

The Birds Upstairs

Introduction

Edward and Henrietta were husband and wife, and lived alone in their austere home on the outskirts of London.

For a couple of their age and... condition, they were perfectly typical.

But were never able to bear children.

Part 1: An Unhappy Couple

Each evening, Edward and Henrietta would labor to conceive. This task had now become a chore, as affection was traded for efficiency - but without success.

Unremarkably, Henrietta would miscarry; their child left dead before it could ever be born. In their misery, Edward turned once more to drink. And would pass out early in the evenings, leaving Henrietta to retire to bed alone.

Profound shame took hold of her... then, as many birds so often do, she soon found her own reflection unbearable. Overcome by grief, she pleaded for a miracle.



Part 2: An Uncertain Blessing

Edward and Henrietta's miracle child bore no resemblance to either of its parents. With its feathers, flesh, and talons - that scratched and clawed their expensive paintings and furniture. Worse, it was a hideous stain to their social distinction. And once again, disappointment befell them both.

Following the birth of their abomination, the family seldom appeared in public. Henrietta was barely able to cope with the embarrassment and though he would never said it aloud, Edward suspected the child was not his.

When both had reached the height of their grief, they locked their child in the attic upstairs where it could no longer be seen by distinguished friends and neighbors. For days, the screaming continued...

Edward and Henrietta went about their everyday lives as best they could. In time, they both grew accustomed... to the bird upstairs.

Part 3: An Unspeakable Betrayal

When both parents stood over their child, they could barely recognize its naked figure. Its flesh had decayed into a lovely skeleton, one that was unmistakably... the product of its two, proud, parents. But as much as they shook their child awake... he remained still as death. And yet... familiar...

Epilogue

Let it be known that at long last the aforementioned parties became of similar kind and were therefore consecrated as family.

The Meaning Of This Story

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