

A cosy cottage

8 February 2021

Vocabulary

Refurbishment: renovate.

To strive: make great efforts to achieve or obtain something.

Old-world charm: of or characteristic of former times, esp., in Europe, quaint or traditional.

Snug: comfortably warm and well-protected; cosy.

Toddler: a young child, especially one who is learning or has recently learned to walk.

Doze: a short sleep, especially during the day.

To creak: make a harsh, high-pitched sound when being moved or when pressure or weight is applied.

To quiver: tremble or shake with a slight rapid motion.

Flurry: a small swirling mass of something, especially snow or leaves, moved by sudden gusts of wind.

Playpen: a small portable enclosure in which a baby or small child can play safely.

Strange happenings at Honeysuckle Cottage

When Arthur Hiran and Henrietta had purchased Honeysuckle cottage in Squirrels Wood from the estate of the late Miss Harding, it was in need of substantial refurbishment. Earl-Lea Riser and Henrietta had taken up the challenge and had made many improvements to the old property including a new central heating system.

The couple have striven to make sure the cottage retains its old-world charm and yet is as comfortable as a modern property. One of Henrietta's favourite improvements is the new wood burning stove that the couple have installed in their fireplace. It quickly heats up the sitting room with a snug, dry comfortable heat.

Late last week Earl-Lea was at the factory working on a project with Henrietta's father. Henrietta was at home with Thandie. The toddler was playing happily in her play pen and Henrietta was flipping through some magazines on the sofa.

It was damp and grey outside with occasional showers. Inside was a different story. Thanks to the wood burning stove, the room was cosy and warm. Gradually Henrietta began to doze as she sat on the sofa.

Half an hour later she awoke to the sound of the clock on the landing chiming eleven o'clock. Earl-Lea had found the clock in the attic after they moved in. It had belonged to a previous owner but was still in good working order, had a beautiful mahogany case and provided an interesting link with the past.

Henrietta noticed that Thandie was now asleep on the floor of her playpen holding her favourite teddy-bear. It was then that Henrietta's heart nearly stopped. She heard the distinct sound of soft footsteps on the landing upstairs. She could also hear the floor boards creaking slightly.

Henrietta thought she must be imagining the sound but nevertheless got up slowly and walked to the foot of the stairs. "Is there anybody there?" she said, her voice quivering.

There was no response.

Henrietta started to slowly mount the stairs looking for any signs of movement. There were none. She went into each room in turn, even opening the wardrobes. Finally she went up the second flight of stairs into the attic. There was a flurry of activity as a bat flew from one joist to another, but nothing else.

As she descended from the attic she noticed that the glass door in front of the clock was open, as if

someone had been winding it up. She looked down and found a silk head scarf that she didn't recognize. She picked up the scarf and noticed the initials "E.H." embroidered on the corner...

Questions for discussion

1. What would you have done if you were in Henrietta's situation? Was it wise for her to go upstairs to investigate?
2. What could account for the sound of footsteps in an empty house?
3. Have you ever had an experience like this?
4. Why are horror films so scary?
5. Do you like open fires or wood burning stoves?
6. What do you like about Honeysuckle Cottage? Ideally, would you prefer to live in an historic or a modern house? Why?

The new pronunciation challenge

I take it you already know
of tough and bough and cough and dough.
Others may stumble, but not you,
On hiccough, thorough, lough and through.
Well done! And now you wish, perhaps,
To learn of less familiar traps.

Beware of heard, a dreadful word
That looks like beard and sounds like bird.
And dead – it's said like bed, not bead.
For goodness sake, don't call it deed!
Watch out for meat and great and threat.
They rhyme with suite and straight and debt.

A moth is not a moth in mother,
Nor both in bother, broth in brother,
And here is not a match for there,
Nor dear and fear for pear and bear.
And then there's dose and rose and lose
Just look them up – and goose and choose.

And cork and work and card and ward.
And font and front and word and sword.
And do and go, then thwart and cart.
Come, come I've hardly made a start.

A dreadful language? Man alive,
I'd mastered it when I was five!

Attributed to T S Watt, 1954

	janvier	fevrier	mars
Intermédiaire / avancé lundi	11, 18, 25	1, 8	1, 8, 15, 22, 29

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