

The Hill of Kings

By

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Chapter 1: The Guitar Flight

Shrieeek!

'What was that noise?' I wondered.

I do not like this old house. It was a two-floor red brick house with what used to be a pointy roof. Something had happened to it. The top point no longer existed. It was now a big flat square, with windows that opened into the attic. There was a big courtyard with hedges on one side. While there were sheds on the other side blocking the prying eyes of visitors of the Hill of Tara. My parents had told me it was a site where a lot happened centuries ago. In the house there were lots of strange sounds. I thought that it must be haunted. It belonged to my great-aunt, I had never seen her, neither had anyone else for the last year. Not knowing if it was the creepy house or my parents.

Shrieeek!

'There was that noise again, what could it be?'

The door of my room was wide open, enabling me to hear that second noise clearly. I just remembered that it couldn't be my parents.

That morning at breakfast at the end of their first week my mom announced, "I will go into town with your dad while he goes to work I want to do some shopping. "

The instant she said shopping, I switched off and didn't hear the rest of what she related.

She then got my attention back when she asked, “How are you finding Ireland our country of birth, so far after one week?”

“I loved it when we lived in the Netherlands where I was born. Everyone was nice to me there. I got invited to birthday parties, playdates, and other special events. They treated me like one of their own, possibly because I was born there. I felt as an outcast when we moved to France and the U.S.A. . I hope it will here in Ireland. Because there was nobody living in my great-aunt’s house in the middle of nowhere, we decided to move in. I am thirteen now and have to go to secondary school where I don’t know anyone. I don’t feel like anything special I am small with my 4.11 inches. If only I was taller and stronger, then I would feel better able to face starting a new school. You'd think I would be good at settling in by now, making new friends and fitting in at school but it still scares me. Why did we have to move countries so often?”

“We had to for dad’s anthropologist job.”

My parents left straight after breakfast leaving me on my own. They would only come home that evening. The sound came from my great-aunt’s room’s direction. Curious to know what it was I got up to have a look. If I was in trouble I had no one to help me. The neighbours lived far away, and I did not know anybody here yet. The commotion propelled my body forward to see if my great-aunt had returned. The entrance to her room was the only one in the corridor, so there must be something going on there. I got up and looked to the door of her room, the corridor was sparsely lit with one small lightbulb.

I glanced around the corner, expecting to see my great-aunt. With her wispy grey hair tied up in a bun and a disgusting big fat brown wart on her nose. That was the image I had of her. That wasn’t what I saw. Instead, there was the back of a person with a slim wiry build and dark hair in a ponytail. He wore a long black

coat that went to the ground made of what resembled black feathers. That person gave me a bad vibe. Gazing at the man made the hairs on my back of my neck stand on end. *'What was this creepy looking man doing here? Obviously breaking in, but why?'* The more he watched the man, the more terrified he ggot. My heart was pounding so loud that I feared that the intruder could hear it, too.

I wasn't sure why I had such a strong feeling of unease. possibly was scared seen that I was alone. All I wanted to do was to hide under my duvet. It wasn't just the black clothes or the fact that he was breaking in. There seemed to be something else in the air, first of all it stank, it felt extra heavy and electrical. My heart still pounded, I also started to hyperventilate. I had to calm down before the creepy man would hear me. I couldn't sit there and wait for this evil man to catch me, I had to do something. I knelt to see what was going on. I placed my head flat on the ground so I could see but wasn't noticeable. I closed my eyes and took three deep breaths. My heart was still pounding, but I was breathing normally. I ducked back, crouched, and peeped around the corner again. All you could see under the feathered coat was his black, shiny DR Martens. Without the use of a key or his hands, I heard the click of my great-aunt's door lock click. I wanted to get away from this man. I stood up and turned around.

“Meow!”

Came a squeal from an unseen creature, shocking me. I realized I had stepped on the black cat's tail that lived here when they moved in.

Once shortly after they had moved in I had queried, “Dad, where is Great-Aunt Judy?”

There was no answer but my dad's posture immediately changed. He was about 6ft tall with a full head of hair with some grey strands in it. He hunched

forwarded, looked small and weak. The colour left his face, his lips started shivering. I thought I saw a glistening at my dad's eye before he turned around and walked away. Sniffles came from his direction and his upper body trembled.

I asked shyly, “Are you alright, dad?”

He grumbled in reply, “I’m fine.”

I didn’t know what to do when I saw that my dad was upset. *‘It was really unlike my dad, best to try and ignore it,’* I thought as I didn’t want to upset him any further. I turned around and looked down in my bowl of cereal. I had lost my appetite and just stirred in it. That was in the first week now he was home alone with an intruder chasing me.

To escape from the intruder I dashed up the stairs into the attic. Footstep noises seemed to be coming from everywhere. They sounded as if they were coming down towards me and from behind me. Logically, they must be coming from behind me. I shook my head and dashed forward. I then stopped for a split second, worrying that I might crash into someone’s evil outstretched arms. There was only one way in and out of the attic. No matter how well I hid, the man just had to turn the space upside down to find me. Maybe I should have gone downstairs. No need to think about that now, I thought, bolting up the stairs again. My chaser was hot on my heels. I could swear I could smell the man's foul breath. It stank of spoiled food. It was that strong from a distance. I didn’t know where it was coming from but there was also a scent that reminded me of my feathered pillow after we had washed it. I am not sure which smell is worse, neither are pleasant odours.

I struggled to the top of the stairs, desperate to get away. At the top of the stairs, I noticed a string less guitar leaning against the wall. Without warning, the

neck of the guitar appeared in between my legs. Next it came up under my bum, lifting him as it flew upwards. As the guitar glided toward the ceiling, I wriggled in fear, nearly losing my balance. I stiffened, bent forward and grasped the guitar's neck.

“Got ya,” said a high-pitched male voice while a hand grabbed my ankle.

I froze, not knowing what to do.

“Awe!” Screamed the same male high-pitched voice and the grip loosened.

The black cat had scratched the horrifying man's ankles. The man shouted many words that I didn't understand but didn't sound good. The man tried to kick the cat, but the cat was too quick for him. I was now floating halfway between the ceiling and floor. The window unlocked and opened by itself. The guitar was just out of the window when I heard lots of noise from the attic. Immediately I felt a weight at the end of the guitar, which tilted dangerously backwards. I moved my full weight to the front, but now it tilted forward. I shifted backwards, restoring the balance, but the extra weight remained.

“Meow,” I heard a cat cry behind me.

When I turned around, I was relieved to see it was the cat that lived in their house and not the chaser. It was hanging at the end of the guitar with its claws barely holding on. The guitar stopped and hovered in mid-air outside the window. When I pulled the cat up by the scruff of its neck, it let out a sigh of relief. While helping the cat, I got a look at the attic. Somehow boxes had fallen onto his follower, stopping the man from pursuing them. The chaser was just coming to his feet with a threatening look. I had only seen his back before, but now I got a good look at his face. His lips resembled two thin lines of which the ends never went up.

He had a big, long thin nose, a long rangy neck, lanky legs and long arms compared to his small torso and there was something very wrong with how his eyes looked. It was as if he had no pupils just two puddles of black.

The man's evil stare turned into a nasty-looking grin. I wasn't sure, but it looked like my pursuer was growing feathers and a yellow beak. I turned around, faced forward to see where they were going, making sure they didn't smash into anything. When I turned back around, the window slammed shut. There was a big bang against it when a black bird flew into it. Instantly it slid down, dazed, and confused. The man was not to be seen, just a black bird, which I recognized as a raven. I had once done a school project on ravens. That was how I was able to identify it.

I was relieved when the guitar started to fly upwards. The intruder terrified him. Normal people don't turn into animal, or birds. That only happens on TV. I knew I didn't want to go back home while that man was still there. With any luck, the man would leave soon. I wished *'the guitar would get out of sight of the house.* The moment the thought came into my mind, the guitar jerked upwards as fast as lightening. I wasn't expecting it, I nearly fell off it and hung on for dear life. They barely missed a few treetops as the guitar rose to the safety of the clouds. The cat whimpered after a short time in the clouds, rousing me from my day mare where all I could see was the man catching me as in picking out at my eyes and suffocating him with his foul breath. I instinctively turned around and reached out to the cat to soothe it. Clearly it was happier on the ground then floating in the air. The higher in the sky the floating guitar reached, the colder I got. I passed right through a dark cloud and was soaked when I got out. I wished for a raincoat or any piece of clothing that could fend off the chilly gusts of wind and rain.

The cat did not mind the water at first, but as its fur got wet the cat immediately shook the drops off its shiny coat. With every shake the guitar became unsteady, which threw me off balance. I turned around and glared warningly at the cat.

“Meooow,” cried the wide-eyed cat pitifully.

When the clouds dispersed, I did not recognize anything around me. The guitar hung still for a while, giving me a chance to look for a point that I knew. I kept flying high in fear of being seen by people on the ground on this absurd floating string less guitar. I realized I had to go lower to see details on the ground. I am worried someone will see me.

The only landmark I recognised was a large house surrounded by a walled garden. It was massive, made up of a large main building with several smaller buildings surrounding it. The outside was dark grey with lots of cracks, showing its age. There were sharp pointy spikes on the roof and surrounding the gutters. There were several closed off chimneys. *How is it that I don't know more about this building.*

It had towers on all the corners and above the big wooden entrance door. The entire complex looked very old and gave me the chills. It was still unfamiliar to me. I went slower over the walled garden to have a good look at the weird items. There was a crocodile with a bat with its wings stretched out on its nose. It looked as if it was going to take off, but it didn't move. The sight of it made me snigger, it looked as if they were talking to each other. The bat opened its mouth occasionally after which it moved up when the croc opened its mouth. After gazing for a while at them, the glimmer of something drew my attention. Set against the wall were some items that you wouldn't see often standing outside. There was a guitar with

strings, a broom, a standing lamp, a baseball bat and a mop. The cat also had a keen interest in the house. It hissed and let out a rumbling growl.

At that moment, from the corner of my eye I saw a black form plummet into the garden. It landed smoothly and instantly transformed into a human. He had long dark hair and wore a long black coat. I expected the man to come up to me. Instead, he walked into the house. Saving me from a second encounter. I realized I was easy to spot and thought to myself ‘*down.*’ As if by magic, the guitar began descending to the ground. “Meow,” whimpered the cat when the guitar started to go down. At roof level, I felt a sharp sting on my upper body.

The cat had its claws in my shoulder. The guitar stopped suddenly, and I moved back to the middle of the guitar’s body. It wasn’t that comfortable sitting on the opening, the edges hurting my bum. All I could do was to occasionally move one of my butt cheeks slightly not to ruin the guitar’s balance. Hanging motionless in the air, I looked at the suddenly aggressive cat. It was tugging on my shirt, trying to pull me up and away from this big house.

I heard a very quiet whisper, “Don’t go.”

I must have imagined it so I mumbled, “Cats can’t talk, right?”

Suddenly there was a chill up my spine that motivated me to change my mind about going to the ground. The guitar moved again by magic, swinging into a full U-turn. It flew away in the direction the figure had come from. I thought if that man or raven was my assailant, following the direction it came from it would bring him back home. There was a chill in the air, but I didn’t mind. Floating high above the ground was the safest way to not be seen by anyone. Not far away I spotted the Hill of Tara. I recognized the view. It was the same as when I looked it up on the internet. Under the image it read that the Hill of Tara was situated in Co. Meath, a

province in Leinster. It was just north of Dublin, in eastern Ireland. It was known for its archaeological sites, in province of Meath. I couldn't quite put my finger on it, but the Hill of Tara was no ordinary landmark. From the sky there was a big circle and a big stone and bumps and lumps in the fields. The feelings I got from looking at it from this height were strange to say the least.

At last, I spotted the house. I thought it would be better land quickly to avoid being seen. Get into the house as quickly and quietly as possible just in case the intruder was still there. I slowly approached the attic window, which was open again, the raven guy must have left it open when he left. I gently flew in, thinking to myself that I needed to set down super quiet. Within an instant the guitar dropped to one inch of the floor. Leaping off the cat released its fearful grip on my shoulder as we reached the ground. I sighed in relief as this happened. My feet touched the ground enabling me to slide backward off the floating guitar. The cat seemed to be super happy to be on solid ground again and walked around my legs purring. It then shook itself, as if it was trying to shake off the memory of the experience. .

I was relieved when I didn't hear any noise. I stepped over the feathers moved around the boxes and went down to his room quiet as a mouse. In his room I lay on his bed. I contemplated how weird it was that each time I thought where i wanted to go, the guitar would respond and take me there. *How did it know?* That wasn't important right now. I thought that *'It was all weird more likely he had fallen asleep, and he was dreaming. People don't turn into ravens and there was no such thing as a flying guitar.'* I grabbed the book my mom had given me with the Dutch stories.

"Daniel, we are back," shouted his mom waking him up.

An hour later she hollered, “Daniel, dinner is ready please come down.”

When he walked in to the kitchen his mom looked up at him from dinner and remarked, “Are you alright? You have a bedhead, your eyes look blurry and glossy. As if you had a bad night sleep.”

“I did just fall asleep and yes it feels as if I had a nightmare.”

“You couldn’t have been asleep for longer then an hour which isn’t enough time for a nightmare. Come and sit down for dinner.”

While I pushed my dinner from side to side on my plate I remarked, “I am just not hungry. “

“But I made your favourite dinner, spaghetti Bolognese.”

“Son, if you want to grow big and strong as me you’ll eat your food.”

“Yes dad, I do,” I mentioned. I rolled some spaghetti on my fork under the prying eyes of my parents. When I started doing the same with a second fork full I stopped. My parents stopped looking at me giving me a chance to trow the remainder of my. Dinner in the bin. I then walked up to my room to go to bed.