

The House That Whispers

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EXT. DECREPIT STREET - NIGHT

There was once a suburb here, now eighty percent of the houses are boarded up, graffiti covered and begging for an arsonist's attention.

DANNY, 11, awkward and nervous, follows CARL, 12, the confident one, up the sidewalk towards the house.

DANNY
But, Stevie said --

CARL
Stevie's a wimp.

DANNY
Bu --

CARL
Are you?

Danny vigorously shakes his head.

Carl points ahead.

CARL (cont'd)
See not scary at all.

Except it is.

WHISPER HOUSE

The house sits on an incline, surrounded by a rusty chain-link fence that seems to keep the house confined rather than trespassers out.

Boards cover every window, sagging in places as rot sets in. The garden is oil-slicked dirt, shrubs and grass in their death throes.

The boys reach the fence, then the gate secured with a heavy steel padlock.

DANNY
(hopeful)
Doesn't look like we can get in.

CARL
There's a hole, this way.

He leads Danny round a corner, then another.

By the corner post is the hole, not very large but more than big enough for a pre-teen or two.

CARL (cont'd)
See, we can get through.

He stoops and slides through.

CARL (cont'd)
C'mon.

Danny spares one glance back down the street before he reluctantly follows Carl into the...

GARDEN

Carl leads the way, picking his way forwards through the decaying weeds and puddles, heading for the front of the house.

DANNY
What if we get caught?

Carl motions around the neighborhood.

CARL
By who?

DANNY
Well...

CARL
Nobody cares.

He climbs onto the porch, the boarded front door their next obstacle.

DANNY
We can't get --

Carl just pushes the board sideways, it swings, suspended above by a single nail.

The door behind the board is solid, heavy, and already ajar.

CARL
Up the stairs, room at the end of the hall, ask your question and it'll whisper your answer.

DANNY
On my own?

Carl nods.

CARL
Gotta, whispers don't come otherwise.

DANNY
I didn't know it'd be...

He trails off.

CARL
You calling chicken?

Danny looks tempted, steels his resolve and shakes his head.

CARL (cont'd)
I'll be here.

Danny pushes into the...

HALLWAY

Dirt, dust and cobwebs.

Doorways to other rooms, shadows - moving?

Danny glances but doesn't divert.

He climbs the stairs two at a time.

LANDING

A floor-board or two missing down the hallway, paint peeling like blistered skin.

Danny treads carefully as he makes his way down to the room where the whispers wait.

DOORWAY

No turning back now.

WHISPER ROOM

The room is empty save for scuffed footprints in the dust.

And the silence, almost palpable.

Danny paces to each corner, examines the room from that perspective, checks the boarded, glassless window.

Returns to the center of the room.

DANNY
(solemnly)
Where's my Mom?

He blushes, embarrassed by his question and the stupidity of asking it.

Until he receives his quiet answer.

WHISPER
Being eaten by the worms...

Danny runs before the whispered answer is even complete.

Footsteps pound down the landing, down the stairs and out of the house.

In the distance, the sound of chain-link fence stretching.

Carl laughs.

The board blocking the window swings out of the way as Carl climbs in from his drainpipe perch where's he's been hiding.

The moon sheds a little more light in the room and on Carl's grinning face.

CARL
Worms, genius!

He laughs out loud at his prank.

CARL (cont'd)
What a sad-sack, how'd he ever fall
for that?

The house creaks.

WHISPER
They always do.

The house door slams shut with a bang.

Then the window board swings back into position with a snap.

Last, the whisper room door slams shut, cutting off Carl's...

SCREAM