elderly people that he's never seen a ghost and is not easily frightened. These creepy people – a man with a withered arm and an older woman – warn the narrator ominously that he's doing whatever it is he's doing (we don't know the details yet) by his own choosing.

The sense of foreboding increases when another even more ghoulish old man suddenly appears. This "man with the shade" enters the room and coughs up a storm. In the midst of a tense silence, the narrator asks to be shown to the haunted room. The man with the withered arm tells him to take the candle outside the door. If the narrator wants to go to "the red room" on "this night of all nights", says the old man, he has to go alone.

The narrator doesn't seem to be phased by these warnings, gets directions from the man with the withered arm, goes out the door, picks up the candle, and leaves the others behind. After a walk up a spiral staircase, through a long, moonlit passageway, and up a small flight of stairs he finds himself at the door of the red room.

We learn from the narrator, who now feels slightly nervous, that he is in Lorraine Castle. It's been abandoned for eighteen months, since "her ladyship" left it behind. (We learn that the old people are the custodians, or caretakers, of the castle.) Apparently there have been many little incidents in this haunted, red room, dating back to the "tragic end" of a joke played by a husband on his young wife there long ago. Most recently, a young duke died while trying to spend a night in the haunted room. This news doesn't bode well for our narrator, who is trying to do just what the duke did. There is a sense of the narrator's bravado fading

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