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THE  
JUDGE'S  
HOUSE



ISBN

978-605-2220-82-5

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Basım Yeri: ERTEM BASIM YAYIN DAĞITIM SAN. TİC. LTD. ŞTİ.

Başkent Organize Sanayi Bölgesi 22. Cadde No: 6 Malıköy-Sincan/Ankara

Sertifika 16031 Basım Tarihi: 2019

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## CHAPTER 1

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This is Malcolm Malcolmson's last year at the university. Now, the semester is over, and Malcolm must study for his final examination. He has a big family, and the house is always noisy. So, he cannot study at home. He wants to go to a quiet place and stay there alone for a month.

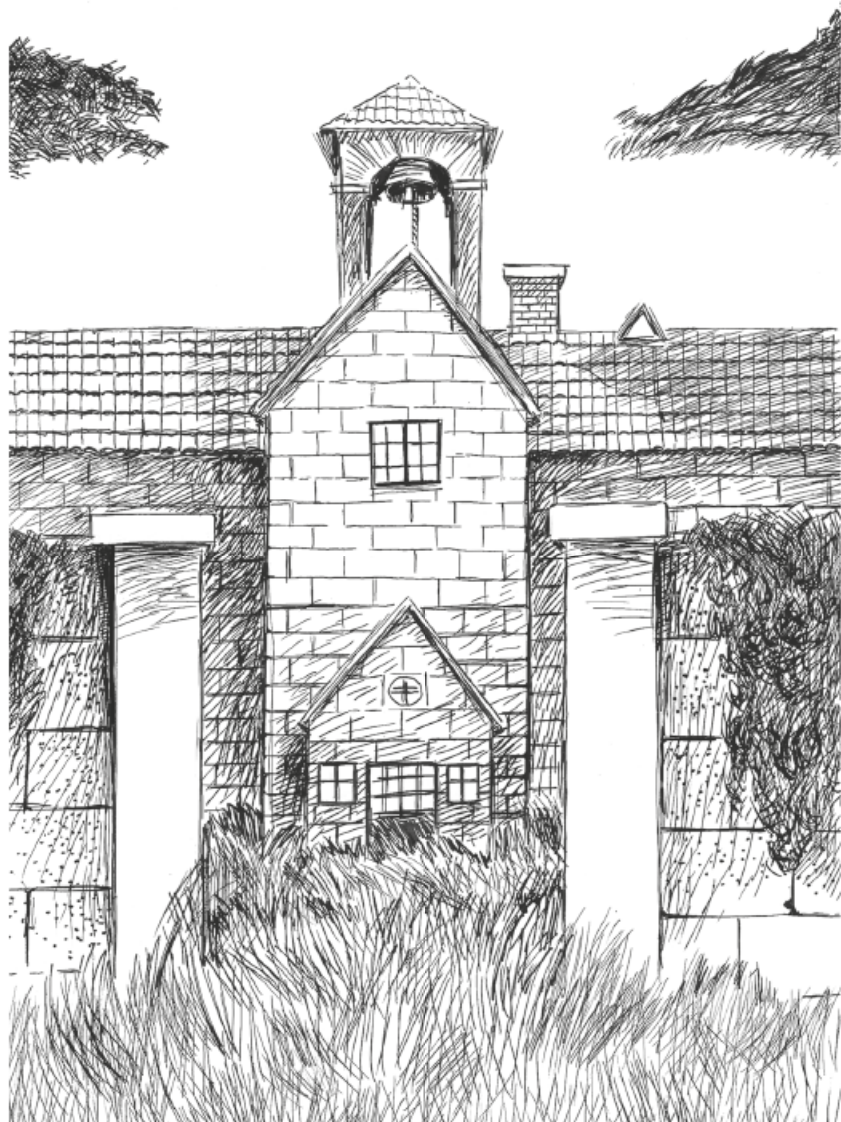
'Why don't you go to our summer house at the seaside? You will be alone there,' his mother says.

'But that place is not very quiet. And I have friends there. I won't be alone,' says Malcolm. 'I will go to a quiet small town in the country and rent a house. I won't have any friends in a town like that.'

'That's a good idea,' says his father. 'And we will not tell any of your friends about this. They can't come and **disturb** you there.'

The next day, Malcolm packs a suitcase with all his books, papers and some clothes. He goes to the train station and takes the first train to an **unfamiliar** town. The town's name is Benchurch. He doesn't know anything about this town.

He arrives there in the evening, after a journey of three hours. He spends the night at the town's only **inn**. In the morning, he walks around in the small, quiet town and looks for an empty house. He finds an old big house. It has an untidy garden in the front, and a high wall around it.



*"This is the right house for me," he says to himself happily.*

'This is the right house for me,' he says to himself happily. 'No one will disturb me here. I can work very hard.'

Then he goes to the shop across the street. 'Does anyone live in that old house?' he asks the shopkeeper pointing to the house.

'No, no one lives in it. It is always empty,' answers the shopkeeper.

'Oh, that's good because I would like to rent it,' Malcolm tells him. Then the shopkeeper sends Malcolm to the town's lawyer, Mr Canford. He is also the agent for the house. His office is near the inn. Malcolm walks there and asks Mr Canford about the house.

'I am surprised because no one wants to rent that house. People say strange things about it,' says Mr. Canford. But Malcolm has no interest in Canford's words. He doesn't ask him about the strange things because he likes the house very much. He rents the house and pays three months' rent. And Canford gives him the keys.

Malcolm walks back to the inn and takes his suitcase. He thanks the **landlady**, Mrs Witham. 'Are you leaving the town?' she asks him.

'No, I will live in the old house across the shop. It's in a quiet place, and I'm renting it for three months,' Malcolm says.

The landlady's face becomes **pale** with fear, and she says, 'Oh, no! That's the Judge's house!'

'Tell me about that house, please. What is wrong with it?'

'I know one thing only. It is the house of a very bad and cruel judge. He is dead now, but his **spirit** is still there after a hundred years. That's a very **scary** and dangerous house. You must not stay there,' the woman tells Malcolm.

'Oh, don't worry, Mrs Witham. I don't get **scared** easily. And I will be very busy. I must work very hard. I must read a lot of books, and I won't notice anything. I can't worry about any stories about the house,' says Malcolm. 'I must go now and clean the place.'

'Oh, I know an old woman. She cleans houses and offices. Her name is Mrs Dempster. I can bring her to the house,' says Mrs. Witham.

Malcolm thanks Mrs Witham and says, 'That's great. I can't clean that big house alone.'

He arrives at the house. It is very dark inside. He goes into all the rooms and opens all the curtains. There is a lot of dust everywhere. There are white sheets over the furniture in every room. He walks into the dining room. It is a very big room with a large table in the middle. There is a fire place, too. He decides to live in that room.

'I don't need the other rooms. This one is big enough, and I can work on that table,' he says to himself.

A few minutes later, Mrs Witham arrives with the cleaning woman.

Mrs Witham is **curious** about the inside of the house. She wants to see the rooms, but she is scared. So, she looks into each one together with Malcolm.

'Mr Malcolmson, you need a new bed. The beds in this house look very old,' she says. 'I will order a bed for you from my friend's shop. They will **deliver** it in an hour.'

Malcolm thanks Mrs Witham for her help again and walks her to the door. Mrs Witham stops at the door and says, 'I hope you do not hear any strange, scary sounds at night, young man.' She seems very worried about Malcolm. But her words make the cleaning woman smile.

'I am never afraid of strange things. I don't believe the stories about this house. It is hundreds of years old, so there are many rats here. They can make strange sounds at night. Also, the door handles and drawer handles are very old. They can fall down in the middle of the night. It is normal to hear strange sounds here,' the cleaning woman tells Malcolm.

'You are right. Those sounds don't **scare** me. I need a quiet place to study, and this is just the right place,' says Malcolm. 'I will be alone all the time, and I will study hard.'

The old woman laughs and says, 'You will definitely be alone here, young gentleman. Don't worry.' Then she begins to work. And Malcolm goes out for a walk. He takes one of his books with him. He wants to sit in the park and read.





*Mrs Witham is curious about the inside of the house.*

After a long walk, Malcolm comes back to the house. The cleaning woman is gone. He goes into the dining room, and he is very pleased. The room looks very clean and tidy now. There is a new bed near the window. The fire is **lit** and his supper is ready on the table.

'Oh, this is a very comfortable life,' he thinks with a smile on his face. Then he lights a lamp because it is getting dark outside. He puts some more wood on the fire and eats his supper. After supper, he puts his books and papers on the table. He begins to read. He studies hard until 11 o'clock.

'I need a short break and some strong tea now,' he says to himself. He adds some wood to the fire and makes a pot of tea.

'A few cups of tea can help me study until **dawn**,' he says to himself.

He takes a **sip** from his cup and begins to read again. Suddenly he hears a noise. And the noise gets louder and louder. He looks around the room. There are rats everywhere. They are running up and down the walls, over the furniture and under the floor boards, **scratching** and **squeaking**.

'The light from the lamp and the fire **frighten** rats at first. After some time, they are not afraid anymore', Malcolm thinks. Then he remembers Mrs Dempster's words about rats and smiles. 'I am glad I am not afraid of rats.'

He takes the lamp and walks around the room with it. He looks at everything with the light from the lamp. He looks at the old paintings on the walls, too. There is a thick **layer** of dirt and dust on them. So, he can't see them **clearly**.

In every crack and hole on the walls, he sees the face of a rat. The

rats' bright eyes **glitter** in the light from his lamp.

Suddenly, he notices a rope hanging down in the corner, on the right side of the fire place. 'Perhaps it is the rope of the great alarm bell on the roof,' he says to himself. And he sits in the high, old wooden chair on the right side of the fire. He drinks his last cup of tea. Then he goes back to the table and continues to study.

He works until **dawn**. It is not very dark outside now. The room is very quiet. He shuts his books and looks around. The fire in the fireplace is very small and low. But there are no rats around.

'I don't need any more wood now. I must go to bed and sleep for a few hours,' he says to himself. 'I will study again in the morning after breakfast.'

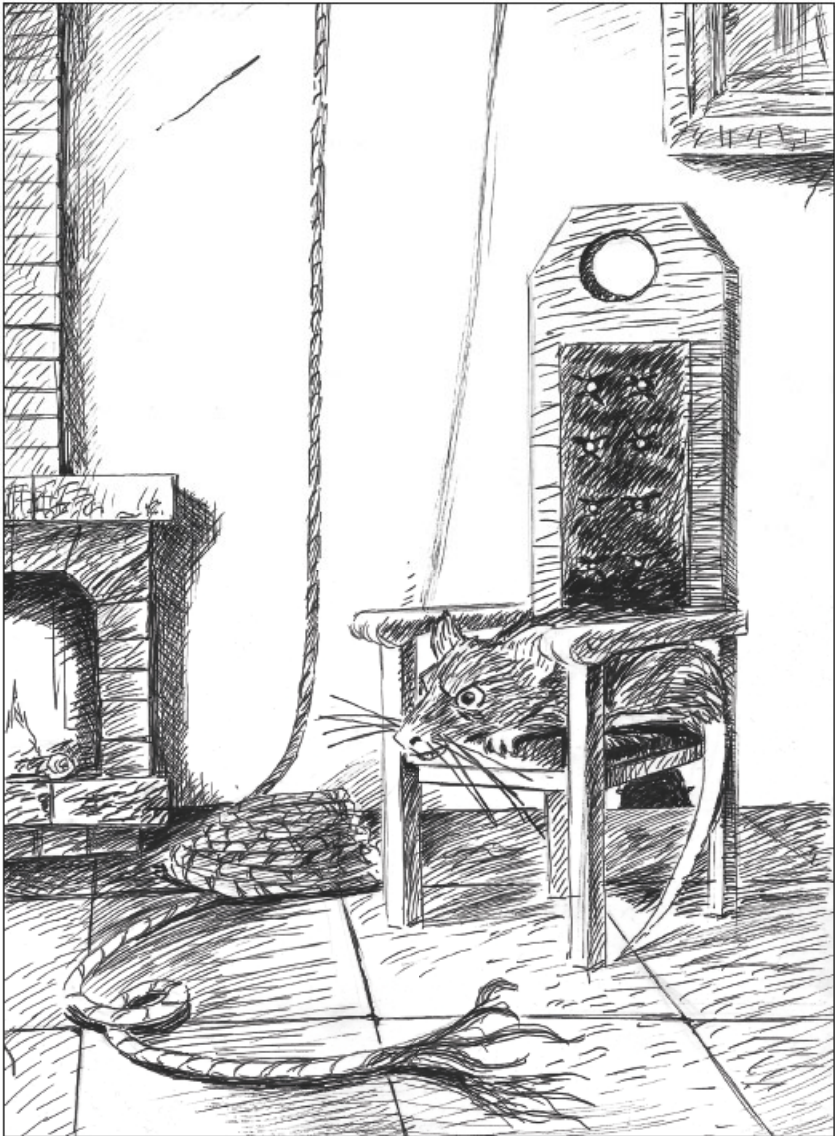
Just then he notices something big sitting in the high wooden chair next to fire. It is an **enormous** rat! It is looking at Malcolm with cruel eyes. Malcolm throws a thick book toward the rat. The rat doesn't even move. It shows its big white teeth angrily. Malcolm takes the iron fire **poker** and runs toward the rat with it. The rat quickly jumps down on the floor with a loud **squeak** and runs up the rope. It goes somewhere on the ceiling or up on the roof. Suddenly, all the other rats come out of the holes. The room is filled with rats and their noise again.

Malcolm is very tired and sleepy now. He doesn't pay attention to the rats anymore. He doesn't even hear their noise. He goes to bed and sleeps.

He wakes up hours later with Mrs Dempster's voice at his door. 'May I bring in your breakfast, sir?' she asks.

'Yes, please leave it on the table,' Malcolm says.

*The Judge's House*



*It is an enormous rat! It is looking at Malcolm with cruel eyes.*

**ACTIVITIES**

**A. Read the five sentences. Find the five hidden names in the puzzle.**

1. Malcolm's surname is very similar to his first name.
2. It is a small, quiet town in the country. Malcolm rents a house there.
3. He is a lawyer. He is also the agent for the Judge's house.
4. She is a kind landlady. She is very helpful to Malcolm.
5. She cleans and tidies Malcolm's room and prepares his meals.

E	G	R	C	G	V	L	T	C	E	X	K	H	L	S
Z	H	T	N	A	D	T	Y	Y	C	J	C	X	F	K
N	S	F	O	H	N	J	S	P	G	R	Q	S	O	U
V	W	A	S	Q	X	F	F	Q	U	B	A	Y	J	O
U	G	C	M	T	I	K	O	H	P	O	B	X	W	M
N	F	J	L	I	I	D	C	R	W	B	N	H	J	B
I	Z	I	O	G	S	N	Z	A	D	C	Q	F	K	C
L	R	X	C	H	E	D	V	R	K	Q	C	D	Q	K
N	O	L	L	B	F	Z	B	R	I	E	W	D	Q	M
Q	A	N	A	K	I	X	I	U	W	Z	W	X	Z	A
X	I	L	M	U	N	D	K	A	I	Q	N	Z	Z	V
C	K	Q	L	N	L	C	R	O	T	J	F	Z	T	T
T	Q	M	W	J	T	G	G	G	H	G	O	H	S	N
D	D	E	M	P	S	T	E	R	A	J	C	S	U	D
D	Z	Y	X	H	H	Y	P	N	M	C	G	O	D	U



**B. Match the definitions (1-8) and the words (a-h).**

1. very light in colour, almost white: ____	a. enormous
2. an old, small hotel in the country: ____	b. frighten
3. a very short, sharp noise: ____	c. landlady
4. very big; bigger than normal: ____	d. lit
5. the beginning of the day; sunrise: ____	e. pale
6. to make someone afraid: ____	f. dawn
7. a woman who owns an inn or a house with rooms for rent: ____	g. squeak
8. burning (2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> form of light) ____	h. inn

**C. Complete the sentences with a new word from the chapter.**

1. Malcolm drinks a small amount of tea from his cup. He takes a s\_\_\_\_\_.
2. Mrs Witham wants to see the house very much because she is c\_\_\_\_\_.
3. Malcolm doesn't know anything about the town. It is u\_\_\_\_\_ to him.
4. The men bring a new bed to Malcolm. They d\_\_\_\_\_ a new bed to his house.
5. The rats are not a problem for Malcolm. The rats do not d\_\_\_\_\_ him.-
6. Malcolm can't see the paintings very well. He can't see them \_\_\_\_\_.

D. Fill in the gaps under the pictures with the words below.

layers

glittering

spirits

scratching

poker

scared

screaming

scare



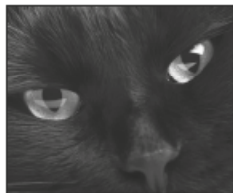
1. The cat is \_\_\_\_\_ the wood.



2. She is \_\_\_\_\_.



3. They are \_\_\_\_\_.



4. The cat's eyes are \_\_\_\_\_.



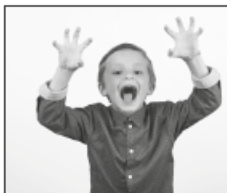
5. She is using a fire \_\_\_\_\_.



6. The cake has four \_\_\_\_\_.



7. There are \_\_\_\_\_ near the house.



8. He wants to look \_\_\_\_\_.

## GLOSSARY

### Chapter 1

**clearly** (adv) in a way that is easy to see, hear or understand

clear (adj)

**curious** (adj) wanting to know about something; eager

**dawn** (n) the time at the beginning of the day when light first appears; daybreak

**deliver** (v) to bring something like a letter, goods, etc. to someone; to hand over  
delivery (n)

**disturb** (v) to interrupt what someone is doing by making noise

disturbance (n)

**enormous** (adj) very big in size or amount; huge

enormously (adv)

**frighten** (v) to make somebody scared; to scare

frightened (adj)

**glitter** (v) to shine with flashing points of light; to sparkle

glitter (n); glittering (adj)

**inn** (n) a small and old hotel in the country

**landlady** (n) a woman who owns an inn or a house with rooms for rent

**layer** (n) one of several pieces of material on top of each other

layer (v)

**light** (v) to make something start to burn

light (n); light (adj)

**pale** (adj) very light in colour or almost white

**poker** (n) a metal stick that is used to move coal or wood in a fire

**scare** (v) to make someone feel frightened; to frighten

**scared** (adj) feeling afraid; frightened

**scary** (adj) causing fear; frightening

**scratch** (v) if an animal scratches, it rubs its claws or nails against something by making a noise

scratch (n)



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bram Stoker (1847-1912) was an Irish author known for his Gothic stories, which are horror tales that happen in mysterious old buildings or castles. Stoker was born in Ireland, and he was the third of seven children in his family. In his early childhood, he was unable to stand or walk because of an unknown illness, but he recovered completely at the age of seven. He attended the Trinity College, Dublin from 1864 to 1870.

Stoker began his literary career as a drama critic for the *Dublin Evening Mail*. In 1878, Stoker met his idol, the actor Henry Irving, and he worked as Irving's manager for 27 years. He wrote Irving's letters and accompanied him on his American tours. Henry Irving is known to be one of the inspirations for Count Dracula, the title character of Stoker's novel *Dracula*.

Stoker published short stories since 1872, but he did not become famous until the success of his novel *Dracula* (1897). His other well-known novels include *The Primrose Path* (1875), *The Lady of the Shroud* (1909) and *The Lair of the White Worm* (1911). *Dracula* and *The Lair of the White Worm* were also made into films.

### Sources

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