

The Couple at 27A

by Jill Clay

Oh God, they were at it again. Sally looked at the clock - 3.30 am! This had to stop, she was exhausted after being woken regularly at night by the sounds coming from next door at 27A. They were a young couple who seemed to be happily married on the surface but the regular nightly events seemed to indicate otherwise. They had recently moved in and so no one really had got to know them yet, she wondered whether she ought to go round and introduce herself. Perhaps it would be an opportunity to tactfully mention the nightly noises and see whether there might be an explanation. She looked at the clock again, what on earth was going on next door, it sounded as if they were murdering each other and furniture was being thrown around the room. She was tempted to bang on the wall in protest but decided against it, she was always happier to avoid confrontation if possible. She got up to pay a visit to the loo and decided to make a cup of tea before attempting to settle down again and try to get some sleep.

The next morning she struggled out of bed after a very disturbed night. All day she felt very disorientated and couldn't concentrate on anything. Probably, she thought, that was largely due to the lack of sleep not just last night but many nights before as well. The phone rang. "Hi Sally, I wondered if you'd like to meet up for a coffee this morning?" It was her friend Maura who lived down the road. "Oh Maura I'm so glad to hear from you. I need someone to talk to, what time do you want to meet?" They settled on a time to meet in the coffee shop in the village and Sally managed to pull herself together to get dressed and ready to go out. She was so pleased that Maura had rung. Maybe she could throw some light on the problem neighbours. They greeted each other warmly and decided to add an inviting cake to the coffee order. Maura looked at her with worry in her eyes. Sally looked pale and drawn and there was something obviously wrong. Maura put an arm round Sally's shoulders and was taken aback when Sally burst into tears. "Whatever's the matter?" Sally explained about the couple and all she had had to put up with. Maura listened with concern and began to question what little Sally knew about the young couple. "I heard in the village that they keep themselves to themselves, Maura offered. Not only that but somehow they appear to be scared of people and make no effort to join in village activities. Sally and Maura discussed things further but came to no conclusion as to what they could do about it and after finishing their coffee they went round the shops.

The retail shopping therapy helped to take Sally's mind off the problems but later on as she was cooking supper she began to dread the night ahead. Maura had offered to stay with her but she didn't want her to get involved and sent her home. Now she was wishing she hadn't accepted the offer, some company would be lovely. As the evening wore on she became more and more agitated and by the time she went to bed she was too wired up to settle down for the night. She tried to read but couldn't concentrate and after a few pages she gave up. Perhaps a hot bath and a whisky would help? So far it had been all quiet next door but in a way that was just as bad as the waiting for noises to begin was almost worse. She decided to take up the idea of a bath and went to get things ready. She looked in the bathroom cupboard to treat herself to a very expensive bath oil which she

had been saving for a special occasion! Not, she thought, that this counted as a special occasion but it might relax her enough to get a few hours sleep! It didn't. No sooner than she had got out of the bath and settled down with a glass of whisky than the noises began. Slowly at first but then gradually getting louder and at one time it sounded as if a really heavy piece of furniture was thrown at the wall. She gave up on the idea of sleep and went back downstairs to watch the television. How she got through that night she never knew but the next morning she was determined to do something about it. She was sitting at the breakfast table when she saw a figure dressed in a black cloak going up the path to next door's front door. Well, look at that she thought, they've decided to call on the local priest. Hopefully they were asking for some marriage counselling. She watched him knock on the door and after a few minutes the door opened a couple of inches and a rather pale and frightened face appeared. She watched him disappear into the house and it was some considerable time before he left - in rather a hurry she thought. Anyway whatever counselling the priest had given the couple just hadn't done the trick as the next night was just as bad if not worse and she was beginning to get paranoid about the idea of going to bed. Right she thought! I'm not putting up with this any longer. She marched round to 27A and banged furiously on the door. It was some considerable time before it was opened but she kept banging until at last someone unlocked the door. The same scared pale face appeared and she had a momentary pang of conscience, only momentary though as she launched into a loud complaint about the constant noises. When she had finished there was a period of silence from next door. Then the door opened wider and the young wife invited her in. When she went into the living room she was astounded, there was upturned furniture everywhere, crockery smashed and pictures torn off the walls. "I'm really sorry" said the young wife. "my name is Judith and this is my husband Rob", she indicated to a rather good looking young man standing behind her. "I don't know how to explain all this disruption without sounding rather loopy. The thing is that we seem to have acquired a poltergeist! We don't know what to do or how to get rid of it but we invited our local priest to come and bless the house. He did what he could but he said he would have to bring somebody better trained and it would take a few sessions before the entity was removed". She smiled weakly. Sally didn't know what to say but it was a relief to know that it wasn't Judith and Rob's marriage that was the reason. Over the next few weeks she became quite friendly with them and invited them round to 27B for a meal on a few occasions. Gradually the noises began to subside. She didn't know anything really about the why's and wherefores of poltergeist invasion but it was a relief to know that the church had managed to find a solution. It was an even bigger relief when peace once again returned to 27A!

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