

The Old House ----- By LINDA BOYKIN--junior

(This paper is an outgrowth of a three-weeks unit on vocabulary enrichment. All words underlined are found in the 60-word study--Editor)

There was a dearth of light, and the night was as dark as an abyss. The old house looked doleful when the two boys descried it. Part of the house had been devastated by a recent windstorm, and the grass had not been cut for many years. Earl and Cliff had heard that the house was haunted, but they had tried to dispel these thoughts.

The boys had received an anonymous note telling them to go to the old house. There had been some dissension as to whether or not they should go. Then Cliff had said, "No one can say I'm scared to go there. If you won't go with me, I'll go alone."

"Nothing doing," Earl said. "If you go, so do I."

As the two boys entered the house, Earl made an erroneous step and knocked over a table. The walls seemed to absorb the noise and re-echo it louder than before. The boys stood inert for a moment, but then laughed at each other. Earl found an old lamp and lit it, saying, "Boy, are we lucky! At least we do have some light."

The words were hardly out of his mouth when the light was suddenly obliterated.

"Hey," Cliff stormed, "Why did you blow out the light?"

"Me?" Earl queried. "I didn't. And the door isn't open, and ever if it were, no wind is blowing tonight. I don't like it here. It seems as if eyes are peering at us through fissures in the walls."

Cliff told Earl to stand by the door while he looked around the room, and if anyone came, whistle. Earl took up his vigilance at the door, even though he still thought the house was fraught with ghosts.

Cliff climbed the stairs slowly and started to enter one of the rooms--when he stopped. His eyes dilated with fear. Was he seeing things or were those white, ghost-like shapes really moving around the room? And what was that incessant noise? This was enough to daunt anyone.

He screamed, turned and ran. He went down the stairs

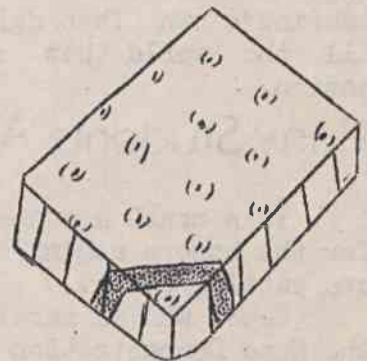
like a deluge of water after the dam has broken. Earl heard Cliff coming, and as fear is contagious, he was already out of the house and running before Cliff even got to the door. When Earl reached the road, he stopped and waited for Cliff.

"What happened back there, Cliff?" asked Earl.

"I don't know exactly," Cliff murmured, "but you can bet I'm not going back to find out."

The boys stood pensive for a moment; they then turned and walked home.

Is the old house really haunted? I really couldn't say. But you can ask Earl and Cliff. They might have an answer for you.



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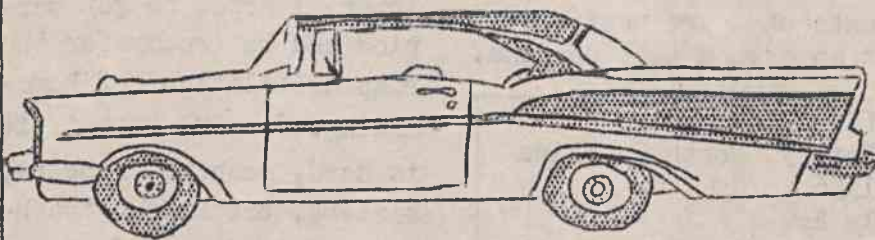
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