



The Twin French Cottages on Plymouth Ave.

A Mid-Victorian Ghost Story

By Cornelius Buch
Sept. 2008

Note: This tale is told in the literary style of a mid-Victorian ghost story popular in the U.S. and Great Britain during the years 1860-1890, the Irish authors Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu and Mrs. J. H. Riddell among its most skilled practitioners. While a work of fiction, this story is based on factual events that occurred in Buffalo, New York between 1901-1906.



- Chapter 1 -
Larry and Margaret

The early 1980s was a time of great hope for Buffalo's west side. A section of the city that was developed within a one-mile wide strip nestled between the mighty Niagara River on its western edge and the former boundaries of the village of Black Rock and the village of Buffalo on its eastern edge. The area was filled with some of the most imaginatively-designed homes ever built in Buffalo, during the last half of the nineteenth century when it was a bustling Lake Erie port city. Some were large, elaborately-constructed mansions while others were more modest in size. At the turn of the twentieth century, the neighborhood was in its heyday, meticulously maintained and undeniably beautiful.

It has been said that every thirty years or so, neighborhoods change. Buffalo's west side was no different. By the late 1920s, the neighborhood's prime had past. Many of the large houses showed signs of age, their proud owners moved to newer neighborhoods and the old dwellings began to be carved up for rooming houses. Their once grand, open spaces were redefined as small rooms for down-on-their-luck Buffalonians, impoverished immigrants fresh off boats from Europe or itinerant workers from the steel mills that opened up after the beginning of the twentieth century. While the new century ushered in rapid technological and social changes, some of the old families resisted. A few held out and stayed in their comfortable old homes that

witnessed joyous family births, happy childhood games, elegant debutantes making their entrance in society, hopeful weddings and sad funerals. These families believed that the neighborhood was still a fine place for a new generation.

One of the prettiest spots in Buffalo's west side is Symphony Circle, a small park designed soon after the Civil War by America's foremost landscape designers, Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux. In the nineteenth century, it was simply called *The Circle*.

Just west of Symphony Circle is found Plymouth Avenue, named after a church whose members felt an affinity to the pilgrims of Plymouth Rock. It is a broad street filled with picturesque Queen-Anne style Victorian-era houses. Two houses appear different from the rest, at nos. 95 and 99 Plymouth Avenue. They are nearly identical, built in 1881 in the French Second Empire style with a Mansard roof and turret, surrounded by a black cast-iron fence. While the houses located on Symphony Circle and its surrounding streets such as Plymouth Avenue had good bones, many of them were in serious states of disrepair by the 1970s, victims of decades of neglect.

By the time the early 1980s rolled around, the neighborhood started to change again. Young people rediscovered the quality craftsmanship in the old houses and the conveniences of a densely built-up community. The distinctive Victorian housing styles which were out of fashion by the mid-twentieth century suddenly became desirable again. One of the people who was part of this neighborhood renaissance was Larry Bartz. His mission in life, he decided, was to purchase old grand homes, undo the destructive changes that had been made to them in the twentieth century and return them to their original nineteenth century condition.

Larry had this goal in mind when he purchased a house on Plymouth Avenue and started renovations. Across the street, a small elderly woman who lived at no. 95 Plymouth Avenue sat on her porch, day after day, silently watching Larry work on his home. One day, the woman greeted Larry and invited him into her home. That's how Larry first met Margaret Carter.

Larry had been inside many of Buffalo's old Victorian houses, but found Margaret's home one of the most authentic he had ever seen - even the gas lights were still operational. Once Larry learned a little about Margaret and her home, it all made sense. Her family was one of those hold-outs from the nineteenth century who weathered the neighborhood's good, bad and then good-again times.

Margaret lived in no. 95 Plymouth Avenue nearly her entire life. She was born there and never married. While homes in the United States are rarely known for their ancestral ownership, the house at no. 95 Plymouth Avenue was an exception. The house stayed in Margaret's family, those that built it, for over a century.

Larry and Margaret became fast friends. Margaret appreciated Larry's vision for the restoration of Plymouth Avenue's once grand homes. Yet Margaret continued to grow increasingly frail until one day she was forced to enter a nursing home. She had to sell her home, and it was Margaret's wish that Larry purchase it. She trusted no one else to care for it and knew that Larry cherished its history and craftsmanship.

Larry purchased the house and all its contents from Margaret. Some of the furniture had been in Margaret's family for generations. Larry loved the house so much that he moved into it and rented out his own house across the street. Margaret lived

for a few more years and even though she no longer resided on Plymouth Avenue, Larry continued to foster their friendship. He would visit Margaret in the nursing home several times a week. During those visits, Margaret would tell Larry lots of stories about herself, the house and its neighborhood - in that order. Margaret was especially fond of telling Larry stories about her cousin, Arthur Godfrey, the popular 1950s-era television host. Larry continued to visit Margaret for several years.

On April 4, 1984, Larry returned home and had a strange experience. Margaret's favorite chair in the parlor had been turned upside down. One of the Victorian-era gas lights was lit. At first, Larry thought the home had been burglarized, although nothing was missing. He went outside to ask one of his neighbors if she had seen anything unusual, but she had not. But in passing, she asked Larry, "Did you hear? Margaret died today."

Since Margaret's death, several other unexplained events have taken place in the house. The bed in which Larry slept was Margaret's old bed. One morning he arose as usual, departed the house and upon his return, he discovered the bed neatly made. Of course, Larry did not make the bed and there was no one else in the house.

Larry's most dramatic experience, however, occurred when he was rearranging furniture in the house and moving some from the first to the second floor. Larry's friend Bill helped to move a piece of heavy furniture up a back staircase that was accessed from the home's shed-roofed rear appendage. As they were lifting the heavy piece of furniture, Bill, in a weak protest, asked aloud "I wonder if Margaret would want this piece of furniture upstairs?" At that very moment, a strong gust of cold wind entered the back room where they were and blew the door closed that led to the stairwell. Not only had the door blown shut, but the door's skeleton key had actually been turned and locked! Bill was so frightened that he jumped out the window. Needless to say, Larry and Bill decided to leave the piece of furniture where it was!

Perhaps certain houses are lightning rods for ghostly manifestations. Perhaps it is easier for ghosts to manifest themselves in a particular house. Or perhaps once a ghost has appeared, a mystical door has been opened that allows other spirits to pass through when conditions are just right. In any event, Larry's unexplained experiences at no. 95 Plymouth Avenue made him believe an old story that Margaret told him one day while he was visiting her in the nursing home. It was a story that was passed down to Margaret by her father about some unexplained events that took place in the house soon after the turn of the twentieth century. Perhaps it was just an entertaining story, or perhaps not.



- Chapter 2 -
William and Joey

The year was 1905 and Margaret's father, William Carter, who was 25 years old at the time, lived in a suburb of London when he decided to move to the United States to seek his fortune. His father was a carpenter, but William learned the skill of masonry after being an apprentice since the time he was a teenage boy. A handsome young man with black hair and brown eyes, he was of medium height but was strong and muscular, resulting from years of lifting heavy bricks and stones.

An adventurous young man, William had heard about Buffalo with its many building projects underway. He left London sooner than he had intended when his father died. After paying his father's debts, there was little money left and it seemed as good as a time as ever to pursue new opportunities.

William arrived in Buffalo during the first week of October. It was the beginning of autumn and not the best time to seek out construction projects. Most of the work had already been contracted and was winding down in anticipation of Buffalo's cold winter season.

William didn't know a soul in Buffalo, but had a tenuous connection. William's mother, who had passed away when he was just a young boy, was from the same province as Judge Joseph G. Masten's family. The Mastens' Welsh ancestors were from the same old village where William's mother grew up before she moved to London. While some members of the Masten family moved to America, others remained behind in London and were friends with William's mother's sister. William's aunt Mabel enlisted her friend Elena Masten to write William a letter of introduction to carry with him to Buffalo.

When William arrived in Buffalo on rail from New York City, he made inquiries into the whereabouts of Judge Masten's home. He was told that the Mastens lived at no. 222 North Street, on the southwest corner of Elmwood Avenue. By Buffalo standards, the Mastens' house was already an old one, being built about 1850 and located in one of Buffalo's wealthiest neighborhoods.

When Judge Masten purchased the house, he made extensive alterations to it, especially on the outside, putting on an ornamental cornice, cupola and elegant front entrance with two stately columns made of cut sandstone. The rather imposing square brown-brick house had no grounds to speak of except on one side, being built close to the street, but there was a certain solidity and suggestion of substantial citizenship that gave it individuality. Masten had lived in the house with his wife and their two children, Joseph and Lilly. By the time William arrived in Buffalo, only Mrs. Masten and her son lived in the house. Lilly had died when she was just a girl and Judge Masten had already passed away.

Masten's son, Joseph Griffith-Masten, as he always wrote his name, did not follow in his father's footsteps as a legal light but was a young man of artistic tastes, rather affected by the English style of dress and manners. He introduced afternoon tea long before it became a pleasant custom in Buffalo.

Masten was devoted to his mother. Even though the Mastens had to live on a reduced income after Judge Masten passed away, they were still received into the most exclusive social circles in Buffalo and in Newport, where Joseph Griffith-Masten and his mother leased a small house.

Mrs. Masten was still in Newport with her sister and planned to return to Buffalo in late October. Joseph Griffith-Masten stayed alone in the big North Street manse except for the Mastens' housekeeper, Mrs. Bridgett Cairn. With her husband Patrick, the coachman, Bridgett had been in the family's employ since the time when Judge Masten was still among the living.

It was late afternoon before William found his way to the Mastens' house. He rang the bell and waited. Mrs. Cairn was polishing the silver in the dining room when she heard the bell. She put down her polishing cloth and wondered who would be ringing the bell at this hour. After a few minutes the prim and proper 50-something year-old Mrs. Cairn answered the door.

"Good afternoon," said Mrs. Cairn in a dry, professional manner.

"Good afternoon. My name is William Carter. I've just arrived in Buffalo from London. I'm sorry for the unexpected call, but I have a letter for the Masten family. May I deliver it to Mrs. Christena Masten?" asked William.

"I'm sorry, that's not possible. Mrs. Masten is away and not expected to return for several weeks," said Mrs. Cairn. "Would you like to see Mr. Masten?"

"Judge Masten? I was told that the Judge had passed away."

"Oh, he has, years ago, God bless his soul!" "I'm referring to Judge and Mrs. Masten's son, Joseph Griffith-Masten. He has decided to spend the summer here in town while his mother is away."

"Oh, I would very much like to see Mr. Masten!"

"Mr. Masten is in the garden, I will see if he is receiving visitors. I can't have you stand on the porch; please come in and wait in the library," said Mrs. Cairn as she ushered William into the spacious entrance hall. "Leave your bags in the hall, please, and follow me into the library."

The entrance hall was covered with cream-colored wallpaper sprinkled with dark red flowers arranged in a symmetrical pattern. A gracious and wide staircase dominated the hall. It had an octagon-shaped newel post and beautiful dark walnut handrail that formed an ellipse rising to the second and third stories of the large home. William left his bags in the corner and followed Mrs. Cairn into the library.

"Please have a seat in the chair beside the fireplace," said Mrs. Cairn.

William sat down in the handsome room that still felt as though it was Judge Masten's domain. The same dark walnut woodwork found in the entrance hall was used in the library to create ornate shoulder-height paneling that enclosed the room. Between the top of the paneling and the ceiling, the walls were covered with book cases stocked with truly great books. It was clear that Judge Masten was a man of great culture. In the center of the room was an enormous fireplace with a carved walnut

mantle. On each side of the mantle was a comfortable club chair, upholstered in dark green leather. Windows that stretched nearly from the floor to the tall ceiling flooded the otherwise dark room with ample light for reading.

Although instructed by Mrs. Cairn to sit, William stood and selected one of the books from the shelf and began to read it. While he was no great scholar, William was interested in how things worked and enjoyed reading about mechanics, masonry and carpentry. Judge Masten's library had several volumes that William found intriguing. After about five minutes, Mrs. Cairn and Joseph Griffith-Masten entered the room.

"Mr. Carter, this is Mr. Masten," said Mrs. Cairn.

Joseph Griffith was tall and thin, handsome in an aristocratic way, just over 30 years old with light brown hair, hazel eyes and was fastidiously well-groomed and dressed, even after just returning from the garden.

"Mr. Masten, my name is William Carter. I've just arrived from London. I am so honored to meet a member of the Masten family of Buffalo. My mother's family is from the same Welsh village as your father. I've brought a letter from your Welsh kin," said William as he held out the letter to Joseph.

"It is my pleasure to meet you, Mr. Carter," said Joseph as he took the letter and read it.

The letter, addressed to Mrs. Masten, was authored by Elena Masten, Judge Masten's first cousin.

"It is always good to hear from our kin. Please sit down," said Joseph.

Joseph and William each took a seat in the matching green leather chairs.

"You have a very handsome home, Mr. Masten," said William.

"Thank you. My father was very proud of this library. We've scarcely touched it since he died. He was an avid reader, a diligent collector of books and proponent of learning. He was even one of the early trustees of Buffalo's public Grosvenor library." Joseph was always direct. He looked William directly in the eye as he asked "The letter of introduction written by my kin attests to your character, but why are you here, Mr. Carter?"

"Mr. Masten, I'll be frank. I'm a mason and carpenter. My mother died when I was but a child and my father passed away just six months ago. My father had some business debts so after he died, I sold everything to pay them. There still was not enough, so I used my own money to pay his debts as a matter of honor. I'm 25 years old, have no brothers or sisters and no wife, so I decided to try to make my fortune in the United States. My aunt told me about the Mastens of Buffalo and from what I hear, Buffalo is a city of great industry and commerce, so I was encouraged by my aunt to come here."

Joseph was touched by William's story and his bold and forthright ambition. He was also charmed by William's London accent, for Joseph was partial to all things British.

"I'm so glad that you decided to follow your aunt's advice. It would be my great pleasure to help you get established in Buffalo. I want to hear much more about what you would like to do in your new adopted city. But first thing is first. You must be exhausted and hungry. I must leave shortly to play a game of racquetball, but I will have Bridgett prepare the guest bedroom for you. We will have dinner at seven o'clock

and talk further."

Joseph entered the hallway and called for Bridgett.

"Bridgett, Mr. Carter will be staying with us for a few days. Will you prepare the guest bedroom?"

"Mr. Masten, I don't know how to thank you. You have shown me such kindness," said William.

"William, I welcome the opportunity to make a new friend. I'm sure we'll have great fun together. Oh, and one more thing, William, my friends call me Joey, and I do hope that we will become best of friends!"

"Please gather your bags and follow me, Mr. Carter," said Bridgett as she escorted William to the guest bedroom on the second floor.

Joey paused at the doorway, fascinated by William as he watched him ascend the stairs, his powerful arms carrying the heavy bags as if they were but a trifle.

"I'm leaving now for my racquetball game," Joey announced. "Don't forget, dinner is at seven o'clock."

William turned around and faced Joey as he displayed a big, thankful smile. "I am looking forward to it!" he said.

The afternoon sun quickly set and a crisp, cool night followed when Bridgett rang the dinner bell promptly at seven o'clock. A short time before, William awoke from his nap and washed up before dinner. He descended the stairs and passed through the drawing room before he entered the elegant red-papered dining room.

"William, you look like a new man; you must have rested since I saw you last," said Joey.

"I was more fatigued than I realized. I had lain down for a moment and fell into a deep sleep," responded William.

"Since it is just the two of us for dinner, Bridgett set our places opposite each other on the long side of the table so it would be easier for us to converse. Bridgett has made a delicious and hearty dinner of pot roast, salad, freshly-baked bread and root vegetables. I even smell one of Bridgett's delicious pies with apples fresh from the orchard that she must have planned as a surprise, but the aroma gives it away."

"I can't wait. I haven't had such a fine meal since I left London," said William.

"I hope you find your room comfortable, William."

"It is a beautiful and commodious room. I cannot thank you enough for opening your home to me."

"On the contrary, my father would have insisted on it and I surely will enjoy your company, even more so since mother is away."

"Even so, I would like very much to start looking to make my own keep," said William. "I'm a skilled mason and carpenter and I have a strong back. I've worked on some of the finest structures in all of London."

"Of that I'm sure," said Joey. "I will start making inquiries on your behalf tomorrow. It is getting toward the end of the construction season here in Buffalo and most of the contracts have been let, but I will see what I can find out. My father was twice mayor of Buffalo, and our family has yet still a great many social and business contacts in town."

"Thank you, Joey. I am much obliged," said William.

"Let's not hear another word about it. Let's imagine that we've grown up together in Wales and that we have been chums since boyhood."

Even though it was only early October, it was chilly night, cold enough to make a small fire in the library.

"Let's retire to the library and have an after-dinner drink," suggested Joey.

William and Joey made their way to the library while Bridgett cleared the table.

"I will be leaving for the evening, Mr. Masten," said Bridgett. "Will there be anything else?"

"No, Bridgett, thank you for the delicious meal."

"It was my pleasure, Mr. Masten."

"Where does Bridgett sleep, Joey?" asked William.

"She lives upstairs in the carriage house behind our main house with her husband," answered Joey. "But she is in the main house with me most of the time except when she is sleeping. So it is just the two of us in the house tonight. I'm having some of my favorite Cognac brandy, would you like some, William?"

"Yes, thank you. What a perfect end to a perfect day."

Joey poured two glasses of brandy and handed one to William. "Cheers," exclaimed the two in unison as they clinked their glasses together.

"Now let me think," said Joey, his eyes transfixed as he watched the syrupy Cognac cling to the side of the sniffer while he swirled it round and round. "Tomorrow I will make a call to Charles Berrick, the finest mason contractor in town. For something short term, I could send you over to the Shadrakes," said Joey as he paused to give the proposal some additional thought. "Yes, I'm sure they'd love to hear from you."

"The Shadrakes?" inquired William.

"Yes, Frank Shadrake. He's an honorable man, from an esteemed Buffalo family. Years ago, he took over his father's painting and carpentry business. In its heyday, it was one of the most popular firms in town. In fact, Mr. Shadrake's firm performed most of the interior and exterior painting on our home. Both Frank and his father, Frederick, were great friends with my father. But Frank has not been in good health these last several years. I think he only has a few painters and carpenters left. He certainly has all the right contacts; his business could easily be reestablished with the right man by his side. If Frank finds you even half as irresistible as I do, he'd be crazy not to take you on."

"You flatter me, Joey. Where is his office?"

"Frank now runs the business out of his home, but when the firm was in its prime, he had a large shop on Plymouth Avenue near Pennsylvania Street, a block down from where the Shadrakes now live."

"Does he live far from here?" asked William.

"No, he lives only several blocks away. I'll write down directions to their home. Mr. Shadrake will be there with his wife Eliza and their fair daughter Una."

"Do I need an introduction?"

"No, just go there tomorrow. Tell Frank that I sent you to meet him."

After another round of Cognac, the fire died down and both Joey and William, tired from the long day and their relaxing conversation, retired to enjoy a good night's rest.



- Chapter 3 -
The Shadrakes

The next day William awoke to one of Buffalo's fine cool autumn mornings, full of sunshine. While enjoying a small breakfast of toast, homemade peach jam and coffee that Bridgett had prepared for him, William decided to meet the Shadrake family. William recalled Joey's directions as he walked down North Street toward The Circle. North Street was aptly named, for it once served as Buffalo's northern boundary. The street was lined with what would have been called suburban estates in London. All of the houses were handsome and very large, built of stone or brick and set far back from the street. They all had manicured lawns and gardens; as William passed by the houses, each was more impressive than the last. After walking for a few minutes, William came upon a small circular park called The Circle, and he was awestruck by its picturesque beauty. In the center of the circular carriageway was a large five-light gasolier surrounded by a small island landscaped with flowers still in bloom and colorful plants. Grand mansions bordered The Circle, even larger than those that William admired on North Street.

Beyond The Circle, North Street changed its name to Porter Avenue. William, who had worked on some of the finest buildings in London, could not help but be impressed by the large three-story limestone mansion that belonged to Trueman Avery bordering The Circle and Porter Avenue. A few more steps down Porter Avenue was the corner of Jersey Street, where William found a large red brick church that had the name *Plymouth Methodist Church* carved into a sandstone block.

"I must be close," William thought to himself. Next to the church, he walked past a handsome red brick firehouse and saw the street sign "Plymouth Avenue." He turned onto the street.

Plymouth Avenue was a handsome residential street filled with substantial wood-frame homes or constructed with oxblood-colored bricks on the first floor. William continued until he arrived at the twin cottages next to each other at nos. 99 Plymouth and 95 Plymouth Avenue.

William walked onto the porch of 95 Plymouth Avenue. The name "Shadrake" was engraved in cursive lettering on an old-fashioned nickel nameplate affixed to the front door. He rang the bell and a few moments later, Mrs. Eliza Shadrake answered. She was an attractive woman with bright eyes, whose grey hair and wrinkles seemed to disappear when she smiled.

"Good day. Mrs. Shadrake I presume?" inquired William.

"Yes, and who might you be?" responded Mrs. Shadrake, slightly surprised.

"My name is William Carter. I've just arrived from London and am a guest at

the home of Mr. Masten from North Street. I'm a mason and carpenter and am looking for work. Mr. Masten mentioned that your husband has a painting and carpentry business and may be in need of some help."

For a moment, Mrs. Shadrake took a long look at William and sensed that he was earnest, especially with his referral from Mr. Masten, of whom Mrs. Shadrake was very fond.

"Well, please come in," Mrs. Shadrake finally said.

"Thank you Mrs. Shadrake."

Mrs. Shadrake brought William through the entry hall and had him sit in the front parlor. While considerably smaller than the Mastens' mansion, the house was spacious nonetheless. Mrs. Shadrake disappeared and a few minutes later, Mr. Shadrake entered the parlor. Mr. Shadrake was probably in his 60s, although he looked much older. Gentle and kindly-looking, his large, well-worn hands bore the scars of a man who was no stranger to physical labor.

William rose to greet him. "Hello Mr. Shadrake, my name is William Carter. I've just arrived from London and I'm staying with Mr. Joseph Masten. I've begun to look for work and Mr. Masten thought that you may need some help."

"Help indeed!" exclaimed Mr. Shadrake. "My business is presently small but we do need some help. I'm afraid that I can't pay you much in the way of wages, but since you are new to Buffalo, I might be able to offer you room and board in addition to your wages. We have a comfortable bedroom upstairs and my wife is a wonderful cook. Won't you join us for dinner tonight and we can talk all about it? We normally have dinner at six-thirty. Will you join us?"

"I'd be happy to have dinner with your family," William quickly blurted out before even thinking.

William spent the rest of the day walking around Buffalo enjoying the beautiful weather. By late afternoon he returned to the Mastens' house. Bridgett let William in and Joey was already at home.

"Hello William. How did it go at the Shadrakes?" asked Joey.

"They were very kind and friendly to me, it seems that everyone in Buffalo is an angel of kindness. They've invited me to dinner tonight to discuss a possible situation," said William.

"I see. Well, I've been making some inquiries, but so far, no luck. It's just as I've thought, all the contracts have been let and the construction season is winding down here."

"Thanks Joey. You've been so helpful to me. I should be back by ten o'clock. Would that be all right?"

William arrived promptly at the Shadrakes at six-thirty and was greeted by Mr. Shadrake. Mrs. Shadrake was busy in the kitchen and the house was filled with the delicious aroma of freshly baked bread and lamb. Mrs. Shadrake was placing platters of food on the dining room sideboard, the staple for those who don't have servants to serve.

Mr. Shadrake escorted William to the dining room. Mr. Shadrake sat at one end of the table and Mrs. Shadrake sat at the opposite end closest to the door leading to the kitchen. William sat in between the Shadrakes. A few minutes later, William could

hear footsteps descending slowly down the staircase. A lovely young woman entered the room.

"Mr. Carter, allow me to present our daughter, Una," said Mr. Shadrake.

"I'm honored to make your acquaintance, ma'am," as William stood to take her hand. Being the perfect gentleman, William helped Una with her chair. Even though Una smiled when she offered him her hand, William could not help but notice her deep melancholy.

Una Shadrake was the only daughter of Frank and Eliza, born late when they had all but given up the thought of having children. Una was beautiful, about the same youthful age as William, but decidedly an old soul. She had long blonde hair, deep-set hazel eyes, thin lips and a petite nose. Her skin, being the palest white, accentuated her high cheekbones. She was more than beautiful, she was interesting looking.

Sitting across from Una, she was a distraction for William from the delicious meal that Mrs. Shadrake had prepared. William couldn't take his eyes off Una and studied every nuance of her face.

"Where about are you from?" inquired Mr. Shadrake.

"I'm from an outlying neighborhood of London, sir. My mother's kin are friends with the Mastens of Wales. Mr. Joseph Masten has been kind enough to allow me to stay with him for a few days. We are getting along famously."

The thought of Masten brought a smile to Una's face. "Mr. Joseph Griffith-Masten? He's Buffalo's Beau Brummel!" exclaimed Una.

"He's been a great friend to me since I've arrived here, I couldn't ask for one better," said William.

Mr. Shadrake looked on approvingly when Una's smiled again at William. Mr. Shadrake's family story began with "My father and mother left Bethnal Green, adjacent to the east side of London about 1834. Our family has lived in this neighborhood for over half a century. My father Frederick was a master house and sign painter and built the house just down the street at no. 46 Plymouth in 1854. Although he passed away in 1867, I've continued on the business. I built this house nearly a quarter of a century ago in 1881 and built three more just like it: one next door at no. 99 Plymouth Avenue and two more behind these houses on Normal Avenue," said Mr. Shadrake. "There was a time when I was one of the largest painting and carpentry firms in Buffalo. My father and I knew Buffalo's finest families. If you would like, we do have some carpentry jobs, including some work on these houses. You might even be able to expand into the masonry business; there is certainly a need."

William was very excited by this prospect. He liked the idea of perhaps even starting his own business with the help of Mr. Shadrake's contacts. And he could not help but be entranced by Una, even though she spoke very little. Still, William was nothing if not a bit forward.

"This all sounds very exciting. Could I move in tomorrow?" asked William.

"Mr. Masten has been so kind to me, but I don't want to wear out my welcome, for I have nothing to offer Mr. Masten for his generosity."

Mr. Shadrake looked at his wife, who gave her smile of approval. "Yes," said Mr. Shadrake. "We'd love to have you work and live here."

"It is settled then, I'll move in tomorrow and start work the day after tomorrow,"

said William.

William noticed a piano forte in the corner of the parlor. "Does someone play the piano?" William asked.

"I do," responded Una.

"Will you honor me with a tune?" asked William.

"Only if you will sing for me, Mr. Carter," replied Una.

"That's not something I do often, but to hear you play, I certainly will!"

Una played several songs, but the only one that William knew how to sing was the old folk song, *I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen*. Mrs. Shadrake couldn't remember when she had such a good time and couldn't remember the last time she had seen Una so happy.

William left the Shadrakes at about a quarter to ten o'clock and walked back with a light step to the Mastens' house. When he arrived there, Joey was in the library, as usual, enjoying his Cognac. "How was dinner, William?" Joey asked.

"Oh, Joey, it was a wonderful dinner. I'm going to start working for the Shadrakes the day after tomorrow. They are even going to give me a room and board; I can move into their home tomorrow."

Joey surprised himself with the unexpected pinch he felt by the suddenness of William's words and actions. "I hope that you don't feel any pressure to leave here, William. I can't find the words to express how much I enjoy having you stay with me."

"Joey, I can't thank you enough for all you've done for me, but I am anxious to start making my own way in my adopted land, and I'm itching to get back to work. And I can't say that my decision wasn't influenced by their beautiful daughter, Una. Is she engaged?"

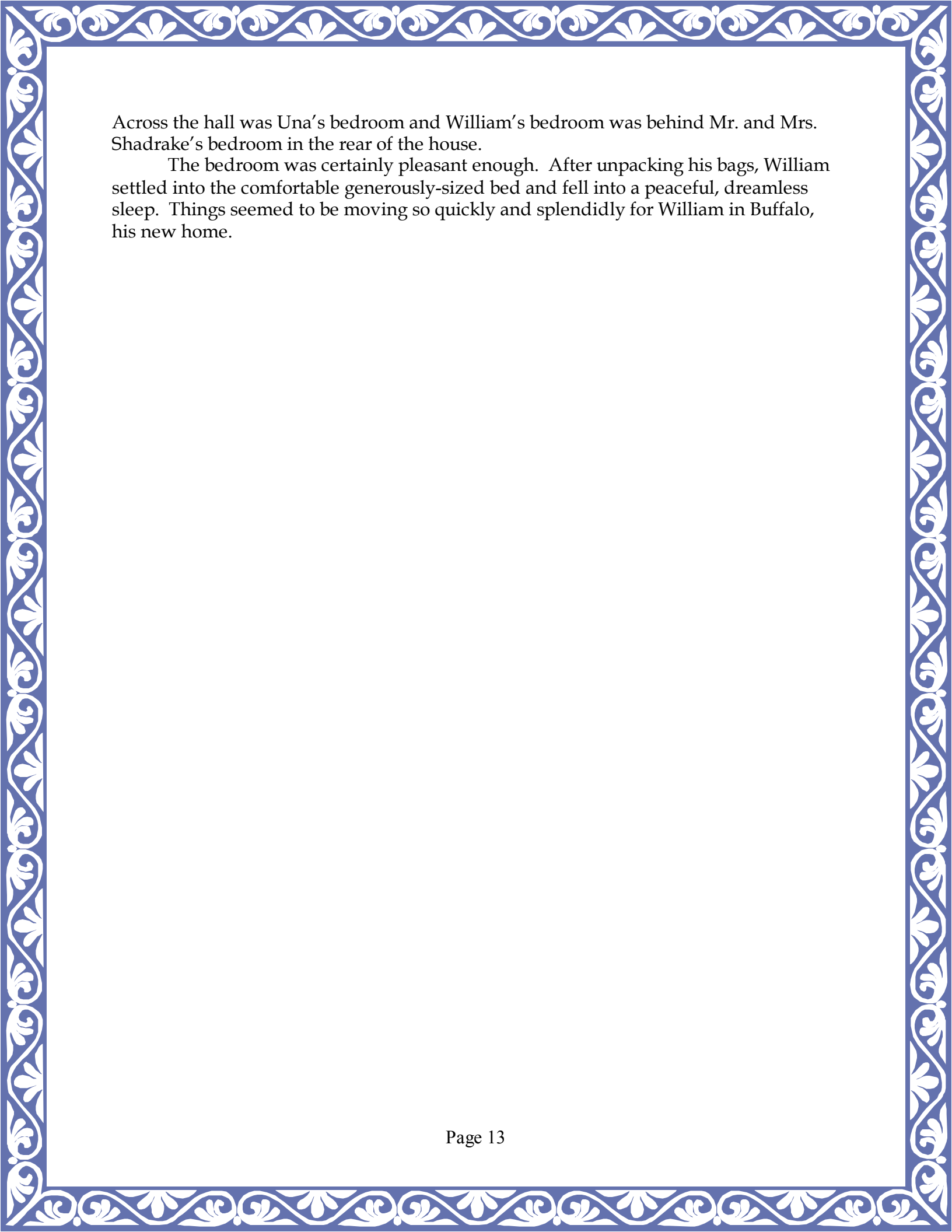
"I don't think that you have any future with Una," said Joey abruptly. "Una is completely devoted to her parents. They are getting on in years and her father is in poor health. She has had many gentlemen callers, but has refused all offers. I don't think that she will ever become romantically involved if she feels that it will lead her away from her parents."

"Since you have one last free day before you start work, promise me that you'll be all mine tomorrow," said Joey. "You really don't know Buffalo and I'd really like to spend the day showing it to you."

"Of course! I can't think of a better way to spend the day," answered William.

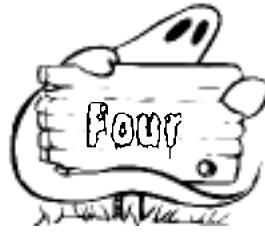
The next day after breakfast, Joey had his coachman, Patrick, prepare his horse and carriage. The Mastens had several carriages, but for this occasion, Joey chose his high two-wheeler, which he drove with two horses, tandem style. Joey and William took a tour about town and those they passed on the street couldn't help but focus on the two handsome men in the swift-moving, debonair vehicle. Joey made arrangements for lunch at the Buffalo Club. They returned home in the afternoon and William began packing his bags. Joey drove William to the Shadrakes and greeted them as he dropped William off. "Don't be a stranger, William. Please stop by any time," Joey said as he drove away.

After another enjoyable meal, Mrs. Shadrake took William to his room upstairs. At the top of the stairs was an upstairs hallway with four rooms off of it and a bathroom. Mr. and Mrs. Shadrake had the master bedroom in the front of the house.



Across the hall was Una's bedroom and William's bedroom was behind Mr. and Mrs. Shadrake's bedroom in the rear of the house.

The bedroom was certainly pleasant enough. After unpacking his bags, William settled into the comfortable generously-sized bed and fell into a peaceful, dreamless sleep. Things seemed to be moving so quickly and splendidly for William in Buffalo, his new home.



- Chapter 4 -
John Longhurst

The following morning, William arose early and the house was still quiet. From his bed he looked out the east-facing window and watched the sun rise, illuminating Mrs. Shadrake's well-tended herb and flower gardens. Mrs. Shadrake's chrysanthemums and other autumn flowers were in full bloom. Taking in the full splendor of the garden, William thought fondly of Joey. "You'd be jealous of Mrs. Shadrake's blooming sedum, Joey," thought William as he chuckled to himself.

After washing and dressing, William headed downstairs. By that time, Mr. and Mrs. Shadrake were also downstairs. Mrs. Shadrake looked bright and cheery as she made coffee, but Mr. Shadrake looked distraught and tired, as though he had no rest at all the prior evening.

"Is everything all right, Mr. Shadrake?" asked William.

"Yes, William, it's just my health, that's all. It's been bothering me lately," responded Mr. Shadrake.

"I'm sorry to hear you aren't feeling well. I'm anxious to be of assistance and get back to work. What can I do to help?"

"I will introduce you to my other carpenter tomorrow, but I have some things around here that need fixing if that is okay?"

"Of course, just name it," said William.

"As I mentioned yesterday, I built this house myself and the other three adjoining it a quarter century ago. I now lease out the other three for income, and a good income it is. This is a very desirable neighborhood and the houses are very comfortable. Next door to us, at no. 99 Plymouth Avenue live the Neffs. They have a list of items that need attention. They have just not been a priority with my limited staff and my own inability to affect the repairs. They have been complaining that the back door does not work, the stairs are squeaky, a handrail has fallen off and one of the pocket doors separating the parlor from the dining room is off its track. There is also some painting that needs to be done. When I was in better health, I could have done that work in short order."

"I'll be glad to take care of all of that," said William who was happy at the prospect of getting back to work.

"I believe that both Mr. and Mrs. Neff are home today," said Mr. Shadrake.

Shortly thereafter, William headed next door and rang the bell. A young servant girl answered the door. William was surprised to see that the Neffs had a servant.

"Hello, is Mr. Neff at home?" asked William.

"Whom may I say is calling?"

"My name is William Carter. I've been sent by Mr. Shadrake to repair the

house."

A few minutes later, Mr. Neff came to the door. John William Neff was 45 years old, a self-made man of business and government. He had just a high-school education, but his diligence and ambition allowed him to move quickly through the ranks. His first job was a messenger boy for the Western Union Telegraph Company. He learned accounting on his next job at Red Line Fast Freight Company, where he became an expert in the computation and auditing of mileage records. When he was 29, he entered upon a political career, becoming affiliated with the Republican Party. He was first elected a Supervisor of Erie County and served on the purchasing and auditing committee of the Board of Supervisors. In 1896, he was appointed Erie County auditor, a position that he held until a year ago. After leaving Erie County government, he became a partner with his wife's father, James A. Menzies, in the fire insurance and real estate business. Neff was fond of social life and was an avid baseball fan. Physically, he was a small man, gentle, and a consummate business man.

"Mr. Neff? How do you do? My name is William Carter. I'm Mr. Shadrake's new carpenter. He informed me that there are a number of things that need repairing around the house and I'm here to take care of them."

"It's good to meet you William, and Mr. Shadrake is correct, there are a number of things that need repairing," said Mr. Neff.

"Is this a good time?" asked William.

"Three weeks ago would have been better, but yes, this is a fine time."

"Wonderful. I will gather my tools and be back shortly," said William.

William returned and saw two women, considerably younger than Mr. Neff, playing with the Neffs' two-year-old daughter Millie.

"This is my wife, Mrs. Elizabeth Neff and her sister, Miss Christina Menzies, who lives with us. You've already met our servant, Ada Schank," said John Neff as he turned to William. "This is Mr. Shadrake's new carpenter, William. He is here to take care of those things that Mr. Shadrake has been promising for weeks," said Mr. Neff.

"Oh, thank goodness," said Mrs. Neff. "I am especially concerned about the handrail on the stairs. As you can see, I'm expecting the birth of our child in a few weeks, and I'm concerned for the safety of myself and our older daughter, Ruth, who left for school just a short time ago. So I'm really relieved that you're here. I keep telling my husband that we should just buy our own house, but it is difficult to find a house with all the conveniences we have here. We just love it here, we're so close to my parents, who live just a couple of blocks away at no. 52 Days Park. We've made offers to buy our house from Mr. Shadrake, but for some reason, Mr. Shadrake doesn't want to sell, so we are dependent on him to make all the repairs."

"Don't worry, ma'am," said William reassuringly. "I'm an expert carpenter and mason and your house will be in tip-top shape when I'm through."

William worked for the rest of the day in the house and completed most of the repairs. He was amazed that the Neffs' home was filled with such beautiful and expensive furnishings. But most of all, he simply enjoyed getting back to work, yet he forgot how much of an appetite it gave him! He looked forward to another of Mrs. Shadrake's delicious dinners and, of course, spending time with Una.

At dinner that night, the family was anxious to know how William's first day on

the job had gone.

"How did your day go?" asked Mr. Shadrake.

"Everything was fine... what a lovely house the Neffs have, it is very beautiful," answered William.

"Yes, Mr. Neff seems to have done quite well for himself. He can afford to keep a servant and his wife and children in the finest of clothes. Insurance must be a very profitable business for him! Well, he can afford the lease payments for the house and that is what is important to me!"

After some pleasant conversation, the dinner hour passed quickly. "It's been a few weeks since I've put in a full day's work. I'm quite tired and I look forward to going to sleep tonight," said William. "Thank you, Mrs. Shadrake, for another delicious meal."

"It certainly is a comfort having you here, William. You seemed to have breathed new energy into our family. I've certainly noticed that Frank and Una's spirits have perked up since you've been here!" exclaimed Mrs. Shadrake.

"You know, even though I've just moved in, I feel right at home as if I belong with your family," said William.

William was hoping to have as deep a sleep as he enjoyed the evening before. But it was not to be the case. It was nearly half-past ten o'clock before he had retired to his bed. That night, William had intense and troubling dreams. It started pleasantly enough, he dreamed of going on a carriage ride with Joey... but then he dreamed that he entered a dark tunnel alone and felt suffocated as he gasped for air. He traveled through the tunnel, or rather was pushed through the tunnel, by some unseen force. At the tunnel's end, the space opened up into a room, but it was still dark. With his hands he felt along the walls that appeared to be subterranean, carved into the earth.

As he felt his way along the passage, he could sense two forms emerging from the wall. As he got closer, he could see that one of them was Mr. Neff, whom he had met that very day. Although there was no light, William could clearly make out the features of the men. "Mr. Neff!" he exclaimed in the dream, but Mr. Neff did not respond. There was a second man, but it did not appear to be anyone that William could recall meeting. William repeated "Mr. Neff," but he did not respond. "Is he dead?" William asked himself. Mr. Neff did not appear dead, but rather asleep. Then suddenly, something pulled the bodies through the wall. First Mr. Neff, then the next man. There did not appear to be any passage, yet the men were ripped through the wall and their bodies were grotesquely ripped apart in the process. Then William was pulled by some invisible force against the wall. He was immobilized but alert. He then felt the wall quake with great force. Something seemed to be trying to pull him through the wall to the other side. William could feel intense pain as his powerful body tried to resist the force. At the very instant he would have been obliterated, William awoke from his dreadful dream.

William had fallen asleep so quickly that night he did not even put on his nightshirt. He lay on top of his sheets and even though the night was cool, his muscular torso was covered with beads of sweat as was his brow. The disturbing dream was still vivid in his memory. His first impulse was to jump up, but he did not want to cause panic or alarm in the household, so he lay in bed perfectly still, listening

to the beating of his heart that seemed to pound in his ears.

He glanced over toward the doorway and noticed that he had even forgotten to close the door, or at least latch it. In any event, the door was open. He considered closing it, but thought it might squeak, awaking the other members of the household.

He casually turned his head fully toward the door and what he saw made him instinctively recoil in fear, an emotion that was foreign to William. Before him he beheld one of the most ghastly sights he had ever seen. A man was standing in the doorway wearing old-fashioned clothing staring intensely at William. While the features of his face were clearly visible, his skin was decayed and potmarked. His steely eyes connected directly with William's. The man was standing in the hall at the point where the hall met the doorway. He did not utter a word or make a motion to enter the room. After a moment that seemed like eternity, the man raised his hand and pointed toward the hallway window that overlooked the Neffs' house.

William thought, "I must still be dreaming," even though he knew that he was wide awake. His heart was racing and he could feel his blood flow through his veins.

Somehow William sensed two things: first, the man in the hallway was not of this world, and secondly that he meant no harm to William. William's emotion changed from fear to one of pathos. The experience probably only lasted for a few seconds, but it seemed much longer. He turned away just for a moment and looked again. The ghostly apparition was gone as suddenly as it had appeared!

William lay in bed, wondering what this all meant. He tossed and turned and finally exhaustion got the best of him. He finally fell asleep once more. This time, it was a deep and restful sleep, as deep as the one he had experienced the night before.

In the morning, William tried to erase the memory of the haunting as he went downstairs to meet the family for breakfast. As Mrs. Shadrake served William his coffee, she innocently asked, "How did you sleep last night, William?"

"Not as well as the previous night, Mrs. Shadrake. I had some troubling dreams," responded William.

Mr. Shadrake immediately put his coffee down, looked William directly in the eye and asked him, "What kind of dreams?"

"They were a bit odd, Mr. Shadrake," answered William. "I dreamt of tunnels in the earth and of a man dressed in old-fashioned clothing."

Mr. Shadrake then turned his head and looked directly at Mrs. Shadrake and she dropped the glass she was holding. "Oh, silly me, I am just a butterfingers today!"

Mr. Shadrake gave William a look as though he wanted to say something, but did not.

"What is it, Mr. Shadrake?" William asked.

Full of emotion, Mr. Shadrake blurted out a series of thoughts as if he had just discovered his long-lost best friend. "Oh William, you are such a blessing! For the last four years I have been haunted by the ghostly apparition, but my wife and daughter don't believe me. His incessant appearance has ruined my health. I don't know why you had the dream, but it is just like my own. Mrs. Shadrake and Una have never experienced this."

"But why has your health been ruined? I didn't sense any harm, even though it is not a sight that I would like to see again."

"But I have... time and time again - and I know the man! Perhaps my own guilt has something to do with it. His name was John Longhurst and when he was alive, he was a close friend in my youth. He owned a bar, the Lake Erie Saloon. Longhurst lived at Eagle and Pearl Streets and also had a barn on Niagara Street, from which he used to drive a cab. He died on July 20, 1862 when he was 45 years old. He was buried in the old North Street Cemetery near here and his body was dug up four years ago when an armory was being built on the site. John had a strange sense of humor and insisted that when he was buried, he was laid in his casket on his stomach instead of on his back. When the bodies in the cemetery were being removed, I had a sinking feeling in my stomach. John did not have any family and I should have stepped forward to make sure that his grave was properly reinterred. But I didn't! I did go to the cemetery to pay my final respects to John Longhurst. I told the health inspector there that Longhurst would be buried facing the bottom of the casket so the grave diggers would not be shocked. I didn't give my name because I didn't want to have any responsibility for reintering John Longhurst. So here is the peculiar thing: when Longhurst was dug up, he was lying on his back!! The health inspector didn't know what to make of this, so he contacted John Farwell, the oldest undertaker in Buffalo. Farwell remembered burying Longhurst and confirmed that he buried Longhurst face down. No one could account for Longhurst rolling over in his grave!"

"What are you saying?" asked William incredulously. "Longhurst was buried alive?"

"No, Longhurst was quite dead, of that I'm sure," answered Mr. Shadrake. "I remember it as clearly as if it was yesterday. I can't explain it - nor can anyone else! It's just... do you think it was only a coincidence that I had an ominous feeling about Longhurst being dug up from his grave and all the while I knew that there was no one to properly look after his reinterment? Instead, I trusted the Erie County government to do it, and look what happened... Longhurst turned over in his grave! I lost track of him after that, even though he was re-buried at Lakeside, poor Longhurst! A few of the graves were re-buried on high ground in a choice spot at Lakeside Cemetery, but for the vast majority of Buffalo's unclaimed founders, including Longhurst, a small, low-lying plot was purchased there. The grave diggers at Lakeside dug 24 trenches, about 70 feet long and about 4 feet wide, with one foot of space in between. They re-buried the deceased's bones in the trenches, but only about two feet was allocated for each grave."

"I should have gotten Longhurst a proper grave in a proper cemetery like Forest Lawn!" said Mr. Shadrake with a look of shame on his face. "Shortly after Longhurst was reburied, if in fact he *was* reburied, the haunting began... he continues to haunt me and now he haunts you! Fortunately, Eliza and Una have been spared my suffering."

"Frank, this is hardly talk for the morning!" said Mrs. Shadrake in a scolding tone.

"I don't care what time it is, this haunting has wrecked my health and has hurt my family," responded Mr. Shadrake.

"Don't worry, Mr. Shadrake. I am strong and not easily frightened," said William. "I'm glad that you told me about what has been bothering you."

"I said that Eliza and Una have been spared this great burden, but I know that it

is not true," Mr. Shadrake continued. "I know that it has affected Una. If it weren't for these unholy visits, I'm sure that she would be married and I would be a grandfather by now."

William's ears perked up and at that moment, he was inspired to solve the mystery. He thought if he could bring peace to the Shadrake household, perhaps he could win Una's heart. "Don't worry, Mr. Shadrake, I'll get to the bottom of this, I promise," said William in a confident tone that made Mr. Shadrake almost believe him.



- Chapter 5 -
The North Street Cemetery

William still had another day's work at the Neffs' house. When he worked there that day, he looked around at the surroundings with new eyes.

That night, William had a very pleasant dinner. There was no talk of the haunting. Una and Mr. Shadrake seemed much happier since the morning. Una smiled at William throughout dinner. If it was possible, it seemed that Mrs. Shadrake's dinner was even more delicious than usual.

William had been considering how he was going to solve the mystery. "I'm going to take a walk after dinner," he announced to the family.

Even though it was early October, it was a particularly warm evening. During his stroll, William deliberately ventured toward Joey's house. He hoped Joey was home so he could talk to someone who was objective to the Shadrake's situation, plus William missed seeing Joey. William rang the bell and Bridgett answered the door.

"William, what can I do for you?" asked Bridgett.

"I'm sorry to come at such a late hour, but I was hoping to see Mr. Masten for a few minutes."

"Mr. Masten is in the library. Come into the hall while I will see if he is available."

A few minutes later, Bridgett came back and escorted William into the library.

"William, what an unexpected and wholly pleasant surprise!" said Joey as he greeted him with a joyous smile. "Let me get you a drink my friend," said Joey, who looked as though he already had a couple.

"Thank you, Joey," said William as Joey poured William a drink.

"Here's to your new job and new situation!" toasted Joey. "Is everything all right at the Shadrakes?"

"Oh, yes, but there have been some unusual occurrences."

"Really?" exclaimed Joey. "Tell me all about it!"

"I'm getting along famously with Mr. and Mrs. Shadrake and I think I'm falling in love with Una."

"So you say, but what I see is that you're here with me tonight, not Una," retorted Joey.

"You seem to know me better than I know myself, Joey," said William. "There is apparently a mystery in the house and I know that if I solve it, I can win Una's heart. Last night I had some unusual dreams... they started out pleasant enough but then they turned horrific. They seemed to be much more than dreams, they seemed real... Joey, what would you think of me if I told you I thought I saw a ghost?" asked William.

"I think I'll reserve judgment, my dear William, until you tell me everything

that's in that head of yours," said Joey.

"I wasn't sure what to do, but I mentioned it to Mr. Shadrake at breakfast this morning and we connected like we were long lost brothers. He said that he's had similar nightmares and has been haunted since his friend's grave was moved from the old North Street Cemetery."

Joey's eyes, which had been in a dream-like state, immediately fixed upon William and the smile that was on his face disappeared as his countenance took on an air of absolute seriousness. It was a look that William had not seen on Joey before.

"Do you know something about the cemetery?" asked William.

"Well, William, it is getting late at night, and I shudder to tell you macabre stories at this late hour for fear that it will nourish your fearful dreams, but I do remember a great deal about the cemetery. Perhaps some other time."

"No, Joey... Now." pleaded William. "Please?"

"The only way you can force it out of me is if you agree to have another drink with me," said Joey.

"Are you sure that's the only way?" asked William as he flashed Joey a big smile.

"Here's your drink. You'll need it, when I'm through with you," jested Joey.

"The old North Street Cemetery... Where should I start? The cemetery was located on North Street just under a mile east of where we are right now. It was about eleven acres in size, bounded by North Street; Masten Avenue, which, by the way, was named for my father; Best Street and nearly to Peach Street."

"Buffalo in the early nineteenth century was growing by leaps and bounds and its early citizens did not properly plan for the needs of its dead. As a result, Buffalo was dotted with a number of small cemeteries which might well have served the needs of the city had it not experienced its explosive growth after the opening of the Erie Canal and then the cholera plagues of the 1830s, 40s and 50s. Ironically, the two are related."

"The old North Street Cemetery was started as a private cemetery by James J. Baldwin across Masten Avenue from the five acres which the City of Buffalo had purchased in 1832 for a potter's field. The potter's field was converted to a park designed by Frederick Law Olmsted in the 1880s but by the mid-1890s, Masten Park High School was built on the site."

"Of the private cemetery, Baldwin sold it to General Sylvester Mathews and Birdseye Wilcox about 1833 or 1834. Mathews and Wilcox maintained the cemetery for about 20 years but then in 1853, the lot owners, finding that Mathews and Wilcox neglected to care for the property, negotiated to purchase the remaining cemetery rights. In 1854 the lot owners finalized the sale under the name of the Buffalo Cemetery Association. Many of my father's associates were trustees, including George Coit."

"Many felt as though it was an ideal location for a cemetery. The land was the highest point in the vicinity, well drained, and the grounds were beautifully improved. It was a picturesque spot, enclosed by a substantial cast-iron fence and marked by mature trees. Yellow locust trees were planted along the outer edge of the whole cemetery and on each side of the walks and carriage ways. Tall, stately elm trees were interspersed among the graves. Along a portion of the southern lot line was planted a close row of silver-leaf poplars."

"For many years, the old North Street Cemetery was considered Buffalo's finest.

It became the final resting place for many of Buffalo's most esteemed citizens and there were substantial monuments made of granite and marble to mark the graves. Some of Buffalo's more well-known citizens who were buried there included Capt. William G. Williams, a typographical engineer and his wife, America Pinkney Williams, the great-granddaughter of Martha Washington. Also buried there was Col. John Bliss, a War of 1812 hero of the battles of Lundy's Lane, Chippawa and Chrysler's Farm. The list of Buffalo's notable early citizens buried there went on and on, including: Oliver G. Steele, Rebecca and Amos Callender and Margaret St. John Foote, whose husband, Thomas Foote, built our home. Another was Capt. Ebenezer Johnson, a soldier of the American Revolution and father of Ebenezer Johnson, the first mayor of Buffalo. And poor Pliny Field. He died on June 3, 1817, drowned in the Niagara River when he was just 35 years old. He was first buried in the old Black Rock Cemetery - now The Circle - that you pass by on the way to the Shadrakes' house. His remains were then removed to the Franklin Square Cemetery where the County Hall now stands and later his remains were placed in the old North Street Cemetery and then finally removed to Forest Lawn Cemetery in 1901."

"The old North Street Cemetery also served as a reminder of a dark chapter in Buffalo's history: one section of the cemetery was the burial site for many of the victims of a cholera epidemic that swept Buffalo from 1849-1852."

"With the opening of the beautiful Forest Lawn Cemetery, with its majestic, pastoral surroundings that included Scajaquada Creek, the smaller cemeteries began to become abandoned, one by one. The old North Street Cemetery was one of the last. By the 1870s, the cemetery was used primarily by the surrounding German community. The final burial occurred there in 1893 when the cemetery ran out of room - and by then there were about 6,000 burials there."

"I suppose that it is the way of things that these smaller cemeteries would eventually become abandoned. Perhaps it was for the best that the cemeteries were consolidated. Yet it was the way in which the graves were relocated that caused all the fuss."

"About the year 1900 the New York Guard's 65th Brigade, located on Broadway Street, sought to build a new regimental armory. There were three sites that were considered, but right from the beginning, Col. Samuel M. Welch Jr., who was commander of the 65th, liked the North Street Cemetery site more than any other."

"Sadly, for those that were buried in the cemetery, too many years had passed since the time the old North Street Cemetery was created. While some families of the deceased were still in the locality and had the resources to re-bury their dead, many more friends of the deceased moved to distant parts of the country. They felt secure in their belief that their ownership of the lot containing the graves of their loved ones was sufficient protection and that the dust and ashes of the dear departed would remain undisturbed by the ruthless hand of man."

"Alas, such was not the case. The decision was made to build the armory, signed by President Teddy Roosevelt when he was governor of New York State. The North Street Cemetery site was selected and the graves began to be dug up. The work started pleasantly enough in March 1901. On the first day of the reinterments, two robins flew merrily from tree to tree, and stopped now and then to sing their spring songs. They

occasionally dropped to the ground and hopped over to where men were engaged in digging up the graves. These were the careful reinterments, paid for and supervised privately. The deceased's families received a small amount of money from the government, but typically not enough to cover the cost of a proper reburial. These lucky sleepers had new graves waiting for them in fine cemeteries."

"The whole affair was watched closely by the deceased's families and friends. As the men dug, a place where the earth seemed looser announced that they were approaching a coffin. When it was reached, the boards were normally decayed and yielded to the slightest pressure of the shovels. Then the earth was scraped away. Usually the coffin was rotted almost away so that its top was pressed down against the skeleton. A few coffins withstood the pressure and moisture of the earth, but in most cases, the wood was completely rotten.

"The coffins were easily opened and the interior was found to be filled with earth. Only the bones of what had once been a living human being and perhaps a few fragments of burial clothes were found within. Mother Earth had taken back to herself all that was perishable of the body. Typically, the skeleton was found in a little pile. Just the skull preserved its shape. In most cases, the bones were black and crumbly, although in a few cases they were found to be firm and white. Of these initial reinterments, the bones were carefully removed, one by one, placed in a new rough-box and conveyed to their new cemetery, often Pine Hill or Forest Lawn."

"People marveled at the unusual condition of some of the bodies. The remains of one woman was dug up and the upper part of her body was in good condition. Her head was covered with smooth, glossy, thick gray hair nearly four feet in length braided as though it had been done up yesterday instead of 50 or 60 years ago."

"In another grave, the mummified head of a man was found. The skin had dried over the skull as hard and firm as parchment. In all, five petrified bodies were found. The perfect outlines of the bodies and the profile of the face were fine specimens of petrification."

"However, by the summer, things took a decided turn for the worse. Most of the reinterments overseen by family and friends were complete. Families were given until the end of May to voluntarily remove their dead to a new cemetery of their choice."

"After this first phase, it was believed that there were between 3,000 - 4,000 bodies remaining that were unclaimed, although no one is really sure. Erie County, of which Buffalo is a part, had responsibility for the graves that were unclaimed. Did I hear you say, William, that you were performing work for the Neffs?"

"Yes. John Neff," answered William.

"Neff was Erie County auditor at the time. Under pressure to get the reinterments completed so that the armory construction could begin, the work turned gruesome. Erie County had purchased some land inexpensively in Hamburg, about twelve miles southwest from here at a place called Lakeside Cemetery where a county contractor was engaged to transfer the remaining bodies."

"The Erie County Health Department tried to oversee the work, but they didn't have enough staff. When the County took over grave digging, it became a favorite public spectator sport. The scene was a strong contrast with those of the day of the original burial. Then there were eulogium and tears. But when the County contractor

was there, there was light comment and careless laughter.”

“I remember once when the diggers were opening a grave, they threw up a leg bone and one of the women who were watching asked where was the deceased’s other leg. The diggers searched the grave but failed to find the other leg. The woman said it would be a shame to leave part of the body in the ground and bury the rest of it in another grave, but the diggers couldn’t find any part of the other leg and let it go at that.”

“Here’s another example of how bad it got. One of the men unearthed the body of what had been a tiny infant. The little coffin lid was first thrown out of the pit. The digger made some rude remark at which the half-dozen onlookers laughed. Once more they bent over the open grave and laughed again. The laborer then chopped the small coffin into pieces with his spade. If there were any tiny bones in it they were so broken and mixed with earth and bits of coffin that they could not be seen. When asked why he did it, he replied with a stupid stare.”

“During the late summer, as the work became even more frantic, all kinds of strange things were discovered. In one grave, where the remains of a child were supposed to be buried, a plaster-of-paris image of a child was discovered. The child’s mother was both shocked and pained at the discovery. She speculated that medical students might have robbed the grave and placed the plaster cast in the coffin.”

“One of the most gruesome finds was that of a well-preserved skeleton with his fingers placed inside his grinning jowl. The corpse was buried in 1885 and friends of the deceased who were at the grave when the body was exhumed said that originally his hands were placed across his breast when the corpse was buried. When the skeleton was seen with its fingers placed in its mouth all who observed it felt an intense, creepy feeling. Some suggested that the corpse was buried alive and its fingers were placed in its mouth during a vain struggle for life; others felt that it was a result of the curse that had been placed on those that dug up the North Street Cemetery graves.”

“A curse?” asked William incredulously.

“Yes,” answered Joey. “Many people protested the use of the site for the construction of the 65th Regimental Armory despite the fact that since the cemetery was no longer being used for burials, it was just a matter of time before it fell into a state of abandonment. The caretaker’s salary was becoming a burden to the cemetery association.”

“Even so, many compared the taking of the cemetery to the biblical story of King Ahab taking Naboth’s vineyards, an example of the damage that can happen when a covetous heart runs free. There were loud protests against taking the North Street Cemetery for an armory site and some tried, in vain, to prevent the desecration and disturbance of the respected bodies of the dead and loved ones laid to rest in the sacred and hallowed ground. In one session, the protestors expressed their indignation at what they felt was an outrageous attempt by the leaders of the 65th Regimental Armory to force their despicable crime through. They warned that the dead would be watching disapprovingly from Best Street with ghoulish glee.”

“Some Buffalonians were so disgusted that they felt certain there would be divine punishment following the despoiling of the graves. One of the protesters proclaimed the curse: ‘These graves will never be opened. Almighty God has forbid it

and prevented the removal of the bodies. There is nothing to move. He can see what is in those graves, but we can't. Six thousand years ago He said "Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." That promise has been kept. God has put His seal of disapproval on grave-opening to show those who seek to open them a most revolting sight. He has done that for the purpose of preventing grave opening."

"The skeleton with its fingers in its mouth was indeed a revolting sight!" declared Joey.

"Despite the protests, all the graves were removed by early August, or so it was believed. When the armory construction actually began, 192 additional bodies were discovered, missed by the grave-diggers. They were also reinterred at Lakeside, and that, my friend, was the end of the cemetery. I certainly hope that I have not frightened you further," said Joey.

"Disturbed, yes. Frightened, no. Tell me, Joey, did you hear of a story of John Longhurst?" asked William.

"No, but there were dozens of stories from that cemetery. As you can see, William, it was very controversial," said Joey.

"I'm glad that you know so much about the cemetery," said William. "But why me? Why do you think I have seen this ghost? Una and Mrs. Shadrake have not seen the ghost and think that Mr. Shadrake's illness is causing him to have hallucinations."

"Perhaps, William, that the ghost only appears to certain people: perhaps only to men, perhaps only to kindred spirits."

"But I have nothing in common with this ghost!" exclaimed William.

"Perhaps you do. You are a man, and you have a connection to the Shadrakes. But who knows! Does it really matter?" asked Joey rhetorically. After a few seconds in thought, Joey said, "I have an idea. Let me stay overnight with you at the Shadrakes' house. Perhaps I too will see the ghost. That will certainly prove my theory. Perhaps I have enough of a connection with you and the cemetery for the ghost to appear to me."

"But how can I make that happen?" asked William. "I can't tell the Shadrakes that I am bringing you into the house to see a ghost!"

"William," Joey said as he approached William and put his arm around William's broad shoulders, "leave it all up to me." "Think of it as a supernatural adventure! You must do just one thing: tomorrow at breakfast, mention that you went for a walk last night and saw the library lights on in my home and stopped by for a visit. Tell the Shadrakes that my mother is still out of town and that I was glad to hear that you've found a situation at their home and business and that I miss seeing them. Just watch and see what happens!"



- Chapter 6 -
Sign Language

That evening, William walked home happy and went to sleep. Longhurst's ghost did not make an appearance that night. The next morning, at breakfast, William did exactly as Joey requested.

"That poor dear!" exclaimed Mrs. Shadrake. "With his mother gone, he must be so lonely. William, later this morning, please do me a favor. Stop by the Mastens' house and deliver this invitation to Mr. Masten's housekeeper. I'll invite him over for dinner tonight and that will be the end of it!"

William was in shock - how did Joey know that Mrs. Shadrake would invite him to dinner? William did as Mrs. Shadrake instructed and dropped off the invitation to Bridgett. Joey was not at home at the time, but he did accept the invitation and arrived promptly and stylishly, as usual.

After dinner, the family retired to the parlor for conversation and a game of cards. The Shadrakes and William were enjoying Joey's company, he was so charming and had such an engaging personality. The time passed quickly and it got late before anyone realized it.

"Thank you for the delicious meal, Mrs. Shadrake. It was so wonderful to spend the evening with you all. I am so exhausted, I think I may be too tired to walk home," said Joey.

"Joey, you know you're always welcome to stay here, but William is sleeping in our extra bedroom," said Mrs. Shadrake.

Joey gave a knowing glance to William, who spontaneously blurted out, "Joey can have my bed, Mrs. Shadrake. That is the least I can do for all the kindness Joey has shown to me."

It was nearly eleven o'clock before Joey and William retired to the bedroom. "I'll sleep on the floor," declared William.

"No, we need to reproduce the conditions as closely as possible to how they were before. We'll both sleep in the bed," declared Joey.

Joey and William went to sleep. William fell asleep quickly, but Joey was too excited to fall asleep. Joey was a light sleeper and it was nearly one o'clock when Joey became lightly conscious and turned to look at William, who was still asleep. Joey was lost in thought as he subconsciously watched William's chest inhale and exhale rhythmically to his silent, deep breaths.

Perhaps it was Joey's presence or some other catalyst, but that evening, Longhurst's apparition made its return. Joey saw it and woke up William, who first looked at Joey and then instantly knew that the ghost had returned. Longhurst again pointed toward the window and then motioned to a portion of the hallway's wall that

jutted out about two inches.

The ghost then made several peculiar gestures with his hands.

Joey was simultaneously excited and frightened, but one thing was certain. Sharing the thrilling experience with William, as frightening as it was, made Joey realize it was the first time he felt truly alive.

The next day Mr. and Mrs. Shadrake, Una, William and Joey gathered at breakfast.

"You look well rested, Mr. Shadrake. Did you have a quiet night's sleep?" William asked.

"Yes, I had a very pleasant sleep, William. Did you?"

Before William could respond, Joey excitedly blurted out, "Mr. Shadrake, William and I both saw a ghost last evening!"

"We saw the ghost of Longhurst," said William. "He pointed to the house next door and then to the portion of the wall that juts out. What could that mean?"

"I don't know. We had an old chimney there that we are no longer using since we've converted our furnace to natural gas."

"Could there be something in the chimney?" asked Joey.

"The ghost was also making signs with his hands, but I don't know what he was doing," said William.

"It almost looked like ancient Indian sign language," interjected Joey.

"Indian sign language?" asked William.

"Yes," said Joey. "From my anthropological studies I know that the Indian sign language was used as an inter-language between Indians of the Great Plains. The North American continent is populated by hundreds of Indian tribes who speak different languages. An incredible sign language developed whereby Indians who spoke different tongues were able to effectively communicate without saying a word. The symbols used are very visual and the most logical way of expressing a given concept. Even abstract concepts such as time is used."

"But we're in Buffalo, not the west," said William.

"The language is so ancient, its origins have been lost, but it is believed to have originated among southern Indians from Mexico. There is recorded evidence of extensive early use by several Iroquoian tribes, although their advanced social condition worked against its continuance," added Joey.

"You are correct, Joey!" said Mr. Shadrake. "I remember that Longhurst, who used to own a bar on Erie Street, once had a regular patron, an Indian who was proficient in sign language. I know that Longhurst learned it from him, but I don't know how to communicate in Indian sign language."

"Fortunately, I do," said Joey. "Linguistics is one of my interests and I thought learning a language that would allow rudimentary communication with any Indian could be of great value."

"Well, what did Longhurst say?" asked William.

"If I can recall, it was a series of numbers and some words. I don't think that Longhurst really learned the language well enough to be conversant in it, but hopefully he can communicate key ideas."

Joey acted out the counting motions and the word-signs that Longhurst made,

although Joey's reenactment was unintentionally far more comical.

"Longhurst held his right hand with palm outward near his right shoulder, his first and second fingers were extended, separated and pointing up; then he moved his hand several inches to the front and upwards," said Joey as he repeated the movements.

"What on earth could that be?" asked Mrs. Shadrake.

"Hunt, or call out," replied Joey in a matter-of-fact tone. "Next he struck wood and extended his left hand in front of his body, back down, and rubbed the tips of his fingers and thumb of his right hand just over his left palm."

"I have no idea what that is," said Una with a smile.

"Rotten!" exclaimed Joey in an exaggerated voice. "Next he brought his partly closed hands, palms inward, close to sides of his head. He raised his hands slightly until his wrists were on the edges of his head, and carried them slightly forward."

"I think I know what that means," said Mr. Shadrake. "I forgot to mention in my youth I also frequented the Lake Erie Saloon and I remember that was the sign for 'Buffalo'."

"Correct, Mr. Shadrake!" said Joey.

"Here's the last one. Pay attention!" said Joey. "Longhurst held his right hand back nearly up, in front of the center of his body, his index finger extended, pointing to the front and upwards and his other fingers and thumbs were closed. Finally, he extended his left hand in front of his left breast, back up, and passed his right hand under and close to his left hand, until his right wrist was close to his left palm, and right index finger extended; then he drew back his right hand, at the same time he crooked his index finger."

"So what did he say?" asked William anxiously.

"The numbers were 99-34-11-32," responded Joey. "And the words were HUNT THE ROTTEN BUFFALO THIEVES."

"What is the meaning of that?" asked William.

"I'm not sure," said Joey. "I think we should trace the chimney. Can we see it from the cellar?"

"Yes, there is an ash-door at the bottom of the chimney in the cellar," said Mr. Shadrake. "Take this lantern!"

William and Joey went into the cellar. "Let me open it," said William. He opened the ash door and held the lantern to it. There was nothing in the chimney, except for some old ashes.

"Hmm... nothing here," said William. The pair went back upstairs and William said to Joey, "What do you think the numbers meant?"

"Mr. Shadrake, what is the address of the house next door?" asked Joey.

"It is 99 Plymouth Avenue," answered Mr. Shadrake.

"Could Longhurst be referencing 99 Plymouth?" asked William. "He did point to the window."

"But what could Longhurst want with the Neffs?" asked Mr. Shadrake.

"I don't know," answered Joey, even though he knew that the question was not meant for him. "Mr. Shadrake, does the house next door have the same chimney as the one we just inspected?"

"Yes, the houses were built identically," answered Mr. Shadrake. "A few years ago when I installed the new furnace here, I did the same for the house next door."

Joey found a reason to change the conversation away from the past evening's events. He went on his way and thanked Mr. and Mrs. Shadrake for their hospitality.

On the way out, Joey approached William. "William, you must find a reason to go back over to the Neffs' house and check the chimney."

"This seems like insanity!," responded William.

"It may be, but do it still," Joey said as he left the house.

William considered whether to drop the matter, but then thought of Una and decided to search the Neffs' house. Several days passed. It was William's second week in Buffalo, the week of Oct. 8. He decided to wait until a business day when Mr. Neff would probably not be at home. One day that week he rang the bell at the Neffs' house.

"Good day, Mr. Carter," said Ada.

"Hello Ada, is Mr. Neff at home?" asked William.

"No, sir, but Mrs. Neff is here."

"May I speak to her?"

Ada left to get Mrs. Neff.

"Mrs. Neff, I'm sorry to bother you, but when I was here last, I neglected to inspect the masonry in the cellar. I've been told that it was a humid summer and there could be trouble if the mortar is loose from the foundation joints. It will only take a few minutes."

"I'd prefer it if my husband was home," said Mrs. Neff. "But if it will only take a few minutes, then I suppose it is all right."

"Thank you, Mrs. Neff!" replied William.

William went down the stairs into the cellar. He went directly to the chimney base and opened the ash door. There was a strongbox there! It was covered in dust, so it had not been placed there recently. The box had a cipher on it.

"Could it be the numbers that Longhurst provided?" William wondered to himself.

There were three numbers on the combination. He thought back to Joey reciting the numbers from the Indian sign language counting. Because Joey had not just said the numbers, but acted out the associated hand-signals, William could easily remember them, 34-11-32. With his hands trembling, William tried them. The box opened!

"Could this solve the mystery?" William wondered to himself.

There was an envelope in the box. William instinctively pocketed the envelope, closed the box and carefully replaced it in its original location. It looked completely undisturbed.

William thanked Mrs. Neff, left their home and returned to his regular duties. He didn't want to tell anyone of his discovery until he understood what it was he had. "If it is nothing, I'll somehow find a way to return it to the strongbox," he thought to himself.

Several days passed while William carefully read through the contents of the envelope. Strangely, Longhurst's ghost did not make another appearance during this time, but there was something else that seemed to capture the neighborhood's

attention. Everyone was joyous over the birth of the Neffs' son, Donald, on Oct. 15.

The envelope contained several cryptic documents. Included in it were two papers that were folded. On the outside were the numbers 1499 and 1500 with the words "not used" written in a bold hand. Once opened, they were blank.

There was also a letter in the envelope dated August 5, 1901 written as follows:
"To John W. Neff, County Auditor.

In compliance with your request I send you herewith list of protested disinterments at North Street Cemetery.

signed Ernest Wende, Health Commissioner."

Also in the envelope was a report made by health inspector George Fellows. It gave a detailed statement as to the number of disinterments, interments and the number of bodies that Fellows had protested their reinterment, nearly 500.

The total contents were the two mysterious blank pieces of paper, the letter and the health inspector's report on a graveyard. William didn't understand what this all meant, but he was certain that it was significant and even more convinced that it was connected to Longhurst's supernatural apparition.

William didn't want to tell the Shadrakes about his find until he fully understood its meaning. After all, he didn't want his new employer to think that he was snooping around and stealing things from homes that he was sent to repair. William thought about it for several days. The only person he even considered telling was Joey, but he wanted to see what he could deduce on his own before going to see Joey again, even though he knew that Joey probably wondered what happened. William studied the documents over and over again and was disturbed by what he read.

One day, when William returned home from work, he found a rough-and-tumble looking man on the porch speaking to Mr. Shadrake. "William, this is Inspector John H. Taylor, Chief of Detectives for the Buffalo police," said Mr. Shadrake.

Immediately, William's heart skipped a beat and although he was very nervous, he acted calm and collected. "I'm pleased to meet you, Inspector Taylor," William said. "Is there any trouble, Mr. Shadrake?"

"No, William, heavens no!" said Mr. Shadrake. "Inspector Taylor is our new neighbor. He recently bought the house eight doors down at no. 117 Plymouth Avenue. Inspector Taylor was just promoted to Chief of Detectives last year."

"What an honor that must be," said William.

"I've paid my dues, son," said Taylor. "I was a detective in the district known as The Hooks, adjacent to the Erie Canal. It was the third most dangerous district in all the Seven Seas after the Limehouse District in London and the Bowery in New York City."

"I know something of the Limehouse District," said William. "I just moved here from London. If The Hooks was anything like the Limehouse District, it was really rough!"

"London, eh?" said Taylor. "I was in charge of a detail at Buffalo's St. Paul's Cathedral on Feb. 3, 1901 when a memorial service was said there for the late Queen Victoria.... 1901 was a tragic year. Later that year I locked up Leon Czolgosz on the afternoon of Sept. 4, 1901 after the youth had fatally shot President McKinley at the

Temple of Music on the Pan-American Exposition grounds.”

“My, what a colorful career you’ve had Inspector Taylor,” said William. “We are certainly fortunate to have you living on our block.”

“And what a quiet block it is,” said Inspector Taylor. “I’m glad it is so removed from the evil crimes I see every day!”

“We are indeed fortunate,” said William. “Good-day Inspector Taylor!”

“It was nice to meet you, William,” Inspector Taylor said in reply, as William breathed a sigh of relief.



- Chapter 7 -
A Halloween Game

After the birth of the Neffs' son, Mrs. Neff and her children stayed for a couple of weeks at the home of her parents on Days Park, a small, pretty oval-shaped park designed by Frederick Law Olmsted. Enclosed by a wrought-iron fence, it was planted with rows of vase-like Elm trees and centered by an ornamental fountain. The park was surrounded by charming cottage homes, of the style recommended by Andrew Jackson Downing. Days Park was just two short blocks away from the Neffs' Plymouth Avenue home, but provided a pleasant change of pace for Mrs. Neff and the children. The park was the closest approximation of open countryside available to nearby residents. It would be filled, especially on Sundays and holidays, with picnicking families, children chasing each other between the flower beds or splashing at the fountain, and couples strolling under the elms.

On Monday, Oct. 30, Mr. and Mrs. Neff were sitting on the porch of her parent's home. Mrs. Neff was holding their infant son and Mr. Neff was watching their two older daughters play in the park. An idle thought prompted a singular question. "Johnny, is everything in order at the house?" asked Mrs. Neff.

"Yes, Elizabeth. Why do you ask?" replied Mr. Neff.

"I forgot to mention to you in all the excitement of the baby being born that William Carter stopped by and said that there was something he had to inspect in the cellar, but I don't remember that he returned to tell us if there was anything wrong."

A feeling of dread came over Mr. Neff. He didn't know why William was in the cellar, but he didn't like the sound of it. He calmed his fears until he could make an excuse to leave Days Park. When the opportunity arose, he returned to 99 Plymouth Avenue and went directly to the cellar. He opened the ash door in the chimney and looked at the strongbox. It was still there. He felt relieved, but decided to open the box. As he entered the cipher and raised the lid, Mr. Neff's heart sank. The envelope was missing! All sorts of panicked thoughts raced through his mind.

Mr. Neff had to think things through before he made any decisions. He waited a few days until he came to the inevitable conclusion, an action he wished to avoid. "I need to tell Roland," Mr. Neff finally admitted to himself.

That same afternoon William walked home after working at a job on Delaware Avenue, Buffalo's famed street of mansions. Joey, riding in a carriage, spotted William walking on the sidewalk. He overpassed William and pulled over. William smiled and ran up to the carriage.

"William!" exclaimed Joey. "I haven't heard from you since I stayed over at the Shadrakes' house. How are you? Did you ever figure out the mystery?"

"Hi Joey, I've been so busy with work, I haven't had a chance to fill you in," said

William in reply. "I've made some progress, but I am still piecing things together." William considered telling Joey more, but decided to hold off until he had unraveled the mystery.

"Well it's certainly good to see you," said Joey. "Tomorrow night is Halloween. I've been invited to a festive party. Won't you come with me?"

"A Halloween party? Whose party is it?"

"It's being given by Clarence and Bertha Cady at no. 163 Park Street, near North Street, a few doors from my home," said Joey. "Clarence is an old chum of mine, the son of Frederick Cady, one of Buffalo's most prominent citizens. Clarence is perhaps the only one that can give me a run as the most fashionable young man in Buffalo's social set. I can still remember when I realized I had serious competition after seeing Clarence return home for the holidays when he was a student at Harvard. He strolled up Delaware Avenue and wore a long tan overcoat of English tweed and a silk muffler of the Harvard crimson, striped in dark blue. As I spied Clarence, tall and athletic with his brilliant coloring, dark hair, sparkling dark eyes and red cheeks, I thought then that I had never seen a handsomer youth. Bertha Ware, from Cambridge whom Clarence met at Harvard, stole his bachelorhood and the two were married under brilliant auspices. The party is at their home tomorrow evening, and it's an event not to be missed."

William couldn't help but smile at Joey's story and invitation. "I'd love to go Joey, it sounds as though it would be great fun. But I'm worried about Una. She has been so melancholy lately. Do you think it would be all right if I asked her to come along?"

"Don't tell me that Una is going to steal you away from me like Bertha did with Clarence!" exclaimed Joey as he gave William a slight smile. "I'm sure the Cadys would be delighted to meet Una if she would be interested in coming along. Do ask her to come."

William looked forward to seeing Una at dinner that evening. "Una, Joey has invited me to a Halloween party tomorrow night at the home of the Cadys on Park Street. He asked you to accompany us. Won't you consider it?" asked Joey.

"I don't think I want to go to a party where I will not know many people," responded Una.

"But Una, you will know me and Joey," responded William. "It's not an ordinary party, it is a Halloween masquerade party and most everyone will be in costume. You will probably not recognize whether you know someone or not!"

"Please go, Una. It sounds like so much fun. It would give me great pleasure if you went," said Mr. Shadrake.

"And it could be good for business, Mr. Shadrake!" added William. "There could be many potential customers at the party!"

"But I have nothing to wear," protested Una.

"Nonsense," said Mrs. Shadrake. "You can wear your forest green satin dress. I can make some lace wings to put on the back of the dress and weave flowers in your hair. You will be a fair garden fairy princess! Joey will love it."

"What about William?" asked Una. "Surely he does not have a suitable costume."

"He can wear my brother Edward's Union Army uniform from the Civil War,"

said Mr. Shadrake. "William is about the same size that Edward was."

"I suppose," said Una. "If it would please you, father, then I will go."

"Wonderful. Then it is settled!" said William quickly.

The next evening, Halloween, Una and William made their way to Joey's house. Una was simply enchanting in her costume. William made a handsome soldier dressed in his blue forage cap with black leather visor, dark blue flannel sack coat and blue wool trousers.

William rang Joey's bell and Bridgett answered the door. "His highness has been waiting for his audience," said Bridgett with a smile. "Please come in."

Joey looked regal dressed as a French king sitting in the front parlor. He wore an impressively jeweled crown and a pale-blue velvet robe trimmed with white fur and embroidered with gold Fleur-de-lis.

"Your Highness!" said William and Una in unison.

"Ah, my subjects have finally arrived," replied Joey. "Don't forget to bow before me," Joey jested.

"How shall we address you, your highness?" William asked.

"Please call me Your Highness King Phillip II of France," responded Joey.

"Don't you recognize your king?"

"Of course I do, Your Highness," said Una. "I am a garden fairy princess and watch diligently over the flowers in your royal gardens, but William here is an American soldier and the French monarchy is foreign to him."

"Well, tonight we are both your loyal subjects," said William with a smile.

"Splendid, then let's depart for tonight's adventure!"

The trio made an impressive sight as they made their way on the short walk along North Street and then to no. 163 Park Street, the home of the Cadys. It was a dark, cool evening. A waxing silver slipper of a moon made its appearance in the black sky interspersed with stars and grey clouds. A few remaining ghoulishly-dressed children returned home from their trick-or-treating.

When the trio arrived at the Cadys' home, William admired the fine masonry craftsmanship of their imposing three-story brick home, its foundation faced with cut limestone. The house, with its wide eaves accented by stylized brackets, was of a cruciform design resembling a Tuscan Villa built nearly three decades before, in 1876. The house had semi-circular windows on first floor and gently arched windows on the second floor. A three story bay on the front facade dominated the house and its side and rear porches.

The house was mysteriously decorated for Halloween. All the first floor windows were covered with yellow tissue paper upon which were pasted cutout ghosts and witches. Outside each window was placed a white paper lantern, its sides ornamented with queer cat-shapes of black paper. There were several enormous jack-o'-lanterns with grinning mouths and narrow, blinking eyes placed on the porch and scattered about the front lawn. The porch light was covered with orange crepe paper that cast an eerie glow on the corn stalks and autumn leaves that seemed to be all about the grounds.

Joey approached the home's classic side entrance with its double entrance doors flanked by two jolly scarecrows and entered the hall. The interior of the Cadys' home

was as impressive as the exterior; its tall ceilings made the large home appear even larger. The wide hall was dominated by handsome, generously sized staircase with an octagonally-shaped newel post and walnut handrail that led upstairs. On either side of the staircase was a parlor, the more formal parlor was to the left of the staircase, in the front of the home. Beyond the rear parlor was the dining room, library and kitchen; these rooms were separated by pocket-doors. Seven beautiful carved marble fireplace mantles were found throughout the home. The rooms were dimly lit for the occasion with candles or fires in the fireplaces. The only other light came from the lanterns placed outside which illuminated the yellow paper-covered windows and created a weird, spooky effect.

William and Una were spellbound as they absorbed the spooky ambiance. Just past the entrance doors, at the base of the staircase, the trio was confronted by a green-faced witch in a black dress with a long scarlet cloak wearing a peaked high hat and wielding a broomstick. Next to her, the newel post supported a skeleton and the balustrade was banked with more corn stalks. A black cat crouched at the witch's feet and above her head was a fat green and black spider that spun a giant web in whose golden meshes winged bogies were entangled.

"Joey!" the witch shrieked. "You look fabulous!"

"You are a truly frightening witch, Bertha!" answered Joey. "But tonight, please call me King Phillip II! I'd like to introduce you to my friends Una Shadrake, a lovely garden fairy princess and William Carter, a brave soldier."

"I'm delighted that you could come to our affair," responded Bertha. "Come, let me show you around and introduce you to the other guests and my husband, Clarence."

Bertha introduced the trio to the other guests. Clarence was in the dining room, which was festively decorated for the holiday with maize, autumn leaves, chrysanthemums and lighted pumpkins. The chairs were removed and the large table in the center of the room was covered with a deep red, heavy table cloth with a large pumpkin face for a centerpiece. The table was full with a delicious gypsy repast of baked beans, pumpkin pie, popcorn balls, punch and other delicious treats that the guests ate on wooden plates and drank from tin cups. Several dishes containing coconuts cut in small pieces, figs, dates, olives, apples, peaches, pears and several different kinds of nuts were in abundance.

"Joey, your costume is fantastic! You make such a handsome and regal-looking king!" said Clarence when he spotted Joey.

"If the real devil looked as good as you do, it would be very hard to resist temptation!" responded Joey as greeted Clarence with a big hug.

The party was a rollicking affair complete with all the traditional Halloween games. The kitchen was filled with laughter, with guests playing games including bobbing for apples and carefully examining a bottle filled with grains of corn in order to guess the number of grains contained therein. There were even more guests in the cellar, which made a perfect dungeon with its rough-hewn flintstone walls. The dimly-lit cellar was decorated with pumpkins, witches, bats and black cats suspended from the rafters.

In the cellar guests played the old English game of snapdragon and "Pumpkin

Man," which was the source of riotous laughter. In one corner was a tall piano-lamp, fitted with a pumpkin head carved in a hideous grotesque way. The body was made from a stuffed coat and its trousers and the arms by shortened broom handles. On the left side of the Pumpkin Man's chest was basted a white patch that showed that he was without a heart and the guests tried to fix the deficiency. Each guest was provided a red flannel heart furnished with stout pins. After being blindfolded and turned around once, they tried to fasten the heart in position.

Somewhere in between all these festivities, William became separated from Joey and Una.

"Where is William?" Una asked Joey.

"I don't know," said Joey. "Let's see if he is in the front of the house."

Joey and Una went into the front parlor that was strangely absent of guests. A fire roared in the fireplace framed by an ornate marble mantle crowned by a gilt mirror over the top. A pair of ornate candlesticks with white candles flanked each side of the mantle. Bowls of apples and nuts were placed around the room.

"What a lovely room," said Una. "I wonder why more of the guests are not here."

"Because the refreshments are in the dining room and kitchen in the rear of the house!" quipped Joey.

"Do you have a hairbrush with you?" asked Joey?

"Yes, I do, Joey, but your hair is perfect!"

"I have an idea. Do you want to play a game?" asked Joey. "Tonight is Halloween and according to the beliefs of the ancient Celts, the veil between the spirit world and ours is thin and it is the time of year when spirits can easily pass between them. Tonight is the traditional time to divine one's future." Joey walked up to the fireplace and took one of the candles and touched the wick to the flame in the fireplace. Once lit, he replaced the candlestick on the mantle.

"How do we play the game?" asked Una.

"It's simple. You look into a mirror that has a candle lit in front of it and brush your hair while simultaneously eating an apple. Legend says that your future husband will appear in the mirror," said Joey handing Una an apple from a bowl.

Una stood in front of the mirror and gazed at her reflection while she brushed her hair and took a bite from the deliciously fresh apple. "Nothing is happening, Joey," said Una.

"Keep doing it," replied Joey.

Una continued to brush her hair for several minutes, and was careful to avoid disturbing the flowers in her hair while she occasionally took another bite from the apple, yet no image made an appearance in the mirror.

"I don't think it is working for me. You try it, Joey," said Una.

"The game is designed for a maiden," said Joey.

"I think that as King, you are entitled!" said Una. "Just try it!"

Joey took off his crown and Una handed him her hairbrush as he grabbed another apple from the bowl. He stood in front of the mirror and brushed his hair while Una sat on a couch along the wall and watched Joey and his reflection in the mirror.

Just then, William walked into the room. "There you both are, I lost track of you

when I went to play Pumpkin Man in the cellar!" said William, taking in the surreal scene. "What are you doing?" asked William as he walked up to Joey and looked at both Una and Joey, his image being reflected in the mirror.

Joey looked at Una and the two of them burst into laughter. "What is it?" asked William.

"We were playing a Halloween game," said Una. "And according to the rules of the game, the spirits just said that you and Joey are to be married."

"What kind of game is this?" said William with surprise and confusion.

"Should we have William play?" asked Una.

"No, I think the spirit of the mirror has been frightened away by our laughter," answered Joey. "But we can try a slightly different game."

"William, give me two nuts from the bowl," said Joey. "Another traditional game is to put two nuts, representing two people, in the grate of a fireplace. If the fire consumes the nuts, then the two people will be wed. If the nuts jump away from each other in the fire, then it is not meant to be. Here is your nut, William and here is one for Una."

"What about you, Joey?" asked William. "Where is your nut? After all, the last spirit said we are to be married!"

"Very well," said Joey. "Here is my nut." Joey went to the fireplace and placed all three nuts on the grate. Joey, William and Una all sat on the sofa, their eyes transfixed as they silently watched the flames dance around the nuts and the logs in the fireplace.

Just then, the heavy cast-iron fireplace damper slammed shut with a loud crash, startling all three and the room began to be filled with smoke. William instinctively jumped up. He reopened the damper and fanned the smoke back up into the chimney while he poked the logs that had been disturbed back to their proper position. In the action, the three nuts spilled onto the ceramic tiled hearth.

"What does that mean?" asked Una in an excited voice.

"I think it is the spirit of Longhurst telling us we need to get our priorities straight," said Joey.

They all laughed nervously at Joey's comment as they looked at the fireplace and the three nuts that sat before it.



- Chapter 8 -

John Neff and Roland Conover

The next day, Mr. Neff reluctantly made the short trip over to 180 Herkimer Street to see Roland Conover. Roland, startled, answered the door.

"Yes?" asked Roland in a harsh tone.

"Roland, I need to speak to you. It's very important," replied Mr. Neff.

"All right, then, you may enter."

Roland escorted Mr. Neff to the parlor where the two men were alone.

"Roland, you know that I don't want to be here, but I must tell you some disturbing news."

"What is it, Neff?"

"Roland, I kept an envelope, hidden and locked in my home, with some papers in it."

"What kind of papers?"

"Fellows' report and a couple of other papers."

"You fool!" blurted out Roland with a look of anger on his face. "How could you do something so stupid?"

"I don't know! Perhaps it was guilt, perhaps for my own sanity," replied Mr. Neff. "Roland, how I regret the day you were selected to dig up bodies for Erie County in the old North Street Cemetery and I ever allowed you to talk me into taking your bribes!"

"But you did, Neff, and we both profited handsomely, did we not? And no one got hurt. What happened to the envelope?"

"I'm not certain. Mr. Shadrake hired a new carpenter and he came over to repair some items around the house."

"Did you supervise him?"

"Yes, but he returned unexpectedly, and my wife, who was to give birth shortly, did not question it. I had the envelope locked in a strongbox, which was not disturbed. I don't know how he got in it, unless he is a professional thief!" said Mr. Neff.

"That's it, Neff," said Roland. "He must have thought the envelope contained money - it was in a strongbox, after all. We need to confront him and threaten to go to the police unless he returns the envelope. He probably has no idea what the envelope contains, nor its value or danger."

"What if he does not admit taking it?" asked Mr. Neff.

"Then we will persuade him!" retorted Roland.

"Tomorrow is Thursday... the Shadrakes always are out on Thursdays for their weekly dinner with Mr. Shadrake's niece Agnes Baker who lives at 30 Days Park. I will stay home and wait until the Shadrakes leave... William will be out but will return at

the end of the workday before they get home.”

“We will sneak into the Shadrakes’ house and wait for William to return,” said Roland. “Neff, we *must* destroy those papers!”

The next day was Thursday, the second of November. It was a special holy day, known in many lands. Some call it Feast of All Souls, by others as the Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed, the *Día de los Muertos* “Day of the Dead” in Spanish-speaking countries, and *Yom el Maouta* “Thursday of the Dead” in Lebanon, Palestine and Syria. By tradition, the feast day started when a Christian pilgrim returned from the Holy Land and was cast by a storm on a desolate island. A hermit who lived there told him that amid the rocks was a chasm that communicated with purgatory, from which perpetually rose the groans of tortured souls. The hermit also heard demons reveal that prayers from the faithful could rescue their victims. When he returned home, the pilgrim hastened to inform the Roman Catholic church who then set November second as a day of intercession for all the souls in purgatory. Many people believe that on this day, it is easier for the souls of the departed to visit the living.

But Roland and Mr. Neff thought none of this as they set out to exact their plan. The Shadrakes departed to visit their niece and the dastardly duo snuck into the house. William came home and entered the house, unaware of the trap that had been set for him.

“Mr. Neff, what are you doing here and who is this?” asked William, who was obviously alarmed.

“Never mind that,” said Roland.

William’s eyes grew as big as saucers. When Roland spoke, William recognized him. Although William had never met Roland before, he was the man who appeared with Mr. Neff in William’s dream several weeks before!

“William, I will be frank,” said Mr. Neff. “We are here to give you a chance to redeem yourself. I know you are poor and just arrived from London, so you may have been tempted to make a bad decision. When you worked in my house, I believe that somehow you broke into my strongbox and stole an envelope looking for money. As you probably now know, there was no money. The envelope is of no consequence to you. All we ask is that you return the envelope and we will not go to the police.”

At that moment, William, although aware of his precarious situation, was filled with vengeance and words rolled from his tongue that did not seem to be his own. “No consequence?” said William with fury. “You have broken into my home and brought a stranger to inquire about an envelope? No, I think the envelope is of great consequence!”

The two rose and approached William. “Give me the envelope!” commanded Roland.

“Roland, let me handle this,” said Mr. Neff.

“You! You are Roland Conover?” William blurted out in disbelief.

“Give me the envelope or we will search the house and call the police,” said Roland with a nasty growl.

“Go ahead, and call for the police!” said William, thinking about Inspector Taylor. “And I would trust the envelope nowhere but with me. You will have to get

through me to get to that envelope."

Roland, filled with anger, made his move and grabbed William, thinking that the envelope was probably somewhere in his coat or pocket. William pushed Roland away, but Roland struck back at him, his fist hitting William square in the jaw.

"Find the envelope!" Roland shouted to Mr. Neff.

William responded and easily overpowered both Roland and Mr. Neff. He punched Roland, the force from the blow nearly knocking him out as Roland hit the floor. Mr. Neff lost his balance when he caught the back of William's elbow as he struck Roland. With Roland on the ground, William stepped back and approached Mr. Neff. Roland did not make an attempt to regain his footing, but instead pulled out a revolver and pointed it at William.

"Stop right there, William," ordered Roland. "Give Neff the envelope," he said as he slowly, aching, rose to his feet.

"You wouldn't dare shoot me," said William.

"Wouldn't I? And why not? You're a thief and I am defending my property. I don't think we'd even be questioned."

William decided not to tempt Roland. He reached inside his coat and reluctantly gave the envelope to John Neff.

"Neff, burn the envelope, now!" ordered Roland.

There was a small fire still burning in the fireplace that the Shadrakes must have started and left for William to keep the parlor warm. Mr. Neff threw the envelope into the fire and Roland had a satisfied, almost gleeful look on his face.

At that very moment, despite the fire, the room grew cold. William immediately thought of Longhurst. "It's about time you've come back," he muttered softly to himself.

A cold breeze, the source of which could not be determined, entered the room and the flames in the fireplace greatly diminished. A few seconds later, seemingly out of nowhere, the mute and hideous-looking Longhurst made an appearance at the far side of the room. For a moment, both Mr. Neff and Roland were frozen with fear, a look of terror and disgust were on their faces. William, however, had neither of those feelings, but one of excitement. His heart raced as he had a split-second inspiration. While Roland was momentarily distracted by Longhurst's apparition, William turned and kicked with all his might. His boot landed squarely in Conover's palm and the revolver flew into the air and across the room. Roland winced and screamed in great pain. Without missing a beat, William stuck his hand into the fire and retrieved what was left of the envelope and bolted out the door, his powerful body throwing off any feeble attempts that Mr. Neff and Roland made to stop him.

Distraught and upset, William didn't know what to do or even whom to turn. He thought of going to the police, but then realized that events could quickly turn against him. He didn't know who else to turn to except for Joey. He made the trek in quick haste to the corner of North Street and Elmwood Avenue. He rang the bell and Bridgett answered the door.

"Bridgett, I need to see Mr. Masten. Is he in by any chance?" asked William with great urgency.

"Yes he is. Please come in and wait in the hall," said Bridgett as she went to get

Joey.

A few minutes passed when Bridgett returned and said, "Mr. Masten is in the library waiting for you, William."

William nearly ran into the library. He was so overcome with emotion that he walked up to Joey and gave him a big hug.

"Oh, Joey, I am in a world of trouble, and I'm not even sure what it is," William blurted out.

"Why didn't you say anything to me earlier this week? Never mind, you can tell me later. Now, now, William what is troubling you? You are quite upset. Whatever it is, it can't be that bad."

"That's just it, I don't know how bad it is," said William, his eyes wild with excitement.

"Start at the beginning, William."

"Joey, the numbers that Longhurst gave us were spot-on! I used an excuse to get into Mr. Neff's house and found a strongbox at the bottom of the chimney. What's more, the numbers that the ghost gave us corresponded to a cipher."

"What was in the strongbox?"

"Two pieces of paper, a letter and a report about the cemetery."

"Why didn't you tell me about this right away?"

"I wanted to take the time to read and understand the contents of the envelope. If it was nothing, I'd return it to its location somehow. I didn't want Mr. Shadrake to think that I am stealing from the homes that I am meant to work in and I certainly didn't want you to be a party to my crime, Joey... and I didn't want to spoil our wonderful evening together on Halloween."

"William, while I don't agree with your approach, I understand your predicament!"

"Just now, I was confronted by Mr. Neff and Roland Conover who demanded the envelope. It must be very important. It is somehow related to the North Street Cemetery. I barely escaped with my life and the envelope - more or less intact. Joey, I'm afraid to go to the police. I think Neff and Conover will twist the facts and I will end up in jail!"

"That is a distinct possibility... Mr. Neff does have lots of influential Republican friends. William, I want you to come with me, I think I know of someone who can help."

"Where are we going, Joey?" asked William.

"To the Ferry Circle!" responded Joey.

"Where?"

"We're going to the home of my friend, the District Attorney Edward Coatsworth, who lives just a mile north of here at no. 468 Richmond Avenue at Ferry Circle. Let's go straight away."

"Joey, are you sure this is the right thing to do?"

"Please trust me, William. I wish you had come to me sooner."

Joey retrieved his horse and carriage and the two went down North Street around The Circle to Richmond Avenue and to the home of Mr. Coatsworth. Joey rang the bell and a few minutes later, a servant answered the door.

"Hello, Lizzie. I am here to see Mr. Coatsworth. Please hurry and tell him that I must see him on an urgent matter."

Lizzie McGarr ran and went to see Mr. Coatsworth. "Mr. Coatsworth, Mr. Joseph Griffith-Masten is at the front door and he says that it is urgent that he speaks to you!"

"Very well, Lizzie, please bring Mr. Masten into the parlor."

"He has a gentleman friend with him," said Lizzie.

"Bring him in as well!"

Lizzie brought Joey and William into Mr. Coatsworth's large parlor.

"Joey, it is so good to see you! How is your mother getting along?"

"Good to see you, Edward. Mother is doing just fine. She is having such a marvelous time with her sister she has been delayed in returning to Buffalo from Newport but will be back next week. Edward, I want to introduce you to a friend of mine, William Carter.

"I'm pleased to meet you, William," said Edward.

"The pleasure is mine, sir," responded William.

"Edward, William wants to show you an envelope he has possession of, one that he obtained at a great personal cost. Neither one of us fully understands its contents, but I think you can help us."

Edward looked more than a little interested. William gave the charred envelope to Edward. He opened it and raised his eyebrows in disbelief. "Where did you get this? How did you get this?" asked Edward incredulously.

"It's a long story, Edward, and I'll be glad to fill you in later," interjected Joey.

"But poor William here, has had a very rough day and we want to know the meaning of the envelope. Can you help us?"

Edward took control of his senses and began to relate the tale. "Earlier in the summer, Frederick Howard, Supervisor of Erie County's 24th ward, contacted Auditor Sturm and myself after he reviewed the county's finances. He noticed a large financial discrepancy when he examined records relating to the old North Street Cemetery deal. The original estimate to move the bodies was about \$210,000, yet the final bill was about \$300,000. No one could explain what happened to the missing money."

"What was stranger, still," continued Edward, "was that when the bodies were being dug up, Supervisor Byron D. Gibson made a motion that gave free clearance to the auditor at the time, John Neff, to directly pay the bills submitted by the County's grave-digger contractor, Roland Conover. Ordinarily, each of the bills would have had to be approved by the Board of Supervisors prior to payment."

"Howard formed a committee to investigate the matter, but the committee had a hard time finding any documented evidence that something was awry. But there were those that knew that something was dreadfully wrong. The Erie County Health Commissioner, Dr. Ernest Wende, and his health inspector, George Fellows, objected vigorously to the methods that Conover used to move the dead. The terrible things that were done to the remains of the bodies by the grave diggers were well known, but Fellows observed that Conover would find animal bones - sometimes even soup bones - and call them bodies. There were even fragments of glass and trash that he would identify as a body. We don't even know the full extent of the abuse because Conover

exerted complete control over the grave digging and demanded complete secrecy. He hired Polish immigrants to dig up the bodies and they were forbidden to speak with the press or health department representatives. Of the things that Fellows protested against, he claimed that Conover tried to bribe him to keep quiet."

"But he didn't keep quiet and wrote a report of Conover's wrongdoings. Dr. Wende wrote a cover letter. He gave it to John Neff and it was just discovered that Neff never gave it to the Board of Supervisors... and this, Joey, is the missing report!"

"And what of the two blank pieces of paper, labeled 1499 and 1500? Do you have any idea of their meaning?" asked William.

"I do - this is, perhaps, the most important part, it is the missing key! There were vouchers that were used to pay Conover and there were several discrepancies in the records. For example, we discovered that one voucher was marked for \$75, but the actual amount of the check that corresponded to the voucher was \$7,500. That could have been a clerical error, but these two pieces of paper are much more important. The numbers 1499 and 1500 correspond to checks that were written for \$7,800 and \$6,000, respectively, but the vouchers in the books were marked void. These two blank papers represent certificates for the vouchers that were supposedly void. This is very important evidence I daresay!"

"Mr. Coatsworth, there was a fire. The letter from Wende was burned and about four pages from Fellows' report were burned," said William.

"That's very unfortunate William, but not the end of the world. We've been in contact with Dr. Wende and he has a copy of the cover letter in his records, although not the report made by George Fellows. Even though four pages have been lost in the fire, enough of it is intact to provide the evidence we are looking for, and most important are the blank certificates corresponding to checks 1499 and 1500!"

"May I keep this?" asked Edward.

"Of course!" exclaimed William.

"This will be entered into evidence," said Edward. "I've been in communication with Charles F. Sturm, the current Erie County auditor who succeeded Neff in 1904. Auditor Sturm has been preparing a report on the North Street Cemetery to submit before the Board of Supervisors. Sturm lives at 287 East North Street, across from where the old North Street Cemetery was located. He saw, first hand, the injustice inflicted when the graves were dug up four years ago and he passionately believes that justice should be served now. He will be very interested to see these documents; very interested, indeed!"

"I knew we could count on you, Edward," said Joey.

On the way back, Joey said to William, "I'm so sorry that all this business has been for nothing. You nearly lost your life for some administrative proceedings."

"Oh, Joey, no, this has been very important - don't you see?" responded William. "I now understand Longhurst's apparition! It's much more than just about the investigation that District Attorney Coatsworth told us about! Longhurst must have been angered that his grave, and perhaps other graves, were desecrated. While he had no way to exact justice on the immortal plane, he sought his justice in the world of men! That was the message he tried to convey, as cryptic as it was, in Indian sign language. I think that when all this is shaken out, it will put Longhurst to rest and the Shadrake

family can find peace. And Una will finally be free. I owe this all to you. Joey, how can I ever repay you?" asked William.

The events of the next few weeks moved so rapidly, they seemed to be a blur for William. He went straight home and arrived before the Shadrakes had returned from their dinner with Agnes Baker. William straightened up the house so that there was no evidence of the scuffle with Conover and Neff, who were nowhere to be found. He said nothing about what happened to the Shadrakes when they shared stories about their day with each other.

A week later, on November 11, William picked up *The Courier* newspaper and quietly read the story that the North Street Cemetery scandal was about to break. The evidence that William provided to District Attorney Coatsworth went to a grand jury. In early January 1906, both John Neff and Roland Conover were arrested, ironically, overseen by Inspector Taylor. John Neff and Roland Conover were accused of bilking Erie County out of over \$80,000¹ for falsified documentation and payment for movement of bodies that seemed to be little more than soup bones, rubbish and shards of glass. While they were accused of taking money, there was no earthly crime that they could be charged for the callous actions Conover took when he re-buried remains of bodies. Individual bones were sometimes counted as whole bodies and in other cases, parts of a body from a grave were put in one box, then other bone fragments from the same grave were placed in a different box.

Both went on trial a few months later and both were found guilty as were Byron Gibson and William B. Jackson, two Erie County Supervisors who collaborated with Neff and Conover in the North Street Cemetery scandal. All four were sent to Auburn prison. Neff served seven years, Gibson and Jackson served four years each and Conover served for less than a year. He received a reduced sentence because he provided evidence used to convict Gibson and Jackson.

Longhurst never again made his ghostly appearance. While peace settled in on the Shadrake family, Mr. Shadrake's health never improved. He passed away in 1907, but not before William and Una were wed. Soon after William and Una's marriage, Joey and his mother left Buffalo and moved permanently to Newport. William and Una inherited the Shadrakes' property and then their only daughter, Margaret, after them. William's emotional insistence of the story's truth was the only proof there was of Longhurst's ghostly apparition. As the years passed, most of the story was forgotten; the people and places in it became like ghosts themselves. The old North Street Cemetery itself has been obliterated for over a century; the 65th Regimental Armory continues strong on its site. Some of the cemetery's former residents now repose in well-tended Buffalo cemeteries, their graves easily identified with dignified monuments. For too many others who built up Buffalo long ago, they rest forgotten at Lakeside. Located a dozen miles south of Buffalo, most of the graves are unmarked and its occupants unknown. Of the few that are known, their graves are faintly marked with illegible, ancient, flat tombstones nearly swallowed up by the surrounding lawn. Joey's home was demolished in 1911 to build the First Church of Christ Scientist and

¹Conservatively estimated to be \$1.2 million by 2008 valuation.

many more of the story's visible landmarks were subsequently lost. Perhaps Longhurst and his fellow residents, displaced from the graveyard, continue to watch the wagons go by Best Street, as those who cursed the cemetery removal warned. For mortal eyes, only the twin French cottages on Plymouth Avenue remain as visible reminders of the tale.

